**Two Ways to Develop Productive Language Skills**

*Making Mini-Speech and Editing*

*Magazines*

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We often find out that our senior-level students of E.F.L. rather weak in productive language skills. Though they have majored in English for three or four years at the university, have a good foundation in English grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, and have little difficulty comprehending authentic English through listening or reading, a considerable number of our students cannot speak or write fluently in the language .This made us realize with regret that linguistic competence does not necessarily lead to communicative performance, and receptive language skills do directly result in communicative competence.

Let us describe two activities that we have found helpful in getting our students to productively use in language.

Making Mini-Speech

Mini-speeches much more demanding and challenging than oral reports.

**Our approach is as follows:**

1- At the beginning of each class, we want one of the students to come to the teacher’s platform and give a talk to the whole class.

This is arranged in advanced so students can sufficiently prepare.

The students will face his or her audience and speak rows can hear.

It is prefer or better students to be begin the first round so that others can learn from them and have more time to prepare.

2- A student’s mini-speech will last between five or ten minutes.

Students can talk about anything they like. It makes that their speeches become interesting, informative and meaningful. We encourage them to focus on some specific themes, and urge them to pay attention to unity , coherence and rhetorical devices as well as to pronunciation, intonation and pauses.

3- We advise our students to talk naturally, if the content of their speech is complicated. They may bring outlines for references; but not whole draft to talk about.

We tell them occasional repetition for self-correction or filling the gaps in normal, while inflexible recitation may harm communication.

4- After each mini-speech, we encourage other students to ask questions or we ask some students to tell the main points. In this way the speaker known if his/ her speech has been effective and will pay more attention to the choice of subject matter, diction, tempo and ways of expression the next time.

5- During the speech it is better for the teacher to take a seat in the back row as a student .After the speech or comments made by the other students, the teacher should make his/her own remarks about the content of speech and manner of the student and the strong points.

Under this condition, our senior level students have become more active and original in making their mini-speeches .The wide range interests shown in mini-speeches to the teacher as well as their classmates.

During the academic year, each student can have 10 to chances to give a mini-speech, although it lasts only for several minutes. Students spend several hours or days in preparation, deciding on the subject matter, selecting relevant materials. More and more students have learned how to make use of the black board to write down and explain some key words. Their talents have been brought into full-play.

Editing English Magazines

This is a term project in which each senior student of F.E.L is required to edit one complete “Magazine” for the purpose of fostering his/her writing ability. The following are our major principals, approaches and experiences:

1-Students should make overall plans for the project to ensure amity completion. Usually they work out time tables, the shortest being three or four weeks in duration while the longest may be as long as two and a half months. Then they start collecting and selecting materials. They may establish their own standards, some thinking the articles should be informative and instructive, others believing they should be light and humorous, or easy to understand of practical use.

2- All students are required to prepare an introduction or foreword, either’s notes or comments for major articles and captions for photos or illustration. They should write 20% of the articles themselves and invite classmates or friends to contribute another 60%. For the remaining 20%, they can make use of selected prepared materials. Finally, they are responsible for giving their” Magazines” suitable name.

Many students tell us that they really rack their brains in order to create the most meaningful name. One student said that he used the name” Window” for he hopes that readers can see, through reading his “Magazine” how wonderful the world outside the campus is. Another girl student gave her “Magazine” the name “Surprise” and explained that it implies youth, energy and hope.

3- We tell our students that they can edit comprehensive “Magazine” including various sections and subjects, or just focus on one subject. We suggest a few for their consideration: i.e. university life, popular science,, book reviews, literature, internal and external affairs, sports, music, fine arts and etc. However, their own choices have proven to be of much wider scope and we find many fascinating sections, on education, psychology, truth, wisdom, linguistics, nature, wild life, youth, love, friendship, biography, health and nutrition, cooking, fashion, movie stars, funny stories and etc.

4- We encourage our students to make their “Magazine” look like real ones in shape and quality. The best way to achieve this is simply to show them some fine examples – some real magazines; but mainly those made by senior-students. After admiring and comparing, many students set out to work so that in the end they really produce “Magazines” of superior quality.

5- Our students are also encouraged to give their own suggestions. Some suggested that teachers let them know the project and requirements before the new year vocation so that they can collect or prepare some necessary materials. Some suggested that they could form groups according to their general subjects. In each group, every one’s magazine could be considered one issue or one part of a whole with different names and content under the same general subject matter. They believed that it would be more fun, more creative, more challenging and perhaps more difficult as well; but classmates in the same group could help one another solve problems collectively, many suggested that all the “Magazines” be kept in the class library so that everybody could read other’s magazines.

This would be enable them to learn something from the other’s and know the others opinions about their own magazines including weak points or mistakes. All these suggestions have been adopted through the term project and our senior-level students of E.F.L have achieved fruitful results.

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