

Study Group Topic: Exploring New Teaching Techniques for the LOTE Classroom

List of Group Members: Anchen Schulz, Elizabeth Colonna, Amber Henyan,
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Describe the initial goal of the group, noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The initial goal of this group was to create a professional dialogue among foreign language teachers who take an active interest in forming a collaborative school environment and developing new materials and resources for LOTE teachers.

Describe the action plan that the group followed.

Our action plan involved a series of mini-workshops lead by individual group members. Each teacher was to address one or more topics falling under the following categories: integrating technology in the classroom, differentiated learning styles through new teaching approaches, increasing student achievement in the LOTE standards through diversified pedagogical approaches.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

Our action plan was carried out over the course of several group meetings, during which each member took one or more turns presenting topics chosen to fulfill the above-mentioned goal. Some specific topics included: Socratic method, inquiry based learning, immersion techniques (FLES ideas), new technology for the LOTE classroom, cultural realia (hands on activities) etc. Each meeting included at least one teaching session which was later accompanied by group discussion on the day's topics and their relevance to the LOTE classroom.

Evaluation of the study group effort on teacher/student performance:

How has this study group changed you as a teacher?

Group members benefited greatly from this study group in several respects. We have each gained a number of new ideas for classroom management, modernized teaching methods ("the 5 C's"), hands on cultural activities in the LOTE classroom, grading strategies, and their connection to New York State standards. In addition, we have each become more technologically savvy and open to the increased use of computers and internet as teaching tools. As a result of this exchange of ideas, each group member expressed interest in changing her teaching strategy in at least one area of her curriculum.

What evidence do you expect to see that student achievement is improving?

Upon implementing the new ideas and strategies we've gained from the study group, we expect to see more student to student communication in the target language. The LOTE classroom will become a more active learning center where students will exhibit an amplified enthusiasm over lessons in the target language. Students' increased confidence in using foreign language regularly will help them to become more sophisticated learners.

What evidence is there that the goals of the study group have been met?

Our initial purpose involved active collaboration among foreign language teachers through the exchange of ideas, materials, and resources with the ultimate goal of improving teaching tactics and student achievement in the LOTE classroom. Evidence that this study group was a success may be found in the extensive number of materials and general knowledge group members took home after each meeting. Furthermore, the excitement of the teachers was evident during our discussions, which included when and how each of us would soon apply what we had learned from one another in the classroom.

Comment on the value of the study group process.

Group members have expressed an appreciation for the collaborative system which has allowed us to share useful and creative ideas. Because of this study group,

we focused more intently on topics that were relevant to the LOTE classroom.

How can we make this study group program better?

We suggest meeting for more hours, inviting guest speakers, and including more participants.