

Enhancing English Language Skills  
of Native Spanish Speaking Students  
at Davis High School, Yakima Washington

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A Special Project  
Presented to  
Dr. Jack McPherson

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Education

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Jorge R. Rodriguez  
Spring, 2008

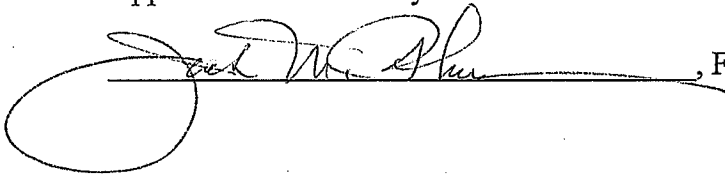
FACULTY APPROVAL

Enhancing English Language Skills

of Native Spanish Speaking Students

at Davis High School, Yakima Washington

Approved for the Faculty

 , Faculty Advisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive research project was to develop selected instructional activities for teaching and learning ESL that allowed students to use their native language and culture. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusions and recommendations were formulated. Data analyzed supported the hypothesis that Native Spanish Speakers learned English in a more effective way when using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Background for the Project

Demographic forecasts have consistently held that students with close connections to their bilingual/bicultural heritage (now labeled “English Language Learners” by the federal government, with this label being widely used in the field) will be very large in number in the near future, becoming the majority in many states over the next two decades. Thus, we educators urgently need to provide appropriate, meaningful, and effective schooling for these students, who too often have been under served by U.S. schools. We feel that it is the responsibility of all educators, not just specialists, to prepare themselves to work with language minority students (Ovando et al., 2006, p. xix).

As alluded to in the above statement by Ovando, a major goal for American educators should be to make special provision for students who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In Washington State the number of students served by English language learning programs has grown nearly 500 percent, from 15,024 in 1985 to 87,343 in 2005. These students comprised roughly eight (8) percent of all public school students in the state. Hispanics made up as much as 85 percent of the student population in some school districts (The Olympian, 2006/Associated Press.)

Throughout the State of Washington, 55,000 Spanish-speaking students (SSS)

learned English; in the Yakima District alone 65% of students were of Hispanic origin, (<http://schools.privateschoolsreport.com/Washington/Yakima/ExcelHighSchool.html>).

In Yakima, a farmworker community, the lack of knowledge of English has been a continual challenge within the daily lives of many Mexican immigrants living in the United States who possess a strong desire to improve English proficiency. However, many students entering high school to learn English as a Second Language (ESL) have been confronted with academic difficulties, such as qualifying for International Baccalaureate (IB) classes or passing the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

The Washington State Board of Education has attempted to address the needs of students who learned English during high school. Spanish-speaking students have strongly urged the need to include awareness of cultural sensitivity in ESL classes, which could make bilingual teachers more aware of Hispanic traditions and their importance in reaching out to students of Hispanic origin.

#### Statement of the Problem

School districts throughout Washington State have struggled in their efforts to meet state academic standards set forth by the WASL assessment. In particular, state resources have been provided to improve deficiencies in ESL classes. Teaching ESL classes at the

high school level has represented a five to seven year effort dedicated to helping students become more proficient in everyday language and in academic subjects.

(The Olympian, 2006/Associated Press).

The writer (Jorge R. Rodriguez) wanted to find a functional and practical way to help students learn English with less stress, difficulty, and in the shortest possible time. Accordingly, an attempt was made to combine listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on listening and speaking skills, into (ESL) classes. The writer further believed that proficiency in everyday language as well as academic achievement could be accomplished in two to three years. The writer sought to accomplish this by combining instructional techniques with the cultural needs of Hispanic students enrolled in his Spanish Language native Speakers (SLNS) classes at Davis High School in Yakima, Washington. This was considered a key factor for helping the students to feel comfortable, more excited, and ready to learn ESL. The consequences of this applied technique would provide these future citizens the opportunity for continuing education at higher levels while finding jobs needed to sustain their lives.

Phrased as a question, the problem which represented the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: Did English language skills of students enrolled in the SLNP class improve when instructional activities were related to their native language and culture?

### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this descriptive research project was to develop selected instructional activities for teaching and learning ESL that allowed students to use their native language and culture. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusion and recommendations were formulated.

### Delimitations

The sample population which comprised the present study included six Native Spanish Speakers (NSS) with third, fourth and fifth grade English language proficiency. The study which involved three boys and three girls, was conducted at Davis High School in the Yakima School District during Fall Semester, 2006 period.

### Assumptions

The writer assumed that educators who dealt with Hispanic students, needed special knowledge of Hispanic culture to reach students and to help them respond to the learning process more promptly. The assumption was also made that ESL teaching did not provide fully effective results for the students to learn in a shorter time based only on factors such as listening, vocabulary or reading. Student attention to classroom management expectations, discipline and behavior were essential for students to become serious about their commitment in learning ESL in the shortest possible time.

Finally, the writer assumed that information obtained and analyzed from in-class student interviews and written measurements would allow the writer to determine student progress in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Native Spanish Language class.

### Hypothesis

Native Spanish Speakers learned English in a more effective way by using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs.

### Significance of the Project

The present study sought to help Native Spanish Speakers shorten the time spent acquiring ESL. This would in turn facilitate their understanding of other subjects at school. Additionally, participating students could discover future career paths and job opportunities to pursue through greater proficiency with English.

The project was also intended to give future ESL instructors a new perspective and additional resources to help countless numbers of NSS who received high school instruction in different educational environments.

Finally, the study contributed to the writer's strong belief that language and culture are integral components of the instructional process that should be included for NSS in all classes, and that teaching and learning must take place in a warm, supportive sociocultural environment that stimulates students' continuous linguistic, cognitive, and academic development.

### Procedure

Procedures employed in the present study evolved in several stages. During the first half of Fall Semester 2006, ESL instruction focused on acquainting students with differences between North American and Spanish cultures (e.g., behavior, food, music, phonetic sounds, holidays, marriage, etc).

During the second half of the semester, teaching and learning focused on oral and written achievement tests to measure students' oral and written proficiency in ESL.

### Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

Descriptive research. Research that determines and describes the way things are; involves collecting numerical data to test hypothesis or answer questions about the current subject of study. Also called survey research.

Inductive hypothesis. A generalization based on observation.

Inductive reasoning. Reasoning that involves developing generalizations based on observations of a limited number of related events, experiences, or subjects

Washington Assessment of Student Learning. A means for establishing higher academic standards for students established by the state legislature.

### Acronyms

ESL. English as a Second Language

IB. International Baccalaureate

NCLB. No Child Left Behind

NSS. Native Spanish Speaker

SLNS. Spanish Language native Speakers

SSS. Spanish Speaking Students

WASL. Washington Assessment of Student Learning

## CHAPTER 2

### Review of Selected Literature

#### Introduction

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 has been organized to address the following research topics:

- Bilingual Education and ESL
- Teaching Bilingual Education and ESL
- The Role of Culture and Native Language in Learning English
- Summary

Data current primarily within the last 10 years were identified through an on-line computerized literature search of Proquest, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), and the Internet. A hand-search of related resource information was also conducted.

#### Bilingual Education and ESL

Bilingual education has been a contentious subject in the United States dating back as far as the Colonial period, and widely immersed in symbolic politics, language, and ethnic identity (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). However, the nation's founders did not adopt an official American language nor a government sanctioned body to regulate speech (Crawford, 1999).



Bilingual education was considered an approach that encompassed a variety of program models, each of which has promoted a variety of distinct goals. For instance, some bilingual education program models have promoted the development of two languages for bilingualism and biliteracy, whereas others have incorporated the students' first language to facilitate a fast transition into English. Still others have aimed to preserve an indigenous or heritage language as an ethnic, cultural, or community resource. There were also bilingual education programs to assimilate or socialize students into mainstream society. Due to the inseparable connection between language and culture, bilingual programs also have tended to include historical and cultural components associated with the languages being used (Baker, 2001).

According to Ovando and Collier (1998), a system of instruction that has enabled students not proficient in English to acquire academic proficiency in spoken and written English was termed English as a Second Language (ESL). This was an essential component of all bilingual education programs in the United States for students who were English Language Learners (ELL's). ESL programs were typically found in school districts where the language minority population has come from different language backgrounds.

Cummins (2000) explained how the ESL pullout method was organized in a variety of ways. Some students were "pulled out" of their regular program of studies for an hour a day while other children received instruction for 30 minutes a day. This authority

contended that ESL pullout was categorized as a subtractive model, which caused the students' first language to become lost.

The goal of ESL programs has been to help students obtain proficiency in English as quickly as possible so they can be admitted into a mainstream classroom. Bilingual education programs were included to develop both the native language and second language so that students could maintain their native language and their culture while acquiring content area knowledge. Bilingual programs were considered to be "additive" models because students have acquired proficiency in both the native language and second language (Brisk, 1998).

#### Teaching Bilingual Education and ESL

Selected strategies were needed to enhance the success of ESL often required active participation in the classroom, including a variety of selected strategies designed to build students' vocabulary, fluency, and language comprehension as paraphrased below from Herrell & Jordan, 2004:

1. Active participation in the classroom focused on valuing home cultures, where students could research and share their culture related studies. Many different language arts skills were incorporated into culture studies, which allowed students to use ideas drawn from reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visual representations to interview students' parents, grandparents, and other members of their culture. Culture studies provided a way for teachers to build the classroom community while engaging

their students in an in-depth social studies project related to language usage. Classroom learning was enhanced when the teacher shared his/her own cultural background. First-hand accounts of personal experiences helped students to appreciate the values, customs, and unique contributions of different cultures.

2. Another strategy involved writing and vocabulary workshops that simulated procedures used by real authors to prewrite, write, revise, edit, and publish. Students were provided multiple opportunities for context-based verbal interactions as they researched, conferred, gave and received feedback on their own and their colleagues' writing. Writing in students' home languages was valued and collaboration to create bilingual (or multilingual) books contributed to the growing collection of classroom activities and resources. Vocabulary knowledge was essential in all areas of learning. Students learned through verbal explanations and gained information through reading.

3. Fluency-building by interactive writing involved students in a thought process that was converted to writing. When students discussed what they had written, and when and why writing conventions were used, students were reminded consistently of the rules of writing and spelling in English. Students could become more confident in their ability to transcribe their thoughts into readable English text because the teacher provided support by asking questions and reminding students to think about the rules. The conventions and thoughts practiced when writing as a group were then transferred to independent

writing. English learners built English language knowledge and vocabulary from learning strategies designed to solve problems related to reading text and to past experiences thereby creating a repertoire of approaches that readers could use when they encountered unfamiliar words and concepts.

Ernst-Slavit et al. (2002) discussed the stages of language development and cultural adaptation that all second-language learners navigated through.

This research focused on a phenomenon known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills/ Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills Threshold, which explained how second-language learners were capable of obtaining everyday language used in conversation within a relatively short period of time, estimated at approximately two years. However, the acquisition of the academic language and literacy needed for high school course work required from five to 11 years. According to these authorities, ESL programs worked best when they provided instruction in English and were adapted to the cultural needs and abilities of students.

In the first stage of learning a second language, students listened and watched others carefully and often communicated with gestures, actions, and some verbal formulas, as well as making use of visuals and manipulative or real objects. The stages of cultural adaptation, which included individual factors (e.g., personality and cultural backgrounds) could greatly influence a student's response to the language learning stages (Ernst-Slavit et al.).

The second stage in language learning involved the assimilation of basic vocabulary and intuitively understanding English. Students' began to try out new behaviors, but often found it difficult to be a part of their surroundings. A good strategy for teachers during this time was to suspend judgment and continue to provide ample and safe opportunities to facilitate students' experimentation with the new language.

For the third stage, students participated in small-group activities and demonstrated comprehension by using language purposefully. Cultural considerations at this stage were adjusted to the new language. Feelings of isolation began to fade at this point when students began to assimilate or to acculturate the new language.

The last stage was characterized by students' abilities to engage in conversation and to produce connective narrative. Students were now able to critically examine information, creatively suggest solutions, and consistently hypothesize possible language learning avenues to follow (Ernst-Slavit et al.).

Thomas & Collier (1999) studied the language acquisition of 700,000 ELL's from 1982 to 1996. These authorities sought to determine how long it took students with no background in English to master that language (i.e., to perform at 50th percentile) on norm-referenced tests. In addition, variables such as socioeconomic status, first language, programs used to learn English, and number of years of primary language schooling were considered. These researchers found that the most significant variable in the time

required to learn English was correlated with the amount of formal schooling students received in their first language.

One promising model for ELL's adopted in U.S. schools was one-way Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE). One-way and two-way programs accelerated students' language development through a meaningful, bicultural, grade-level curriculum that connected with students' lives inside and outside school. These programs have achieved high levels of academic success for both native ELL's. One-way DBE schools or classes were found to be appropriate in any school district with large numbers of students originating from one primary language heritage (Thomas & Collier).

Thomas & Collier affirmed that an important principle for all DBE programs was that students learned more effectively when working in groups for all or most of the school day, regardless of their proficiency in the language of instruction. Developmental Bilingual Education teachers consistently used cooperative learning, thematic interdisciplinary units, hands-on materials, and such technology as video and computers.

The growing body of research based on long term outcomes has clearly demonstrated that ESL pullout was the least effective model, whereas DBE was the most effective. For all program models, language taught through academic content was considered essential for accelerated learning (Ovando & Collier).

July 2004 census figures published by the Los Angeles Times reflected the following U.S. population demographic trends: The Latino population grew to

41.3million in 2004 (a 3.6% increase over 2003); the Asian population swelled to 14 million (3.4% increase); the black population increased to 39.2 million ( 1.3% increased); and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders increased to 980,000 (1.7% growth p. AIO).

According to Ajayi (2006), with the increased minority population, interactions and communications between different peoples in this country will increasingly depend on multiple languages and multiple cultures express.

The researcher investigated how Hispanic middle school students used their understanding of the socio-political, cultural and linguistic realities in America to construct their own identities as English language learners. Ajayi contended that the goal of ESL programs should be to help these students attain the required reading, writing and speaking proficiency needed to participate fully in academic activities and then transfer to English mainstream classes. These learners seemed to look to their roots and to their cultural heritage to provide a strong sense of direction, recognition and acceptance. Ajayi's study showed that language learners wanted to retain their heritage, culture, and language in addition to learning English and American culture. Therefore, a critical issue for teachers and policy makers was how to ascertain these learners' understanding of their own identities. This was important, as learners' identities dictated to a large extent the degree of their interests, commitment and enthusiasm in participating in classroom learning activities and therefore how much they can learn.

According to Ogawa and Malen (1991), multivocal synthesis was a useful

tool in areas "characterized by an abundance of diverse documents and a scarcity of systematic investigations" (p. 266). An important feature of a multivocal synthesis was its ability to make comparisons within and among data sources (e.g., studies, professional work groups, and school district documents). In professional work groups, it was consistently stressed that principles of effective instruction for native English speakers needed to be modulated for ELL's if simultaneous goals for English-language development and content acquisition were to be met. Five components for ELL's instruction were mentioned by Russell & Baker (2000): (a) building and using vocabulary as curricular anchor; (b) using visuals to reinforce concepts and vocabulary; (c) implementing cooperative learning and peer-tutoring strategies; (d) using native language strategically; and (e) modulating cognitive and language demands.

A good English-language development program included three components: The first component focused on development of proficiency and fluency in English. The second component addressed the more formal, grammatical aspects of English use, and the third component focused on learning new academic content.

#### The Role of Culture and Native Language in Learning English

Language and culture have been interrelated. The role of culture in school success of language minority students has reflected a wide range of achievement levels. Some language minority students became the nation's finest young scholars while others failed to complete high school or finished with an inadequate education. Educators often



placed recently arrived language minority students in the lowest curriculum track, thereby guaranteeing low achievement levels for these students. Some progress has been made in this area. Today, it has been recognized that there are social, economic, cultural, and personal factors that influenced the educational ELL's (Arias, 1986).

Different theories have been discussed concerning the role of culture in the school success of language minority children. One theory maintained that the schools had failed to effectively solve discrepancies between sociocultural and linguistic patterns in the home and in the school which resulted in underachievement by ELL's. Another theory suggested that classroom teachers have failed to acknowledge that cultural differences can affect broad range of cognitive styles, language variation, and language use patterns (Lomawaima, 1995).

English as a Second Language classes have typically combined listening, speaking, reading and writing, with an emphasis on listening and speaking skills. However, ELL's have expressed a strong desire to retain their ethnic heritage and culture when learning English and American culture (Ajayi).

### Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 supported the following research themes:

1. Due to the inseparable connection between language and culture, bilingual and ESL programs have tended to include historical and cultural components associated with the languages being used.

2. Successful bilingual and ESL programs utilized a variety of instructional strategies requiring active participation in the classroom to build students vocabulary, fluency, and language comprehension skills.

3. Bilingual and ELL authorities expressed a strong desire to incorporate ethnic heritage and culture into English language acquisition classes.

## CHAPTER 3

### Methodology and Treatment of Data

#### Introduction

The purpose of this descriptive research project was to develop selected instructional activities for teaching and learning ESL that allowed students to use their native language and culture. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusion and recommendations were formulated.

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology employed in the study. The researcher included information about the participants, instruments and designs used, procedures and treatment of the data, and a summary.

#### Methodology

This descriptive study utilized a student questionnaire and an oral examination to analyze data needed to determine any significant improvement in written and oral English language acquisition by participating students. Pre and posttest results were measured using a rating scale based on student written and oral ability in the English language. Each examination was designed to elicit student responses related to his/her native language and culture.

### Participants

Participants in the study included one male and five female students enrolled in the researcher's Spanish Native Language Speakers (SNLS) 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes at Davis High School, Yakima, Washington. Three girls from grade 9, two girls from grade 10, and one boy from grade 11 participated. The students were of Hispanic background who came from Mexico.

### Instruments

The data gathering instruments used in the study were developed by the researcher for pre and posttests to measure students' English written and oral skills. The student questionnaire (APPENDIX) was organized in two parts, a written exam and an oral exam. Exam questions were focused on learning topics and assignments addressed in the SLNS class.

### Design

The study was conducted during fall semester 2007. English as a Second Language instruction was designed around four annual Mexican celebrations (i.e., Quinceañera, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos, and Piñata). Instruction was designed to acquaint students with differences between North American and Spanish cultural characteristics including family activities, food, music, phonetic sounds, and differences between North American and Spanish cultures. Written and oral pre and posttests were administered throughout fall semester, 2007. Pre and posttest results were compared to

determine if significant improvement in English language and written proficiency had occurred.

### Procedure

Procedures evolved in several stages. During fall semester 2007, ESL instruction focused on acquainting students with differences between North American and Spanish cultures (e.g., behavior, food, music, phonetic sounds, holidays, marriage, etc). Teaching and learning was designed to measure students' oral and written proficiency in ESL. Pre and posttests were composed of written and oral questions based on the customs of Hispanic culture. Twenty questions about different traditions were asked for the students to respond to in one to three sentences. Topics addressed included the following traditional ceremonies/celebrations: Quinceañera, Cinco de Mayo, Día de los Muertos, and Piñata Celebration. Student pre and posttest scores were rated according to their ability with vocabulary, sentence structure, conversation, comprehension, and written and oral expression. During Spring semester, 2008, essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

### Treatment of the Data

Data obtained for purposes of analysis included pre and posttest scores to measure the ability of Hispanic students' use of English written and oral language. Baseline data were then used to draw inferences regarding student progress and to formulate related conclusions and recommendations.

### Summary

Chapter 3 provided a description of the research methodology employed in the study, participants, instruments used, research design, and procedure utilized. Details concerning treatment of the data obtained and analyzed were also presented.

## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis of the Data

#### Introduction

The present descriptive research study used selected instructional activities for teaching and learning that allowed students to use their native language and culture (i.e., Hispanic) to improve written and oral English language acquisition. Pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn and from which recommendations and conclusions were formulated.

#### Description of the Environment

Conducted at Davis High School in Yakima, Washington during the 2006-2007 school year, the study included one male and five female students enrolled in the instructor's 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish for Native Speaker classes. The students were of Hispanic background who came from Mexico.

#### Hypothesis/Research Question

Native Spanish Speakers learned English in a more effective way by using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs.

#### Results of the study

As detailed below, an analysis of data presented in Table 1 has provided a convincing argument from which the researcher may conclude that the hypothesis of the study has been supported (i.e., Native Spanish Speakers learned English in a more

Table 1

GRADING SCALE  
WRITTEN AND ORAL PRE AND POSTTEST SCORES  
Spanish Language for Native Speakers

Topic and Question	PRE TEST WRITTEN SCORES*						POSTTEST ORAL SCORES*				
	V	SS	Con	Com	OE	FINAL GRADE	V	SS	Con	Com	FINAL GRADE
<b>Quinceañera</b>											
1 Why do they celebrate Quinceañera and what does it mean for the family?											
Student 1	D	D	D	C	D	D	D+	C	C	C	C
Student 2	C	C	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B
Student 3	C+	B	B	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	B
Student 4	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 5	C	C+	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 6	C+	C+	B	C+	B	C+	B	B	B	B+	B
2 Explain how people dress for Quinceañera											
Student 1	D	D+	D	C	D+	D+	D+	C	D+	C	C
Student 2	C	C	C	C+	C+	C	B	B	B+	B+	B+
Student 3	C+	B	B	C+	C+	C+	B+	B	B+	B+	B+
Student 4	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	B	B	B+	B+	B+
Student 5	C	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	B+	C+
Student 6	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	B+	B	B+	B+	B+
3 How is the ceremony performed?											
Student 1	D	D	D	D+	D+	D	D+	C	C+	C+	C+
Student 2	D+	C	C	C	D+	C	B	B	B	B	B
Student 3	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B+	B+	B+
Student 4	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	B	C+	B+	B
Student 5	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	B
Student 6	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	B	B	B	B+	B
4 What kind of food is prepared?											
Student 1	D+	D	D	C	D	D+	D+	C	C	C+	C
Student 2	C	C	C	C+	C+	C	B	B	B	B+	B
Student 3	C+	B	B	B	C+	B	B	B	B	B+	B
Student 4	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 5	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 6	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B+	B+	B+	B+
5 What kind of music is played?											
Student 1	D	D	D+	C	D	D+	D+	C	D+	C	C
Student 2	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B+	B	B
Student 3	C+	B	B	B	C+	B	B	B+	B	B+	B+
Student 4	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+
Student 5	C	C	C+	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+
Student 6	C+	C	B	C+	B	C+	B	B+	B+	B+	B+

\*Rating Scale: 21 -25 = A; 16 -20 = B; 15 -19 = C; 10 - 14 =D; 09 -00 =F

Code Key:

V = Vocabulary

SS = Sentence Structure

Con = Conversation

Com = Comprehension

OE = Oral Expression



Table 1 (Continued)

GRADING SCALE  
WRITTEN AND ORAL PRE AND POSTTEST SCORES  
Spanish Language for Native Speakers

Topic and Question	V	PRE TEST WRITTEN SCORES					FINAL GRADE	V	POSTTEST ORAL SCORES*				FINAL GRADE
		SS	Con	Com	OE	SS			Con	Com			
Cinco de Mayo													
1 Why do they celebrate Cinco de Mayo?													
Student 1	D	D+	D	D	D	D	D+	C	D+	C	C	C	
Student 2	C	C	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 3	C+	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B+	B+	B+	B+	
Student 4	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 5	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 6	C+	C+	C+	C	B	C+	B	B	B	B+	B-	B-	
2 What does it mean for the family?													
Student 1	D+	D+	D	D+	D	D+	D+	C+	C	C	C	C	
Student 2	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	B	C+	B	B	B	
Student 3	C+	C+	B	C+	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 4	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	
Student 5	C	C	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 6	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	B	B	B+	B	B	B	
3 What kind of food is prepared?													
Student 1	D	D	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+	C	C+	C	C	C	
Student 2	D+	C	C	C	D+	C	D+	C	C+	C+	C	C	
Student 3	C	C+	C+	B	B	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 4	C	C	C	C+	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 5	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	
Student 6	C	C	C+	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	
4 How is Cinco de Mayo celebrated in the USA?													
Student 1	D	D	D	D+	D	D	D	D+	D+	D	D	D	
Student 2	C	C	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	
Student 3	C+	C+	C+	B	B	C+	B	B	B+	B+	B+	B+	
Student 4	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 5	C	C	D+	D+	D	D+	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	
Student 6	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
5 How is celebrated in Mexico?													
Student 1	D	D	D+	D	D	D	D+	C	D+	C	C	C	
Student 2	C+	C	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	
Student 3	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 4	C	C+	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 5	D	D	D	D	D	D	C	D+	C	C+	C	C	
Student 6	C+	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	
*Rating Scale: 21 -25 = A: 16 -20 = B: 15 -19 = C: 10 - 14 =D: 09 -00 =F													

\*Rating Scale: 21 -25 = A; 16 -20 = B; 15 -19 = C; 10 - 14 =D; 09 -00 =F

Code Key:

V = Vocabulary

SS = Sentence Structure

Con = Conversation

Com = Comprehension

OE = Oral Expression

GRADING SCALE  
WRITTEN AND ORAL PRE AND POSTTEST SCORES  
Spanish Language for Native Speakers

Topic and Question	V	PRE TEST WRITTEN SCORES					FINAL GRADE	V	POSTTEST ORAL SCORES*				FINAL GRADE
		SS	Con	Com	OE	SS			Con	Com			
Día de los Muertos													
1 Why do they celebrate Día de los Muertos?													
Student 1	D	D	D	D	D	D	D+	D	C+	C	C	C	
Student 2	C	C	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 3	C+	C+	C	C+	C	C+	B	B	B+	B	B	B	
Student 4	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	
Student 5	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 6	C+	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
2 What does this mean for the family?													
Student 1	D+	D	D	D	D+	D	D+	D+	C	C	C	C	
Student 2	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	
Student 3	C+	C+	B	B	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 4	C	C	D+	D	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
Student 5	C	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 6	C	C+	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
3 Why do people celebrate this Holiday?													
Student 1	D	D	D+	D+	C	D+	D+	D+	D+	C	D+	D+	
Student 2	C+	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	
Student 3	C+	C	C+	C	C	C	C+	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 4	D+	C	D+	C	D+	D+	D+	C	C	C+	C	C	
Student 5	C	C	C+	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 6	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	B	B	B	
4 What kind of food do people eat during this celebration?													
Student 1	D+	D+	D+	D	D	D	D+	D+	D	D+	D+	D+	
Student 2	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	C+	B	B	B	B	B	
Student 3	C+	C	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 4	C	C	D	C	C	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	
Student 5	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	
Student 6	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
5 What activities do they perform?													
Student 1	D+	D	D	D	D	D	D	D+	C	D+	D+	D+	
Student 2	C	C+	C	C	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 3	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B+	B+	B+	B+	
Student 4	C	C	C+	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 5	C	C+	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	
Student 6	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	

\*D=25-30; C+=16-20; B=11-15; C=6-10; D=00-05

\*Rating Scale: 21 -25 = A; 16 -20 = B; 15 -19 = C; 10 - 14 =D; 09 -00 =F

Code Key:

V = Vocabulary

SS = Sentence Structure

Con = Conversation

Com = Comprehension

OE = Oral Expression

Table 1 (Continued)

GRADING SCALE  
WRITTEN AND ORAL PRE AND POSTTEST SCORES  
Spanish Language for Native Speakers

Topic and Question	PRE TEST WRITTEN SCORES						POSTTEST ORAL SCORES*				
	V	SS	Con	Com	OE	FINAL GRADE	V	SS	Con	Com	FINAL GRADE
<b>Piñata Celebration</b>											
1 Describe a piñata, how is it made, what is it stuffed with?											
Student 1	D	D	D	D+	D+	D	D+	D+	C	C	C
Student 2	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 3	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+
Student 4	C	C	C+	C	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 5	C+	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+
Student 6	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B
2 How is a Piñata Celebration conducted?											
Student 1	D	D	D	D	D	D	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+
Student 2	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 3	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	B	B	B	B	B
Student 4	C	C	C	D+	C	C	C	C+	B	B	C+
Student 5	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+
Student 6	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	B	B
3 What is the origin of the piñata?											
Student 1	D	D	D	D	D+	D	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+
Student 2	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	C+
Student 3	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+	C+	B	B	B	B
Student 4	C	C+	C	C	C+	C	C+	C+	B	C+	C+
Student 5	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 6	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B
4 When do people use piñatas?											
Student 1	D	D	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+	D+
Student 2	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 3	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 4	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 5	C	C+	C+	C	C	C	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 6	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B
5 What are some differences between this celebration in Mexico and the United States?											
Student 1	D	D	D	D+	D+	D	D+	D	D+	D	D+
Student 2	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 3	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B
Student 4	C	C+	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	B	C+
Student 5	C	C	C	C+	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+
Student 6	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	B	B	B	B

\*Rating Scale: 21 -25 = A; 16 -20 = B; 15 -19 = C; 10 - 14 =D; 09 -00 =F

Code Key:

V = Vocabulary

SS = Sentence Structure

Con = Conversation

Com = Comprehension

OE = Oral Expression

effective way by using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs).

For example, when comparing student written and oral pre and posttest grades awarded in response to five questions related to the **Quinceañera** celebration, 26 student scores (86.6 percent) showed improvement in acquisition of English language skills, while 4 student scores (13.4 percent), remained the same.

Similarly, when comparing student written and oral pre and posttest grades awarded in response to the five questions related to the **Cinco de Mayo** celebration, 26 student scores (86.6 percent) showed improvement in acquisition of English Language skills, while 4 student scores (13.4 percent), remained the same.

When comparing student written and oral pre and posttest grades awarded in response to the five questions related to the **Día de los Muertos** celebration, 26 student scores (86.6 percent) showed improvement in acquisition of English Language skills, while 4 student scores (13.4 percent), remained the same.

Finally, when comparing student written and oral pre and posttest grades awarded in response to the five questions related to the **Piñata celebration**, 24 students scores (80 percent) showed improvement in acquisition of English Language skills, while 6 students scores (20 percent), remained the same.

### Findings

Further review of data presented on Table 1 revealed that from 80-86 percent of participating students demonstrated improvement in English Language skill acquisition

when responding to written and oral questions related to their native (i.e., Hispanic) language and culture.

### Discussion

The above study results and findings have served to corroborate the researcher's belief that using instructional strategies that related to students language and cultural interests can help them to enhanced their language acquisition, and in less time.

### Summary

Chapter 4 included discussion of the environment, hypothesis, results of the study, finding and discussion. Data analyzed supported the hypothesis that Native Spanish Speakers learned English in a more effective way when using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs.

## CHAPTER 5

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Summary

The purpose of this descriptive research project was to develop selected instructional activities for teaching and learning ESL that allowed students to use their native language and culture. To accomplish their purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally, pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusion and recommendations were formulated.

#### Conclusions

Based on the review of selected literature and major findings produced from the present study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Due to the inseparable connection between language and culture, bilingual and ESL programs have tended to include historical and cultural components associated with languages being used.
2. Successful bilingual and ESL programs utilized a variety of instructional strategies requiring active participation in the classroom to build students vocabulary, fluency, and language comprehension skills.
3. Bilingual and ELL authorities expressed a strong desire to incorporate ethnic

heritage and culture into English language acquisition classes.

4. Data analyzed supported the hypothesis that Native Spanish Speakers learned in a more effective way when using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs.

### Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions cited above, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To connect English Language Acquisition and Culture, effective bilingual and ESL programs should include historical and cultural components associated with the languages being used.

2. To build students vocabulary, fluency and language comprehension skills, successful bilingual and ESL programs should utilize a variety of instructional strategies requiring active participation in the classroom.

3. Incorporating ethnic heritage and culture into English language acquisition classes is strongly recommended by bilingual and ELL authorities.

4. Using an instructional model related to Hispanic culture and customs can motivate native Spanish speakers to enhance English language acquisition.

5. Schools and school districts interested in improving English language skills of Spanish speaking students may wish to utilize information contained in the present study or, they may wish to undertake research more suited to their unique needs.

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APPENDIX

Grading Scale

Written and Oral Pre and Posttests

Spanish Language for Native Speakers

Students in the SLNS class are invited to answer questions presented on the following pages. This student feedback will be used to measure students' English language oral and writing skill. Completing the questionnaire is OPTIONAL. Responses will be treated as confidential, and no individual respondents will be identified.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire has been organized in two parts, a written exam and an oral exam. Exam questions have focused on learning activities and assignments addressed in the SLNS class. Topics include: Quinceañera; Cinco de Mayo; Dia de los Muertos; Piñata celebration.

WRITTEN EXAM: You will be asked to write a 1-3 sentence written response to each question or statement.

ORAL EXAM: The oral exam will be administered by the instructor to each student, individually.

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire exercise.

Jorge Rodríguez

SLNS Teacher

## PRE-TEST WRITTEN EXAM

## POSTTEST ORAL EXAM

## Spanish Language for Native Speakers

INSTRUCTIONS: Please prepare a 1-3 sentence written response to each of the following statements or questions.

**Topic : Quinceañera**

1. Why do they celebrate Quinceañera and what does it mean for the family?
2. Explain how people dress for Quinceañera.
3. How is the ceremony performed?

4. What kind of food is prepared?

5. What kind of music is played?

**Topic: Cinco de Mayo**

1. Why do they celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

2. What does it mean for the family?

3. What kind of food is prepared?

4. How is Cinco de Mayo celebrated in the United States?

5. How is it celebrated in Mexico?

**Topic: Día de los Muertos**

1. Why do they celebrate Dia de los Muertos?
2. What does this mean for the family?
3. What is th origin of this holiday?
4. What kind of food do people eat during this celebration?

5. What activities do they perform?

**Topic: Piñata Celebration**

1. What is the origin of the piñata ceremony?

2. How is a piñata celebration conducted?

3. Describe a piñata, how is it made, what is it stuffed with?



4. How is the Piñata celebration conducted in the United States?

5. What are some differences between this celebration in Mexico and the United States?