





## The Spanish Cultural Exchange Project

Jennifer Bentivegna-Lei  
Bram Morjinis



## Project Goals

- **Motivation:** Engage students in foreign language and culture study through contact with student peers overseas.
- **Metacognition:** Open students' minds to other cultural perspectives and see themselves from the eyes of others.
- **Authentic Learning:** videoconferencing provides a real-life, natural language usage context.



## Objetivos

**The First Videoconference:**  
To build a relationship with our Spanish partners, and get a sense of who we all are, how much we know, and what we need to learn.

**The Second Videoconference:**  
To show the Spanish students how much we've learned about them, and have them be impressed with the showcasing of our web pages.

**The Third Videoconference:**  
To share what we care about and experience through student-created videotapes, and have more direct student-to-student communication.

## Student Comments

- The responses were quick and the sound quality excellent, even all the way from Spain!
- We were able to learn things directly, not through other people's assumptions about culture
- It was fun and exciting to meet new people from a different place.
- This was a unique experience, as we probably will not ever visit Spain.
- We like to learn from our peers rather than a teacher – some of us relate better to kids.
- Spanish kids look and act just like us!
- We learned about what they do in their free time, and sports they play.

## More Student Comments

- It was fun to see the sudden recognition in everyone's faces when they understood what we were saying.
- It was cool to be able to laugh about something with people on the other side of the Atlantic.
- We learned a lot through their answers, but more through the mistakes.
- We appreciate the opportunity to do something really special.
- We got the chance to hear a real Spanish accent.
- The delay looks weird when we/they laugh late.
- It was helpful that they would repeat things when we didn't understand.

## Post-Conference Activities



- ◊ The **Webquest**: [with Carol Ueland, Sharon Davis]  
<http://www.taconichills.k12.ny.us/middle/school/scep/valencia>
- ◊ The **Web Pages** (Learning Village Home Pages):  
<http://www.taconichills.k12.ny.us/middle/school/SCEP/pages.html>
- ◊ The **Bulletin Board** (Learning Village Team Project):  
<http://lv.taconichills.k12.ny.us/lv/teamproj.nsf/OpenDatabase&Login>

## Follow-up for the One-Computer Classroom

<b>Team 1</b>	
Kristin Knickerbocker	Culture & School
Amanda Flouren	Food and Geography
Melina Hoyt	Fun & Socializing
<b>Team 2</b>	
Robert Lachance	Fun & Socializing
Brian Elliott	Fun & Socializing
Nicole Chambers	Culture
Kristin Darnquest	Geography & School
<b>Team 3</b>	
Drew Cooklin	School & Geography
Elizabeth Hunt	Fun & Socializing
Lisa Mullaney	Culture
Sara Dings	Food
<b>Team 4</b>	
Karla Hasler	Food
Natalie Amundola	Fun & Socializing
Jackie Tye	School & Geography
Heather Simmons	Culture
<b>Team 5</b>	
Heather Walters	Culture
Harley Nardone	Geography and School
James Mack	Food
Allan Kraft	Fun & Socializing

- **Evaluating Internet Sources:** looking at the list of websites put together for our webquest, identifying authors, evaluating content.
- **Evaluating Student Work:** looking at our web pages, asking questions of the creator, offering Plus / Minus / Interesting comments.

## Reflection Session

- **A. Thanks for the feedback!** This is R&D for us.
- **B. Putting It In Perspective:** What we accomplished
  - 1. The First Videoconference
  - 2. The Team Project
  - 3. The Web Pages
- **C. The Second Videoconference:** Lessons Learned
  - 1. What I learned
  - 2. What we learned
  - 3. What did you learn?
- **D. Next Steps**
  - 1. Keeping the Pages & Team Project Up and editable
  - 2. Doing a Third Videoconference
  - 3. Participating in a March Showcase

## Some Lessons Learned

- Always have a live meeting with partner teachers before the videoconference to plan and test the protocols and technologies.
- Videoconferencing is high profile, high tension. Students feel they're on television. Be very sensitive to body language! Middle school students can have a hard time remembering what they know when they feel under stress.
- Planning for sessions requires lots of "active listening" reinforcement to make sure both partners know exactly what is planned required, PARTICULARLY with LOTE partners.