Strategies for Practicing Writing and Speaking
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Pedagogical skill: Teaching Speaking skills	Topic: Storytelling to narrate a personal experience.
Curricular Thread 2: Oral Communication	Sub thread: Spoken production and interaction.

Strategy 1: Personalized Storytelling

Description

Storytelling is a useful strategy to narrate past experience. With this strategy, the students will narrate a story based on a model provided by the teacher. This a strategy that students from Year 8 until 10 of general basic education can learn to develop A2.1 level of communicative competence based on the Common European Framework of Referenced (CEFR).

When foreign stories dominate the teaching of reading to Ecuadorian learners, they occasionally complain because the workbooks reflect either British or American culture that they are not familiar with; thus, they find it difficult to talk about things they do not have prior knowledge of.

This strategy will help students tell personal stories about their experience. This is a highly motivating activity for students who are learning a foreign language because they always like to talk about their lives. There is information gap, as the listener does not know what they speaker is going to tell him/her. The students have the option to choose the language register they want to use in their story. It can be formal, colloquial or they can just use standard English. The listener may react to what they are listening to as a manner of feedback. The speaker may also ask for repetition if they do not understand well and they can give their opinion, and agree and disagree with the speaker. These principles of communicative language teaching theoretically support the use of this strategy.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to use this strategy, you will first need to ask your students to take time to think about the story they will tell. For, example, what happened? When did it happen? Who are the main characters of the story?

A personal story will be narrated by the teacher using narrative tenses – past simple, past continuous and past perfect for the students to use as a model to narrate theirs. Students can use adjectives and adverbs to make the story interesting, and sequencing words such as first of all, then, after that, later on, and finally to give it a logical sequence. This will help the students tell a coherent and comprehensible story. A personal story can also be shared with students and then invite them to tell stories about themselves in small groups. There will be a lot of interaction when they tell their stories to their classmates.

To ensure that storytelling is effective and engaging, there are seven (3) easy steps to follow. First, give the story an introduction. Say briefly, what your story is about. Give the background to your story. Say when and where it took place and what you were doing at that time.

Second, say what happened step by step. Use words as *so, because* and *although* to connect the actions until you reach the end of the story. And, third, finish your story or anecdote by saying why it is important to you or why you remember it.

After you have told your story as a model, the students will tell their personal stories to their classmates in small groups. The students will take turns telling their stories and the teachers' role will be to pop in the different groups, listen to parts of their stories, and give feedback on content, not on grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation errors at this time. Rather, take notes of the most common mistakes basically with the past tense and past participles of regular and irregular verbs and give feedback to the whole class after the activity has been completed.

This strategy works with all class sizes, as most of the time students will be working in groups, and the number of groups will depend on the class size. For large classes, let us say for 40 students, you can ask your students to form eight groups of five students each. For a small classroom you would form less groups.

You will not need ICTs nor any other materials for this activity. Seats have to be arranged for group work although it may also work well outside the classroom, in the school garden or somewhere else students can sit and talk in small groups.

Pedagogical Skill: Teaching Writing skills	**Topic:** Project writing
Curricular Thread 4: Writing	**Sub thread:** Text production

Strategy 2: Project writing

Description

This is a process and product writing strategy that promotes teamwork activity and enhances fluency in writing. Its focus is more on the process of learning and learner-peer-content interaction than in the product itself. The students work in small groups in order to identify a phenomenon or a situation and they will work out a plan to solve it. This is a very complex process for the *Educación General Básica* and high school Ecuadorian students but as it is mandated in the 2016 curriculum project, teachers might find these tips useful to work with it, so it will be simplified as follows.

The project is assigned at the beginning of the unit so the students will work on it during a couple of weeks and they will have regular scaffolding from the teacher and peers during class work and e-mail feedback from the teacher during this time. It is very important to give the students enough time to complete this task and precise instructions and deadlines for completing each activity.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to develop this strategy, you should first, select a topic for the project from the list of contents in the unit. For example, Unit 5. Level A2.1. Student's Book. Décimo Grado EGB. The content and language integrated learning (CLIL) topics for that unit are: **Odd Jobs and occupations, Career Choices of the Future, Career Choices in the Job**

Market and Creative thinking, and the project they have to develop is a Poster presentation.

The students work in small groups brainstorming what their projects will be about. They can use sheets of paper to take down notes. Then, they identify a simple problem to solve or a phenomenon to describe. This discussion is very important, as all the opinions may be valid so they have to decide as a group what they will definitely do. This strategy enhances cooperative learning and decision making so it helps students develop their high order thinking skills.

In order to help students with the paragraph structure for writing their projects, it might be helpful to give them some support. For example, you can conduct a short discussion focusing on the topic sentence-detail mode. You can ask for a topic sentence stating the main point of each paragraph, and then emphasize on the paragraph model. Ask your students to look for the topic sentence, concrete details and examples in the supporting sentences, and see in this piece of writing how the writer sums up the point of the paragraph with a concluding sentence. This example can be written on the board.

Then, as another step of the project writing, provide scaffolding, helping the students write concept maps in class and give them regular feedback when they give you the sheets of paper with their concept maps or when they email you their first drafts.

Have the students write their projects and exchange their progress with you by email so that you can give them feedback as they edit and re-edit their docs until they get to a refined draft (process writing). At the end, have the students submit a written report of the project (product writing). If your students do not have access to emails, you will have to arrange a certain time, out of class time, to check their work and give them feedback. Feedback on language and content is very effective in project writing as it contributes greatly to formative evaluation.

This strategy may work with classes of all sizes as students will be working in small groups. Then the number of groups will depend on the class

size. For a large class you may form more groups and you may form less groups for a smaller class.

In order to develop the project, each student can choose the classmates he/she wants to work with. However, it is advisable to suggest that all teams include students with different language proficiency levels so that the ones with higher and levels of English can help those with a lower level while writing the projects.

Just a few resources are needed for these activities. A white or black board can be useful to illustrate the paragraph structure mentioned before and then, manila papers are needed for the students to write the posters if they choose this mode of presentation. If they prefer to use a power point presentation, then they will need projectors and laptops or desktops.

Access to email services are also necessary for you to give feedback to the students during the process–writing period but if ICT technology is not available, the students can make drafts of their projects progress on Manila paper and share them with you for feedback out of class time.

Seats must be arranged so that the students can work in small groups. Students can sit in teams to develop the project and prepare the posters, and then they will stick posters on the wall and present them to their classmates as they move from poster to poster. The classroom environ-ment is enough for this activity, although the posters can also be pasted on the hall walls to have more space for presentations.

Reference

TeachThought. (2012, December 3). The Difference Between Projects and Project-Based Learning.

Pedagogical Skill: Teaching Speaking skills	**Topic:** Oral poster presentations
Curricular Thread 2: Oral Communication.	**Sub thread:** Spoken Production and Interaction.

Strategy 3: Oral Poster Presentations

Description

Once the students have written their projects, they will have to present them orally. Mnemonics can be used to help them during the presentations. You can write some phrases on the blackboard to help them remember a list of facts in a certain order, for example, the use of adverbial phrases as: at the beginning, then, after that, finally.

The students present their projects orally with the help of a printed poster or a PowerPoint presentation.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Have the different team members take turns presenting the findings and results of their project. Each team member should report part of the project so that all the students are engaged in the presentation. This part of the strategy is very important because as the students had different roles when writing the project, now each one will present the part that s/he did the research on.

Have the rest of the class ask questions about what the team is presenting. This is another important part of the presentation because it guarantees that the students do not memorize and recite by heart without knowing what they are talking about as they have to be ready to answer questions The students can also give opinions, agree or disagree with what is being presented.

This activity works well in various class sizes. As it is an oral presentation, the class size does not affect the quality of the activity.

A Manila paper for the poster is highly recommended in contexts where the infrastructure of the school does not include projectors in each classroom. The presentation can be organized in the form of an open house. The students display their posters on different places of the classroom and the audience moves around listening as the speakers present.

However, the students can use a MS PowerPoint presentation if they feel more comfortable using it. When using this presentation mode, the speaker presents only once for the whole audience.

No other ICT is necessary. Seating the students in a horseshoe shape will help communication during the project presentation and discussion. The classroom environment is enough for this activity. This is a good strategy to help students develop competencies for preparing oral presentations in congresses when they become professionals.

Pedagogical Skill: Teaching Speaking skills	**Topic:** Short dialogues to stimulate spoken production
Curricular Thread 2: Oral Communication.	**Sub thread:** Spoken Production and Interaction**.**

Strategy 4: Short Dialogues to stimulate Spoken Production

Description

Dialogues play an important role to develop oral interaction in communicative language teaching and learning. So short dialogues in the form of role-plays with information gaps are useful to stimulate spoken production. In this activity, the students will practice the oral language and develop speaking skills in authentic communicative situations.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to develop this strategy, first divide the class so that everyone will work in pairs. One will play the role of a **tourist** and the other one of an **Ecuadorian tourist guide**. Give the students cards with names of different places: La Mitad del Mundo, Montañita beach, Galapagos Island, among others.

Present a model conversation with an advanced student for the rest of the class to see what they are expected to do. Write these prompts on the blackboard or whiteboard for the students to develop the dialogue:

> **Tourist**:
> Where is…?
> What can I see/do there?
> What is X like?
> **Tourist guide**:
> It is in…
> There you can see/do..
> It is ….

Give the students time to prepare and practice a conversation talking about pros and cons of visiting these places. After they have had enough practice, have them perform the dialogues for the whole class (no written support allowed) Then, have your students exchange roles and practice the dialogue again. This time, the ones who played the tourist will take the role of the tourist guide and vice versa. In this activity, the students are not only practicing their English, but also improving their speaking skills, as each time they do it, they will get more fluent and with your help more accurate.

The think, pair and share (TPS) technique may be very useful while the students are preparing for the pair work activity, as it is always good to give the students enough time to practice before they engage in language production. This practice time will help them feel more confident when they speak.

As this is a fluency speaking activity, the teacher should not interrupt the students when they as speaking. Correct language mistakes is key in constructive feedback when it does not hamper students from communicating. Instead, the teacher can take down notes of those mistakes and plan a "Trouble Spots" session for future class. After the identification of these mistakes, students need to write some sentences with these mistakes on the board and have them correct and mention the mistakes made. When a student reacts and says, "That was my mistake", it signifies that there is consciousness in learning the language.

In this strategy, only the blackboard or whiteboard is necessary for the teacher to write the instructions and students may use their cell phones to record the dialogues for practice and self-correction.

This strategy works well with all class sizes as the students will be working in pairs and they can practice outside the classroom to avoid interfering with their peers. The students may be allowed to do the pair work practice outside the classroom and then come in when they are ready for their performances. No ICT is necessary.

Reference

Simulating an interview adapted from Role Playing and Simulations (page 48), Productive Group Work. How to Engage Students, Build Team Work, and Promote Understanding Nancy Frey, Douglasw Fisher, Sandy Everlove.

Pedagogical Skill: Teaching Writing skills	**Topic:** Elements of flipped classroom to develop literacy skills
Curricular Thread 2: Writing	**Sub thread:** Literacy building

Strategy 5: Elements of Flipped Classroom to Develop Literacy Skills

Description

Teachers can occasionally implement elements of the flipped classroom in a lesson or unit (Engish as a Foreign Language. Educación General Básica. Subnivel Superior. Teacher's Guide. page 18). As it may be tough to implement this strategy due to the school's context where it is difficult to have access to the Internet, lack of time for teachers to make their own videos and lectures, etc. However, as an alternative to this little problem, and in order to be able to do what is suggested in the Teacher's Guide, you can find videos available online. You just have to download them and give them to the students on a pen drive, upload them to the virtual classroom, if you have one in your school, or just give the students the link where they can watch the video at home or in any other place, like in an Internet café, at a friend's house, etc. This is an example of a link where students can view a video on verbal tenses in order to review the simple past, past progressive, and there was/were that appear in the Grammar section of Unit 2 "Travel and adventure" 10th grade book. Level A 2.1. This is the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84jVz0D-KkY. This link may also be useful to review the past tense in order to use it in writing the vacation narrative that the students have to present as the project for that unit.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Essence of the three flips

⋆Flipped classroom I- Before the lesson (out of class)

Students prepare to participate in the activity. The teacher records a lecture or downloads a video with the material s/he wants to work with, and the students tune in and watch videos any time before they come to class.

⋆Flipped classroom II- During the lesson (in class)

Students arrive to class ready to engage and participate in active learning activities by applying key concepts and receiving feedback.

⋆Flipped classroom III- After the lesson (out of class)

Students check their understanding and extend their learning. It is necessary to consider the previously three mentioned moments: (Before the lesson (out of class), during the lesson (in class) and after the lesson (out of class) in order to develop this strategy.

Before class time (at home)

The students watch the video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84jVz0D-KkY. In this video, they can watch a review of all the English verb tenses. They can watch the video as many times as they need to understand it. They will have the chance of viewing the subtitles while they watch the video once and again until they understand it and can identify the verbal tenses assigned in the pre viewing task before coming to class. This will prepare the students to complete the task in the textbook.

Then, they will be asked to find the verbs in **simple past** in the text "Adventure Tales", page 26, 10th grade book.

The time devoted to this activity will largely depend on the students' skills. Each student can work at his/her own pace. The students will need their textbooks, and a laptop or any other type of computer to watch the video.

During Class

The teacher will check for completion of work at home by checking the identification of the verbal tenses in the text "Adventure Tales", page 26, 10th grade book. Students will then be placed into cooperative learning groups to answer study guide questions (this is another set of more specific "intelligent questions" about the simple past structure and usage explained in the video so that they have to use their high order thinking skills (HOTS): analysing, evaluating and creating in order to answer them).

To provide the development of these HOTS, the teacher will discuss how to use this structure in communicative situations expressing past experience. For example, asking intelligent questions, such as: How did you feel when this/that happened? How do you evaluate what X (the main character of a story) did? What steps did you follow to get to..? For the students to answer the questions they do not only need to remember or recall facts, they need to make analysis, evaluations etc. And this demands the use of HOTS

The teacher can then provide students in small groups with this list of topics and questions for group work discussion and report: When did you do yesterday? What did you do in your last vacations? Discuss an interesting experience with your classmates.

Finally, they will do exercise six, page 27. Write a personal narration. In this stage, the students will integrate what they watched and listened to as a previous task at home, with the new knowledge they are acquiring in class.

After class-follow up

As homework, students will be required to prepare a report of what they did in their previous school year. This strategy works well with all class sizes. If videos on the topic are not available on the web, the teacher could record a video of him/herself giving a lecture on the topic or use a text on the topic.

The technology that they will need is access to the Internet, either at home or in any other place and in cases where students do not have access to the Internet, you may allot a schedule during free time to access these videos in the ICT laboratory. It requires a normal seating arrangement and rearrangement of eats seats for group work and discussions. Other types of learning environments can be at home, friend's house with Internet access, internet cafés, etc.

This strategy is highly recommended as the students can work at their own pace. The most advanced students might have to watch the video only one time, while the slow learner might have to watch it many times and might even have to use the subtitles, but the important thing is that they all come to class ready to discuss and apply what they learned in order to develop their high order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and making proposals, etc.

References

All tenses English Lesson. Retrieved from _https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84jVz0D-KkY Level A2.1. Student's book. Décimo Grado-EGB

Recino, U., Minchala, O. and Ortega, D. (2017). Using the flipped classroom to teach educational models in English at the education national university (UNAE) of Ecuador. Speech, *Language and Hearing Journal, Taylor and Francis.* 21:2, 94-97
*Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/*10.1080/2050571X.2017.1369068

Pedagogical Skill: Teaching Writing skills	**Topic:** Find someone who
Curricular Thread 2: Oral communication.	**Sub thread:** Spoken production and interaction.

Strategy 6: Find someone who

Description

This strategy is very useful as it engages the students in authentic communication.

After presenting any language structure, for instance, , present simple, past simple, be going to amongst others, the students need to practice asking and answering questions, and reporting back to the whole class.

Spanish-speaking students usually find it difficult to use the auxiliaries *do* and *does* to ask questions and then to add the –s and -es to the verb when they report their findings. The *Find someone who…* strategy can help teachers solve this problem.

Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to work with this strategy you have to prepare a set of prompts in a hand out and give it to each student.

Example of hand out:
Find someone who:
… lives around the university.
… drives a car to come to school.
… likes listing to music in his/her free time
Give the students some time to prepare their questions. They can use the TPS technique to consult the questions with their peers in order

to check that they have used the correct question structure before they actually ask them to their classmates.

Examples of questions:

-Do you live around the university?
-Do you drive a car to come to school?
-Do you like listening to music in your free time?

After the students have prepared the questions, they go around the classroom asking them to different classmates until they find someone who does what they ask. Then, they write the name of the students on the sheet of paper, and when they have found answers to all questions they report back to the class.

Example: X lives around the university. Y drives a car to come to school. Z likes to listen to music in his free time.

This strategy may be very useful for large and small classrooms as the students first work in pairs preparing the questions and then move around the classroom finding the information and the more students, they ask the questions to, the more they practice the language.

When using the Presentation, Practice and Production methodology. First, the students can practice the structure of questions in the controlled practice stage. This helps them be more accurate and then they ask the questions to their classmates getting authentic information and reporting it back to the whole class.

This strategy combines pair and group work practice while finding the people who do the actions. This strategy can be used with any class size as pair and group works are the essential activities, and the number of students reporting individually will depend on the available time. This

"report stage" is very important because the teacher can give individual feedback when the students finish reporting their findings.

No ICT tools are necessary. The students will be sitting in pairs first and then they will just stand up and move around the classroom, so no seats arrangement is necessary for this part of the activity.