

*Engaging Students in Interpersonal  
and Presentational Communication  
via Digital Tools*

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# Introductory Remarks

Many of the curricular requirements in an AP Italian Language Culture and Course can and should be incorporated into pre-AP levels of instruction. Two of these requirements deal with modes of communication:

1. The course provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency in spoken and written Interpersonal Communication.
2. The course provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency in spoken and written Presentational Communication.

# Digital Tools

Digital projects increase student motivation while building communicative skills and cultural awareness in the L2 classroom. A digital tool is an on-line resource that focuses on user creation, collaboration, sharing of content and social networking. Digital tools make speaking and writing in the target language fun by presenting students with an opportunity to express their individuality and creativity through multimedia.

# Common Core State Standards

According to the Common Core State Standards, students must master vital 21<sup>st</sup> century skills including technical skills and media literacy skills. Moreover, students must be able to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and think creatively.

The activities that I will describe in this presentation were designed by Cristina Pausini, Coordinator of Italian, Tufts University. I will discuss four digital projects that we use for the elementary level at Tufts.

# Key Questions

- How do I want my students to benefit from using web tools?
- What types of tasks promote meaningful communication and interaction?
- How should feedback be provided and by whom?

# Interactive Blogs through Word Press Interpersonal Writing

- Blog 1:** Scegli la foto di un personaggio famoso e descrivilo.
- Blog 2:** Scegli una foto di famiglia, descrivi i suoi componenti e spiega cosa fanno.
- Blog 3:** Scegli una foto del tuo piatto preferito e descrivilo. Quali sono gli ingredienti necessari per cucinarlo?
- Blog 4:** Scegli una foto di un vestito che ti piace e descrivilo nei dettagli. In quale occasione puoi o vuoi indossarlo?
- Blog 5:** Scegli la foto di un posto che non hai mai visitato e immagina di fare un viaggio lì: quali saranno le tappe del viaggio? Cosa vedrai? Con chi andrai?
- Blog 6:** Trova la mappa di una città italiana, poi da' istruzioni a un tuo amico su come andare dalla stazione del treno ad un luogo turistico famoso di tua scelta (una piazza, una chiesa, un museo...)

# Directions & Feedback

Two language sections work together within the same blog. Both instructors provide models for each topic. After students post their personal blogs, they comment on three or four blogs among their peers in both sections. Instructors provide substantive feedback, without explicit error analysis, to their own students as well as a few students in the other class.

# Why Blogging in a Language Class?

A blog is a creative and interactive learning space which promotes language fluency. The focus is on self-expression and exchange rather than error correction. Students receive feedback through multiple viewpoints, track their progress and maintain motivation.



# Listen & Speak through Audio-Lingua

## Presentational Speaking

### **Listen and Speak 1:** Le mie materie preferite

Parla dei tuoi corsi. Qual è la tua materia preferita? Qual è il tuo professore o la tua professoressa preferito/a?

### **Listen and Speak 2:** La mia famiglia

Parla della tua famiglia. Descrivi i membri della tua famiglia: cosa fanno nella vita di ogni giorno? Quali sono i loro hobbies?

### **Listen and Speak 3:** Al ristorante

Immagina di essere in un ristorante in Italia e ordina un pasto completo secondo il modello suggerito da Ilaria.

### **Listen and Speak 4:** La vigilia di Natale

Parla della tua festività preferita. Cosa fa tradizionalmente la gente quel giorno? Cosa fa tipicamente la tua famiglia?

# Directions

Each language section has its own site in Trunk (Tufts course management system).

Students listen to an audio clip in Italian and then check their comprehension by answering some “true/false” questions which they self-correct with the answer key provided.

Students record their own audio clips of approximately one minute in length, speaking without a script.

Students can use the following free internet websites with a microphone to make their recordings:

[www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com) and [www.chirbit.com](http://www.chirbit.com)

# Feedback

The instructor provides specific feedback to each student with regard to pronunciation and intonation as well as pace and delivery, and some content analysis.

# Resources

The following website contains audio clips uploaded by native speakers of several languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Occitan, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish:

<http://www.audio-lingua.eu/spip.php?rubrique6&lang=fr>

Alternate tools for presentational speaking include: [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com) and [www.blabberize.com](http://www.blabberize.com).

# Final Video Projects through Vimeo Presentational Speaking & Writing

- Ti presento la mia famiglia
- La prova del cuoco: una ricetta italiana
- Avventura in un caffè o in un ristorante italiano
- Avventura in un negozio di abbigliamento
- Uno spot pubblicitario

# Directions

In groups of 3-4, students write a script for one of the situations from the list above. The script contains dialogues, about 4 to 6 pages in length. The instructor grades the first draft with a correction key. Students submit a revised script for final corrections by the instructor. The group then produces a video, four to five minutes long.

# Grading Rubric

The final grade is based on the following categories:

- Content and Organization (script)
- Grammar and Vocabulary (script)
- Pronunciation and Fluency of Speech (video)
- Costumes and Props (video)
- Audience Engagement (questions for the rest of the class after the video presentation)

# Feedback

The instructor provides specific feedback with regard to linguistic structures on two drafts of the script. Because this is a collaborative project, there is no individual pronunciation help.



# Digital Story Telling through Voice Thread

## Presentational Speaking & Writing

Students prepare final presentations consisting of a digital story using Voice Thread, free software that allows students to upload digital images, voice and music to create a story. The project consists of several stages, including the creation of a storyboard, drafts and revisions, feedback from other students, and the production of the digital story for final class presentations.

# Resources

To see an example of a digital story for a foreign language class, go to:

- [http://voicethread.com/community/library/HigherEd Studying Abroad in Ecuador David Thompson/](http://voicethread.com/community/library/HigherEd_Studying_Abroad_in_Ecuador_David_Thompson/)

Alternate tools for presentational speaking and writing include: [www.goanimate.com](http://www.goanimate.com) and [www.littlebirdtales.com](http://www.littlebirdtales.com).

# Grading Rubric

The final grade is based on the following categories:

- Initial script (syntax, grammar and vocabulary)
- Feedback to other DST projects
- Revised script (syntax, grammar and vocabulary)
- Pronunciation and Voice Quality on 2<sup>nd</sup> take
- Overall originality (pictures, topic, plot)

# Feedback

The instructor provides specific feedback with regard to linguistic structures on two drafts of the script and conducts individual pronunciation clinics before the final recording. After the initial recording, students provide constructive feedback on the storyline, character development, voice intonation, choice of images etc. Because students add individual comments in written or spoken form, the project becomes interpersonal and collaborative.

# Why Digital Storytelling in a Language Class?

In creating and telling a story, students are actively engaged in using the language for communication. Students use a variety of grammatical structures learned in class although the story is narrated in the past. Students pay attention to cultural elements specific to the target language people and their habits.