**Intercultural Activity Design: 1.6 Exploring Culture through a Virtual Mascot**

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**Communicative Modes:** *Interpersonal Speaking*

**Intercultural Elements**: *Discovery & interaction Critical cultural awareness*

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| **Overview:** | |
| Source Activity: | 1.6 Exploring Culture through a Virtual Mascot (Corbett, 2010, p. 24) |
| Description: | The class and e-pals make and exchange classroom mascots which they use to discuss aspects of culture within their respective communities. |
| Context: | public high school novice to intermediate learners of Spanish; in second semester of learning |
| **Objectives:** | |
| * Students will be able to describe people, places, and events by writing descriptions of a classroom mascot and its adventures within the community to their e-pals in the target language. * Students will be able to compare cultures of their and their e-pals’ communities by reading descriptions of the mascots, their adventures within the communities, and viewing the photographs taken along the way with a classroom discussion around the cultural elements found within these artifacts focused on the similarities and differences between the communities. | |
| **Plan:** | |
| Class Time: | Day One: 40 minutes  Consecutive Days: 20-30 minutes\* \*May need more days depending on length of response time from e-pals. |
| Materials: | * Paper * Markers * Computers * [Descriptions, Places, and Events Vocabulary](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bVQaa8hGys0mwF-9-6hz7rTQdT_o4q0o/view?usp=sharing) * [Photo of mascots (Box 1.6a, Corbett, 2010, p. 25)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uYWrC4tGD4o1rziNKgnm8f6AZ39eCnXU/view?usp=sharing) * <https://www.olympic.org/pyeongchang-2018-mascot> * <https://graphicmama.com/blog/21-famous-brand-mascot-designs-time/> |
| Preparation: | * Students will have already had e-pals assigned prior to assignment. * Students will have already been instructed on making descriptions in the TL * Preparation should take about 10-15 minutes. Make sure photos and websites are ready to view and that computers are accessible for generating email to e-pals. |
| Procedure: | Day One:   1. Introduce the concept of a mascot. Have them reflect on mascots (animal, person, or mythical creature) in sports and their representations in a group, community, or company. Show them examples using the links provided. Can be conducted in TL or NL. (5-10 minutes) 2. Have students brainstorm ideas for a possible class mascot. Then, decide as a class what the mascot will be to represent the class. Can be conducted in TL or NL. (5-10 minutes) 3. Allow students time to design, scan, and send a copy of their mascot to their e-pals. You can draw it as they give suggestions (ie two arms, blue stripes, mean eyes, etc.), have a student volunteer draw it on the board for all to see, or have students in small groups create their own for each group using the paper and markers. Descriptions given should be communicated in the TL and reinforced if needed in the NL. (5 minutes)   4. Then, guide the students through a group composition in the TL to give the mascot a brief biography using the questions below: (3-5 minutes) ) \*Group composition can be teacher led and students generate a response to the questions. This will depend on how you choose to roll out the activity (as a class, small groups, or individuals)\*   * What is its name? Where does it come from (local)? What does it like to eat? What are its hobbies?   5. Send the mascot(s) to e-pals by taking a photo of the board or paper and email the photograph to their e-pals with the biography (written in the TL). (2 minutes)  6. Then, decide as a class some local activities that the mascot should experience. Have students take the mascot to these areas of the communities to “see the sights” and experience the local community. Can be conducted in TL. (3 minutes)   * Ex. Local restaurants, sporting event, beauty spot, shops, markets, etc.   7. Divide the class into small groups and have them choose an activity to experience with the mascot. (5 minutes)  Day Two:   1. After completing the activity, have the students write up a small report in the TL about what they experienced in the community and send them to their e-pals along with photos of the experiences. (10-20 minutes) Within the email, they should invite their e-pals to take their mascot on an adventure throughout their communities and report back on the experiences in the e-pals’ communities.   Follow Up: Students can generate questions to ask their e-pals based on the experiences reported from their partners. They may discuss various landmarks, local restaurants, history, customs, class/ school environment, etc. |
| Assessment: | 1. Completion of the mascot creation, reports of the events/activities, questions for the e-pals about the mascot adventures abroad.  2. Participation in the design of the mascot, community experiences, photos of the mascot in the community, observations about cultural aspects within the mascot experiences in the communities.  3. Teacher can give students a mascot and have students describe the mascot including various activities that the mascot may complete based on their own experiences with their chosen mascot.  4. Teacher can have students complete a Venn Diagram of the similarities and differences between their mascot and the mascot of their e-pal. An oral summation of conclusions drawn within the Venn Diagram could elicit the need for communication in the TL as well as provide an opportunity for the teacher to assess student achievement of content through this project! |
| Recommendations / Variations: | Students could create postcards / journal entries as if they were the mascot doing the various events within the community. |
| **Rationale:** | |
| This activity allows students to create something (a mascot) that they feel represents them. They must negotiate meaning within this process as well as communicate their thoughts as to why they are making the choices that they make. Additionally, they must identify various locations within the community that they deem valuable as areas that represent their community for their e-pals. Likewise, they will then receive similar information from their e-pals thus providing an opportunity to explore intercultural themes hopefully yielding intercultural competence.  Furthermore, this activity will allow students an opportunity to increase their vocabulary skills through interpersonal communication in relation to physical descriptions, places, and characteristics. Their use of this vocabulary several times within the verbal classroom discussion, written e-pal exchanges, and summative classroom discussion held at the end comparing the events and mascots. The use of the e-pals will provide an opportunity for the students to interact with someone outside of their community in the TL. This online environment will need to have an established set of rules and regulations for discourse within the community as well as support for discussion topics (Corbett, 2010, p. 9).  ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL.org):   * In my own and other cultures I can make comparisons between products and practices to help me understand perspectives. (Intermediate) * I can make comparisons between my community and the community of my e-pal. * I can interact at a competent level in familiar and some unfamiliar contexts. (Advanced – depending on student TL abilities/level of course) * I can generate a correspondence in the TL about locations in my community and review information about unfamiliar places using similar language. * I can converse with peers from the target culture in familiar situations at school, work, or play, and show interest in basic cultural similarities and differences. (Intermediate) * I can interact with my epal in the TL in relation to my local community while reflecting on his/her community. | |