Equipped
for the Future

Understanding and Building Self-Esteem

Project writer
Christine Ipolyi

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Equipped for the Future
Project Based Lesson Plan   VII - 82

Project Title: **Understanding and building self-esteem**	**ESOL Language Focus:** ☑ **Reading** ☑ **Writing** ☑ **Speaking** ☑ **Listening** **Level(s): D, E, F**

Florida Adult ESOL Course Competencies: 66.0 Demonstrate English Skills necessary to listen, speak, read and write effectively, (83.0, 100.0), 52.0 Demonstrate English skills necessary to obtain employment (69.0, 87.0), 99.0 Demonstrate English skills necessary for family and parenting	**EFF Standards and Roles:** Read with understanding, observe critically, listen actively, speak so that others can understand, solve problems and make decisions, plan, cooperate with others, guide others, take responsibility for learning, reflect and evaluate, learn through research

Classroom Activities/Procedures: (Project includes attachments)

1. Teacher introduces project topic. Tchr shares general information about self-esteem with class, including definitions of high and low self-esteem, problems associated with low self-esteem and benefits of improving self-esteem.   Encourage them to brainstorm about mini-projects within the main topic. Write ideas on BB
2. Tchr designates teams according to level and compatibility. Teams sit together and choose their leader, asst. leader, recorder and liaison. (Job responsibilities are provided in writing.)
3. Tchr assigns mini-projects to each team. Try to provide sts with a choice between two different mini-projects.
4. Teams vote on their mini-project and then develop a list of tasks necessary to complete their project. Tchr should assist teams in developing a very extensive task list if creativity and resourcefulness is lacking.
5. Task list is developed into an Action Plan. Tchr discusses the format of an Action Plan with the class and provides a handout (see attachment). Give sts a few examples before they work on their own.
6. Tchr posts project work schedule on blackboard and reminds sts of completion dates. Teams may choose a presentation date providing it doesn't interfere with tests, etc.. Total in-class working hours: 16.
   Post ground rules, including "Everybody Works, Everyone is accountable, English Only, Teamwork Always."
7. Liaison must inform tchr of changes in plans and/or general scheduling. Suggest that students view project as real-world professional project in which the boss frequently asks employees for an update.
8. Groups may choose their own presentation dates.   Provide them with guideline for dates available.
9. Encourage sts to exchange home phone numbers and work on the project outside of class, if necessary.
10. Tchr may provide an introduction to Library Research for all sts, including how to use an online library search website.
11. Tchr monitors as necessary. Use Action Plan as monitoring tool.   Encourage sts to be assertive about problem-solving.
12. After all teams have presented their mini-projects, sts should complete evaluations of their own work as well as their classmates' work.
13. Next, sts develop a booklet called "Building Self-Esteem." The material for the booklet would come from the best ideas from each team's mini-project. Sts vote on the best ideas. Encourage them to share their booklets with their families and friends**.** Teacher provides feedback for each team and compiles general project feedback.

Vocabulary:
self-esteem, self-confidence, criticism, affirmation, encourage, positive, negative emotional safety, trust

Resources:
Videos and books from local library, guest speakers from college Women's Center and community-at-large, various websites.

Out of Class Assignment(s):	**Materials Needed:** VCR, computer lab or access to computers, transparencies notebooks, poster board, colored copy paper, overhead projector

SUMMARY

The topic of self-esteem was chosen because of the suggestion of a student the previous semester. When the student requested that we talk about it in class, we didn't have enough time to explore the subject.   I suggested we follow-up on it during the next semester and everyone heartily agreed. For this reason, we didn't discuss any other topic when the question of a group project came up.

We began the group project by discussing self-esteem in general, charting out what we already knew and what we wanted to learn. I provided them with some vocabulary words and their definitions. Moreover, we considered the prevalence of low self-esteem in society, its deleterious effects and the value of improving it in ourselves and our families. Then, I encouraged the students to brainstorm a range of ways to teach others about understanding and building self-esteem. I told them that they would be responsible for presenting research about self-esteem to their classmates.   The group established a list of possible ways to present the topic and I sent them home with the assignment of developing those ideas individually.

The next day, we collected our ideas and wrote them on the blackboard. As a group we elaborated on each idea (or each mini-project).   Next, we voted on our favorite eight (8) mini-projects.   Once the choices were established, I shared my group assignments with them. They were instructed to introduce themselves to their teammates and then to choose a leader, assistant leader, liaison and recorder. Each team received a "job description" for each position. Four of the five teams had 4 members, 1 team had 5. The extra student in this group functioned as a substitute. After I had given the teams time to get acquainted and to organize, I assigned them each two mini-project ideas. (I would encourage the teacher to assign the mini-projects with the abilities/levels of the teams in mind.) Finally, the teams had to vote among themselves for the mini-project they preferred and inform me of the results.

These were the mini-projects that were chosen: Create posters/banners to educate students in elementary schools about building self-esteem, demonstrate how to make and use a self-esteem journal, present a video about understanding and building self-esteem, investigate and present ways to teach children about self-esteem, arrange for members of the community to come to the campus to teach about self-esteem.
Now that we had established teams and mini-projects, we focused on the assignment of breaking down each mini-project into separate tasks. I used the

example of a mini-project that wasn't chosen by any team to illustrate the technique of creating a task list. Then, I gave them time to work on their task breakdown. I provided a lot of guidance in "fleshing out" the mini-projects into tasks. Suggest to the students that they ask the questions how, why, where, when, etc… for each task. It is important that you and your students create a very detailed task list before they move on to the action plan.

A schedule was posted (and presented to students) indicating the class dates (workdays) and times that were set aside for project work. I advise teachers to be very consistent about the schedule in order to encourage good planning and follow-through. I also posted the ground rules of the project in a visible place: Everybody Works, Everyone is Accountable, English Only, Teamwork Always.

Next, I assigned the students the completion of their action plans.   I allowed them to work on their action plans while they were initially researching their projects because they would have many more ideas once they began to understand the topic. Allow them this discovery period.   You might schedule this assignment for their first workday.   Emphasize the importance of completion dates and responsibility (or teamwork.) The action plan proved an ideal monitoring tool.   I periodically reminded my students that I would be available to them if necessary but I encouraged them to resolve conflicts within the group before they requested my help.

The project was introduced on the 20th of January and we presented our mini-projects from February 12-28. I scheduled workdays twice a week for four weeks. One workday was equivalent to two hours, therefore, the students had a total of 16 hours of class time to devote to their mini-projects. Some groups required additional time outside of the classroom but this was due to poor time management. Groups should choose their presentation date by the end of the second week.

I would suggest that you give students the minimum time to complete their project as they tend to relax too much if they think they feel they have weeks and weeks to complete it. Hold them to their action plan completion dates.   Keep theses plans posted in the classroom for easy reference.

Make sure you choose groups according to language level. If you don't need to organize them in this fashion, be aware of incompatibilities. Allow the high achievers to work together. It gives them a chance to really excel and the lower-

level students don't feel as intimidated in a group of their own level. My students were very comfortable (nearly relieved) with this arrangement. You might keep the upper-level groups smaller than the lower because they can often do twice the work in the same time allotted.

A final note for the ESOL classroom: There might be problems with language if most of the students speak the same mother language. Their conversations all too easily turn to the native language. The best possible resolution is a mixed group of nationalities because it provides much more practice of spoken English. If your options are limited, you should monitor the "English Only" rule during workdays.

ACTION PLAN for Group _____

Mini-project: _____

Check (3) when action is completed	ACTION/TASK	Responsibility	Expected Completion date	**Comments**

Your name: _____ Date:_____

Evaluation of your group's project (Don't worry about your grammar!)

1. What were the <u>strengths</u> of your group's presentation?

2. What were the <u>weaknesses</u> of your group's presentation?

3. If you had to do the same project again, what would you change? What wouldn't you change?

4. Did the group work well together? Why or why not? Did everyone participate equally? Why or why not? Were you happy with your contribution?

<u>Evaluation of group projects</u> (<u>Don't worry about your grammar</u>!)

<u>Group B: Gilma, Guadaupe, Chatchulee</u>   (<u>Self-esteem journal</u>)
<u>Group C: Yelin, Esperanza, Judith, Antonio, Cecilia-</u>   (<u>Speakers</u>)
<u>Group D: Maria, Anays, Pastora, Jenny</u>   (<u>Video</u>)
<u>Group E: Anayansi, Lisset, Olga, Anatoliy, Eva</u>   (<u>Teaching children</u>)

1. Which presentation did you enjoy the most? Why?

2. Which presentation did you enjoy the least? Why?

3. Which presentation was the most professional?

4. Which presentation taught you the most about self-esteem? Why?

5. Additional comments:

Final Teacher Report
EFF Project-Based Classroom Project

Name: **<u>Christine M. Ipolyi</u>**
Institution: **<u>Daytona Beach Community College -</u>**
       <u>Adult Education ESOL program</u>
Topic: **<u>Understanding & Building Self-Esteem</u>**

1. **Explain how the project improved your students' English language acquisition? Which activities were most helpful?**

   There are several ways in which the project helped improve my students' English language acquisition skills. First of all, they had to research the topic using books and Internet materials that were at a much higher reading level than the students were accustomed to. Most of the reading we do in class is designed specifically for the solid intermediate level. The project challenged their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills considerably.

   Secondly, the students had to communicate verbally with many different people in the community. This gave them the opportunity to practice their speaking skills in a natural setting and to learn new social skills. In some cases, they wrote notes and asked me to correct them before they approached the person they had to speak to, especially when they had to use the telephone. In other cases, they had to approach people directly. Many students were very tentative and insecure about asking for help. I discovered that one of the reasons for their hesitancy was that they were often worried about *inconveniencing* others, especially those they viewed as professionals or superiors. I had to reassure them that it is acceptable in this culture to ask others for their help and that providing help or advice to the community-at-large is generally accepted as a part of the professional's job. Additionally, this experience led to a conversation about assertiveness, which is linked to self-esteem. They were certainly challenged to move beyond their normal boundaries.

   Students also had to use written English in this project for the preparation of presentation handouts, notes, thank you letters and information flyers. I insisted that they prepare first drafts before asking me for any help with language.

Utilizing listening skills was necessary for all groups whether they were telephoning, requesting help on campus or in the community, previewing videotapes, or talking to potential speakers. Some students learned some invaluable lessons about confirming dates and information in writing. We learned about the importance of clarity and follow-up, which helped to reinforce professional standards as well as their confidence in making arrangements.

2. How was student attendance impacted by the project? Explain.

I don't believe that student attendance was impacted by the project at all. In my ESOL group, students generally miss class when they have a doctor's appointment or illness but rarely for lack of interest. If they missed class on a project workday, someone on their team usually called them to update them.

3. Describe how the students organized to accomplish team goals.

Students first organized their teams according to leader, assistant leader, recorder and liaison. There were no more than 5 members to a team so almost everyone had an official role to play. I allowed for substitute recorders/liaisons because I anticipated that attendance might be a problem for some groups. Usually, the elected leader was the most extraverted and dedicated student on the team and that person tended to guide the entire project. The more passive members usually followed along with any and all plans. I tried to monitor the "Everyone Works" rule as much as possible.

The teams ran into problems when it came to assigning specific tasks. My students often behave passively when it comes to volunteering. I suggested they might cut up the tasks and pick them out of a hat if nobody had a preference and they couldn't resolve the issue otherwise.

Oftentimes, this portion of the project may overwhelm your students so work closely with them. Once your teams establish some clear tasks, help them to flesh them out. This will remove a lot of the "unknown quality" that could be intimidating them and it will help to assure them that the tasks at hand are manageable once they are broken down into smaller, more manageable pieces. As the project progressed, the passive students tended to become less involved so I had to intervene. You might want to talk to students on a one-to-one basis if you notice they are slacking off. The slackers often get shrugged off because people might feel uncomfortable calling them back to task. You as the teacher can easily

take this role if necessary. (This might prove to be a more sensitive issue in an adult classroom.)

4. Would you initiate another project-based activity in your class? Why or Why not?

Yes, absolutely**.** The results of the project were excellent and worthwhile for the students in my class. Everybody gained skills and knowledge and it allowed them the opportunity to work successfully on language acquisition without the direction of the teacher. This type of independent learning environment is a healthy and encouraging one. I plan to initiate another class project in April.

5. **Additional comments on the project and its impact on student**s.

This project provided a wonderful opportunity for students to practice all four of the language acquisition skills while work independently. Most of my students rose to the occasion and felt a great sense of pride in their individual accomplishments as well as the accomplishments of the group. Since the topic project was self-esteem building, I had hoped we'd all gain confidence from the project.

An added benefit of studying self-esteem with your students is that you can then continually reinforce and refer to the issue of self-esteem because they all have so much information about it. During class time, I ask my students to write affirmations in their notebooks on a daily basis. I also remind them to speak with a confident posture and tone whenever they are speaking in the classroom. And among other things, I encourage them to compliment instead of criticize.