



BREAKING NEWS

ENHANCING AND PRACTISING VOCABULARY USING PROJECT-WORK

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1. Lesson content – Introduction of the topic; Topic and method relation:

In this class, L2 learners read different news items from around the globe. (In the case of advanced learners, Ls should compile their news items.) Afterwards, they write headlines for them. Ls do creative thinking exercises to practice diverse registers. Then they produce TV newsreels with anchors, cameramen, reporters and interviewees. In fact, they build their own studios and accumulate ideas to produce not only an oral but also a graphic representation of the particular news item. Finally, they show their project to the class while the others evaluate the recorded material. Since listening to spoken English can easily be done by using the Direct Method, this method is significantly used here with the essential support from audio-visual input from Internet based excerpts.

2. Competences to improve:

Personal competences

self-esteem, confidence, self-control, adaptability to L2 environment, external and internal motivation, fact-finding and analysis, gathering data empirically

Social competences

empathy, cooperativeness, communicative rationality, team-building, raising cultural awareness

Cognitive competences

critical thinking, analytical skills, higher order processes of application and evaluation, successful intelligence, cultural adaptability to L2 environment

3. Target group:

Secondary school students. Ages: 15-18. Grades: 9-12.

4. Preliminaries:

Pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate groups. (Impossible for beginners.)
(A2; B1; B2; C1)





5. Teaching materials and equipment:

A Camcorder, plenty of markers, sheets, and handouts. (If you have ample of time, you may utilize a multimedia player with a Video Display Unit (a TV-set or a projector) and a SMARTboard.

6. Comments and remarks:

In the case of pre-intermediate L2 learners, it is vital to follow the steps in the video. Doing so the class should cover a double lesson, at least. Teachers may opt for tasks or they can omit them. For upper-intermediate L2 learners, however, the reading exercise might be merely a warming-up task and the focus may be shifted onto the project-work and the idiosyncratic language use.

7. Lesson plan:

Pre-Tasks



Task 1

What is a TV newsreel? What TV companies do you know? What was the latest news item you saw/watched/heard? (Warming-up: L2 learners should list different types of TV companies/news items.)



Task 2

(In the case of advanced learners) Compile your news items in the computer lab. (T prints the articles Ls have collected and distributes them to various groups.



Task 3

Read the short articles.

You can read a fine example of a news item – the one the Ls found the most amusing:

Drunken moose ends up stuck in Swedish apple tree - By Per Nyberg, CNN

It was a dark, windy and rainy night when Per Johansson returned from work to his home in Saro just south of Gothenburg, Sweden.

"It was raining really bad. In the wind I heard something screaming with a very dark voice," Johansson told CNN. "At first I wondered if it was the crazy neighbors, but then I heard it again and went and checked. I saw something really big up in a tree in my neighbors' yard and it was a moose. It must have been drunk after eating fermented apples and as it was reaching out for more fruit it must have slipped and fallen into the tree."

Johansson called the local fire and rescue department, which responded with a fire engine and a jeep with a winch.

"We got the alarm at 9.59 p.m. on September 6 that a moose was stuck in a tree," said Anders Gardhagen, spokesman at the Gothenburg Fire and Rescue Services.

"When we arrived we used the winch to bend down the apple tree so the moose could get himself out of the tree. Once free, the moose collapsed on the ground and fell asleep. So we let





him sleep it off and went back home" Gardhagen told CNN.

"Moose are attracted by the apple trees, and in the autumn when the apples have fallen off the trees we normally have at least one of these cases of intoxication. These apples, which ferment in their bellies, aren't part of their natural food, so they can get quite angry from this drunkenness," Gardhagen said.

Johansson's son, Gustav, who is about to turn 11, made sure to take lots of pictures of the ordeal.

"He is saving up to buy a PlayStation so he thought he would take pictures that he could sell," Johansson said.

CNN purchased three of Gustav's pictures.

When dawn came the day after it was freed from the tree, the moose had not yet left.

"When I went out for the newspaper it was still laying there on the ground, sleeping. By the time I left for work it was walking around the neighbor's yard on very shaky legs." Johansson said.



Task 4

Underline the new words. Discuss the new items. (Ls check the new vocabulary items. T writes the proper vocabulary on the board and Ls copy them in their books or on the handouts.)

Tasks



Task 5

Write proper headlines and the short summary of the articles.



Task 6

Read out your headlines and the short summary of the articles to the class.
Copy the new vocabulary items in your books or on the handouts.



Task 7

Produce interviews with reporters, witnesses, spokespeople, police officers, and any characters you think fit the article. Then create your projects e.g. a poster representing the studio background with captions and pictures of the events, names and titles belonging to the interviews. Pick the hosts/hostesses, anchors, cameramen, reporters, and all the characters you think are necessary for a hot show!



Task 8

Stage your show introducing your studio-work to the class.





Post-Tasks



Task 9

Show the recorded projects and evaluate them.



Task 10

Write down what you like on the pink cards and what you don't on the green ones.
(Evaluate using pink cards for positive agreement and confirmation, and green cards for correcting mistakes or expressing disagreement.)



Task 11

Stick the little cards on the project to highlight the things you like or you dislike.



Task 12

Study the problem points. Discuss them in class.

8. Visuals:



There is a detailed description of the class-work and a closer look at the activities in the video.

9. Evaluation and assessment:

A great way of mastering students' speaking skills and enhancing reading skills using authentic material and placing the task itself in a advanced, cultural context while producing projects of their own.

10. Related Works:

1. Nyberg, P.: Drunken moose ends up stuck in Swedish apple tree.
<http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/09/09/drunken-moose-ends-up-stuck-in-swedish-apple-tree/>
2. Richards, J.C.: The language teaching matrix. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
3. Widdowson, H.: Aspects of language teaching. Oxford: OUP, 1990.

