

What Keeps Me Busy?

THEME:	EDUCATION (WEEKLY SCHEDULE)			
LANGUAGE:	ANY			
STANDARD(S):	COMMUNICATION	CULTURES	COMPARISONS	
	1.1 1.3	2.1	4.2	

Time Frame:

30-40 minutes

Materials needed:

- Notebook paper and strips of cut paper on which students can write ten simple sentences
- An example of a student's daily schedule from the target culture

Description of Task:

Pre-writing:

Individually the students brainstorm and then generate a list of their daily activities including their activities during the school day.

Writing:

After several minutes, students are to compose at least 10 simple sentences stating what they do during a typical week, including the time, and write these sentences on the small strips of paper. (Ex: I go to math class at two o'clock. I play tennis on Tuesday at five-thirty.)

Reading:

After the sentences are written, students pass the 10 strips of paper to a partner who will determine the sequence of the activities and arrange the activities in order, beginning with Monday. When completed, the partners read their lists aloud to each other. The author listens to verify the correct order.

Level:

Novice-High

Purpose:

To communicate successfully about one's daily schedule

Communicative Function(s):

Interpersonal: Making appointments

Referential: Talking about things/events

Language Structure(s):

Present tense verbs and expressions for telling time

Cultural aspects:

Daily life and comparing students' schedules in the U.S. with those in the target culture

Modalities:

Speaking

Listening

Writing

Reading

Speaking:

Assigned pairs of students are to imagine that they need to meet with their partners to work on a class project. It is necessary that they discuss their schedules and negotiate to find a common time to meet. They will work with their partners until they find at least three times during the week that they can meet. When they find some possible times, they will jot down the three times that they plan to meet and turn this in to the teacher.

Follow-up Discussion:

The teacher will show students an example of a student's typical daily schedule from the target culture. Students should compare and contrast their own schedules to the one from the target culture and come up with a list of what they view as the advantages and disadvantages of the two schedules. As a class, students will be asked to comment on similarities and differences. Teacher may pose some of the following questions:

- What is different/similar about the length of the class periods?
- Are there any courses offered which are not offered in U.S. schools?
Are there courses in U.S. not offered in the target culture?
- Do students in the target culture have the same classes at the same time every day?
- How long is the break for lunch and between classes?
- Do the students stay at school for lunch?
- Do they stay after school for sports and other extra-curricular activities?

As a class, students can brainstorm about why they think these similarities and differences might exist. They should be encouraged to think about what this might indicate about the two cultures.

Assessment:

Pairs of students will self-check the sentence sequencing activity. The teacher will informally assess students' speaking ability as they negotiate a meeting time with their partners. Teacher will ask pairs what time they will be meeting and which conflicts prevented them from meeting at other times.

Extensions:***Suggestions for adapting the task for various levels:***

For beginning levels: Pairs of students can make a list of the daily activities that they share and those that they do not have in common.

For advanced levels: Students can include a third or fourth person in their groups in order to find a common time for all of the group members to meet.

Other extensions:

- Students can interview an exchange student from the school and find out what the typical daily schedule is like for teenagers in this student's home country. Students can then report back to the class on their findings.
- The same kind of paired interactions can be set up with different scenarios. For example, students can role play a conversation in which two friends are trying to decide on a movie to see (needing to determine the date and time, the theater, and the movie). Such a task can be made increasingly complex by assigning specific roles and schedules to the students so that extended negotiation is necessary for students to agree on a date, time, movie, and theater (e.g., Student A dislikes horror films and action films, is busy on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, etc.).

Cultural extensions:

Students can research the school system in the target culture and explore other aspects of the system which may differ from our educational system in the U.S.

Reflections:

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