Problem-Based Learning Activity

Lower-Division Foreign Language Courses—Vocabulary (Lab Activity)

Dr. Joseph Fees

Objectives—

1) Utilize the clothing vocabulary learned in the chapter and learn additional new Spanish words
2) Successfully navigate websites in Spanish
3) Develop a basic understanding of the fashion and costs of Spain

Imagine you are doing some clothes shopping in Spain. Go to the following websites of popular clothing stores in Spain and peruse the articles of clothing, accessories, etc. that they are selling—make sure the language is set to Spanish and the country is set to Spain. Notice the vocabulary and expressions that are used for the clothing, promotions, etc.

http://www.bershka.com/es/
http://www2.hm.com/es_es
http://www.zara.com/es/
http://www.elcorteingles.es/moda
http://www.lefties.com/es
http://www.desigual.com/es_ES

Complete the following activities:

1) Make a list of vocabulary words from Chapter 7 that you see on the websites:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2) After looking at the websites, design an ideal outfit for yourself from different stores (you may include pants, a jacket, shoes, accessories, etc.).

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<th>Artículo de Ropa—Descripción</th>
<th>Tienda</th>
<th>El precio</th>
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3) ¿Cuáles son algunos de los colores más populares de la ropa en España?


4) ¿Te gusta la moda de estas tiendas españolas? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?


5) ¿Es la ropa en España más cara, más barata o igual que la ropa en Estados Unidos? (Check xe.com for exchange rates of USD/EUR)


6) ¿Qué son algunos nuevos palabras españolas que aprendiste de los sitios web? Haz una lista de palabras españolas nuevas con sus traducciones en inglés. (Eight minimum)


7) ¿Ves mucha palabra inglesa en los sitios web? ¿Por qué crees que es así? Da algunos ejemplos. (Puedes responder a esta pregunta en inglés.)
Problem-Based Learning Activity

Lower-Division Foreign Language Courses—Culture

Dr. Joseph Fees

Objectives—

1) Develop an in-depth understanding about a specific region of the target culture and how its culture may be different from one’s own culture
2) Improve communication, presentation and writing skills

Students will work individually on this assignment and will present their work in class as well as hand-in the assignment to the instructor.

Step One) Cultural Knowledge (Homework assignment outside of class—one to two weeks for preparation)

An exchange student from a foreign country speaking the target language is coming to stay with you and your family for a few weeks. You know a fair amount of information about the country but you don’t want your family to embarrass you with their lack of knowledge about the culture of the exchange student’s country including customs and food. You want them (and yourself) to be as cultured and informed as possible.

Choose a country or region of the target culture where the exchange student lives. Get approval of the country or region from the instructor before you begin. Research the country’s culture in-depth in the library or on-line to learn about its customs, food, holidays, etc.

Assignment) Create a cheat-sheet (2 pages minimum) for you and your family with the following information to ensure your exchange student has a comfortable and welcome stay:

- Common customs
- Common dialectical or colloquial expressions used in the country with English translations.
- Common/popular foods and drinks in the country with a few recipes for your family to make.
- Common popular past times (good for conversation starters)
- Unique holidays celebrated in the country
- Behaviors or gestures which are taboo or inappropriate in the exchange student’s culture but acceptable in your own culture.
- Any other relevant information about the culture
Step Two) Presentations (One to Two Class Periods Depending on Class Size)

Each student will give a presentation of approximately five minutes to the class highlighting the information on their cheat-sheet about the target culture.

Class Discussion Questions)

What are some interesting examples of information you learned about another country or region through the other students’ presentations?

How are some of these examples different from our own culture?

What do you think some of the benefits and challenges would be of having an exchange student living with you?

How did your own research and these presentations make you think differently about your own culture?

Do these presentations make you want to travel to any of these particular counties or regions? Why?
Problem Based Learning Activity

World Literature/Spanish Literature Course—Don Quixote

Dr. Joseph Fees

Objectives—

1) Think deeply about the text studied; understand how the work is a product of 17th century Spanish culture and society; and analyze how one can relate to the story and its themes in the modern world.
2) Build teamwork skills; improve communication and presentation skills

Students will form groups of 3 to 5 students to work on the project. The activity will be completed in three steps over a three week period.

Step One) Historical and Cultural Context (Week One)

Miguel de Cervantes published the first and second parts of Don Quixote in 1605 and 1615 respectively. Any writing is a product of the time in which it was written and Don Quixote is no exception. What are the cultural, social and economic factors that were central to the beginning of 17th century Spain? Research this information online or in the library.

1) As a group, create a two-page sheet with historical and cultural information outlining what life was like in early 17th century Spain. Give specific details of society, the economy, laws and customs, etc. and each student can research one particular facet.

Now that you have a thorough background in early 17th century Spain, think about the following question: How did these specific factors influence this book—in particular the character of Don Quixote, the plot and the basic themes presented?

2) Create an outline addressing at least five aspects of Don Quixote that are related to the cultural, social and economic factors you researched. Cite passages from the text for your examples.

Step Two) A modern day Don Quixote (Week Two)

Now, imagine that the character Don Quixote resurrects himself 400 years later in our time in the United States. What are the explicit cultural, social and economic factors in our time and country that would affect how this book is written? How would the book and the plot change?

Discuss these questions with your group and then create a brief plot (3-5 pages) that makes Don Quixote a believable figure of the 21st century.

Specifically, address these questions in your new story—

What is his new obsession (libros de caballería would not necessarily be relevant in our time) that drives him to madness and his quixotic adventures?
What is his life like in the modern world? Give a description of him and his social circumstances.

Who is his 21st century Dulcinea and where does she (or he) come from?

What are some of the adventures on which he will embark?

How does his story end?

**Step Three: Presentations and Class Discussion (Week Three—One Class Period)**

The groups will present their modern day Don Quixote story to the class with a description of their contemporary Don Quixote and the basic plot of the story. (5-10 minutes total)

**Questions for Class Discussion After the Presentations:**

Which group’s story is the most believable? Which group’s story is the most creative?

How are themes in *Don Quixote* universal versus specific to the culture and time in which it was written? Do the themes of Don Quixote transcend 17th century Spain?

How must Don Quixote be a different character today than he was in the novel?

How does living in the 21st century and in our country change the way we think about Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*? How does technology impact the way we think of *Don Quixote* and of literature in general?