

MAISA and the REMC Association of Michigan Best Practices in Technology Integration Plan

Title: Establishing Electronic Communication in the Foreign Language Classroom

Subject(s): Spanish (and all Modern Languages)

Intended Grade Level(s): 6-8

Description:

This plan allows non-native students of Spanish (and other languages) the opportunity to investigate and establish written communication via e-mail with native Spanish-speaking students from various countries around the world. Students will select keypals from an internet site that gives brief personal descriptions, along with likes and dislikes. The students then compose and send electronic messages to those students. When the messages are answered, students will then evaluate (translate) the information they receive and begin drafting responses based on common themes, topics, likes and dislikes, etc.. The basic skills that the students will learn and practice are: 1) Introductions 2) Giving Personal Information 3) Giving Basic Descriptions 4) Expressing Simple Likes and Dislikes and 5) Asking Basic Questions. The students work will be evaluated from a rubric that is taken in part from the Michigan State Standards for Language Learning.

Curriculum Benchmarks:

MI.WL.1.MS.1 Understand and engage in conversation on familiar topics.

MI.WL.1.MS.2 Derive meaning from limited written stimuli and respond appropriately.

MI.WL.1.MS.4 Copy or transcribe familiar words, phrases, and some sentences.

MI.WL.3.MS.1 Produce limited written discourse.

MI.WL.3.HS.1 Understand and produce main ideas from narration and description.

MI.WL.3.MS.2 Use oral language to generate written language.

MI.WL.3.MS.4 Express in writing personal information and preferences.

MI.WL.4.M.1 Understand and respond to questions and commands.

MI.WL.8.M.1 Utilize technology to communicate personal information across cultures.

Materials/Hardware/Software:

To complete this project students should have access to the following:

- Access to the Internet and the World Wide Web.
- Netscape Navigator (web browser from Netscape).
- Eudora Light (e-mail software from Qualcomm).
- A reference source for vocabulary and grammar.

Activities/Procedures:

This activity is best completed *after* students have been introduced to basic phrases and questions in the target language such as “My name is...” “How are you?” “I am ____ years old.” “How are you.” And “I like...” This basic background information will allow the students to read and understand the information presented on the web page where they will select their keypal.

The teacher will give the students the address of the web site which contains the list of keypals (for Spanish the site is <http://www.nalejandria.com>). If the language is other than Spanish, a simple search on the part of the teacher on the web should give many possible locations for sites that contain keypals in the target language. Once at the website (<http://www.nalejandria.com>) the students will follow the links to the “Amigos” site where the keypals are listed. Here students can read simple descriptions of potential keypals from various Spanish-speaking countries around the world, including name, age, address, and likes/dislikes.

Once students have picked potential keypals they should copy the e-mail address that accompanies the information, and quit the browser portion of the computer work. Next, they must write-out their letter to their keypal (on paper), including any requirements the teacher may have specified in his/her instructions. Once they have proofread their work (and the teacher may want to proofread it as well...) the students can open the e-mail software and begin typing their letter to their new keypal.

Once finished, the students will send the message and begin the anxious wait for a response. *This lesson does assume a certain degree of familiarity on both the part of the teacher and students of Internet and e-mail usage. If the teacher and/or students are unfamiliar with the above programs they will first have to be introduced and allowed to practice with them before actually beginning the lesson. ** Also, in order for the students to get a response they must have a return

e-mail account through the teacher/school at which they can receive their mail. Students do not each have to have their own account, the teacher can receive and print out all mail if they are willing to check it consistently.

Assessment/Evaluation:

The method of evaluation that works best for this lesson is a rubric designed with the State Standards for Language Learning in mind. The teacher can take a printed copy of the students sent correspondence (or hand-written if they forget to print) and use the rubric below to evaluate the learning.

Sample Rubric – Keypal Letters

5 – The non-native speaker can be fully understood by a native speaker; there are no errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. The letter addresses all required topics with use of substantial vocabulary.

4 – The non-native speaker can be mostly understood by a native speaker; there are very few errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. The letter addresses all required topics with adequate vocabulary.

3 – The non-native speaker can be partially understood by a native speaker, frequent errors in grammar and spelling are present, yet meaning may still be clear. The letter addresses most of the required topics with basic vocabulary.

2 – The non-native speaker cannot be understood by a native speaker. Errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation inhibit meaning. Very few of the required topics addressed. Limited vocabulary.

1 – Some effort given, although not enough to be comprehended by a native or non-native speaker. Very few vocabulary words used, no coherent grammar or spelling structure evident.

0 – No effort.

Follow-up Activities:

Once students receive responses from their keypals they will read/translate them and share the information learned with their classmates. The teacher can monitor their comprehension of the messages sent by the native speakers to gauge the students' skills in reading, translation, and comprehension of authentic written text in the target language.

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