

Collaborating With Refugee Students For More Effective Instruction

Diane Pecoraro
depecoraro@aol.com



***2010 National Refugee and Immigrant Conference:
Issues and Innovations***

October 7-8, 2010
Holiday Inn Chicago-Mart Plaza
Chicago, Illinois

Ideas for Eliciting Learner Feedback

What if you want to get feedback from your learners about the learning process in your classroom, but you do not share a native language with them?

- Use picture or word prompts to stimulate role plays or brainstorming sessions to preface a new topic. As you and the learners do this, you will gather clues about what they already know or have experienced and any special needs or interests they may have in relation to the topic.
- Create a Language Experience Approach (LEA) story about studying English. Find or draw pictures in which people are writing, listening, speaking, looking in a dictionary, talking collaboratively, etc. After the story has been completed, ask learners to circle the ways they like to study English, compare with each other, and even create a consensus list of advice that you can use to inform your lesson planning.
- Take a picture of your classroom on a typical day. Ask learners to create (draw, assemble a collage, for example) pictures of classes they have attended in the past. Ask them to compare the pictures they create with the picture of your current classroom. Write or discuss what your students like and dislike about each.
- At the end of a class period, ask learners to comment on the various activities in which they participated. They can do this by voting yes or no on whether a specific activity was helpful, or by rating it. Use pictures, symbols, recognizable words or phrases, and refer back to concrete handouts or products of the activities to support the learners as they tackle the task.

Collaboration with Learners: Some Topics to Start the Discussion

Physical environment (noise level, classroom rituals, latecomers, students talking to each other in native language)

Rote learning vs. more creative learning

Teacher as leader vs. group work

Correction preferences

Amount of repetition

Time on task

Time for practice

Giving examples

Speaking listening, reading, writing: skill order and emphasis

Teacher talk

Cultural Information

Organized class or less structured

Assessment of learning and progress

Classroom Instructions

Peer teaching

Other:

Small Group Activity: Feedback from Learners

Instructions: With your group, develop questions to invite students' views around the one of the following topics (**classroom instruction, awareness of learning, correction or classroom management**). Try to create clear, focused questions that will elicit input from the students. As a group, write 3-5 questions on your chosen topic. Choose a spokesperson and be ready to report to the larger group.

1. Classroom Instruction

2. Self-Awareness of Learning

3. Correction

4. Classroom Management

Other

Teachers Define Optimal Instructional Moments

- ❖ Students decide the direction of the curriculum.
- ❖ Students practice learning with each other.
- ❖ Students tell the teacher what works for them.
- ❖ Students work independently.
- ❖ Teacher sets up and moves out.
- ❖ Students help other students.
- ❖ Students apply learning to the “real world” and talk about it.
- ❖ Students use English outside the classroom.

Other: