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Video chats connect language students with native seniors looking for conversation

VIDEO CHATS CONNECT LANGUAGE STUDENTS WITH NATIVE SENIORS LOOKING FOR CONVERSATION

 NONPROFIT & SOCIAL CAUSE

Speaking Exchange is a service enabling Brazilian students to practise their English through video chats with US seniors in retirement homes.

Online education is booming thanks to platforms such as [Khan Academy](#), YouTube tutorials and even educational video games such as [Koe](#), which recently crowdfunded on Kickstarter. However, language-learning especially is a skill that's best acquired by speaking one-on-one with natives on a regular basis. Aiming to facilitate this, a new service in Brazil called [Speaking Exchange](#) is enabling students to practise their English through video chats with US seniors in retirement homes, who benefit from regular conversation.

Created by CNA, a language course provider for young people, the platform was developed as a way to let students who can't afford to travel to an English-speaking country to have real-time conversations with people who speak it as their mother tongue. At the same time, the scheme enables elderly residents of retirement homes to have a chat with someone new. Students simply log onto the program while they're in class and choose a senior who's also online. A video chat then begins, with prompts suggesting topics of conversation. Students and seniors can talk for as long as they like and when they've finished, a recording of the video is saved as a private YouTube video so students can listen back and teachers can evaluate their performance.

Watch the video below for a demonstration of the service:

Speaking Exchange adds a more personal touch to online learning, enabling language students to improve their skills while also helping retirees feel more active and engaged with the world. Are there other disparate communities that could be brought together online to learn from each other?

20th May 2014

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