<u>**Sample Activity 2:**</u>
<u>**Analyzing Preterit and Imperfect Distinction in Anecdotal Narratives**</u>

**Goal:** To help future second language teachers distinguish between foreground and background information when listening to anecdotes in Spanish.  After listening to various anecdotes, future language teachers discuss how the use of preterit and imperfect influences proficiency levels, etc.

**Materials:** This activity will be used with the textbook *Lingüística aplicada* (Koike & Klee, pg. 81-86) and SPT learners: Elizabeth, Rachel, Karen, Jacob, Emily, Claire, Alexis, Anthony, and Robert, in which they answer the question, "Describe the most important moment in your childhood".  Each student will be assigned a group of three SPT videos to analyze.

Group 1:
Elizabeth: Intermediate high
Rachel: Native
Jacob: Intermediate low

Group 2:
Karen: Intermediate high
Emily: Intermediate low-mid
Claire: Intermediate high

Group 3:
Alexis: Intermediate low-mid
Anthony: Native
Robert: Intermediate high

**Preparation:** During class, discuss the different uses of preterit and imperfect.  In addition, learners can work with the textbook (e.g. *Lingüística aplicada*, Koike & Klee, pg. 81-86) to discuss how preterit is used to advance the story with "foreground" information and the imperfect is used to provide background information.

**At home:** Assign each student a group of three videos to watch, paying particular attention to use of preterit and imperfect by the learner and the interviewer. After watching a video, the learners should print out a copy of the transcript from the video and answer the following questions:

1.  How did the interviewer ask the question?  Why did she choose preterit / imperfect?
2.  If the learner did not understand the question, how was it rephrased?  Did the interviewer continue to use preterit or imperfect?  Why?
3.  Once the learner understood the question, how did he/she respond, in the preterit, imperfect, or both?

4. How did the learner advance the storyline?  Did the interviewer help?  Why and how did the interviewer intervene?
5. How did the learner provide background information? Did the interviewer help? Why and how did the interviewer intervene?
6. Did the learner take control of their own story, or did they depend on comments made by the interviewer to advance through the anecdote?
7. After listening to the interview and answering the above questions, what proficiency level would you assign to this learner?  Why did you choose this level?  What uses of preterit and imperfect reflect the learners' level?

**In class:** Pair learners up with their group partners to discuss their answers to the above questions and come to a final decision on the proficiency levels.  After the group has reached a decision, have them present one video to the class and discuss the different uses of preterit and imperfect that helped them determine the proficiency level of the learner. Remind them, however, that in order to accurately determine the learner's proficiency level, it is necessary to watch several videos of the learner answering questions on several topics that require different language skills.