

WEB-BASED ACTIVITIES

Each task is designed, taking into account the language knowledge (i.e., grammar and vocabulary) students would need to be successful (Ballman, 1996). The activities integrate South Asian culture and language. They vary in terms of foci on language forms, language functions, culture, etc.; in terms of purpose, reporting on trips, describing photographs, looking at pictures and matching descriptions, finding places on the map, etc.; in terms of skill development goals; and in terms of learning processes and modes.

Activity 1. Describe the pictures from the Web. Beginning Hindi (second week).

Preparation: I start the very first sessions with Total Physical Response activities. We build in class simple copula indicative or imperative sentences using vocabulary for objects, fruits and vegetables and space orientation (postpositions). The second week we use the computer lab and use pictures from the Web to make descriptions.

Goals: It is easier for the students to contextualize their language use through visual support, and on the other hand, the images are interesting to see since they represent some aspects of Indian reality.

Advantages: Working in pairs with a specific task allows for enough time for all the students to practice speaking and also the instructor in this way can attend individually the pairs and provide guidance if needed. Printed out colorful images can work instead, but the Web allows for students to go back at home to these images and the teacher is free of worry in terms of copyright and the condition of the pictures after they are used.

Target skills: These sets of activities I have designed for the development of the speaking and writing skills, along with emphasis on new vocabulary.

Strategy training: memory, affective, social, metacognitive.

Description:

- Step 1. The students are asked to download a photo from the virtual photo album, a collection of images supported by the LCTL project at the University of Minnesota (<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/vpa/vpa.html>)
- Step 2. During the beginning of the session the instructor brainstorms for question words and their position in the sentence (information available in the textbook¹).
- Step 3. All students open one particular picture. The teacher asks questions based on it and students respond in Hindi.
- Step 4. The whole class open a second picture and students take turns in asking a question and their neighbor provides the answer.
- Step 5. Students get in pairs and download a picture assigned on a handout-out to each pair.
- Step 6. One of them asks the questions and their partner answers.
- Step 7. They write down a full description of the image and leave it next to the computer.
- Step 8. They move to another computer where a different picture has been downloaded, read the description left there and after putting their names down write additions or corrections.
- Step 9. The instructor collects the descriptions at the end of the session.

Follow-up: The homework is to write up as many questions as possible about one image

¹ First Year Hindi Course by Van Olphen, Herman, University of Texas, Austin.

assigned to the whole class. The next day's session takes place in the lab again. The goal is to recycle the question words and to introduce vocabulary for colors with the same kind of exercises.

Activity 2. Hindi Matching Web-Exercise. Beginning Hindi (4th week).

(http://carla.acad.umn.edu/webexercises/front_page).

Target skills: grammar, listening, reading, speaking skills and culture competence

Description:

- Step 1. (5 min.) The instructor explains the steps of the web-exercise and students start with oral brainstorming based on the two pictures included in the first page.

Strategies involved: Metacognitive - organizational planning, identifying the purpose of a language task, setting goals and objectives. Cognitive - predict upcoming information by using visual clues.

- Step 2. (15 min.) In pairs, students write down as many questions as possible related to the pictures, and ask the class or their partner for an oral answer. The teacher writes on an overhead projector all the question words for a review.

Strategies involved: Cognitive - using common knowledge; using a rule (question word order, adjective-noun agreement). Memory - placing relatively new words in specific context and using imagery.

- Step 3. (10 min.) students listen twice to two descriptions from the sound file. The first time only listen and the second time, they also take notes.

Strategies involved: Metacognitive - selective listening by attending to key words and types of information. Cognitive - note-taking by writing down key words in abbreviated verbal or graphic form.

- Step 4. (5 min.) students simultaneously read and listen to the description. If necessary they skim the text once again in order to complete the matching task.

Strategies involved: Metacognitive - selective reading, delaying speech production to focus on reading and listening. Cognitive - formally practicing with sounds and writing system, making inferences by using information in the image and the text to guess meanings of new items.

- Step 5. (20 min.) students are asked to go back to the first page of the exercise with no text and, in pairs, to prepare a more detailed oral description of one of the pictures by using their notes and their previous knowledge in order to present it at the end of the session.

Strategies involved: Cognitive - elaboration of prior knowledge by relating new to known information. Memory - repetition, active use of new items in a specific context with visual support. Social - cooperation with peers.

Follow-up: Students introduce a set of characters appropriate to the pictures and create dialogues based on the pictures.

Activity 3. Hindi Web-Exercises. Hindi Intermediate level (group size: 10)
(<http://carla.acad.umn.edu/webexercises/river.html>)

Target skills: grammar, listening, reading, speaking skills and culture competence

Description:

- Step 1. (5 min.) In pairs students brain-storm and write down what they see or associate from the picture in the web exercise and report.

Strategies involved: Metacognitive - planning and organizing. Cognitive - making personal analogies.

- Step 2. (15 min.) students take turns and orally describe what they see on the picture by trying to be relatively cohesive.

Strategies involved: Cognitive - elaboration of prior language knowledge and use of common knowledge.

- Step 3. (15 min.) Individually, every student listens to and reads the description of the picture made by a native. The class discusses the differences.

Strategies involved: Cognitive - using imagery to learn new information; repeating and practicing sounds & script. Social - developing cultural understanding.

- Step 4. (20 min.) In groups of three students are asked to use the picture and write up a short story by introducing a set of characters and creating a dialogue which, at the end of the session, they exchange with their colleagues from other teams to receive some peer feedback.

Strategies involved: Metacognitive - planning, managing and organizing. Cognitive - use reference materials (notebook, dictionary, textbook). Social - work with classmates and pool information/knowledge.

During the follow-up session all students return the short stories with their comments to the authors; students from each team prepare for and make an oral presentation/dramatization of their story, make final corrections and hand them in to the teacher.

Activity 4. My trip to India last summer. Intermediate Hindi.

Targets: perfect tense and ergative construction, transitive intransitive verbs in use, geography of South Asia.

Preparation: Work with the textbook.

Goal: selective listening, speaking and writing.

Note: (The instructor should download the news audio file from the Web before the session because it takes at least 10-15 minutes: gopher://gopher.voa.gov:70/11/audio/realaudio/hindi_1600_news.ra)

Description:

- Step 1. (5 min.) Warm up - What did you do yesterday, last weekend, last summer, etc.
- Step 2. (10 min.) Listen for perfective verb forms: students open the audio file and first only listen for all the past tense forms of the verbs that they can hear and recognize during the first 2 minutes of the broadcast. Then they listen to the same piece of news again and try to write down all the forms - work in small competing groups.
- Step 3. (5 min.) Report what you could hear: A volunteer from each group writes on a separate sheet of paper their items. Winning is the group that has the largest number of items heard. The teacher writes the verb forms on the overhead projector.
- Step 4. (20 min.) Design your trip: students gather in small groups/pairs and open location <http://wings.buffalo.edu/world> where they will find a clickable map. They try to design their one-week-trip to the country of their choice and take notes on what they find interesting and worth visiting/experiencing (e.g. cities, places, restaurants, museums, etc.). They are encouraged to use an English-Hindi dictionary if needed to and use their notes and textbook to make references.
- Step 5. (15 min.) Report on your trip: Each student is asked to report on at least a couple of days from the imaginary trip.

Follow-up: For homework students are asked to write up a description of their seven-day-trip. The follow-up activity is during the next session when in pairs they talk about their

trip in a loop exercise and answer questions from their partner for clarification, because at the end of the lesson they are supposed to report in about 10 sentences about the trip of their partner.

Activity 5. Geography (<http://www.vtourist.com/webmap/>). First Year Hindi.

Task: Go to any place in the world (e.g. country, city, village, mountain, island, etc.) and keep a travel log in Hindi on the way there (e.g. "It is a mountain in Asia. It is to the north of India, to the East of Pakistan...").

Advantages: Usually, students enjoy this activity because it is in Hindi and it allows for meaningful communication even at the beginning level of language study. It also has a language non-specific value as it often improves general knowledge of the world geography. At the same time it frees the instructor from the need to introduce mechanical repetitions and drills. This particular activity I combine with reviewing and adding new interrogative words. It takes place right before the questioning starts by quick brainstorming and by having a volunteer write them down on a transparency for the overhead projector. Most importantly, the activity offers different modes of learning - visualization, hands-on techniques, writing and speaking .

Target skills: speaking.

Description:

- Step 1. students pair up and go to the place of their choice by clicking on the map.
- Step 2. Each pair takes turns to answer to the questions asked by the rest of the students in order to provide the information the class needs to guess their place.
- Step 3. If there is time left students write down a full geographical description of the place of their choice and turn it at the end of the session which is usually not more than ten simple sentences.

Follow up: for homework they have to pick up another spot and to prepare an oral description of it for the next session.