Interdisciplinary English Workshops: An Innovative Program for University Students.

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Context

The University of Guanajuato has mainly offered English for General Purposes (EGP) programs. Last year, for the first time, an alternative learning program was proposed.

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The reasons for having an alternative learning program

- Based on the idea that traditional teaching methods 'tend to separate language development from general cognitive development' (Lyster, 2007, p1, referring to Snow, Met and Genesee, 1989), we started researching different learning and teaching approaches that would help us to reduce the schism between language development and general cognitive development.

The idea of our learning Model

- We created a learning model based on Vygotsky's views of learning. These emphasize the importance of culture and the social context in the learning process.

- Our proposal partially coincides with approaches used in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Europe.

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The Model

- An important area of agreement between our proposal and CLIL refers to the cognitive dimension of "using the language to learn" (Barbero et al., 2009). This may enhance the level of engagement with the language as students develop linguistic knowledge: functions, structures, vocabulary and the use of social and cultural conventions of general English as well as the understanding and development of disciplinary discourses.

Samples of Writing in the ESP program

Correspondence

I-602
Gevardo, Fernandez U
October 15th 2010,

16 - Subida del C. del Cuarto
Gto
México
October 15, 2010

25- Avenue Juarez
Ilinois
U.S.A.

Dear Vareli, I wrote this letter with a lot lovely and I would like talk about me, I- studying the degree of Acounting, what about you? I need tall you that in my family there are far member, two girls and two boys I'm number three.

Her in Gto is very cold I'm freezen but it's Great the city. To me, I like dance and enjoy de music in the clubs with my friends. I hope that you arrived carly.

I can't wait for you.

Love Gevardo.

Gerardo Hernandez Vazquez
English   I 602.
09 / 20 / 2010.

Independence. Day.

I think that. the independence is important but
I don't like this. day because this day remember
me the suces about the Mexican people. fought
but thats o.k. because they give us the liberty
and I'm happy for this reason. because I could
travel expres to me. and be free.

When I will be accounting I going to try
Chance the goberment and desapear the Corruption
how the revolotionary were fougth for the
and I will be more honest.

Advantages of The Use of a Glossary in The Interdisciplinary Workshop

Nowadays having knowledge of a second language has become a priority. According to Evans (2005, p.1) the English language "is the language in which nations carry out their economic, political, technological, academic, and cultural transactions". For this reason it is used in all activities of daily life. Consequently, learning English is very important and one method to learn it is throughout the interdisciplinary workshop. In this system students does different tasks, one of these is the creation of a glossary. With a glossary, students not only learn new words, but also and how to use them. Thus, a glossary is a learning tool that helps increasing the vocabulary and also helps improving students writing and reading skills.

According to SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.) International (Online 2012, para.1) a glossary is an alphabetized collection about specific subject. The word glossary is derived from the Latin *glossa,* (wiseGEEK. Online, 2012, para.2), which means "foreign word". In the interdisciplinary workshop, as mention in the class syllabus of English IV:

"…the glossary contains all the new words that the students have learned while developing each project. It is necessary to give an example of how each word is used correctly within a sentence." (González, 2012, p.1)

The collection of words may be used by students in different academic activities, such as writing an essay, reading an academic text or while speaking about specific issue in front the group.

The glossary helps to increase the vocabulary and it is important at the moment of reading, because it is necessary to know the meaning of specific words in order to understand the text. Base on August, et. al. (2005, p. 1) a good vocabulary does a difference between having good or bad level of reading comprehension. In the glossary used in the interdisciplinary workshop, students write the new words they have learned and an example of how each word is used correctly within a sentence. In this way, students can use the new vocabulary in different tasks.

In the first draft I felt a little nervous because I had ideas but I didn't know how to structure them. But I could write when I started the paragraph of introduction I understood that in each paragraph is one idea. Then was easier to write the three paragtaphs in the body and one in the conclusion.

In general in this draft I felt very good and I would want to write more. I need to improve my writing skill and whit this essay I started. Now is necessary to understand how is a essay better.

The importance of lindependent Wwork in the linterdisciplinary Wworkshops

The independent work helps students to the develop skills during their English classes, resulting in the improvement of their educational process. By working independently, students have the opportunity to notice if their learning process is been improved by the methodology used in the interdisciplinary workshops.

The independent work has an important academic benefit when it is used with the interest to improve the teaching- learning process of a student working under an interdisciplinary workshop model

According to Quiñones (2001.para.7, translate by Robles Bárbara) The independent work is_a_——"method of self- directed learning focused on the developing of skills for the cognitive independency inside and outside the classroom". The teacher directs the learning of students with the aim of developing skills and knowledge independently, that activities carried out inside and outside the classroom is a teaching-learning process, however learn more by what is done it says so.

The independent work is characterized as students the liberty if choice and what they are going during a determinate time. This means supervision of from the teacher and big of learning and responsibility learning of from the students. also they couldStudnets choice choose their workings materials toof support andthat makes learning easier. the learning. In tThis way, students can do work by on

The Roles

- The Teacher becomes a companion, a facilitator, a guide and a counselor during the learning process.

- On the other hand <u>students become learners</u>, and therefore, they become responsible of their own learning process.

*These roles problematize traditional classroom roles.

The Research

- The objective of this research was to understand the experience that teachers and university students, who have worked under a traditional teacher centered educational model, went through while facing our learning model proposal.

The Findings

- Students' change of identity.
- An increased students' level of engagement with the language.
- Teacher's change of identity.

Student's Change of Identity

- Students had to change their identity. From recipients of knowledge to people in charge of their own learning.

- From being teacher-dependent to becoming critical thinkers.

For the class

Reflexión: (¿Qué aprendí? ¿Qué se me dificultó? ¿Qué haré en mi siguiente visita? - Comentarios en mi trabajo -)

I discovered that. I need to practice ~~more~~ the present progresive since. I forgot the present progresive and I need to Practice more.

And with the vocabulary. I still learn more vocabulary with ___

Auto - Evaluación

For the Workshops

February 23 of 2011   Orizbeth

I feel good because I know to do with
my abstract.
Make a abstract in English is very
different to transbte into Englis the
abstract.

Students modified their attitudes and ways of working as they understood what the workshops demand from them. After

- Before

- "Today I felt a little weird because I was not used to my English class was in English" [sic]

- "Today in my english class I foll [felt] bad because the new form of work is

- "We learned a lot how to speak to people in english because at the very first class nobody wants to talk and the classmates ashamed of how they sound."[sic]

An increased Students' level of engagement with the language.

- Students' view of language changes: from being a set of linguistic rules to a means to construct a social identity.

"The toppics are interesting and usefull for our carrier when we work all the English we learn use for communicated with all that parners y personal." [sic]

Teachers' Change of Identity

- The model challenges the power position of a teacher.

- The assumption that the teacher is the source of knowledge becomes problematic.

- The model challenges teachers' educational background.

Some of the Teachers' Quotes

- "I believe I'm not doing my job"

- "I felt that students thought my job was to be sitting in a chair"

The Future

- There is a need to continue with teachers' development workshops.

- There's a need to link with other disciplinary areas to develop collaborative work.

- Start a new research project, focusing on students' language development.

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