

Title of case study

Using authentic assessment and outreach activity to upskill students studying Portuguese

Staff Lead

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School/ Department

School of Histories, Languages, and Cultures

Faculty

Humanities and Social Sciences

Name of course and module (if applicable) case study took place within

PORT311 - Proficient Portuguese 11

Please briefly describe the activity undertaken for the case study

A recent redesign of the assessment of the final-year Portuguese language modules resulted in the creation of a task-based assessed assignment: a "Portuguese language taster". This assignment involves the preparation of a "Portuguese language taster" to be delivered in class, followed by an essay describing the rationale underlying the presentation. In the taster, the students produce an overview of the language and its cultures, enriched by their experiences during their Year Abroad stay in a Lusophone country. In this way, students develop their Portuguese language skills, but also acquire important employability soft-skills: the development of presentation techniques and an understanding of cultural diversity, which is crucial in the context of an increasingly globalized world.

After this, and as part of our outreach efforts, students are offered the opportunity to present their taster in a local school. In this way, they put into practice the intercultural understanding and research and presentation skills developed in class, while at the same time engaging prospective students in the study of a language at university level.

I was keen on having my students deliver language tasters at local schools, since peer to peer presentations have proven to be an effective way to raise awareness of the importance of language learning at University level. I had also been investigating ways in which to create a more authentic mode of language assessment in my language modules. The project was born of the desire to bring these two ideas together. Students would create language tasters, which would be assessed in-class, and they would also have the opportunity to present their tasters in schools, thus inspiring a new generation of language learners. Results have been very pleasing: authentic assessment provides learners with the opportunity to focus on the learning process itself, gaining important employability skills in the process, and the tasters have become important outreach tools for our Department.

How was the activity implemented?

In my final year Portuguese language classes, students work in teams to produce an assessed language taster, which they present to their peers in class. They receive in-class feedback on their taster from me and their peers, and later write a self-reflective essay upon their experience. Once the semester finishes, students are given the opportunity to present their taster in local schools.

Has this activity improved programme provision and student experience, if so how?

This activity improved our programme provision in many ways. Listening to students' presentations on the language and cultures they have come to know allowed me to gain an understanding of the pleasures, and also the challenges, of their academic careers and lived experience in Lusophone countries. These insights have been helpful for me in designing student-centred classes catering to their needs.

Students very much enjoyed this activity. Those who took the opportunity to deliver language tasters in local schools were especially positive about the assignment. The video accompanying this case study (in the links section) testifies to the students' enjoyment of the assignment and their clear awareness of the important employability skills acquired during this activity.

Did you experience any challenges in implementation, if so how did you overcome these?

Surprisingly, the greatest challenge in implementing this assessment had to do with deciding on the weighting of the assessment of the different components of the activity. Group presentations can be difficult to assess fairly, especially since preparation takes place outside of the classroom. After speaking with language teaching colleagues about their practices, I concluded that a combination of 30% of the mark for the in-class presentation and 70% for the individual essay was a fair and balanced weighting.

The other difficulty was the relatively low number of students who actually take the opportunity to deliver their presentation in a school. This is a particularly busy time for students, who are studying for their final year assessment and at the same time preparing for their future. However, a recent suggestion from the UoL CIE team to have language taster outreach activities approved as a HEAR activity should increase the number of students presenting language tasters in schools in the future, as this activity will now be shown on their HEAR.

Which Liverpool University Hallmarks and Attributes does this case study relate to (tick all boxes that apply)

Research-connected Teaching

Active Learning	X
Authentic Assessment	X
Confidence	X
Digital Fluency	
Global Citizenship	X

How does this case study relate to the Hallmarks and Attributes you have selected?

Active Learning

Students work in teams to create a presentation (language taster) in their target language (Portuguese), which provides an overview of the language and culture and draws on their shared experiences of living in the country. Each group presents to the class and participates in a peer review process, receiving and offering feedback from/to peers. They also have an opportunity to deliver an English-language version of this presentation in local schools.

Authentic Assessment

As students prepare and deliver their in-class presentations, and reflect on this experience and on the feedback received, they know that they will have the opportunity to deliver the tasters in a real school. This brings an added sense of responsibility and excitement to this assessed task.

Confidence

By delivering their tasters, first to their University colleagues, and later to an audience of teachers and schoolchildren, students develop their communication skills and confidence as presenters. In the reflective essay, many students commented on how they overcame anxiety and even found it enjoyable to present before their peers.

Global Citizenship

In the course of this assessment, students reflect on their learning experience in our language modules and on their Year Abroad, and this makes them more aware of the richness of their experience as global citizens. By presenting their taster in local schools, they share the experience of living in another culture and what it has taught them, and inspire young people to follow in their footsteps.

How could this case study be transferred to other disciplines?

This approach could be transferred to any other discipline which involves in-class presentations and student-led outreach activities.

If someone else were to implement the activity within your case study what advice would you give them?

- In-class presentations do not always go according to plan, so be prepared to have a plan B when a student cannot attend on the day.
- I found it useful to prepare an assessment guide, with all the steps of the activity explained in detail.
- Do not forget to record the session and have the camera ready. The marketing team can help with this.
- It is important to introduce a self-reflective component (essay or in class discussion) to the activity, and create a space for reflection on the skills and knowledge acquired.
- My department's Outreach Lead has been invaluable in helping me set up the tasters in local schools. It is important to look for colleagues who can help.



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