“CHARLAS” (mini-presentations)  (Anne Becher)

These were an innovation in my modified and mainstream classes inspired by Borden, Matt, "'Las Charlas' como expresión oral diaria" ["Chats" as Daily Oral Practice], Hispania, v. 85, no. 2, pp. 339-40
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Description of Charlas (as I’ve used them):
• 5-7 minute component of every day’s class
• 1-minute spontaneous presentations, 2-3 per day (if student needs to use notes s/he may, but there is no reading of prepared paragraphs)
• In one thematic cycle all students will make an individually-oriented presentation about the same unit topic (food, home, family, weather, etc.)
• Teacher should give model charla at the beginning of each cycle
• In advance, at the beginning of the cycle, students are assigned or sign up for day they’ll give the charla
• If teacher assigns charlas, assign stronger students first to provide good models
• Pass/Fail grade for the charla based on
  • willingness to present
  • evidence of preparation (acceptable level of fluency and one-minute minimum charla)
• Questions from the class follow each student’s charla
  • for time’s sake, limit questions to 2-3 per charla
  • credit is given for questions that are on-topic and don’t require presenter to repeat information s/he gave during charla or in answering another question
  • students who have asked the fewest questions during the cycle are called on first; the teacher can call on students while consulting the gradebook with the question record, or students can raise their hands, displaying with outstretched fingers how many questions they’ve already asked during the current cycle so that the presenter can call on those with fewest questions so far.

Charlas are beneficial in that they...
• allow for community-building since charlas are on personalized topics (i.e. My favorite foods or restaurants, my home, etc.)
• allow for low-pressure presentational mode practice
• allow Q & A periods that promote low-pressure interpersonal mode practice
• provide a change from a teacher-centered class modality
• provide an opportunity for fairly authentic oral communication
• provide topics usually of interest to students
• allow almost all students to make a successful oral presentation!