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Green Economy & Social Justice

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Immigrants: Should They Be Required to Learn English before Becoming Citizens?

The course I will be using this assignment in is my Beginning Intensive Reading course in fall 2014. This class is for ESL learners who have a background in reading and writing, and can form basic sentences. Beginning Intensive Reading focuses on sentence structure and paragraph writing. Because this class of ESL learners is composed of immigrants and international students, I want to focus on the importance of learning English and their motivation behind it.

In the second to last unit in the book, students are taught how to write an opinion paragraph. So, I believe this would be a good subject to bring up and help them to process through their motivations in learning English and help them to form their opinion on this specific topic. Sometimes students have difficulties seeing both sides of an issue, so the article that I found will help them to see both sides of this issue, and give them an opportunity to join one side of the argument or the other.

This particular assignment relates to social justice. Many different people hold to the belief that if you move to this country you should learn English, but others believe that you shouldn't have to give up your language and cultural heritage in order to be a citizen. Learning English is very important for many things, which my students are the first ones to point this out, such as getting a good education, getting a good job, and being successful in life. But still, there are times that I ask myself, despite being an IEL teacher, am I still allowing my students the freedom to speak in their own language and celebrate their cultural heritage, and is my instruction of English going to cause them to lose these things that have shaped their identity up until now? Therefore, I chose this assignment for my students to be able to identify their motivations for learning English, and to be able to discuss the other side of the argument.

Learning Outcomes for the Course:

1. Produce grammatical structures both at the sentence and paragraph level.
2. Order ideas in paragraphs.
3. Identify and use transitions.
4. Write original paragraphs reflecting appropriate grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and organizational skills.
5. Apply the writing process.
6. Compose sentences with correct punctuation and capitalization.
7. Edit and revise.

Learning Outcomes for the Assignment:

1. Students will be able to identify both sides of an argument.
2. Students will know which side of the argument they identify with, and be able to defend their opinion.
3. Students will be able to write a paragraph giving their opinion and defending it.

Presentation:

First of all, the teacher will provide a definition of an opinion essay. Then, the teacher will provide the article from [businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com) on the topic of immigrants having to learn English or not. The students will read the article slowly to themselves. Next, the teacher will go over any unfamiliar words the students may not know and have them read the article a second time after that. After they have finished reading, the teacher will provide a few comprehension questions to check if they understand it.

Practice:

Once the students have finished the comprehension questions, the teacher will draw a graphic organizer and have the students help fill out both sides of the debate, and the main arguments of both sides. When they are finished filling out the graphic organizer as a class, the teacher will have the students decide which side of the debate they are on. Then the teacher will give the students a graphic organizer that they can fill out, writing their opinion with support for their argument.

Activity: (this assignment will come towards the end of the chapter)

After the students have done their own brainstorming on the topic, and have gone over the structure and organization of an opinion paragraph, they will write an opinion paragraph using the graphic organizer they filled out. This assignment will be done out of class and handed in the next time class meets.

Assessment:

- I will grade them on grammar, sentence structure, and content
- I will look to see if they are able to use the correct sentence structure when forming an opinion.
- I will look to see that their spelling, punctuation, and word usage is correct.
- I will also assess whether they can give an opinion and support it.

Website I found the article that I will use for this assignment:

http://www.businessweek.com/debateroom/archives/2008/08/immigrants_should_learn_english.html.