

# Performance Based Assessment: *El camping en el mundo hispanohablante*

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## Abstract

This performance based assessment is an activity that impacts all learners in my 10th grade Spanish class. This group has studied Spanish since seventh grade. I decided to create this activity as I reflected upon the essential question in Grant Wiggins' *Understanding by Design* — what could my students do with the material presented at the end of the unit? The unit dealt with extracurricular activities and national parks within the Spanish speaking world. At the end of the unit, I wanted my students to be able to do the following:

1. Research — from investigating national parks to researching the environment/flora and fauna in the target country
2. Technology — from “purchasing” airline tickets on expedia.com to putting together a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Culture — from understanding local customs to the hour in which locals dine.
4. History — The three sites within the capital many selected to “visit” had historical and cultural importance. They had to share this information with the class.
5. Presentational skills/Team Building — Each group had to divide the work equally and they had to present their findings to the class with the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation. Their slides had to include visuals and they could not include full sentences. I instructed them on how to give a presentation. They were not allowed to read from their slides. In addition, I instructed them on how to write their notes on index cards so that they could glance down at their notes and then look up to have eye contact with their audience(classmates). Their classmates gave them feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation. A rubric was used to grade the project. If a member of the team failed to do his/her work, it would have been evident during their presentation.
6. Writing — after their presentations, they each had to send me a “postcard” telling me about their trip. I even told them that they had to find, cut and paste stamps from the target country to use on their postcards. Each student was provided with

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an opportunity to express him/herself and write me a 100 word letter. Most gave me more than the state requirement of 100 words. I used the New York State Regents rubric for foreign languages to assess their writing.

This project worked well to tap into all learning styles. It gave enough freedom to the highly motivated student to express him/herself at his/her level, but it also set an expectation of what I demanded of all students. Students with learning disabilities enjoyed this experience because it was not a traditional drill activity in which they have difficulty completing. It moved all students, at their level, from the concrete phase of language learning to the abstract phase. Memorized responses did not work for this project. They were expected to give me a series of sentences during their presentations. Mistakes were made, but few impeded communication. The most difficult part for them was when they were asked to stand before their classmates and present their “trip” and to use technology as a tool to help enhance their presentation. Special education students were undetectable when they presented with their classmates. It also allowed those students who were creative to help put together a slide show that was pleasing to the eye, but that did not distract the audience from the presentation. This presentation allowed the diversity of learners in my classroom to bring in their strengths into the project and their weaknesses were minimized by another member of the group. I am a firm believer that performance based assessments help all learners to become proficient in a second language. It requires them to put it all together and to do something with the vocabulary, grammar, culture, history and research that they do within our classrooms.

The activity:

## Capítulo I — Performance Based Assessment

### El camping en el mundo hispanohablante

El propósito: El camping es una actividad de diversión universal y se practica en los EE.UU. como en todos los países del mundo. Ahora su grupo tiene la oportunidad de explorar el Internet y encontrar unos sitios sobre los parques nacionales en varios países hispanohablantes. A la misma vez, van a descubrir la cultura y la naturaleza que existe en los parques. Incluyan lo siguiente:

#### I. Las preparaciones necesarias antes de salir de Ardsley (PowerPoint Presentation)

El país:

El parque nacional:

Las fechas: — Hay que quedarse por lo menos una semana. ¡Ojo! ¿Cuándo es mejor ir?

El clima:

La unidad monetaria es:

¿Cómo van a llegar a su destino? ¿Cuánto cuesta?

Los sitios que se pueden usar: (expedia.com) (orbitz.com) (priceline.com) etc....

Antes de salir de Nueva York, ¿qué necesitan comprar para acampar en el parque nacional y por qué? ¿Se permite acampar?

Incluyan: el mapa del país y la ruta desde el aeropuerto al parque.

## II. La capital (PowerPoint Presentation)

Busquen alojamiento. ¿Cuánto cuesta una habitación doble? ¿Hay un baño privado?

Mencionen tres lugares para visitar durante el día. ¿Por qué son importantes?

¿Dónde van a cenar la primera noche? ¿Cómo se llama el restaurante? ¿Qué tipo de comida sirven? ¿Qué van a pedir? ¿Cuánto cuesta una cena para dos personas?

¿Cuáles son los platos típicos del país? ¿A qué hora se come normalmente la cena?

## III. El parque nacional (PowerPoint Presentation)

¿Hay transportación pública al parque? ¿Cómo van a llegar?

¿Hay que pagar para acampar? ¿y para entrar al parque? ¿Necesitan un guía? ¿Cuánto cuestan el servicio?

¿Hay reglas en el parque?

¿Qué actividades hay en el parque? Mencionen las actividades en que van a participar.

¿Qué tipo de flora y fauna hay en el parque?

¿Hay sitios arqueológicos cerca? Expliquen lo que hay y la importancia de los sitios a la cultura.

## IV. Comunicación con el Señor Fratto (Una tarjeta postal)

Cada miembro del grupo tiene que crear y escribir una tarjeta postal. Incluyan lo que hiciste durante el viaje. Escriban por lo menos 100 palabras.