



DigiEduHack Solution

Teachers of languages for specific purposes

Challenge: Teachers of languages for specific purposes Challenge 2020

The architecture through historical monuments

Architecture through historical monuments

Knowledge of ESP is a prerequisite for working communication because the more you know ESP, the more possibilities there are to improve your working conditions and achieve success. Going abroad is not always possible and study can help students to improve their knowledge and skills.

Team: Gretaly

Team members

Margarita Chatzoudi , Elizabetta Cazzolla , Danai Koutsoumpeli

Members roles and background

Elisabetta is a Spanish teacher in an Italian language high school, precisely in Brindisi. Here she works among peers together with two Greek students. Margarita is a current student in the Faculty of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies at Athens. She would love after graduating to start teaching the Turkish language. This is the first Hackathon that she takes part in and here she works with an Italian Spanish teacher and a fellow student of hers. Danai is currently studying Turkish and Modern Asian Studies in Athens. This is her first Hackathon collaborating with a Spanish teacher and a fellow student.

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Solution Details

Solution description

It is not easy to build an educational module on such a specific language and in particular with a topic that is very broad, architecture and art can be declined in many ways, but above all it was not easy to work online in such a short time. For this reason we decided to focus on architecture, especially Greek and Italian classical because the team is made up of members from these two countries. Our goal is the learning and strengthening of vocabulary through activities that develop different skills; improving languages as ESP in students. We have decided to divide our unit lesson in three main steps: warm-up (students approach a well-knowing vocabulary), reinforcement of vocabulary (students work on this aspect in different ways, we only have made one example of exercise), speaking interaction (here, too, we have focused on small examples). Every unit at the end has a debate. Why the debate? Since, it is a methodology that helps the student to learn from different points of view; from the purely linguistic one to the motivational, social, cognitive one. The Debate leads students not so much to memorize contents, but to question themselves on the validity of these contents, spurring them to go to the root of the concepts and to question, the last but not the least, they will put all their skills into play. As a closing of the project, we thought of a small video game, (the game is a complex and involving experience, it activates the subject globally and allows him to participate, to be protagonist, to learn through practice, in a constant and natural way, increasing his knowledge and skills) where students enter virtually into the Parthenon and the Pantheon and to be able to go on they have to choose the right words, not only those learned in our unit but during their studies as our target are students of specific schools such as art or techniques; the debate and the video game are the common thread of each unit of our hypothetical manual.

Solution context

We have tried to develop all the language skills but in particular the speaking ability because the foreign student, despite having a lot of knowledge, when presenting a job, a project, a report or simply doing a role-playing activity, has to face many difficulties, such as the difficulty of speaking in public, the fear of making a bad impression in front of the teacher or classmate or simply the lack of knowledge of vocabulary. Our challenge is to perfect and improve the specific language of our target group's students. According to Krashen, the student acquires when the content is slightly above his/her knowledge, in our challenge the L2 student, starting from simple crosswords arrives at a debate that is much more complex and thus acquires more knowledge.

Solution target group

We have decided to choose learners belonging to the last years of High School, a specific school like

Art School, technical School ect. Thanks to European and international mobility, more and more students decide to study abroad or an Erasmus project, and in both cases the language of communication is English. Starting from this assumption we decided to choose high school students precisely because they represent the right starting point for a real improvement of ESP, reducing the gap between knowledge and communication of their own knowledge that L2 students often face when they go out. We have decided to choose learners belonging to the last years of High School, a specific school like Art School, technical School ect. Thanks to European and international mobility, more and more students decide to study abroad or an Erasmus project, and in both cases the language of communication is English. Starting from this assumption we decided to choose high school students precisely because they represent the right starting point for a real improvement of ESP, reducing the gap between knowledge and communication of their own knowledge that L2 students often face when they go out. Then, every learning involves moments of metacognitive reflection and the debate represents the most complex part, while the video game and the test through a challenge (you can use applications such as Kahoot or Mentimeter) are the most playful and less loaded with expectations on the part of the learner. The class must be a place without tension and relaxed for students who can express themselves[25]without problems, the more relaxed the atmosphere is, also through the use of playful approaches, the more relaxed they will be in their oral productions.

Solution impact

We are optimists and we think the impact of our solution will be positive, because students learn by doing: they are tourist guides, they plan, they confront each other in a debate, they play and they challenge each other. This first debate was conceived in a little bit different way compared to the standard way, a mix between debate and impossible interview; among the (pros) are the representatives of classical architects, on the other (cons) the ultra-postmodern ones. The question was: should art be codified or free to express itself? In this way our students among the research activity, the drafting of the debate, the exposition, be involved, develop soft skills and a critical spirit. After the video game, on the other hand, we thought an evaluation activity through Kahoot or Mentimeter, it is not original but the challenge and competition are always a strong stimulus to learning. We are optimists and we think the impact of our solution will be positive, because students learn by doing: they are tourist guides, they plan, they confront each other in a debate, they play and they challenge each other. This first debate was conceived in a little bit different way compared to the standard way, a mix between debate and impossible interview; among the (pros) are the representatives of classical architects, on the other (cons) the ultra-postmodern ones. The question was: should art be codified or free to express itself? In this way our students among the research activity, the drafting of the debate, the exposition, be involved, develop soft skills and a critical spirit. After the video game, on the other hand, we thought an evaluation activity through Kahoot or Mentimeter, it is not original but the challenge and competition are always a strong stimulus to learning. Also, one of our goals is to extract the fear from each student when he/she learns new vocabulary. We think that the activities we have chosen will help the student to face the new terminology with a more positive perspective. They are able to learn, to play with words, learn interesting information and of course to interact and collaborate with each other. By these activities the process of learning a new language is much easier and far from traditional education like learning words by heart. Our aim is learning by experience, by interaction with the new language in order to shape students with more confidence about their language skills.

Solution tweet text

What's the better way of learning the architectural terminology from learning from the architectural

miracles themselves? So, let's learn more about architecture!

Solution innovativeness

Perhaps, at first sight our solution seemed not as original as it could be if we only consider the methodologies chosen but, keeping in mind our target and based on our experience, both as a teacher and university language students, we thought that starting immediately with activities that are too divergent from educational standards produces unconscious states of anxiety in the student that block his/her learning process because they have stereotype ideas about an English foreign class. In our project we begin by guiding the learner using their previous knowledge and in a crescendo we arrive at the most complex part which is the oral exposition of a debate, perhaps the real difficulty lies in trying to expose and convince a jury in a determined and rigid time. We are firmly convinced that the part relating to the debate and the videogame can be considered the most innovative one. First they can

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Solution transferability

This unit lesson does not claim to be exhaustive but a starting point of how a specific language can be taught. Some of the proposed exercises can be integrated or modified according to the level of knowledge of the learner. We were thinking in a wider project, a kind of book or interactive book where this unit lesson is only prototype and, as we expose in the question n° 11, every module can have a life of its own in a crescendo of difficulties, approaching a different aspect of the working life or university world. At the same time it can be applied in other contexts because the main structure of our project can be used for other ESP, for example engineering, medicine, marketing etc. We did several researches on internet and we called experts in the field, and both modalities highlighted how much the student or the foreign worker, especially from the Mediterranean basin, even if they have a good school or work preparation, they have a lot of difficulties to express their ideas, for example finding a design slogan to a given image, making a report, presenting a work project etc. It is for this reason that we have created a lesson with a basic skeleton to make it adaptable to every aspect of ESP teaching. We give the skeleton of the lesson and the teacher chooses from a virtual container the exercises most suitable for his students. Obviously this lesson presupposes a very important work of preparation upstream. If, on the other hand, the lessons are frontal, the professor's book has to contain worksheets with a certain number of activities for each topic. In sum, we would say that one is a dynamic and customizable work.

Solution sustainability

One of the major issues that foreign students deal with the English terminology is the ability of speaking in front of the public. Due to their limited knowledge in vocabulary and especially terminology they find it difficult to express themselves properly without having to worry about that. Our plan for the implementation is to boost the confidence of each student about speaking. Also we would really love to help them approach learning as a way of expressing themselves, not as something obligatory.

Solution team work

I personally had a hard time working in English. I signed up for the challenge thinking of doing it in Spanish, all of which produced serious difficulties in expressing my ideas. Also the problems of work commitments and generational gap created misure understanding at the beginning, but in the end we found a solution. Yes, i could continue to work with them in the future (Elisabetta)

Personally my greatest problem wasn't working in English but I found it really hard to understand what the target of the hackathon was and create educational tools without having ever taught before. However, I believe that in the end we were able to put all the ideas together and create a nice work. I would love to do it again despite that this was my first time participating. (Margarita)

As it was my first time on Hackathon I was really concerned about defining our goals and collaborating with two persons I had never worked with, while having limited time to prepare. However, we had an effective collaboration that resulted in the creation of an innovative method of teaching a foreign language. I would really love to continue working with this team in the future. (Danai)