

TEACHERS' FORUM

Practical Strategies for Developing Speaking Skills in Asynchronous L2 Courses

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This article presents a curricular model designed to strengthen oral production in asynchronous second language (L2) instruction. Developed within a Spanish L2 program at a large public university in the southern United States, the model responds to a persistent pedagogical challenge intensified by the post-pandemic shift toward remote learning: fostering communicative competence without real-time interaction. Grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Output Hypothesis, Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, the model integrates two complementary asynchronous oral activities: (1) *Video Conversation Threads* and (2) structured, proctored *Oral Description Tasks*. The first promotes interaction, confidence, and social presence through multimodal, low-stakes exchanges, while the second reinforces grammatical accuracy, lexical control, and procedural familiarity with formal assessment formats. These tasks establish a scaffolded progression that supports both communicative fluency and linguistic precision. Implementation across multiple course levels followed two sequencing configurations: a Sequential Scaffolding Model emphasizing gradual skill development and a Cyclical Scaffolding Model reinforcing iterative learning. Preliminary observations from instructors and students suggest increased learner engagement, confidence, and digital competence, as well as reduced anxiety in high-stakes oral assessments. This framework demonstrates that meaningful oral communication can be effectively cultivated in asynchronous environments through intentional design, iterative practice, and reflective feedback. It offers a transferable, theory-informed approach to integrating oral production into online and hybrid language courses.

1. Introduction: Oral Production in the New Normal

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly altered the landscape of higher education, accelerating the adoption of remote instruction and reshaping student expectations regarding course delivery. Asynchronous online learning has now become a preferred modality among many college students in the United States (Johnson, Veletsianos & Seaman, 2022). This trend is mirrored at a large public university in the southern United States, where enrollment in asynchronous sections of Spanish L2 courses has steadily increased since 2022, reflecting a broader shift toward flexibility, learner autonomy, and remote access. This shift highlighted a persistent pedagogical challenge: how can oral production—traditionally fostered through real-time interaction in a classroom—be meaningfully developed in asynchronous online environments?

Most commercial language-learning materials continue to prioritize face-to-face or synchronous delivery, relegating asynchronous components to auto-graded, text-based exercises that rarely foster authentic communicative engagement (Clark & Grove, 2015). Consequently, instructors and program coordinators must devise original practices to promote interaction, fluency, and

community within asynchronous environments—a challenge widely shared across second, foreign and heritage language programs. In many cases, these initiatives emerge through individual experimentation rather than from theoretically grounded and standardized frameworks capable of producing consistent, measurable outcomes (Blake, 2013; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Hubbard, 2021).

This article introduces a curricular response to that challenge, implemented within a Spanish L2 program and grounded in established theories of second language acquisition (SLA) and online learning. The proposed model integrates two complementary asynchronous oral production tasks: (1) low-stakes, participation-based *Video Conversation Threads*, which promote confidence, interaction, and social presence; and (2) structured, proctored image-based *Oral Description Tasks*, which strengthen grammatical accuracy, lexical control, and exam preparedness. Together, these activities create a dual pathway for developing communicative fluency and structural precision in asynchronous contexts.

The sections that follow describe the institutional context and pedagogical need (Section 2), outline the theoretical and pedagogical foundations underpinning the model (Section 3), detail the curricular design and task implementation (Section 4), present preliminary outcomes and reflections (Section 5), and conclude with implications and directions for future research (Section 6).

2. Institutional Context and Pedagogical Need

The Spanish L2 program at a large public university in the southern United States—where the present proposal and subsequent reforms were developed—serves a diverse student population across a full sequence of beginner-to-intermediate courses aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012), from Novice Low to Intermediate High. Each course spans a full academic term and integrates instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking, and culture.

Instruction across levels relies primarily on *Portales 2.0: Introductory Spanish* (Blanco, 2023a) and *Portales 2.0: Intermediate Spanish* (Blanco, 2023b). While these materials provide robust grammatical and cultural content, they are primarily designed for face-to-face or synchronous instruction, a trend also evident in other widely adopted programs such as *Vistas* (Blanco & Donley, 2023) and *Encuentros* (Martínez et al., 2022). As scholars have noted (Blake, 2013; Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Hubbard, 2021), most commercial textbooks emphasize real-time communicative interaction and instructor-led practice, offering limited pedagogical support for asynchronous modalities that require greater learner autonomy and technological mediation. Consequently, asynchronous sections functioned largely through auto-graded, text-based exercises that provided few opportunities for meaningful oral communication. Instructors in these courses often supplemented the textbook with individually developed tasks, resulting in uneven practices and inconsistent learning experiences across sections.

In 2022, the program launched a series of pedagogical reforms aimed at aligning the curriculum more closely with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Two major innovations were introduced across all modalities through the institutional Learning Management System (LMS), with particular emphasis on asynchronous courses, where student-to-student interaction had historically been minimal. These included (1) the incorporation of asynchronous “discussion forums” to promote interaction and (2) the development of a proctored Oral Midterm Exam to assess spoken proficiency within a controlled environment.

Although well-intentioned, both initiatives presented significant challenges. The “discussion forums” were typically designed at the discretion of individual instructors, producing heterogeneous formats with inconsistent expectations, assessment criteria, and levels of complexity. Prompts and rubrics were created independently, based on shared program goals but without a standardized template, leading to substantial variation across sections. As these forums were text-based, many

students produced minimal or formulaic responses merely to satisfy participation requirements or relied on translation and AI tools, limiting opportunities for authentic language use and spontaneous interaction.

By contrast, the Oral Midterm Exam was a standardized, proctored, high-stakes assessment implemented across all sections. In this task, students were shown a picture and asked to describe it using specific grammatical structures and vocabulary provided in the prompt. They were allotted between one and two-and-a-half minutes of active speaking time, depending on level, and fifteen minutes total for preparation and performance. However, many students used the preparation time to script and read their responses, limiting the exam's capacity to measure spontaneous speech. Moreover, evaluation focused primarily on grammatical accuracy and lexical precision, and the high-stakes nature of the task intensified student anxiety. In addition, students were unfamiliar with both the task format and the use of proctoring tools, which often led to technical difficulties, heightened stress, and reduced performance, as reported by both instructors and students.

To address these challenges, a revised format for both activity types was piloted in Spring 2024 in an intermediate-level Spanish L2 course with 27 students. The new design emphasized greater standardization, interaction, and pedagogical support, aiming to create more authentic opportunities for oral communication and community building in asynchronous contexts. For the “discussion forums,” the reform shifted focus from written participation to spoken interaction through short, multimodal contributions as *Video Conversation Threads*. For the “Oral Midterm Exam,” scaffolding was introduced through preparatory *Oral Description Tasks* distributed throughout the semester, enabling students to build confidence, fluency, and technical familiarity before the high-stakes assessment. These innovations sought to balance communicative spontaneity with structural control, providing low-stakes contexts for oral practice while gradually preparing learners for formal evaluation.

Preliminary observations from the pilot indicated that these curricular changes addressed several longstanding challenges in asynchronous instruction. According to instructor reports, students were more willing to participate, demonstrated greater comfort with oral tasks, and engaged more thoughtfully with peers' contributions. Likewise, informal student feedback reflected increased confidence and a stronger sense of community within the asynchronous environment.

Building on these positive outcomes, the coordination team extended the redesign to all “discussion forums” and “Oral Midterm Exams” across the Spanish L2 program. The pilot model served as the foundation for a standardized version, refined through clearer instructions, detailed rubrics, and unified evaluation criteria. Implemented across all levels and modalities—including face-to-face, synchronous, and asynchronous courses—beginning in Summer 2024, the new model has since become a central component of the program's curriculum.

3. Theoretical and Pedagogical Foundations

The instructional design proposed in this article draws on four complementary theoretical perspectives from applied linguistics and online education: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the Output Hypothesis, Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework. These perspectives explain how language learning can occur meaningfully and interactively in asynchronous environments, providing the conceptual foundation for the oral production tasks detailed in Section 4. The integration of these theories responds directly to the pedagogical needs identified earlier in Section 2, seeking to create structured yet communicative spaces for authentic interaction and skill development.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) remains the dominant paradigm in second language pedagogy, emphasizing learner interaction, negotiation of meaning, and the use of language for authentic purposes (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 2002). Because CLT promotes task-based, student-centered learning through activities such as role plays, discussions, and open-ended exchanges, it provides a strong foundation for fostering fluency and engagement. Implementing CLT in asynchronous settings, however, requires thoughtful adaptation, since learners do not interact in real time. The challenge lies in designing tasks that preserve the social and spontaneous nature of communication while accommodating the delayed pace of online exchanges. Within this framework, asynchronous video-based activities serve as a bridge, recreating dialogic interaction and offering learners semi-authentic opportunities for oral production that sustain the communicative intent of CLT.

Complementing CLT, the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985) underscores the central role of language production in acquisition. Producing language compels learners to notice gaps in their *interlanguage*—the evolving linguistic system constructed as they internalize elements of the target language. Through production, learners test hypotheses, monitor their output, and establish form–meaning connections that promote linguistic restructuring. Unlike written or multiple-choice exercises, oral production requires real-time decision-making and deeper cognitive engagement. In asynchronous environments, video-based speaking tasks can encourage learners to plan, produce, and self-monitor their speech, while peer and instructor feedback sustain an ongoing cycle of production, reflection, and reformulation, an iterative process central to this design.

Building on the interactive emphasis of CLT and the cognitive mechanisms of the Output Hypothesis, Sociocultural Theory (SCT)—particularly in the Vygotskian tradition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006)—frames language learning as a socially mediated process. Development occurs through interaction, scaffolding, and internalization within a social context. In asynchronous courses, mediation can take the form of instructor-recorded video feedback, peer replies within conversation threads, and the observation of classmates’ performances. These affordances support learners’ internalization of linguistic structures, pragmatic routines, and discourse patterns while promoting self-regulation and audience awareness. SCT thus reinforces the pedagogical value of socially grounded, collaborative interaction in asynchronous language learning.

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000) complements these SLA-based perspectives by emphasizing the importance of community building in online education. CoI identifies three interdependent elements—social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence—essential for meaningful learning. In the proposed model, social presence emerges as students appear on video, respond to peers, and engage in conversational threads that humanize asynchronous interaction. Teaching presence is enacted through intentional task design and instructor-recorded feedback, which provide guidance, correction, and encouragement. Cognitive presence develops as students plan, articulate, and reflect on their responses, engaging with peers’ contributions and observing diverse linguistic strategies.

Collectively, these four frameworks—CLT, the Output Hypothesis, SCT, and CoI—form a cohesive pedagogical foundation for the proposed design. By integrating principles from SLA and online learning theory, the model leverages video-based interaction not only to approximate real-time communication but also to address learners’ cognitive, social, and instructional needs. The result is a multidimensional framework that fosters authentic interaction, metalinguistic development, and confidence-building within flexible asynchronous learning environments. The following section operationalizes these theoretical principles through two complementary asynchronous oral production tasks designed to balance communicative interaction with structural accuracy.

4. Curricular Design and Task Implementation

Building on the communicative, sociocultural, and cognitive principles outlined in Section 3, this curricular model operationalizes these frameworks through two complementary asynchronous oral activities: (1) *Video Conversation Threads* and (2) structured *Oral Description Tasks*. As noted in Section 2, the model was designed to address pedagogical challenges identified in the Spanish L2 program at a large public university in the southern United States. However, its flexible design and theoretical grounding make it adaptable to other instructional contexts, including second, foreign, and heritage language programs. The following subsections outline the model's design, describe each activity type, and present two sequencing alternatives that illustrate how these tasks can be integrated into diverse course formats.

4.1. Video Conversation Threads

The first activity type transforms traditional written “discussion forums” (see Section 2) into interactive, multimodal *Video Conversation Threads*. In these tasks, students record short video responses to open-ended prompts—such as “Describe your weekend plans,” “Introduce yourself to the class,” or “Talk about your favorite cultural tradition.” Each student then watches their peers’ contributions and replies to at least three of them in the same format, creating a layered conversational thread that simulates real dialogue over time. This design promotes authentic interpersonal communication and nurtures a sense of community within the asynchronous environment by allowing students to see and hear one another regularly, a key component of social presence in language learning. These activities may be coordinated centrally or co-designed with instructors (Graves, 2000), enhancing alignment between curricular goals and classroom realities while fostering instructor ownership and engagement.

At the beginner level, prompts emphasize familiar, concrete topics such as daily routines, preferences, and family descriptions. Intermediate-level prompts, by contrast, require greater narrative and descriptive depth, encouraging students to express opinions and recount experiences (see Appendix A). Task parameters evolve across proficiency levels to ensure developmental progression. Beginners may incorporate occasional phrases in their first language (L1) to facilitate self-expression and reduce anxiety, prioritizing fluency and participation. Intermediate learners are expected to communicate exclusively in the target language (L2), demonstrating greater lexical variety, grammatical control, and discourse complexity. Speaking time likewise increases—from approximately one minute per video at the introductory level to two or three minutes at the intermediate level—reflecting growing confidence and proficiency.

Evaluation emphasizes completion, communicative effort, and interaction rather than grammatical precision, encouraging students to focus on meaning and fluency. The rubric rewards active participation, engagement with peers, and clarity of expression (see Appendix B). Instructors provide individualized video feedback posted as a reply within the same thread, strengthening social learning: students would benefit from direct feedback and from observing their peers’ performances and instructor guidance. Over time, this iterative exposure fosters language awareness, models effective self-correction strategies, and builds mutual encouragement within the asynchronous classroom community (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Hampel & Stickler, 2012; Sato & Lyster, 2012).

4.2 Oral Description Tasks

As described in Section 2, one major challenge of the original Oral Midterm Exam was students' limited preparation for its format and technological requirements. Because the assessment was both proctored and high-stakes, this unfamiliarity often led to technical difficulties, heightened stress, and reduced performance, as reported by both instructors and students. To address these issues and strengthen learners' oral accuracy under timed conditions, a new sequence of structured image-based ***Oral Description Tasks*** was developed. These low-stakes practice tasks, completed prior to the Oral Midterm Exam, follow the same format and objectives, allowing students to rehearse both the linguistic and procedural components of the assessment while building confidence and fluency in a supportive, scaffolded environment.

In each of these tasks, students are presented with a visual stimulus—such as an illustrated daily routine, a situational image, or a narrative sequence (see Appendix C)—and are asked to describe what they see using targeted grammatical structures (e.g., reflexive verbs, present tense, preterite vs. imperfect) and specific lexical sets (e.g., daily activities, professions, or community settings). These assignments are proctored through institutional systems to simulate exam conditions and ensure academic integrity, thereby familiarizing students with the technological environment of the Oral Midterm Exam (see Appendix D).

To promote spontaneous speech and reduce reliance on scripted responses, preparation time was intentionally limited and progressively reduced—from 15 minutes in the original Oral Midterm Exam to 6 minutes in the current version. This gradual reduction encourages students to rely on real-time language retrieval and adapt quickly to timed speaking conditions, mirroring the *impromptu speech* model commonly used in oral proficiency testing (Iwashita, McNamara & Elder, 2001; Ockey, Koyama, & Setoguchi, 2014). The preparatory *Oral Description Tasks* use the same six-minute time frame as the Oral Midterm Exam, allowing students to rehearse under identical timing conditions. This consistency is intentional: limiting preparation time discourages scripted or memorized responses and instead promotes outline-based planning and more natural *impromptu speech*.

Regarding assessment, these activities prioritize lexical precision and grammatical accuracy while maintaining a primarily formative function. Instructors evaluate performance using a detailed rubric that emphasizes grammatical control, vocabulary use, and overall task completion (see Appendix E). Despite their rigor, these rehearsal tasks carry a relatively low weight—typically around 5% of the total course grade each—which underscores their role as preparatory and developmental practice rather than summative assessment. The specific weighting, however, can be adjusted according to programmatic or instructional needs.

4.3 Implementation Scope and Sequence

Implementation of the proposed oral activities occurs within the institutional Learning Management System (LMS), where students can record, upload, and comment directly within the platform, minimizing technical barriers. Because most universities rely on comparable LMSs such as Canvas, Moodle, or Google Classroom, the model is both accessible and transferable across contexts. Its adaptability ensures consistent implementation even in institutions with limited infrastructure, maintaining pedagogical coherence and accessibility.

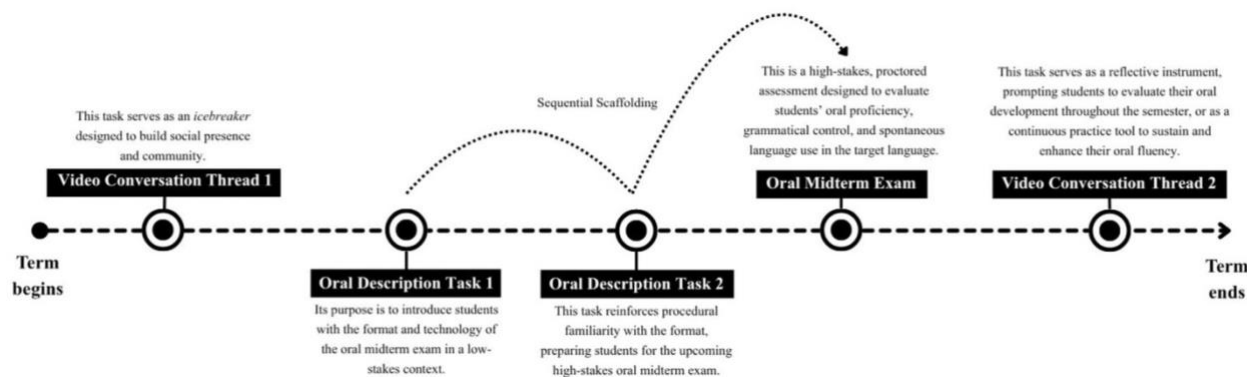
Beyond its technological adaptability, the model's strength lies in its pedagogical flexibility, allowing instructors to integrate oral production tasks into various curricular structures while maintaining consistency in objectives and outcomes. As previously discussed, the framework is designed to foster continuity between communicative interaction, procedural training, and reflective assessment. While multiple sequencing combinations can be adapted to institutional calendars and instructional goals, two empirically tested models have been developed and refined within the Spanish

L2 program at a large public university. These models illustrate alternative yet complementary ways of structuring oral production tasks across a term.

The first of these proposed models, the **Sequential Scaffolding Model**, is illustrated in Figure 1, where tasks are distributed progressively across the term. Following a *linear scaffolding approach* (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005), this design gradually increases both task complexity and stakes, fostering a steady buildup of linguistic control, communicative confidence, and test readiness.

Figure 1

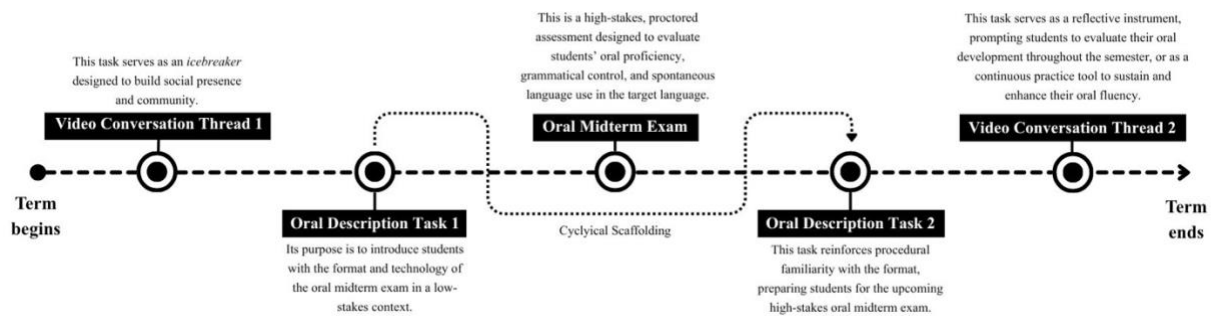
Sequential Scaffolding Model



The semester begins with *Video Conversation Thread 1*, which functions as an *icebreaker* activity designed to build community and social presence within the asynchronous environment. Once students become comfortable with the technological tools and spontaneous speech production in the target language, the *Oral Description Task 1* is introduced. This low-stakes, proctored activity familiarizes learners with exam-like conditions while prioritizing fluency, procedural awareness, and anxiety reduction. As the term progresses, *Oral Description Task 2* serves as a bridge between formative and summative assessment, emphasizing lexical precision, grammatical control, and time management. This step provides continued scaffolding as students prepare for the Oral Midterm Exam. Finally, *Video Conversation Thread 2* is implemented near the end of the semester as a reflective and consolidating activity. This model exemplifies a linear progression from social interaction to linguistic accuracy and reflection, supporting both language development and learner autonomy over time.

The second proposed model, illustrated in Figure 2, represents an alternative **Cyclical Scaffolding Model**. In this configuration, the first *Oral Description Task* precedes the Oral Midterm Exam, allowing students to gain familiarity with the exam's format, linguistic demands, and technological procedures in advance. Following the midterm, a second *Oral Description Task* is reintroduced—not as preparation but as consolidation—allowing learners to revisit similar communicative conditions with increased confidence, fluency, and strategic awareness. This cyclical sequence reinforces learning through iteration and reapplication, helping students internalize procedural and linguistic strategies across tasks (Reiser & Tabak, 2014; Walqui, 2006).

Figure 2
Cyclical Scaffolding Model



The main distinction between the *Sequential* (see Figure 1) and *Cyclical* (see Figure 2) models lies in their temporal rhythm and pedagogical emphasis. The ***Sequential Model*** supports gradual progression and steady linguistic buildup, making it ideal for full-semester courses focused on continuous practice and community formation. In contrast, the ***Cyclical Model*** promotes adaptive reinforcement, offering opportunities for reflection and re-engagement after high-stakes assessment—particularly beneficial in accelerated, hybrid, or modular contexts. Despite their structural differences, both models share the same pedagogical foundation: fostering community interaction, developing procedural familiarity with oral assessment, and sustaining oral fluency in asynchronous learning environments. The following section presents preliminary observations and reflections derived from the model's implementation across course levels.

5. Preliminary Outcomes and Reflections

Although formal empirical data have not yet been collected, preliminary observations from instructors, teaching assistants, and students across course levels suggest notable pedagogical benefits from the redesigned model. Instructors reported that, when ***Video Conversation Threads*** were implemented, students tended to be more expressive and personally invested in their responses. The open-ended prompts seemed to foster individuality and narrative depth, eliciting more extended and authentic language use than traditional written or scripted tasks. Peer interaction within the threads encouraged self-correction, incorporation of new vocabulary, and heightened attention to clarity and audience. Observing classmates' performances provided opportunities for implicit modeling and reflection, while the asynchronous format allowed students to process input and monitor their speech at their own pace. Participation in these activities therefore appeared to serve both communicative and metacognitive functions.

Regarding the ***Oral Description Tasks***, instructors observed that repeated exposure to the image-based format increased students' familiarity with the exam structure and technological procedures. This consistent practice appeared to reduce anxiety and hesitation associated with proctored, high-stakes assessments. Students became more aware of time constraints and more adept at managing their preparation efficiently. Some instructors also noted that learners gradually began to balance fluency and message delivery with grammatical accuracy, suggesting a shift toward more integrated communicative competence. Informal student feedback supported these impressions. Several participants described feeling "more prepared" and "less nervous" for the midterm exam after completing the preparatory tasks. Instructors emphasized that these activities also provided clearer diagnostic insights, allowing them to identify recurring grammatical or lexical difficulties before the

formal assessment. Such formative feedback may guide future instructional adjustments and targeted interventions.

Some challenges nonetheless emerged. Several students initially expressed hesitation about recording themselves, citing either technical unfamiliarity or discomfort with appearing on camera, especially at lower proficiency levels. In the *Oral Description Tasks*, time pressure and limited preparation sometimes caused stress, though this effect diminished after repeated practice. These issues were mitigated through clear orientation materials, guided rehearsal, and continuous instructor support. Over time, learners appeared more comfortable with both the task format and the required technology. In this sense, the redesigned activities may contribute not only to oral communication skills but also to the development of broader digital competence.

6. Conclusion and Future Directions

The curricular model outlined in this proposal demonstrates that meaningful oral communication can be fostered even within asynchronous instruction when activities are intentionally designed around interaction, reflection, and accessibility. By combining low-stakes, community-oriented **Video Conversation Threads** with structured, accuracy-focused **Oral Description Tasks**, the approach addresses both the affective and cognitive dimensions of language learning. It also provides a flexible and scalable framework that supports communicative fluency, social presence, and learner confidence while remaining compatible with institutional and technological constraints.

This model highlights the pedagogical potential of repurposing widely available institutional tools—such as LMSs and proctoring systems—for uses that extend beyond content delivery or testing. Leveraging these platforms as spaces for multimodal interaction allows instructors to create learning environments that feel more authentic, participatory, and humanized. Aligning technology with research-informed pedagogy thus offers a practical pathway for enhancing engagement and communicative development in online settings.

As online language education continues to expand, there is increasing interest in models that move asynchronous learning beyond passive content interaction. The present framework offers a viable reference point for programs seeking to integrate oral production more meaningfully in online contexts. While the current insights remain preliminary, they indicate promising directions for strengthening student engagement, confidence, and communicative competence. Moreover, the underlying design principles are readily adaptable to other languages and modalities.

Future implementations of this curricular model should also consider the role of instructor preparation and pedagogical alignment. While the present study focused on task design and assessment, the consistency of communicative practices across instructors remains an essential factor for sustainable success. Providing continuous professional development, peer collaboration, and reflective teaching opportunities can help ensure that the low-stakes, communicative orientation of the model is carried out consistently across different course sections and instructional contexts.

Looking ahead, future research should empirically evaluate the model's effectiveness across proficiency levels and course formats through mixed method designs that include pre- and post-course assessments, self-efficacy surveys, and instructor and student interviews. Longitudinal studies could also examine how sustained engagement with these tasks influences communicative development, confidence, and digital literacy over time. Additionally, further implementations might explore how these activities function in hybrid or synchronous contexts and whether their effects differ when real-time interaction is introduced.

Ultimately, this proposal contributes to broader conversations on how asynchronous language instruction can become more interactive, inclusive, and pedagogically grounded. With continued

refinement and systematic evaluation, it may serve as a foundation for designing flexible, human-centered approaches to online language learning that balance communicative authenticity with institutional feasibility.

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Appendix A. Sample Video Conversation Thread Activity

Course	Intermediate Spanish L2
Activity Type	Video Conversation Thread (Asynchronous Oral Production)
Platform	Institutional LMS, Video Discussion
Estimated Time	Total video time: 20 to 25 minutes (initial video + peer replies) Average time to work on the whole activity: 50 minutes.
Lesson Components	
Overview	This activity promotes spontaneous oral communication, community building, and confidence in speaking Spanish within an asynchronous environment. Students record short videos in response to an open-ended prompt and interact with peers through video replies. The emphasis is on communication, participation, and social engagement rather than grammatical precision.
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ss will engage in authentic oral interaction in Spanish within an asynchronous format. 2. Ss will develop fluency, confidence, and spontaneity in speaking. 3. Ss will strengthen listening comprehension and peer interaction skills. 4. Ss will demonstrate consistent participation and supportive engagement with classmates.
Prompt Example	<p><i>Topic: The Most Important Invention in Human History.</i></p> <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of an invention that you consider essential for humanity, for example, electricity, the internet, modern medicine, etc. 2. Record a short video (3 to 5 minutes) in Spanish explaining why you believe this invention is the most important. You may talk about its history, how it changed people's lives, or how it impacts your life today. 3. Submit your video to the institutional LMS. 4. Then, watch your classmates' videos and respond in video to at least three of them. In your replies, share your opinions, ask questions, or provide similar examples, in Spanish. Your videos must reflect genuine interest and participation and must last at least 1 minute. <p style="text-align: center;">Useful Expressions for Your Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>En mi opinión, el invento más importante es... porque...</i> – <i>Este invento cambió la vida de las personas al...</i> – <i>Gracias a este invento, hoy podemos...</i> – <i>Sin este invento, la humanidad no podría...</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Useful Expressions for Your Replies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Estoy de acuerdo contigo porque...</i> – <i>No había pensado en eso, pero tienes razón cuando dices que...</i> – <i>¡Qué interesante! En mi caso, yo pienso que...</i> – <i>También me parece importante ese invento, especialmente porque...</i>
Evaluation Criteria	<p>Evaluation focuses on completion, communicative effort, and engagement rather than grammatical accuracy. Students receive full credit for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting the initial video and at least three replies. • Demonstrating sustained effort to communicate meaningfully in Spanish. • Showing active participation and attention to peers' ideas. • Instructor feedback is provided through short, personalized video replies within the same thread, focusing on pronunciation, fluency, and communication strategies.

Pedagogical Rationale	This task aligns with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework. It fosters social presence, authentic interaction, and linguistic risk-taking in a low-stakes environment. Open-ended prompts naturally elicit relevant grammar and vocabulary without explicit instruction. By lowering the affective filter and promoting peer-to-peer interaction, the activity encourages students to develop confidence, fluency, and community in asynchronous learning settings.
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Note: Appendix A illustrates the design of a low-stakes asynchronous oral-production task implemented in the Intermediate Spanish L2 course. The activity promotes communicative fluency, social presence, and learner confidence through video-based interaction in Spanish.

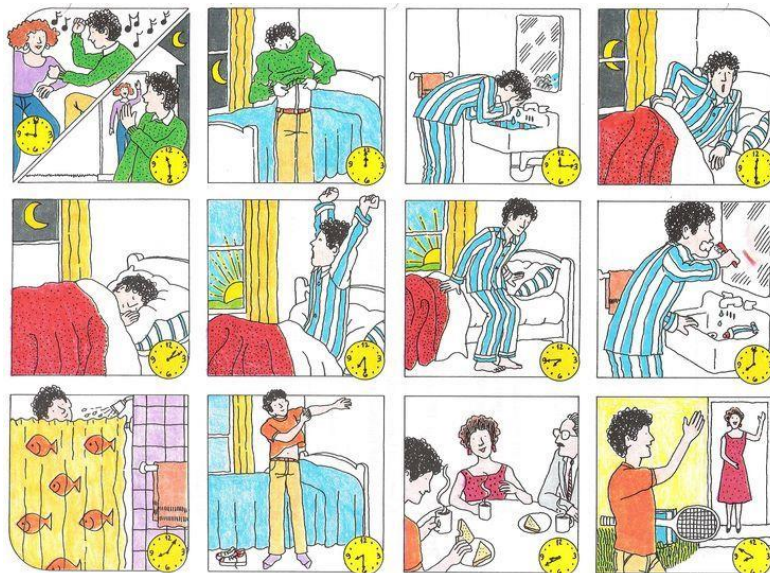
Appendix B. Proposed Rubric for Video Conversation Thread Activity

Criteria	Excellent (2 pts)	Satisfactory (1.5 pts)	Developing (1 pt)	Needs Improvement (0.5 pt)
1. Completion and Participation	Posts the initial video and at least three meaningful replies on time; shows consistent and active participation.	Posts the initial video and two replies; engages with peers but may lack consistency.	Posts only one reply or submits late; limited participation.	Fails to post the initial video or does not interact with peers.
2. Communicative Effort and Fluency	Communicates clearly and naturally in Spanish with spontaneous flow and minimal hesitation.	Communicates ideas clearly with occasional pauses or repetition; effort is evident.	Speech is hesitant or over-rehearsed; limited spontaneity or elaboration.	Minimal responses or reading directly from a script; little effort to communicate.
3. Interaction and Engagement with Peers	Replies show genuine interest by asking questions, comments meaningfully, or connects ideas.	Replies show some interest and understanding but lack depth or follow-up.	Replies are brief or repetitive with limited interaction.	No replies or irrelevant comments.
4. Pronunciation and Comprehensibility	Pronunciation is clear and comprehensible; minor errors do not impede understanding.	Mostly clear speech with some pronunciation issues that slightly affect comprehension.	Frequent pronunciation difficulties that occasionally hinder understanding.	Pronunciation problems regularly make speech difficult to understand.
5. Communicative Accuracy and Vocabulary Use	Uses appropriate vocabulary and grammar for the topic; minor errors do not affect meaning.	Some grammatical or lexical errors but overall message is clear.	Frequent errors that affect clarity or expression.	Constant errors that obscure meaning and limit communication.

Note: Appendix B presents the proposed rubric for the Video Conversation Thread activity described in Section 4.1 and Appendix A. The evaluation emphasizes completion, communicative effort, and interaction rather than grammatical precision, encouraging

learners to focus on fluency and authentic engagement. Each criterion is rated on a 2-point scale (Excellent = 2, Satisfactory = 1.5, Developing = 1, Needs Improvement = 0.5), for a total possible score of 10 points.

Appendix C. Sample Oral Description Task Image



Note: Illustrated sequence showing Juan's daily routine. The image portrays common morning actions such as waking up, brushing teeth, showering, eating breakfast, and leaving for the day. (Image retrieved from Pinterest, n.d. <https://fr.pinterest.com/pin/393009504958145820/>).

Appendix D. Sample Oral Description Task

Course	Elementary Spanish L2
Activity Type	Oral Description Task (Controlled Oral Production)
Platform	Institutional LMS – Quiz function (proctoring system)
Estimated Time	6 minutes total (including setup and recording). Speaking time: minimum 1:30 minutes.
Overview	This activity develops oral accuracy and fluency through a controlled, image-based description. Students describe a sequence of daily actions (see Appendix E) using complete sentences in the present tense, focusing on reflexive verbs, temporal expressions, and sequencing connectors. The task replicates the format of the Oral Midterm Exam but in a low-stakes, formative context.
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ss will use targeted grammatical structures (present tense, reflexive verbs) to describe a visual sequence. 2. Ss will improve lexical precision related to daily routines. 3. Ss will produce spontaneous speech under timed, exam-like conditions. 4. Ss will gain familiarity with the technical procedures of the proctored oral exam.
Visual Stimulus	Illustrated sequence showing Juan's daily routine (see Appendix E).
Instructions to Students	IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ BEFORE STARTING This activity is intended to help you strengthen your oral proficiency in Spanish through a structured description exercise. Avoid reading from notes, as doing so will result in a

	<p>point deduction. Keep your entire face visible throughout the recording and ensure that your workspace has adequate lighting. Speak at a natural pace and volume. Whispering or mumbling should be avoided. If any technical issues occur, do not take screenshots or attempt to restart; the proctoring system automatically records your session.</p> <p>Task Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you are ready to start, click “Take the Quiz” to begin. The proctoring system will activate video recording automatically. 2. Observe the image carefully (see Figure 1) and describe Juan’s daily routine in Spanish using complete sentences. 3. Example: <i>“Juan se despierta a las siete de la mañana. Luego se levanta y se cepilla los dientes.”</i> 4. Your response must last at least 1 minute and 30 seconds, but no more than 6 minutes in total. 5. When you finish, click “Submit” to complete the activity.
Grammatical Focus	Present tense; reflexive verbs (<i>levantarse, ducharse, cepillarse</i>); sequencing adverbs (<i>primero, luego, después, finalmente</i>); time expressions (<i>a las siete, por la mañana</i>).
Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation focuses on lexical and grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, and task completion . Students receive a total of 10 points according to the rubric in Appendix D .
Pedagogical Rationale	This activity is based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Output Hypothesis . It helps students practice structured, spontaneous speech while reinforcing linguistic control. By mirroring the oral exam format in a low-stakes context, it promotes familiarity, reduces anxiety, and supports procedural learning. It also encourages self-monitoring and digital literacy within a controlled, proctored environment.

Note: Appendix C presents a controlled image-based oral description activity designed for elementary-level Spanish L2 learners. The task functions as a formative rehearsal of the Oral Midterm Exam format, reinforcing grammatical control, lexical precision, and familiarity with the proctored testing environment. By integrating Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles and the Output Hypothesis, this activity encourages spontaneous, structured speech within low-stakes, timed conditions.

Appendix E. Proposed Rubric for Oral Description Tasks

Criteria	Excellent (2 pts)	Good (1.5 pts)	Developing (1 pt)	Needs Improvement (0.5 pt)
1. Task Completion	Describes all or nearly all actions in the sequence with complete sentences; response lasts at least 1:30 min.	Describes most actions with some omissions or incomplete details.	Describes a few actions; response is brief or lacks structure.	Minimal response; incomplete or off-topic description.
2. Grammatical Control	Uses present tense and reflexive verbs accurately with few minor errors.	Mostly accurate grammar. Include some errors that do not interfere with meaning.	Some errors in verb conjugation or agreement that affect clarity.	Constant errors that obscure meaning or show limited control.
3. Vocabulary Precision	Uses a wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the topic (daily routine, sequencing, time).	Uses adequate vocabulary with some repetition or imprecision.	Limited vocabulary; occasional use of English or circumlocution.	Very limited vocabulary; frequent word retrieval problems.

4. Pronunciation and Fluency	Speech is clear, natural, and well-paced; minor hesitations do not affect communication.	Generally comprehensible with some hesitations or mispronunciations.	Noticeable hesitation or pronunciation issues occasionally impede understanding.	Speech is difficult to understand; frequent pauses or unclear articulation.
5. Organization and Coherence	Ideas are logically sequenced using connectors (e.g., <i>primero, luego, después, finalmente</i>).	Some sequencing; minor issues with coherence or transitions.	Limited use of connectors; ideas may appear disconnected.	Lacks organization or sequencing; speech is disjointed or confusing.

Note: This rubric is designed for use in proctored oral description tasks that emphasize grammatical and lexical control under timed conditions. Scores reflect the accuracy, precision, and organization of students' spoken production, prioritizing linguistic control over fluency or interaction. Each criterion evaluates key components of controlled oral performance, ensuring consistency across evaluators and alignment with the format of the Oral Midterm Exam.