

Content-Based Instruction

Dr. Fischer

April 13, 2008

CBI Salsa Rueda Activity

Salsa Rueda is a Cuban-style of dancing that is taught in dancing schools worldwide. The dance is performed in a circle of five or more pairs of dancers, who follow a leader's order and swap partners around the circle. The names of all the moves are called out in Spanish by the leader and the rest of dancers perform them simultaneously.

I propose to create a course in Spanish that would teach students how to dance Salsa Rueda with the goal of performing it on the International Latin American Dance Conference in Oaxaca Mexico. After 10 weeks of classes, the class will travel to Mexico and perform their dancing act in collaboration with ten couples from five European and five Latin American countries. The preparation for the performance as well as the collaboration in Oaxaca with the other dancers will be conducted in Spanish.

The curriculum of Salsa Rueda will provide students with a variety of communicative abilities in Spanish. Students will practice reading, speaking and pronunciation each class because each class meeting will have a student who will be the assigned leader calling out moves and being in charge of the coordination of the group. Listening of the dance calls and other dancing commands will be carried out through a variety of TPR activities. In addition, students will practice writing and reading through written communication via e-mail with the other 10 pairs of dancers, who will be

attending the Conference and joining them in the performance. Throughout the ten weeks students will explore many cultural aspects that will lead them to a better understanding of the dance and also the importance of dancing in Latin American cultures.

Activity #1

The assigned leader for the class meeting receives the list of calls that will be practiced during the class period. For example, he/she receives the following calls: "Abrázala", "Dile que no", "Candado", "Sombrero", and "Havana". Students are divided in groups of 2 pairs (total of four students). The leader for the class reads the calls and assigns each group a call from the list. Groups are asked to discuss the meaning of the call and to create a dance move for it. Groups have 10 minutes to communicate and create their new move. Then, each group presents their move in front of the class (1 minute per group). Classmates can comment on it or ask questions about the move (5 minutes at most). This part of activity emphasizes the communicative and creative aspect of language and dance as students are asked to negotiate the meaning of the call and create a move that for them represents the meaning of the call.

Afterwards, the instructor introduces the actual move pertaining to the call and asks students to verbally repeat the call. Then, through a TPR activity with the whole class students practice the body movement of the call in addition to the verbal repetition. This part of the activity exercises the listening ability and pronunciation of the calls. Once the class seems comfortable with the new moves, the instructor plays the music and students follow choreography made by the instructor but lead by the assigned leader.

How about adding a few structural targets (imperative, deber, tener que) and the vocabulary of expressing quality (to get beyond "good" + "bad")?