

2021-2022 CTL Fellows program

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The student's personal interests as a facilitator of learning: Using the methodology of presentations to improve students' speaking skills

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1. A rationale for the project

In language learning, there are four skills that the student needs to acquire: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. As a language teacher, I find that speaking skill is the one that students have the most difficulties. The necessity to express oneself in a foreign language is a mental obstacle for many individuals, even in a safe environment like a classroom. As part of my ongoing reflection on my teaching pedagogy, I have decided to use a new pedagogical tool: student presentation on topics close to their hearts. This decision was based on my assumption that learner-centered pedagogy will enable students to reinforce and internalize the Hebrew language spontaneously and become independent users of the language in everyday life situations.

2. A description of the teaching project

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines defines speaking skills for novice high learners as speakers who can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor¹. The presentations allow students to practice phrases and recombinations while speaking on their personal choices, such as a favorite restaurant, a family photo, or a type of music close to their heart. The course I am planning to address in this project is Hebrew 102². Based on the first-course objective³, I plan to elaborate and further develop the existing pedagogical tool of student

¹ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2021). ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL, Inc. p. 9

² Hebrew 102 is an elementary modern Hebrew course, the following course to Hebrew 101. After taking the 101 class, the students can read and write in Hebrew, a Semitic language with a system of letters unfamiliar to new Hebrew students. These skills are crucial for presentation making.

³ Course objectives- By the end of the course, students will be able to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Participate in a conversation regarding their using infinitive, adjectives, verbs, particles, expressions and vocabulary words regarding living environment and food.
2. Produce texts of various kinds, such as messages, descriptions, comparisons, and brief narratives that integrate the content area of the learning units.

presentations as a permanent classroom activity that will allow students to practice speaking skills while engaging in their personal experiences.

3. Timeline

Fall semester:

1. Create a format for the weekly presentations: guided subjects, clear expectations and assessment system, peer reflections on the presentations (to create a more “Flowing conversation”), etc.
2. Think about ways to measure the effectiveness of my pedagogical tool.
3. Examine the literature on teaching speaking skills in a foreign language classroom
4. Reach out to colleges that have done similar projects.

Spring semester:

1. Testing the project in class, using the pedagogical tool I developed,
2. taking feedback from students and writing notes in real-time for improvement and future development.

Bibliography

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2021). ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL, Inc.

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3. Produce a few hebrew paragraphs after performing their own research.
 4. Review their own and fellow students' processes and projects.