Using Engageli for My Class Sessions

Here is a group presentation-based lesson plan that I was able to switch from BB Collaborate to Engageli, which incorporates interactive classroom engagement. I am excited to show you how I used Engageli to make group activities more effective and engaging for my learners.

Teaching Preparation

Perhaps the biggest challenge for any public speaking course is to get learners to feel comfortable giving a speech, when it's estimated that a large portion of the population has a fear of public speaking and much of that anxiety comes from lack of preparation.

One way to help learners understand that they are not alone in feeling discomfort with public speaking is to use a poll prior to the group activity. Using the instructions on "Create a Poll or Quiz", I create 1 **Engageli poll** in a Google slide. The poll question: "I am nervous about public speaking." and options are a Likert scale from Strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Another approach is to assign learners to cohorts for the semester, so that learners get to know others in their group, reducing their own fear of giving speeches and inspiring them to provide supportive feedback. I can pre-assign seating by using a template, or I can let learners choose a seat at any table during the first class to get acquainted, then save that seating as a preset and apply it in future class sessions, found in "Set Up Your Class Roster and Assigned Seating".

This lesson plan assumes that all course materials (lecture slides, handouts, polls/quizzes, etc.) have been created ahead of time. Learners are also expected to complete all the previous session's reading assignments before the current session.

Learning Objectives:
- Learners will be able to use humor to connect with tablemates and reduce anxiety.
- Learners will be able to practice telling a story to the class.
- Learners will be able to offer constructive feedback to others.
- Learners will be able to begin developing their speeches with input from their tablemates.

Group-Based Lesson Plan: Click the bookmark to view each section

Before Class (5–10 Minutes Before Class)

To prepare, I close all of the apps and browsers on my computer that I will not be using during class. I also ensure that all notifications (Outlook, Google Calendar, Slack, etc.) are either snoozed or shut off. I open my PowerPoint slide deck or any other materials so that they are easily accessible.

Similar to my in-person classes, I have learners who like to join early, so I am always logged in at least five minutes before class starts. The audio defaults to "Room Mode", which I leave as is, but remind learners to use the "Raise Hand" button, explained in "Ask a Question", when they're speaking, even to me, so that everyone can see who is speaking. Logging in early gives learners a chance to chat with their peers and me before class starts. I try to greet or acknowledge learners by name as they enter my Engageli classroom.

Welcome to Public Speaking! (5 Minutes)

At the start of class, I shift the audio to "Table Mode". For the first five minutes of the class, I make some announcements regarding readings and assignments. Using the "Chat" feature in Engageli, I upload some of the important course documents and links to where they can find these in the LMS. I also make sure to "Record and Share Class Recordings," which will come in handy for learners who missed class or want to review.

To set the stage for the semester, I conduct the **poll** prior to the first group activity, which is explained in "Using Your Created Polls.", because it helps learners to understand that they are not alone in feeling uncomfortable about public speaking. I click "Share Results" and also let them know that it's estimated that 75% of adults fear public speaking, but this can be exacerbated by lack of preparation, so taking the class can help alleviate this experience.

Small-Group Activity #1 (15 Minutes)

I let learners choose a seat at any table to establish groups by "Using Tables for Active Learning" during the first class to get acquainted, then save that seating as a preset and apply it in future class sessions, found in "Set Up Your Class Roster and Assigned Seating". This first lesson is to begin with an informal conversation and develop that conversation into a formal speech.

The task for learners at each table is to spend less than 2 minutes telling a funny story from their real lives. Then as a group, they decide which story is most entertaining and help the storyteller organize their ideas and practice to present it to the entire class. Although any funny story works, I provide some prompts to help get them started.

The prompts:

- Tell us about an embarrassing clothing malfunction.
- Have you ever done something clumsy that landed you in the emergency room?
- Have you ever tried a DIY project that succeeded or failed spectacularly?
- What funny things have your children, pets, family, or friends done?
- Can you think of a funny interaction you have had with someone outside of your family/friends?

While learners are meeting with their tables, I visit tables using "Joining Tables", to answer questions, check on learners' progress as they collaborate on projects, and hear some funny stories.

Presentations and Feedback (15 Minutes)

Engageli has a "Host a Panel" feature that I can use to move speakers to the primary view. Visually, they appear at the front of the classroom as a panel. They can share screens and interact with other learners who can raise hands or post in the "Q&A or Chat". It looks and feels like a panel to both the audience and the presenters.

I move one learner from each table to a panel in Engageli so that the class can see the speakers in their primary view as they present their funny story. I encourage all other learners to provide immediate feedback to the speaker by the "Engagement Metrics", from Very Satisfied to Dissatisfied, or using body language/facial expressions on their webcams.

After each story, learners can use chat to provide more meaningful feedback or "Raise Hand" to speak to the whole class.

Review the Autobiographical Speech Assignment (5 Minutes)

I spend a few minutes explaining the first speech assignment and answering questions using the "Q&A Tab" in Engageli.

Small-Group Activity #2 (10 Minutes)

The task is for learners to spend a few minutes discussing different approaches to giving an autobiographical speech and even begin organizing their ideas in an outline using the notes feature in Engageli. I ask one learner from each table to share their screen at their table, using "Share Your Screen as a Learner", so they can work on their speech outlines collaboratively as a group.

Recap and Questions & Answers (10 Minutes)

For about the last 10 minutes of the session, I recap what was learned and answer questions. Then I explain that the learners can access recordings via Engageli's Study Halls, which is described in "Using Replay Rooms and Study Halls." Study Halls are open classrooms where learners (independently or in a group of up to 10) can review videos, participate in polls, ask and answer questions in the Q&A, take notes, and—if in a group—chat, talk, learn and work on projects together. I also remind them to download their notes that they have taken during class. Directions for downloading their notes can be found at "Notes."

This lesson shows how I use Engageli to help learners develop and give effective presentations. Hopefully, this lesson plan gives you some ideas for your own courses. I highly recommend Engageli and hope it enables you to find new and creative ways to engage your online learners.