La bolsa Guidelines

1. Description
La bolsa (literally, “the bag”) is a mandatory individual language and culture creative learning project in which all students must engage while enrolled in the three-semester sequence SPA 101, 102 and 201. Each semester, students must create a bag of their preference (paper or material such as canvas) to use it as an active language-learning tool. La bolsa will serve as a device to produce and practice language and vocabulary learned in class. La bolsa has a two-fold objective: 1) a chapter-by-chapter oral practice, and 2) the final exam.

2. Rationale
Second Language Acquisition research has proven that language learning mainly occurs if it is meaningful and contextualized. La bolsa is an ideal instrument to make the language learning process meaningful and contextualized.

3. Objectives
The objectives of this project are to provide:
   a. authentic and active foreign language practice and performance.
   b. meaningful activity for students.
   c. ample opportunity to practice language and culture.
   d. personalized foreign language performance.
   e. creative foreign language usage.
   f. thorough preparation and interaction.
   g. connections with student’s daily lives.

4. Learning Outcomes
By the end of the semester students should be able to:
   a. talk in Spanish about the rationale behind the items selected for la bolsa.
   b. incorporate in their bolsa presentations the language forms and functions learned in each chapter.
   d. maintain an active conversation with the instructor about his/her bolsa.
   e. maintain an active conversation with peers about his/her bolsa.
   f. ask questions about his/her peers’ bolsas.

5. Relation to the QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) at UAB
La bolsa project strongly relates to the QEP in that it:
   a. builds strong communicative skills.
   b. strengthens critical-thinking skills.
   c. improves the decision-making process.
   d. develops sensitivity to and respect for diverse opinions of others.
   e. enhances knowledge of the foreign language and target cultures.
   f. expands students’ cognitive skills.
6. Chapter-by-Chapter Procedure

La bolsa should follow a careful planning and design which involves:

a. bag selection according to the students’ personal style (paper, canvas, fabric, box, etc.)

b. outside decoration should induce conversation starters related to the chapters studied throughout the three-semester sequence.

c. inclusion of 5-10 appropriate items directly related to each chapter.

d. at least one in-class practice per chapter (indicated on the syllabus).

e. at least one in-class formal evaluation per chapter (specified by the instructor).

7. Final Oral Presentation: Description and Procedure (Exam)

a. The final oral exam will be taken only during the official final exam week and only during the time slot assigned by UAB and your instructor.

b. No make-ups will be allowed.

c. A no-show to the final exam will be an automatic "F".

d. Students must be 10 minutes early to their exam appointment.

e. La bolsa is NOT a vocabulary recitation/quiz; In other words, students should use the vocabulary and language structures learned during the semester naturally to show how their communication skills in Spanish.

f. The final exam should flow naturally in a conversation-like manner. DO NOT MEMORIZE A SCRIPT.

g. The final exam will be tape-recorded by the instructor.

8. Tricks for a Successful Bolsa Project and What to Avoid

a. DO NOT MEMORIZE A SCRIPT.

b. Do not include just pictures or photographs, have specific real items inside your bolsa.

c. Have a reason behind each item included in la bolsa.

d. Remember that la bolsa is YOUR project and it must reflect who you are.

e. Remember that la bolsa project can be as good or as bad as you want it to be.

f. Be prepared for interruptions from peers and instructor.

g. Do not expect language assistance from the instructor during the final exam. This is NOT a time to ask questions.

h. Practice in groups periodically outside of class.

i. Refrain from having material and/or language structures that have not been covered during the three-semester sequence. In other words, use the language learned up to that point instead of more advance language structures.

j. USEFUL PHRASES:
   • Ésta es mi bolsa...
   • En mi bolsa hay/tengo...
   • Este/esta soy yo
   • Este/esta es...
   • En esta foto está...
   • Aquí tengo...

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