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CRYNOLDEBAU / ABSTRACTS

ENTERING THE 'DRAGON'S DEN': A CREATIVE
APPROACH TO TEACHING SPANISH BUSINESS
LANGUAGE

JENNIFER WOOD

This presentation will introduce participants to a group work project used in the second year Spanish Language of Business module, focused on enhancing the student learning experience and encouraging language students to see the connection between skills gained in the classroom and their 'real world' application. In addition, this project fosters a collaborative and participatory learning experience, where students are encouraged to work together and take ownership of their own learning.

Students are expected to work independently throughout the semester, in small groups of 3-5 people, on the creation of a business, which they are then expected to present to their peers, in Spanish, in a Dragon's Den style scenario at the end of the module. The purpose behind this approach is to foster transferable and employability skills and encourage entrepreneurship, alongside the necessary linguistic skills, and to tailor these both to the learning outcomes of the module and to students' overall degree programme, as many students who take this module study Spanish as an element of studies in Business or Tourism. This assessment is also aimed at encouraging those students who are not Business/Tourism students to engage creatively with the module.

Assessment consists of a variety of elements to actively engage students in the process and allow for students with different learning styles and skill levels to have an opportunity to present their work to advantage. Assessment includes (i) both tutor and peer feedback and assessment – peer marks are included within the overall grade for the assessment; (ii) an individual portfolio, including a reflective piece; and (iii) the final group presentation in which all students must participate equally and for which they receive a group mark.

Student feedback on this group project is positive, with a marked increase in student satisfaction on the MEQ, while comments received focus on the positive impact students see on both their employability skill-set and their increased confidence in presentational and oral communication skills. However, of course, during the process of preparation, not everything runs smoothly and students also must learn how to collaborate, negotiate and manage the problems which arise when working in a team.