

This activity was originally developed for an advanced high school Spanish class with the purpose of engaging learners in task-based, written interpersonal communication. The task that the learners are engaged in, planning a party, requires considerable negotiation and some target-language research in order for learners to arrive at an accord.

Learning Objectives:

Learners will be able to:

- Use vocabulary related to party planning appropriate to context.
- Research in the target language to inform decision making.
- Respect imposed limitations and arrive at an agreement when making decisions with a partner.

Modes: Interpersonal Communication, Interpretive Reading

Materials Needed: Computers with internet access, Gmail accounts for teachers and students, Decision Making Handout

Procedure:

1. First, activate the schemata of learners by having them read an article similar to “100-Year-Old Woman Celebrates 25th Leap Day Birthday” (<http://stlouis.cbslocal.com/2016/02/29/leap-year-100-year-old-woman-celebrates-25th-birthday/>). As the learners read, have them look for any information that would be necessary to know when throwing a party for the person featured in the article. Then, learners will brainstorm what other decisions would need to be made to plan one such party as a class. Both the brainstorming session and the article review should occur in the target language.
2. Next, divide the learners into pairs. After they are in their pairs, have them reflect on how well they think that they can engage in the learning objectives of the lesson by rating their perceived abilities on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest). This reflection will be carried out on their own sheets of paper, papers that should be kept for reference later on in this activity.
3. After that, give learners the Decision Making Handout. This handout describes a situation for them in which they are traveling from Spain to Cuba in order to throw their 100-year-old grandmother a birthday party. They have \$4000 to spend on the trip and the party. Though some target-language resources are provided to them as the research the prices of the various goods that they need, the learners will have to find additional resources to complete the activity.
4. After reading the handout and understanding both the decisions that are required of them and the limitations that are placed on their decision making, the learners will engage in a Gchat using Gmail accounts to arrive at those decisions. They will document the decisions that they make and the information that supports those decisions on the Decision Making Handout.



5. To close the activity, learners will email the table from the Decision Making Handout and the transcript of their conversation to the teacher for evaluation.
6. Finally, learners will use their tables and transcripts to reflect upon how well they were able to achieve the learning objectives of the activity. They will consider their pre-activity evaluations from Step 2 and will decide whether or not they should adjust their self-scores. They should justify this decision making process with evidence from their work.

Notes: Educators will find that having learners set up their Gmail accounts before starting this activity will save considerable class time.

This activity can easily be adapted to lower proficiency levels by allowing some target language use, especially during the brainstorming phase outlined in Step 1. An additional scaffolding mechanism would be to provide the learners with all of the target-language resources that they need to complete the activity. This scaffolding mechanism would, however, engender the removal of the second learning objective.

Lastly, this activity has the potential to require currency conversions. If this is the case, it provides educators with the opportunity for meaningful cross-curricular planning with another instructor from the mathematics department.