Sharing and Learning

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language requires learning situations that favour spontaneus interactions. It also needs to be taken into account the development of the competences according to CEFR. In order to do that, we present this set of activities in which we propose a variety of tasks to promote interactions and teamwork. Geography is the thread that runs through the entire proposal. Our objective is to bring Europe closer to our students having in mind that geography is a key issue in an environment in which there is multicultural students. As each of the students has a different background, we take that as something positive to work with. Students may feel free to express and share ther own experiences. The methodology used in this proposal is the Task Based Learning method which we think is the most appropiate way because it promotes teamwork, interactions between different classmates even if they have different levels. This set of activities allows the teacher to use them in a class where there is a variety of levels because the activities are adaptable to different situations.

One of the biggest challenges in the 21st century school is to structure and promote a curriculum that considers the diversity of cultures and languages found in the classrooms all over Europe. Possibly the most difficult question is how to manage this diversity, develop and adapt new ways of teaching the target language (Second language) in order to improve plurilinguism, not only multilinguism, to help our students to put into practice competences, abilities and learning strategies to strengthen their lifelong learning. During the learning process of a Second language (from now on L2), the mother language of our students also plays an important role since the learner comes to class with a whole background that shouldn't be forgotten or avoided**.** Multilinguism must not be unperceived therefore the pedagogy of a language must be aware of that to achieve a successful learning. As well as multilinguism, plurilinguism needs to be considered when teaching foreign languages. Working through different strategies based on new technologies and tools such as internet and the web 2.0 focused on Task Based Learning methodologies, the teacher may bring real situations to class and facilitate a more meningful experience during the learning process.

Taking into account the *Common European Framework of Reference for Learning* (CEFR), we propose a set of activities to develop general competence, communicative competences (sociolinguistic and pragmatic) that help us to use strategies which allow the learning throughout student´s life at the same time they develop self-study and autonomy. Besides, in our proposal, the European dimension has a key role as we present the analysis and study of it through different tasks .As it is considered in the CEFR, the sociolinguistic competences are a key issue when it comes to language teaching, so this set of activities are designed following the Task Based Learning methodology with the aim of increasing and improving student´s communicative skills as using the cooperative work/learning. They promote the learning of the culture and social conventions in Europe. At the same time, students will be working their pragmatic competence as they have to work with different parts of a text and they have to produce their own speech as they interact with their classmates.

Our methodological proposal has as an objective learning to learn and work in groups in a cooperative way. It allows the students to learn in a way that will help them to work together and it will also encourage them to get autonomy through the L2. Using this methodology, cooperation and sharing experiences and different opinions, proposals and knowledge will arise. In this way, natural interactions appear helping the students to progress, as they develop their self-esteem which encourages the learning of the foreign language.

The affective aspect of this proposal enriches the tasks developed. Emotional factors are taken into account when the activities are planned and also when they are carried out in the classroom. This affective and emotional dimension affects both teachers and students. In this project the learning experience is also directly implied in this emotional perspective. The students are the ones who play the main role in the learning process and teachers become closer to the concept of the 'task development agent'. As teachers of a L2, we need to work different aspects, strategies and tools. The task based learning methodology fosters cooperative work and a meaningful learning in the process. The learning environment provides materials and resources that add this affective aspect, which

allows the students to become aware that they play an active role in the learning process. It also helps to develop a meaningful learning that changes the student behaviour towards this process.

Another important aspect of this educational proposal lies in the fact that even though these activities are designed for students who are learning Spanish, they could be easily adapted to different situations and learning contexts. Language learning, team work, and key competences development are the primary focus. Studying a language is not only knowing linguistic codes but also being able to manage interactions according to the different backgrounds. In this proposal, we focus mainly on these aspects and not on the grammar points. The activities developed in this proposal will be available on the web for further study: viajeintercultural.wordpress.com.

The tasks proposed are the following:

1. **Our world: a critical look, another world is possible**: The key point of this set of activities is to bring political maps and projections to the classroom and become students aware of why there are so many different types of representations of the planet Earth. At the same time, we will compare some map projections in order to catch the students' attention to the diversity of perspectives shown on a range of maps. After the study of different map projections, the students should state their opinion about some of them, comparing and spotting differences. Finally, the learners will work together and design a map by themselves showing their perspective about the world they live in.

2. **A trip around the world**. This activity of three tasks in which the students have the opportunity to study (or revise, depending on the level), some countries and their capitals using a political map. In order to do that, along the process, they must place the name of the countries given on the map and identify their capitals. Then, using the vocabulary learned to read a text about the teacher's plans for his/her holidays and correct some mistakes about the countries and their nationalities. Finally, the students should think about places they would like to visit on their holidays and use the internet to look for information about the countries they would like to visit and use a power point to present their route to the class.

3. **Together in Europe**: these activities are divided in two parts. In the first one we deal with geographical aspects of Europe. The teacher starts asking some general questions to introduce the topic, and then students need to work together as they deal with capitals, countries and flags and how to put them on a map. In the second part, we deal with historical aspects and Europe's popular cultures as well. Students have to read two texts, in the first one they have to answer a set of questions in groups. After that, there is a quiz which is meant to be a way to check students' knowledge. After that, they have to work in pairs to complete different parts of a sentence. In the next activity students' work together as they deal with sentences stated by philosophers, writers and polititians. They should express what they understood, felt or thought. Finally, the teacher presents a text based on the myth of Europe for students to draw a storyline about what they have understood.

4. **Discover the city**: is a set of activities in which students deal with new vocabulary that will allow them to work using maps and directions. At the same time, they work with their classmates and share personal experiences by interviewing them.

5. **Let's travel!** : Task based lesson using a webquest in which most part of the information will be found online. The students will be divided into groups and link what they have learned in the previous activities to plan a trip to a place chosen.
   To do that, they will need to follow some steps to decide where and when to go, places to visit, means of transport to use to arrive to the place selected, what they would like to eat in the country visited.
   Once the information about the trip is selected and classified by the groups, they should design and introduce their work to the whole class using a *powerpoint* presentation. Self evaluation will help the students to understand their role during the learning process.

6. **The story of my journey (**Transmedia storytelling): this transmedia storytelling activity embraces the use of different tools through different stages of the task. It also allows students to participate in the class as they listen to their classmates and share a common experience: their journey to the new country.

To sum up, learning a foreign language in a natural an unconscious way like the mother language is learnt. This is the aim of the methods of language teaching. So, in order to achieve this goal, teachers should be able to provide tasks that use real communication contexts. The students face real learning situations in which they become the key role in the process. It also develops and favours spontaneous interactions between students and guarantees the fluidity in comunication so they get to know each other and share their experiences and realities promoting intercultural awareness. Such methodology

encourages teamwork as it brings students together so that feel free to take decisions and participate in the task.

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