**Fostering a student-centered classroom to maintain student interest and participation**

Panama TESOL Congress – September 21-22, 2013 – Abigail Bruhlmann – abigail.bruhlmann@gmail.com

**Goals:** **By attending this interactive workshop, teachers will be able to:**

-implement numerous techniques in their classrooms to help foster a student-centered learning   
 environment where the affective filter is low and students are actively participating in class.

-think of their own ideas for fostering a student-centered classroom.

**What is the difference between a teacher-fronted and a student-centered classroom?**

-Teacher-fronted: Teacher is the “sage on the stage.”

-Student-centered: Teacher is the “guide on the side.”

**Why is a student-centered classroom important?**

-Lessons are more interesting and memorable

-Students held accountable for their own learning

-Easier for teacher to informally assess student progress

-Caters to different learning styles (audio, visual, kinesthetic, etc.)

**Student expectations**

-Students might be used to/comfortable with the teacher as the “sage on the stage”

 -Teacher must explain “guide on the side” concept to students

-Give students time to adjust

**Some ideas for fostering a student-centered classroom:**

**Needs Analysis**

-Who are your students? What are their needs and interests?

**Throw things**

-Have students throw a stuffed animal around the classroom to *self-regulate* participation

**Use interesting materials (ex: ridiculous websites to teach grammar, reading, slang)**

www.theoatmeal.com www.hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.com www.urbandictionary.com

**Personalize content and use student generated materials**

-“Sally took the bus to the conference.” *vs* “Diego took a Diablo Rojo to the TESOL Congress.”

-Students take pictures of each other/their city (descriptions, scavenger hunt, etc.)

**Involve the students in grammar explanations**

-The Question Hand to teach question structure – students trace their own hand

**Have students change partners often**

-Students get to know each other, and lesson topic is reinforced (ex: match-up activity)

**Use manipulatives**

-Reinforce lesson topic (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.)

-Ex: Vocabulary “memory,” Hang the Spider, Student created fill-in-the-blank, chain stories

**Give your students resources to practice English outside of class**

-Students can take charge of their own learning and share materials *they* discover

*Sample Needs Analysis*

Dear Student –

Welcome to Advanced Conversation! I hope to make this course as useful and fun for you as possible. We´ll be focusing on various topics in order to improve your conversation skills such as: pronunciation, listening, body language and gestures, what it means to be “polite,” the relationship between culture and language, etc.

So that I can get a better idea as to your needs and interests, please fill out this questionnaire and return it to me by our next class:

What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a nickname that you´d like me to use? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where are you from? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a student? YES / NO If yes, what do you study? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a working professional? YES / NO If yes, what is your job? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are your hobbies/interests? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why are you learning English? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you practice speaking English outside of class? YES / NO

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please mark how much you would like to see the following activities in this class:

Like a lot Like a little Don’t like No opinion

Grammar clarifications \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pronunciation/intonation clarifications \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role plays/skits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Group debates about controversial issues \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Whole group discussions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Small group discussions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Partner discussions \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Learning about body language/gestures \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Talking about current events \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Talking about fashion/appearance \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Talking about food \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Talking about different cultures \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Going on field trips to find English speakers \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else you would like me to know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. I look forward to working with you!

* Abigail