Exploring the Metro

THEME: CULTURAL CONTEXTS (TRANSPORTATION)

LANGUAGE: ANY

STANDARD(S): COMMUNICATION CULTURES CONNECTIONS COMMUNITIES

1.1 1.2 1.3 2.1 3.2 5.1

Time Frame:

Two or three 50-minute class periods

Materials Needed:

- Computer stations with access to the Internet

- Websites (examples provided)

- Maps of metro systems in target cultures (optional; portions of this activity can be done with maps if Internet access is not available)

- Handouts for Internet exercise (provided)

- Scenarios for role plays (examples provided)

- Multitrait rubric for assessing role plays (provided)

- Audio or video recorders and tapes (optional)

Description of Task:

Context:

This lesson provides opportunities for students to explore the Internet as an information resource in two ways (Hoffman, 1996). First, students have the opportunity to visit websites and search for specific information. Second, students will seek out international key-pal partners from the target culture to learn culturally appropriate behavior on the metro. This information will assist them in resolving the dilemmas in their role plays in informed, culturally appropriate ways.

Level:
Intermediate-Mid/High

Purpose:
To use technology to explore the metro system; to request information via e-mail

Communicative Function(s):
Directive: Requesting information

Referential: Talking about things in the environment; interpreting information

Imaginative: Solving problems

Language Structure(s):
Question formation; present tense

Cultural Aspects:
Exploring the metro system as a means of transportation and understanding culturally appropriate behavior for the metro; polite forms of address

Modalities:
Reading

Writing

Speaking

Listening

Pre-task:

The teacher introduces the task by asking students to brainstorm and then list all the possible modes of transportation that they can. Next the students imagine being in a large metropolis, such as Paris, Mexico City or Berlin (P/MC/B). They list all the possible means of transportation in this city. Teacher then poses the following questions and asks students to share this information orally with a partner:

• Have you ever used the metro or subway system?

• If so, where?

• When?

• With whom?

• What was it like? What was confusing/exciting/difficult/fun about it?

Finally, teacher asks the class, "What might you need to know and want to say in order to use the metro system in P/MC/B?" Teacher provides language structures/vocabulary as necessary on the blackboard.

Cooperative Group Formation:

The teacher asks students to imagine that they are planning a visit to P/MC/B. They will have only three days in P/MC/B, so they will be required to use the time efficiently and need to make some plans for the trip! Each student needs to find three traveling companions and form a cooperative working group. To divide the class into cooperative groups, the teacher distributes cards with the names of various metro stations. There must be at least four cards for each station so that students can find individuals with a matching card. Once students have found their groups, they choose a cooperative group role (possible roles: Surfer, Task Facilitator, Time Keeper, Recorder, etc.).

Metro Search Task:

The challenge for the group is to search the Internet for tourist attractions and information about the metro system in P/MC/B. As a group, they should discuss the possible destinations and then choose three that they want to visit. Using the city's metro map as a guide, they need to plan an itinerary for their visit to the city (see handout provided). The handout also requires them to search for information about the city's metro system and determine the approximate cost in the foreign currency for their trip on

the metro. Students will need to practice the target language necessary for communicating this information to another group.

Post-search Task:

To debrief this activity, students form new groups according to their roles within the cooperative group, i.e. all time keepers in one group, etc. In these new groups, student share their group/findings and travel plans.

Role Play:

The teacher assigns one scenario (samples provided) to each group and explains that they need to create a role play in their cooperative groups. Groups will be given the Internet addresses of PenPal/Key Pal lists (see below) and are asked to contact three key-pals from the target culture. They should introduce themselves in the target language and describe the specific scenario they will be presenting. Students will need to construct a series of questions for their key-pals to answer. [The teacher should check the questions before they are sent!] The questions should provide them with information about culturally appropriate practices regarding use of the metro. After allotting sufficient time for preparation, students audiotape or videotape their role play. [Alternatively, groups can present the role plays to the class.]

Post-task:

Following the audio/video-taping or presentation of the role plays, teacher will ask students to reflect on the group's resolution of the dilemma and the use of technology to assist their efforts during the process. For example: How did your group resolve the dilemma? Do you feel this response was culturally appropriate? Why or why not? Was the information received from the key-pals helpful? Did you learn anything new about the target culture or about the potential of the Internet as an information source? Explain.

Assessment:

The teacher will informally assess the metro search task by observing student interactions when students are grouped according to roles and sharing their information from the completed handout. Completion of the handout provides a comprehension check.

Role plays will be formally assessed with a multitrait rubric (provided). Peer evaluation can be conducted in addition to teacher evaluation of the role plays. Students can individually listen to each group's audiotape (or view videotapes) in the language lab (Otto, 1991) or at stations within the language classroom. Students will use the evaluation rubric to facilitate peer assessment of both content and language use. The same rubric can be used if role plays are presented in class.

Extensions:

Suggestions for adapting the task for various levels:

For beginning levels: Beginning students could complete the Internet search task only, and the task can be simplified.

For advanced levels: All of the activities and discussions can occur in the target language (including the handout for the Internet search and the role play scenarios).

Other extensions:

Students can create problem-solving role play scenarios after interacting with international key-pals and requesting information about possible scenarios.

Cultural extensions:

Students compare the subway system of one large city in the U.S. (e.g., New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington D.C.) and compare it with that of the metro system in the target culture.

References and Resources:

Hoffman, R. (1996). Computer networks: Webs of communication for language teaching. In M. Pennington (Ed.), *The power of CALL* (pp. 55-77). Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Otto, S. (1991). The language laboratory in the computer age. In W. F. Smith (Ed.), *Modern technology in foreign language education: Applications and projects* (pp. 13-41). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Websites:

General:

Subway Navigator provides access to subway information in a multitude of cities spanning the globe. Maps, suggested routes, station information, etc. are provided.

http://www.subwaynavigator.com (Subway Navigator)

Paris:

http://www.anu.edu.au/french/french.html (The French Connection)
http://www.france.diplomatie.fr (Le Serveur France)
http://www.france.com (France Online)
http://travel.excite.com (Search for France)
http://www.pariscope.fr (Cultural information for Paris and France)

Berlin:

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/berlin (City Information)
http://travel.excite.com (Search for Germany)

Mexico City:

http://www.travel.org/mexico.html (Travel.org - Mexico)
http://www.go2mexicocity.com (Mexico City Travel Guide)

Money conversion:

http://www.xe.net/cgi-bin/convert.new

For international key-pals:

This site provides a list of schools in the U.S. and around the world that are linked to the Internet and interested in exchanges.

http://web66.coled.umn.edu/schools.html

IECC is a free teaching.com service to help teachers link with partners in other cultures and countries for email classroom pen-pal and other project exchanges.

http://www.iecc.org

This site provides information about connecting with international keypals.

http://www.collegebound.com/

Reflections:

EXPLORING THE METRO SYSTEM:

1.   Three tourist attractions that we intend to visit:

    a.

    b.

    c.

2.   Each group will depart from the metro station named on their group's metro card. How we plan to get there by metro:

Starting station/line	Transfer station(s)/line	Destination station/line

3.   How long should it take you to arrive at your desired destination? Explain your response.

4.   Your group has US$35.00 to spend for transportation during the day. How much does that amount convert to in the foreign currency?

5.   What are the hours of operation for the metro on weekdays? weekends?

6.   How many separate lines are available on the metro? How are the lines differentiated?

7. How does one know which metro car to take since each line travels in two directions?

8. Name one line that traverses the city from east to west and one that travels north-south.

   a.

   b.

9. What is the population of this city? Estimate how many people use this means of transportation daily. Who do you think might travel by metro in this city? Why?

Role Play Scenarios for "Exploring the Metro"

- You are lost in a metro station where four lines intersect and you need to ask for help to read the map and find a way to your destination.

- You are at the window at the metro station trying to purchase a token. You discover that you don't have enough foreign currency to purchase a token! Ask the employee to allow you to change some money or ask one of the customers in line to make the exchange with you.

- You are in the metro station, standing in a long line at the window waiting to purchase a token. You are running late for an important appointment, and you know from experience that if you don't board the incoming train at this station, you'll have another 10-minute wait before the next train. You hear in the distance the arrival of the train, so you decide you'll ask the people in front of you if you can move to the front of the line to be sure to make the train.

- You are seated in the metro and the doors open for the next stop. Two street musicians board and begin to perform. You and your traveling partners enjoy the entertainment. As the train nears the next stop, the musicians begin to solicit contributions from the passengers by using a cup. Discuss with the group members how you will respond.

- You are boarding the metro for the first time and you notice that it's very crowded, requiring many people to stand. You need to discuss proper etiquette for the trip with the group members. How will you respond if an elderly person boards? a pregnant woman? a small child? Can one travel with luggage? Is smoking or eating permitted? Do you look people in the eye?

Rubric for Role Play—"Exploring the Metro"

	Ideas/Content	Participation	Word Choice	Pronunciation	Language Use
4	Focuses on topic; Provides culturally appropriate content	Each group member assumes an active role in presentation	Appropriate for context; clearly communicates ideas	Pronunciation and intonation are level-appropriate	Few or no syntactical errors; Appropriate usage
3	General focus on topic; Most content is culturally appropriate	Each group member assumes an active role; 1-2 students dominate	Mostly appropriate for context; mostly communicates ideas, though at times may be confusing	Always intelligible, though one is aware of definite accent and lapses in intonation	Some syntactical errors; Mostly appropriate usage
2	Moves away from focus; Some content is questionable in terms of cultural appropriateness	Uneven participation among group members; 1-2 students are mainly passive	Some words appropriate for context; at times word choice causes confusion and inhibits comprehension	Pronunciation problems partially impede comprehensibility	Many errors in form and word order; Some appropriate usage
1	Unfocused; Lacks culturally appropriate information	Uneven participation among group members; some students do not participate	Word choice inappropriate for context; Limited vocabulary makes comprehension difficult	Very difficult to understand because of pronunciation problems	Errors in syntax impede comprehension; Inappropriate usage

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