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## **Final Project for Speak Better: Increasing Student Discourse in the English Language Learning Classroom**

I am modifying my unit on **DESCRIBING YOURSELF/GETTING PERSONAL** to make it more student-centered and to include more opportunities for oral discourse.

The overarching question for my unit is:

*How do experiences affect your self-perception and how others see you?*

My three content learning targets are:

- *I can say how life experiences influenced Katniss's self-perception*
- *I can say how the culture of District 12 influenced Katniss's self-perception.*
- *I can identify the relevance of description nowadays, giving three examples of places where they can find it (literature, online or dating profiles, etc)*

My three language learning targets are:

- *I can describe my own physical appearance and personality objectively, using a wide variety of new descriptive strategies and vocabulary, including compound-adjectives (e.g, blue-eyed girl) and comparative and superlative structures, orally and in written form.*
- *I can produce written texts in which I compare myself to a friend.*
- *I can use past tenses to describe events in the past that helped shape my self-image.*

Three driving questions I can show my students to model how to write driving questions are:

- *How does description help us when reading about another person's life (real person or fictional-character, to know it better)?*
- *How do my classmates see me objectively, and how does that compare to my self-image? (prejudices, self-image vs. peer-perception)*
- *How does culture/religion/likes shape who we are? E.g. How did the culture of District 12 shape Katniss' character?*

An oral discourse protocol or activity that I will use to build background knowledge or introduce the topic is: (explain the activity and provide a question to be used in your unit)

*-- How would you describe yourself physically? And personality-wise?*

*(using the Inner Circle-Outer circle protocol, in which the inner circle (A) poses the question, outer circle (B) answers, inner circle (A) describes the outer circle (B) person, and outer (B) circle says whether they agree or not; then switch roles, and proceed with the same process from 3 minutes each pair)*

*At the end of this activity, the student will have practiced his/her self-description, and also will have heard how his/her classmates perceive him/her.*

Academic conversations are:

*- A talk between two people who are discussing a specific school topic, while trying to learn from each other and expand their knowledge about it.*

Two benefits of academic conversations are:

*- Speakers can learn from the information each other has about the subject in order to complete their own knowledge, which can be used for brainstorming or background information.*

*- Speakers can add vocabulary to use about the topic being discussed to their own word-stock, through hearing it in their peer's speech, used in context and as vocabulary related to the topic.*

The five communication skills practiced during academic conversations are:

*Crafting and clarifying their thesis or opinion*

*Being able to summarize or reduce the information to the basics*

*Strengthen the validity of their thesis with instances or samples that support it*

*Expand or contradict ideas to ensure their relevance*

*Reword previous ideas to check for understanding*

A question for the paraphrase card activity is:

*One of the activities would be the paraphrase card, in which each student will answer the same prompt question.*

*Student A will read the question for B to answer, and A will listen in order to take notes to then write B's answer, in A's own words. B will check to see whether A understood his/her answer properly or if they need to clarify or add anything.*

*Then they will switch roles.*

*A question could be: How would your best friend describe you?*

I would provide this list of words or expressions to support my students during the speaking activity:

→ *Opinion expressions: You seem to be, you look, you seem, you appear, I think you are/might be, I consider you, I admire your*

→ *Personality Vocabulary: Confident, patient, ambitious, brave, cheerful, selfish, shy, tidy, talkative, modest, quiet, outgoing, miserable, lazy, pessimistic, reserved, furious, intelligent.*

→ *Compound adjectives: Bad-tempered, big-headed, hard-working, long-legged, dark-skinned, broad-shouldered, thin-lipped, kind-hearted, quick-witted, loud-mouthed, blue-eyed, curly-haired.*

Choose a children's book, audio or video clip that you could use during this unit with your students to introduce or build background knowledge for the unit:

- *An excerpt of 'The Hunger Games', by Suzanne Collins (2008)*

- *The video of the TV Advertisement, 'Dove Real Beauty Sketches' (2013)*

*The reason for choosing both of these is because they include an impressive amount of descriptive vocabulary and expressions, that could help students pay attention to how they are used in both visual form (through reading) and auditory form (via a video, with visuals to help as well).*

One protocol I would use to get students to talk about this text is...

**Go-Go-Mo for the TV Advertisement.**

*With an empty table of 20 squares, each student will write a couple of the adjectives they heard on the advertisement.*

*They will walk around, with their hand up (to show they are not paired up), until they find someone who is alone too. Student A will ask Student B to share an adjective he or she might not have written down, using one square for each adjective. Once both have questioned each other for one new adjective, they will raise their hands up again, to find another student who*

*could give them a new adjective. The game will stop when every student has completed all 20 squares.*

**Quiz, Quiz, Trade for the Hunger Games.**

*Using an index card, students will write the name of one the characters in 'The Hunger Games' excerpt, and on the other side, they will write the adjectives mentioned to describe said character.*

*Going around the class, with their hand up (to show they are not paired up), until they find someone who is alone too, Student A will ask Student B to read the description for his/her character, and Student A will have to try to guess it. Once the process is repeated, with Student B guessing Student A's card character, they will trade cards, and raise their hand again to keep playing with other classmates.*

To have my students show a relationship between characters, setting or events in the text, they could use these words (list 7-10) and these symbols (list 3).

***Words: Young, Older, Tall, Small, Female, Male, Poor, Wealthy, Hard-working, Highly skilled.***

***Symbols: → (this idea leads to the next one, consequence) , + (this ideas go together), =(this are synonyms or repercussions)***

A Newsela article I could use in my unit to differentiate reading for my students is

***\_ <https://newsela.com/articles/girls-brilliance/id/26309/> \_ , because it tackles the subject of gender stereotypes, while including a lot of descriptive vocabulary.*** In class, I would:

***Divide the readers by different levels, trying for them not to notice, then I would ask each one of them to write three main words or concepts that stood out for them, each one in a separate card, then share within a small group.***

Five possible final products that my students could create are:

- A poster, via the Text to visual protocol, in which they would summarize the information.***
- A chalk talk mind map, each group focusing on one of the sub-headings/ findings of the research.***
- An oral presentation with prompt questions about the subject, for the rest of students to think about, and discuss with the Back to Back, face to face.***
- A rap about the differences in education for little boys and little girls.***
- A scrapbook of stereotypical female and male professional careers, and relevant examples of how this stereotypes can be refuted. (e.g; science is a typical male-dominated field, vs. Madame Curie being one of the most relevant and important scientists of all times).***

Another activity I would use to provide oral discourse practice is:

***Continuum dialogue, in which they could say whether they agree with the stand in the article, that claims that girls as young as 6 can be led to believe that men are inherently smarter and more talented than women, making them less motivated to pursue novel activities and ambitious careers.***

***Those who agree with the statement could be on the front of the class, those who disagree at the back, and those who agree with it up to a point, in a middle point between both strong opinions.***

***Then we would have some time for each person to voice why they agree or disagree with it, and students may change their minds, and change positions as they learn new information, or see their peers' points of view.***

A formative assessment that I would use during this unit is:

***Chalk Talk: Create a Mind-map in groups of all the vocabulary you would be able to use in order to create a list of all the content you have been able to acquire throughout the unit.***

***The groups could be focused on one sub-topic each, being: a) personality adjectives, b) physical description adjectives, c) compound adjectives, d) comparative and superlative examples and e) Hunger Games' character profiling.***

***Each group will start at one sub-topic, write all the information they know, either departing from the key topic or from one of their classmates ideas, and then they will rotate to be able to participate on the information-building process of the other topics as well.***

***These mind maps would be hanged around the class for everyone to see and check***

A summative oral assessment for this unit that I would use is:

***Ink- Pair Share, mixed with Praise, Question and Suggest:***

***After writing the overarching question on the blackboard, each student would write their answer on a piece of paper. When they finish, they can swap their answer with a partner, that would praise his/her answer or part of it, as well as posing a further question for him/her to develop in order to answer the overarching question more completely or offer a suggestion in order to improve this.***

***The original answer would be written in one colour, while all the peer-comments could be written in a different colour, to be able to tell them apart. The feedback process can be repeated as many times as required.***

I would use this rubric to measure how the students met the learning targets: (include prompts or a chart)

Learning Targets Rubric: Can you do this?	Yay! Achievement accomplished , congratulations! :D	Good job, you are getting there! :)	Fear not, with some work, you'll soon be a master of description! ;)
I am able to understand how Katniss's experiences affected her self-image.	I can link Katniss biography and main events in her life to how she perceives herself	I can see some connections between her character development and her self-esteem	I can only see a faint link, but it's not very clear for me; I need further research.
I can identify three examples of places where I can find description, and why it is relevant.	I am able to see the importance of description, as well as find instances of its use nowadays.	I can see it is somewhat relevant and where I can find it.	I do not see the relevance, or its presence in everyday life.
I can use a big variety of description vocabulary and structures.	I feel comfortable using many new words to describe a person, as well as a variety of expressions	I can use some new vocabulary and expressions but still rely on older vocabulary I knew.	I rely heavily on older vocabulary// I don't know how to use the new vocabulary or structures correctly.
I can describe my own physical appearance and personality objectively	I am able to easily describe myself facts, trying to avoid prejudices or self-esteem to prevent me from seeing myself as I am.	I can be more or less objective when describing myself to my peers, both physically and personality -wise.	I find some problems whenever I have to be objective regarding myself// when I have to describe myself in English.
I can compare myself to a friend in a written production	I have no problems when it comes to using comparative and superlative structures in written form.	I barely have any problems when using comparative and superlatives in written productions.	I don't feel confident using these structures in written form.
I can present personal experiences that shaped who I am, confidently	I have no problems sharing my life experiences in order to let people know how I became who I am in an oral production.	Even though I am not shy, I have problems with accuracy// I am not comfortable with my abilities, even though I am not shy.	I would prefer not sharing personal experiences orally, or find it difficult to express myself accurately.