Palestine Polytechnic University

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

My Portfolio

For

Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Training Course

Prepared By:

Amneh Tahboub

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Course Outline (Syllabus)

Palestine Polytechnic University

Faculty: Languages Center

Course Name: Remedial English

Course Number: (5052)

Semester: Fall (2016)

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Instructor: Amneh Tahboub

E-mail: amnehat@yahoo.com

Office Hours: Monday : 9:30- 10:30 (Wadi- Hariyah)

                Thursday: 11:00-12:00 (Wadi- Hariyah)

Textbook:

- Making Connections –Low Intermediate Student Book: A Strategic Approach to Academic Reading and Vocabulary, Jessica Williams with Daphne Mackey

 - Making Connections- Intermediate Student Book, Jo McEntire and Jessica Williams, Cambridge University Press.

- Grammar Worksheets from 'English Grammar in use' book

Additional Materials Needed for the Course :

Electronic dictionary and camera.

Course Description:

This course is intended to help Remedial students improve their English language skills with special emphasis on reading. Students will expose some basic reading strategies such as topic sentences, supporting details and learning to read quickly. Students will also be taught to develop the vocabulary – building skills to help them grow confidence and progress to higher levels of reading abilities.

Students will practice some different activities to enhance their communication skills in both writing and speaking language

Course Aims:

-It aims at training students to use various techniques in dealing with reading comprehension such as skimming, scanning, guessing meaning from context …etc

- It also aims at developing students' writing abilities by giving them an opportunity to practice different activities for this purpose.

-It also aims at encouraging and developing students' discussion around the theme of the unit with inspiration from interesting questions and striking visuals.

- It aims at improving students' vocabulary – building skills on one side and practicing different basic grammatical patterns and structures on the other side.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

A. Knowledge and Understanding

A1. Identify the general meaning of an extended reading text.
A2 . Recognize topic sentences and main ideas in different texts
A3. To write up to one paragraph correctly

B. Intellectual skill

B1. Apply some reading techniques (skimming, scanning...) in their daily readings.
B2. Infer the meaning of new words from context.

B3. Design a field trip video through using some technical tools.
B4.Construct different sentences on similar grammatical structures and features

B5.Distinguish between fixed phrases and collocations.
B6.Classify derived words into their correct parts of speech.

C.Professional and Practical skills

C1. Make and upload video through using some technical tools.
C2. Use the electronic dictionary for different purposes effectively .

D.General and Transferable skills

D1 Design group projects about different topics

D2.Take part in within a group in conducting interviews with certain people.

D3.Make oral group presentations on free topics.

D4.Team teach lessons in English in other courses subjects using PowerPoint.

Course Outline and Calendar:

Topics	Weeks (or hours)	Comments
Introduction to the course **Unit One: Crossing Borders** <u>**Skills and strategies**</u> **1: Finding the meanings of words (1)** Class : Reading 1 : Borders on the land, in the Ocean, and in the Air{lass – Reading 2: Walls as Borders. <u>**Skills and Strategies 2:**</u> **Finding the topic of a paragraph** **Class :** Reading 3 : Border Control. *Introduction to project*	**Weeks** **(1+2+3)**	
Unit Two: Names <u>**Skills and strategies**</u> **3: Noticing Parts of Words (1)** **Class** : Reading 1 : Where Does Your Name Come From ? **Home**: Reading 2: Changing Names <u>**Skills and Strategies 4:**</u> **Finding the main idea of a paragraph** **Home :** Reading 3 : Names in Business.	**Weeks** **(4+5+6)**	
Unit Three: Food		

Skills and strategies 5: Collocations (1) **Class** : Reading 1 : Food from the Old World and the New World **Home**: Reading 2: Fast Food **Skills and Strategies 6: Finding Supporting Details** **Home :** Reading 3 : Table Manners **<mark>Guest Speaker</mark>**	**Weeks** **(6+7+8)**	
Unit Four: Urban Transportation **Skills and strategies 7: Phrases (1)** **Home** : Reading 1 : A Short History of Public Transportation **Class**: Reading 2: Bicycles as Transportation **Skills and Strategies 8: Finding Contrasts** **Class :** Reading 3 : The Dangers of Driving. *Follow-up Project*	**Weeks (9+10+11)**	
Unit Five: Sleep **Skills and strategies 9: Finding the meanings of words (2)** **Class** : Reading 1:: The Importance of sleep **Home**: Reading 2: Getting Enough Sleep **Skills and Strategies 10: Finding**	**Weeks (11+12+13)**	

causes and effects **Class :** Reading 3 : Your Body Clock		
Intermediate Book **Unit 1: The News Media** **Skills and strategies : Understanding vocabulary in context** **Class** : Reading 1 : The News Media in the Past **Class**: Reading 2: The History of Electronic Media **Skills and Strategies : Finding main ideas** **Home :** Reading 3 : Citizen Journalism **Class :** Reading 4: Ethical Reporting	**Week (13+14+15)**	
<mark>**FINAL EXAM**</mark>	**Week** **(16)**	

Course Policies:

- ✓ Class attendance is compulsory according to the university regulations. Students who are absent more than 6 hours will get F (Fail).
- ✓ All students are expected to be in class on time. Being late will be treated as absent.
- ✓ Unexcused absence make students lose marks.
- ✓ All mobiles should be turned off during the lecture

Teaching Methods:

1. Lecturing : Most of the lecture time will be used for discussion, pair and group work in doing parts of the exercises.
2. Problem based –learning
3. Critical –thinking
4. Cooperative learning projects
5. Peer-tutoring

Assessment:

Methods	ILO's
☐ Video-Group Project	Design group projects about different topics
☐ Team-teaching	Team teach lessons in English in other courses subjects using PowerPoint
☐ Career poster	Design group projects about different topics
☐ Oral presentation	Make oral group presentations on free topics
☐ Unseen Final Exam	-Infer the meaning of new words from context. -Construct different sentences on similar grammatical structures and features -Distinguish between fixed phrases and collocations. -Classify derived words into their correct parts of speech. -Identify the general meaning of an extended reading text. - To write up to one paragraph correctly

Grading System:

☐	Video-Group Project	20%
☐	Team-teaching	15%
☐	Career poster	15%
☐	Oral presentation	10%
☐	Unseen Final Exam	40%
Total		100%

Group Project

This project aims at engaging students in the process of cooperative learning. Students will develop their reading skills through reading articles and searching on a specific area then develop their work on a format of presentation/video. A private Facebook group will be developed for each class as a host for the work they develop and as a venue to generate discussions about the project and other issues addressed in class. Groups of 3-4 students will be formed. Clear instructions and grading rubric will be handed to students beforehand. Alternative project that doesn't use Face book is a possibility.

Video Project Rubric

Criteria / Ratings	Exemplary	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Incomplete	Points
Concept	4 points Has a clear picture of what they are trying to achieve. Adequate description of what they are trying to do and generally how his/her work will contribute to the final project.	3 points Has a fairly clear picture of what they are trying to achieve. Can describe what they are trying to do overall but has trouble describing how his/her work will contribute to the final project.	2 points Has brainstormed their concept, but no clear focus has emerged. Goals/final product not clearly defined.	1 points Little effort has been spent on brainstorming and refining a concept. Unclear on the goals and how the project objectives will be met.	
Content/ Organization	4 points The content includes a clear statement of purpose or theme and is creative. A rich variety of supporting information in the video contributes to the understanding of the project's main idea. Events and messages are presented in a logical order. Includes properly cited sources.	3 points Information is presented as a connected theme with accurate, current supporting information that contributes to understanding the project's main idea. Details are logical and persuasive information is effectively used. The content includes a clear point of view with a progression of ideas and supporting information. Includes properly cited sources.	2 points The content does not present a clearly stated theme, is vague, and some of the supporting information does not seem to fit the main idea or appears as a disconnected series of scenes with no unifying main idea. Includes few citations and few facts.	1 points Content lacks a central theme, clear point of view and logical sequence of information. Much of the supporting information is irrelevant to the overall message. The viewer is unsure what the message is because there is little persuasive information and only one or two facts about the topic are articulated. Information is incorrect, out of date, or incomplete. No citations included.	

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 points	
Quality	4 points Movie was completed and had all required elements. The video was well edited and moves smoothly from scene to scene with proper use of transitions. Audio and other enhancements were well used.	3 points Movie was completed and contained all required items. Editing was not done as well as it should have been. Some poor shots remain. Movie is still somewhat choppy. Audio and other enhancements were utilized, but not for maximum effect.	2 points Movie was made, but had very little if any editing. Many poor shots remain. Video was very fragmented and choppy with little to no audio reinforcement.	1 points There was no movie, or tape was totally unedited with no transitions or audio support of any kind.	
Teamwork	4 points Student met and had discussions regularly. All students on the team contributed to the discussion and were part of the final project. Team members showed respect with each other.	3 points Students met and had discussions regularly. Most of the students on the team contributed to the discussion and were part of the final project. Team members mostly showed respect with each other.	2 points Only a couple of team meetings were held. Most of the students on the team contributed at some level, but a majority of the work was done by one or two.	1 points Meetings were not held and/or some of the team members did not contribute at all to the project. Low levels of respect were evident within the team.	
Timeliness	4 points All project deadlines were met.	3 points Most project deadlines were met. Those that were late did not have significant impact on the finished project.	2 points Many project deadlines were not met, resulting in some impact on the finished project.	1 points Deadlines were regularly missed, having a significant impact on the final project.	
Final Score					

Good Luck

Bridging the Gap Between Remedial and Regular Students through Cooperative Learning Approach

By

Amneh Tahboub

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Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Action Research Project (ARP)

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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the steering committee of the *Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* for carrying out this valuable training course *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* and giving us the opportunity to join it. Special thanks to all dedicated instructors for their guidance, assistance and valuable feedback.

We have also been blessed to be with great and cooperative colleagues from different fields and backgrounds .This gave us the chance to exchange different point of views and enriched the discussions the whole time.

Abstract

This action research project aimed at improving remedial students' performance in English language skills. Some cooperative, effective and appropriate techniques and activities are suggested for this purpose. It also aimed at checking their suitability for improving teaching language skills cooperatively.

The researcher followed the qualitative descriptive approach in order to accomplish the above mentioned study goals. The researcher used three tools to collect the required data ; reflection on my regular English lectures, samples of students' works, students' results in English level test and a questionnaire for students. Class reflections have shown that the remedial students face difficulties in the four skills; they cannot express themselves in short meaningful sentences. Their written works showed disability in writing one short paragraph correctly. Moreover, these students fail in understanding reading comprehension and most of the time fail in understanding teacher's instructions and consequently do not respond adequately. In addition, these students feel frustrated, lack self- confidence and consider English as a handicap.

For the above mentioned reasons and as a remedial measure, some cooperative learning activities have been chosen carefully to address this target of students to promote their English and improve their performance. After the implementation of these activities, class- reflections were planned and recorded to check the effectiveness of the suggested activities. In order to find out the view points of students toward the influence and benefits of the cooperative approach, a questionnaire was used for this purpose.

The results of the study revealed the following points:

1. Students showed progress in their performance and as a result one student out of thirty failed the course.

2. The remedial students also showed enthusiasm toward learning English cooperatively and they became more responsive and active .

3. Students agreed on acquisition of linguistic and affective benefits of the cooperative language.

Relying on the research results, the researcher set some recommendations to be followed and carried out by the English Language Center at Palestine Polytechnic University. Firstly, to hold workshops to train the English instructors in teaching English using cooperative approach and other teaching methods. Secondly, to encourage instructors to conduct similar studies in other different courses. Finally, other studies to evaluate the present English textbooks and their degree of suitability for remedial students and adoptability of cooperative language approach.

1. Introduction

The advancements in educational research, and the findings in the learning theories of today must be taken into account by teachers in their teaching practices. Classic teaching no longer satisfies the needs of learners whose interests are heavily influenced by information and communication technology.

The communication and information technology, promptly, raised the young learners' awareness to crucial gaps in their knowledge and skills in general, and their knowledge of English Language and their skills in using it, in particular. Though they have good reservoir of English vocabulary, they fail to communicate; their ability to monitor the language output is incompetent. Their learning of the language is temporary, it is learnt to serve a short term goal: to pass a quiz or a test.

Using the cooperative approach in teaching the language classrooms will have many advantages. Not only, it will work on the affective domain, but also will work on the long term memory. The cooperative activities entertain and relax the learners while learning and provide authenticity and context, and thus make it more understandable and easy to and apply.

1.1 Background of the Study

 It has been confirmed that 70% of the total new students joining the university who sit for the English level exam, fail in achieving the minimum mark of success. Therefore, these students have to study the English remedial course with Zero credit. These students face difficulties in the four language skills.

2. Research Problem

Though, teaching English as a foreign language in regular classes; quests all means to attain a competitive or yet a superlative status to achieve the short term targets of university curricula, it does not guarantee the fulfillment of the broader goals of interaction and communication at the national and international level.

During the regular English lectures, it has been strongly noticed that the remedial students face difficulties in the four language skills; they cannot express themselves in short meaningful sentences. Their written works showed disability in writing one short paragraph correctly. Moreover, these students fail in understanding reading comprehension and most of the time fail in understanding teacher's instructions and consequently do not respond adequately. In addition, these students feel frustrated, lack self- confidence and consider English as a handicap.

4. Methodology

This chapter introduces a description of the study methodology, research questions, action- plan and data collection tools. It describes how this study is conducted

4.1 Research Questions

The research questions are summed up as follows:

1. How can applying cooperative approach bridge the gap between the remedial and regular students?

2. How can the cooperative learning activities improve students' performance in English language skills?

4.2 Research Design (Action Plan)

This research was carried out at the Palestine Polytechnic University. The
Participants are three instructors of different specializations teaching remedial students.
The participant students consist of two sections of remedial students during the academic year
2016/2017. They are sixty- four female and male students. They come from
good and cooperative environment. They represent the best Tawjih
graduates whose average is above 90% and they study Engineering and
Business Administration.

Pre-class reflections have shown that the remedial students face difficulties in the four English
language skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking .

As a remedial measure, some cooperative learning activities have been chosen carefully to
address this target of students to promote their English and improve their performance. These
cooperative learning activities included video-group project, team-tutoring, career in media
poster and oral presentation.

Group Project

This project aims at engaging students in the process of cooperative learning. Students will
develop their reading skills through reading articles and searching on a specific area then develop
their work on a format of presentation/ video. A private Facebook group will be developed for
each class as a host for the work they develop and as a venue to generate discussions about the
project and other issues addressed in class. Groups of 3-4 students will be formed. Clear
instructions and grading rubric will be handed to students beforehand. Alternative project that
doesn't use Facebook is a possibility.

Team-tutoring

This activity is an alternative lecture type of the traditional one. Groups of five students are asked to select a certain lesson from their textbooks of other courses they study this semester in English; math, physics, lab and others. They are required to teach this lesson using one of computer software applications. This activity is an excellent and motivating one for remedial students in particular. It enhances their self-confidence of using English as regular students or even better. It has been carried out in cooperation with respective colleagues who showed all support for the students .

Future Career in Social Media

Groups of (4-5) students are asked to design posters about their future career in at least two or three sources of media. This activity aims at enhancing students 'research skills, communicative skills in written and spoken language. Rubrics and instructions are provided to students in advance.

Oral presentation

Groups of students are asked to choose a certain topic of their interest. They have to investigate and bring recent information about it. They have to share the roles; collect data, summaries, and present it in the class using their own language. After the presentation students will answer related questions by others. This activity aims at improving students' reading skills, oral communication, written abilities and listening skills.

After the implementation of these activities, post-class- reflections were planned and recorded to check the effectiveness of the suggested activities. In order to find out the view points of students toward the influence and benefits of the cooperative approach, a questionnaire was used for this purpose.

4.4 Data Collection Tools

To accomplish the aims of this study, three tools were used to collect the required data. Reflection on the regular English lectures, samples of students' works, and a questionnaire for students. This triangulation helps in making the study dependable and providing more accurate results. According to Mackey and Gass (2005:54):

Triangulation involves using multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives. Using the technique of triangulation can aid in credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability in qualitative research.

Used Tool	Sample of Study
Lecture reflections / pre and post	64 students of two sections
Samples of students' works	Random sample of students works of the two sections
Questionnaire	30 students

5. Results and discussions

The aim of this chapter is displaying the study results as answers to the research questions. The collected data were analyzed through ongoing, recursive analysis methods. In addition, descriptive and categorical analysis were employed in order to sort data into an assigned category (e.g. class reflections).

Post- class reflections showed noticeable improvement in learners' performance. They have been influenced positively during cooperative learning lessons. They became more active and responsive.

Relating to the cooperative activities, the study proved their utility. They facilitate teaching the language. They were well chosen and based on the development of the ability to use language in real life situations more than on manipulation of linguistic structures, which do not enable speakers to interact naturally in real communication.

Based on the results of students' questionnaire, it was very clear the positive impact of cooperative learning classes on the learner' performance and enhancement.

6. Reflection and Recommendations

It has been a credit for me to have been involved in this project, it has been a notable and valuable experience. I am indebted to the trainers for their assistance and support. They have devoted their time and contributed effectively in transforming a concept into a working reality.

After conducting this study, it has become convincing more than any time before that there is always a place for improvement in teaching-learning process. Also, it has become clearer that students learn in different ways and have different strengths and abilities. Therefore, different classroom activities should be adopted to enhance learners performance and positive attitudes toward learning English.

Special attention should be also paid to students' issues. There are few students in each class who are completely not responsive. Whatever the activities, techniques, cooperative work, encouragement vary, they stick at the same statue without showing any kind of communication or enhancement. Some of them suffer of shyness, particularly in expressing themselves in English, others lack self-confidence of their abilities to use the language. It would be very interesting if more investigation and studies are carried about this target sample of students.

There must be continuous and constant willingliness to modify, adjust or implement new methodology to make the teaching of English challenging and rewarding experience for learners. *In other words English teachers should be researchers for promotion of the most honorable job ever.*

It has been proved that cooperative learning motivates students' learning with fun and enjoyment. Also students have developed using some collaborative skills; trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills.

It has also been observed face-to-face interaction. Although some of the group work may be parceled out and done individually, some must be done interactively, with group members providing one another with feedback, challenging reasoning and conclusions, and perhaps most importantly, teaching and encouraging one another.

Through Cooperative learning activities, team members set group goals, periodically assess whether they are doing well or not. On the other side, all the individuals in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned.

In the light of this study results, the following points are recommended:

- For future investigation, other studies are recommended to be carried out in teaching English language cooperatively.

- Other studies to be conducted on evaluating the English textbooks to check their suitability for teaching remedial students.

Team work divides the task and multiplies the success