

Sponsoring Committee: Dr. Joseph Shosh, Moravian College  
Dr. Richard Grove, Moravian College  
Mrs. Doris Correll, Moravian College

**TEACHING THROUGH THE TARGET LANGUAGE**

Amy S. Whitaker

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education  
Moravian College  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania  
2010

© Copyright 2010

All Rights Reserved

## **ABSTRACT**

This teacher action research study investigated the experiences of conducting class primarily through the target language in a middle school Spanish I classroom. Sixteen eighth grade non-native Spanish speaking students participated in the study conducted in a rural K-8 elementary school containing approximately 300 students in northwestern New Jersey. Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, anecdotal notes, student surveys, formal and informal assessments, and collection of student work. Methods of analysis included analytic memos, reflective memos, coding of field log, construction of theme statements, and review of student work and assessments. Both the teacher and the students were required to conduct all classroom interactions in the target language. Findings suggest that conducting class through the medium of the target language increases students' target language proficiency and communicative competence, as well as their motivation toward learning a second language. Furthermore, conducting class in the target language is likely to decrease students' overall target language anxiety.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my students who so willingly and enthusiastically participated in this study. You are among the only students I know whose enthusiasm for Spanish matches mine. Thank you for taking the adventure with me and for putting your trust in me. I feel privileged to have worked with such a wonderful, unique group of students.

Thank you to my colleagues at work for your assistance and support during the completion of this thesis. Without your model, Kerri, I would have been lost and overwhelmed. Thank you for your reassurance. Additional thanks to my professional support group, especially to Theresa, for the many hours spent on the phone over the course of numerous Saturdays as we wrote and rewrote each section.

I would like to give a special thanks to Michelle for taking the time to read and revise my story. Thank you for your reassurance regarding my writing and for your invaluable input into my final revisions. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Shosh for all of his input into each drafted section of my thesis. I appreciate the time you took to help make my document the best it could be and the inspirational words of encouragement that kept me uplifted and working ahead. Thank you to Dr. Richard Grove and Mrs. Doris Correll for joining my thesis committee and taking the time to read the entire document and offer your input. I appreciate the time you invested on my behalf.

I could not publish this document without expressing my utmost gratitude and appreciation to my husband and my family. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility throughout this whole process. I cannot thank you enough for your willingness to listen and for your genuine interest in my study. Thanks for cheering me on and offering limitless support. Last but not least, to my baby boy, thanks for giving me the “kick” I needed to get this thing done!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
RESEARCHER STANCE .....	1
Things Are Not Always As They Appear .....	1
¡En Español, Por Favor! .....	3
Leading By Example .....	5
Developing An Intervention .....	7
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9
Introduction .....	9
Proficiency in the Target Language .....	10
The Role of Target Language Input .....	12
The Role of Target Language Output .....	15
The Role of Target Language Interaction .....	20
Strategies for Teaching in the Target Language .....	22
Modifications to Make Target Language Input Comprehensible .....	23
First Language Use in the Foreign Language Classroom .....	27
Discourse in the Foreign Language Classroom .....	30
Teacher Attitudes Toward First Language and Target Language Use .....	31

Discourse Patterns in the Foreign Language Classroom .....	36
Student Reactions to Target Language Use .....	37
Student Output and the Negotiation of Meaning .....	38
Student Attitudes Toward Target Language and First Language Use in the Classroom .....	40
Student Anxiety and Target Language Use .....	41
Summary .....	43
METHODOLOGY .....	45
Setting .....	45
Participants .....	46
Procedure .....	48
Data Collection .....	52
TRUSTWORTHINESS .....	57
Validity of the Study and Ethical Guidelines .....	57
Researcher Bias .....	59
THIS YEAR'S STORY .....	62
Ready or Not .....	62
What's Your Strategy? .....	64
Survey Says... .....	69
Piccionario .....	70
Yo No He Terminado Todavía .....	73

Did I Say That? .....	75
Spanish In the Classroom .....	77
Humor That Translates .....	79
What Promise .....	80
Actions Speak Louder Than Words .....	81
¿Cómo Se Dice Fun En Español? .....	84
La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala .....	88
Sentence Strips .....	92
Time For a Disappointment .....	94
Talking Up a Storm .....	97
Spanish Surprise .....	100
My Own Worst Critic .....	100
Bop .....	101
Una Encuesta .....	104
Zip Around .....	106
Día de los Muertos .....	108
How Does It End? .....	111
Missing the Connection .....	114
¡UN JUEGO! .....	117
En la Clase .....	119
Wrapping Up .....	126

Now the Survey Says.....	129
METHODS OF ANALYSIS .....	132
Analysis of Collected Documents.....	132
Coding .....	135
Bins and Theme Statements .....	136
Memo Analysis .....	136
FINDINGS .....	139
Creating a Classroom Conducive to Learning .....	139
Student Comprehension of Input .....	148
Development of Student Target Language Proficiency .....	151
Development of Grammatical Competency .....	159
The Role of Social Interaction and Motivation .....	164
Student Motivation .....	168
Challenges to Teaching in the Target Language .....	171
NEXT STEPS .....	176
REFERENCES .....	179
RESOURCES .....	184
APPENDIXES .....	185

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Student pre-survey.....	71
Table 2. Student post-survey.....	131

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Classroom picture.....	46
Figure 2. Chart of unit activities and content.....	49
Figure 3. Euro stamps.....	51
Figure 4. Pastiche of student attitudes toward target language use.....	78
Figure 5. Johnny’s layered story.....	80
Figure 6. Comic strip assignment.....	82
Figure 7. Part 1 of Chris’ layered story.....	86
Figure 8. Cuentame un Cuento story.....	87
Figure 9. Sentence strip activity.....	94
Figure 10. Classroom library.....	98
Figure 11. Part 2 of Chris’ layered story.....	106
Figure 12. Part 2 of Johnny’s layered story.....	116
Figure 13. Sara’s layered story.....	118
Figure 14. Wesley, Ana & Allison’s skit.....	120
Figure 15. Chris, Josh & Brett’s skit.....	121
Figure 16. Johnny, Danielle & Stephen’s skit.....	122
Figure 17. Luke, Laura & Sara’s skit.....	123
Figure 18. Robin, Jen, Lisa & Rebecca’s skit.....	125
Figure 19. Pastiche of students’ attitudes toward teacher target language use...127	
Figure 20. Pastiche of students’ attitudes toward grammar instruction.....	128

Figure 21. Pastiche of students' attitudes toward their communicative competence.....	129
Figure 22. Coding bins.....	137
Figure 23. Graph of student use of Spanish.....	142
Figure 24. Comparison of target language anxiety.....	145
Figure 25. Comparison of students' overall desire to use the target language...	146
Figure 26. Comparison of proficiency levels in September and December.....	153
Figure 27. Lower proficiency writing sample.....	156
Figure 28. Mid proficiency writing sample.....	157
Figure 29. High proficiency writing sample.....	158
Figure 30. Students' ability to communicate in the target language.....	160
Figure 31. Negotiation of meaning.....	166

## RESEARCHER STANCE

### Things Are Not Always As They Appear

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11-12*

Just when you think you have it all figured out, life throws you a curveball. Believe it or not, I had my future career all figured out at the age of three. I was going to be an elementary school teacher, and that was that. I was not concerned with the mere technicalities. No, I did not yet know how to read or write, nor had I ever set foot in a school. Somehow, though, I knew I was going to study hard and become a teacher. Fast forward eighteen years. I had indeed studied hard and just nearly completed four years of college as a dual elementary education and Spanish major and was now in my final semester of study as a student teacher in a kindergarten and a sixth grade language arts classroom. Imagine my dismay when I realized that, not only did I not like teaching elementary school, but I also found absolutely no enjoyment from it whatsoever. My enthusiasm in the classroom felt forced, and my creativity felt exhausted after attempting to plan meaningful learning experiences in math, spelling, reading, science, social studies. . . What was I going to do?

All of my dreams of becoming an elementary school teacher were a far cry from the reality of my experience. I never second-guessed the enjoyment I found from the practice of teaching itself, yet I knew that I could not be an elementary

classroom teacher. Faced with the prospects of graduation and completing applications for employment, I decided to consider the possibility of teaching Spanish; after all, I had majored in Spanish as well as elementary education. I applied for both elementary and Spanish positions, yet the response was certainly one-sided. Foreign language teachers were in demand. Although I was offered a 5th/6th grade Spanish position, combining both my elementary and Spanish backgrounds, I first had to undergo an oral proficiency interview (OPI), and an interview with the district Superintendent, who happened to be from Puerto Rico, and also just happened to conduct my interview entirely in Spanish. Albeit anxious about participating in these interviews as a non-native Spanish speaker, I was able to demonstrate my proficiency in Spanish, and I accepted the job.

The students entered my classroom for their, and my, first day of school. From the first moments of the lesson, I knew I had made the right decision. I found much enjoyment listening to my students develop their language proficiencies, knowing that the language and vocabulary they were using came from my class. I took great joy in planning creative, engaging lessons, rich in meaningful learning experiences. I had never envisioned myself as a Spanish teacher, and yet now, I cannot envision a different future. This may not have been exactly what I had once had in mind, but it sure was close to what I had dreamed of as a three-year-old little girl.

### **¡En Español, Por Favor!**

My own experience as a student of Spanish was marked by an interest in language from the very start. When I walked into Señora's class on the first day of high school, I expected the typical "escucha y repite" traditional of most foreign language classrooms, not Barbie dolls and Spanish baseball. Señora's teaching style was active and I could not help but find myself enthralled with learning the language. She dressed Barbie dolls as she introduced us to Spanish clothing vocabulary, sang culturally authentic songs – the words and melodies still fresh in my mind, and engaged us in a game called Spanish baseball to review all of the unit grammar and vocabulary. I was interested in the language, and learning it came easily to me.

I continued my Spanish study at the collegiate level and quickly found myself three classes away from a minor. My professor encouraged me to participate in a study abroad program in Salamanca, Spain during the summer of 2000. A group of twenty students from my university, none of whom I knew, embarked on what would be one of best and worst experiences to this point in my life. I experienced a month-long period of extreme homesickness in a foreign country, yet simultaneously developed a deep appreciation of the Spanish language, culture, and people. I was able to separate the love I had developed for the country from the pain I felt from the experience. Though it seems laughable now, interacting in this country was the first time I viewed the language as an

actual communicative tool, and no longer just a school subject. Spanish was no longer a foreign language, rather, a second language, and would soon become my second major. I was intrigued by the notion that I, a German-Italian American, could communicate, although somewhat haltingly, in another language and was eager to further develop my proficiency.

It was during my last year of college that my Spanish advisor declared to me in her distinct Puerto Rican accent, “You go to Puerto Rico. I sign you up!” Apparently, in her mind, this had already been decided and I did not have a choice in the matter. So, *I go to Puerto Rico*. I spent the fall semester of my senior year there, knowing that when I returned I would be student teaching, then graduating. Apprehensive at first, and recalling the still all too familiar Spain incidents, I was blessed to be surrounded by friendly fellow students from my university, who shared similar linguistic anxieties. In awe of every new experience, I developed a love of the island, as though it were part of my own heritage, a love of the rhythmic sound of the language, and of course, the ability to use it.

Although at one point my studies and academic interests were divergent, they have melded to create a career that both excites and invigorates me. I take great pleasure in teaching Spanish and am able to merge many of the strategies I learned as an elementary education major within the foreign language classroom. I have told my students the story of how I learned to speak and came to teach Spanish, and I encourage them to take risks with the language. My hope is that

they will experience the same triumph, the same ability to communicate in a language other than their own, and the same opportunity to consider this foreign language a second language.

### **Leading By Example**

Regardless of my enthusiasm for teaching Spanish, I must admit that even after seven years of teaching and honing my practice, most of my students are still not able to communicate proficiently in the target language. I am conflicted by the fact that my primary goal for the program is to develop the students' proficiency in a communicative setting, yet the majority of students are still far from meeting this objective. I try to make lessons as engaging as possible, incorporating the multiple intelligences and various learning styles, and an array of communicative activities in order to encourage student use of the target language. TPR and TPR Storytelling techniques are fundamental to my instruction. I attempt to develop students' listening comprehension through the use of videos, DVDs, and recordings, yet the fact remains that most students lack the ability to communicate in Spanish. It distresses me when they begrudgingly complete communicative activities with their broken Spanish, then immediately revert to English, confident that they have met the minimal requirements of the assignment. They seem to lack the ability to produce authentic speech in the target language. They often use limited Spanish in short bursts, consisting of memorized phrases and expressions or simple one-sentence structures, and follow

the majority of their utterances with an English translation. Both they, and I, feel frustrated when they try to speak Spanish. I feel like a failure and they feel like they cannot learn a language.

I noticed and attempted to remedy this lack of proficiency in two previous teacher action research pilot studies. In my first pilot study, I performed a two-week study on the affects of TPR Storytelling on student proficiency. I found that although students' oral proficiency increased, their motivation for language learning decreased. In my second pilot study, I performed a six-week study on the effects of a hybrid approach to language instruction with a combination of TPR Storytelling and communicative activities. I found that the students' motivation increased, but their oral proficiency and grammatical competence remained the same. What was missing that would increase my students' ability to produce proficient, authentic speech in the target language? The answer was easier than I had expected. As I reflected on my practice, I realized that I was not utilizing enough Spanish during instruction to enable the students to understand and use the language for themselves. During the first pilot study, I conducted class primarily in Spanish, but the students became bored with the storytelling technique because they did not see an authentic value in the language needed to tell the stories. The irony is that it was through this maximization of the target language that students were able to discuss the stories and acquire the language. Conversely, in my second pilot study, I conducted class primarily in English and

switched to Spanish for modeling purposes only. This lack of exposure to the Spanish language and provision of comprehensible input was what inhibited the students' language proficiency.

As I reflected on my daily teaching practices, I realized that instead of teaching Spanish, I was teaching *about* Spanish. The majority of my daily instruction occurs in English. I incorporate Spanish to provide examples and models, but not for extended discourse, and certainly not to conduct class. This practice is not effective and is failing to develop my students' language competencies. I realized that in order to increase my students' language proficiency and communicative skills, I had to increase my own use of Spanish.

### **Developing an Intervention**

As a result of the hypothesis that my students' inability to communicate in Spanish is most likely a direct result of my own overuse of English in the classroom, I decided to investigate the effects of maximizing my target language use on the students' proficiency. I hypothesized that if they were exposed to, and encouraged to interact in the target language for a variety of functions such as classroom instruction, interactions, and management procedures, they would develop the ability to produce proficient speech while simultaneously experiencing the language as an authentic communicative tool. To create this type of environment conducive to language acquisition, I wondered: ***What are the***

*observed behaviors and reported experiences when I conduct my eighth grade Spanish class primarily in the target language?*

Although I tried to remain open to unexpected research findings, I anticipated that my increased use of the target language and increased provision of comprehensible input would enable my students to acquire the necessary language structures to understand and produce authentic, comprehensible speech. I anticipated that my students would develop in their communicative competency, and develop a view of the target language as one of immediate use for authentic communicative purposes. I predicted that students' foreign language pronunciation would develop as a result of the increased amount of target language exposure. I wondered though, what effect the increased use of the target language would have on my students' motivation and anxiety toward language learning. I decided to remain open to observing students' motivational attitudes throughout the study with this secondary question in mind. I also realized that teaching through the medium of the target language would require a great deal of planning and strategic use of instructional practices and modifications to aid in comprehension and knew that I would have to engage in purposeful planning and assessment practices, admittedly strategies that I do not always employ. These ambitious expectations were soundly rooted in the literature and research, after all. Why could I not do the same in my classroom?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

A distinct difference exists between learning a second language and learning about a second language. There is an agreement among researchers and teachers that the foreign language classroom should be: an environment in which authentic communication is encouraged in the target language, an environment in which the students learn through the language, not about the language, and an environment which emphasizes the immediate use of the target language as a communicative tool (Chambers, 1991; Franklin, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Omaggio Hadley, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Yet the current disparity lies in the lack of proficiency and communicative skills the students possess upon completion of their language programs (Crawford, 2004). What is the missing link to bridge the gap between the students our language programs currently produce and proficient communicators in the second language? Research suggests that a lack of exposure to and interaction in the target language is to blame. In order for students to acquire a language in a classroom setting, students must be exposed to as much comprehensible target language input as possible, yet input alone is not sufficient in developing second language proficiency. Students must be given the opportunity and encouragement to produce target language output in order to experiment with linguistic hypotheses and develop proficiency (Doughty & Pica, 1986; Mayo & Pica, 2000; Omaggio Hadley, 2000). Without

the combination of input, output, and interaction in the target language, students will superficially learn the structure and form of the language without truly learning how to use the language for authentic communicative purposes (Chambers, 1991; Meiring, 2002; Macaro, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

Research suggests that although foreign language teachers recognize the importance of providing target language input, practice varies greatly (Duff & Polio, 1990). Many students complete a foreign language program with little actual exposure to and interaction in the target language and consequently, are deprived of valuable comprehensible input due to the over-reliance on the students' first language (L1) (Crawford, 2004). Teachers cite various reasons for using the students' L1 in class, some for pedagogical reasons and others for increasing efficiency in the classroom, yet there is great controversy over this practice as it limits the amount of target language exposure students receive and detracts from the authenticity of the language learning environment (Bateman, 2008; Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio, 1990; Kraemer, 2006; Levine, 2003; Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

### **Proficiency in the Target language**

*“While grammar and vocabulary are essential tools for communication, it is the acquisition of the ability to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways with users of other languages that is the ultimate goal of today’s foreign*

*language classroom” (Standards for foreign language learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 1996, p. 2).*

The term proficiency is defined as the degree or level of competence (what a person knows about the language) and performance (how a person can use the language) in a second language (Omaggio Hadley, 2000). One’s communicative competence, therefore, is the ability to know how, why, and when to appropriately use the language and is marked by one’s grammatical/linguistic competence (knowing how to use grammar, syntax, and the vocabulary of a language), sociolinguistic competence (knowing how to use and respond to the language appropriately given a variety of contexts and interlocutors), discourse competence (knowing how parts of speech are combined to produce coherent speech in a variety of discourse patterns), strategic competence (knowing how to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in one’s knowledge of the language and repair communication breakdowns), and contextual competence (knowing how to use words appropriately in context) (Canale & Swain, 1980, as cited in Omaggio Hadley, 2000). There is a variation in the degrees of proficiency each person attains as a result of a variety of individual learner differences. These factors include motivation, aptitude, life experiences, and learning style preferences (Omaggio Hadley, 2000). Due to these variations, proficiency is measured according to the guidelines outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The

ACTFL has outlined various levels of proficiency in the modalities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The proficiency guidelines are arranged into ten levels, ranging from superior (the equivalent of an educated native speaker), to advanced, intermediate, and novice (possessing little to no working knowledge of the target language), with the levels being further subdivided into high, medium, and low ranges. The various degrees of measure among the modalities allow for an accurate assessment of a person's language proficiency. Proficiency is not typically attained through the adoption of one specific methodology or approach, but rather, a contextualized, eclectic, and flexible approach that is responsive to learner needs and preferences is what ensures that students will be successful on their road to developing language proficiency (Omaggio Hadley, 2000).

Regardless of the combination of methodologies employed, the key components to developing communicative competence is the provision of comprehensible input, production of student output, and provision of opportunities for interaction in and with the target language.

### ***The Role of Target Language Input***

The fundamental theoretical rationale for maximizing teachers' target language use in the classroom is to expose learners to as much target language input as possible, thereby having a positive effect on learners' target language proficiency (Turnbull, 2001). Input has been identified by numerous researchers as a critical component in language acquisition, and research demonstrates that

the amount of input students receive impacts their proficiency development (Crawford, 2004; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Turnbull, 2001). The classroom environment is most often the primary, if not only, source of target language input second language learners receive. As a result, the foreign language teacher often becomes the sole linguistic model of the target language (Crawford, 2004; Turnbull, 2001). Therefore, it is crucial that teachers maximize the amount of target language used in the classroom setting thus exposing second language learners to as many functions of the language as possible (Bateman, 2008; Duff & Polio, 1990; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). The impact on students' proficiency is profound when the target language is used as the normal language of interaction in the language classroom as it: develops an awareness of language through the use of L1/L2 clarifications and comparisons; improves learners' pronunciation in the target language; develops problem-solving skills as learners attempt to repair communication breakdowns; enables learners to deal with the unpredictable nature of authentic language use; motivates learners to autonomously create new and authentic speech; develops a cultural awareness and alternative points of view of the world around them; conveys to learners that the target language is a genuine vehicle of communication rather than an intellectual exercise; promotes confidence and facility with listening comprehension; and facilitates experimentation with the target language (Halliwell & Jones, 1990; Meiring & Norman, 2002).

Second language acquisition research maintains that language is acquired by understanding messages via comprehensible input (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). Language itself does not carry meaning for the learner; rather, the message is made comprehensible by connecting the intended message with the learner's existing schemata (Omaggio Hadley, 2000). Only when the message is understood by the learner is the language then acquired (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). Krashen and Terrell contend that language is subconsciously acquired by understanding input that is slightly beyond one's current level of competence, not consciously learned by means of grammatical and form based instruction. They define this as the input hypothesis, which states that language acquisition occurs when messages are understood at an  $i+1$  level, with  $i$  being the students' current level of competence. They emphasize that when acquiring a second language in a classroom setting, the teacher should be the primary source of input, thus, input should be central to the curriculum.

Turnbull (2001) refers to his 1998 research study in which the impact of the teachers' use of the target language positively impacted the students' proficiency in the target language. He studied four grade 9 French teachers over a period of eight weeks and observed that that amount of French spoken in class by the teachers ranged from 9% to 89%. He found that students of the teachers who spoke primarily in the target language outperformed students in all measures of general proficiency and achievement in classes where the teacher spoke less of the

target language. Turnbull also refers to a number of empirical studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s as evidence that the teachers' use of target language positively impacts students' language proficiency. Although differences existed in the settings and levels of instruction, both found that there was a positive relationship between the amount of target language used by the instructors and the students' achievement and proficiency in the language.

Wong-Fillmore (1985) agrees that it is important for second language learners to be exposed to as much target language as possible, and that amount of target language input the classroom teacher provides directly affects students' target language proficiency. She conducted several three-year longitudinal studies of approximately 40 elementary schools serving limited English proficient (LEP) students. She concluded that classrooms differ in the degrees to which they promote language learning and in the language skills students develop based on the amount of target language the teacher uses. She determined that teachers can greatly influence language learning in their classes depending on their use of the target language during classroom instructional events and by the opportunities they make available for students to use the target language during instruction.

### ***The Role of Target Language Output***

Although there is much agreement among researchers that comprehensible input is a main component in the development of L2 proficiency, controversy exists surrounding the benefits of student L2 output. Krashen and Terrell (1998)

adamantly argue that language acquisition is a result of the comprehension of input, not the production of output. They argue that “comprehension precedes production” and claim that speech patterns naturally emerge after students have passed through a silent period in which they acquire a sufficient amount of competence through input (p. 20). They advise that during this silent period, students should not be required to produce any form of L2 output, but should instead focus on understanding messages in the form of comprehensible input. Krashen (1998) states that forced output requires students to “utilize structures they have not yet acquired” resulting in increased feelings of anxiety and stress (p. 5 para. 1). He argues that requiring students to produce output when they have not acquired sufficient linguistic competence increases their affective filter (or anxiety level), thus reducing the amount of comprehensible input the students are open to receive (Krashen & Terrell, 1998, p. 38). Krashen & Terrell maintain that comprehensible input is solely responsible for the acquisition of language, and that when language is acquired in a natural, predictable order, language production will emerge in stages.

Not all researchers agree with Krashen and Terrell and contend that the role of teacher target language input is not the only component affecting student L2 proficiency. They identify the need of student target language output in the process of developing proficiency (e.g., Chambers, 1991; Macaro, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Meiring & Norman, 2002; Swain, 1985; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Meiring

and Norman (2002) state that, “although there is no conclusive evidence to link widespread teacher use of TL with effective language learning, there is clear evidence that pupil use of TL positively affects learning” (p. 34). Swain (1985) proposes that the development of language proficiency requires not only the provision of comprehensible input as previously believed, but a combination of input and comprehensible output. When comparing sixth grade French immersion students and native French speakers in their grammatical, discourse, and sociolinguistic use of the language, Swain found that after the provision of seven years of comprehensible input in a French immersion program, the students’ grammatical performance was still not equal to that of native speakers of the language due to the lack of comprehensible output. Based on this study, Swain proposed her comprehensible output hypothesis that states that students need to receive  $i+1$  in comprehensible output, pushing them one step beyond their current level of language proficiency ( $i$ ) to produce more accurate grammatical sentences. This process of teaching and learning one step beyond the students’ current level of language proficiency encourages students to experiment with the language and test linguistic hypotheses they formulate about the structure of the language.

In his article regarding issues in target language teaching, Macaro (2000) refers to his 1998 study of student-teacher target language and first language (L1) use and notes that the lessons he observed containing the greatest amounts of

target language over L1 were those in which the discourse was dominated by the teacher. However, Macaro found that high quantities of teacher L2 talk did not lead to high quantities of student L2 talk, and conversely, high quantities of teacher L1 talk did not lead to an increased L1 use among students. These findings suggest that although the role of input is an integral component in the development of language proficiency, it does not necessarily lead to increased amounts of student L2 usage. The missing component is student output. Macaro concludes that successful language learning environments were those that provided input in the target language in addition to encouraging student target language output. He states that,

Oral L2 use, particularly, leads to the internalisation of the rule system, an awareness of how language is linked to its speech community, how discourse operates between speaker and hearer. Only through the learner using the L2 can s/he achieve strategic communicative competence. The over-arching pedagogical tool should, therefore, be learners' use of the target language, not teacher use of the target language. (Macaro, 2000, p.184)

Macaro notes that environments conducive to language learning provided the opportunity and time for students to produce the target language and encouraged students to initiate target language dialogue, thus giving the students some control over the interaction. Additionally, in successful language learning

environments, teachers provided students with a means with which to express themselves in the target language by explicitly teaching the language of classroom interaction. Students were also provided with opportunities to engage in target language interaction through the use of high quality pair and group work activities that moved along a continuum of highly structured to fully communicative activities.

Chambers (1991) notes that there is evidence that students will not spontaneously respond in the target language even if the teacher predominately uses the target language for classroom interactions. She suggests explicitly teaching students specific phrases and structures that enable them to respond or intervene in the target language, even if only minimally. She specifically recommends teaching phrases that enable students to make requests, ask for assistance, apologize, and evaluate themselves and their peers. She further states that a language program that provides opportunities for students to practice speaking through the use of well-developed speaking activities in which students exchange information with their peers will promote language proficiency.

Wong-Fillmore (1985) agrees that the teacher should maximize his or her use of the target language during all classroom interactions, yet states that the amount and functions for which students receive input in the target language is only one factor in developing language proficiency. She states that teachers can affect their students' proficiency by providing opportunities for students to

practice the target language in class. She recommends employing a variety of turn-allocation procedures that involve calling on the roster of students various times throughout the lesson in a consistent manner with well-established procedures such as choral recitation, petitioning of volunteers, or calling on students to answer. She also recommends tailoring oral questions to the individual proficiency level of the students' to ensure that each student has the opportunity to produce meaningful target language output. When considering the role of target language output, it is necessary to consider the implications of how teachers and students interact with the target language when producing output, and its role in developing proficiency.

### ***The Role of Target Language Interaction***

Research demonstrates that group work or pair work is capable of providing students with opportunities to produce the target language and to modify interaction (Antón, 1999; Doughty & Pica, 1986; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). Second language interaction facilitates language development by providing opportunities for learners to receive comprehensible input and negative feedback from each other as an additional source of comprehensible input. It is not the interaction itself that assists in comprehension; rather, in the interactional modifications that learners employ, which increase the repetition of utterances and redundancy of the message in the form of clarification requests, confirmation and comprehension checks (Pica, Young, & Doughty,

1987). The redundancy in input provided through interaction develops the connections between input, output, feedback, scaffolding, and processing. Additionally, interaction provides an opportunity for learners to modify their own output, test linguistic hypotheses regarding the structure of the language, and identify gaps in their developed interlanguage systems (Mackey, 2002; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987). Through the negotiation of meaning in learner-learner interactions found in group and pair work, students are provided with the opportunity to receive comprehensible input as well as produce comprehensible output in the target language, both of which are important when establishing conditions for L2 learning (Mayo & Pica, 2000). As a result of their study, Mayo and Pica found that learner-learner dyads are effective in contributing to input and feedback among other language learners and are capable of producing the modified output necessary to make input comprehensible. Pica refers to her 1996 study in the research report and ascertains that even “learners at a low-intermediate level of proficiency can provide opportunities for grammatical feedback, albeit, in a simplified form” (p. 19). The researchers note that attention to imprecision and error correction must be observed when students at a lower level of proficiency negotiate meaning as to not reinforce incorrect forms and patterns; however, they stress the value of the process due to its provision of comprehensible input and output in the target language.

The process of negotiation between learners takes place during the course of their interaction when either interlocutor signals that the others' message has not been understood. These signals arise in the form of questions or comments about the message, called the trigger. The other responds by repeating the message, modifying the message in more simplified terms, repeating a segment of the utterance, or paraphrasing the utterance until the message is understood by both interlocutors. These modification strategies are used during interaction to repair communication, or negotiate the meaning of the intended message. Research has shown that when interaction is modified through these triggers, signals, and responses of negotiation, it considerably increases the learner's need to access more input and produce more output in the target language (Doughty & Pica, 1986; Mackey, 2003; Mayo & Pica, 2000; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

### **Strategies for Teaching in the Target Language**

Although it seems logical to argue that the more target language students are exposed to, the more proficient they will become, this is not necessarily the case. Turnbull (2001) and many others (e.g., Chambers, 1991; Crawford, 2004; Duff & Polio, 1990; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Macaro, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1985) suggest that mere exposure to target language input does not ensure intake. Converting input to intake depends on the teachers' ability to employ various

modification strategies, teach specific language learning strategies, manage and organize classroom interactions, and make appropriate use of the students' L1.

***Modifications to Make Target Language Input Comprehensible***

Researchers agree that modifications to both the management of the classroom environment and verbal adjustments must be made to ensure that target language input becomes comprehensible intake (e.g., Bateman, 2008; Chambers, 1991; Duff & Polio, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Modifications to the classroom environment should include the implementation of familiarized routines and formulaic starters to signal when activities begin and end. Language used by the teachers when adhering to classroom routines “tends to be routinized, consistent, and therefore familiar . . . and provide[s] a kind of scaffold for the interpretation and learning of the new materials” (Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p. 29-30). Bateman (2008) suggests that teachers should explicitly teach and post common classroom expressions and questions in the target language and provide students with “coping cards” containing necessary expressions to ensure that target language input becomes comprehensible.

Linguistic modifications are also necessary to ensure that target language input becomes comprehensible intake on the part of the students. These modifications include slowing the speed of speech, simplification of syntax and vocabulary, repetition of utterances, dramatization, circumlocution, rephrasing,

paraphrasing, and using high frequency patterns and expressions (Bateman, 2008; Chambers, 1991; Duff & Polio, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Kraemer, 2006; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Mayo & Pica, 2000; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Additionally, researchers suggest using nonverbal modifications to make input comprehensible such as gestures and visuals including pictures, props, graphs, chalkboards, and overheads. Visual aids provide the “extra-linguistic context that helps the acquirer to understand and thereby to acquire” the message (Krashen & Terrell, 1998, p. 55). Utilizing a variety of mediums when presenting content provides message redundancy and ensures that the whole message is communicated and the input becomes intake (Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

Instructing students to interpret the general meaning of a message without the reliance on understanding and decoding individual words also facilitates language acquisition (Duff & Polio, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1998). Messages are understood using more than just language alone. Successful language learners simultaneously employ a variety of strategies to interpret the meaning of the communicated message including: interpreting the context in which the language is used; employing their knowledge of how the world works; and engaging their ability to read intonation patterns, facial expressions, and other social signals (Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Omaggio Hadley, 2000). Consequently, learners can understand the

intended message even if they do not understand the words and structures used. The key is to teach students to attend to the context and key words in a sentence in order to promote success in understanding and increase intake. Explicitly teaching students to employ language learning strategies increases the amount of intake students receive from the target language input. These strategies include teaching students to listen for cognates and for the overall gist of the communicated message rather than deriving meaning from individual words in a sentence (Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000; Meiring & Norman, 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

Wilkerson (2008) agrees that students must be explicitly taught strategies for language learning in order to ensure that the target language is made comprehensible and is effectively used during instruction. In her research study, Wilkerson identified distinct characteristics of one instructor who effectively remained in the target language. This instructor began the first day of class by clearly identifying the importance of interacting in the target language and outlined her expectations in the student's L1. She assured her students that her message would be made comprehensible through the use of props, facial expressions, gestures, and voice modulation. Throughout the semester, the instructor began class in the L1 to outline the goals and activities for the lesson, and closed each lesson in the L1 to summarize, point out new structures, and give examples of contexts in which students could apply what they had learned. She

provided the students with a repertoire of phrases in the L2 that could be used to ask for clarification or repetition of a word or phrase, to ask a peer for assistance, or to refuse a turn. These explicitly taught strategies prevented breakdowns in communication and allowed the class to be conducted primarily in the L2. The study revealed that the students exposed to this environment were the most effective communicators in the target language when compared to the students in the other four settings.

When making the above input modifications, Neil (1999) cautions teachers to not limit students' communicative potential by over-simplifying input. He suggests that teachers utilize an array of forms and tenses when communicating during instruction, regardless of the level of proficiency. Subsequent to observing the quality of input and linguistic complexity among several German teachers, Neil determined that the target language used by the teachers was simplistic with an overreliance on the present tense, simple sentences, and imperative verbs, which he suggested were a direct result of the classroom context in which teachers communicate. He observed that many of the forms and structures previously introduced during grammatical instruction were lacking during the teachers' provision of input. Additionally, he hypothesized that teachers avoided more complex structures and tenses with the intention of making their classroom talk comprehensible to their students. He concluded that teachers have sacrificed elaboration for the sake of comprehensibility, and that

through the implementation of input-enhancing strategies, it is possible to use more complex structures in conversation. The lack of doing so results in the fossilization of students' interlanguage system and severely limits the students' communicative potential. Without continued and authentic exposure to more complex language, students will be deprived the opportunity to fully acquire these structures. The incorporation of more complex language structures found in authentic communicative patterns will advance the students' grammatical, communicative, and sociolinguistic competencies (Neil, 1999).

### ***First Language Use in the Foreign Language Classroom***

A more controversial strategy for converting target language input into comprehensible intake involves the incorporation of the students' L1 during instruction. There is much disagreement among researchers surrounding the use of L1 in the foreign language classroom as a language learning strategy. On one side of the argument are researchers who promote target language exclusivity and contend that any time spent in the L1 subtracts from critical target language input (Chambers, 1991; Franklin, C. E. M, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Wong-Fillmore, 1985), while on the other side of the argument are researchers who emphasize the importance of the target language, yet recognize the value of the L1 in the classroom as a language learning tool (Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio, 1990; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000; Macaro 2001; Turnbull, 2002).

Proponents of total exclusion of the L1 from the classroom suggest that the process of codeswitching between learners' L2 and L1 is futile and argue that language learning occurs when students attempt to negotiate the meaning of the message delivered in the target language (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). They urge that the practice of translation has a negative impact on language learning as students ignore the target language message and anticipate only the L1 translation, and agree that teaching entirely through the target language makes the language real, allows learners to experience unpredictability, and develops the learners' own interlanguage system (Chambers, 1991; Franklin, 1990). Franklin (1990) states that,

When the teacher resorts to speaking the shared native language, the message that is given to the pupils is: 'use English when you have something real to say. Use the foreign language when we are doing exercises, question-and-answer work, and other *unreal* (non-communicative) things.' (p. 20)

Conversely, there are researchers who acknowledge the pedagogical use of the students' L1 as a scaffold to language acquisition and encourage the incorporation of the L1 as a language learning strategy (Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio, 1990; Macaro, 2000; Macaro 2001; Turnbull, 2001). They argue that although teachers should aim to maximize their target language use, the total exclusion of the L1 from the classroom deprives students of a valuable tool for

language learning (Macaro, 2001). In his 2001 study, Macaro found that the language of thought for beginning and intermediate students was the L1 and concluded that L1 should be incorporated in the foreign language classroom to assist in cognitive processing. He argues that the process of making keyword associations between the L1 and L2 is a valuable language acquisition tool for the processes of memorization and language production, and that the incorporation of the L1 helps with: semantic processing, reduces memory constraints by chunking L2 structures into semantic clusters, increases confidence and lowers the affective filter in the learner by converting input into familiar terminology, and clarifies grammar roles through L1 translation (Macaro, 2001).

Advocates for using L1 as a strategy for language learning claim that the systematic use of the L1 is not only justified, but plays a crucial role in language learning, and should not be avoided as a classroom resource or be viewed as a guilty indulgence (Cook, 2001). They agree that L1 use is an effective pedagogical tool if used purposefully and in short bursts in order to increase comprehensibility and efficiency in the classroom. They identify that while students should be exposed to the target language as much as possible, the judicious use of the L1 enables teachers to convey meanings more effectively, to expedite the process of giving instructions and explanations, and to efficiently organize the class (Cook, 2001). Teachers' use of L1 in the foreign language classroom is most often attributed to specific, pedagogical functions including:

translation of individual words, repetition or explanation to remedy and prevent students' lack of comprehension, interaction with individual students during pair or group work, and remediation of discipline problems (Bateman, 2008; Kraemer, 2006); however, teachers also cite lack of time and the desire to build rapport with students as key influences in using the students' L1 (Bateman, 2008; Kraemer, 2006). Students should be permitted to use their L1 as a language learning strategy both independently and collaboratively as a scaffold to learning (Cook, 2001). When codeswitching is encouraged in the classroom, students develop an "interlinked L1 and L2 knowledge" (Cook, 2001. p. 418), which results in students becoming more authentic L2 users who are able to codeswitch between both languages, a practice customary in many bilingual speakers.

There is no definitive conclusion as to whether the inclusion or exclusion of the students' L1 increases target language proficiency. Ultimately, the amount of target language and L1 present in the classroom varies depending on the teachers' personal attitudes and beliefs regarding language pedagogy.

### **Discourse in the Foreign Language Classroom**

If the role of the classroom is to maximize the students' exposure to the target language, what affect does the teachers' choice of language have on the students' proficiency? Research reveals that although there is agreement that the foreign language classroom should be an environment in which authentic communication in the target language is both used and encouraged, practice varies

greatly among teachers (Chambers, 1991). Researchers have found that the amount of target language teachers use in the classroom depends on their intended goals of the program and their desire to continue in the target language when communication breaks down, and have concluded that the amount of target language exposure students receive affects the students' overall development of proficiency (Crawford, 2004; Duff & Polio, 1990; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Wilkerson, 2008).

### ***Teacher Attitudes Toward First Language and Target Language Use***

Many teachers agree that L2 instruction should be through the medium of the target language, yet there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. In a survey questionnaire conducted in Queensland, teachers and students responded to various questions concerning their level of agreement with statements regarding their target language use, their attitudes toward the target language, and an estimation of the percentage of target language use in their classrooms (Crawford, 2004). The results from the survey indicated that teachers continued to make extended use of learners' L1, thereby limiting the amount of target language exposure students receive. At beginning proficiency levels, only 10% of teachers reported using the target language more than the learners' L1 compared to the 78.8% who agreed that it was desirable to teach through the medium of the target language (Crawford, 2004). Crawford concludes that the limited amount of exposure and opportunities for interaction in the target language may limit the

students' view of the L2 as being immediately useful. Students could potentially complete a course of foreign language study with little actual exposure to and interaction in the target language. Crawford cites Pica (2000) as she states, "Teacher use of the learners' L1 considerably reduces the quantity and quality of the target language exposure students receive as well as their opportunity to use the language themselves and receive feedback on this use" (Crawford, 2004, p. 11).

Crawford determined that the amount of target language teachers use in the classroom varied depending on the teachers' goals for the program and experience in the target culture. She found that teachers who were proficiency oriented in their goals for the program, and had spent a year or more in a country where their target language was spoken, were significantly more likely to agree with promoting target language use in the classroom. Conversely, less proficiency-oriented teachers who had limited experience in the target culture were more likely to agree with favoring L1 use in the classroom. Crawford concludes that teacher attitudes toward the target language and L1 use reflect the teachers' personal experiences with learning through the medium of the target language and demonstrate a willingness to replicate their own personal learning experiences in the classroom.

Macaro's findings (2000; 2001) are in conjunction with Crawford's 2004 study. Based on his previous research studies, he found that levels of target

language use in the classroom range from 33.1% to 97.5% and he concludes that teachers determine how much target language to use in the classroom as a result of their personal attitudes. Macaro (2001) proposes three categories of teacher attitudes regarding target language use: the *total exclusion position*, which equates L2 learning with L1 acquisition and attributes no pedagogical value in the use of L1; the *maximalist position*, which sees little pedagogical value in the use of L1 and aims to maximize target language use at all cost except in cases of communication breakdown or demotivation; and the *optimal use position*, which attributes pedagogical value to the learner use of L1 in the classroom and relies on judicious use of codeswitching between the target language and L1. Proponents of the optimal use position propose that the L1 can be used to “lubricate” (Macaro, 2001, p. 535) the interactions in the classroom and can be used as a short-cut strategy. Although teachers may feel guilty about using the L1, they are able to “justify the specific use of the L1 in the classroom against a theoretical framework” (Macaro, 2001, p. 535).

In their 1991 study of the ratio of target language to L1 used by teachers in the foreign language classroom, Duff and Polio found that there was a great variability in the amount of target language used in the classroom depending on the instructor and the language ranging from 10%-100%. They concluded that teacher use of codeswitching between L1 and the target language did not depend on lesson objectives, years of teaching experience, or teacher target language

proficiency. They attributed the ratio of target language to L1 use to factors including language type, departmental policy or guidelines regarding target language use, lesson content, materials, and formal teacher training in teaching foreign language methodology. Overall, the teacher's attitude toward target language use impacted the decision of whether to use the target language or L1 during instruction as each teacher could justify his or her language choice. The implications of the study suggest that many foreign language teachers do not know how to effectively use the L1 in the classroom for pedagogical reasons and are not aware of exactly how much L1 they are using in the classroom.

Wilkerson (2008) studied five university-level Spanish instructors to analyze the amount of time spent in the target language and in the L1 during instruction, as well as the instructors' reasons for deciding which language to use. As a result of her research, Wilkerson similarly concluded that the use and distribution of English among instructors varied widely as one instructor lectured in English with minimal use of Spanish, another conducted class in Spanish but translated and retaught lessons during office hours, two participants engaged in frequent codeswitching during instruction, and one spent five to ten minutes introducing and summarizing lessons in English but provided all lesson instruction in Spanish. The instructors that primarily used the L1 or engaged in frequent codeswitching during classroom instruction stated that the L1 was intentionally used to save time, demonstrate authority, and reduce ambiguity.

Instructors were fearful that students were unable to understand their message, and therefore, immediately switched to the L1 for clarification. Although the rationale for switching to the L1 included saving time, it was found that confusion among the students regarding the language in which they should respond was an unintended effect of codeswitching and consequently, resulted in slowing the pace of interaction. One instructor used the L1 prior to and at the conclusion of instruction to direct the students regarding the goals and activities for the lesson. The remainder of the class was conducted in the L2. The effect of this blend of L1 and L2 resulted in her students' ability to engage in "spontaneous discourse" and communicate for authentic purposes (p. 314). Wilkerson concluded that the decision to use the students' L1 or L2 reflects the instructor's beliefs about language learning and pedagogy. Instructors who believed that learners could not tolerate ambiguity engaged in classroom codeswitching and frequently used the students' L1 during instruction. Conversely, instructors who believed that learners could resolve ambiguity through interaction in the L2 reserved the L1 for the beginning and end of instruction or outside of the classroom. The variability of the amount of L1 spoken by instructors during class may influence students' proficiency among courses and in the overall success of the language program.

Levine (2003) conducted a survey to determine the amounts of target language and L1 teachers and students thought were present in the classroom and to determine their attitudes toward using each language. The results of the

questionnaire reveal that target language use differs according to the interlocutors and communicative contexts. The target language was most frequently found to be used when instructors were speaking to students. The target language was used less when students were speaking with their instructors, and decreasingly less when students were speaking with other students. The target language was used most often for topic/theme-based communication; yet was used less when discussing grammar, and decreasingly less when discussing tests, quizzes, and assignments.

There is not an agreement in the balance of L1 and L2 for classroom instruction; however, the consensus among researchers is that the overreliance on the students' L1 ultimately limits the amount of target language exposure students receive which in turn affects the students' overall development of proficiency.

### ***Discourse Patterns in the Foreign Language Classroom***

Many researchers agree that a learner-centered environment is more conducive to language learning than a teacher-centered environment (Antón, 1999; Ellis, 1988; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987). In traditional, teacher-centered classrooms, teachers are portrayed as the purveyors of knowledge, control the speaking rights in the classroom, and control all interactions in the classroom (Cazden, 2001). In the traditional L2 classroom, the typical teacher initiation- pupil response- teacher feedback (IRF) patterns of interaction deprive learners of opportunities to negotiate meaning with the teacher and their peers,

thereby limiting opportunities for scaffolding and communicative practice.

Macaro (2000) argues that students in this type of environment often feel dissatisfied and unmotivated. He found that students generally had negative attitudes toward the foreign language as a result of the unequal power relationship prevalent in foreign language classrooms. He concludes that “environments that over-emphasize teacher use of the target language with long periods of input modifications to aid comprehension lead to teacher dominated classrooms yet do little to develop the students’ use of the L2” (p. 184).

In juxtaposition, the teacher’s role in non-traditional, learner-centered L2 classrooms is that of facilitator of the communicative and learning processes. In the learner-centered L2 classroom, teachers engage students in open-ended questioning techniques designed to evoke thought and reflection, thereby making students active learners who are responsible for their own learning. Teachers can encourage students to become active in the negotiation of meaning by engaging students in dialogue and communicative exchanges, and through interaction with other students, which in turn, maximizes students’ opportunities for communicative practice (Antón, 1999).

### **Student Reactions to Target Language Use**

Wong-Fillmore (1985) observed that in those foreign language classrooms where many students share a common L1, their interactions are predominately conducted in the L1 rather than the L2 (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Although

teachers can encourage peer-peer communication in the target language, nearly 6 out of 10 students switch back to their L1 60% to 100% of the time as soon as a partner or group activity is complete (Duff & Polio, 1990). As a result, even when teachers strive to interact primarily in the target language, there is evidence that students will not perform likewise (Chambers, 1991; Duff & Polio, 1990; Franklin, 1990; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Teachers should intentionally plan opportunities for students to engage in the use of the target language through group and pair work. In addition to increasing comprehension of the target language, cooperative work alleviates student feelings of anxiety toward target language use (Levine, 2003).

### ***Student Output and the Negotiation of Meaning***

More often than not, there is a disproportion of L2 native speakers (NS) to L2 non-native speakers (NNS) in the foreign language classroom, and situations may exist where there is a complete void of native speakers, including the teacher. As a result, learners often experience greater verbal interaction with their peers and other non-native speakers during class, thereby becoming each other's principal interlocutors in the target language (Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). Second language research has demonstrated that learner-learner interaction in the L2 does aid in language learning. When working in groups, learners display greater motivation, more initiative, and less anxiety toward their learning (Long & Porter, 1985; as cited in Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, &

Linnell, 1996). During periods of learner-learner interaction, students produce greater amounts of target language output which serves as comprehensible input for each other (Long & Porter, 1985; as cited in Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). Among the benefits of learner interaction in the target language, research has found that: learners obtain comprehensible input, or make input comprehensible from learner interaction; receive both explicit negative feedback (corrections and metalinguistic explanations) and implicit feedback (clarification requests, confirmation checks, repetitions, and recasts); are pushed to make target language modifications in their output to enhance comprehensibility, appropriateness, and accuracy for other learners; and test linguistic hypotheses they have constructed about the rules of the target language (Mackey, 2003; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996). During her 2003 study, Mackey found that learners were indeed aware of the benefits of learner-learner interactions. Students were required to observe and reflect on their own interactions with their peers and found that the above benefits occurred during learner-learner interactions. The students determined that input was being made more comprehensible for them during interactions with either the teacher or other classmates 76% of the time, that they were aware of receiving or supplying feedback during interactions 81% of the time, that their output was being pushed during interaction 81.5% of the time, and that they were testing linguistic hypotheses during interaction 76% of the time.

Although it has been found that learner interaction facilitates language learning, a required exchange of information must be present to increase both student target language output and modified interactions when working in groups (Doughty & Pica, 1986). In their study of ESL teacher and student interactions in teacher-fronted, small group, and dyad situations, Doughty and Pica (1986) found that two-way information gap tasks with a requirement for information exchange generated more modification of interaction (requests for confirmation, comprehension checks, and clarification requests), thus increasing the comprehensibility of the message, than did tasks without this requirement. Modification of interaction and total amount of student speech was almost 10 times higher in the group and dyad settings than in the teacher-fronted participation setting. Increasingly more interaction was generated during the required information exchange task whenever the teacher was present. Doughty and Pica concluded that task-based interactions with a required exchange of information produce more instances of repair negotiation, or modification of interaction, than do open-ended tasks such as opinion exchange or free conversation.

### ***Student Attitudes toward Target language and First Language Use in the Classroom***

Student attitudes regarding the amount of teacher target language use in the classroom vary depending on the students' ability to comprehend the intended

message. Duff and Polio (1990) found in their study that 71% to 100% of students were satisfied with the current amount of target language and L1 their teachers used during instruction regardless of what the amount was. Only 9% to 18% of the students in the classroom that contained the most target language requested the use of more L1 on the part of the teacher. In the other classes, none of the students requested more L1. Additionally, Duff and Polio found that over 70% of every student in each class claimed to understand most or all of the teacher's target language use. The conclusion Duff and Polio draw is that an increased use of the target language, even up to 100%, would not bother the students.

### ***Student Anxiety and Target Language Use***

In order to create an environment conducive to language acquisition, the teacher must strive to keep the students' anxiety levels low (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). A learner's affective filter, or attitude and anxiety level, directly affects subconscious language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). A low affective filter enables students to be more receptive to input, which in turn increases their motivation to obtain more input, thereby developing the acquisition of the L2. Krashen and Terrell hypothesize that forced language production creates a higher affective filter in students, and that as a result of the anxiety incurred, the amount of comprehensible input students receive is limited. Conversely, Levine's 2003 study of student and instructor beliefs and attitudes regarding target language use,

L1 use, and anxiety contradicts Krashen & Terrell's hypothesis that forced target language output results in a higher affective filter. Levine found that there was a negative relationship between reported amounts of target language use and reported target language-use anxiety. When using the target language, instructors perceived a higher level of anxiety in students than students themselves reported feeling. Although about 40% of the students reported feeling anxious about using the target language, 85% of the instructors perceived that students felt anxious about using the target language. The results reveal that approximately 63% of instructors and students agreed that communicating in the L2 was a "rewarding and worthwhile challenge" (Levine, 2003, p. 351). The study also revealed that student and teacher perceptions regarding target language-anxiety when communicating in different contexts differed. Instructors perceived a higher level of anxiety in students than the students reported feeling regarding target language communication about grammar, tests, and administrative information, and even about topic or theme based activities. The results also confirm that target language use tends to be higher and anxiety levels lower for students in at least their second year of study, students with a bilingual background, motivated students who expect a high grade, and students who have received specific strategy instruction in target language use. The strongest predictor of target language-use anxiety correlated to the amount of target language used in the classroom. Students who reported higher levels of target language use in their

classrooms reported lower levels of target language-anxiety. Conversely, students who reported lower levels of target language use in their classrooms reported higher levels of target language-anxiety. The conclusion that Levine draws is that teachers who use a greater amount of the target language in their classroom should not expect higher levels of target language-use anxiety, but conversely, should expect students to feel comfortable with higher amounts of target language as they become accustomed to its use in the classroom.

### **Summary**

Several key factors seem to be evident in classrooms that are most conducive to language learning. First, the teacher should provide large amounts of target language input by conducting the lesson primarily in the target language (Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Turnbull, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). The teacher should implement various input modification strategies and explicitly teach various language learning strategies to convert the input to intake, thus creating an environment that encourages authentic communication in the target language (Bateman, 2008; Chambers, 1991; Duff & Polio, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Wilkerson, 2008). The environment should contain routine lessons and instructions carried out in the target language (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Reactions and simple requests should be insisted upon in the target language (Chambers, 1991). Students should be given the means and prompted to produce target language output by providing them with the necessary

language and opportunities with which to express themselves and interact in the target language (Bateman, 2008; Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Meiring & Norman, 2002; Swain, 1985). Key phrases and the language of the classroom should be explicitly taught, and students should be encouraged to initiate and negotiate target language dialogue, thereby giving them some control over the interaction (Mayo & Pica, 2000). Students' should be given a deep understanding of the target language input with the help of L1/L2 associations. Judicious use and short bursts of the L1 should be present to facilitate understanding, allowing both teachers and students to remain in the target language as much as possible (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). The combination of target language comprehensible input, output, and interaction is a prescription for student proficiency (Omaggio Hadley, 2000). Teachers should aim to use the target language as much as possible thus having a positive effect on learners' target language proficiency while providing opportunities for students to experiment with the target language and produce meaningful output; however, this requires a conscious and planned approach to language instruction (Macaro, 2000; Swain, 1985; Turnbull, 2001).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Setting**

This study was conducted in a rural, northwestern New Jersey town about 40 minutes west of New York City. The school district serves approximately 300 lower to upper-middle income students in grades Kindergarten to eight in one building and is considered a sending district to the 9-12 regional high school. The community, as well as the school population, is predominately Caucasian. The school contains a 3% minority population with 4% speaking a language at home other than English. Class sizes range from 12 to 21 students with the average class size being approximately 16 students. Students in grades 6 to 8 are considered middle school and change classes as such. Each grade level from Kindergarten to eighth grade is divided into two homerooms, or sections, and students typically continue their schooling with their same classmates until they enter high school.

My Spanish classroom contains 22 desks, which are arranged in five groups of four desks and one dyad. There is a table in the back of the room that students often utilize during group work. The teacher's desk is located in the front right corner of the room. On the front wall of the classroom is a large chalkboard and a mounted Smart Board. The room is brightly decorated with Spanish posters, both of the language and culture, three large Spanish, Mexican and Puerto Rican flags, and other artifacts reflecting the Spanish culture. On the

wall opposite the door is a wall of windows with a classroom library of close to 150 Spanish books separated into bins with categories such as bilingual, Spanish easy reader, Spanish culture. The room is rich in both Spanish text and culture.



*Figure 1. Classroom picture.*

### **Participants**

The participants of this study were students in an eighth grade Spanish I class. The class contained 17 students, consisting of seven boys and ten girls, all of whom were Caucasian and whose first language was English. The motivation of the class towards learning Spanish was mixed. Some thoroughly enjoyed learning the language. Others preferred to choose a language to learn instead of being “forced” to learn Spanish while some shared the belief that in America, everyone should learn English and they should not be forced to learn a foreign language at all.

I have had the unique advantage of teaching and observing the students' progress in Spanish during the past three years. This experience has enabled me to limit the amount of time spent on review at the beginning of each school year and continues to allow me to draw on the background knowledge that I have taught them throughout the various units and school years.

Prior to my arrival three years ago, these students experienced great inconsistency in the Spanish program and had been instructed by four different Spanish teachers from the time they were in Kindergarten to fourth grade. As a result, the students had little working knowledge of the vocabulary and structure of the Spanish language as each teacher taught the same material each year, typically colors, numbers, and days of the week – a far cry from the District's official Spanish I content. In past years, the eighth grade students only had Spanish two to three times a week for 42 minutes. This is the first year that Spanish is considered a core subject for the students and is scheduled four times a week. I am typically able to address three-quarters of the content the high school Spanish I program covers by creating thematic units that introduce a range of functions and structures necessary for Spanish II. The students have an opportunity after completing eighth grade Spanish to take the high school Spanish I exam to determine if they are eligible to take Spanish II as ninth graders. Approximately 65% of students typically pass into Spanish II after completing the entrance exam at the end of eighth grade.

## **Procedure**

The existing textbooks for the program are outdated by twelve years, and as a result of the shift in language pedagogy since the late 1990's, I have been in the practice of supplementing and adapting materials and ideas from newer textbook series and creating individualized comprehensive thematic units. These units range from ten to twelve weeks in length with a combination of four to five units a school year.

The intervention period lasted for twelve weeks. Throughout the intervention, all classroom interactions were conducted in Spanish. In the rare instances that English was used, the decision to interject with a brief English explanation was made only if all other communication had broken down and the students' understanding was compromised. In addition, English was used in several instances when making L1/L2 connections between English and Spanish grammar. Various opportunities were presented for the students to engage in target language output. The unit activities and content are displayed in Figure 2.

After receiving approval from my administrator and the Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) to conduct the study, I discussed the study with the students during the first week of school and gained

<b>Unit Activities and Content</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	Introduction of language learning strategies, partner activity using language-learning strategies, survey 1
<b>Week 2</b>	Introduction of 10 TPR commands, back to back drawing activity, communicative crossword puzzle, questionnaire 1
<b>Week 3</b>	Introduction of expresiones comunes, envelope vocabulary game, Charades, Flyswatter game, quiz 1
<b>Week 4</b>	Dibujos cómicos, cuéntame un cuento, TPR storytelling vocabulary, Simón Dice
<b>Week 5</b>	TPR Storytelling, Reglas de la Clase, sentence strip activity
<b>Week 6</b>	Dime algo activity, storytelling quiz,
<b>Week 7</b>	Introduction of –AR verb endings, Bop, una encuesta, Zip Around, survey 2
<b>Week 8</b>	Día de los Muertos reading, sequentially order events of Día de los Muertos, make/decorate sugar skulls
<b>Week 9</b>	Dry erase board conjugation practice, envelope conjugation game, una semana típica information sharing activity, listening activity, dice conjugation game
<b>Week 10</b>	Conjugation battleship game, conjugation/unit test, Muestra y Explica (show & tell)
<b>Week 11</b>	Write and perform dramatizaciones
<b>Week 12</b>	Qué coincidencia activity, survey 3, questionnaire 2

*Figure 2. Chart of unit activities and content.*

permission for their participation by having parents sign and return a consent form.

In order to promote student success in communicating in the target language, I introduced several input-modification strategies that the students could employ to remain in the target language and increase their comprehension of oral and written language input. The input-modification strategies included: gesturing, drawing illustrations, pantomiming, pointing to the object, circumlocution, or the act of talking around a word to describe its meaning using known vocabulary words, and L1/L2 Keyword connections, or the act of associating a similar word from the student's L1 with the new L2 vocabulary word. Students practiced using these strategies in small groups during the first week of the study, before any content was introduced to practice communicating in the target language.

To provide opportunities for students to communicate in the target language, students met daily in pre-assigned groups for the first five to ten minutes of class to complete a communicative activity as a warm-up. The activities were designed to communicate in the target language and to practice unit vocabulary and structures in a communicative setting and included: information gap activities, illustration activities, gesturing activities, and partner communicative activities. Each week, students evaluated their group's performance and use of the target language while I evaluated each individual

student's use of the target language (Appendix A). The separate grades were recorded as a component of the students' speaking grade for the marking period



*Figure 3. Euro Stamps.*

and served to increase student motivation to engage in target language conversation. Throughout the intervention, I implemented flexible grouping strategies during instructional activities. Based on the objective of the activity, students were instructed to work with their pre-assigned groups consisting of two higher proficiency students and two lower proficiency students, were assigned groups or partners based on proficiency level, or were allowed to choose a partner to increase motivation.

The Euro system (Figure 3) was implemented to further increase student motivation to produce target language output. Students were awarded monetary amounts of Euros based on their daily production of Spanish. Euros were collected in the form of stamps in which students stamped in their “bank book” at the end of each class with their accumulated euros for the day.

A listing of values was hung in the classroom awarding small phrases 1€ to 3€, long phrases 3€ to 5€, a Spanish conversation among peers 2€ to 5€, and a pertinent target language question or addition to class discussion 1€ to 3€. Additionally, a list of rewards was posted detailing authentic target language items the students could purchase with their euros. Students could buy a Spanish pencil with 10€, a Spanish scratch and sniff sticker with 20€, a Spanish scratch and sniff bookmark with 35€, and a sombrero with 50€.

### **Data Collection**

Hendricks defines triangulation as “the process in which multiple forms of data are collected and analyzed” (2009, p. 80). By triangulating the forms of data that I collected, I gathered as complete a view as possible of the effects of my inquiry. The majority of the data I gathered was observational data. Due to the communicative nature of this unit, there were many opportunities to observe my students as they were involved in group and partner work, as well as in whole class settings.

### ***Anecdotal Notes***

During student-centered, communicative activities, I acted as a non-participant observer which enabled me to maintain detailed anecdotal records on all of the students in the class. I listened for and recorded specific examples of language and grammar usage and tracked student progress and proficiency levels using detailed checklists (Appendix B). This role also allowed me time to engage in target language conversations with individual students to assess their current level of proficiency. Using a rubric, weekly speaking grades were assigned based on observations of target language use for the week.

### ***Field Log***

I maintained a field log in which I recorded all of my participant and non-participant observations throughout the duration of my study. In this field log, I recorded what I saw as the observed experiences of the students throughout the duration of the study, including “detailed information about implementation of the intervention, participant responses, and surprising events” (Hendricks, 2009, p. 91). I was able to type my detailed field notes each day during fourth period, only an hour and twenty minutes after the class ended. I sat at my computer daily and replayed the contents of the entire class period in my mind as I typed scripted accounts of the events and discourse that took place during first period. I saved a template on a flash drive and recorded my daily observations in a double-entry journal.

I documented student behaviors and conversations and recorded the detailed events of each lesson I taught, including discourse exchanges between the students and me as I endeavored to communicate my message through the target language. When reflecting and writing in my field log, I clearly separated my own personal feelings about observed experiences from reports of observations through the use of brackets (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003). The process of writing and reflecting on the events of the day often encouraged me to reevaluate my presentational techniques and implement necessary changes for the next lesson based on student understanding. The implementation of a double-entry journal allowed me to review and reflect upon previously written field log entries, which enabled me to gain further insight into the effectiveness of the study.

In addition to participant and non-participant observations, my field log also contained my collected anecdotal records and speaking evaluations, interview questionnaires, student surveys, and various examples of student artifacts. All materials were arranged into the categories of field notes, student interviews, teacher observations, and student work. Within each category, all work was arranged chronologically, and within each collected piece, alphabetically.

### *Assessments*

I incorporated a variety of rubrics as assessments of students' speaking and writing proficiencies on various tasks to provide evidence of students' developing proficiencies. The rubrics assessed students' comprehensibility,

comprehension, grammar, content knowledge, and accuracy when speaking and writing. In addition, students alternated group leaders who discussed and assessed the group's use of the target language during the week using a conversational evaluation rubric.

Students also participated in a variety of performance assessments such as dramatizations, skits, and communicative partner activities and games. These performance assessments enabled students to demonstrate their proficiency with the language and structures of the unit in a creative manner and also developed and practiced language proficiency strategies. Activities involving TPR and appropriate student response to commands were recorded using a checklist to document the student response (Appendix C). Finally, students completed two quizzes and a test to assess their written proficiency with the unit vocabulary and structures. At the end of the unit, students worked in small groups to compose and perform a skit incorporating as much of the new unit vocabulary and structures as possible to demonstrate their proficiency and ability to use the new material. Skit performances and written versions were graded using an evaluation rubric (Appendix D).

### ***Surveys/Questionnaires***

I administered a pre-survey and a final survey (Appendix E) to students to assess their attitudes toward their (1) proficiency in the target language, (2) the teacher's use of the target language, (3) target language anxiety, and (4) their

general attitude toward learning the target language. Students completed the surveys in English and their responses were used to report what they observed and experienced throughout the duration of the study. In addition, students completed a beginning and post study questionnaire in which they detailed their experiences and attitudes toward the teacher's use of the target language for instructional purposes, their own use of the target language, and their ability to understand and communicate with their group through the use of the target language (Appendix F). Questions were phrased, "How do you feel about..." or "What do you think about..." in order to eliminate leading questions.

### ***Student Work***

I collected a variety of student work throughout the duration of the study to serve as evidence of student achievement. Examples of student work included homework assignments, writing and journal assignments, worksheets, quizzes/tests, products of communicative partner or small group work, and the final skit prepared by the students.

## TRUSTWORTHINESS STATEMENT

*The enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived, and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic –*

*John F. Kennedy*

I do not presume to generalize my findings in this study, nor do I presume to prove certain truths regarding education; rather, through this study I anticipate gaining insights into my own teaching, which will ultimately improve my own instructional practices and understandings. After all, this is the story of *my* interpretation of the results of *my* intervention in *my* classroom. However individualized my study and interpretation, I have taken great care to uphold the ethical obligation to represent the truth as accurately and objectively as possible. Due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, it was imperative that I remain open to the discovery of unexpected research findings, consider multiple points of view as I gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data, and follow a series of ethical guidelines in order to be a trustworthy action researcher.

### ***Validity of the Study and Ethical Guidelines***

I underwent various, multifaceted techniques to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of my study. First and foremost, I obtained approval and written permission to conduct my study from the college Human Subject Internal Review Board (Appendix G). After approval was received, I made clear to the students, their parents, and my administrator, the purpose of my research and what the

anticipated benefits and potential risks may be. I obtained written permission by means of an informed consent letter (Appendix H), which was signed by all involved parties (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2005). The informed consent also made it clear that students could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I ensured that all collected data would be stored in a secured location and destroyed upon completion of the study, and that anonymity would be maintained through the use of pseudonyms. As the students were the primary stakeholders in the study, they were included as co-researchers through the collection and inclusion of student feedback in the form of surveys and interviews, which provided insights into the students' perspectives concerning the research, thus, I hope, increasing the fairness and accuracy of my results. The utilization of member checks (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997) to discuss with the students my interpretation of their perspectives further increased the validity of my study and ensured that I consider multiple points of view and interpretations (Hendricks, 2009).

The incorporation of persistent and prolonged observations, as well as the accurate recording of data in the form of detailed field notes and observational records enhanced the validity of my study (Hendricks, 2009). During this prolonged data collection process, I included thick descriptions of the setting and the study by detailing the setting, participants, intervention, and research methods. Furthermore, I charted and documented student engagement and achievement

through the incorporation of checklists, field log entries, and a collection of student work, thereby maintaining the outcome validity of my study, or the degree to which there was a successful resolution of the problem (Hendricks, 2009). Maintaining this audit trail provided a record of the analyzed data included in the study. I triangulated and compared my data sources in the form of artifacts, observational data, and inquiry data (Hendricks, 2009). These data sources included student surveys, interviews, artifacts of student work, student assessments, and my own observational and reflective notes. I engaged in reflective planning and made changes to my research plan as necessary by writing and including reflective memos and observer comments in my field log entries (Hendricks, 2009). I remained open to considering multiple points of view and interpretations as I gathered, analyzed, and interpreted my data by debriefing within a peer research group and presenting my results to key audiences (Hendricks, 2009). Within this group, I was also open to negative case analysis to analyze and determine why components of the intervention may not have been effective, or did not produce the desired results (Hendricks, 2009; Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2005).

### ***Researcher Bias***

Researchers possess certain biases that must be considered and identified to ensure both a successful intervention and an accurate and truthful report of the study (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997; Hendricks, 2009).

As researchers our stances, our angles of repose, do affect what we are interested in, the questions we ask, the foci of our study, and the methods of collection as well as the substance of analysis. And the meanings we make from research projects are filtered through our beliefs, attitudes, and previous experiences as well as through both the formal and informal theoretical positions we understand or believe in. (Ely et al., 1997, p. 38)

Therefore, it was necessary that I identified my own preexisting biases that inadvertently may have influenced my beliefs and attitudes regarding my study. First, I present the bias that language is acquired and develops naturally when students are exposed to input and comprehend language as comprehensible intake, which is the primary belief influencing my intervention of teaching through the medium of the target language. I believe that language develops with ease when students understand messages in the target language, pay attention and participate in class, and remain willing to experiment and take risks with language use. Although on one hand I understand that some students may have to make a more concerted effort to learn a language and make necessary accommodations during instruction for these students, my relative ease in learning a language has influenced my attitude that languages are fun and easy to learn and can be learned by all students. I must remain open to the possibility that not all students will share my same beliefs and may consider language learning laborious, tedious, or unachievable.

My teaching style could potentially present another bias in the interpretation of my research data. I am an outgoing and energetic individual who incorporates activities, songs, and games into the classroom. I enjoy singing, performing for, and engaging my students, and could potentially view their lack of participation as apathy instead of introversion.

I grapple with trying to understand students who outwardly declare their disdain for learning a second language, the same students who declare that English should be the only language learned in the United States, and anything less would be compromising us as Americans. I strive to remain open to the fact that these young, impressionable students could still be persuaded otherwise, and that perhaps my influence as a teacher of the Spanish language and culture could expand their worldly perceptions.

It was essential that I kept these biases in check by writing reflections of my participant observations and other reflective memos in my field log. Additionally, I was careful to consider multiple points of view, engage in negative case analysis, glean the perspectives of my teacher inquiry support group, and utilize member checks to maintain the validity and trustworthiness of my study.

## THIS YEAR'S STORY

### Ready or Not...

As the familiar faces of my eighth graders walked through my classroom door first period, I could not help but feel excitement to see most of them after a long summer vacation. Knowing that I would begin teaching primarily in Spanish and providing contextualized comprehensible input to the students beginning the second week of school, I had high hopes for the students in this class. Yet I was not anticipating how grueling a task this would be at times and how much patience and creativity it would take both on my part and on theirs.

At the end of the school year last year, I explained my research study to my then seventh grade students, and even elicited their help in my study's development. As I pondered a research question that I felt worthy enough to explore for the entirety of a semester, I asked them one day in class

- Sra. Whitaker :** What is it that you feel you most need to improve regarding your use of Spanish?
- Allen:** Oral communication. I mean, we're not able to say a whole lot in Spanish. (*Nods from the rest of the class*).
- Ana:** Yeah, it's like...if we can't say anything, then what's the point? We need to develop our fluency.

I chuckled at the use of my own words resonating through the mouths of my students. At least I know they listened...sometimes. Admittedly, I was in agreement with the students and told them I would take their input into

consideration. It was important that my students felt as though they were stakeholders in this whole process.

Toward the end of the school year, as my research plan became more and more polished, I informed the students that with their help my research study had been developed, and that I agreed that their oral proficiency was in need of development as a result of my own overuse of English and underuse of Spanish. I introduced my thesis topic and my plan for the next school year to an audience of mixed reviews, partly out of fear of the unknown, and partly because they knew that it sounded like more work. I could see their quizzical expressions and sideways glances and knew they didn't understand what a thesis was or what an integral part they were all about to play in the foreign term, "research study." However, they were receptive to the idea of conducting class in the target language and knew I already had confidence in their ability to understand my input and produce their own output.

Based on the research I had done, I knew that the students would not learn Spanish by simply hearing me speak more Spanish. I would have to make the input they received comprehensible so that they could understand the messages I was communicating. I began their eighth grade school year with an English introduction of several input modification strategies that both the students and I would use to make the Spanish input comprehensible. They were unaware that they possessed quite a bit of background knowledge already, as they had observed

me using several strategies to help them comprehend my target language input in previous years. They were able to identify: gesturing, illustrating, pointing, and using cognates. We added to the list and defined: circumlocution, L1/L2 keyword associations, and non-verbal expression or body language. With strategies in hand for making the target language input comprehensible, we made the leap to Spanish...ready or not.

### **What's Your Strategy?**

Though it was the second week of school, I stood, pensive, waiting, watching in the front of the room with an awkward smile on my face that surely masked my own anxiety about this first day of using all Spanish as the students entered. *Would I really be able to do this? Would they understand what I was saying? What if I made a mistake while I was speaking? Could I conduct an entire class period in a language that wasn't my own, nonetheless, an entire semester? I feel like a fraud. I'm supposed to be teaching **them** a language that I don't even feel fully confident using.*

The air of apprehension that loomed over the classroom was undeniable. I was certain that the students' own anxiety matched my uneasiness as the students quietly entered the room and sat with their groups, a distinct difference from the routine.

The lesson was intended to enable the students to practice making their own input comprehensible to their peers by engaging in several of the input

modification strategies reviewed the previous day. A few students thankfully remembered that there would be a group assignment at the beginning of each class on the Smart Board and they directed their group's attention to the assignment stating:

*Choose two Spanish words from a Spanish dictionary. Explain the meaning of these words to your group members without the use of English using three different input modification strategies (circumlocution, illustration, gesturing, etc.)*

Ana and Wesley made their way toward the bookshelf in the back of the room, returning with dictionaries in hand. The rest had looks of confusion on their faces. Noticing that the class would need some prompting, I spoke my first words, "En el Smart Board están las direcciones para el grupo." My profound first words were returned with hesitant stares. Some began to move and open their dictionaries, while others continued to stare at me, hoping for further directions in English. I decided not to say anything further to see what they would do. This was going to be harder than I thought. Apparently, I needed to model what to do, albeit the fact that the activity directions were in English. They seemed frozen by their anxiety.

**Sra. Whitaker :** Un ejemplo. Clase, miren aquí (*gesturing for their attention*). *Una ilustración.*

I wrote the word *cinta* on the chalkboard and proceeded to draw a picture, or somewhat distantly related picture, of tape. Apparently my picture was worse

than I thought. No takers, just blank stares and silence!

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Nadie? (*pointing to the picture and frowning*).  
¡Yo soy artista terrible!  
**Clase:** Nervous laughter.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** Ok, circumlocución.

I wrote the Spanish words *el papel* and *pegar* followed by a drawing of a piece of paper and glue bottle. Immediately, four hands went up.

**Ana:** Glue?  
**Sra. Whitaker:** No, pero bueno (*giving her the thumbs up to signify that it was a good try*).  
**Chris:** (*with a confident smile on his face*) Tape.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** Ah, muy bien (*holding up the tape dispenser from my desk*).  
**Josh:** Oh, I get it. Like, that picture you drew on the board is supposed to be the strand of tape you pulled out.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** ¡Exacto! Muy bien, clase, ahora, en los grupos, usen el diccionario y...

As I pointed to the English words on the Smart Board, I translated the directions into Spanish and wrote on the board *estrategía...explicar...no inglés*. This time, students immediately began to work, looking up their words and taking turns drawing, pointing, and creatively acting out their meanings. The former uneasiness of the room was replaced with laughter and a sense of ease.

As I moved about the room, I listened as different groups attempted to use the input modification strategies to explain the meaning of their chosen words. I came to Danielle and Rebecca's group who seemed somewhat confused. In an attempt to try and make them less anxious, I tried to guess what Danielle's picture was and attempted to conduct a Spanish conversation about her drawing which

required quite a bit of creative pointing and gesturing. In exchange for my dramatic performance, I received a smile and a “sí,” no more, no less. As I walked toward another group, Danielle asked Rebecca, “What did she say?” I could not hear Rebecca’s response. How disheartening.

Johnny’s group did not have a chance to finish mostly due to the fact that Johnny could not come up with either an illustration or gesture to represent his word and was overly content doing nothing. His group went to great lengths to help him describe his word without using English. Each group, whether successful in using and understanding the language or not, had practiced and been introduced to methods for making target language input comprehensible. By the end of the activity the students knew that they could at least begin to understand the Spanish of their peers and teacher by using the strategies.

When the last group finished, I summarized the lesson by identifying the key terms and strategies used to make input comprehensible. As I narrated in Spanish, some students took out their journals and copied down the heading as I wrote on the board. Others looked around at their group members for direction of what to do and copied their actions. Ironically, I had not intended these to become written notes, but the response was encouraging, so I proceeded.

**Sra. Whitaker:** El jueves, escribimos apuntes de las estrategias de usar el español. ¿Cuales son las estrategias?  
**Clase:** Silence. (*staring unknowingly*)

I walked over to the days of the week poster hanging on the wall with my pointer,

showed them *jueves*, then held up Allison's journal and modeled flipping back a page.

**Sra. Whitaker:** En los apuntes del jueves, ¿Cuál es número uno?  
(*students flip back to their notes from Thursday*)

**Ana:** ¿Qué es la fecha?

**Sra. Whitaker:** La fecha es el 8 de septiembre. (*writing it on the board*) ¡Muy bien, 1 euro! (*Ana smiles*) I wait several more seconds. ¿Cuál es una estrategia para usar el español?

**Ana:** (*hesitantly*) ¿Circumlocución?

I was notably surprised that she answered in Spanish. This looked promising!

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¡Excelente! Circumlocución ó sinónimos. ¿Cuál es otra estrategia?

I wrote on the board as students dutifully copied the notes, yet the class continued to stare at me. Ana halfway raised her hand again after several moments, but no one else. Eventually, Sara volunteered.

**Sara:** ¿Ilustraciones?

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¡Muy bien, y en español, wow!

As I continued to prompt the students, I noticed several voracious students looking up words in their dictionaries. I then understood from their hesitancy and use of the dictionary that the students thought they had to respond in Spanish, whereas I just wanted them to respond. Fully aware that they did not know any of these words, I knew I had to make my input more comprehensible. I casually said, "En español ó inglés clase." They seemed to understand because Sara and four others immediately raised their hands and the rest of the notes progressed

much less laboriously. Regardless of which language they wound up responding in, I saw their ability to comprehend and it was encouraging.

We were off to a somewhat rocky, but promising start as the process of negotiation unfolded. At the close of the lesson, I flipped my *español/inglés* sign to the English side and asked for their feedback regarding their ability to understand during the lesson.

*“You used a lot of motions. We just watched you.”*

*“It’s not too hard to understand you, but not too easy either. I just really had to watch.”*

*“I guess I listened for words that sounded like I could figure them out.”*

I was impressed by how flexible they were when they did not understand my Spanish and how willing they were to try and negotiate what I was saying. My initial expectation was to pry the language out of them, yet they surprised me by their adaptation skills and ability to adjust to a new climate of learning. Now that they understood that I would make input comprehensible for them and that I expected them to do likewise, I would introduce some classroom expressions and commands to help them navigate daily classroom conversations and routines in Spanish.

### **Survey Says...**

Towards the beginning of the study, I wanted to ascertain the students’ existing viewpoints regarding (1) classroom target language use, (2) target

language use anxiety, (3) motivation toward using the target language, and (4) an estimate of the amount of target language used in class as a baseline. Table 1 includes the data collected from this survey. The categories of Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree were condensed into Agree for the purposes of reporting data in this table. In addition, the categories of Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree were condensed into Disagree in this table. Realizing that the students had based their answers on their previous years of Spanish study in my classroom, I was nonetheless impressed by the notion that the majority of students were able to understand most of what was said in Spanish during class and felt that they could communicate proficiently about topics they had learned. I was surprised, however, by the level of anxiety that accompanied student production of the target language.

### **Piccionario**

As the second week progressed, I introduced ten common classroom commands via TPR (Appendix I). In order to enable the students to begin producing target language output, our next warm-up activity was to take turns acting out some *mandatos* while others in the group named the Spanish command. As I walked from group to group, I noticed that all but Danielle's group were trying out new Spanish phrases. In fact, not only were they not speaking English, they still looked overly confused about how to even approach the whole process of speaking in Spanish.

Table 1. Student Pre-Survey

Student Survey	N=16	
	Agree	Disagree
I can understand most of what is said in Spanish during class.	14	2
I can communicate proficiently in Spanish about topics I have learned.	14	2
I feel anxious when I have to speak in Spanish.	10	6
I feel anxious when people in class (students or teacher) speak to me in Spanish.	6	10
I speak in Spanish when working cooperatively with my classmates and try not to switch to English.	12	4
I speak in Spanish when speaking with my teacher and try not to switch to English.	9	7
Using comprehension strategies like cognates, gestures, and pictures helps me to understand the message of what is being said in Spanish.	16	0
I would rather my teacher use Spanish instead of English in the classroom.	10	6
I try to use Spanish outside of class when I can.	6	10
I enjoy learning Spanish.	14	2

The Spanish chatter that filled the room from the other groups, with their memorized phrases and broken expressions, scant as it was, provided promise that the students were eager to try to communicate and create in a language other than their own. They were willing to learn and that was a start. I overheard Laura and Jen using the language creatively as they called each other *estúpida*, and used the poster on the wall behind them to try out new expressions. Laura boldly proclaimed, “Jen es una fiesta!”

I directed the students to “síentense, por favor.” Ana pretended to sit exactly where she was on the floor. The sense of humor she portrayed allowed me to see that she not only understood my directive, but she was trying to allow her own personality to pierce through her limited ability to communicate her thoughts in Spanish.

I introduced Pictionary using an overhead with three examples pictures.

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Qué mandato es? ¿Qué significa el dibujo en español? (Unknowing stares) Hay un papel y una flecha. Es una acción.  
**Ana:** (hesitantly) ¿Saca papel?

This was repeated for the remaining two phrases, to which I added,

**Sra. Whitaker:** “En grupos de tres, dibuja ilustraciones de los mandatos, cómo piccionario. Usa el tablero magnético y un marcador (holding up the objects). ¿Comprenden?”

I gave a thumbs-up or down to see if they understood. They nodded and moved.

The students used a mix of English and Spanish during the activity, but most

sounded like they were trying to use as many Spanish expressions as they could. They did not have a large vocabulary yet, but seemed to be working quite well with what they had. At least they were making the effort and that is all I could ask at this early stage. I recognized that not every student had grasped the concept yet most students were engaging in the new class format.

### **Yo No He Terminado Todavía**

I knew the students would need a broader vocabulary if I was expecting them to converse in the target language. *Expresiones comunes* sheets (Appendix J) were distributed and directions were painstakingly narrated in Spanish. Their task was to use the distributed picture cards to cooperatively make predictions as to the meaning of each expression based on the illustration and category of each phrase.

**Sra. Whitaker:** En el papel, hay frases populares ó comunes de escuela. Aquí están tarjetas con dibujos ó ilustraciones que representan las frases en español (*holding up the cards*). La tarjeta dice ¡Yo primero! ¿Qué significa ¡yo primero! en inglés? (*quizically*) Hmm...mira al dibujo. Hay una persona y un número uno y la categoría es trabajando cooperativamente.

**Allison:** (*hesitantly*) Me first?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Sí, clase, escriban “me first” en el papel.

Some students immediately wrote the English translation, while others were on the wrong side of the paper and clearly did not understand my Spanish input. I walked around and pointed to their papers to show them where we were.

**Sra. Whitaker:** En los grupos, miren (*pointing to my eye*) a los

dibujos en las expresiones y determinen que significan las frases en inglés. Usen un lápiz por favor.

They all began to look for pencils. I was reassured and relieved that they were at least grasping this concept.

**Johnny:** ¿Uh, no lápiz?

The students had 30 minutes to make as many predictions as possible before I called them back to their seats.

**Josh:** ¡Yo no he terminado todavía!

Josh smiled proudly as he correctly used one of the new expressions. I returned his smile warmly and rewarded him with a Euro.

The use of Spanish and level of cooperation varied from group to group; however, I learned something from each group's response. As I circulated around the room, I reflected on what I might do differently to challenge some students and also reach the more resistant learners. Ana's group worked very well together and managed to remain speaking Spanish for the majority of their interactions. Sara's group spoke mostly English and used Spanish only when reading the Spanish expressions. Although Sara attempted to use Spanish to lead the group, Laura relied heavily on *Spanglish* and Chris was simply uninvolved, relying on Sara and Laura to complete the work. Throughout the activity, Chris remained distant and uninterested. Brett and Jen were the obvious leaders in their group, encouraging the quieter students, Wesley and Robin, to speak in Spanish and

contribute. Their enthusiasm and confidence seemed contagious which made Wesley and Robin more comfortable interacting in Spanish. Allison's group made extensive use of both English and Spanish. Allison codeswitched, depending on her mood at the time, though her dominant personality governed the group. Josh tried to remain primarily in Spanish, using his comical personality to juxtapose Allison's assertiveness. Johnny used only English, though he would periodically offer a Spanish word, seemingly more for attention than anything else. Based on my past teaching experience with Johnny, he has typically been known to slide by in all of his classes by relying heavily on his humorous personality rather than his less-than-stellar academic performance. It was interesting to watch the dynamic in the classroom as these different personalities struggled with their role in the new environment. Johnny seemed uncomfortable not knowing if his charm and wit would suffice, whereas Allison grappled with the chance to become the new competition for Brett and Jen.

It was crucial to give the students a common vocabulary. If I had not started with the language of the classroom vocabulary, the students would not have been able to conduct themselves in Spanish.

#### **Did I Say That?**

Sixteen actively engaged students. Spanish chatter filling the room. As I wandered from group to group, listening to their descriptions of a crazy classroom drawing to their partners, I drifted into thought...

*I am astounded by how long it takes to teach a lesson entirely in Spanish! The amount of allotted time seems to double when compared to previous years in allowing the students time to comprehend my messages. After seven years, I'd like to think I have a pretty good sense of how long activities will take to complete. I've become very accustomed to allotting only 10 to 15 minutes for an activity, but now I need a new timeframe; a planned 10 minute activity takes almost the entire period. The difference is that the students receive vital comprehensible input. They also have increased opportunities to produce comprehensible output as compared to before the study began. Although the activities take longer, the activities seem more engaging and productive. There has to be a communicative payoff in return for not being able to fit in as many activities. After all, they were not all educative experiences anyway, but simply a string of activities. I also can't help but realize how absolutely exhausting it is using Spanish all of the time. If it is this taxing on me, I can only imagine how the students must be feeling.*

I suddenly stopped reflecting and a smile crept across my face as I watched my students making their output comprehensible for their peers using the input modification strategies I had taught them like gesturing, pointing, and circumlocution to execute the assignment entirely in Spanish. They were sitting back-to-back, or side-to-side, detailing for their partners where each item should be drawn based on the description in their hands. I was intrigued as I overheard

Luke, traditionally quiet during Spanish class, sarcastically call a seat *una cita*. I could not pass it up, “Oh no, una cita es para muchachos y muchachas. Ellos miran videos, van a restaurantes, y es muy romántico.” Luke’s cheeks immediately blushed at his unknown reference to a date.

*Did I just explain that all in Spanish? He understood too! Wow, it’s not that they can’t understand, it’s that you have to make a concerted effort to remain in the target language and find a way to make the language comprehensible to them. I actually feel quite proud of myself. I was so nervous that I would not be able to conduct myself for entire class periods in Spanish, yet, the practice is serving me well. I am beginning to realize that my research isn’t just for their benefit, but for mine too. Even in just two weeks, my proficiency and comfort level is gradually increasing with each passing day. I think I underestimated my own ability to use the language and their ability to understand it.*

### **Spanish In The Classroom**

By taking the results from the first questionnaire regarding student attitudes toward target language use in the classroom, I created a pastiche (Figure 4) to juxtapose the various student attitudes that existed within the class at this early stage in the research. I was surprised by the varying attitudes regarding the students’ ability to understand my use of the target language but was comforted by the fact that almost every student acknowledged that the input-modification strategies enabled them to somewhat understand the message. I was equally as surprised by the students’ attitude toward their own ability to produce the target

## A Pastiche of Student Attitudes Toward Target Language Use

### **How do you feel about your ability to understand your teacher's use of the target language during class?**

- I feel really confused. I have no idea what she's saying when she's speaking Spanish.
- Sometimes I hear a few words I can translate, but most of the time I'm clueless.
- By the time I can think about what all the words mean and piece it together, everyone else is already answering the question.
- Sometimes I'm frustrated and confused because I am not sure what she's saying and then she just moves on.
- I feel as if I don't know enough Spanish to really understand what I'm being told.
- It's hard to understand.
- I can only understand about 45% most of the time.
- I think it's great that she's using all Spanish because if all we hear is Spanish, we'll gradually pick up words.
- When she's talking in Spanish, I pay more attention because I have to translate it in my head.
- I can understand mostly everything she says.
- It really influences us to speak more Spanish during and after class.
- It'll help us to learn faster by her speaking all Spanish.
- I get the gist of what she's talking about.

### **What are your feelings towards your own ability to use and understand the target language?**

- I normally can't pronounce most words and I'm not used to talking in another language.
- I'm not good at it.
- My group can say a lot more than I can.
- When I use Spanish, I need to think about what I'm saying and how I say it in Spanish.
- I can carry on a conversation, but by the end of the year, I think I'll be able to talk better.
- I'm surprised by how much I can say already because sometimes I'm like, "Wow, did I just say that?"
- I'm happy with how much Spanish I know, but I want to know a lot more!
- I think I know a lot of Spanish and it's a fun language to speak.
- I never thought I could learn this much!
- Spanish in small groups is actually very helpful because some kids are scared to raise their hands and ask for help, so you can just talk about it in your group.

Figure 4. Pastiche of student attitudes toward target language use.

language as they seemed to be pleasantly surprised by the amount of Spanish they could already produce.

### **Humor That Translates**

As we moved into the second week of school, I asked students to produce target language output as they played what I called the Envelope game, in which each group received an envelope with a set of expression cards from the *expresiones comunes* paper and took turns calling phrases aloud. The first person who correctly yelled out the English translation won the card. The person at the end of the game with the most cards won a Euro.

During the game, Johnny was slow to answer each round, but admittedly, was only partially attentive. He struggled to recall the vocabulary as quickly as his fellow group members. I constructed Johnny's layered story (Figure 5) through the use of my field notes, observer comments, and a student interview to recount Johnny's story from two perspectives.

A quiet and meek Robin engaged me in a brief Spanish conversation asking, "¿Cómo se dice, cómo se escribe en español?" Surprised at her quick and accurate pronunciation, I awarded her a Euro before delivering an answer. This was the most I had heard her say so far this year. Saddened by his lost opportunity to also earn a Euro, Wesley commented, with a downtrodden expression, "Oh, estoy triste," eliciting laughter from his well-timed response. I, too, laughed at his humor that translated between languages, replying, "Oh, ok, I

### **Johnny's Story**

Johnny

I think I'm starting to get this. I don't care that I'm slow. At least I'm trying. I can't answer as fast as the other people in my group, but whatever. I'll just get what I get.

Sra. Whitaker

I wonder what effect this competition has on Johnny? I hope that this seemingly friendly game doesn't make him feel incompetent, or worse yet, incapable of learning a second language. He seems ok with his meager 3 cards compared to his group member's 10 or 12. His pronunciation is improving, that's for sure, and he certainly seems unfazed by the fact that he's obviously losing.

Johnny

Three cards, twelve cards, what's the difference. I'm not going to win anyway. Who am I kidding? There's no way I can remember all these phrases. I'll just do the ones I know. At least it's fun.

Sra. Whitaker

He has a few more cards now and his speed is increasing, but he's still losing. His humor and lackadaisical demeanor won't be of use to him in Spanish class much longer. He's going to have to get serious and study.

*Figure 5. Johnny's layered story.*

Euro para ti también,” which elicited a quick smile and an, “¡Oh, estoy contento!”

Wesley's clever ability to use the language to convey his personality and emotions revealed itself as a good language development indicator. He was certainly developing the ability to authentically create with the language and felt comfortable enough doing just that.

### **What Promise**

It was becoming evident that by the third week, the students' ability to comprehend my spoken Spanish had increased dramatically. No longer did they

wear blank expressions. No longer was action preceded by hesitation. They were getting it. Differences in proficiency levels were markedly increasing as each student produced his or her own varying amount of Spanish on a daily basis. Some were still inclined to listen and digest the language, some teetered on language production as they recited memorized phrases, and some generated their own authentic messages. The development that occurred in three short weeks unveiled great promise that the students' would indeed increase in proficiency as a result of my increased use of the target language.

### **Actions Speak Louder Than Words**

There was quite a large group crowded around Brett at the beginning of one of our next class sessions radiating expressions of admiration and endearment. Of course, I was somewhat interested in the happenings of the group, but more interested in beginning my lesson.

**Sra. Whitaker :** ¿Qué pasa?  
**Brett:** It's my baby picture, you know, for the yearbook.  
**Sra. Whitaker :** Ah, qué lindo tú eras. ¡Clase, tenemos 10 minutos para completar el juego de Charades de ayer! ¡Vamos, en los groups de jueves, por favor!

A quick redirection was all that was needed as the group dispersed and the students refocused. Thus far I had not found a classroom management issue that could not be resolved through the medium of the target language. Tone and body language helped to make initially incomprehensible words meaningful.

## Viñetas para tiras cómicas



Figure 6. Comic strip assignment.

While the students were engaged in their game of Charades, I checked their comic strip homework from the night before. Figure 6 portrays a sample in which the student effectively used a variety of newly learned classroom phrases from the *expresiones comunes* list to depict a scene representative of Spanish class. Although some of the grammar is imperfect (no me gusta tú, hablas

español) the student demonstrated the ability to creatively use and recombine known language structures to create a new product.

I noticed that Sara, Luke, and Rebecca had left the last two frames blank.

**Sra. Whitaker :** ¿Qué pasa aquí? ¿No hay nada?  
**Luke:** I didn't know I had to do them all.  
**Sara:** I couldn't think of anything more to say.

My sudden stroke of guilt made me reluctant to reprimand them with a homework slip. Perhaps I should have given the homework directions in both the L1 and L2, in alignment with what I had read in the literature. I kept this in mind for future assignments and test directions.

As the game of Charades came to an end, I directed the students to form new groups and to read their comic strip assignments aloud. It was amazing how similar the groups looked to the Charade activity only moments before. Sara, Stephen, Johnny, and Danielle sat inconspicuously at the back table.

**Sra. Whitaker:** Espérense, este no es un grupo diferente.  
**Johnny:** (without hesitation) Yeah, but we're sharing different stories.

He certainly could understand much more than he could say. I find it interesting that he understood my Spanish and replied in English with a quick and appropriate response. Smiles and laughs filled the room as students shared their comics.

As the flutter of activity and noisy shuffling of assignments came to a close, I announced the upcoming quiz (Appendix K).

**Sra. Whitaker:** Ahora, tenemos una prueba (writing it on the board). Una prueba es un exámen corto. En inglés, ¿qué significa prueba?

**Josh:** A quiz?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Exacto.

**Sara:** ¿Uh, lápiz ó pluma?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Excelente. Un Euro. Una pluma azul ó negra, ó un lápiz está bien.

**Sara:** ¿Me puedes prestar un lápiz? (using one of the expresiones comunes)

The quiz seemed as if it were over before it even began. There was no hesitancy as the students completed each question testing their knowledge of the *expresiones comunes*. The class average was a 92.5%, including Johnny's 72%. I realized how much he must be struggling and decided that I must remedy this by checking in with him more frequently.

### **¿Cómo Se Dice Fun En Español?**

I would never have foreseen the decision to change my plans at the last minute and introduce the *Cuéntame un Cuento* activity ending in such an engaging lesson, but sometimes spontaneity can be beneficial. The activity itself was simple, but the product produced by the students was anything but. I acted out the directions with key words written on the board. Each person in the group was to write one sentence of a story using the *expresiones comunes* and other learned vocabulary, then pass the story to the next person in the group who continued the story with another sentence. This procedure would continue until each story was returned to the original author.

The students sat staring at their blank papers determining how to begin their stories. “¿Cómo se dice, once upon a time?” one student asked. “Había una vez...” I wrote on the board. And they were off. Pens and pencils carefully moved across their papers and dictionary pages flipped as students sought for the quintessential words to complete their creative sentences. The room was silent unless broken by a student’s “¿Cómo se dice...?” or “¿Cómo se escribe...?” or my own “¡cambien papeles ahora!” in which the students would switch papers, mid-sentence or not.

Even after several attempts at prompting him, Chris invested very little effort in the *Cuéntame un Cuento* activity. I interviewed him after class to determine the cause of his detachment during the activity. I constructed Chris’ layered story (Figure 7) through the use of my field notes, observer comments, and a student interview to recount Chris’ story from two perspectives. After 20 minutes and a “¡Ya terminé!” from Rebecca, the stories containing each individual author’s unique fingerprint were returned to the original author. Chuckling and cocked eyebrows filled the room as students silently read the new direction their story had taken. Group members helped make the input comprehensible for their peers in order to help them understand their own story. Instead of an English translation in response to Danielle’s question “¿Qué es osito peluche?”, Laura walked across the room and grabbed my stuffed *coquí* frog.

### Chris's Story- Part 1

Chris

God, I hate this! I hate when she speaks in all Spanish. It's hard to understand. I try to get what she's saying, but I just can't, so I give up and tune her out. Of all days, I'm really not into this today. Why can't she just leave me alone?

Sra. Whitaker

Chris is just sitting there staring blankly ahead of him. After sitting for several minutes with a closed binder on his desk, he finally removed a piece of paper by my personal invitation only. I tried gesturing and asking him what was wrong. Was he was tired, sick, confused, angry? All I got was a shrug of the shoulders and not even any eye contact. What's going on with him today? Why is he so detached?

Chris

She's obviously not going to leave me alone. She keeps asking me all these questions in Spanish. I'm not going to tell her what's going on, especially since I have no idea how to do it in Spanish. She'd probably give me a, "En español, por favor" or something. It's easier just to say nothing. I'll write something on everyone's paper to make her quiet, but my head's not in this today. My girlfriend just broke up with me last night, and I don't even feel like being here today. My mom made me come.

Sra. Whitaker

I talked to Chris after class today to investigate whether it was his anxiety level causing him to shut-down in class or something entirely different. I wish he would have told me that that his girlfriend had broken up with him. I could have been more sympathetic. In a strange way though, I feel some closure knowing that it wasn't his proficiency distracting him in class.

*Figure 7. Part 1 of Chris's layered story.*

Naturally guessing frog, Laura shook her head no and quickly drew a bear on a piece of paper while squeezing the stuffed frog. The group's response of a stuffed bear was returned by Laura giving a thumbs-up. Sara asked, "¿Qué es zanahoria?" Danielle pointed to the carrot on the poster behind her.



Although the grammar contained various errors, the message was easily communicated.

I had intended the activity as only a warm-up, but I realized that it was more worthwhile to take advantage of a teachable moment where the students were deeply engaged than to continue with my plans for the day in hopes of creating an engaging environment. After all, this is what I was trying to accomplish studying the classroom, authentic, creative use of the target language.

### **La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala**

After the realization that I had taught all of the vocabulary thus far in isolation and through memorized phrases, I decided to make modifications and implement the storytelling technique earlier than scheduled. The students needed some context if they were going to begin speaking a bit more authentically. In typical TPRS fashion, I introduced the story vocabulary words in small chunks and the students demonstrated their understanding of the meaning of the words through their actions, and of course through a game of *Simón Dice*, or Simon Says to add some interest. They were ready for the story (Appendix L).

#### Una Dramatización

*Scene: Sra. Whitaker writes on the board, los caracteres: la profesora, la alumna buena, la alumna mala, el/la narrador(a).*

**Sra. Whitaker:** Vamos a actuar el cuento de La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala. Hay cuatro caracteres en el cuento, la profesora, la alumna buena, la

alumna mala, y yo soy la narradora. Necesito un voluntario para la profesora.

*(Ana raises her hand)* Ok, Ana, tú eres la profesora. ¿Clase, cómo se llama la profesora?

**Johnny:** Alberto.

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(Ana grimaces)* Ok, la profesora se llama Alberto. *(laughter)* Y necesito una alumna buena.

**Chris:** *(standing up)* Oh dude, this is so gotta be me.

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(the class laughs at the irony of Chris as the good student)* Ok, Chris, tú eres la alumna buena. Y finalmente, necesito una alumna mala.

*(Josh's hand shoots up in the air)* Ok, Josh, tú eres la alumna mala. *(He comes to the front of the room smiling broadly)*

*Sra. Whitaker begins to narrate the story as the student volunteers act out her words. The actors show they understand all of the narration by their hysterical performance. Chris and Josh speak in high voices, pretending to be the good and bad "girl" students, while Ana speaks in a low voice since the class has decided that the teacher in the story is a man. The class erupts in laughter at various parts of the story as the actors bring the characters to life.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(narrating the story)* Sofía es alumna muy mala...Ella no presta atención en clase cuando la profesora enseña. Ella no escucha cuando la profesora habla *(Chris begins moving his index fingers together in a motion symbolizing that Josh is a bad boy, and proceeds to fold his hands and listen intently to Ana, el profesor.)*

*The narration continues.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** Sofía saca una nota mala en la prueba. Sofía saca una nota baja, una “F.” (*Chris shoves his A+ paper in Josh’s face, moving it back and forth and teasing him*)

**Josh:** (*throwing himself on the floor pretending to cry*) ¡Yo soy estúpida! Una “F” Whaaa. (*Laughter erupts from the class.*)

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¡Wow, qué dramático! ¿Esta clase tiene actores muy buenos, no? Ahora clase, uds. van a actuar ó performar el cuento en grupos. Una persona será el narrador, una persona será la alumna buena, una persona será la alumna mala, y una persona será el profesor. ¿Me comprenden?

*The students nod their heads yes and begin to move.*

**Ana:** (*pointing at their pre-set groups of four*)¿Uh, en los grupos aquí?

**Sra. Whitaker:** (*making a waving motion over the class*) No, quienquiera en la clase.

**Ana:** ¿Qué?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Tú, Wesley, Luke, y Allison pueden formar un grupo, ó tú, Chris, Brett, y Laura pueden formar un grupo.

**Ana:** Ah, yo entiendo.

*Students break into groups of 4 but time runs out in the period.*

*Scene II: The next day in class, students reform their groups of 4.*

**Allison:** ¿Quién es el narrador?

**Wesley:** Yo soy el narrador.

**Allison:** ¿Y la alumna buena?

**Ana:** Yo primero. ¡A mí me toca!

*The group starts acting out their story.*

**Wesley:** ¿Sra., cómo se dice detention?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Detención. ¿Por qué?

**Wesley:** Porque la alumna mala en detención ahora.

*Robin begins dancing across the room.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Es ella la alumna mala ó la alumna loca?

*The group erupts in laughter. Chris' group is acting out the story in an animated fashion.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Quieren performar para la clase?

**Chris:** Yeah dude, that'll be awesome!

*Josh agrees, but Brett is not so sure.*

**Brett:** ¿Puedo ir al baño?

**Sra. Whitaker:** No. *(Brett smiles slyly)*

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(asking Ana's group)* ¿Quieren performar para la clase?

*Ana and Luke say no while Allison and Wesley simultaneously say yes.*

**Wesley:** Es una posibilidad.

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(asking Johnny's group)* ¿Quieren performar para la clase?

*They stare at Sra. Whitaker confused.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Performa, la clase? ¿Sí ó no?

**Johnny:** OH NO!

*Danielle looks at him confused.*

**Johnny:** She wants us to perform for the class!

**Rebecca:** ¡Oh sí! Come on, it'll be fun!

The students who chose to act out their version of the story took turns performing for the class, followed by the class retelling the story in written form in their journals. It appeared that collectively they were beginning to understand more, and therefore I did not have to repeat myself as much because they were immediately responding, or at least helping each other to translate within their groups.

### **Sentence Strips**

It took an incredible amount of time to explain a simple activity such as rearranging sentence-strip pieces of paper into a logical sentence in the target language. What would have normally taken a few seconds to explain in English required closer to 10 minutes of explaining and modeling in Spanish. Displayed on the Smart Board was a jumbled sentence from the story of La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala. Reading the sentence aloud to the class,

**Sra. Whitaker:** La oración tiene muchas palabras (*pointing to each individual word in the sentence and identifying it as a palabra*) pero la oración no está en orden. ¿Cuál es la primera palabra en la oración?

I held up one finger to indicate that I was searching for the first word in the sentence. Laura immediately raised her hand, came to the Smart Board, and moved the first word of the sentence into its proper location. After modeling how the sentence was to be put in order, I said,

**Sra. Whitaker:** Ahora, hay ocho oraciones que no están en orden. (*spreading the cards out on different desks*) En un minuto, uds. van a mover por la clase y poner las

oraciones en orden. Escriban las oraciones en los diarios. Pueden trabajar en grupos, parejas, ó independiente.

Seemingly too much target language input for the students to digest at once, they immediately formed their familiar groups of four and sat down in front of a set of cards.

**Sra. Whitaker:** Hay una oración allí. Busca una oración dónde no hay nadie.

Getting the hint, the students divided themselves into partners and arranged the set of cards they sat in front of, then moved to another open set of cards until they had rearranged all eight sentences. Figure 9 shows an example of student work in which the student rearranged all eight sentences into the correct order. Each word contained in the sentence was written on an individual piece of sentence strip.

Intended to reinforce word meaning and sentence structure, the activity also provided necessary confidence for struggling students that they could indeed understand some Spanish. Johnny was doing great and had found his niche. Expertly arranging cards that stumped his partner Danielle, he smiled with the realization that he, for once, felt like an expert at what he was doing. Stephen, a student who typically lacked self confidence in the target language, read sentences aloud to himself before committing his words to paper, while in another group, Sara made sure the sentences she had created “sounded right.” After collecting the assignment at the end of the class, I was amazed at the grammar that was

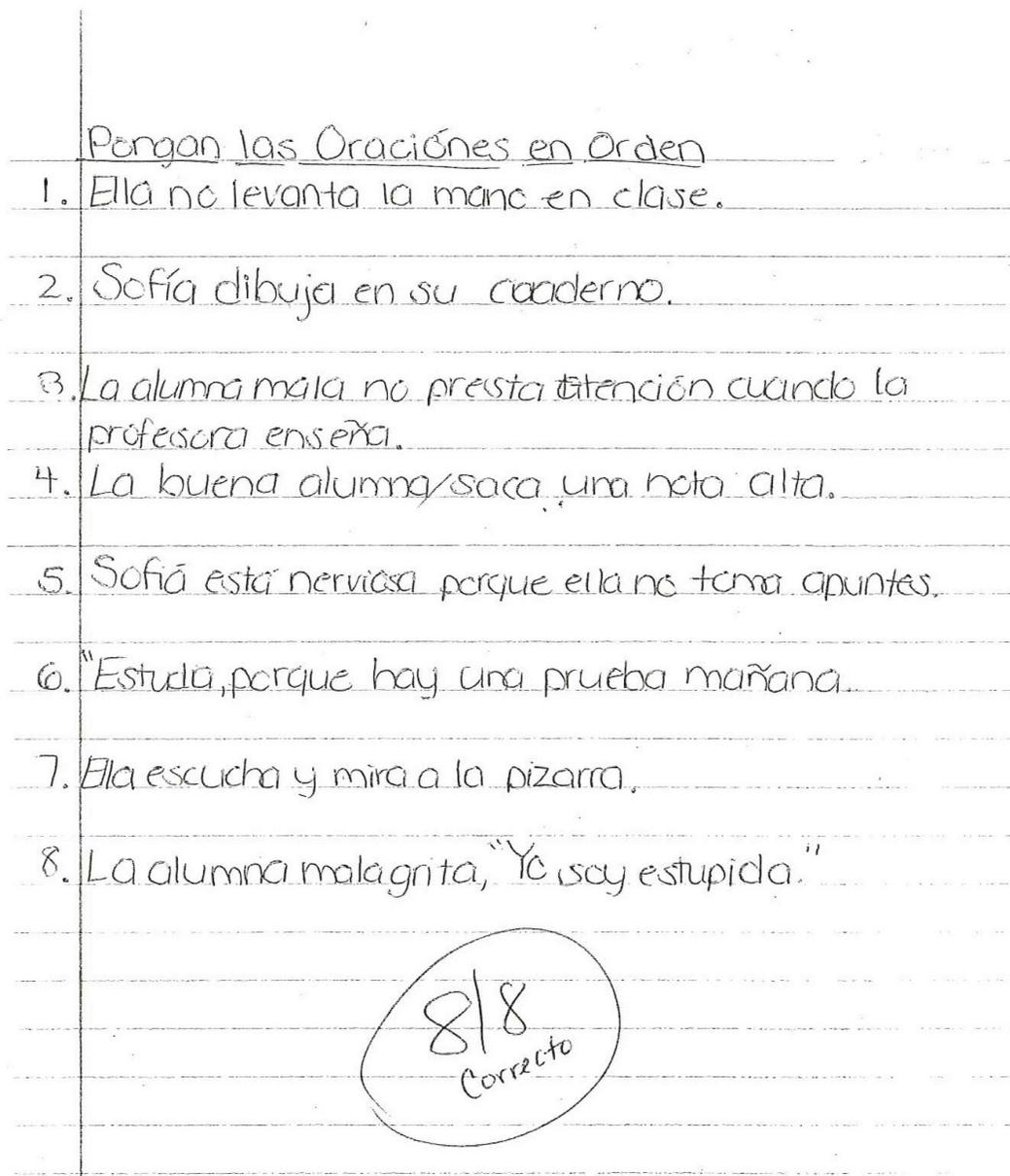


Figure 9. Sentence strip activity.

developing as a result of the contextualized presentation of vocabulary through storytelling. Students shared what “sounded right” and what did not.

### **Time For A Disappointment!**

After so many successful lessons, I knew there would be a flop eventually. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes spontaneity results in educative experiences (Dewey, 1938), while other times, a lack of sufficient planning is evidenced only

by an ineffective product. Regardless of the fact that I had carefully planned the next lesson, I decided that it would be better –no, easier- to have both of my Spanish I classes at the same point, and the afternoon class was seriously behind schedule. To remedy this, I developed a spontaneous activity to create a competition to assess my students’ developing language skills. The assignment was going to be fun and oral, I decided, not another written story, but I had not quite figured out how. I quickly created lavish directions in my head and proceeded to try and explain them in Spanish. Students had 20 minutes with a partner to write as many descriptive sentences about a picture as they could. The group with the most sentences would be awarded three Euros.

I suddenly remembered an activity from a previous year in which a student was very irritated at the fact that I seemingly changed the rules at the last minute. I had disqualified his repetitive sentences that changed only a word or two and he argued that they were indeed different sentences and that I should have specified that detail when the activity commenced. I had the solution this time. I began to explain in Spanish how there were two levels of winners, one for whoever had the most sentences, and one for whoever had the most creative/different sentences. Not only did I use too much Spanish for the students to truly comprehend the activity, but I was unsure of the purpose of the activity so I could not effectively explain the directions regardless of the language.

After several attempts at making the directions comprehensible, the students nodded that they understood and began their clandestine meetings to write about the illustration competitively, though what they were supposed to be writing, they were not sure. As I became more accustomed to giving Spanish directions, I came to realize that abstract directions proved hard enough to explain in the target language, but when the plan was not properly developed, explanation was nearly impossible.

After 15 minutes of diligent writing, the students were instructed to stop and count their sentences and Euros were awarded to the group who wrote the most. If I had stopped there, the activity would have been somewhat successful. It would have encouraged creative and authentic use of the target language and demonstrated their ability to create target language sentences. However, I did not stop here.

I proceeded to have one student from each group alternate reading aloud a sentence their group had written. Groups could not repeat any existing sentences another group had written on the paper. The group with the most remaining sentences would be the winner of the most creative category. No wonder there was such confusion. Not only could the students not understand my incessant Spanish mumbling, but they lost what understanding they had already developed of the purpose of the activity.

After making several attempts at explaining the second competition, the students still stared in confusion. I was getting impatient and frustrated. And then it happened...I translated the whole thing into English, the first English words I had spoken since the beginning of school. It was absolutely amazing how a mere 35 seconds of English could cause so much guilt. I felt that it was more beneficial to quickly summarize and move on so that the students could continue to receive comprehensible input and be given an opportunity to produce target language output rather than to spend another ten minutes trying to explain a point that no one understood. Yet, this was the first time I had used English and I was plagued with the guilt of my failure. In spite of my guilt, the students seemed appreciative of the clarification, brief as it was.

Eventually the activity came to a close as each group took turns reading an expression while the other groups listened and identified if they had the same phrase. I learned a very valuable lesson that day: carefully planning activities and language for instruction would avoid confusion and mayhem and more likely result in the learning I desired.

### **Talking Up A Storm**

I walked around the silent room observing the students' progress while they took their storytelling quiz (Appendix M). The silence was broken by an occasional question, but nothing more. In the past, students robotically handed in their quizzes as they finished, walking back to their seats in silence until the last



*Figure 10. Classroom library.*

quiz was returned. This would regularly take anywhere from 20 minutes to the entire period. Today was different. Josh was the first to finish. As he handed in his quiz, he moved toward the containers of Spanish children's books sitting on the windowsill and proceeded to peruse them until he found one to his liking. He then returned to his desk devouring his newly found gem. Intrigued by this new pattern of behavior, several other students followed his lead and returned to their seats with carefully selected children's books. Then it happened. The students began trying out new Spanish phrases from this newly discovered resource that had been available to them for the past four years. Never before had any of the students expressed an interest in these books until now. The books can be seen in Figure 10 on the window sill, categorized into separate bins.

The Spanish chatter that began filling the room caused me to physically gasp in amazement. Reading from a picture dictionary, Chris, Brett, and Stephen

began identifying items around the room and putting together new phrases, and were swiftly awarded Euros for their motivation. After copying down several phrases from a book, Laura decided to see if they made sense and tried them out on me. In response to her reward of Euros was a loud, “Yes!” In her typical fashion, Allison began correcting the other students Spanish and coming up with a bit of her own. Luke approached my desk to inform me, “No tiene una frase larga hoy.” Though grammatically incorrect, he had put the entire phrase together himself and was rewarded with Euros. He also made me aware that he had downloaded a Spanish translator App for his iPhone which he used on a daily basis to help him construct long phrases.

Struck by a sudden impulse, Josh picked up his desk and moved several steps to the front of the classroom facing the rest of the class, announcing “Me gusta la silla aquí.” Intrigued by his behavior, Johnny picked up his desk and shuffled across the room, still in a somewhat seated position, and inched his desk next to Josh’s. Peeking through the hole in the chalkboard, once used to hang some apparatus, Johnny announced to the class, “Estudia estudios sociales,” as he tried to peer into the class located on the other side of the chalkboard.

This was the first time I had observed this degree of motivation to use the target language. Many of the students were obviously motivated by earning Euros, but I wondered if over time, their motivation would develop more intrinsically.

### **Spanish Surprise**

Though I had intended the assignment as a brief warm-up, the students took this next task very seriously. They read and analyzed a bilingual job postings paper (Appendix N) in their assigned roles of summarizer, reporter, recorder, and translator. Some groups answered the English comprehension questions in Spanish, while others wrote some answers in both English and Spanish. If I had done this assignment last year, I suspect that none of the students would have written any of the answers in Spanish and would have experienced greater difficulty interpreting the answers. I truly was not expecting them to answer in Spanish and was amazed that as I called on each group to report their answers, all information was given in Spanish. Brett even added his own example to compliment the information I provided. I stood amazed at the notion of how higher expectations could, over time, change an entire classroom environment. The language of the classroom was now Spanish and regardless of the assignment, the students upheld this expectation, even when completing an English worksheet.

### **My Own Worst Critic**

I moved on to make my first attempt at direct grammar instruction using only the target language. Though I was able to convey the message regarding -AR verb endings using both English and Spanish, the guilt that once again surfaced concerning my use of English was undeniable. My English narration of

the notes left me feeling like a failure. In retrospect, I could have remained entirely in Spanish had I engaged in proper planning of what I was going to say and how I was going to say it. I reflected that if I had just used more examples and visuals, I would have been able to entirely avoid using English. Although I designed my inquiry to observe the effects on proficiency when class is conducted primarily, not entirely, in the target language, I continued to grapple with my own conscience when I “resorted” (Franklin, 1990) to English. During the review of the literature, I identified the position that there were sound pedagogical uses for the judicious incorporation of the L1 in target language instruction (Cook, 2001; Duff & Polio, 1990; Macaro, 2000; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull, 2001; Wilkerson, 2008) and that use of the L1 should not be viewed as a guilty indulgence (Cook, 2001), yet now that I was in the practice of teaching almost entirely in the target language, I could not view it as anything but. I knew that I must somehow come to terms with the amount of L1 I felt was appropriate, if at all, as to not hinder the students’ target language input.

### **Bop**

Visuals, visuals, visuals. Prepared to introduce a new game to the students, I came armed with an overhead transparency of simplified directions in easy-to-understand text and pictures. I gestured to make the rules of my game understood and used student models to demonstrate the play of the game. I

organized the class into a large circle and energetically leapt from person to person as I whacked several students with a pool noodle.

My description may sound as odd as the game itself, but interestingly enough, it was designed to assist in vocabulary comprehension. Standing in a large circle, each student held a vocabulary picture card while one student stood in the center of the circle with a pool noodle. The objective of the game was to call out another vocabulary word before you were bopped by the person in the center of the circle. If you were bopped before calling another card, you changed places with the person in the center and became the bopper.

Albeit my skillful one-woman-demonstration of the play of the game was entertaining at best, I made a conscious decision to interject with a 25 second English summary of my lengthy Spanish explanation to reinforce the rules and keep order in what could turn into a potentially aggressive game. I found that when I consciously decided to incorporate a small amount of English, I was not plagued by overbearing guilt as I was when I felt that I had lapsed into English unconsciously. Perhaps there was some benefit in judiciously incorporating the L1 in target language instruction. The game certainly ran smoothly and there was more time for play instead of plaguing the students with more directions.

Pulling me aside quietly, Robin asked if she could sit out of the game because she was not feeling well. I hesitantly complied, hoping that her abstention was actually a result of her health and not a heightened anxiety level

caused by the game. She sat in a desk pushed to the side of the room and completed a conjugation packet instead. Sensing that participation was not mandatory, Danielle approached me with saddened eyes and asked if she had to play. Giving her a definitive “yes,” she grimaced and returned to the circle to begin the game.

Even as a teacher, I recall the anxious feelings that crept up inside of me the first time I played this game at a workshop, secretly hoping that no one would call my card, and rehearsing over and over again in my mind the card I would call in case I was chosen. Knowing that this game could cause some anxiety, I was sensitive to Robin and Danielle. However, I knew that Danielle, with her social personality, would adapt well to the game. I also recognized that this was a fairly competitive class and that the majority might actually enjoy the fast-paced competition the game offered. My suspicion was correct. The students expertly called one card after another as the bopper ran around aimlessly in the center, searching for the correct card.

Though the game produced an increase in motivation, it did little to develop the students’ language and communication skills, and was therefore not as educative as I had hoped. Students repeatedly called the phrase *tomo apuntes*, regardless of who had the card because it was a quick fallback and ensured that they would not get bopped. This game proved to be fun for most, but only mildly educational. I would likely use it again with discretion, perhaps on a day when

students are having a difficult time getting motivated or seem unwilling to participate.

### Una Encuesta

The students' heads nodded along approvingly as I explained the next interview activity in Spanish (Appendix O).

**Sra. Whitaker:** Uds. necesitan preguntar a sus amigos en la clase las preguntas. Si la persona hace, does, la actividad, la persona firma su papel. Si no hace la actividad, pregunta a una otra persona. Un modelo, Josh, ven aquí, por favor.

*Josh eagerly walks to the front of the room.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Prestas atención en clase?  
**Josh:** No.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Completas la tarea?  
**Josh:** No.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Escuchas cuando la profesora enseña?  
**Josh:** No.  
**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Lloras mucho?  
**Josh:** Sí (*looking sad*)  
**Sra. Whitaker:** Josh, ven aquí y firma mi papel.

*Josh writes the sentence, Josh llora mucho.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** Ah, firma tu nombre Josh.

*I model writing Josh's full name on the board in cursive.*

**Sra. Whitaker:** Clase, ¿qué significa firma?  
**Laura:** Sign/signature?  
**Sra. Whitaker:** Exacto. Uds. pueden tener dos nombres en el papel de la misma persona. Dos firmas de Sara, dos firmas de Stephen. No más de dos firmas de la misma persona.  
**Laura:** No comprendo... ¿dos qué? (*I reward Laura with a Euro*)  
**Sra. Whitaker:** ¿Alguien puede explicarlo?  
**Ana:** ¿En inglés?

**Sra. Whitaker:** Sí.  
**Ana:** You can't have anyone sign it more than two times.  
**Laura:** Oh, gracias.

The students got up and began asking each other the interview questions, but to my surprise, most of them responded in full sentences instead of the customary, *sí* or *no*. Most students even added their own comments to the interview questions.

Brett and Wesley approached me saying, “Nosotros necesita practica.” I smiled and restated their comment, “Ah, nosotros necesitamos practica.” Nodding to show they understood, they corrected themselves and walked away with satisfaction. Laura was the first to finish the activity, her paper filled with her classmate's signatures, proudly proclaiming as she ran from across the room, barely able to stop in front of me, “¡Ya terminé! ¡Yo primero!” A chorus of “¡ya terminé!” began to fill the room as the students finished one-by-one.

Of course, Chris was quite the exception to the *encuesta* enthusiasm as he pushed his paper toward Brett asking, “Which one can you sign?”

**Sra. Whitaker:** No hables en español, por favor. Preguntale,  
¿Brett, prestas atención en clase?  
**Chris:** Ok! (angry)

Once again, Chris seemed detached during the activity. His blatant use of English was noticeable in contrast to the chorus of Spanish in the classroom. I created Chris' layered story (Figure 11) to reflect both viewpoints using my field note observations, observer comments, and a student interview.

### **Chris's Story – Part 2**

Chris

What the heck, why is she correcting me in front of my friends? She seriously won't leave me alone. I don't feel like doing this! She's forcing us to use Spanish and quite frankly, I don't even feel like being here. I think I have mono, but no one believes me. The nurse sent me back to class, but I called my mom from the office instead. She won't come pick me up.

Sra. Whitaker

Yeah I corrected him because he's not participating again. He's blatantly using English. Now he claims that he has Mono. I found out from the nurse that it's a self-diagnosed case, so my sympathy is waning. His symptoms miraculously disappeared after two days.

*Figure 11. Part 2 of Chris's layered story.*

As I listened to the students engage in this focused communicative activity, I could not help but realize how much of their own creativity they brought to its completion through their responses. The activity was structured enough to develop their grammar structure, yet open-ended enough to allow for creative language use. I observed that many of the students had branched out from using just memorized phrases and began creating their own messages with appropriate vocabulary.

### **Zip Around**

Becoming more adept at explaining directions in Spanish, I narrated the directions of the game Zip Around with ease as I made my meaning clear through the use of drawings and different colored chalk. The few extra minutes spent planning ahead for the language and vocabulary I used clarified any potential

confusion in regards to the new game. I narrated the directions as I modeled the game.

**Sra. Whitaker:** *(holding up a playing card)* Esta es una tarjeta. En las tarjetas, hay dos frases. Una a la arriba en roja *(writing in red chalk)* y una al abajo en azul *(writing in blue chalk)*. La azul es una pregunta. Una persona tiene un número uno en su tarjeta. Esta persona empieza *(writing "begins" on the chalkboard)* y esta persona termina el juego *(writing "ends" on the chalkboard)*. ¿Quién tiene el número uno en la tarjeta? Lee la pregunta en azul, por favor.

Laura began right away and read her blue question, obviously understanding my Spanish directions.

**Sra. Whitaker:** Escucha y mira a tu tarjeta a la arriba en roja.

After several seconds, another student answered Laura's question and looked at me hesitantly for reassurance.

**Sra. Whitaker:** Excelente. Ahora, lee tu pregunta, el azul.

The play continued slowly for the first round until there was some familiarity with the game. I gave the directions to shuffle the cards and we played two more rounds of the game. The students listened intently as each person spoke. The room was absolutely silent with the exception of the person answering the question, yet there was a sense of calm in the air. Unlike the game of Bop, I did not sense any anxiety among the students. Instead, I noticed that some students began to read their card with the wrong verb ending and

immediately corrected themselves, demonstrating that they understood their mistake. The game proved to be an excellent language development activity as it ensured success for each student. I began to realize that the more success each student encountered in understanding and using the language, the more apt they might be to enjoy what they were doing and become more motivated to continue in its use.

### **El Día De Los Muertos**

The three day celebration of the Day of the Dead was a highlight each year in Spanish class. I wish I could claim that it was due to my interesting narration of the events of the celebration or my presentation of fascinating cultural insights, but alas, the excitement stemmed more from the sugar skulls. Each year, I allowed my seventh and eighth grade students to make and decorate sugar skulls typical of the Day of the Dead celebration throughout Mexico. The thought of ingesting pure sugar with icing on top was irresistible to the students and they could not help but be excited. This year, however, would be different. This year, it would be me who would glean additional excitement from the Day of the Dead celebration.

I had never before considered teaching culture through the target language, yet this year, I could not consider an alternative. I quickly wrote a Day of the Dead informational story in Spanish (Appendix P). In TPR Storytelling fashion, I highlighted several unknown structures the students would be

unfamiliar with and then taught them through TPR. The students spent time reading the story aloud in their small groups and answering four short answer questions. Students began calling out phrases such as, “¡A mí me toca!” or “¡A tí te toca!” so they did not have to go first. I could not help but chuckle as I heard Sara call out, “Nárices.” Glancing over at her group, all four students had their fingers on their noses, while Wesley, obviously the loser of the race, answered question number 1.

In another activity, students had to correctly order eight poster-size photographs of the Day of the Dead celebration displayed on the front chalkboard using new ordinal number vocabulary. Although there was some groaning on this rainy morning, the students found a partner and began discussing the correct order of events. To my surprise and pleasure, their discussions were entirely in Spanish. I wandered through the room listening as the students discussed their thoughts.

*La bienvenida es primero.*

*La preparación de cempasúchil es segundo.*

*(frustrated) ¡Escribe!*

I was in awe of the amount of target language output the activity produced from all of the students, including Chris.

By midweek, the anticipation of the sugar skulls had reached its zenith, and it was time. Holding up each item the students would need to make their

concoction, I introduced new vocabulary words for the bowl, napkins, measuring cups, and the ingredients in Spanish. With the Spanish directions posted on the Smart Board, I called on one student volunteer at a time to read the next step and come to the back of the room to complete the action. Although the 20 minutes it took to explain and prepare the mixture was nearly four times as long as my typical English explanation, the language input the students received far outweighed any unnecessary time constraints I may have placed on myself in the past.

While five students at a time were called to the back table to make their sugar skull molds, the other students worked with a partner to rewrite the directions in the correct order (Appendix Q). I removed the Smart Board directions and the students at their seats began working and discussing with their partners which step was *primero*, *segundo*, etc. As I worked with the students at the back table, I was pleasantly surprised by how little confusion there was surrounding the activity. The students seemed to be able to deduce the meaning of the phrases just from my introduction and provision of input. I was quite impressed by their ability to complete this higher order thinking activity.

The following lesson marked the culmination of our Day of the Dead unit. We decorated the hardened sugar skulls and I served Mexican hot chocolate. The students asked if they could color in *calacas*, pictures of skeletons performing every day tasks in life. Intended as a “down day,” a day in which to socialize and

celebrate the holiday, I had not anticipated that much target language production would occur. Nevertheless, I continued to be amazed by my students' progress. Ana, Wesley, Robin and Jen bantered back and forth in Spanish for almost the entirety of the period and were able to conjugate while talking, though at a very slow pace. Proud of their accomplishment, I rewarded them with Euros on this celebratory occasion. It was evident that the grammar I had taught in context had indeed sunk in.

The activities were by no means watered down. I required the students to use real language at one step above their current understanding level, or an *i + 1* level. I had set my expectations high and the students met them once again. I was able to combine the introduction of ordinal numbers, commands, and verb conjugation through this culture unit. I gained the confidence to teach culture in the target language, a topic for which I traditionally would have reverted to the L1.

### **How Does It End?**

Our next class period marked the students' first non-contextual attempt at conjugation. As a warm-up assignment, the students worked in their small groups to identify seven infinitive verbs listed on the Smart Board. As they quickly navigated the list, identifying all but one infinitive, I could not help but stand amazed at the continued positive effect teaching in the target language had on classroom management and on engaging students in the learning process. No

longer was there needed clarification as to what the students' should be doing; rather, they seemed to listen more intently to my directions to ensure that they fully understood what they needed to do.

As we discussed the meanings of the infinitives, I was pleasantly surprised that they were able to recall the meaning of *bailar* and *cocinar*, two verbs that I had only introduced in the context of the Day of the Dead activities. Teaching these verbs contextually enabled the students to acquire the meaning of the words in context and recognize them in isolation, a benefit of the increased provision of comprehensible target language input.

Student volunteers read the short textbook description of conjugation, and I modeled the conjugation process by using verb stems and ending cards in a pocket chart, as well as some gesturing to reinforce the meanings of the various pronouns. The students were clearly ready to begin conjugating.

<b>Sra. Whitaker:</b>	Vamos a jugar un juego.
<b>Josh:</b>	¡Yeah, un juego!
<b>Sra. Whitaker:</b>	Necesito una persona de cada grupo a coleccionar tableros magnéticos, marcadores, y borradores para el grupo.
<b>Ana:</b>	¿Un tablero ó el grupo?
<b>Sra. Whitaker:</b>	Por todo el grupo.

They started to distribute the dry erase boards and other materials to their group members. Josh stood up and walked across the room.

<b>Josh:</b>	Yo olvidé borrador.
<b>Sra. Whitaker:</b>	Yo voy a levantar un pronombre y un infinitivo. Uds. necesitan escribir la forma correcta de la frase con el pronombre. ( <i>holding up Ana's board to</i>

*demonstrate*) Un ejemplo... ellos participar en clase... uds. escriben participan en clase, y levantalo. ¿Me comprenden?

Nods of understanding filled the room. The simple formative assessment quickly morphed into a race as students competed to be the first to hold up the correctly conjugated structure. I enthusiastically called out, “primero, segundo, tercero, etc.” as the boards rapidly flew into the air. Johnny got very good at this game. With a smile brimming across his face, he never once broke eye contact as he furiously wrote the correctly conjugated verb structure and flung his board into the air, determined to be the first place winner every time. Without even so much as a glance at the conjugation chart, or what he was writing on his board for that matter, he proudly accomplished his goal each round. He was cheered on by his classmates who were as happy to see him succeed as I was.

Chris and Sara began to develop confidence in changing the verb endings as the game progressed. Initially, they could not understand how to match up the endings with the pronoun I called. Sara continuously added the verb ending onto the pronoun (ellan, ela), while Chris seemed to choose endings at random to add to his verb phrases. A quick English explanation clarified their misunderstandings, and they quickly entered the competition along with the rest of the class.

Unbeknownst to me, as I helped students around the room to understand their errors, Josh would sneak up to the front of the room, peek at the next card in

the pile, and write down the conjugated form in advance. For two rounds, Josh simultaneously held up his answer as I called the pronoun and infinitive cards. The class laughed knowingly. Looking horrified and astonished, I played along when I caught on to what he was doing.

**Sra. Whitaker:** ¡Oh no, tú eres tramposo!  
**Josh:** No, yo no soy tramposo.  
**Clase:** ¡Oh sí!

The activity was a great assessment of their ability to conjugate. They began asking me for *más difícil*. I called people's names instead of pronouns for the next several rounds, having the students determine what the correct pronoun substitution would be and therefore the correct ending. They all got it! Feeling confident that every student understood the concept of conjugation, I assigned three textbook exercises for homework that required the students to determine the correct form in context. I was eager to see if their learned skill would carry over to contextualized practice.

### **Missing the Connection**

As I reviewed their homework, I noticed that Johnny, Stephen, Sara, Luke, Josh, and Chris struggled with choosing the correct pronoun and matching up the verb ending when the assignment was in context. I wrote, "correct and resubmit" on their papers instead of making the corrections to determine if it was a lack of comprehension or effort. They resubmitted their papers with corrected answers. After class, I questioned the students regarding their corrections and discovered

that they had needed the extra scaffolding of me asking them to find the pronoun in each sentence before selecting the verb.

Continuing in our practice of conjugation, I explained the directions to *el Juego del Sobre* or the Envelope game. In this game students had to translate the meaning of selected –AR verbs in their conjugated forms or correctly conjugate verbs according to their subjects, depending on which side of the card was drawn from the envelope. The game lasted the majority of the period and while the students were engaged from beginning to end, they experienced varying levels of success accumulating cards based on their proficiency.

Chris struggled with the game and did not seem to understand the concept of conjugation in isolation or in context. He slowly improved, however, from his first attempts at conjugating when using the dry erase boards. His pile of accumulated cards was scarce in comparison to the rest of his group. Although he was seated directly next to the conjugation chart, he did not understand how to effectively use the tool and consequently could not choose the correct conjugated form of the verbs.

Johnny once again struggled to accumulate cards during the activity. I observed that he most likely did not understand the meaning of the various pronouns and therefore, did not understand the overall concept of conjugation. I composed Johnny's layered story (Figure 12) to represent both points of view as Johnny grappled with the process of conjugation.

Stephen, on the other hand, slowly demonstrated his understanding. He understood the basic concept of conjugation, but could not make the leap to connect the pronouns with actual meaning in order to attach a verb ending. His

### **Johnny's Story- Part 2**

Johnny

I thought I finally understood this whole conjugation thing. I mean, the other day, I was the first person to hold up my board and they were all right. It was easy then. All I had to do was find the ending that matched the card she held up, but I got almost all my homework answers wrong because she tricked us. The sentences weren't clear like in the activity and I couldn't figure out which ending to use. How does she expect me to match them up if she's not going to tell me which ending to use?

Sra. Whitaker

I thought Johnny understood the concept of conjugation in isolation, but just didn't understand the practical application of the concept in context. However, today's Envelope game was an isolated conjugation practice and he could not understand it. Johnny struggled to make the connection that *he* meant *él*, so therefore the phrase *he sings* should be *él canta*. Strangely though, when I held up the pronoun card *él* he was able to immediately rattle off the correct verb ending. After speaking with him, I realized he doesn't understand the meaning of the different pronouns.

Johnny

What's a pronoun? Oh, those *él* and *ella* thingies? I can't remember what all those things mean. She wanted to know if I used flashcards at home to study, but I really just don't feel like it. I mean, it's not like its science or something. It's only Spanish class.

Sra. Whitaker

I try so hard in class to help him understand what we're doing but he doesn't put forth any effort. He's missing the connection but doesn't care enough to remedy it.

*Figure 12. Part 2 of Johnny's layered story.*

proficiency had developed quite a bit as a result of his continued effort and hard

work.

Overall, however, as a result of my continued use of Spanish and the students' continued exposure to the comprehensible input, the students had progressed much further in both the curriculum and their understanding of the Spanish language and grammar than in years past. It is I who must develop some patience and allow their proficiency levels to develop naturally.

### **¡UN JUEGO!**

Josh raised both hands above his head and shouted, “¡un juego!” each time I mentioned that we would play a game. The games certainly worked to increase student motivation and produced a great deal of output on the part of the students. At the beginning of the lesson, I explained the Dice game in which students rolled two dice, one colored and one white. Each die corresponded to either a pronoun or a verb on their game board with correct answers located on the back (Appendix R).

During the game, Sara was noticeably withdrawn. I was concerned about her recent change in behavior and talked to her privately during the activity. I composed Sara's layered story (Figure 13) to reflect both viewpoints using my field note observations, observer comments, and a student interview.

Most of the students were engaged and had opportunities to practice and produce target language output during the game. Johnny continued to put forth very little effort during its play. During the conjugation game, even his group

members began to get frustrated at his outward lack of effort as he continued to get the verb ending for the pronoun *Pablo y yo* wrong each time he rolled it.

### **Sara's Story**

Sra. Whitaker

Sara used to be one of my most vocal users of Spanish. She'd come to class, participate, and smile. Now, she barely even comes to class. Sara's been absent almost every Monday and Friday since the beginning of October, and on an occasional Tuesday or Wednesday also. She doesn't participate in class anymore and appears sullen and withdrawn. Now she sits silently staring straight ahead of her. She responds in whispers when she is called on. I received a note earlier in the week from the parent of another student explaining that things were very bad at Sara's house right now and that she was staying with the other family. I'm really worried about her. As I watch her play this game right now, she's sitting hunched on one arm staring into the distance. She's barely uttering a whisper when it's her turn to go.

Sara

*Huh? My turn? Yeah, I'm still playing. Good, it's over. God my life sucks. No one here has any idea either. No one at home cares about me. Everyone's too busy doing their own thing. My dad doesn't care whether I come or go. He's already gone in the morning, and sometimes I'm so depressed I don't feel like getting out of bed. So I don't. I feel like my life is falling apart. To top it all off, last night I got into a huge fight with my so-called friends. Even they don't care about me. No one does. I feel so alone.*

Sra. Whitaker

When I called her outside to talk to her during the game, she told me that she had gotten into a fight with her friends and that she felt betrayed. I don't think that's the root of her withdrawn behavior, but maybe that's the root of today's sadness. I saw a smile brimming on her face when we went back into the classroom. Maybe she just needed to know someone cares.

Sara

I just needed to know someone cares.

*Figure 13. Sara's Layered Story.*

From across the room, Chris appeared engaged in the game, and at first he truly was. As the game progressed, I observed that his score was a negative 11 even though he was once again seated next to the conjugation chart. As I stood in front of his group, I assisted him with identifying the pronoun on the verb conjugation chart so that he could choose the appropriate conjugated ending. After several turns his performance improved and he was once again out of the negatives. He still required extra scaffolding.

As my mood began to sour, I walked past Rebecca and jokingly made a comment about her being a *tramposa* or cheater. She quickly and jokingly replied with a sweeping motion of her hand, “¡quéquiera!” I was so impressed that she was able to make the connection that since *quiénquiera* meant whomever, *quéquiera* meant whatever. I rewarded her with Euros. My outlook had just been renewed with hope.

### **En la Clase**

As a culminating assessment for the unit, students worked in small groups to write a dramatization about a classroom scene involving a quiz. My directions were not specific, other than to set the above scenario. I hoped that this assessment would reveal the extent of the students’ learning and their level of proficiency more than a traditional paper and pencil test.

After three days of writing and practicing, the students were ready to begin their performances. I was impressed that almost all of the students had near

### En la Clase Skit

Profesora: Estudiantes, hay una prueba mañana. (Silencias) ¡Estudia! Hasta mañana.

■ Yo no estudio.

■ ¿Por que?

■ Yo soy intellegente.

■ (Silencias) **tos tos**

■ ¡Yo soy!

■ Por supuesto eres tu.

■ Tu eres antipático.

■ Lo siento. Necesitamos leer capitulo dos por la prueba.

■ Yo no leo.

■ ¿Tu tomas apuntes?

■ No.

■ Tu prestas atención del todo?

■ No.

■ Estupido.

■ Yo saco una nota buena.

■ Si...

■ Prueba me.

■ Da un verbo correcto en la frase... ¿Ellos llevar camisas rojas. Que es el verbo correcto?

■ ...Camisas...?

■ ¿Estas seguro que tu no quieres estudiar?

■ ¿Qué es malo con eso?

■ Es incorrecto. Muy incorrecto.

■ Oh...

■ ¡Estudias! ¿Por favor?

■ No. Haré muy bien.

■ ...

El día siguiente

Profesora: ¡Un prueba hoy! ¡Limpian tus escritoras!

■ ¿Estudias tu?

■ No. ¿Y tu?

■ Si, estudio.

Profesora: ¡Silencio por favor!

Diez minutos later

Prof.: Pase adelante sus papeles. Habla en voz baja mientras los califico.

S2 ¿Qué pasa?

S1: Nada. Estoy bien.

S2: ¿Cómo crees que hiciste?

S1: ¡Muy mal!

Prof.: Aquí están las pruebas calificados.

S2: ¡Si! ¡Una A+!

S1: ¡Oh no! ¡Yo no paso la prueba!

Figure 14. Wesley, Allison & Ana's skit

perfect pronunciation and intonation as they brought us into their make-believe classrooms. Luke and Chris struggled with the pronunciation of several words including the words *ustedes* and *prueba* making their delivery hard to understand at times, yet they certainly put forth their best effort.

As I reviewed the written copy of the scripts, I was amazed by how minimally I had to correct Wesley, Allison, and Ana's script. Their skit centered

Final Copy Skit

11-30-09

Kid 1	¿Tu estudias las notas?
Kid 2	No estudio.
Kid 1	Tu eres estúpido.
Kid 2	Tu necesitas ser simpático
teacher	(da examen)
Kid 1	¡Hay una prueba!
Kid 2	Yo no estudio.
teacher	¡Tu no prestas atención!
Kid 1	Yo miro a la pizarra.
Kid 2	Yo no escucho.
teacher	Toman la examen.
Kid 2	Yo leo el examen y yo <sup>estoy</sup> confundido.
Kid 2	(da el examen al profesor)
teacher	TU (Point to Kid 1) sacas una nota alta.
teacher	TU (Point to Kid 2) sacas una nota muy mala.
Kid 1	Yo <sup>estoy</sup> simpático, yo bailo (dance)
Kid 2	Yo <sup>estoy</sup> antipático, yo lloro (cry)
teacher	TU (Point to Kid 2) necesitas trabajar.
Kid 1	Yo <sup>estoy</sup> muy simpático, yo juego (play)
Kid 2	Yo debo escribir notas.

Figure 15. Chris, Josh & Brett's skit

on a conjugation quiz. Their writing was creative and ventured far outside of the basic structures I had taught them with structures such as *¿Estás seguro que tú no quieres estudiar?* and *¿Qué es malo con eso?* (Figure 14).

Chris, Josh, and Brett turned in a script (Figure 15) that was reminiscent of the story of La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala, yet written as a dramatization. The language was basic in vocabulary, but very well written. Very few corrections were needed, yet I suspect that Josh and Brett wrote the majority, if

Beinvenidos clase.  
and Hola.  
Vamos a jugar un juego hoy.  
Juego!!!  
Si, no trabajan.  
Silencio.  
Que nombre de juego.  
Nombre de juego es "Saltamontes"  
10 minutes later...  
Una la prueba es hoy.  
Oh no, una nota mala! No estudiá.  
Si, una nota <sup>(alta)</sup> <sub>(baja)</sub>.

Narrator: Tanner no estudió <sup>a</sup> en la prueba.  
Drew estudia <sup>para</sup> una la prueba. Tanner no escucho y no  
le vanta la mano. Drew escucha y le vanta la maná.  
Tambien, Drew mirra a la pizzera.

Tanner <sup>saca</sup> una "F". Drew <sup>saca</sup> una "A".  
Yo <sup>soy</sup> estúpido. Mi nesicito estudió.  
Tanner, escribe una <sup>va</sup> notas.  
Drew, presta atencion. No hablas.

Narrator: El professor lee la frases en la  
pizzera. Tanner and Drew toman apuntes. Tanner y  
Drew obtienen en una pruebrea, una nota alta. Ellos  
esuchan <sup>ahora</sup> arorda.

Figure 16. Johnny, Danielle & Stephen's skit.

not entirely, of the skit as I observed Chris providing very minimal input during the writing process.

Rosalita: ¡Hola mi amiga! Estudias para la prueba mañana?

Marie: ¡Hola Rosalita! Si, yo estudio. ¿Y tu?

Rosalita: No, no estudio. No presto atención o escucho<sup>o</sup> el profesor enseña.

Marie: Muy mala, Rosalita. ¡Tu necesitas<sup>o</sup> tomar<sup>s</sup> apuntes y miras a la pizarra!

Señor Persh: ¡Clase! ¡Miran! Yo cocino calaveras de azúcar. Si ustedes sacan una nota alta, ustedes reciben unas calaveras de azúcar.

Rosalita: ¡Marie! ¡Ayude me!

Marie: No, te ayudá.

~ Next Day

Señor Persh: Clase! Yo doy ustedes los examen. Buena suerte.

Rosalita: ¡OH! Yo necesito<sup>o</sup> limpiar<sup>o</sup> mi acto.

Señor Persh: Termina en los cinco minutos, por favor.

~ Next Day

Señor Persh: Clase, los exámenes<sup>o</sup> muy Buena<sup>s</sup>. Marie, ven aquí por favor.

Marie: Si, Señor?

Señor Persh: Tu recibe sacas una nota mala. Rosalita saca una nota muy alta.

Rosalita: ¡Yay!

Señor Persh: Yo me olvide los Calaveras de azúcar. Muy perdón.

Figure 17. Luke, Laura & Sara's skit.

Johnny, Danielle, and Stephen centered their skit (Figure 16) on a group of students playing a fictional game called *saltamontes*, followed by a quiz. Their skit was similar to Chris, Josh, and Brett's in both basic language and story line, yet their skit needed several corrections, mainly pertaining to word choice and usage such as in the structures *Tanner estudio* and *Tanner una "F."*

Luke, Laura, and Sara centered their skit (Figure 17) on making sugar skulls. Their skit was creatively written, yet contained several grammatical errors, mostly pertaining to conjugating two verbs in a row, a topic that we had not yet discussed. This was evident in structures such as "*Tú necesito tomas apuntes*" and "*Yo necesito limpio mi acto.*"

Robin convinced her group to center its skit (Figure 18) on Harry Potter and they wrote their skit about a quiz in potions class. Robin, Jen, Lisa, and Rebecca's skit needed many corrections as they appeared to use an online translator during the writing process. This was done more out of desperation than shyness. Each day, two of the members of the group were absent for various reasons. Behind in their writing, the remaining girls attempted to type the skit on a school laptop, but lost the document in cyberspace. They quickly scrambled during the last minutes to rewrite a script worthy of 100 points. Much of the language was either above their level or did not make sense at all, typical of online translators. As a result of the unfamiliar vocabulary, the girls struggled with accurate pronunciation, yet their strong acting and efficient use of props,

including an exploding potion and an authentic Harry Potter broomstick, succeeded in helping them to make their meaning known to the class.

Narrator : Un día, dos mago estudiantes llegan a clase de pociones en escobas de la practia de Quidditch. Dos de los estudiantes se ~~estaban peleando~~ <sup>pelean.</sup>

Hermione: Comas <sup>es eso</sup> que, punk.

Ginny: ¡Oh, no tu ~~de no!~~ <sup>no haces</sup>

Hermione: ¡Oh, si lo ~~hice!~~ <sup>hago</sup>

Ms. Potter: ¡Hermione y Ginny! ¡Ya basta!

Hermione y Ginny: Si, señorita Potter.

Narrator : Los <sup>tres</sup> ~~tercer~~ estudiante <sup>sienten</sup> ~~sentado~~ en el Rincon, leyendo su libro de pociones. Ginny y Hermione hablan mientras la Señorita Potter ensena.

Ms.Potter: Entiendes?

Luna: Si, señorita Potter.

Narrator : Ginny y Hermione no prestan atencion.

Ms. Potter: GINNY! DA LA VUELTA!

Ginny: \*turn around\*

Narrator: Luna tomas apuntes <sup>en</sup> ~~in~~ clase. Ginny y Hermione no toman apuntes. Señorita Potter da a los estudiantes el tiempo libre. Ginny y Hermione hablan todo el tiempo, Luna estuddias para una examen.

Ms. Potter: Los estudiantes, usted <sup>es</sup> ~~tiene~~ una prueba de manana.

Narrator : Ginny y Hermione no <sup>escucha</sup> ~~la oyo,~~ porque no <sup>estaban</sup> ~~estaban~~ <sup>prestan</sup> ~~prestando~~ atencion.

-la clase termina-

-al dia siguiente-

Narrator: Luna fue el <sup>llega</sup> ~~primero~~ <sup>primero</sup> ~~en~~ <sup>trabaja.</sup> ~~legar~~ a clase. Ella ~~comenzo~~ <sup>trabaja.</sup> a ~~trabaja~~.

Ms. Potter: Donde <sup>están</sup> ~~se~~ Ginny y Hermione?

Luna: Yo no <sup>se</sup> ~~say.~~

Narrator: Ginny y Hermione llegan a clase tarde.

Hermione: Que estamos haciendo <sup>hoy</sup> ~~hay?~~

Figure 18. Robin, Jen, Lisa & Rebecca's skit.

## Wrapping Up

Although I knew that my formal data collection period had come to an end, I was invigorated by the success of the students and knew that I would continue to refine my practice of teaching through the target language. From my observations, the practice had dramatically increased the majority of the students' communicative and grammatical competencies, as well as their overall proficiency levels. Eager to see if the students shared my analysis, I distributed a questionnaire in mid-December to glean the students' perspectives on the outcome of the study. The questionnaire asked students to reflect on (a) the impact of the teacher's use of the Spanish on their own ability to use and understand the Spanish language, (b) the impact of the games and activities on their ability to use and understand the Spanish language, (c) the impact of the grammar practice on their ability to use and understand the Spanish language, (d) their initial feelings and any changes in attitude toward the class being conducted primarily in Spanish, (e) their feelings toward their overall ability to communicate in Spanish, (f) their favorite part of Spanish class so far, and (g) their least favorite part of Spanish class so far.

The first pastiche (Figure 19) reflects the students' opinions regarding my use of Spanish to conduct class and the effect on their own ability to understand and produce the target language. The comments demonstrate that my continued use of the target language enabled the students to acquire and produce more of the

L2. Additionally, the comments demonstrate that my use of the target language increased the students' motivation and engagement toward learning the L2.

## Impact of the Teacher's Spanish Use

*It encourages me to speak more Spanish. I use Spanish outside of the classroom now.*

*In all the other years of Spanish without the teacher speaking Spanish most of the time, I was lost and it was very hard to think and say phrases and other words. Now that the teacher uses more Spanish and less English, it has helped me immensely. I understand more.*

*It helps me to figure out how words are pronounced.*

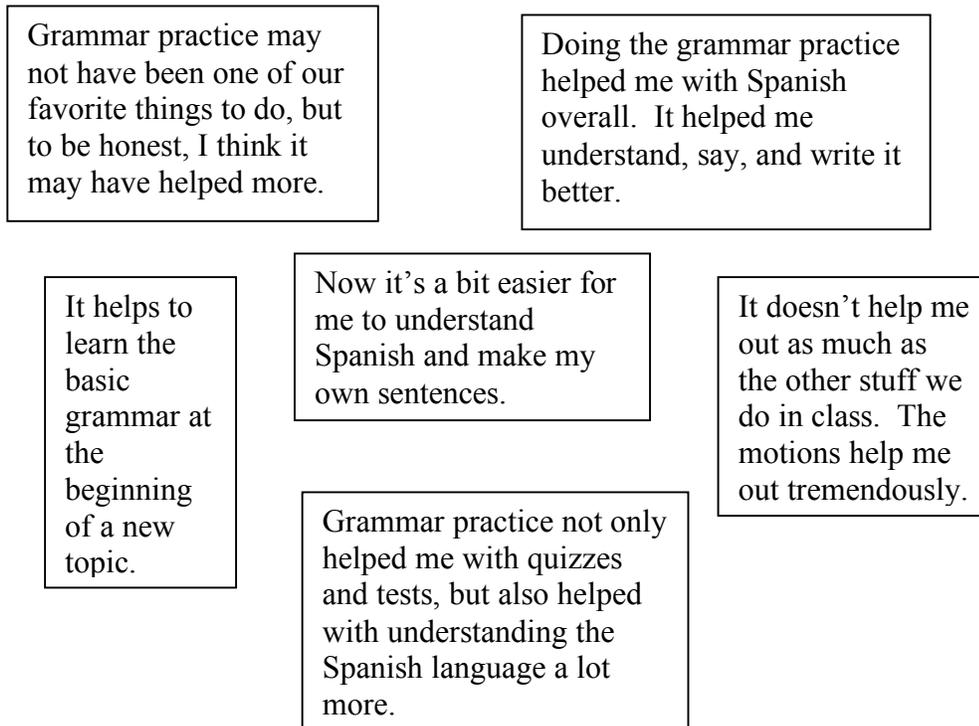
*It makes our Spanish vocabulary much larger.*

*I tend to pay attention more when she uses Spanish in class.*

*Figure 19. Pastiche of students' attitudes toward teacher target language use.*

Figure 20 represents the students' opinions regarding the effects of grammar practice on their proficiency and communicative development. The comments reflect that the students' appreciated the benefits of grammar practice as it helped them to hone their ability to accurately understand and produce the target language.

## Grammar Practice



*Figure 20. Pastiche of students' attitudes toward grammar instruction.*

Figure 21 reflects the students' opinions regarding their ability to produce the target language as a result of the intervention. Student comments reflect that the students developed confidence in producing target language output and recognize the potential for future growth.

## How well do you communicate in Spanish now?

I feel ok about my ability to communicate in Spanish, but I know it can get better. I still am weak at talking to other people.

I speak Spanish at home now too. Sometimes I have a hard time understanding others. It's easier to see it on paper.

*I've gotten a lot better. I'm the strongest at conjugating verbs.*

My ability to communicate is very good but I still need to work on writing good sentences.

*I've come a long way from the beginning of the year.*

I think that with all the things we do in class and how Mrs. Whitaker teaches us, anyone could easily adapt to speaking and understanding Spanish. I have grown to like Spanish a lot. I'm good at speaking and understanding it, although learning the rules of grammar are a weakness of mine.

*I'm very proud of my ability to speak Spanish but my friends are a major weakness because they don't always speak Spanish.*

Figure 21. Pastiche of students' attitudes toward their communicative competence.

### Now The Survey Says...

At the conclusion of the study, I wanted to compare the students' existing viewpoints regarding (1) classroom target language use, (2) target language use anxiety, (3) motivation toward using the target language, and (4) an estimate of the amount of target language used in class with the results from the pre-survey to determine if there had been any changes in attitudes. Table 2 reflects the data

collected from the final survey. Once again, the categories of Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree were condensed into Agree for the purposes of reporting data in this table. In addition, the categories of Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree were condensed into Disagree. The overall improvement in student attitudes in all categories was evident compared to the pre-survey in September. I was particularly surprised by the drop in the level of anxiety that accompanied student production of the target language as well as the increase in students that preferred that I conduct class in the target language.

Table 2. Student post survey

Student Survey	N=16	
	Agree	Disagree
I can understand most of what is said in Spanish during class.	15	1
I can communicate proficiently in Spanish about topics I have learned.	16	0
I feel anxious when I have to speak in Spanish.	5	11
I feel anxious when people in class (students or teacher) speak to me in Spanish.	4	12
I speak in Spanish when working cooperatively with my classmates and try not to switch to English.	15	1
I speak in Spanish when speaking with my teacher and try not to switch to English.	16	0
Using comprehension strategies like cognates, gestures, and pictures helps me to understand the message of what is being said in Spanish.	16	0
I would rather my teacher use Spanish instead of English in the classroom.	14	2
I try to use Spanish outside of class when I can.	11	5
I enjoy learning Spanish.	14	2

## **METHODS OF ANALYSIS**

### **Analysis of Collected Documents**

#### *Anecdotal Notes*

By the completion of the twelve-week study, I had recorded seven anecdotal notes in the form of observational checklists and oral evaluation rubrics. I analyzed the collection of anecdotal notes for evidence of individual student achievement in proficiency throughout the study using the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Weekly speaking grades recorded from the oral communication rubrics were compared on a weekly basis and analyzed for improvement in the categories of: (1) use of Spanish before and after class, (2) warm-up and conversation activities, and (3) class time participation in the target language. I specifically compared and analyzed areas targeting student use and comprehension of the target language during communicative activities to look for patterns of improvement throughout the study. I also analyzed how often students initiated a target language interaction with each other and with the teacher and the overall amount of target language production by each individual student to determine each student's proficiency level. Anecdotal notes served as a component of the overall measure of each student's proficiency as a result of the intervention.

### *Assessments*

I graded the students' quizzes and tests and used the scores as a numerical reflection of the students' progress and development of written proficiency. I used oral proficiency rubrics to evaluate the students in their performance assessments and weekly use of the target language. I then compared the weekly assessment rubrics to demonstrate patterns of development in the students' oral fluency. I analyzed the performance assessment rubrics and reflective notes for patterns of input-modification use such as circumlocution and cognate use, as well as for instances of risk taking, creativity with the language, and authentic language use. Activities involving TPR and student response to commands provided concrete evidence of the students' understanding of the target language and listening proficiency. The checklists detailing student performance in these activities were compared and analyzed to determine if my target language use impacted the students' listening comprehension. The final skit written by the students at the culmination of the unit was analyzed to determine if students possessed the ability to authentically create their own target language messages and accurately use the target language structures and vocabulary contained in the unit.

The combination of various types of assessments were compared and analyzed to determine if my use of the target language impacted students' ability to communicate and create with the target language in a proficient manner. I

analyzed the assessments to provide as complete as possible of a view of each student's proficiency level according to the ACTFL guidelines. The collected assessments served as a component in the overall measure of each student's proficiency as a result of the intervention.

### *Surveys/Questionnaires*

I compared the pre- and post-intervention surveys to determine if there was a development in the students' attitudes toward both student and teacher use of the target language in the classroom. The surveys were also compared to note any changes in (1) perceived student comprehension of the target language, (2) proficiency in the use of the target language, (3) anxiety toward target language use in the classroom, and (4) motivation toward learning the target language. The results from each survey were tabulated and each category within the survey was compared as a whole and for individual students to determine if there were any notable changes.

I analyzed the questionnaire given early in the study and recorded recurrent themes the students identified when discussing their views regarding (1) the teacher's use of the target language, (2) their own use of the target language, and (3) their ability to understand and communicate in the target language in a group setting. Similar questions were again asked in a questionnaire given at the culmination of the study and results were compared to the initial questionnaire and analyzed to determine if there were any notable changes in the students'

ability to comprehend and produce the target language. Information regarding the overall effectiveness of the study was gained from the final survey as I noted trends of positive or negative effects of the intervention from the students' point of view. The students' perspective added an additional dimension to the analysis of the study. The collected student surveys and questionnaires were a component in the overall measure of each student's proficiency as a result of the intervention, as students reflected on their own ability to comprehend and produce the target language.

### ***Student Work***

I also collected and analyzed various examples of student work throughout the study for evidence of individual student development of proficiency and the demonstration of the acquisition of the vocabulary and structures of the unit. By collecting various forms of student work such as independent class work, homework, and group work, I was able to examine the students' proficiency in conjunction with various settings and contexts to determine if my use of the target language may have impacted student proficiency.

### **Coding**

Several weeks into my study, I began rereading the field notes I had written and initiated the process of coding my field log. During the ongoing coding process, I summarized the principle idea of each passage by developing a code, or keyword, to represent each idea. As I organized the data into

manageable units, patterns began to emerge among the data I had collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Each code was recorded alphabetically in a coding index, which I continued to update periodically.

### **Bins and Theme Statements**

At the culmination of my data collection period, I began to look for patterns in the codes in which my use of the target language impacted the students' target language use. As patterns began to emerge among the codes, I identified relationships among the codes and grouped codes together based on their relevance to each other. Related codes were then placed into titled bins (Ely et al., 1997) which in turn, helped me to begin answering my research question. I generated theme statements, or preliminary findings supported by the data based on the collected data represented by the codes in each bin.

### **Memo Analysis**

Throughout my data collection period, I wrote several analytic memos that assisted me in analyzing my data from a multiplicity of perspectives. As I read the works of educational philosophers Dewey (1938), Freire (1970), Delpit & Dowdy (2002), and Vygotsky (1978), I identified the philosophical commonplaces of each author and connected key quotations from the readings that were most salient to my research study to help in the analysis and interpretation of my own collected data.

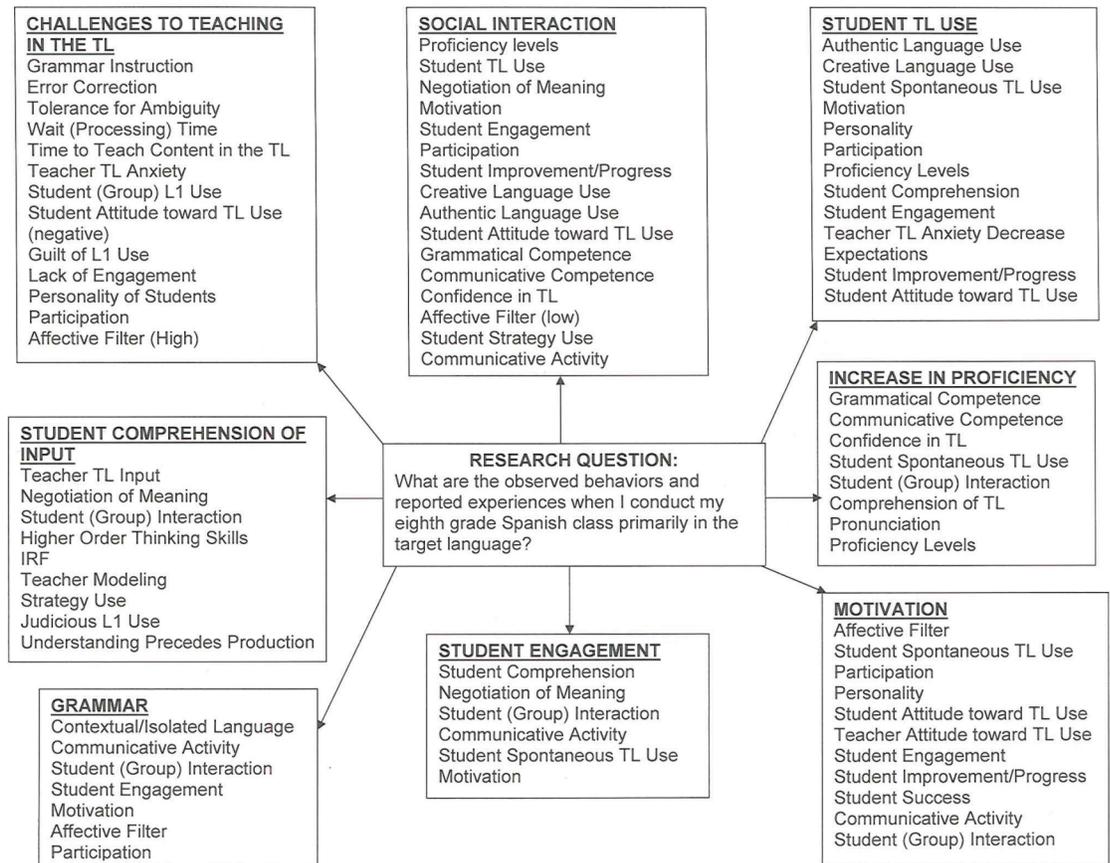


Figure 22. Coding bins.

As I read Dewey (1938), I analyzed the educative value of my study and the quality of educative experiences I provided for the students. Reading Dewey enabled me to view my data through a progressive lens. As I read Freire (1970), I analyzed my study through a dialogical lens and questioned whether my study eliminated the transmission of knowledge and whether it engaged the students in dialogical discourse and critical thinking. The works of Delpit and Dowdy (2002) enabled me to view my study through a sociocultural lens as I analyzed the impact

of academic diversity within my classroom and its effect on the students' developing proficiency levels. Reading Vygotsky (1978) enabled me to analyze my study through the lens of social interaction and questioned whether I had been teaching within the zone of proximal development for the individual students within the class.

In addition to interpreting and analyzing my data through the various lenses of educational philosophers, I wrote a mid-study methodological memo in which I assessed my own data I had collected at the mid point of my study. In this memo, I itemized the data I had gathered, summarized my insights to that point, and determined the future direction of my data collection efforts. The memo also helped me to identify emerging sub-questions based on the data I had collected. Through analyzing the data at the mid-point in my study, I was able to determine the methods that had helped to answer my research question and to identify and determine how to collect any data that were still missing.

The ongoing analysis of my data as a result of the educational philosophers and mid-study data assessment analytic memos enabled me to make appropriate changes to my instructional practice based on the initial conclusions I had begun to draw (Holly, Arhar, & Katsen, 2005).

## FINDINGS

The purpose of my research study was to examine the effects on student proficiency when I conducted class through the medium of the target language. Although in previous years, I thought I was designing engaging lessons which incorporated games and communicative activities designed to enable the students to produce the target language, the experiences themselves were not necessarily educative and there was little transfer of information from one unit to another. Traditionally the medium of my instruction was through the students' L1 yet in this study, the medium of my instruction was through the L2. The games and hands-on activities remained the same, although I analyzed their selection against the educative value of the activity and their effect on communication. As I analyzed the plethora of data I gathered throughout the study, several themes emerged within my data.

### **Creating a Classroom Climate Conducive to Learning**

*When achievable expectations are established and consistently reinforced in the classroom, most students will meet or exceed the set expectations.* I began instruction through the target language during the first week of school, thus setting the expectation that all classroom interactions would be conducted in Spanish. As a result of my consistent reinforcement that Spanish would be the primary method of communication throughout the school year, the students accepted and met the expectation I set.

As I reflected on the first day of my target language use in the story “What’s Your Strategy,” I realized that in spite of my novice attempts at making my input comprehensible, the students were able to understand the input I provided and thrived during the lesson. Although they could not understand every word I spoke, demonstrated by Danielle and Rebecca’s “What did she say?” as I walked toward another group, the understanding prevailed that the target language would be the language of the classroom. At the culmination of the same lesson, Sara, Ana, and several other students perused their Spanish dictionaries in order to volunteer answers in Spanish as we reviewed the input-modification strategies. They met the expectation and attempted to communicate in the target language.

In the story “Spanish Surprise,” I recounted my astonishment when the students spontaneously answered the English textbook questions in Spanish during our class discussion. I predicted in the story that had I taught this lesson last year, the responses would have been in English as the expectation of speaking Spanish had not been set. Throughout the study, the students continued to make efforts to interact in the target language and consistently met the classroom expectation.

In instances when students spoke to me in the L1, my response was consistently in the L2. As a result, I found that fewer and fewer students interacted with me in the L1 as the study progressed; rather, they carefully

selected known phrases in the L2 to communicate their message. Based on their proficiency level, students communicated with me and with their peers using sentences, phrases, isolated words, or in some cases Spanglish combinations. Regardless of the amount of target language the students used, they made the effort to use as much Spanish as possible to communicate.

In the story “Actions Speak Louder than Words,” Brett was surrounded by a crowd of friends interacting in English at the beginning of class. Reinforcing the notion that the classroom was now a Spanish environment, I asked the group “¿Qué pasa?” to initiate a target language conversation. Brett responded in English that they were looking at his baby picture for the yearbook to which I made a Spanish remark and reminded the class that we had a lesson to learn. Returning to Spanish, Brett said “Lo siento” and I continued the lesson in the target language. In another instance during the same lesson, Johnny responded to me in the L1 during the game of Charades when I questioned whether their group construction was new. My response was in the L2, reinforcing the notion that I would only respond to him in Spanish and that he should make the attempt to do likewise. Though his response was in the L1, he demonstrated that he could understand significantly more than he could produce through his quick response.

Figure 23 demonstrates the students’ own realization that their method of communication as they interacted with me shifted from English to Spanish as the study progressed. In September, there was a variance among the language

students used when interacting with me, yet by December, all of the students either strongly or somewhat agreed that they tried to use Spanish when speaking with me. In their questionnaires, many students noted that they were capable of saying significantly more than they had anticipated and found communication much less intimidating as the weeks progressed.

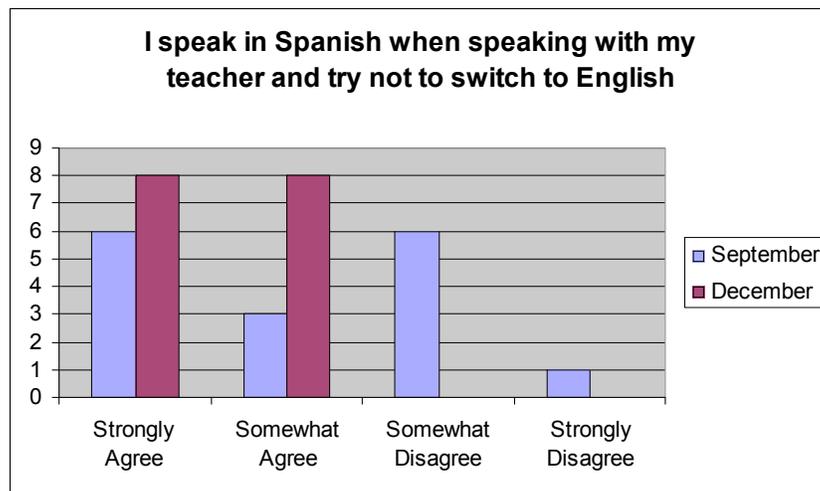


Figure 23. Graph of student use of Spanish.

As the proficient Spanish speaker in the room, I tried to model how to communicate in Spanish for all classroom interactions and how to negotiate meaning when communication broke down as seen in the dialogue portions of THIS YEAR'S STORY. By restructuring the classroom environment and setting the expectation that all communication would take place through the L2, the classroom environment was reshaped to promote growth in the L2. The classroom became more conducive to learning a second language as the students

were exposed to an increase of input in the target language and experienced the language as an authentic communicative tool. Teaching through the target language enabled me to link once isolated learning experiences together so that the students could comprehend how the grammar and vocabulary they learned were interconnected during authentic discourse and social interaction.

I observed the students' continued progress throughout the study from my first experience through the final week of data collection. The students demonstrated observable patterns of improvement in their ability to understand and produce the target language as the amount of input they understood and familiarity with the language increased. Only three weeks into the study, I noted that the students' ability to comprehend my input had dramatically increased in the story "What Promise." As the weeks progressed and the students gained confidence understanding and using the target language, I found that I did not have to repeat myself as often. In the *encuesta* activity, I gave directions only one time with little to no repetition of language input to reinforce understanding. The students were able to comprehend the input they received because their familiarity with the language had increased.

Additionally, I found that my rate of speech increased from a markedly reduced rate to an almost normal rate of speech. As the students began to comprehend more target language input, they no longer hesitated before responding to my target language directives and their responses in the L2 became

more immediate, thus reducing my anxiety that they did not understand my input. In the game of Zip Around, after explaining the directions to the newly introduced game, the students immediately began playing in the proper manner, clearly demonstrating that they understood my Spanish directions. The quicker they were to respond, the less anxious I felt that they did not understand my input.

Even as my own target language anxiety was alleviated, the *students' anxiety toward target language use decreased as the amount of comprehensible input they understood increased*. As students built confidence in their ability to understand more Spanish, they experienced a decrease in target language anxiety and an overall positive change in attitude toward target language use. In the stories “Missing the Connection” and “UN JUEGO,” I noted how the students, particularly Johnny and Josh, exhibited little to no target language anxiety as they playfully interacted during the activities. I also noted in the story “Cuéntame un Cuento” how the majority of the students volunteered to read their stories aloud and attributed their willingness to the low level of anxiety in the room.

Figure 24 represents the change in attitude demonstrated by the students taken from their September and December surveys. The comparison demonstrates that in September, there were students who strongly or somewhat agreed that they felt anxious when they had to speak or understand Spanish. In contrast, no students strongly agreed with feeling anxious when having to speak

Spanish in December, and the amount of students who somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement increased significantly.

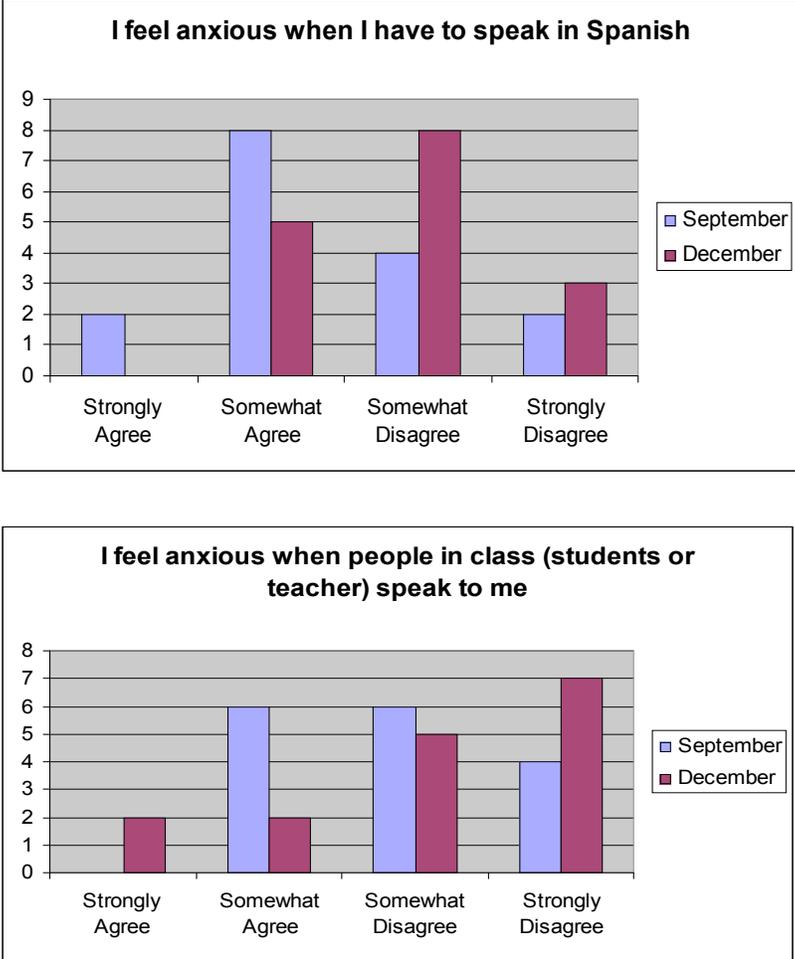


Figure 24. Comparison of target language anxiety.

The number of students who strongly or somewhat disagreed with feeling anxious when they had to understand Spanish increased from September to December, though two students commented that by December they strongly agreed that they felt anxious when having to understand Spanish. This was most

likely due to the fact that those two students could not understand the majority of the input I provided and often felt confused during class.

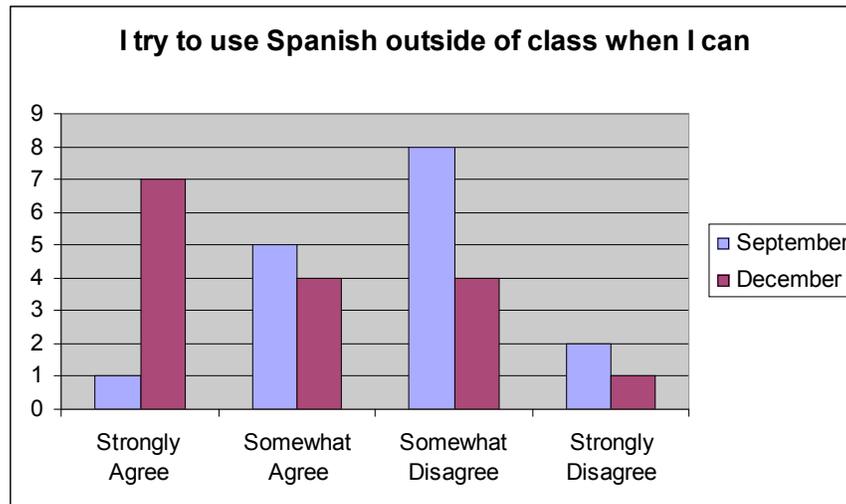


Figure 25. Comparison of students' overall desire to use the target language

Changing the environment affected the students' desire to use Spanish outside of the classroom as evidenced in Figure 25. The number of students who strongly agreed with the statement significantly increased from September to December, while the amount of students who somewhat disagreed decreased.

Even within the first few weeks of the study, the students began to create and communicate entirely through the target language, as evidenced by Wesley and Ana's humor, and Jen and Laura calling each other *estúpida*. Toward the end of the study, Josh's personality shone through the language barrier in the *encuesta* activity as he answered "no" to all of my questions about his daily activities, and answered "yes" with a forlorn expression to the question, "Do you cry a lot?" They understood that the language was an actual tool of communication and were

able to let their personalities shine through the language barrier by creatively using the language structures they knew. In the story “La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala,” Wesley creatively placed his “bad student” in detention as he used new language structures to retell the ending of the story. Additionally, in the story “Talking Up a Storm,” the students began creatively using new phrases to earn Euros. Though Luke tried to relay to me that he had not constructed a long Spanish phrase to earn himself Euros, he authentically constructed the phrase “No tiene una phrase larga hoy,” which I considered to be a long phrase. The students were most likely willing to use the target language “because [they] apprehend[ed] the challenge as interrelated to other problems within a total context” (Freire, p. 81, 2007). They were able to understand the proper context in which the language was used and viewed their own use of the target language as a challenge.

Creating and reinforcing a classroom environment in which the target language was the method of all interactions was a key component in the development of the students’ overall proficiency, yet the primary contributing factor to the increase in the students’ proficiency was the increased provision of comprehensible input (Krashen & Terrell, 1998). Comprehensible input is defined as a critical component in language acquisition. The amount of input students receive impacts the students’ development of proficiency (Bateman, 2008; Crawford, 2004; Duff & Polio, 1990; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Turnbull, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

## Student Comprehension of Input

*Teaching through the target language exposes students to a vast amount of comprehensible input provided that a variety of input modification strategies are employed to convert the input to intake.* The decision to teach through the medium of the target language required purposeful planning of the language that would be used for instructional purposes. Modifications to both the management of the classroom environment and verbal adjustments had to be made to ensure that my target language input was converted to comprehensible intake (Bateman, 2008; Chambers, 1991; Duff & Polio, 1990; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 1998; Wong-Fillmore, 1985).

In the beginning of the year, I specifically instructed the students in using several input-modification strategies that would enable them to make input comprehensible (Chambers, 1991; Halliwell & Jones, 1991; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2000; Meiring & Norman, 2002; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Through the use of modeling, gesturing, circumlocution, cognates, illustrations, reducing the rate of speech, and L1/L2 keyword associations, the students were able to understand the majority of the input I provided for them and that they provided for each other. Practicing the concept of listening for the gist of the message enabled the students to focus on keywords that they could identify while I was speaking rather than trying to translate the entire message word for word.

In the questionnaire given on September 21, all but two students referred to the fact that they tried to listen for the gist of the message and relied on cognates to help them understand my target language input. Again in the December 12 questionnaire, the majority of the students referenced their ability to understand my target language input through the various input-modification strategies. Specifically teaching these strategies during the first few days of school enabled me to conduct class entirely in the target language. I knew that the students were adequately equipped to understand my target language input.

One of the key strategies to remaining primarily in the target language during instruction was employing the use of cognates and engaging the students' background knowledge of the L1 and L2 (Omaggio Hadley, 2000). During my study, I often tried to link new input to what the students already knew about the Spanish language by consciously choosing as many cognates as I could so that the students were more likely to understand my message. My use of cognates was evident throughout the dialogue sequences in "This Year's Story." An outside reader with little to no Spanish knowledge could most likely identify several words per dialogue due to their similarity to the English language.

In addition to purposefully using cognates when speaking, I attempted to link the new input to existing background knowledge the students had developed from their previous years of Spanish study. In the story *Yo No He Terminado Todavía*, I described a setting in which I introduced new vocabulary. The

students worked in small groups to deduce the meaning of various classroom phrases using illustrated picture cards, their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary from previous years of study, and their knowledge of cognates. I noted that many of the students did not need the pictures as they knew some of the more common expressions from recognizing them in previous years.

In addition the input modification strategies listed above, I provided visuals and props to assist in making my input comprehensible for the students. On numerous occasions, I used overhead transparencies and realia to help the students make connections to the meaning of new words and to clarify directions, such as in the introduction of the games Bop, Zip Around, Battleship and the *encuesta* activity. During the instances when I did not employ the use of visuals and props, I noticed a marked decrease in the students' comprehension of my messages, as evidenced in the story "What a Disappointment." During those instances, I relied heavily on rephrasing and drawing illustrations to make my meaning clear. I realized that when I planned ahead and provided a visual, comprehension was increased in a timely manner; however, it was difficult to foresee every instance when students would not understand my input. A variety of input-modification strategies alleviated the risk of lack of comprehension. The students were able to acquire more of the language because the input was made comprehensible.

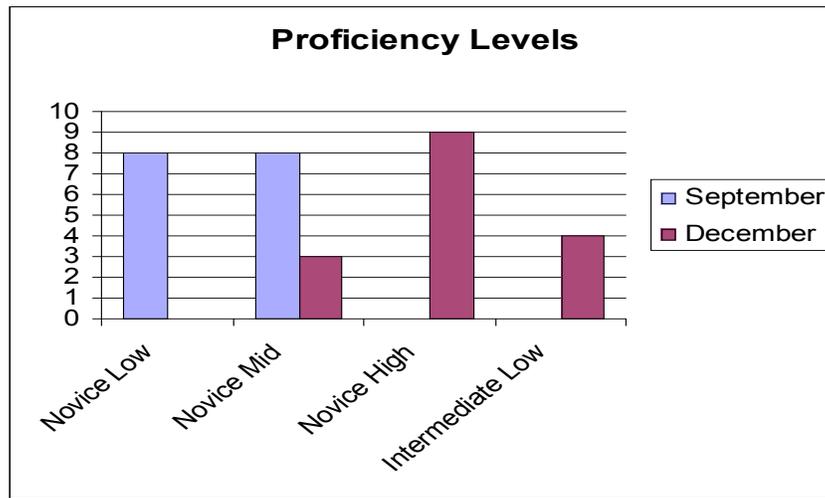
### Development of Student Target Language Proficiency

I found that *As a result of the provision of increased contextualized comprehensible input, conducting class through the target language increased students' overall proficiency.* Additionally, I found that *teaching through the target language enabled students to develop proficiency at their own rate and allowed for the development of varying levels of proficiency within the classroom.* As students attempted to comprehend input and produce target language output, their communicative competence developed within the zone of their proximal development, or “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, p. 86, 1978). Similarly, Krashen (1998) suggested providing comprehensible input at an  $i+1$  level, or one level beyond the students' independent or current level of language understanding. This interaction in and instruction through an  $i+1$  level increased students intake and production abilities. The students began to imitate (Vygotsky, 1978), and consequently acquire, the language structures they heard from me and from other knowledgeable peers as evidenced when Rebecca figured out that since *quiénquiera* meant whoever, *quéquiera* must mean whatever. The more comprehensible target language input the students received, the more opportunities they had to acquire and produce the language themselves. Thus,

“learning [was] matched . . . with the child’s developmental level” (Vygotsky, p. 85, 1978) as students acquired and produced the language at different rates and accelerated at different proficiency levels.

Academic differences were magnified within the microcosm of the beginning foreign language classroom as some students quickly acquired the language and rapidly advanced to higher levels of proficiency, while others remained fossilized in lower levels of proficiency and struggled to recall individual words. Regardless of their rate of proficiency development, all of the students demonstrated some, if not a great increase in their communicative competence and overall proficiency. At the beginning of the year, 8 students performed at a Novice Low level and 8 at a Novice Mid level of proficiency. At the culmination of the study, 4 students performed at an Intermediate Low level of proficiency, 9 at a Novice High level, and 3 at a Novice Mid level demonstrating great improvement from September through December as noted in Figure 26.

The students performing at the Novice Mid level communicated minimally by using isolated words and memorized phrases. They uttered only two to three words at a time and paused frequently to search for simple vocabulary. They could be understood with great difficulty. Students at the Novice High level responded to simple and direct questions or requests for



*Figure 26. Comparison of proficiency levels in September and December*

information. They expressed personal meaning by using memorized phrases or by recombining learned phrases and could generally be understood by a patient listener. Students at the Intermediate Low level created new, yet basic structures with the language and developed their own authentic messages by restructuring learned phrases and grammatical structures. They could more easily be understood by a patient listener (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines as cited in Omaggio Hadley, 2000).

One of the primary tools for evaluating the students' development of their oral proficiency was the incorporation of the weekly speaking rubrics. Each week, I evaluated the students on (1) their ability to use Spanish before and after class time, (2) their use of Spanish during warm-up conversations and activities, and (3) their use of Spanish during class instruction. I wrote detailed notes to the

students regarding observations I made during the week and suggestions for increasing their use of the target language. In addition to my daily field note observations, this weekly proficiency evaluation enabled the students and me to compare their use of Spanish from week to week and determine their appropriate level of proficiency.

One realization that I made in the early stages of my study was that I had started their scores out too high and did not allow enough room for improvement in their speaking proficiency. I was so impressed by their initial attempts at target language use that as the weeks progressed, a few of the students' proficiency scores dropped as my expectation for their use of Spanish rose. As I returned these rubrics to the students each week, I noticed that most, if not all of the students reviewed their grades from the previous weeks and compared the categories in which they increased and decreased. Several students noted that the weekly speaking grade increased their motivation to speak more Spanish both in and out of class.

In addition to the weekly proficiency rubrics, I completed a non-participant anecdotal notation on each student. I made notes regarding each student's ability to comprehend, produce, and pronounce the target language, as well as whether the student used structures learned during class to engage in conversations. When I compared my anecdotal notes, I observed that the students developed significantly in their communicative competence from September

through December in their ability to speak and respond in Spanish, as well as in their ability to pronounce words in the target language. In addition, students with a higher level of proficiency also exhibited higher levels of risk taking with the language as they attempted to create their own messages and expand conversations.

Student artifacts also contributed to my overall evaluation of each student's proficiency level. Students were asked to write their own version of the story "La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala" in their journals as a homework assignment. The length of the stories and accuracy of their language use varied from student to student depending on their level of proficiency. Some wrote entire pages and were able to explain and recount each detail of the story while others wrote a short paragraph explaining the overall gist of the story. The writing sample indicated the various proficiency levels which had developed within the class (Figures 27, 28, & 29). Although I had observed these variations in the students' speaking abilities, this assignment provided a concrete example of each student's ability to use the language proficiently.

The results from the participant observation checklists, non-participant anecdotal notations, and weekly speaking evaluations all revealed consistent proficiency and communicative levels that were in conjunction with the artifacts the students produced and the students' own feelings regarding their ability to understand and use the language as per their pre and post surveys. The students

who struggled to understand the language used during class were also the students who struggled to apply the grammatical concepts and communicate their written messages in their student work. These students performed at a lower speaking proficiency in their weekly speaking evaluations and were hesitant or incorrect when responding to the target language in participant observation checklists.

7/10/09 El cuento de la Alumna Buena y la Alumna Mala  
Susana va a escuela en la autobús. Susana llega a escuela y en tiempo. Susana presta muy attention en la classe. Susana saca A+ en la una prueba. Sofia llega a escuela y no en tiempo. Sofia no muy presta attention. Sofia saca F. Sofia muy muy muy Mal. ~~Susana~~  
~~Sofia~~  
\* Susana estudia en la classe  
\* Sofia no estudia en la classe.  
\* Sofia llora y grita en la classe.

Figure 27. Lower proficiency writing sample.

Figure 27 demonstrates an example of a lower proficiency writing sample. Although the student is able to convey the gist of the story, the story lacks detail

and displays afterthoughts at the end in the form of asterisk additions. The writing also displays little control of grammar and usage.

7-10-09 El Cuento de la Alumna Buena  
y la Alumna mala  
Susana es una alumna buena. Susana  
llega a escuela ~~y se sienta en su~~  
en tiempo. Susana presta atencion en  
Clase y <sup>en</sup> levanta la mano. Susana ~~saca~~ <sup>tomo</sup>  
buena apuntes. Susana estudia ~~metella~~  
apuntes para una prueba mañana. Susana  
saca una nota buena. Ella saca una A+  
Sofia es una alumna mala. Sofia es  
tara para clase. Sofia no presta atencion, ella  
habla much. Sofia no toma apuntes. Sofia  
no estudia para una prueba mañana,  
ella debaja en ella cuaderno. Sofia  
es muy nerviosa porque ella no estudia ó  
escuchan en clase. Sofia saca una not  
mala. Ella saca una F-. Sofia es triste.  
Sofia grita "SOY ES STUPIDA!"

Figure 28. Mid proficiency writing sample.

The students who sometimes or mostly understood the language used during class were the ones who were able to effectively communicate their written message, though with some errors, in their student work. These students had a mid-level speaking proficiency in their weekly speaking evaluations and were able to

correctly respond, though with some hesitation in the target language participant observation checklists. Figure 28 demonstrates an example of a mid proficiency writing sample. The student was able to include more details in the retelling of the story and had good control of both grammar and usage. Several errors were still evident, such as in verb usage and the word *ella* instead of *su*. Regardless, the story was clearly conveyed.

7/10/09 El cuento de la alumna buena  
y la alumna mala

~~Un día~~ Hay una alumna. El nombre de la ~~buen~~ alumna es Susana. Susana es una alumna muy buena. Ella llega a escuela a ocho y media. Ella presta atención <sup>cuando</sup> la profesora enseña. Ella escucha y no habla ~~con~~ durante clase, y ella levante la mano. Un día, ~~se~~ la profesora de Susana la dice, "Una prueba mañana." Susana estudia mucho, y saca una nota buena, una A+.

En la misma escuela, es una estudiante ~~no~~ muy mala. Ella ~~su~~ nombre es Sofía. Sofía llega a escuela ~~a~~ tarde. Ella habla muy durante clase, y no escucha la profesora. La profesor le dice mucho, "Levante la mano," y "da la vuelta." Cuando la profesora le dice "Una prueba," Sofía no estudia. ~~En~~ Ella saca una nota muy mala, una F-. Ella es triste, y grita "¡No soy estúpido!"

Figure 29. High proficiency writing sample.

The students who easily understood the language used during class were the ones who could communicate their message with detail and precision in their student work, had a higher speaking proficiency in their weekly speaking evaluations, and were able to immediately and correctly respond in the target language in participant observation checklists. Figure 29 demonstrates an example of a higher proficiency level writing sample. In this retelling of the story the student effectively included dialogue and many details. Additionally, the student incorporated more advanced connector phrases such as *en la misma escuela* and the *durante*. This writing sample displays very good control of Spanish grammar and usage, and a more extensive vocabulary.

In the pre- and post-surveys, the students themselves noted the improvement in their overall proficiency levels from September through December as illustrated in Figure 30. In both graphs, there was an increase in students who strongly agreed with the statements found in Figure 30 in December as opposed to somewhat agreed in September.

### ***Development of Grammatical Competency***

I found throughout my study that the students' communicative and grammatical competencies developed simultaneously and realized that I had to allow the necessary time for development in each student. I observed on numerous occasions that the students could understand and effectively use the conjugated form of verbs when telling or retelling a story, yet many could not

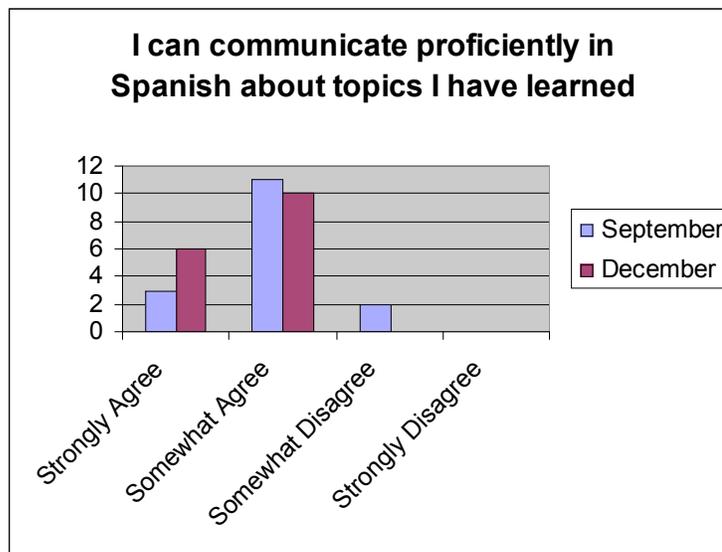
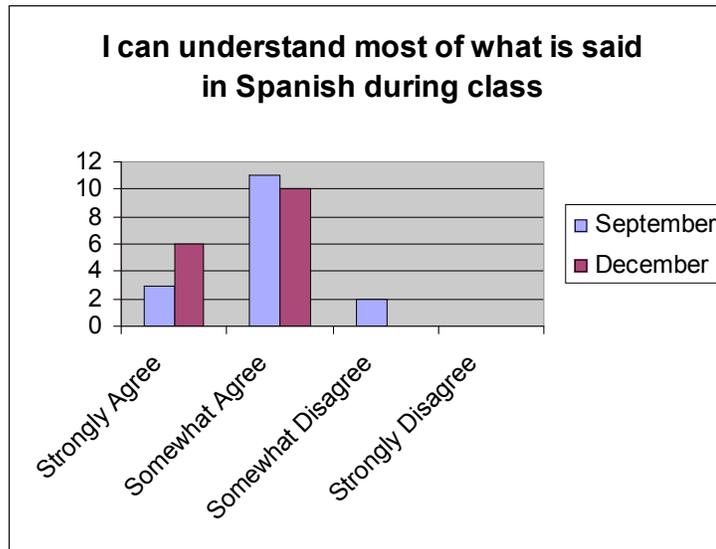


Figure 30. Students' ability to communicate in the target language.

transfer this knowledge over to isolated conjugation practice as evidenced by Johnny, Stephen, and Chris in the story “Missing the Connection.” Students with higher levels of proficiency, such as Ana, Wesley, Allison, and Josh, were able to

conjugate while speaking and transfer their knowledge between communicative and grammatical usage. I referenced the educational philosophers to understand why my direct grammar instruction did not always transfer over to communicative competence.

Although I understood the importance of acquiring an L2 through the increased provision of target language input, I grappled with the role of direct grammar instruction. I remained “nostalgic toward [my] origins” (Freire, p. 61, 2007) as a grammar-based teacher and feared that without correcting each grammatical mistake the students made, I was reinforcing incorrect grammar development. In two specific situations I struggled with the decision to correct student work or to allow the grammar to develop naturally. In the comic strip homework assignment, I reflected in my field log that the activity was a creative way to demonstrate proficiency and that it was an authentic use of language structures in context, yet grappled with whether I should correct the imperfect grammatical structures on their papers. Ultimately, I decided to allow the grammar to develop naturally and hoped that with time, the students would recognize their own errors. I struggled with the same concept as students completed the activity *Cuéntame un Cuento* in which the students continued the stories of their peers by adding a sentence to the existing story. Although I was impressed by the creativity the students demonstrated with the language, I

reflected in my field log that the students used imperfect grammar but communicated their message well.

I could not help but attribute my desire to correct their grammar to my nostalgic origins as a grammar-based teacher and considered this action as a reversion to exerting my status as the all-knowledgeable teacher (Freire, 2007). In the past when I taught grammar-based units, students were not able to correctly apply the grammar in context. The grammar “was learned in isolation...it was segregated when it was acquired and hence [was] so disconnected from the rest of experience that it [was] not available under the actual conditions of life” (Dewey, 1938, p. 48). Teaching by grammar instruction alone did not link language learning to the students’ actual experience. The students mastered disjointed pieces of grammatical language but could not see the whole picture of how each structure interconnected to create a useable language system.

Within the context of teaching grammar contextually, Vygotsky stated that:

the improvement of one function of consciousness or one aspect of its activity can affect the development of another only to the extent that there are elements common to both functions or activities . . . The learning process can never be reduced simply to the formation of skills but embodies an intellectual order that makes it possible to transfer general

principles discovered in solving one task to a variety of other tasks.

(Vygotsky, p. 83, 1978)

During my study, as I continued to implement isolated conjugation and grammar practice in conjugation games and homework assignments, I emphasized the formation of skills and hoped that the skills transferred into general principles. I realized that this practice should have been implemented in reverse. I should have continued to teach the grammar contextually, as in storytelling and mini-stories, and anticipated that the process of contextually narrating the story would transfer to the general principle of conjugation. In essence, I was trying to promote communicative and grammatical competence, yet was still somewhat relying on “drill-and-kill” grammar sheets to “teach” the students how to conjugate. This was contradictory in both philosophy and practice.

Krashen (1982) hypothesized that students acquire language in a natural order or progression. Students typically develop communicative competence first, and only later, after a multitude of language instruction and reception of comprehensible input, do they develop grammatical competence. I realized that some of my students were not yet ready for the development of grammatical competence, yet I continued to force it upon them. “Instead of begin founded on the needs of children as they naturally develop and on their own activity, [language was] given to them from without, from the teacher’s hands” (Vygotsky, p. 105, 1978). I developed patience in allowing the students’ grammar to develop

in a natural order instead of giving them the grammar “from without.” As their proficiency developed, the students’ grammatical and communicative competencies indeed developed at the same rate.

### **The Role of Social Interaction and Motivation**

*“The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process” (Dewey, 1938, p. 58).*

Language acquisition could not have occurred without the role of social interaction in the target language where the students were engaged in dual roles as learners and teachers. They strove to understand my spoken language and comprehend my general message as learners, yet they became teachers while attempting to communicate their own spoken messages to their peers while in small groups.

I witnessed the benefit of social interaction on several occasions. During the first day of target language interaction in the story, “What’s Your Strategy,” I observed Johnny’s group assisting him with target language words and structures to enable him to use less English. Additionally, I commented in my field log that I was impressed by Stephen’s gains in Spanish production and attributed this to the positive interaction he received in the target language within his group. I observed that when Allison, Ana, and Wesley worked together, they encouraged one another to create with the language and helped each other to construct new

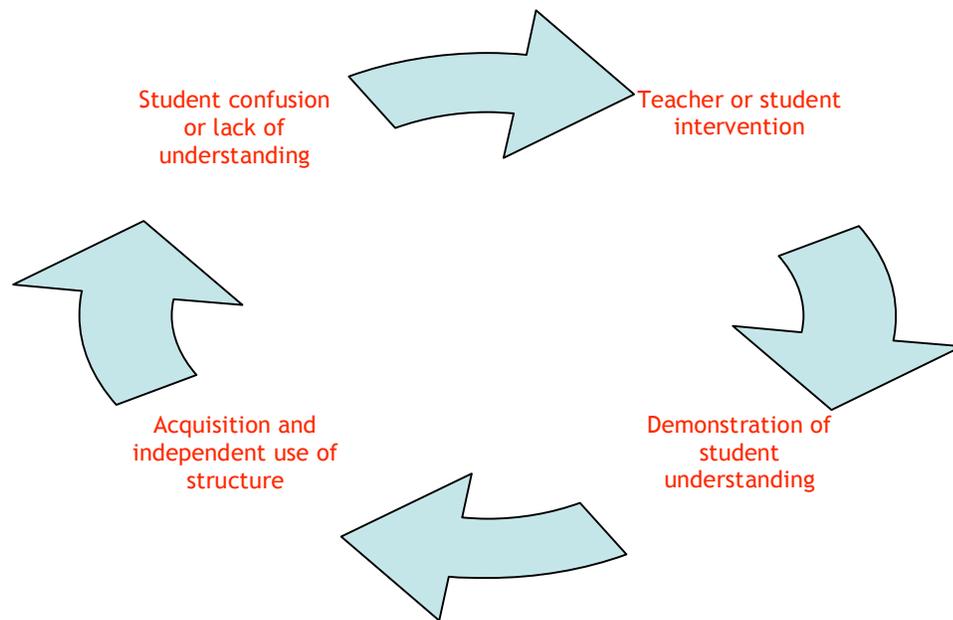
and authentic messages as they communicated entirely in Spanish. In their student interviews, many of the students noted that they were able to make their messages understood to their group members by using many of the strategies learned in class and that the process of explaining things to others further developed their own proficiency.

Throughout the study, instances of students interacting in their groups, monitoring their classmates' use of the L1, and helping them to use the L2 as much as possible continued. In the sentence strip activity, I observed Johnny helping Danielle to correctly form the sentences that she could not arrange. The success Johnny experienced from the activity uplifted his confidence that he was able to understand some Spanish and could be of assistance to his peers when necessary. Danielle, who possessed the higher proficiency level of the two, was typically the one who helped Johnny. Her surprised smile when Johnny produced the correct answer on more than one occasion revealed that the role change was a positive experience for both students involved.

During times when communication broke down, the process of the negotiation of meaning enabled me and the students to convey the intended meaning of the message without direct translation. Primarily in the beginning of the study, several instances occurred in which the students did not understand my input the first time given. As seen in the dialogue portions of THIS YEAR'S

STORY, the students' lack of understanding was usually remedied by a simple gesture or illustration, or by choosing a closer cognate to the intended word.

I summarized the pattern of the negotiation of meaning in Figure 31.



*Figure 31. The Negotiation of Meaning.*

The negotiation of meaning began initially with some sort of student confusion or lack of understanding. A teacher or peer intervention to increase comprehension then occurred such as student or teacher modeling or the implementation of an input-modification strategy. A demonstration of understanding on the part of the student followed either in the form of an action, a gesture signifying comprehension as “writing in air” (Vygotsky, p. 107, 1978), or a target language response. Finally, there was an eventual acquisition and independent use of the structure that caused initial confusion. This process

demonstrated that “what is in the zone of proximal development today will be the actual developmental level tomorrow- that is, what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow” (Vygotsky, p. 87, 1978).

Examples of the negotiation of meaning were evidenced throughout the story, yet, the most poignant example was in the story of “La Alumna Buena y La Alumna Mala.” In the story, I directed the class to form groups of four so they could dramatize the story. Ana asked in the target language if they had to work in their preset groups of four. My response was, “No, *quiénquiera* en la clase.” Although I made a waving motion to symbolize that *quiénquiera* meant whoever, she was clearly confused by the meaning of the word and asked, “¿Qué?” By gesturing and giving specific names of students that could potentially form groups, we were able to negotiate the meaning of the word *quiénquiera* for the class.

I found that as a result of the social nature of language learning, ***teaching through the target language increased students’ target language output, provided that I incorporated sufficient opportunities for social interaction.*** In the student questionnaires, a recurring theme among the students was their surprise by the amount of Spanish they were able to use. Many cited they felt they had learned more already this year than in past years. They also felt strongly that they benefited from the interaction and communication in small groups because they were able to communicate at a slower and more comprehensible

pace with their peers than with me. One student wrote, “The activities we do help me more because we interact with each other and we are speaking more to each other.”

Students learn as much, if not more, from each other when attempting to communicate in the target language. *Engaging in social interaction increased students’ proficiency due to the provision of opportunities for the negotiation of meaning, the provision of comprehensible input and output from one student to another, and the provision of opportunities to build confidence in and comprehension of the target language in a low-anxiety setting.* The students understood the importance of communication and dialogue with their peers in a language classroom. The lack of communication and dialogue in a language classroom would inhibit the acquisition of the second language. Freire proclaims that education could not occur without communication, without dialogue. “Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education” (Freire, p. 92-93, 2007).

### **Student Motivation**

*Student engagement and motivation increased through the implementation of a variety of games and communicative activities resulting in an increase in language acquisition.* In their surveys, students noted the impact of the games and activities on their proficiency development. Students cited that the games helped them to remember the content they were learning, allowed them

to practice their language skills, and made learning Spanish easier and more fun. In addition, students cited that the games increased their fluency, pronunciation, and overall engagement.

[Language] should be meaningful for children . . . an intrinsic need should be aroused in them . . . [and] should be incorporated into a task that is necessary and relevant for life. Only then can we be certain that it will develop not as a matter of . . . [habit] but as a really new and complex form of speech. (Vygotsky, p. 118, 1978)

In other words, the target language had to be meaningful for the children and be useful as a tool of immediate and authentic communication for proficiency to develop. Since the classroom environment was conducted through the L2, the students found language learning relevant, meaningful, and necessary for communicative purposes. As a result, their motivation, or intrinsic desire to learn and use the language was aroused. They acquired the language in a natural setting instead of having the language patterns and structures forced upon them by the order of the textbook.

I implemented several motivational strategies during the study to promote the relevance of the target language during instruction. The use of information gap activities and games, such as Battleship, *Sobres*, Bop, Zip around, and el Juego de los Dados encouraged students to play and experiment with the language while fostering an anxiety free environment to try out different language

structures. While engaged in these games and activities, the students were more inclined and motivated to use the target language both in the form of memorized phrases and in the construction of authentic messages. An example of this occurred every time I said the phrase “vamos a jugar un juego” (we’re going to play a game). Josh enthusiastically shouted out, “un juego!!!” and triumphantly raised both hands demonstrating his enjoyment of playing games. I also noted an example of student motivation and increased inclination to use the target language as we practiced a conjugation oral activity in which students wrote the conjugated form of a verb on their dry erase boards while I held up a pronoun and infinitive. During the activity, Johnny strove to be the first student to correctly conjugate each verb while Josh playfully looked at the next card in the series in order to try to be the first to conjugate the verb. As the activity became increasingly easy for the students, they shouted for, “más difícil.” The students were genuinely encouraged to create with the target language and desired to be challenged in its use.

In addition, the implementation of the Euro system greatly motivated students to produce target language output, as confirmed by several students in their questionnaires. Students were awarded varying amounts of Euros based on their use of the target language. Students stamped and collected their Euros to buy authentic realia from the target language such as sombreros, stickers, bookmarks, etc. Throughout the study, I awarded four sombreros costing the

students 50 Euros each. In the story “Talking Up A Storm,” I detailed my surprise as students demonstrated their motivation as they read Spanish children’s books after a quiz in order to learn new phrases they could use to earn Euros. The students produced increased amounts of authentic and creative target language output with the hopes of receiving Euros.

If we ignore the child’s needs, and the incentives which are effective in getting him to act, we will never be able to understand his advance from one developmental stage to the next, because every advance is connected with a marked change in motives, inclinations, and incentives. (Vygotsky, p. 92, 1978)

This increased motivation helped the students advance from one stage or level of proficiency to the next by challenging and developing their communicative competencies.

### **Challenges to Teaching in the Target Language**

Although I did not experience classroom management challenges as a result of conducting class through the target language (Bateman, 2008), I encountered *several situations that did present a challenge to remaining in the target language including the lack of student comprehension, the increased amount of time to teach and explain content in the target language, and the varying moods of both the teacher and the students on a daily basis.*

One of the main challenges to teaching in the target language was deciding whether to continue repeating and rephrasing a point when the students continued to demonstrate a lack of understanding or deciding to briefly switch to the L1. This internal struggle was evidenced in the explanation of the game Bop, and in the story “What a Disappointment.” Regardless of my most valiant attempts to explain the activities in Spanish, my input was not comprehensible and the students could not fully understand. Of course, in “What a Disappointment,” the lack of comprehension was the result of my lack of objectives rather than the abstract language I tried to communicate. In the game of Bop, I gave a lengthy explanation of the directions, complete with a transparency of illustrations; however, I still felt the students needed a brief English explanation to clarify the play of this new game.

Cook (2001) strongly advocated that the L1 should be used as a language learning strategy and as a scaffold to learning. He argued that while students should be exposed to the target language as much as possible, the judicious use of the L1 enables teachers to convey meanings more effectively and expedites the process of giving instructions and explanations. On the other hand, proponents of total exclusion of the L1 from the classroom argue that the process of codeswitching between the learners’ L1 and L2 is futile because language learning occurs when students attempt to negotiate the meaning of the message

delivered in the L2 (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Thus, translation to the L1 eliminates the negotiation process and inhibits language acquisition.

I grappled with the strategy of L1 use throughout my study. Initially, I was plagued by feelings of guilt when I was not able to communicate my target language message in spite of the input-modification strategies I used. I felt like a failure when I resorted to brief L1 usage to summarize my message. As the study progressed, I began to understand the pedagogical value of the judicious use of the L1 during instruction. The amount of L1 teachers feel comfortable using depends on the individual teacher's attitude regarding the use of the L1 in the classroom. Based on my experience of teaching in the target language, I found that short bursts of the L1 when faced with the lack of comprehension were indeed a valuable language learning tool; however, I found that I preferred to remain in the target language for as long as possible to ensure that students received the opportunity to negotiate the meaning of the message.

One of the other challenges I found to teaching in the target language was the increased amount of time required to explain activities and directions, detailed in the story "Did I Say That?" Although I agreed with Cook (2001) that L1 use would have expedited the conveyance of these directives, I felt that the input the students received from my explanation of the activities warranted my continued use of the target language and that codeswitching to the L1 would have deprived the students of valuable target language input. Additionally, the students were

able to experience the language used for a variety of functions and thus enabled them to develop their own interlanguage system (Chambers, 1991; Franklin, 1990). My insistence on giving directions and explanations through the target language limited the number of activities that students were able to participate in. Instead of three or four disconnected communicative activities, students were engaged in one or two educative activities (Dewey, 1938) that linked language learning to real-life experience as they interacted with their peers in information gap activities and open-ended communicative activities. I found, however, that quiz and homework directions were most effectively given in both the L1 and the L2 to ensure that students understood exactly what was required of them. I realized this when correcting the students' comic strip activity and several students failed to complete the assignment as directed in class. It was then I determined that graded assignments should be explicated in both languages to avoid confusion and clarify grading expectations.

Teaching in the target language required more class time allocated to target language input, and as a result, was exhausting at times for both the students and me. As "partners" (Freire, p. 75, 2007), my students and I were both required to use the target language during classroom interactions. Neither I, nor they, were native speakers, and communicating in a second language presented a challenge for all parties involved. Admittedly, I had an advantage of having a substantially wider knowledge base of the language than they did, however, the

fact remained that it was often difficult for me to use Spanish all the time. Some days, I simply felt that it was too exhausting to use Spanish and would be much easier to switch to English, but I was motivated by the fact that the students' language proficiency was increasing and continued on with my use of the target language. Other times, it was difficult to produce the correct word, especially when it was an unfamiliar word to my vocabulary. I found myself having to use the same strategies of circumlocution, gesturing, realia, cognates, etc, that I taught the students to employ to make their message understood, as much for myself as for them. In the process of having to communicate my message entirely in Spanish, I further developed my own proficiency in the language and was quite surprised by how much my own language use developed in the process. As the teacher, I was also learning.

## NEXT STEPS

We were told during our high school graduation exercise that the ceremony was not truly a graduation or completion of learning, rather a commencement of our future learning. I prefer to think of my study in the same regards. I have not graduated from or completed anything through this study; rather my learning has just begun. I will now take what I have discovered and commence my future learning in the area of second language development.

As I observed the progress the students made in the development of their proficiency, my enthusiastic commitment toward the method of teaching through the target language was not easily contained. I eagerly told anyone who would listen about the benefits gleaned from the experience. I recounted how the students could now proficiently communicate regarding the topics they had learned. I relayed to the high school Spanish teachers during our yearly articulation meeting how well prepared my students should be for the challenges of Spanish II and how comfortable they were communicating in the target language.

I was struck by a sense of pride that I could finally utter the words that my students had gained the ability to proficiently communicate in the target language. Moreover, I felt confident standing behind my statement. When sending my students to the high school Spanish II class each June, I used to worry that they were ill-prepared and that they did not possess enough background knowledge

from Spanish I to succeed in Spanish II. I suspect that this June will be different. As my study progressed this year, I realized that the benefits of the increased proficiency levels and communicative competencies of all of my students far outweighed any negative notions of not being able to complete as many activities or cover all of the content in the textbook chapters. The students had gained a working understanding and ability to use the language that working page by page through the textbook rarely allowed. The students acquired rather than learned a second language, and were increasingly more motivated to do so.

This study has encouraged me to continue to attend professional development seminars to continue to learn new and innovative techniques to incorporate in my Spanish classroom, in the target language, of course. I am further encouraged to spend the appropriate time planning out the resources, materials, and instructional language needed to ensure that input is indeed made comprehensible and is converted to student production.

For the remainder of this school year and years to come, I will continue this method of teaching through the target language and extend the methodology to the remainder of my Kindergarten through seventh grade classes. Yet as sure as I am of the effects of the study on students' proficiency, I cannot help but consider several questions that remain unanswered. What effects does error correction have on the students' communicative and grammatical developments? Are incorrect grammar patterns reinforced when students' speech and writing

errors go uncorrected? What affect will the lack of grammatical correction have on the students when they encounter other teachers with different philosophies at the high school level? What affect would assigning cooperative roles during social interaction have on the students' proficiency development? Would the study results differ if conducted with a group of younger students? Would elementary students retain language input and produce output given that instruction is only once a week for thirty minutes? The questions are just the commencement of new action research studies waiting to be explored.

## REFERENCES

- Antón, M. (1999). The discourse of a learner-centered classroom: Sociocultural perspectives on teacher-learner interaction in the second-language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(3), 303-318.
- Bateman, B. (2008). Student teachers' attitudes and beliefs about using the target language in the classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(1), 11-28.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Chambers, F. (1991). Promoting use of the target language in the classroom. *Language Learning Journal*, 4, 27-31.
- Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57, 402-423.
- Crawford, J. (2004). Language choices in the foreign language classroom: Target language or the learners' first language?. *RELC Journal: A Journal of Language Teaching and Research in Southeast Asia*, 35(1), 5-20.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Doughty, C. & Pica, T. (1986). "Information gap" tasks: Do they facilitate second language acquisition? *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(2), 305-325.

- Duff, P. A., & Polio, C. G. (1990). How much foreign language is there in the foreign language classroom? *The Modern Language Journal*, 74(2), 154-166.
- Edstrom, A. (2004). The L2 as language of instruction: Teachers explore the competing tensions. *Northeast Conference Teaching Foreign Language Review*, 55, 26-32.
- Ellis, R. (1988). *Classroom second language development*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.
- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M., & Anzul, M. (1997). *On writing qualitative research: Living by words*. London: Falmer Press.
- Franklin, C. E. M. (1990). Teaching in the target language: Problems and prospects. *Language Learning Journal*, 2, 20-24.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Halliwell, S., & Jones, B. (1991). *On target: Teaching in the target language*. London, England: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.
- Hendricks, C. (2009). *Improving schools through action research: A comprehensive guide for educators (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Holly, M. L., Arhar, J. M., & Kasten, W. C. (2005). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

- Kraemer, A. (2006). Teachers' use of English in communicative German language classrooms: A qualitative analysis. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39(3), 435-450.
- Krashen, S. D. (1998). *Comprehensible output*. Retrieved April 5, 2009, from [http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/comprehensible\\_output/all.html](http://www.sdkrashen.com/articles/comprehensible_output/all.html)
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1998). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. New York: Prentice Hall Europe.
- Levine, G. S. (2003). Student and instructor beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use, and anxiety: Report of a questionnaire study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(3), 343-364.
- Lipton, G. C. (1998). *A practical handbook to elementary foreign language programs (FLES)*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Macaro, E. (2000). Issues in target language teaching. In K. Field (Ed.), *Issues in modern foreign languages teaching* (pp. 171-189). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Macaro, E. (2001). Analysing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision making. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85(4), 531-548.
- Mackey, A. (2002). Beyond production: Learners' perceptions about interactional processes. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 37, 379-394.

- Mayo, M., & Pica, T. (2000). Is the EFL environment a language learning environment? *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 16(1), 1-24. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED446429)
- Meiring, L., & Norman, N. (2002). Back on target: Repositioning the status of target language in MFL teaching and learning. *Language Learning Journal*, 26, 27-35.
- National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project. (1996). *Standards for foreign language learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Yonkers, New York: Author.
- Neil, P. S., Salters, J., & McEwen, A. (1999). Teacher's use of target language in the German classroom. *Language Learning Journal*, 19, 12-18.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (2000). *Teaching language in context* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Canada: Thomson Heinle.
- Oxford, R. L. (1997). Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction: Three communicative strands in the language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 81(4), 443-456.
- Pachler, N., & Field, K. (2004). *Learning to teach modern foreign languages in the secondary school: A companion to school experience* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Pica, T., Young, R., & Doughty, C. (1987). The impact of interaction on comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(4), 737-758.

- Pica, T., Lincoln-Porter, F., Paninos, D., & Linnell, J. (1996). Language learners' interaction: How does it address the input, output, and feedback needs of L2 learners? *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(1), 59-84.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output and its development. In S. M. Gass, & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury.
- Turnbull, M. (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but . . . *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(4), 531-540.
- Turnbull, M., & Arnett, K. (2002). Teachers' uses of the target and first languages in second and foreign language classrooms. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22, 204-218.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wilkerson, C. (2008). Instructors' use of English in the modern language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 41(2), 310-320.
- Wong-Fillmore, L. (1985). When does teacher talk work as input? In S. M. Gass, & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 17-50). Rowley, MA: Newbury.

## RESOURCES

- Funston, J. F., Castellanos, R., Hoff, P. J., & Mason, K. (2005). *¡Aventura!* (Annotated Teacher's Edition). Saint Paul, MN: EMC Paradigm.
- Muirhead, P. (2007). *Strengthening Spanish language instruction: Practical strategies for strengthening your students' proficiency in Spanish* (Resource handbook). Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education & Research.
- Petersen, W. (1999). *50 Spanish oral communication activities with mini-rubrics*. Auburn Hills, MI: Teacher's Discovery.
- Schmitt, C. J., & Woodford, P. E. (2008). *¡Buen viaje!* (Teacher Wraparound Edition). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Glencoe.
- Sheeran, J. G., & McCarthy, J. P. (1992). *Exploring Spanish*. Saint Paul, MN: EMC Publishing.
- Skaife, L., & Rodríguez, V. (1997). *Creative communicative activities for the Spanish class*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

## **APPENDIXES**

## Appendix A

<span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">¡Habla español!</span>			
Evaluation Rubric			
	<i>EXCELLENT</i>	<i>ACCEPTABLE</i>	<i>NEEDS WORK</i>
<b>Use of Spanish Before &amp; After Class Time:</b>	Student <u>always</u> speaks Spanish once inside the classroom, before and after the actual class period.  5	Student uses <u>some</u> Spanish once inside the classroom; many times student prefers to just not speak to anyone.  4    3	Student continues to use English, whisper in English, or says nothing once inside the classroom (even after a prompt from the teacher).  2    1    0
<b>Warm-up Conversation and Activities:</b>	Student <u>always</u> speaks Spanish with partner(s). Student uses additional Spanish to go beyond the immediate exercises to expand the conversation.  10    9	Student <u>mostly</u> speaks Spanish with partner(s), but many times resorts to English when faced with difficulties. Student only discusses exercises given and does not attempt to expand the conversation.  8    7    6	Student frequently uses English, either to complete the warm-up or to talk about things unrelated to the exercises given. Student does not complete the assigned exercises.  5    4    3    2    1    0
<b>Class Time Participation:</b>	Student is focused during class. Participates freely in Spanish. Asks questions in Spanish to understand; does not give up when attempting to say something in Spanish (sees it through / circumlocution).  10    9	Student is fairly focused during class. Occasionally participates in Spanish. Attempts to ask questions in Spanish; often gives up when attempting to say something in Spanish (tries but does not see it through).  8    7    6	Student is not focused during class. Student tries to work on other subjects during class. Only participates in Spanish when called on. Never makes an attempt to ask questions in Spanish.  5    4    3    2    1    0

©2004 Wade Petersen

e/la estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_

las observaciones del profesor / de la profesora:



Peterson, W. (1999). *50 Spanish oral communication activities with mini-rubrics*.

Auburn Hills, MI: Teacher's Discovery.

## Appendix B

### Non-Participant Observation Checklist for Anecdotal Records

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior	Yes	No	Evidence	Reflection
Does the student remain in the target language? (Evidence of English use)				
Does the student demonstrate comprehension of other student's target language use?				
Is the student comprehensible when he/she speaks?				
Does the student use the "language of the classroom" to engage in conversation?				
Does the student use correct pronunciation?				
Is the student engaged in the activity?				

Other Observations	Reflections



## Appendix D

### Oral Communication Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

	4	3	2	1
<b>Content</b>  ____ x 5 = ____	<b>Complete:</b> Speaker consistently uses the appropriate functions and vocabulary necessary to communicate.	<b>Generally Complete:</b> Speaker uses the appropriate functions and vocabulary necessary to communicate.	<b>Somewhat Complete:</b> Speaker sometimes uses the appropriate functions and vocabulary necessary to communicate.	<b>Incomplete:</b> Speaker uses few of the appropriate functions and vocabulary necessary to communicate.
<b>Comprehension</b>  ____ x 5 = ____	<b>Total Comprehension:</b> Speaker understands all of what is said to him or her.	<b>General Comprehension:</b> Speaker understands most of what is said to him or her.	<b>Moderate Comprehension:</b> Speaker understands some of what is said to him or her.	<b>Little Comprehension:</b> Speaker understands little of what is said to him or her.
<b>Comprehensibility</b>  ____ x 5 = ____	<b>Comprehensible:</b> Listener understands all of what the speaker is trying to communicate.	<b>Usually Comprehensible:</b> Listener understands most of what the speaker is trying to communicate.	<b>Sometimes Comprehensible:</b> Listener understands half of what the speaker is trying to communicate.	<b>Seldom Comprehensible:</b> Listener understands little of what the speaker is trying to communicate.
<b>Accuracy</b>  ____ x 5 = ____	<b>Accurate:</b> Speaker uses language correctly including grammar, spelling, word order, and punctuation.	<b>Usually Accurate:</b> Speaker usually uses language correctly including grammar, spelling, word order, and punctuation.	<b>Sometimes Accurate:</b> Speaker has some problems with language usage.	<b>Seldom Accurate:</b> Speaker makes many errors in language usage.
<b>Fluency</b>  ____ x 5 = ____	<b>Fluent:</b> Speaker speaks clearly without hesitation. Pronunciation and intonation sound natural.	<b>Moderately Fluent:</b> Speaker has few problems with hesitation, pronunciation, and/or intonation.	<b>Somewhat Fluent:</b> Speaker has some problems with hesitation, pronunciation, and/or intonation.	<b>Not Fluent:</b> Speaker hesitates frequently and struggles with pronunciation and intonation.

**Additional Observations/Reflections:**

## Appendix E

### Student Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the statements below by choosing the category that best describes how you feel. Please be honest in your responses.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I can understand most of what is said in Spanish during class.				
I can communicate proficiently in Spanish about topics I have learned.				
I feel anxious when I have to speak in Spanish.				
I feel anxious when people in class (students or teacher) speak to me in Spanish.				
I speak in Spanish when working cooperatively with my classmates and try not to switch to English.				
I speak in Spanish when speaking with my teacher and try not to switch to English.				
Using comprehension strategies like cognates, gestures, and pictures helps me to understand the message of what is being said in Spanish.				
I would rather my teacher use Spanish instead of English in the classroom.				
I try to use Spanish outside of class when I can.				
I enjoy learning Spanish.				

Please complete the statements below by filling in an appropriate number that best describes how your feel.  
**Choose from: 0%-20%; 20%-40%; 40%-60%; 60%-80%; 80%-100%**

1. My teacher uses Spanish to communicate with students about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time in class.
2. My classmates use Spanish to communicate with each other about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time in class.
3. While working with a partner, we switch to English as soon as we are through with the activity about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time.
4. I understand what my teacher is saying in Spanish about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time.
5. I understand what my classmates are saying in Spanish during partner activities about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time. If I do not understand, I ask questions about \_\_\_\_\_% of the time.

Questions based on Duff & Polio (1990) study.

## Appendix F

### Student Questionnaire

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: Please read each question and carefully consider your response. Write your response in English providing as many details and examples as possible. Attach additional paper if necessary when completing your response. Thank you for taking the time to help me with this questionnaire.*

**What impact did the teacher's use of Spanish to conduct class have on your own ability to use the Spanish language?**

**What impact did the games and activities have on your ability to use and understand the Spanish language?**

**What impact did the grammar practice have on your ability to use and understand the Spanish language?**

**How did you initially feel about class being conducted mostly in Spanish? Has your attitude changed at this point in the school year? Explain how.**

**How do you feel about your overall ability to communicate in the Spanish language? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?**

**What has been your favorite part of Spanish class so far this year? Why was it your favorite?**

**What has been your least favorite part of Spanish class so far this year? Why was it your least favorite?**

## Appendix G



July 23, 2009

Amy Whitaker  
4609 N. Hedgerow Drive  
Allentown, PA 18103

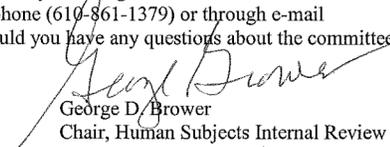
Dear Amy Whitaker:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has accepted your proposal: "Teaching Through Target Language." Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

This letter has been sent to you through U.S. Mail and e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone (610-861-1379) or through e-mail ([browerg@moravian.edu](mailto:browerg@moravian.edu)) should you have any questions about the committee's requests.

  
George D. Brower  
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board  
Moravian College  
610-861-1379

## Appendix H

### CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am currently completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The title of my research is *Teaching Through the Target Language*. During this study, I will be conducting class primarily in Spanish in an immersion-type setting. The students will benefit from participating in this study by increasing their language proficiency. They will receive valuable language input during class interactions and will use Spanish in real-life, conversational situations.

As part of this study, I will be using primarily Spanish to conduct class, and students will be asked to use Spanish for all classroom communications as well. They will be learning the "language of the classroom" in order to conduct all necessary classroom functions in Spanish, and will participate in various group and partner communicative activities to practice their communication skills. The study will take place in the eighth grade Spanish class from September 2 until December 23, 2009.

During this study, I will collect various forms of data to determine what the impact of conducting class primarily in the target language has on student proficiency. The data I will collect includes informal observations of student fluency during group work, checklists of vocabulary usage, collections of student work, including class work and quizzes, and student surveys and questionnaires. The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. No one's identity will be used. Minor details in student work may need to be altered to maintain student anonymity. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home and all data on my computer will be password protected. At the conclusion of the study, all data will be destroyed.

This study is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not result in penalty or consequence. A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study; however, students must participate in all regular class activities including partner and group communicative activities. Only data from students who consent to be research participants will be used in my study. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal from this study have any influence on the student's grades or ability to participate in regular classroom activities.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. Any questions you have about the research or about the process of withdrawing can be directed to me, Amy Whitaker, (908) 859-1001 x618, ~~whitaker@moravianschools.org~~ or my advisor, Dr. Charlotte Zales, Education Department, Moravian College, (610) 625-7958, [czales@moravian.edu](mailto:czales@moravian.edu). You may also contact the school principal, Mr. Jason Koenig, CSA-Harmony Township School, (908) 859-1601 x602, ~~koenig@harmony-moravianschools.org~~. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Amy S. Whitaker

---

I agree to allow my son/daughter to take part in this project. I understand that my son/daughter can choose not to participate at any time without penalty.

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

---

Student's Signature

Date

Appendix I

**3**

**CLASSROOM  
COMMANDS**  
Los mandatos de la clase

Repite.  
Repeat.

Habla.  
Speak.

Dilo en español.  
Say it in Spanish.

Completa las frases.  
Complete the sentences.

Contesta la pregunta.  
Answer the question.

Levanta la mano.  
Raise your hand.

Saca papel.  
Take out paper.

Abre el libro.  
Open the book.

Cierra el libro.  
Close the book.

Escribe.  
Write.

Escucha.  
Listen.

Lee.  
Read.

Siéntate.  
Sit down.  
Be seated.

Completa las frases.  
Complete the sentences.

Pasa a la pizarra.  
Go to the board.

 A palabras necias,  
oidos sordos.

To foolish words lend  
a deaf ear.

16

Sheeran, J. G., & McCarthy, J. P. (1992). *Exploring Spanish*. Saint Paul, MN:

EMC Publishing.

## Appendix J

### EXPRESIONES COMUNES

Del libro preparado por Lori Langer de Ramírez  
<http://miscositas.com>

Expresión en español	Traducción al inglés	Categoría
¿Qué hora es?		Clarification
¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?		Clarification
¿En que página estamos?		Clarification
¿Lo puede repetir?		Clarification
¿Puede hablar más despacio?		Clarification
Necesito ayuda.		Clarification
Tengo una pregunta.		Clarification
¿Cómo se dice...?		Clarification
¿Cómo se escribe...?		Clarification
¿Qué significa...?		Clarification
¿Cuál es la tarea?		Clarification
No tengo la tarea.		Clarification
No encuentro mi libro.		Clarification
¿Qué es esto?		Clarification
¿Qué es eso?		Clarification
¿Cómo está el clima hoy?		Clarification
Ven aquí.		Command
Mira		Command
Escucha		Command
Dibuja...		Command
Toca...		Command
Señala...		Command
Levanta la mano.		Command
Dámelo		Command
No me siento bien.		Conveying need
No entiendo.		Conveying need
Necesito papel.		Conveying need
Necesito una pluma.		Conveying need
Yo quiero...		Conveying need
Yo necesito...		Conveying need
¿Quién tiene...?		Conveying need
¿Me puedes prestar...?		Conveying need

¿Qué tiempo hace hoy? →

Estuve ausente ayer.		Explaining
Me gusta...		Explaining
No me gusta...		Explaining
Estoy contento/a.		Feelings
Estoy triste.		Feelings
Estoy aburrido/a		Feelings
Estoy confundido/a		Feelings
Me llamo...		Introduction
¿Cómo te llamas?		Introduction
¿Puedo ir al baño?		Permission
¿Puedo tomar agua?		Permission
¿Puedo ir a la oficina de salud?		Permission
Por favor		Politeness
Muchas gracias.		Politeness
¡Sí! / ¡No!		Politeness
¿Dónde?		Question words
¿Cuánto?		Question words
¿Quién?		Question words
¿Cuándo?		Question words
¿Cómo?		Question words
¿Por qué?		Question words
¿Qué?		Question words
¡A ti te toca!		Working together
¡A mí me toca!		Working together
Yo primero.		Working together
¡Ya terminé!		Working together
No he terminado todavía.		Working together

Muirhead, P. (2007). Strengthening Spanish instruction: *Practical strategies for strengthening your students' proficiency in Spanish* (Resource handbook).

Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education & Research.

## Appendix K

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Prueba 1 Las Frases de la Clase

Direcciones: Circula la letra de la frase correcta que corresponde con cada frase en español.

1. Hace mucho calor hoy.
  - a. ¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?
  - b. ¿Cómo está el clima hoy?
  - c. ¿Qué hora es?
  - d. ¿Cuál es la tarea?
2. No tengo la tarea.
  - a. ¡ A mí me toca!
  - b. Estuve ausente ayer.
  - c. Estoy contento.
  - d. Levanta la mano.
3. No entiendo.
  - a. ¿Cuál es la fecha de hoy?
  - b. ¿Me puedes prestar un lápiz?
  - c. No encuentro mi libro.
  - d. ¿Puede hablar más despacio?
4. ¿Me puedes prestar un lápiz?
  - a. Necesito un lápiz.
  - b. Necesito papel.
  - c. No encuentro mi libro.
  - d. No he terminado todavía.
5. ¿Cómo se escribe gato?
  - a. El gato significa cat en inglés.
  - b. El gato se dice cat en inglés.
  - c. El gato se escribe con ge, a, te, o.
  - d. Hay tres gatos.
6. Tengo una pregunta.
  - a. Escucha a la maestra.
  - b. Dibuja un cómic.
  - c. Señálame una bandera.
  - d. Levanta la mano.
7. No me siento bien.
  - a. ¿Puedo ir a la oficina de salud?
  - b. ¿En que página estamos?
  - c. ¿Lo puede repetir?
  - d. ¿Me puedes prestar un lápiz?
8. Me gusta la clase de español.
  - a. No he terminado todavía.
  - b. Estoy contento en clase.
  - c. Ya terminé
  - d. Yo primero.

Direcciones: Escribe la letra de la frase correcta que corresponde con cada frase en español.

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 9. ¡Yo primero! _____              | A. I'm finished!           |
| 10. ¿Quién tiene ...? _____        | B. It's my turn!           |
| 11. Dámelo ... _____               | C. It's your turn!         |
| 12. Yo quiero ... _____            | D. Me first!               |
| 13. No he terminado todavía. _____ | E. Could you speak slower? |
| 14. ¡Ya terminé! _____             | F. Could you repeat that?  |
| 15. No encuentro mi libro. _____   | G. How do you say ...?     |
| 16. ¡A mí me toca! _____           | H. What does ... mean?     |
| 17. A tí te toca! _____            | I. Who has ...?            |
| 18. ¿Lo puede repetir? _____       | J. Give me it.             |
| 19. ¿Cuál es la tarea? _____       | K. I'm finished!           |
| 20. ¿Cómo se dice ...? _____       | L. I want ...              |
|                                    | M. What's the homework?    |
|                                    | N. I haven't finished yet! |
| 21. Toca... _____                  | A. Draw...                 |
| 22. Señala... _____                | B. What is this?           |
| 23. Dibuja... _____                | C. Touch                   |
| 24. ¿Qué es esto? _____            | D. What is that?           |
| 25. ¿Qué es eso? _____             | E. Point to...             |

## Appendix L

### **El Cuento de la Alumna Buena y la Alumna Mala**

Susana es una alumna muy buena en Harmony Township Escuela. Ella **va a escuela** en autobus. Susana **llega a escuela** a las 8:40 (ocho y cuarenta) de la mañana. Susana **presta atención** en clase cuando la profesora **enseña**. Cuando la profesora habla, ella escucha. Ella escucha mucho y mira a la pizarra. Susana levanta la mano y **toma apuntes** buenos.

Un día, la profesora les **dice** a la clase, “Estudia, porque hay **una prueba** mañana.” Susana **estudia los apuntes**. La profesora les **da** a la clase la prueba y Susana **saca una nota buena**. Ella saca **una nota alta**, una “A.” Susana está muy feliz.

Sofía es una otra alumna en la misma clase en Harmony Township Escuela. Sofía es una alumna muy mala. Ella va a escuela a pie. Sofía llega a escuela a las 8:55 (ocho y cincuenta y cinco) de la mañana. Sofía no presta atención en clase cuando la profesora enseña. Ella no escucha cuando la profesora habla. Sofía habla mucho con sus amigos. Ella no

mira a la pizarra. La profesora le dice a ella, “¡Sofía, **da la vuelta**, por favor!” Pero, Sofía no da la vuelta. Ella no levanta la mano. Ella habla cuando la profesora habla. La profesora le dice a ella, “¡Sofía, levanta la mano, por favor!” Sofía no toma apuntes cuando la profesora enseña. Sofía dibuja en su cuaderno. Ella dibuja elefantes morados.

Un día, la profesora les dice a la clase, “Tenemos una prueba hoy. ¿Quién estudiaron?” Sofía no levanta la mano porque ella no estudia para la prueba. La profesora les da la prueba a la clase. Sofía está muy nerviosa porque ella no estudia, no toma apuntes, y no presta atención cuando la profesora habla. Sofía **saca una nota mala** en la prueba. Sofía saca **una nota baja**, una “F.” Sofía **llora**. Ella llora y **grita**, “¡Yo soy estúpida!” Sofía está muy triste.

## Appendix M

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Prueba 2 El Cuento

Direcciones: Lee el cuento y respuesta las preguntas.

#### La Sorpresa de Elena

Hay una muchacha que se llama Elena. Elena es una alumna en el colegio de Belvidere. Elena va a escuela a pie y llega a escuela muy tarde, a las nueve de la mañana. Elena no presta atención en la clase de español. La profesora le dice, "Elena, da la vuelta por favor!" Pero Elena no escucha en clase y no mira a la pizarra. La profesora le dice, "Elena, levanta la mano por favor!" Pero Elena habla mucho en clase con sus amigas. La profesora le dice, "Completa la tarea, por favor!" Pero Elena no completa la tarea y no toma apuntes. ¡Ella no escribe nada!

Un día, la profesora les dice a la clase, "Hay una prueba mañana." Pero Elena no presta atención en clase y no escucha a la profesora. Ella no estudia. Elena entra la clase el día de la prueba, y ¡Qué sorpresa! Elena levanta la mano y le pregunta "¿Qué es esto? ¿Es una prueba?" La profesora le dice, "Sí, es una prueba. ¡Sorpresa Elena! Es muy importante prestar atención cuando yo enseño." Elena toma la prueba y da la prueba a la profesora. Elena está muy nerviosa porque ella no estudia. Elena saca una nota mala, una nota muy baja. Elena saca una F. Ella está muy triste y llora.

(1 punto)

1. ¿Dónde es Elena alumna?
  - a. Ella es alumna en Harmony Township Escuela.
  - b. Ella es alumna en el colegio de Belvidere.
  - c. Ella es alumna en México.
2. ¿Cómo va Elena a escuela?
  - a. Elena va a escuela a pie.
  - b. Elena va a escuela en autobús.
  - c. Elena va a escuela en carro.
3. ¿A qué hora llega Elena a escuela?
  - a. Ella llega a escuela a las ocho y cuarenta de la mañana.
  - b. Ella llega a escuela a las nueve y media de la mañana.
  - c. Ella llega a escuela a las nueve de la mañana.
4. ¿Por qué no estudia Elena para la prueba?
  - a. Porque ella no escucha a la profesora.
  - b. Porque ella es estúpida.
  - c. Porque ella no comprende el español.

5. ¿Qué es la sorpresa de Elena?
- a. La sorpresa es que la profesora habla español.
  - b. La sorpresa es que Elena está nerviosa.
  - c. La sorpresa es que hay una prueba.
6. ¿Cómo está Elena cuando ella saca una F?
- a. Ella está muy feliz.
  - b. Ella está triste y llora.
  - c. Ella está frustrada y grita.

**Escribe en oraciones completas.**

7. ¿Es Elena una alumna buena ó mala? ¿Por qué? Da ejemplos. (5 puntos)
8. ¿Por qué no saca Elena una nota buena en la prueba? (2 puntos)
9. Escribe 4 reglas de la clase en el cuento. (4 puntos)
- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
10. ¿Eres tú un alumno bueno ó un alumno malo? Da ejemplos. (3 puntos)  
(Yo soy alumno \_\_\_\_\_. **Yo estudio** para exámenes. **Yo trabajo** mucho en clase...)

## Appendix N

# Cultura viva II

### El español en los Estados Unidos

In the United States, over thirty million people use Spanish daily for business or pleasure. Many American cities are becoming bilingual because of their large Spanish-speaking communities. In fact, Spanish is the second language of the United States. Los Angeles, Miami, San Antonio, New York and numerous other cities across the United States have Spanish television and radio stations, Spanish newspapers and magazines and bilingual signs in most public places. The Hispanic presence is increasing rapidly in the United States and influencing many aspects of the American culture and economy. Look



around, you may find you can experience more Spanish than you ever realized!

### Oportunidades de trabajo

Answer the questions below based on the following classified advertisements.

Compañía multinacional  
ubicada en Chicago  
busca  
**Secretario/a bilingüe  
Español-inglés**  
Responsabilidades: mantener  
archivos, contestar teléfonos y  
escribir cartas para los clientes  
hispanohablantes.  
Experiencia mínima: 1 año  
Salario: \$30,000 anuales  
Para mayor información llame al  
(312) 100-7799.

**BANCO CAMINO REAL**  
necesita  
Director(a) de Servicio al Cliente  
Se prefiere persona bilingüe  
(español e inglés), con fluidez y  
excelentes habilidades de  
escritura en ambas lenguas,  
buen manejo de las relaciones  
personales e impecable  
presentación. Se requiere  
experiencia mínima de 3 años.  
Interesados por favor enviar  
currículum vitae a: Banco  
Camino Real, 201 SW Black  
Rd., Austin, TX 78701-6384.

**Se requieren profesores  
para  
Español y Literatura**  
Prestigiosa escuela privada busca  
profesores de español y literatura  
para la primavera. Los interesados  
deben tener un Masters en  
educación y tener licencia para  
enseñar en el estado de New  
Mexico. Se requiere un mínimo de  
dos años de experiencia.  
Candidatos favor enviar su CV con  
carta de presentación a P.O. Box  
75634, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

1. How much experience is needed for the job as a bilingual secretary?  
For the position as a teacher?  
For the position as the director of customer service at the bank?
2. How do you find out about the *secretario/a bilingüe* job? About the other two jobs?
3. Where is the company located that is looking for a bilingual secretary?
4. What type of business do you think *Banco Camino Real* is?
5. Which job includes keeping archives, answering phones and writing letters?
6. Which job requires a college degree?  
Why do you think a degree is important for this job?

### ¡Oportunidades!

#### Las ventajas de ser bilingüe

Many American companies today are searching for bilingual employees who can expand their market and increase sales to the growing population of Spanish speakers in the United States. Being bilingual may be the advantage you need to compete in the job market.

Funston, J. F., Castellanos, R., Hoff, P. J., & Mason, K. (2009). *¡Aventura!*

(Annotated Teacher's Edition). Saint Paul, MN: EMC Paradigm.

## Appendix O

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Una Encuesta

**Direcciones:** *Pregunta una pregunta a un alumno. Si la persona indica que haces la actividad, la persona firma su papel. Si la persona no haces la actividad, pregúntalo otra pregunta.*

**Modelo:**      **Pregunta:** ¿Tomas apuntes en clase?      **Respuesta:** Si, tomo apuntes en clase.

<u>Pregunta</u>	<u>Firma del alumno</u>
1. ¿Hablas despacio en español?	_____
2. ¿Hablas rápido en español?	_____
3. ¿Hablas mucho por teléfono celular?	_____
4. ¿Tomas apuntes en las clases?	_____
5. ¿Llegas a escuela en autobús?	_____
5. ¿Llegas a escuela en carro?	_____
6. ¿Llegas a escuela a pie?	_____
7. ¿Llegas a escuela puntualmente?	_____
8. ¿Llegas a escuela tarde?	_____
9. ¿Escuchas cuando los profesores enseñan?	_____
10. ¿Estudias mucho para las pruebas?	_____
11. ¿Estudias poco para las pruebas?	_____
12. ¿Completas la tarea?	_____
13. ¿Prestas atención en las clases?	_____
14. ¿Sacas unas notas buenas?	_____
15. ¿Sacas unas notas malas?	_____
16. ¿Comprendes mucho español?	_____
17. ¿Comprendes poco español?	_____
18. ¿Miras a la pizarra en escuela?	_____
19. ¿Lloras mucho?	_____
20. ¿Gritas mucho?	_____

## Appendix P

### El Dia de los Muertos

El día de los muertos es un día de feria cuando las familias se celebran los ancestros. Los espíritus regresan y visitan la familia. Las familias comen el mole y el pan de muerto. El día de los muertos es el 31 de octubre hasta el 2 de noviembre. Las familias mexicanas se celebran a los antepasados. Todas las personas en México se celebran el día de los muertos.

Las decoraciones para el día de los muertos incluyen el papel picado, los cempasuchiles, altares, calaveras de azúcar, las cruces, esqueletos, y las máscaras.

En los cementerios, familias van a las tumbas y limpian las tumbas. Ellos decoran las tumbas con cempasuchil, flores, el copal, velas, sal y agua, y cruces. Ellos comen en el cementerio. Comen un picnic de arroz, pan de muerto, mole, dulces, empanadas, calaveras de azúcar, y tamales.

En las casas, familias decoran un altar de la ofrenda con comida favorita del antepasado. También, hay sal y agua, fotos, las flores (cempasuchil), papel picado, dedicación de los angelitos, las cruces, juguetes. Las familias limpian la casa.

El día de los muertos es un día de feria muy diferente. No es Halloween! Es divertido.

## Appendix Q

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Cómo Hacer Las Calaveras de Azúcar La Receta

#### **Ingredientes:**

2 tazas de azúcar blanca  
2 cucharaditas de polvo de merengue  
2 cucharaditas de agua  
1 molde de calaveritas

#### **Receta:**

1. Pon los ingredientes secos en una taza grande (el azúcar blanca y el polvo de merengue).
2. Mezcla los ingredientes secos hasta que los ingredientes están combinados.
3. Añade el agua.
4. Bate la mixtura hasta que está combinada.
5. Usa una cuchara y rellena los moldes firmemente.
6. Pon un pedazo de cartón encima del molde.
7. Da la vuelta al molde.
8. Deja las calaveras al aire por 24 horas.
9. Decora las calaveras con glaseado.
10. Seca las calaveras decoradas al aire por 24 horas ó hasta duras.

#### **Verbos Importantes:**

poner  
mezclar  
añadir  
batir  
usar  
rellenar  
dejar  
decorar  
secar

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

### Cómo Hacer Las Calaveras de Azúcar

#### La Receta

*Direcciones: Escribe la receta en el orden correcto. Incluye los números ordinals (primero, segundo, tercero, cuarto, quinto, sexto, séptimo, octavo, noveno, décimo)*

#### **La Receta:**

Añade el agua.

Deja las calaveras al aire por 24 horas.

Seca las calaveras decoradas al aire por 24 horas ó hasta duras.

Mezcla los ingredientes secos hasta que los ingrediententes están combinados.

Pon un pedazo de cartón encima del molde.

Bate la mixtura hasta que está combinada.

Da la vuelta al molde.

Pon los ingredientes secos en una taza grande (el azúcar blanca y el polv o de merengue).

Decora las calaveras con glaseado.

Usa una cuchara y rellena los moldes firmemente.

#### **El Orden Correcto:**

## Appendix R

### El Juego de los Dados de Conjugación

- 1 Yo
  - 2 Pablo y yo
  - 3 **Juán y Alma** (dado de color)
  - 4 **Marta**
  - 5 **Carla y tú**
  - 6 **Tú**
- 

- 1 escuchar a la maestra
- 2 hablar español
- 3 necesitar un lápiz (dado blanco)
- 4 prestar atención
- 5 mirar a la pizarra
- 6 estudiar para la prueba

1-1	Yo escucho a la maestra.
2-1	Pablo y yo escuchamos a la maestra.
3-1	Juan y Alma escuchan a la maestra.
4-1	Marta escucha a la maestra.
5-1	Carla y tú escuchan a la maestra.
6-1	Tú escuchas a la maestra.
1-2	Yo hablo español.
2-2	Pablo y yo hablamos español.
3-2	Juan y Alma hablan español.
4-2	Marta habla español.
5-2	Carla y tú hablan español.
6-2	Tú hablas español.
1-3	Yo necesito un lápiz.
2-3	Pablo y yo necesitamos un lápiz.
3-3	Juan y Alma necesitan un lápiz.
4-3	Marta necesita un lápiz.
5-3	Carla y tú necesitan un lápiz.
6-3	Tú necesitas un lápiz.
1-4	Yo presto atención.
2-4	Pablo y yo prestamos atención.
3-4	Juan y Alma prestan atención.
4-4	Marta presta atención.
5-4	Carla y tú prestan atención.
6-4	Tú prestas atención.
1-5	Yo miro a la pizarra.
2-5	Pablo y yo miramos a la pizarra.
3-5	Juan y Alma miran a la pizarra.
4-5	Marta mira a la pizarra.
5-5	Carla y tú miran a la pizarra.
6-5	Tú miras a la pizarra.
1-6	Yo estudio para la prueba.
2-6	Pablo y yo estudiamos para la prueba.
3-6	Juan y Alma estudian para la prueba.
4-6	Marta estudia para la prueba.
5-6	Carla y tú estudian para la prueba.
6-6	Tú estudias para la prueba.

Muirhead, P. (2007). Strengthening Spanish instruction: *Practical strategies for strengthening your students' proficiency in Spanish* (Resource handbook).

Bellvue, WA: Bureau of Education & Research.