

Teaching Spanish as a Heritage Language

A Teacher's Guide to
Strategies, Considerations, and Resources
for
Spanish for Native Speakers

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CREATING A POSITIVE CLIMATE FOR SUCCESS

According to the Education Trust, 62% of Hispanics graduate from high school, 29% go to college and 6% finish college (2001). The Hispanic drop-out rate is around 38%, higher than any other group in the United States.

- Be a drop-out prevention counselor by investigating high absenteeism, communicating with parents, and providing students with options. Focus on developing students' self-esteem. Promote students to stay in school.
- Have students participate in the Hispanic Educational Summit sponsored by the NC Society of Hispanic Professionals.
- Get to know each student. Greet each student each day.
- Include literature, culture, and history from each country your students represent. Allow for student input and selection of materials.
- Avoid a grammar-driven curriculum that focuses on what students don't know.
- Consider yourself a Spanish language arts teacher. Spanish is not a foreign language to these students.
- Do authentic assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
- Measure progress with a portfolio, class involvement, and increased use of Spanish. Avoid giving grades based on homework and grammar driven tests.
- Invite administration, guidance, other teachers, and Latinos from the community to speak to the class.
- Incorporate group-work and use heterogeneous groupings.
- Network to get your students involved in school activities.
- Ritualize reading and writing daily to hook students on reading in Spanish.
- Model everything you expect your students to do. Many may be new to U.S. schools and will be unfamiliar with teacher expectations. Assume nothing!
- Expect a diverse population that brings a variety of productive, receptive, and literacy skills to the classroom. Some will be English dominant and some will have little formal education in Spanish.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

“Students whose native language arts skills are not adequately developed by the time they enter school and are not developed and used while in school would appear to face long odds against success.” (Slavin, 2001)

- Hold debates on high interest topics. Devote class time to research of debate topics on-line or in the media center.
- Have students interview family, friends, and professionals in the community. Pre-teach the interview process and create questions in class.
- Hold mock job interviews.
- Devote class time to roundtable discussions on topics of the students’ choice.
- Teach and use peer-editing.
- Group work is essential. Use any of Kagan’s activities, like Jigsaw. Consider using heterogeneous grouping so that students with poorer productive skills will be able to work with students with better productive language skills.
- Have students write a children’s story or fairy tale. In groups, students read each other’s stories to make suggestions for improvement. For homework, students rewrite and correct rough drafts. The best story from each group is read to the class.
- Administer attitude surveys toward Spanish language use that students fill out at the beginning and the end of the class.
- Evaluate whether or not students use Spanish with each other and with their families or whether or not they read in Spanish.
- Teach theme driven not grammar driven units. Teach and assess vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and accentuation in context as on-going year long objectives. Great strategies are peer-editing, self-correction, and journaling.
- Do a pre and post assessment for spelling, accentuation, and grammar at the beginning of the year. Collect work for portfolios to measure progress for each student.
- Be prepared to differentiate instruction and assessment of students based on their receptive and productive abilities in Spanish.

INTERPRETIVE COMMUNICATION

Reading skills developed in the first language transfer to the second language. (Jim Cummins)

- Provide a variety of language models through video, audio, or presenters. Use film as a springboard for discussion. See film list for ideas.
- Have students write their goals for the school year. Place this in students' portfolios to be read at the end of the year.
- Students write memoirs or childhood memories.
- Allow students to read Spanish language newspapers. High interest sections, like the sports sections, are great tools to get students reading in Spanish.
- Always provide pre-reading activities. Read and act out a play. An excellent pre-reading, warm up activity is to pass out strips of paper with dialog from the play. Students move around the room reading their "lines" to each other. The teacher asks students to predict what will happen in the play.
- Read everyday in class. Hold one-on-one reading conferences with students to assess comprehension of texts.
- Set aside silent reading time in class.
- Explicitly teach literary devices and literary terms such as theme, plot, setting, character, conflict, metaphor, simile, memoir, essay and tone.
- Use graphic organizers like time lines, story maps, tree diagrams, and flow charts.
- Do read aloud. Also read in pairs in groups. Use Kagan's Jigsaw activity.
- Receptive skills may be stronger than productive. Students with interrupted education may have poorer literacy skills.
- Stop often for comprehension checks.
- Become a language arts teacher. Observe master language arts teachers. Invite a language arts teacher to your class to model a lesson.
- Have students read novels of their choice and present novels and authors to the class. High interest novels are listed in the Authors by Country pages.
- Provide for journal, oral, and dramatic responses to literature.

PRESENTATIONAL COMMUNICATION

- Write everyday. Always provide a model. Use graphic organizers. Peer-edit.
- Provide models of different genre. Have students write poetry, skits, short stories, fables, memoirs, and essays after reading examples of each.
- Devote class time to journaling and provide topics. Develop a list of essay/journal prompts.
- Have students finish a story.
- Do character studies. Students assume the personality of characters either in drama or journal. Students design a drama where characters talk to authors. Students can write letters from one character to another.
- Use time lines or cartoons to outline plots.
- Publish student writing in school newspapers, foreign language newsletters, or local Spanish publications.
- Students discuss issues that affect Latinos living in the United States. Have students write public service announcements relating to these issues for print, radio, or TV. Real public service pamphlet in Spanish can serve as models. Create a clip file of authentic texts.
- Students share favorite song lyrics and music.
- Train students to be effective public speakers. Invite the debate coach to give some cues on public speaking.
- Prepare a mock news broadcast. Video if possible.
- Have students determine the topic of an editorial, author's point of view, and any solutions they may offer. Students determine whether or not they are in favor or against the editorial, present the information to the class and support their point of view. Keep a clip file of pertinent articles.
- Write and exchange Dear Abby letters.
- Fill-out real applications taken from the Internet. Try Spanish and Latin American university applications or employment applications.
- Use authentic assessment and collect writing samples or videos of student presentations.

CULTURES

“Somos indígenas, negros, europeos, pero sobre todo, mestizos. Somos griegos e íberos, romanos y judíos, árabes, cristianos y gitanos. Es decir: España y el Nuevo Mundo son centros donde múltiples culturas se encuentran, centros de incorporación y no de exclusión. Cuando excluimos no traicionamos y empobrecemos. Cuando incluimos nos enriquecemos y nos encontramos a nosotros mismos.”

Carlos Fuentes *Nuestro Mundo*

- Have students be “Tour guides” through their own countries or hometowns. Students can develop itineraries through their country and highlight places of historical and cultural interest. Have students prepare scrapbooks, PowerPoint presentations, or posters to share with the class.
- Create a bulletin board with photos of students’ families and home countries. Put up a map and locate students’ home countries. Students write a “quick facts” paragraph on each country or city.
- Include literature from every country represented in the classroom. See the list of authors by country.
- Design the course syllabus around the students’ backgrounds and needs. Student driven curriculum can include the history, art, and literature of each country represented by your students. Be prepared to pre-plan, revise and re-plan.
- Do team building exercises that encourage active participation through presentations and projects. Example: in groups students discuss what they do and don’t have in common. Each group makes and presents a poster.
- Dance, sing and, cook in class, for other classes or school festivals. Encourage students to learn traditional dances from their elders and share them with the class.
- Have students interview their families about traditions from their countries.
- The class discusses the meaning of *refranes* and generates a list of more *refranes*.

Cuando el gato va a sus devociones, bailan los ratones.
Dime con quién andas y te diré quien eres.
El que mucho abarca poco aprieta.
El que no se aventura no cruza la mar.
El tiempo da buen consejo.
Quien siembra vientos recoge tempestades.

COMPARISONS

- Constantly conduct word studies and develop cognate awareness. This will build both English and Spanish vocabulary.
- Compare rules of punctuation and capitalization between English and Spanish. Focus on this during in-class writing time.
- Discuss Anglicisms and “Spanglish” terms as you hear them used. Discuss code-switching. Vote on the best code-switcher in the class. Play the “Spanglish” game. Is it Spanglish, English, or Spanish?
- Compare and contrast formal and informal Spanish. Provide scenarios to act out so student can practice register shifts in a game-like setting. Students, alone or in pairs, present parts of their scenario to the class. The class tries to guess to whom the students are speaking and whether or not the situation requires formal or informal registers.
- Compare and contrast dialects of Spanish. Read literature with dialect use, Nicolas Guillen’s poetry for example. Have students create their own literature that includes their dialects. Have students write and perform plays that use their dialects.
- Compare and contrast vocabulary used in different countries. Hand out sentence strips in English for students to translate. See how many different translations the students present. Example: I’m going to catch the bus. Bring me the blanket.
- Compare and contrast topics of high interest to students through class debate, projects, essays, journal entries, or small group discussion.
- Use Venn Diagrams to visually represent similarities and differences between topics of comparison. Draw a big Venn Diagram on the board and let students brainstorm ideas or come to the board to fill out the diagram.
- Hold an art criticism class. Compare and contrast works by two or more artists. Artists to consider are Diego Rivera, Fernando Botero, and Rufino Tamayo,
- Hold a music festival. Have students bring in their favorite Latino tunes to share with the class. Students present their songs and share what they know about the style of music.

CONNECTIONS

*Curriculum that values diverse communities “builds a stronger **connection** to a positive sense of identity, community and culture” because “young people who are solidly grounded in their own culture and language are the most successful.” (Houseman & Martinez 2002)*

- Support students across the curriculum by discussing other classes. Hold “study groups” for other core classes. Have them to create outlines, flashcards, quiz each other on the material, but in Spanish. Set aside time each week to discuss progress in other classes and for “study group” time.
- Assign content-based essays on topics that students are studying in other classes.
- Assign research papers on interdisciplinary topics. Guide novice students through the process of using the media center. Have the librarian give an orientation and let a bilingual student interpret. Create a scavenger hunt in the library. Teach students how to document and cite sources.
- Teach learning strategies and effective study skills. The Spanish Ministry of Education web site has a wonderful framework for this.
- Use technology and Internet based activities to connect students to the world and to help bridge the digital divide.
- Use icebreakers and teambuilding to ensure all students feel connected to the class. The *Tráigame* game is an example of a great teambuilding exercise.
- Help students to make school connections. Invite the principal, guidance counselors, other teachers, and career counselors to speak. Explain Advanced Placement classes and tests. The teacher or bilingual students can interpret.
- Invite motivational speakers that focus on the topic of staying in school, college professors that discuss high education, or Latino local business people to discuss careers.
- Develop a local speakers bureau of Latino professionals to get the community involved in the school. Members can speak on topics pertinent to Latino students and could even help volunteer as mentors or tutors for the students. See the Charlotte Speakers Bureau list and the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals website for ideas on starting your own.

COMMUNITIES

It takes the whole village to raise a child...African Proverb

- Have bilingual students interpret for newcomers or PTA meetings and translate signage or documents for the school.
- Invite parents to class and to all PTA meetings.
- Teach students to conduct oral history interviews of family and friends. Provide a model and interview questions.
- Visit other Spanish language classes to exchange and share their cultures. Plan and develop presentations before you go. Bring music and teach Latin dances.
- Create “intercambios,” or conversation partners, between advanced Spanish students and native speakers. Charter a Latino club.
- Write letters back home to friends and family.
- Create a sense of ‘community’ in the classroom by greeting students by name daily and getting to know your students. Find out their immigration stories, if they want to share.
- Research via the Internet current events for students’ home countries.
- Travel via the Internet. Create web scavenger hunts to web sites from Latin America or Spain.
- Create a video to share with other Spanish classes. Videotape student presentations, or skits. Create Spanish lessons to share with lower level Spanish classes. Students will enjoy taking the roles of writers, directors, producers, and actors.
- Have students teach other classroom teachers Spanish.
- Invite a career development counselor to talk to students about opportunities in the workforce for bilinguals. Work with workforce development personnel to find internships where students can use their Spanish in the workplace.
- Monitor and value active participation.
- Encourage students to use Spanish with family and friends outside of class.
- Be sure you hear every voice every day.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

This list is a sampling of agencies in Charlotte, NC where Latinos have volunteered as speakers.

- Invite speakers to class to enrich the curriculum and to provide role models for students.
- Prepare the students before the visit.
- Have students develop questions for the speaker.

MEDIA

- Newspapers: La Noticia
- Radio: Radio Lider

SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS & SOCIAL SERVICES

- Police Department: International Relations Unit
- Charlotte World Affairs Council
- International House
- Mi Casa Su Casa
- Centro de recursos
- Chemical Dependence Center of Charlotte
- La Conexion Latina
- Latin American Women's Association
- Programa Confianza domestic violence
- Catholic Social Services
- Boy Scouts of America
- Girl Scouts of America
- La Coalición Latina
- Goodwill Industries Career development specialist

CORPORATE

- First Citizens Bank
- TSI-Translating Service International
- Las Americas Business Council

EDUCATION

- Public Library
- CPCC
- UNCC
- Davidson College

AUTHORS BY COUNTRY

Novels Commonly Found on Reading Lists are Listed

- Survey your class on Latin American or Spanish authors they have read.
- Start the year by reading literature representative of your students' backgrounds.
- Find poetry or short stories on the web.

Argentina

Alfonsina Storni
Julio Cortazar
Ana María Shua

Bolivia

Alcides Arguedas

Colombia

Gabriel García Márquez- Crónica de una muerte anunciada
El amor en los tiempos de cólera
Cien años de soledad

Hernando Téllez

Costa Rica

Ana Istarú
Joaquin Gutiérrez

Cuba

Nicolás Guillén
José Martí
Nancy Morejón

Cuban-American

Cristina Garcia Dreaming in Cuban
Gustavo Pérez-Firmat
Oscar Hijuelos Dolores Prida
Ana Alomá Velilla
Sonia Rivera-Valdéz
Virgil Suarez

Chile

Isabel Allende La casa de los espíritus
Paula

Gabriela Mistral
Pablo Neruda

Ecuador

Jorge Icaza
Enrique Gil-Gilbert

El Salvador

Roque Dalton
Manlio Argueta
Claribel Alegría

Guatemala

Rigoberta Menchu
Miguel Ángel Asturias

Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la consciencia

Honduras

Marcos Carías Reyes

Mexico

Mariano Azuela
Laura Esquivel
Elena Poniatowska
Octavio Paz
Juan Rulfo
Sor Juana
Carlos Fuentes
Rosario Castellanos

Los de abajo
Como agua para chocolate
La noche de Tlateloco

Mexican-American/Chicano

Sandra Cisneros
José Antonio Villareal
Rudolfo Anaya
Gary Soto
Rolando Hinojosa-Smith
Jim Sagel
Judith Ortiz
Gary Soto
Rosaura Sánchez
Sabine Ulibarri
Denise Chávez
Ana Castillo

The House on Mango Street
Pocho
Bless Me Ultima
Beisbol en abril y otras historias

Nicaragua

Ernesto Cardenal
Ruben Dario
Gioconda Belli

Panama

Bertalicia Peralta
Rogelio Sinán

Paraguay

Augusto Roa Bastos
Josefina Plá

Perú

Mario Vargas Llosa
Ciro Alegría

Puerto Rico & Puerto-Rican-American

Esmeralda Santiago Cuando era puertorriqueña
Rosario Ferré
Ed Vega
Abraham Rodriguez
Piri Thomas
Julia de Burgos
Mayra Santos Febres
Judith Ortiz-Cofer

República Dominicana

Julia Álvarez De cómo las hermanas García perdieron su acento
Junot Díaz
Hilda Contreras

Spain

Miguel de Cervantes Don Quijote
Ana Maria Matute
Garcia Lorca

Uruguay

Jorge Luis Borges Laberintos
Horacio Quiroga
Cristina Peri Rossi
Mario Benedetti

Venezuela

Arturo Uslar Pietri
Teresa de la Parra

FILM

- Film is an excellent vehicle to expose students to a variety of language models.
- Integrate film into the curriculum.
- Film Aerobics and Discovery Video often sell videos with lesson plans and handouts to accompany films.
- Provide students with the background knowledge needed to better understand the film. Use short readings or present film along with literature from the country represented in the film.
- Create handout for students to fill-out while watching the film.
- Stop the film often for class discussion. Assign journal reactions and homework related to the film.
- Have students act out scenes from the film.
- The following films have been selected for their treatment of political, economic, and cultural themes all pertinent to Latin American studies.

<u>Film</u>	<u>Country/Region</u>
Azucar amargo	Cuban American
Buena Vista Social Club	Cuba
El Norte	Central America
Flamenco	Spain
Guantanamera	Cuba
Hombres armados	Central America
La historia oficial	Argentina
Romero	El Salvador
Stand and Deliver	Los Angeles, CA
Tango	Argentina

WEB SITES

The “Clearinghouse” for all SNS materials and sites

<http://tigger.uic.edu/~kimpotow/snsresources.html>

LangNet annotated bibliography of SNS materials

http://epsilon3.georgetown.edu/~pmw2/sns_materials.html

***Nuestro Mundo* Textbook site from McDougal Little**

http://www.classzone.com/start/nu_mundo/index.html

Center for Applied Linguistics

<http://www.cal.org/ericcll/faqs/rgos/sns.html>

Spanish Ministry of Education: Includes two fully developed units for heritage Spanish speakers, Study skills inventory and organizer

<http://www.spci.mec.es/usa/publicaciones.shtml>

Lesson Plans

<http://edsitement.neh.gov>

News in Spanish

<http://www.cnnenespanol.com/>

Mexican Department of Education (All K-5 textbooks on the web)

<http://www.sep.gob.mx/wb/distribuidor.jsp>

Links to all Latin American Ministries & Government sites

<http://www.goalsnet.com.pe/goalsnet/Ministerios.html>

The North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals

<http://www.TheNCSHP.org>

TRÁIGAME

The class is divided into two teams. The teacher requests something "*Tráigame tres lápices....*" The first team who brings the person with the requested object to the front of the class gets a point. Anything can be requested that is readily accessible to students in your classroom: 10 pennies, a comb, 4 keys, lipstick, a math book, etc. Be creative.

--Eleanor Rosenbaum, High School, Staten Island, New York.

- Idea skillfully implemented in a native speaker class by Nhora Gomez-Saxon of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.
- Idea adapted by Kelly Price of Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools from:

<http://www.SpanishUS.com>

Tráigame...

- Una pluma de tinta roja
- La llave de un carro de marca Honda
- Una licencia de conducir (u otra forma de identificación) con una dirección fuera de North Carolina
- Una tarjeta de biblioteca
- Un recibo de un restaurante, el mercado u otra tienda
- Gafas de sol
- Un cinturón de color negro
- Un reloj de marca Timex
- Una moneda nueva de 25 centavos de cualquier estado (u otro país)
- Una foto de alguien (de la madre)
- Un libro de biología
- Una persona que sepa el nombre de tres presidentes latinoamericanos

DEMOGRAPHICS & STUDENT SURVEY RESPONSES

Five Spanish for Native Speakers classes were surveyed for a total of 81 responses

Country or U.S. State of Birth

California	2	Guatemala	1
Chile	1	Honduras	4
Colombia	1	Mexico	29
Costa Rica	2	New York	1
Cuba	2	North Carolina	1
Dominican Republic	3	Nicaragua	1
Ecuador	15	Peru	5
El Salvador	4	Puerto Rico	1
Florida	3	Texas	3
		Venezuela	2

Length of time in the U.S

Less than a year	13
Less than 3 years	31
Less than 6 years	15
More than 6 years	22

All respondents speak Spanish in the home.

52 of 81 students take ESL classes.

Reasons students took the course:

To practice Spanish
To be with other Spanish speakers
They signed me up I had no other option
I can speak here with confidence and I don't get so bored like in other classes
To learn about other countries
North Americans bore me
It's the only class where I can talk to everyone, especially the teacher
There are moments when one gets frustrated and needs people to talk to, and needs one's own environment to remember and speak one's own language
It's for me!
My friends told me it was cool (*padre*) so I took it
It's important not to forget our roots and our language
I wanted another class because I already had this in Florida
I like to be informed of my heritage and ancestry
I have to improve my grammar and spelling
Because it gives you college credits
I thought it would be an easy 'A'

STORIES OF THE CROSSING

Story adapted from essays written by students in a Spanish for Native Speakers class at West Charlotte High School in 1999-2000.

One day my mother told me she wanted to speak to me very seriously. My grandmother had told me that she wanted to go to the “other side” for a chance at a better life. I thought my mom was just kidding. I was only nine, and in the third grade.

My country is full of injustices and poverty. The beauty of my country has been destroyed with delinquency, drugs, prostitution, alcohol, but mostly poverty. The economic situation is very difficult and my mother had a tough life.

One day I got home from school to my grandma’s house. I found a letter in the kitchen table, from my Mom, in it she explained that she had gone to the United States. She sent for me six years later.

I was told we wouldn’t have to walk much. We went from hotel to hotel to the Guatemalan border and there we got another guide. But the Guatemalan immigration turned me around. I waited for eight days before I tried again.

The guide got us through and left us in the mountain. We had to run far and through some farms. Later the same car picked us up again and took us to a river where we had to cross without clothing to keep it dry. We went behind some homes through more mountains and arrived at the edge of a highway.

There we were in Mexico and we were taken to another hotel for five days with only two dinners. Then we went from bus to bus across Mexico. From time to time Mexican immigration would get on the buses. At one point I had to give them all the money I carried, \$80. One of the bus drivers threatened to take advantage of me. Luckily he was scared I would turn him in for having illegal passengers.

We finally got to the U.S. border. There we crossed a river and walked very far and we had to get on the ground and walk with your arms, dragging your body through the mountain. You had to be careful for the ‘migra’ or their cameras not to see you. We were taken to a desert where we walked all night long.

Soon a car picked us up and took us to Washington. From there I got on a bus to Charlotte to be rejoined with my family.

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