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Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching
Sentrum vir Innovasie in Leer en Onderrig
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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

CASE STUDY 13 - SUMMARY

NAME
Karin Schmid

COURSE
SLL1061S - Initial French IB

FACULTY
Humanities

LEVEL
Undergraduate

CATEGORY
Mitigation strategies

One sentence summary
Developed weekly quizzes to test translations between French and English that were adapted as timed Vula Tests and Quizzes, with a time limit to reduce (to some extent) students' ability to make use of online translation tools.

Context

In French I, we do continuous assessment with a final oral exam, so 80% coursework and 20% oral exam at the end of the semester. The students have a number of tasks that they complete throughout the semester.

Purpose:

Our biggest problem with the beginners courses is that students have access to tools like Google Translate and pretty much everything on the Internet. For first-years, it would be really easy to just have a device on the side, and quickly look up the conjugation of verbs or something like that. Even though students had strict instructions not to use such tools, we felt limiting the time minimised the opportunity for students to use such tools.

Process

This year we used the Tests and Quizzes for both the summative assessments and practicing tasks. To assess oral comprehension remotely, we created Vula quizzes with a time limit. Students also had short written paragraphs to assess written comprehension that were done using Vula Assignments. If we combined a written comprehension with an oral, we would say that they have to look at something, and then answer some questions. For example, I used photos or activities from a book as the prompt. We made it clear to students that some of the questions are not automatically marked, so they needed to go and have a look at the feedback to see their mark. For these longer written answers, we had to go through it and mark them first, so students would get feedback.

Outcomes/ Lessons learned

The Vula Tests and Quizzes was certainly useful for me to see whether the students were doing the exercises that I wanted them to do, as they would be doing in class. The Tests and Quizzes was also helpful in terms of being able to mark multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank questions automatically. A quiz is not the preferred way to assess comprehension, so when we return to campus, we would continue using oral comprehension modes. We may still use quizzes to a limited extent.

Recommendation

We found Vula Tests and Quizzes was certainly a useful form of assessment in the remote teaching context. A quiz is though not the preferred way to assess foreign language comprehension, so when we return to campus, we would continue using oral comprehension modes.