Using Weather Reports in the LCTL Classroom

Sample Lesson Plan Overview

Level: Beginning-advanced

Aims: Listen for numbers, geographical terms, and vocabulary associated with weather; discuss leisure activities and their relation to weather conditions

Class time: 20-30 minutes

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Resources: Television/radio clip of weather report, video/tape player, handouts

Weather reports are a popular source of authentic language and lend themselves especially well to teaching vocabulary and culture. Not only do these reports reinforce students’ knowledge of numbers and weather terminology—they also add to their understanding of the host country’s geography.

The following two lesson plans present ideas for using weather reports to teach LCTLS.

➢ Did you hear that?—Listening for details in a weather report
➢ It’s raining again? What can we do?
Did you hear that?—Listening for details in a weather report

Level: Beginning

Aims: Listen for geographical terms and vocabulary associated with weather

Class time: 20-30 minutes

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Resources: Television/radio clip of weather report, video/tape player, map of the region (optional); handout

Knowing the weather conditions is important to many aspects of our lives. In this activity, students listen for details (e.g., temperature, cities, weather conditions) in a weather report, eventually matching the weather conditions to specific cities or geographical regions. The three-part listening process suggested in the lesson plan breaks the listening materials into more digestible segments, thus facilitating the listening process and easing students’ anxiety about the listening act.

Procedure:

1. Before class, locate a weather report on tape (either audio or video).
2. Prepare a handout (see appendix for an example) to use in class. According to the tasks specified in this handout, students are to listen for one specific type of information (e.g., cities mentioned, temperatures, weather conditions) each time the tape is played.
3. Post a large map of the region on the blackboard or wall of the classroom. Ask student volunteers to point out key cities and/or geographical points of interest (e.g., lakes, mountain ranges) on the map and write the names of these cities or points of interest on the board (optional).
4. Elicit from students information that is typically given in a weather report and note student contributions on the blackboard.
5. Review already known vocabulary relating to weather. Write these terms on the board as well.
6. Present any missing or key weather vocabulary.
7. Play the weather report three times, each time having students listen for key information and asking them to fill out a different section of the handout.
8. Go over answers with students and ask them what was difficult for them to understand.

Caveats and Options:

1. Because weather reports are densely packed with information and often delivered at a very fast speed, they tend to be hard for learners to process. Playing them
multiple times (and/or asking learners if they want to listen again) can lessen learners’ anxiety and help them build listening skills.

2. For each of the three listening phases, learners may want to hear the tape more than once. The teacher should feel free to play it multiple times to assist learners in their quest for information.

3. A possible follow-up activity entails breaking the students up into groups and asking each group to prepare a “weather report” for the region. Using the map of the region as a prop, they can then present their report to the rest of the class.

Acknowledgments:
This lesson plan was inspired by Kazumi Kimura.
Weather

1. Listen and circle all the cities that you hear in the report

Chimkent
Karaganda
Astana
Ushtube
Aktau
Pavlodar
Almaty

2. Listen and check the types of weather you hear

Rainy
Sunny
Windy
Cloudy
Hot
Cold
3. Listen again and draw lines to match the weather with the city

- Chimkent: rainy
- Almaty: sunny
- Pavlodar: cloudy
- Aktau: cold
- Karaganda: hot
- Ushtube: windy
It’s raining again? What can we do?—Planning the day’s activities

Level: Intermediate-advanced

Aims: Learn and practice vocabulary associated with weather

Class time: 30-40 minutes

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Resources: Television radio clip, TV and VCR

What we do in our leisure time often depends on the weather. In good weather, outdoor activities are appealing and feasible. In bad or inclement weather, most people favor indoor activities. This activity, in which students use a weather report to plan their upcoming day out, uses authentic weather reports as a point of departure for student discussions of the types of activities they prefer to do in their leisure time.

Procedure:
1. Before class, locate a weather report on tape (either audio or video).
2. Elicit from students information that is given in a weather report and note student contributions on the blackboard.
3. Ask students to name things that they do for fun on a weekend and note those on the board.
4. Play the weather report asking students to pay attention to the local weather.
5. From their list of weekend activities, ask students to name those that could be done during the upcoming weekend given the weather report.
6. For the activities that wouldn’t be good for a region, ask students to name an alternative place where the weather would allow that activity. Play the report again for students to check their answers.
7. Break students in to pairs and have them write a dialogue between two people discussing what to do for the weekend. Have some students role play their dialogue for the class.

Caveats and Options:
1. It is always good to model activities before turning students loose to do them on their own.
2. For a writing assignment ask students what their favorite rainy day activity is and why.

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