Snapchatting Challenge: Learning a Second Language using the Social Media Context

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For any Second Language Course

Introduction and Objectives

"mobile devices allow students to leave the classroom and easily collect real data from the real world and experience things they cannot experience inside classrooms", stated Miika Eriksson, Pauliina Tuomi and Hanna Vuojärvi (84). In today´s world, after saying "nice to meet you" and talking for a while, the next question is "what is your Instagram?", or "what is your Snapchat?". Social Media is part of the young adult generation´s life. My idea is a challenge for second language learners to employ the language they are learning in real-life situations, while making short videos that will finally be uploaded to either Instagram or Snapchat. Both social media networks are current and highly used by young adults, who consider them a motivating and creative way of sharing their experiences. Since instructors would like their students to experience the language being taught in every way possible, this challenge provides them with the opportunity to share their enthusiasm for the language in an active manner. The objectives of this challenge are fourfold. First, to practice grammar and vocabulary in context. Secondly, to engage students through the creation of a fun, social media environment, in which they can show what they have learnt. Thirdly, to motivate students to think in the second language in their daily life, and develop their communication skills. Finally, to cater to multiple learning styles, to reinforce the language learning process.

Intended Audience

This activity is intended for students of SP1030 (Spanish for Beginners) and SP2200 (Intermediate Spanish).

The Activity Description

1. The course instructor creates an account on either Instagram or Snapchat. For example, the account could be titled "Snapchatting Challenge Sp-245", with the number of the section that is participating.

2. Students access the account to post their videos. The instructor and students follow the account to watch and post the videos using their personal account.

3. Students can work individually or in pairs to create their videos.

4. The length of each video should be approximately 1 minute. Students could also share more than one video or snapchat.

5. Videos are posted once a week. The instructor decides which day is the due date (for example, every Wednesday).

6. The topic or grammar point that is used for the video must be related to what students learned during that week.

7. Students should leave at least one comment on two videos posted by their classmates.

8. Videos are observed in class on the due date. Phrases and sentences used in the videos are analyzed in groups, and students will provide oral feedback to each student. The development of the activity requires about 30 minutes, although it variates depending on the number of students.

Required Resources

- ➢ Mobile or laptop.
- ➢ Download Instagram or Snapchat application.

Key concepts and Learning Outcomes

After studying different learning theories from a Constructivist perspective, Päivi Karppinen (2005) selected six characteristics that provide a meaningful learning experience when using videos. Meaningful learning is active, constructive and individual, collaborative and conversational, contextual, guided, and emotionally involving and motivating. All these characteristics are present in the development of this activity.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to:

- ➢ Use the second language in a real-life situation using a social media network.
- ➢ Put into practice communication skills, vocabulary, and grammatical structures that they have learnt in an original and creative environment.
- ➢ Analyze other students' productions critically.

Adaptation to Other Courses

This activity can be adapted to all language courses and to all levels, by adapting the requirements in terms of grammar and vocabulary knowledge, fluency, and pronunciation.

References

Karppinen, Päivi. "Meaningful Learning with Digital and Online Videos: Theoretical Perspectives". *AACE Journal* 13.3 (2005): 233-250.

Eriksson, Miikka, Pauliina Tuomi, and Hanna Vuojärvi. "Integrating Mobile Learning Digital Storytelling and Social Media in Vocational Learning". *Social Media and the New Academic Environment: Pedagogical Challenges.* Ed. Bogdan Patrut, Monica Patrut, and Camelia Cmeciu. Hershey: Information Science Centre, 2013. (68-90). Print.