

Utilizing Online Courses in the World Language Classroom

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As we are all aware, technology is becoming more advanced every day. As foreign language teachers, we try to engage our students in using the target language in meaningful and innovative ways so they can become successful 21st century global citizens (Theisen, 2013). In Haworth Elementary/Middle School, where I am currently employed, the population of students enrolled is approximately 430. This number encompasses the entire school which ranges from Kindergarten to Eighth Grade. This school year, I teach grades five through eight with my students' schedules varying from one day a week for the fifth graders to four days a week for the eighth graders, gradually increasing each year. Haworth School is fortunate enough to have the funds to purchase several carts with MacBook Pro laptops, a number of new Mac Air desktop computers as well as at least two carts of I pads, all of which are available to the teachers for daily use. This year, I have also received a brand new SmartBoard which my students and I have been delighted to use every single day in my various lessons.

The project that I am proposing for this capstone project will be aimed for use with my eighth graders. The graduating 8th grade this year is comprised of 58 students, 47 of which are enrolled in Spanish. The ones who do not take Spanish are diverted to different areas based on their IEP's and 504's. I see the 8th grade students four days a week for 47 minutes a period. The project will be a combination of Moodle, WordPress and Dreamweaver. I am planning on taking the entire final unit I teach in the 8th grade and turning it into an online component for the students to make use of with the thought of it being considered an "online course". While I will still be in physical contact with the students every day my hope is that students can study the vocabulary and grammar at their own pace. Deadlines will be given for all assignments, along with a couple of projects and small exams to test for comprehension of the material as checkpoints between lessons. I feel that this will

enhance the individualization of the program since the students will be able to study at their own pace. I do have several gifted and talented students and I find that sometimes it appears they are being held back with the pace of the class due to the heterogeneous group and my goal is to reach all students. With this type of program, these students can quickly move through the concepts and then progress onto more difficult exercises and material that will expand their knowledge of the language and culture while the other students are studying at their own level. This will change my curriculum since each student will ideally be achieving at their highest level possible and each will be challenged in a way that is not overwhelming to them. Each individual student would have access to all the materials and they could expand their horizons of the language in ways that they would not normally do in a normal teacher centered classroom. The addition of the self-paced classroom will give each child a chance to really absorb the material as opposed to just memorizing it for a test and then forgetting it. By utilizing it in a real world way that makes sense to them, the material has a stronger likelihood of moving in to long term memory as students frame the words into real world settings like travelling, using foreign currency, asking questions in an airport, restaurant, hotel, etc. rather than just memorizing for tests.

The end goal of this project is for students are able to utilize the travel vocabulary in conjunction with the grammar of the chapter to successfully plan and execute a trip to a vacation destination. Each lesson will contribute vocabulary and grammar components the students will apply to the final Webquest project for the unit. The Webquest will have the students plan a vacation from start to finish, purchasing tickets, getting on a plane and planning destinations to go to within the desired location. The lessons will cover the following items in accordance with the World Language and Technology Standards as of 2009 (World Language, 2009), (Technology Standards, 2009):

1. To be able to discuss the culture of a Spanish speaking city/country
 - i. 7.1NM.A.1-5 – Discuss cultural elements of target countries
 - ii. 8.1.2.A.5 - Demonstrate the ability to navigate in virtual environments that are developmentally appropriate.
2. To be able to describe what they will need for vacation, to navigate an airport correctly and communicate on an airplane in the target language.
 - i. 7.1NM.A.1-5 – Relate proper order of travel activities.
 - ii. 8.1.2.A.4 - Create a document with text using a word processing program.
3. To use the future tense to discuss what they will do on their vacation.
 - i. 7.1NM.A.1-5 – Tell what someone is going to do.
 - ii. 8.1.4.A.3 - Create and present a multimedia presentation that includes graphics.
4. To use the present progressive to discuss what they are doing right now to prepare for their vacation and/or what they are doing in the airport/airplane
 - i. 7.1NM.A.1-5 – Express activities in progress.
5. To be able to use saber and conocer to correctly distinguish what they know as facts and what they are familiar with.
 - i. 7.1NM.A.1-5 – Distinguish the difference between saber and conocer.
 - ii. 8.1.2.C.1 - Engage in a variety of developmentally appropriate learning activities with students in other classes, schools, or countries using electronic tools.

In regards to the procedure, each lesson will be given the appropriate amount of time to complete, ranging from overnight for the lessons with just homework, to one week for the lesson with a project, to two weeks for the group Webquest. Each lesson employs a differentiation technique on the computer. The lessons that employ the rote repetition of vocabulary on conjuguemos.com pertain to the students who want the basic, factual practice. The more abstract students will benefit from the employment of the projects such as the Future Project and the Webquest since they can be more creative with the results. Each of the bullet points below outline what the lessons within the unit will entail along with the Brainy Bits that are touched upon:

- A. Students will be reading about the culture of a specific Spanish speaking country/city as well as viewing videos/music. They will then use the blog feature on Moodle to discuss what they found. They will submit the answer to their homework via the submit feature.
 - a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983):
 - i. **Visual** – Seeing/Reading the information
 - ii. **Musical** – Listening to music from country
 - iii. **Interpersonal** – enjoy blogging and responding to blogs

- iv. **Intrapersonal** – enjoy thinking about what it would be like to live in those countries.
 - b. Learning Styles (Gregorc, 1985):
 - i. **Abstract Random:** These students focus on the theme and ideas of traveling the world through the Hispanic countries
 - ii. **Concrete Random:** These students will be the ones sharing their real world experiences with the class about their experiences with any of these countries.
- B. Students will be using an online dictionary to define the terms given. They will then practice answering questions utilizing the vocabulary. Homework will involve accessing a website containing vocab terms with the goal of expanding their personal lexicon of Spanish terms. Advanced learners will be writing definitions in Spanish for the terms.
- a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983):
 - i. **Verbal/Linguistic** –Practicing the correct pronunciation
 - ii. **Bodily/Kinesthetic** – Using dictionary/computer to look up terms
 - iii. **Mathematical/Logical** – looks for patterns/cognates in words/phrases
 - b. Learning Styles (Gregorc, 1985):
 - i. **Abstract Sequential:** Exact well researched information as well as the teacher who is an expert in the subject.
 - ii. **Concrete Sequential:** Routine of the lesson
- C. Students will be watching a video on how to form the future tense. After some practice with the tense, they will create a mini project in which they will record their voices along with a PowerPoint presentation to describe their life in 20 years using as much of the Spanish vocabulary they have learned in class to date. These will be posted so all students can provide feedback in Spanish correcting any errors they spot as well as expressing praise for work well done.
- a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983)::
 - i. **Visual** – Seeing/Reading the information
 - ii. **Musical** – Listening to pronunciation/accent of conjugation
 - iii. **Interpersonal** – enjoy blogging and responding to blogs
 - iv. **Verbal** – giving a “live” speaking component to their presentation
 - b. Blooms Taxonomy (Blooms, 1999):
 - i. **Remember:** Remember future tense endings
 - ii. **Understand:** Understand how the endings are used for each pronoun
 - iii. **Apply:** Apply the future tense to conversations
 - iv. **Analyze:** Recognize the patterns of the irregulars
 - v. **Evaluate:** Explain how they would use the future tense in everyday conversation
 - vi. **Create:** Create a presentation using the future tense.
- D. Students will be watching a video on how to use the present progressive tense. After some practice with the tense, they will be posting on the blog in twitter/Facebook style, stating what they are doing right now. They will have to comment in Spanish on other people’s “status” updates. Homework will be a worksheet to practice.
- a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983):
 - i. **Visual** – Seeing/Reading the information

- ii. **Logical** - Seeing the pattern of how the present progressive is formed.
 - iii. **Interpersonal** – enjoy blogging and responding to blogs
 - iv. **Bodily/Kinesthetic** – Using computer to post status updates.
 - v. **Existential** – Think about what Spanish Twitter/Facebook must look like.
 - b. Learning Styles (Gregorc, 1985):
 - i. **Abstract Sequential:** Exact well-researched information as well as the teacher who is an expert in the subject.
 - ii. **Concrete Sequential:** Routine of the lesson
 - iii. **Abstract Random:** Be enthusiastic about learning since they have an emphasis on high morale and will give good feedback to each other on the blog.
- E. Students will be viewing a PowerPoint on how to distinguish between saber and conocer. They will then be working with several websites to practice saber and conocer usage. Once they are done, they will be posting on the blog things they know how to do and things they are familiar with. Homework will be a worksheet to practice.
- a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983):
 - i. **Visual** – Seeing/Reading the information
 - ii. **Logical** - Seeing the pattern of how the present progressive is formed.
 - iii. **Interpersonal** – enjoy blogging and responding to blogs
 - iv. **Bodily/Kinesthetic** – Using computer to post on blog.
 - v. **Naturalistic:** Responds to experiential aspects of foreign language acquisition.
 - b. Learning Styles (Gregorc, 1985):
 - i. **Abstract Sequential:** Exact well-researched information as well as the teacher who is an expert in the subject.
 - ii. **Concrete Random:** Also, they will like the use of the websites since they enjoy unique and different ways of doing things as opposed to traditional ways.
 - iii. **Abstract Random:** Be enthusiastic about learning since they have an emphasis on high morale and will give good feedback to each other on the blog.
- F. Project will be created and done using Google Docs/Hangouts to aid the students in collaboration (Haebig & Lawrence, 2013). They will be creating a Prezi or a PowerPoint that explains how they will travel and spend a week in a Spanish speaking country. They will include everything from airfare, phrases they will use at the airport and on the plane, to the sites they will see in their chosen country, all while staying within a budget. A video on how to use Prezi will be given as well as a tutorial on how to use Camtasia so they can videotape their project and submit it.
- a. Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983)::
 - i. **Verbal/Linguistic** – Giving the spoken report.
 - ii. **Visual** – Creating the visual component of the project
 - iii. **Mathematical** – calculating the budget
 - iv. **Intrapersonal** – thinking of where they would like to visit if they were going to the country
 - v. **Bodily/Kinesthetic** – Using computer to create the project.

- b. Learning Styles (Gregorc, 1985):
 - i. **Concrete Random:** Also, they will like the use of Prezi since they enjoy different ways of doing things as opposed to traditional ways.
 - ii. **Abstract Random:** Be enthusiastic about the project since they create high morale in a group.

Where the outcome is concerned, I am expecting that at the end of this unit, students are more aware, culturally and linguistically how a second language can aid in travelling. Since 7th grade, the students have been studying the culture of various Hispanic countries. Being able to successfully navigate an airport and airplane in these countries would be a useful skill for them to have, especially considering how often my students go abroad now. The fact that the students are experiencing this course online gives them more sense and meaning since the majority of their social and academic lives revolve around computers and technologies such as Ipads and cell phones. This will hopefully allow the students a certain level of comfort in that they are not rushed to learn the concepts in 45 minutes. This accommodates students who may need more time to research for more resources and practice sites to help them understand each concept or deepen their knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary. My hope is that with something such as an online unit, it can be accessed by all the teachers in the Northern Valley Districts so that they are able to use it within their own classrooms while simultaneously adding or changing things. By allowing this type of access, the teachers can create a unified lesson unit which we will all be able to collaborate on as well as update on a constant basis, ensuring the students receive the most up-to-date material we can provide for them in this digital class. Also, once perfected, I would like to potentially duplicate this for each unit and utilize it in such a way that if a teacher is gone for an extended period of time, such as a maternity leave, the school can just hire a substitute to watch the students while they do the course online until the teacher returns from the extended absence. With something like this, the teacher could have office hours via Google Hangouts (Haebig & Lawrence, 2013) and the chat

room feature in Moodle as well as the forums to post questions that the teacher can answer.

Overall, my expectation is that this project will be the future of how we teach foreign language classes and collaborate as one teaching unit.

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