

Equipped for the Future

Conducting Interviews with Inspiring Community Role Models

Project writer

Connie Gaskill

“In the context of committee work, students learned many skills...they also played various roles on the day of the interviews. They were armed with appropriate vocabulary and cultural information to succeed at these tasks prior to the interviews. Afterward, students were happily amazed at their newfound abilities and poise!”

Equipped for the Future

Project Based Lesson Plan V - 43

Project Title: Seeking Wisdom Conducting Interviews with Inspiring Community Role Models	ESOL Language Focus: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening Level(s): C, D +
Florida Adult ESOL Course Competencies: 52.05 Ask and answer questions in an interview 85.00 Demonstrate pronunciation skills. 90.00 Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills 100.02/03 Listen responsively and clarify meaning 66.16/69.04 Write friendly letters/thank you notes	EFF Standards and Roles: Interact with others in friendly, courteous ways. Pay attention to word choice, register, pace, gestures to minimize barriers to communication. Determine the purpose of written communication--seek feedback & revise work. Organize & present information to serve purpose, content & audience. Use electronic tools & Internet to learn & practice skills, obtain information.
Classroom Activities/Procedures: During this unit, students will have an opportunity to: 1. develop their conversational skills. 2. write invitation and thank you letters. 3. write and practice the pronunciation and intonation of interesting questions. 4. develop an understanding of the cultural aspects of planning a social event. 5. plan and budget for refreshments. 6. work in committees and practice being responsible to the group for various parts of the project.	Vocabulary: pose questions draft a letter jot down a response letterhead first draft checklist plan of action adage/motto/proverb defining moment acculturation (and many adjectives describing personality)
Procedures: (see explanations, assorted handouts, and tips on attachment pages) 1. Identify some outgoing , interesting, educated people who are willing to visit class on the same day. 2. Divide students into five planning team committees--Letter of invitation, Refreshments, Question writers, Thank you, Note/materials, and Classroom layout committees. Review responsibilities. 3. Review committee work. 4. Set up interviewing committees. 5. Prepare students for assuming duties on the day of interviews with the handout "Who can best do it?" 6. Students volunteer for the following duties--welcome host, social host, media helper, materials helper, interviewer, follow-up question maker, recorder, timekeeper--in preparation for the interviews. 7. Students conduct interviews. 8. Students complete evaluations and send thank you notes to speakers.	Resources/Handouts: Seeking Wisdom Intro Overview of project Interviewing Committees Who can best do it? Managing Interviews Final Preparations Checklist Interview Questions
Out of Class Assignment(s): If you wish to serve refreshments, members of that committee will need to to research prices to compile their budget and will also need to buy the items. Or you might prefer to have students each bring a few pastries and coffee to share with the speakers. Members of the thank you committee may want to shop for a small remembrance (or order photos of the event to send speakers).	Materials Needed: Computer/printer Tape recorder and cassette for each group of four students Camera/film/new batteries for flash Refreshments/beverages/small gifts?

Summary

Intro: This unit evolved from a discussion in which students complained Americans were “cold.” My students confided they felt nervous and had no idea how to converse with Americans. I wanted to give them a chance to chat on a personal level with people who could provide helpful, even inspirational, input into their lives. I believed that by showing students how to prepare for a such a conversation (i.e. interview) we could build confidence in their communication skills and help them win jobs and friends. The result of our preparations was a wonderful day when the 24 students were divided into groups of four and each group interviewed an outgoing native speaker. Yes, six speakers visited class on the same day. It was a fantastic experience! Of course, you don’t need to do all the activities we did. Just pick and choose what works best for you!

Dear Teacher:

There are two ways in which you may choose to approach this emotionally-engaging, two-part unit. You can replicate what I did, which was a lot of work and fun! Or, if class time is an issue for you, you can shorten the project.

If you choose the first option, you’ll find a step-by-step, logical approach to the unit (entailing everything from forming the first committees to making class presentations on the interviews). I’m including all the handouts, which explain each step of the project to students, for your use.

If you choose the second option, you will find enclosed invitation letters, tried and true questions, and thank you notes. That will greatly shorten your preparatory time. You’ll want to secure one speaker for every four students in your class in order to promote increased conversation and help students overcome their inhibitions.

Locating six or seven speakers doesn’t have to be difficult. I found excellent speakers through our school’s Strategic Impact Committee, volunteer GED tutor program, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). If you plan ahead, you might find human interest articles in the paper about people you might like to invite. Another good source of speakers may be your school’s Speakers’ Bureau. You might also check with groups like Toastmasters’ International, Rotary Clubs, veteran’s clubs, the Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and even community event planners for ideas on speakers.

As you look over the unit, you’ll notice the class incurred expenses for refreshments, photos and small gifts (5 x 7” frames) for the speakers. Our class was in the enviable position of having grant money from Read Pinellas, a local literacy coalition. (Thank you, Read Pinellas!) Your students might choose to bring in food or share expenses. Or you might want to eliminate food and photos. In our case, the class hoped to make a really good impression on the speakers, so they’d want to return again.

While working through the unit, the students and I experienced many delightful moments. I found great joy in helping them realize they could develop a plan of action in creating conversations...and in completing the unit itself. Some of the moments I think we all most enjoyed included the students working intensely in small committees: limited time to accomplish their various objectives. Once the assignment had been

explained and students realized they had just 90 minutes to finish, noise in the classroom soared! They certainly stayed on task! Some people were happy with their committees, others weren't! But everyone agreed that in the work world one has no choice and consequently, we all had to get along.

The process of peer--and later, teacher-led group--editing of letters and questions was fascinating. Since my students had told me Americans were cold ("But not you, teacher!"), I wanted to demonstrate how to use questions to draw people into conversation. In our think-tank discussion on the student-generated questions, I proposed including some of a personal nature. But I quickly learned several questions I considered culturally appropriate were considered too personal by my students. ("Ask the Irish comedian about the biggest challenge in his life? Oh, no, teacher!") More discussion ensued. Eventually students chose to include some "personal" questions in their interviews, and later discovered those resulted in the most rewarding answers.

A big part of ensuring the students' success depended on their ease in asking the interview questions. At the close of class one day, I promised a "mini-pronunciation session" the next. "Great teacher!" they all said. The next morning, there we were, questions in hand...and the "mini" session extended through the entire class period--90 minutes! The students were very concerned about articulating the sounds in each word. We worked on phrasing and intonation, writing the sentences on the board, placing slashes between words so students could see pauses, and arrows above and below phrases to help them understand rising and falling pitch. "We've almost got it, teacher!" they told me. "Let's do it again!" After everyone felt confident, I assigned them to work in pairs, asking and answering each question, creating mock interviews. "We like this teacher! Now we know what to expect!"

But, of course, everyone realized asking questions was only one factor in creating a good interview. We also had to develop skills to manage the conversation. What if, God forbid, the speaker talked too fast, or rattled on forever about unimportant details? What if the students wanted to change the topic, or the speaker didn't understand a question the students had asked or even repeated? I tried to think of all the stumbling blocks. The result was a worksheet with problematic situations for the students to consider in groups. They jotted down their responses and then we came together to share ideas. As one student provided an answer, four or five more answers bubbled up. "Teacher," someone would cry, "can I say it like this?" "Could I say that idea this way, too, teacher?" Soon the board was covered with scores of possibilities to solve the problems on the worksheet. Whoosh! Another 90 minutes had vanished! Students left, armed with language to help them accomplish their goals.

The day of our interviews was, of course, exciting. Everyone arrived a good half-hour in advance of the speakers, who were expected at 8 a.m. I had to catch my breath as the students filed in, looking fairly sharp--about two-thirds of them attired for work. "Teacher," they said, "you should have asked us to come in even earlier! Look at all the things we have to do!"

As the Refreshments Committee arranged the bagels and muffins, the Room Layout Committee hurried to reconfigure the furniture into six private conversation areas. I

noticed Yuriy, the Ukrainian engineer, opening a box. “Table decorations, teacher, “ he said, removing a small centerpiece, followed by five crystal water goblets and a liter of water. “Fantastic!” I told him. “But Yuriy, the refreshments people bought three gallons of water and cups...they’re over there.” “Yes, I know, “ he responded. “But this is more elegant and now I don’t have to get up to get water. We have our own *private* water here and I can take notes!” By this time, several other students had gathered admiringly around the table. “This looks good!” one said. “You should have told us! We like it too!”

By now, I suppose you’re getting the idea of just how much fun we all had...while developing some very important communication skills. After the interviews, after the speakers had just left, the students surrounded me. With obvious pride, they said, “We never thought we could do all that, teacher! But look, we did, just like we were at an office!” Several others took me aside. “It was nice, teacher! Now we know how to plan a conversation.” Another added, “I never thought about planning a conversation before. This was my first interview in English--and it lasted an hour!”

Finally, as noted earlier, this is the first of a two-part unit. By now you are familiar with its objectives. If you would like to give your students practice in paraphrasing ideas, writing, creating a short summary including a recorded clip, and making oral class reports, have a look at Part Two.

I hope you’ll enjoy these units. Have a wonderful time! Your students will be amazed at what they learn!

Sincerely,

Connie S. Gaskill

ESOL Teacher

Clearwater Adult Education Center

Clearwater, Florida

Time Line Activity Approx. Time Required

Introduce the Project	
1) Create excitement with Project Overview (Student Handout #1)	
2) Discuss likely speakers	30-45 min.
Set up first round of committees	
1) Read Student Handout #2 as a class and discuss	30-40 min.
2) Students volunteers for various committees and begin work!	90 min.
Review committee work	
1) Peer/full-class editing of invitation and thank you letters, reports from refreshment, thank you and authorization committees.	90 min.
2) Full-class review of questions submitted by question committee, discuss culturally-appropriate questions, edit them, vote.	90 min.
Practice question pronunciation, intonation, and phrasing followed by students conducting interviews using the questions in pairs.	60 min.
Draw lots to break students into interview teams, regrouping	5-10 min.
Choose Interview Committee roles	
1) Introducing the concept (Student Handout #3), class reading & discussion	30 min.
2) Activity: Who Can Best Do It? (Student Handout #4). Students do sheet in groups, followed by class discussion	60 min.
Manage Your Interview (Student Handout #5) Teams discuss scenarios, jot notes. Entire class regroups to share what works.	60-90 min.
Final committee reports/Class completes Check List (Handout #6)	30 min.
Interviews, presentation of gifts, refreshments	90 min.
Students evaluate their work	20-25 min.
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Estimated Class Time:	12-13 hours

Seeking Wisdom...introducing our exciting unit!

Class objectives

- 1) To foster communication skills among students by organizing a social event in which speakers are invited to our class
- 2) To teach students social and cultural skills related to creating and writing invitations/thank you notes in the context of hosting a social event
- 3) To give students an opportunity to plan questionnaires and budgets
- 4) To provide students with practice listening, paraphrasing and clarifying speakers' ideas
- 5) To give students experience in working in groups and being responsible to the group for their various parts of the project

What we will need to do

1. Form small committees to prepare for the speakers--

Question Writer Committee(s)

Letter of Invitation Committee

Refreshment Committee

Authorization/Room Layout Committee

Thank You Committee

- 2 Get approval from the principal to invite the people of our choosing, to use our classroom as an interview room, and to set up refreshments for the speakers and class.

3. Type a list of the speakers' names and date (__/__/__) they will visit class. Give the list to the principal

4. Mail the invitation letters.

5. Full-class editing/input session:

A) Question writers hand out photocopies of their questions and read them to class.

Teacher and students consider the cultural appropriateness of each and edit them.

B) Invitation writers present copies of their letter. Students proofread and revise it.

Teacher conducts editing lesson, incorporating ideas from the groups.

C) Refreshments Committee members present their plans...share the menu.

Students make suggestions and vote.

D) Thank You Note Committee hands out copies of the letter, students pair edit.

Teacher leads full-class editing discussion. The Thank You Committee also presents ideas for speaker gifts.

6. Managing a Conversation: Practice techniques to maintain a conversation,, show interest in the speaker and ask follow-up questions

7. Practice question pronunciation/intonation and attentive body language

8. Prepare a standard Questionnaire Form to facilitate note taking.

9. Authorization/Layout Committee makes follow-up phone calls to remind the speakers of the upcoming event.

10. Hold the event. Five or six speakers visit our class one morning. Students tape record the conversations and take notes. The Thank You Committee photographs speakers as a group and interacting with students, has the photos developed, includes them in the thank you letters and photocopies the letters.

11. Evaluations...what we learned...how we'll do it differently next time

Project Overview

During the next few days, you will have an opportunity to work on your conversational skills, write invitation and thank you letters, write and practice the pronunciation and intonation of interesting questions, and develop an understanding of the cultural aspects of planning a social event. We will do all of these activities in groups, which will provide you with additional practice in communicating in English in a businesslike setting.

With each group assuming particular responsibilities, we can accomplish our goals faster. During our unit, you will work on two or three different committees. Below is a list of our first set of committees. Let's take a look at the responsibilities of each committee so we'll know what everyone is doing.

Committee Responsibilities

Directions: As we read, consider what committee you'd like to work on. Remember, the Refreshments and Thank You Committees will have to research purchases outside of class. After we've read through the list, we'll choose committees. Then each group will have **90 minutes** to complete its work. You may divide the work however you like, but *you must finish on time*. All group work will be subject to editing or review in full-class discussions. This will allow everyone to have input into each part of our project.

Letters of Invitation Committee--Even if our list of speakers is not complete, we can still draft the letter. The invitation, which will appear on school letterhead, will include the purposes for inviting the speaker to class, a general idea of the kind of information we will ask, a map with directions from the speaker's home to the school, and a request to record the conversation and photograph the speaker with students. Please type and save your letter on the computer today. Please submit a copy of the letter to your teacher. After the letter is approved, you will prepare a letter for each speaker, as well as use the internet MapQuest site to print off a map with directions from each speaker's house to the school.

Refreshments Committee--Members will brainstorm to create a menu of refreshments. What items would be nice to serve? Consider the time our class is held in choosing foods. This can be done two ways. Let's choose the plan we prefer now. Then the refreshments people can write up their plan for us to review tomorrow.

Plan One

The class agrees to have the Refreshments Committee comparison shop for prices, prepare a budget within a certain dollar amount, buy the food, and arrange it the day of the speakers' visit. The committee will provide receipts for purchases in order to insure reimbursement by the class.

Plan Two

Class members agree to supply the refreshments themselves, each bringing something--a plate of pastries, cookies, veggies and dip, napkins, paper plates, cups, coffee, soda, etc. The refreshments committee will create a list of needed items and keep track of who's bringing what.

Question Writers Committee--Members will create the first draft of questions to be asked during the interviews. Tomorrow we will discuss the questions, in terms of their grammar, logic, and cultural appropriateness. While we will be asking information about the speakers' careers, please remember we also want to include questions of a more emotional nature which will help us understand their personal values.

Examples:

Informational Question: How did you choose your career?

Emotional Question: What has been the biggest challenge in your career (or life) and how did you handle it?

Informational Question: How many jobs have you held? Where did you attend college?

Emotional Questions: Of all the jobs you just mentioned, which was your favorite, and why?

If you could give us one piece of advice, what would it be? Why?

Do you have a personal motto? Could you share it with us?

Please remember: We can not ask questions about any presenter's age, marital status, salary or retirement pension. It would be culturally inappropriate. If a speaker mentions he or she is married or single, *only then* may you talk about his or her marital status.

After the class has agreed upon a list of questions, the committee will type them up, creating a Question Form on which students will take notes during the interviews.

Thank You Note/Materials Committee--This committee will draft a thank you letter prior to our interviews. A good letter will thank the speaker for generously sharing his or her time, include one particularly interesting highlight from the group's discussion and a photograph of the speaker with students. We will thank the speaker and mention that we hope we may call upon him or her again in the future.

Members of this committee have some out-of-class responsibilities. They will purchase a box of six or more 90-minute Sony tapes so we can record our interview. They may also be responsible for purchasing and providing receipts for small gifts (perhaps a photo frame) for the speakers, depending on the wishes of the class.

On the day of the interviews, members will photograph groups interacting with speakers. These photos will need to be developed, shown to the class, and then reprints will need to be ordered.

Reprints will be included in the thank you letters.

Classroom Layout Committee--This committee will determine how to organize our tables and chairs into small configurations to facilitate friendly, face-to-face communications between the speaker and students. A plan will be drawn indicating the placement of six conversation groups and the refreshments table. The committee must take into account the logistics of the room, including placement of electrical outlets and whether or not we may need extension cords, and if

so, who will provide them. They will submit their furniture configuration plan tomorrow to the class.

Note: See the appendix to view work done by these committees.

Interviewing Committees

Directions: We will now move into the next phase of our class project--forming interview committees. We will do this by drawing lots. The slip you take has the name of the speaker whom you will interview. Four students will choose slips with the same name. You will work on this team until we complete our project.

If you take a speaker slip, you must attend class on _____ day, _____, 2003.

Students will function in two or more roles as they serve on an interview committee. With your group, review the following roles. Think about your strengths and interests. Then complete the handout "Who can best do it?" Use that information to assign roles from each of the two categories.

Before the Interviews Begin Everyone will need to arrive early! 7:30 a.m.!

Welcome Host--This person is responsible for meeting the group's speaker at the door, introducing him or herself to the speaker, accompanying the speaker to our classroom and introducing the speaker to each group member.

Social Host--This person is responsible for preparing name tags for the speaker and each group member, as well as meeting the personal needs of the speaker (providing beverages, snacks, and napkins for the speaker.)

Media Helper--This person will pick up a cassette and set up the recorder. She or he may need to provide a *long, three-pronged extension cord* in order to connect the tape recorder to a far-off outlet. This person must ascertain that a clear recording is being made.

Materials Helper(s)--These students will set up the room in the layout planned earlier, arranging tables and chairs to create a private, friendly environment for the interview.

During the Interviews

Directions: Four students will be in an interview group. Your group may equally share the following responsibilities or delegate them to one or several people. If you want to equally share them, then I suggest that the responsibilities shift clockwise with each question. If you want to assign one responsibility to one person, that is fine too. However, at any time, at least two people should be taking notes. Please submit your group's plan of action by the end of class.

Interviewer(s)--The responsibility of asking questions will rotate clockwise from student to student so everyone has an opportunity to participate (unless your group chooses one designated interviewer).

Follow-up Question Maker(s)--Don't stop with one question! Develop your conversational skills by listening carefully and asking for more information.

Recorders--Two people must be taking notes at any time! Remember, you'll begin writing speaker summaries the next day!

Timekeeper--This person will keep the interview moving. (Each group will have approximately five minutes per question.) It is also this person's job to make sure that the group is following its plan.

Who can best do it? Assign Interview Committee Roles

Directions: You have read about the responsibilities of each Interview Committee member. Which adjectives below best describe the people who might do the following roles? Several adjectives may describe each. Write down the adjectives you think are most pertinent. As you do the work sheet, consider your own strengths. Which job would you be good at doing?

friendly interested strong gracious

fast thinking mechanical good note takers detail oriented

confident thoughtful careful good at condensing information

artistic good memory outgoing cordial

organized firm punctual grammatically minded

diplomatic helpful attentive able to set limits and follow rules

Welcome Host *EX: Friendly, cordial, outgoing.....what else?*

Social Host

Media Helper

Materials Helpers

Interviewers

Follow-up Question Makers

Recorders

Timekeeper

Managing the Interview

Directions: With your a group, please review the following possible situations. What will you do if any of these occur? Remember, you need to direct the interview to meet your needs-- understanding the information, recording it, and taking good notes. Discuss what you will do in the following situations in order to keep the interview moving. What will you actually *say*? Of course, you need to be diplomatic! Jot down one or two responses to each item. Then we'll share ideas in a class discussion. Thank you.

- 1) The speaker talks too fast.
- 2) The speaker talks too long on unimportant details, and you want to move him to the main idea.
- 3) You notice that you and other members of the group are having a hard time taking proper notes. What will you say to the speaker? What can you do as a group to improve your notes?
- 4) It appears the speaker's voice is not recording well. (Check this by watching the modulation light on the recorder which needs to occasionally peak in the red zone.)
- 5) The speaker keeps moving away from the recorder.
- 6) You want to change the subject to a new question.
- 7) The speaker doesn't understand the question you just asked.
- 8) The speaker doesn't understand the question after you repeat it.
- 9) You don't understand an answer the speaker provided.
- 10) You can't think of a good follow-up question.
- 11) You know that you will need to select a 45-60 second clip from the interview that's being recorded. How can you plan your notes to help you make a good clip selection tomorrow?
- 12) The speaker is taking way too much time answering questions. It is obvious you will never be able to ask all the necessary questions on your list.
- 13) Can your group think of any other problem that you would like to discuss with the class?

Write the problem here:

Final Preparations Checklist (Tomorrow's our big day!)

Students will work in the following groups, listed by their speaker's name.

Spkr 1: _____ Spkr 2: _____

Members _____ Members _____

Spkr 3: _____ Spkr 4: _____

Members _____ Members _____

Spkr 5: _____ Spkr 6: _____

Members _____ Members _____

1) Interview Committee Meetings

Each group has decided how it wants to handle the interviews. Some groups have decided that members will participate in all roles (interviewers, follow-up question makers, recorder, timekeeper). Others have delegated responsibilities to selected students. Both plans are fine.

Check each group's choice.

Student Group Equally Share Roles Strictly Delegated Roles

One _____

Two _____

Three _____

Four _____

Five

Six

2) Final Reports

A) Refreshments Committee--food/drinks ready? Set up plans?

B) Thank You/Gift Committee--camera/film/batteries/cassettes ready? Other?

C) Question Writers Committee--questionnaires ready?

D) Authorization/Layout Committee--follow-up phone calls? extension cords/recorders ready?

E) Teacher--?

3) Pre-Interview Committee Meetings

Welcome hosts --Plan and place a short call to your group's speaker. The purpose of this call is to thank them for coming and remind them we will be looking forward to meeting them at 8 a.m. Tuesday morning. You may also want to briefly practice introductions. (Remember, your job entails introducing everyone in the group to the speaker. Make sure you know everyone's full name.)

Students' Names:

Media Helpers--Practice working with the tape recorders today. Be sure that you will be able to properly record the speaker. You may need to experiment placing the tape recorder on a couple of books in order to record well. Practice with another classmate. You may also need to remind the speaker to speak more directly into the small microphone in the recorder.

Students' Names:

Social Hosts--Prepare name tags for each member of your group and the speaker. You may also want to briefly practice asking the speaker about his or her preferences regarding beverages and snacks.

Students' Names:

Materials Helpers--Review the classroom map detailing the placement of tables. Figure out how many extension cords we will need. Will the table layout we planned last week offer privacy for discussions? Are tables far enough apart to allow each group to record their conversations without hearing noise from other groups? Can you anticipate any other problems?

Students' Names:

4) Class Discussion: Ways to create identification with speakers and encourage them to share. Topics include maintaining eye contact, nodding, smiling, gestures, open body posture, leaning forward to show interest, and subtly mimicking speaker's gestures to create identification as well as using short phrases ("Wow!" "Really!" "You don't say!" "What happened then?" "Gee, this is really fascinating!" "I didn't know that!" "What did you do after that?" "Interesting!") to encourage the speaker to continue talking.

5) And finally, remember attendance tomorrow is mandatory. Please arrive at 7:30 a.m.

Interviewee: _____ Group# _____ Student's Name _____

1. How did you choose your career?

2. Could you tell us about some of the happiest or most interesting experiences in your professional life?

3. What do you think we, as immigrants, need to learn about the U.S.?

4. Many of us have come of the US with great hopes and dreams, but the adjustment to American life has been difficult. What advice do you have for us?

5. What do you consider the most defining moment of your career or life?

6. What do you think would be the hardest thing for us in acculturating to the U.S.?

7. What proverb, adage, or motto has most influenced your life?

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8. What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?

9. In business practices, what can we, as immigrants, do to protect ourselves from being discriminated against?

10. What's the biggest challenge you have faced? How did you overcome it?

Invitation Letter to Speakers

School Letterhead

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear _____,

It is our pleasure to invite you to share some of your life experiences with English students at Clearwater Adult Education Center. We would like to invite you to join us on Tuesday, December 3, 2002 from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

We are learning about conversation skills and U.S. culture. We would like to know how we can live better and become more productive members of U.S. society.

In order to share what we learn from you, we would like to ask you permission to record our interview. You will be chatting with a group of four to five students.

We look forward to meeting you on December 3rd in Room 11 of our school. After the interview, we will have some light refreshments.

Sincerely,

Name of Student

Name

Name

Name

Enclosure: Directions to our school.

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Student Thank You Letter to Speakers

School Letterhead

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear _____,

We very much appreciate you spending time with us, and we say thank you for coming to our class and making time in your busy schedule. We enjoyed very much our talk with you and we want to tell you that we learned new and interesting things during our conversation.

You've been so very nice with us and, if you don't mind, we hope we can keep in touch with you and have another wonderful time again.

Sincerely,

Name of Interviewing Committee Member

Name

Name

Name

Enc: Photo

Teacher Thank You Letter to Speakers

School Letterhead

Name

Street Address

City, State Zip

Date

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for making time in your busy schedule to share with my students yesterday. They greatly enjoyed their talk with you and commented on the interesting things they learned.

It was wonderful to meet you and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us. If you don't mind, perhaps we may have permission to call on you again as the opportunity presents itself. Long before that, however, a photo will arrive to fill that empty frame you received yesterday. Thanks for giving us such a happy memory!

Sincerely,

Name

Position

Final Teacher Report

EFF Project-Based Classroom Project

Name: Connie Gaskill

Institution: Clearwater Adult Education Center

Topic: Seeking Wisdom:
Conducting Interviews with Inspiring Community Role Models

Explain how the project improved your students' English language acquisition? Which activities were most helpful?

This unit represented a wonderful chance to experiment! Tony Lagos had recommended that I use lots of committees to help prepare students for participating in teams in future work situations. The use of committees required a lot of organization on my part and flexibility on the part of the students! They did not find working in teams easy. Students clashed on how parts of the projects should be done...and then, as in real life, some shirked doing their fair share. Some students complained other students were difficult to understand...and that probably was true! Others disliked working with bossy, lazy or unimaginative students (to which my response was a cheery, "Welcome, everybody, to the real world!") However, due to the strict time limits for making decisions and the fact that each team was relying on other groups for the overall project to succeed, most students focused intently on negotiating meaning and communicating effectively. It was exciting to watch!

Of course, in the context of committee work, students learned many skills--writing invitation and thank you letters, preparing interview questions, planning budgets for refreshments and small gifts for speakers, organizing the room layout, etc. They also played various roles on the day of the interviews--welcome host, social host, media helper, materials helper, interviewers, follow-up question askers, recorders and timekeepers. They were armed with appropriate vocabulary and cultural information to succeed at these tasks prior to the interviews. Getting to practice these skills in a real-life context helped focus students on the importance of learning each skill. They really wanted to do well! Before the interviews, most confessed to having butterflies. Afterward, students were happily amazed at their newfound abilities and poise!