TEACHx

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Course: Spanish 199: Language in Context: Contemporary Spain
Students: 16 per section
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Rolling R's and Taking Names

(Self-)Assessing Speaking in the Foreign Language Classroom Through Videoconferencing

Context

Visibly improving the speaking skills of our students in the foreign language classroom is a challenge, especially in a quarter system where we only meet for 10 weeks. At the intermediate level, the proficiency at which most of my students are, it is particularly challenging, given that learners typically reach a plateau in their language acquisition at that point.

This project will hopefully help them move forward with their learning process given that the videoconferences will provide concrete evidence of errors and opportunities for accurate feedback that the student will be able to review and apply to future assignments.

Project

The project consists of a series of three videoconferences of 10 to 15 minutes each that students will be completing in pairs throughout the quarter. In each videoconference, students will discuss a specific topic as well focus on a main grammatical point or linguistic function (both aspects directly related to the content being covered in the course at that point). At the end of the videoconference, each student will individually complete a self-assessment (checklist format), and I will also provide a holistic individual assessment (rubric based on the Integrated Performance Assessment).

But what is truly innovative about this process is that all these components (the recorded videoconference, the self-assessment, and my assessment) are contained in a Canvas- and user-friendly software application called Arc. Students simply have to set up an account in Arc, which is already embedded in our Canvas course site. Arc also archives all three videoconferences so that students can, at the end of the quarter, compare and analyze their conversations and see their progress.

Objectives & Outcomes

In Spring 2016, I implemented the project in my class (this was a perfect pilot opportunity given that I am only teaching one section, as opposed to my regular three sections per quarter). At the end of the quarter I will have some data to share regarding results. I have also designed pre- and post-assessment tools that will help measure student improvement.