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A Shared Story of Successful Spanish Learning: An Embedded Multiple Case Study

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by

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A Shared Story of Successful Spanish Learning: An Embedded Multiple Case Study

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　　　Student success is on the American mind, and rightfully so, as indicators point to inequitable educational experiences in a nation that emphasizes equity and opportunity for all (NCES, 2009, 2010; Peterson, Woessmann, Hanushek, & Lastra-Anadón, 2011). The occasional story of academic success in the face of obstacles inspires a desire to make these stories of success mainstream rather than scattered occurrences. With this desire for widespread academic success, we arrive upon the challenge of fully understanding the inherently complex path to student success. One manner in which to understand the phenomenon of student success is to empirically identify situations of consistently impressive academic outcomes, entering into those situations and exploring the phenomenon at a deep, holistic level (Imig & Imig, 2006).

　　　This embedded multiple case study explored three situations of student Spanish learning success identified through hierarchical linear modeling. Successful Spanish learning was defined as situations empirically identified as exhibiting the greatest overall student growth in Spanish proficiency over time. Each of these situations of empirically supported student success was explored both qualitatively (interviews, observations, artifacts, narratives) and quantitatively (matrix observations, surveys, demographical information) at both the building/community-level and classroom/teacher-level. Findings

were presented through a narrative story of student success and then discussed through

Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework (Goodwin, 2011). Findings supported

Goodwin's assertion that "we can make a tremendous difference for students---*especially*

if everyone is on the same page and working to the same ends" (p. 160, italics added).

This story of student Spanish success reflected buildings and communities unified in

supporting instructional staff so that they could focus on classroom instruction. Within

this supportive and collaborative environment, reflective Spanish practitioners presented

students with high expectations and actively engaged them with activities strategically

designed to enable efficient and successful Spanish communication. In the words of one

of the principals in this study, the outcome seemed to be a bit of a "daily, mini

immersion", that allowed students to maximize their learning experience.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A GoogleScholar search of the phrase "student success" produces more than

53,000 formal documents to explore. A more general quest with the generic Google

search engine yields over 13 million results. In a room of K-12 teachers, educational

administrators, educational policy-makers, or teacher educators, it would not be

surprising to hear success-related terms such as achievement gap, struggling or successful

school, performance outcomes, achievement behaviors, school improvement, college

preparedness, race to the top, graduation rate, academic growth, or high stakes testing.

Student academic success is on the American mind, and rightfully so, as indicators point

to inequitable educational experiences for the youth of a nation that emphasizes equity

and opportunity for all (for examples, see NCES, 2010, NCES 2009; Peterson,

Woessmann, Hanushek, & Lastra-Anadón, 2011).

In a recent report of the comparative global proficiency of American students, it

was emphasized that students in our schools are not enjoying success equal to that of

their global peers. The youth of our nation ranked 32nd in math and 17th in reading among

nations of the world (Peterson, Woessmann, Hanushek, Lastra-Anadón, 2011, p. vi).

Even within our own country, there are countless inequitable experiences of academic

success, only one example of which is black and Hispanic students trailing their white

peers by an average of more than 20 points on 4th and 8th grade assessments (NCES,

2009, 2011). As noted by Peterson, Woessmann, Hanushek, and Lastra-Anadón (2011),

such inequities cause us to ask ourselves, "Are U.S. schools failing to teach their students

adequately?" (p. 4). It would be irresponsible if we were to not question these disparate occurrences of success.

In spite of the educational doom and gloom that so pervasively visits us via media outlets, this story of academic progress is not uniformly bleak. There are many inspiring instances of success that are celebrated, glorious stories of student triumph even in situations in which obstacles seem insurmountable (for examples, see Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lucas & Henze, 1990). The desire, then, would be to make these stories of success mainstream rather than what sometimes seems like scattered and randomly situated occurrences.

When pursuing the expressed desire of academic success for all, we must first establish an accurate understanding of how students arrive at success, and this is where the challenge begins. Accurately understanding paths to student success invites amazing complexities. Where does one begin? Researchers have approached this dilemma from multiple angles, from exploring subtle factors such as peer pressure and test bias (for examples, see Horvat & Lewis, 2003; Goldman & Hewitt, 1975) to looking at larger picture items such as the ill-defined construct of teacher quality (see literature review of this study for multiple examples).

Value Added Assessment (VAA) has provided us with a novel approach for exploring the phenomenon of student success. VAA is primarily utilized in the educational sector to attribute differences in classroom achievement to teachers, although Imig and Imig (2006) appreciate the potential for VAA to empirically identify specific instances of a classroom-situated phenomenon so that researchers might enter into such

situations, exploring and developing a deep understanding of the empirically identified phenomenon.

Whether VAA is a valid tool by which to attribute quality to teachers has been highly contested, and this study does not propose to enter into this debate. This study does, however, draw from the idea of empirically identifying a phenomenon and then exploring the nature of the phenomenon. Instead of relying on VAA modeling, which focuses primarily on teachers and schools, this study begins with specific situations of consistent Spanish learner success that have been identified through hierarchical growth modeling, a statistical approach that focuses first and foremost on students (Briggs, 2011).

Even with empirical identification of situations of student success, qualitative exploration of any contextualized situation remains inherently complex. In a recent effort to "distill simplicity from complexity", Bryan Goodwin and a team of researchers at Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning devoted a year to understanding the story of student success (2011, p. 2). The outcome of their efforts is the publication *Simply Better: Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success*. Goodwin's book summarizes and provides a visual representation of the research relevant to student academic success. In this study of successful Spanish learning, Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework offers a simplified lens through which to understand the qualitative, contextualized story of successful Spanish learning for high school students (p. 159).

While there certainly have been formal explorations of successful learning contexts and scenarios, most situations have been identified through proxy measures, such as case studies of schools anecdotally noted to be of high quality or teachers who

were nationally board certified (for examples, see Nathan & Febey, 2001; Smith & Strahan, 2004). Without statistically supported incidences of student success at the heart of these exploratory studies, results are questionable at best. In this study of successful Spanish learning, hierarchical linear modeling has allowed for empirical and statistical identification of successful learning situations, defined as situations exhibiting the greatest amount of Spanish proficiency growth over time. Entering into these classrooms of empirically indicated success, conducting observations, analyzing artifacts, and asking many, many questions provides one venue by which to better understand the phenomenon of academic success. This study presents the opportunity to tell the story of empirically indicated successful Spanish learning, with a refined understanding of the phenomenon afforded through discussion driven by Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework (2011).

Purpose Statement

This study explored the shared story of successful Spanish learning at three high schools in the heart of the Midwest. An embedded multiple case study approach was utilized, with teachers/classrooms nested in buildings/communities, to allow the exploration of student success within a socially contextualized structure. These three cases of consistently successful Spanish learning were identified through hierarchical linear modeling analyses during a previous study (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). Qualitative data sources allowed for a deep and thorough exploration of student success and included: (a) participant observations, (b) interviews with teacher-participants, peer educators, and administrators, (c) student anecdotal narratives, (d) elicitation interviews with teacher-participants, and (e) classroom, building, and community artifacts.

Concurrent with the qualitative data collection, quantitative data were collected via an observational matrix, a teacher belief and practices survey, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Interview (ACTFL OPI), and existing demographical databases. These quantitative data sources enriched and supported the qualitative findings by investigating teacher, building, and community characteristics specific to these instances of Spanish learning success. For this study, successful Spanish learning was defined as those situations empirically identified as exhibiting the greatest overall student growth in Spanish proficiency during a five year longitudinal study on Spanish learning in 23 schools across the Midwest (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012).

Research Questions

Grand tour question. What is the story of successful Spanish learning at three specific Midwestern high schools?

Within case research questions.

Qualitative.

1) What characteristics, policies, practices, and contexts are observed in these situations of successful Spanish learning?

a) How do students, peer-educators, administrators, and Spanish teachers describe successful Spanish learning?

b) What do classroom and building artifacts reveal about successful Spanish learning?

c) What do informal observations of Spanish instruction reveal about successful Spanish learning?

Quantitative.

1) What do matrix observations reveal about the statistical occurrences of specific

   teaching practices of teachers of successful Spanish learners?

2) What do demographical data reveal about the contexts in which successful Spanish

   learning occurs?

3) What do belief surveys reveal about the beliefs and practices of teachers of successful

   Spanish learners?

Cross case research questions.

1) What common themes emerge when comparing the within-case findings of successful

   Spanish language learning?

2) What relationships emerge among common themes?

3) How do findings relate to the assumptions set forth in Goodwin's What Matters Most

   Framework (2011)?

Limitations of Study

   While this study integrated quantitative data into the research design, it was

nonetheless primarily qualitative in nature. In qualitative design, the researcher is the

principle instrument for collecting and analyzing data, and this lends itself to certain

inherent strengths and limitations (Merriam, 1998). The intimate relationship that the

qualitative researcher establishes with the central phenomenon, the data collection, and

the data analysis lends a very human element to research conducted in any qualitative

study. While this unique intimacy allows for the depth of description and understanding

sought by qualitative researchers, it is important to bear in mind that, as Shkedi (2005)

notes, "the researcher does not begin empty-handed; his/her mind is not a *tabula rasa*" (p.

30, italics in original). It is critical for the researcher to position him or herself within the study context such that biases, beliefs, and assumptions about both the central phenomenon and the research process are clarified.

The fact that the researcher comes equipped with biases, beliefs, and assumptions is not necessarily a problem; rather, they allow the researcher to make meaning of the data. Problem arise when "these crucial underpinnings of analysis remain mostly implicit, explained only allusively……We need to make explicit the procedures and thought processes that qualitative researchers actually use in their work" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 22).

In this study, a conscious effort was made to position myself in relation to the research approach and the central phenomenon for this study. Additionally, according to Merriam (1998), a qualitative study is only as good as the individual(s) conducting the study, and qualities such as tolerance for ambiguity, being highly intuitive, and having good communication skills are critical if one intends to maximize results. I was fairly confident with my skills in each of the areas mentioned by Merriam, but an effort to minimize potential limitations was sought through collection of a variety of data sources from multiple perspectives, feedback and direction from experts, and a thorough self-exploration prior to entering into the context of the study.

Yin (2003) cautions novice researchers integrating embedded units into case study design, noting that novices tend to conduct analyses at the subunit level and fail to return to the global phenomenon central to the research study. This is a valid concern, especially considering the complexities inherent to the phenomenon of student academic success explored in this embedded case study design. In an effort to not lose site of the

global issue at the heart of this study, the discussion of results for this study returned to the global-level of the phenomenon central to this research study. This global interpretation of results was driven by Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework (2011).

Significance of Study

Development of teacher-education programs, professional development experiences, school improvement initiatives, and educational policies all rely upon certain assumptions concerning the path to student success. Any program or initiative intended to impact student success can only be as good as the underlying conceptualization of what is actually occurring to facilitate the process to produce student achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2003). At the time of this study, there had yet to be conducted any qualitative investigations into successful Spanish learning in classrooms identified through empirical analysis of student growth. In fact, when searching for studies driven by selection of cases based on empirical analyses of student growth, database searches failed to reveal any qualitative, in-depth multiple case studies identified through growth analysis in any content area.

This study presents a unique opportunity to add to our understanding of student success with Spanish learning through the in-depth exploration of contextualized, successful Spanish learning identified through hierarchical linear analysis of student growth. This study intends to tell the holistic and shared story of a highly contextualized and complex phenomenon, followed by a purposeful refinement of results through a discussion driven by Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework (2011).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In Simply Better: Doing What Matters Most to Change the Odds for Student Success (2011), Bryan Goodwin presents the What Matters Most Framework, consisting of specific themes and touchstones (see Table 1), or "principles for changing the odds for students" (p. 5). Goodwin's framework is the result of over a year of in-depth exploration, looking at "what works in classrooms, schools, and after-school programs, as well as what works for at-risk students and school and district leaders" (p. 5). With this framework, Goodwin identifies principles that, "when addressed properly, are most likely to have positive effects on student success" (p. 5). It is this What Matters Most Framework that served as the theoretical lens for the discussion portion of this study.

Table 1: The What Matters Most Framework Components and Their Touchstones	
What Matters Most Themes	**What Matters Most Touchstones**
Guaranteeing challenging, engaging, and intentional instruction	*Teachers must focus on* • Setting high expectations and delivering challenging instruction • Fostering engaging learning environments and meaningful relationships with students • Intentionally matching instructional strategies to learning goals
Ensuring curricular pathways to success	*School systems must focus on* • Providing all students with high-expectations curricula • Providing all students with personalized learning

	opportunities
Providing whole-child student supports	*School systems must focus on* • Providing real-time supports in keeping with the ounce-of-prevention principle. • Addressing the deep causes of student performance: home environment, prior knowledge, interest and motivation.
Creating high-performance school cultures	*School leaders must focus on* • Raising the quality and reducing the variance among classrooms within the school • Creating a culture of high expectations for academics and behavior
Developing data-driven, high-reliability district systems	*School systems must focus on* • Setting clear, "no excuses" goals for teaching and learning • Attending to the "core" business of schooling: great teachers and teaching • Developing a healthy preoccupation with failure, prevention, and intervention
Goodwin, 2011, p. 159, reprinted with permission from McRel Publishing Table 1	

The qualitative, exploratory nature of this study called for an initial inductive approach to understanding the shared story of successful Spanish learning. As such, the literature review for this study addresses student success through a broad exploration of the research base on student success. The nested nature of the phenomenon at the heart

of this study is reflected in the structure of this literature review, with an initial

exploration of teacher/classroom-level factors followed by an overview of teaching

context-level factors (building and community-level factors).

Teacher/Classroom-Level Factors

There are seemingly multitudinous terms employed when exploring

teacher/classroom factors relating to student success. Teacher quality, effective teacher,

expertise, teacher effect, educational excellence, best practices and classroom climate are

only a few of many. The advent of Value Added Assessment (VAA) has emphasized, in

particular, the centrality of teachers and teacher quality as teacher/classroom-level factors

related to student achievement (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Rowan, Correnti, &

Miller, 2002; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders,

1997). This literature review segment on teacher/classroom-level factors addresses a

variety of classroom-related items and, similar to the broader literature base, emphasizes

the teacher factor.

Aggregation of terms might be one manner of managing the myriad factors

expressed in the literature base as being integral to understanding the teacher/classroom

component of student success. Aggregating all factors according to categories would

establish a simplified yet comprehensive conceptualization of teacher quality or high

quality teaching. Heck (2007) perceives the literature base to possess two major

categories: a) teacher characteristics and b) classroom effectiveness. Teacher

characteristics refers to backgrounds, professional preparation, certification, and teaching

assignment, and the category of classroom effectiveness pertains to active teaching that

takes place in the classroom.

Teacher characteristics.

The literature base represents Heck's conceptualization of "Teacher Characteristics" through multiple related factors. Classroom experience, subject matter/content knowledge, certification or degree, and testing or aptitude scores are all factors addressed at length. Attitudes and beliefs are represented in the literature base as an additional facet of teacher characteristics.

Experience.

Many studies find teacher experience (time in the profession) to have a positive relationship with student performance (Ackerman, 2006; Ferguson, 1991; Leana & Pil, 2006; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). Others qualify this relational statement, noting that experience is often correlated with achievement *at the beginning of the teaching career* (Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, Rivkin, 2005; Harris and Sass, 2007). Analyzing experience through the lens of expertise helps to understand the indicated positive relationship. Sternberg and Horvarth (1995) note that "Experts rate more efficient with problem solving….. experts do more in less time…..they are more likely to arrive to novel and appropriate solutions to problems…than are novices" (p. 10). Each of these qualities of experts should theoretically contribute to student learning. If experience continually moves teachers closer to the realm of expertise, then it is no surprise that the literature base indicates a positive relationship between student performance and teacher experience.

An interesting aspect of the teacher experience factor is the non-linear relationship often indicated between teacher experience and student achievement. It seems that the most commonly cited trend is an increase in effectiveness (defined as

ability to improve student achievement) during the first 3 years of teaching with little to no major improvement in effectiveness after 3 years of teaching experience (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Rice, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Gordon, Kane, and Staiger (2006) were more specific in their findings, identifying large gains in teacher effectiveness between the first and second year of teaching, much smaller gains between the second and third year, and no substantial improvement after the third year in the classroom.

As with other teacher quality factors, there are concerns with the data collection procedures employed by researchers looking at teacher experience, and these concerns are primarily situated with factors that might influence how experience is represented in a study. Prince, Koppich, Morse Azar, Bhatt, & Witham (2008), in a general overview of the teacher quality literature, question whether teacher attrition might be a factor in the link between experience and student achievement. They suggest that teacher effectiveness might increase not because of duration in the profession but rather because unsuccessful beginning teachers often leave the profession after their first year of classroom practice. Wayne & Youngs (2003) note that accurately measuring experience would require control for shortage and surplus conditions for each possible year of hire, and meaningful generalization should only take place in studies with controls established for teachers with dependent children at the time. This might be interpreted as saying that (a) those hired in a shortage year may reflect a "starting quality level" that is lower than those hired in a surplus year (and vice versa), thus influencing how experience relates to teacher quality and/or student achievement and (b) those with dependent children would be faced with constraints that would impede performance in the classroom, thus

producing results not truly reflective of experience. Without controlling for factors that might influence experience, the representation of teacher experience in a study may be flawed.

Attitude and beliefs.

Many school districts present teacher-candidates with tests of attitude and beliefs prior to considering them for available classroom positions. This trend results from the "influential hypothesis…that the best teachers share a particular set of values about education, such as commitment, caring, or persistence" (Metzger & Wu, 2008, p. 921).

The literature base indicates that attitude and beliefs do, indeed, play a role in teacher quality and student achievement. Palardy & Rumberger (2008), for example, found teacher attitudes to indicate effective teaching, and Jacobs & Harvey found that perceptions, attitudes, and expectations contributed significantly to student academic achievement (2010).

While there is a tendency to indicate a positive relationship between attitude and student achievement, this portion of the teacher quality literature base again is fraught with concerns regarding research methodology. Metzger and Wu (2008) note concerns with findings of commercial instruments, noting the following:

> Commercial teacher interviews, by their very nature, can only assess a teacher's espoused theory, assuming that the candidate's responses to the interview prompts are both an honest reflection of personal feelings and an accurate indicator of future behavior…..Teachers may consciously "strategize" in response to the interview prompts, providing answers that the candidate thinks the hiring administrator wants to hear (p. 933).

In other words, providing a 'high quality teacher answer' does not necessarily guarantee that an individual is actually a 'high quality teacher', and studies that rely on relating the results of such instruments to student achievement may be flawed in design. Similar concerns may be expressed regarding survey studies designed to address teacher beliefs and attitudes, and many of these studies, such as that by Palardy and Rumberger (2008), utilize data gleaned through a survey. Design of self-reporting survey items must be done with great care because respondents can be influenced by the context of the question (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). A more convincing approach might involve the inclusion of qualitative data collection to support and build upon the quantitative survey data, thus strengthening the validity of the results (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

Preparation variables.

The literature base on teacher quality presents mixed results concerning preparation variables such as the relationship between student achievement and teacher certification, degree, and testing/aptitude scores. Some studies indicate that preparation variables are related to student achievement (Darling Hammond, 2000; Monk, 1994), while others find minimal effect (Ackerman, 2006) no effects (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005), or even a negative effect (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006).

A primary concern when viewing teacher quality through the lens of these preparation variables is that they are incredibly flexible in definition. Teacher certification varies from state to state, a degree might require vastly different coursework from one institution to the next, participating in coursework/training in no way indicates that knowledge and skills were retained or even gained, and scores may or may not

indicate that a person is able to apply knowledge in a dynamic situation (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Taylor, 1996; Liston, Borko, & Whitcomb, 2008; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Another problem with equating teacher scores, degree, certification or specific training to quality is the theory and literature base supporting teacher time on the job as contributing to teacher quality (and hence student achievement). Even if there were a valid measure of teacher scores, degree, certification, or training, one might question whether the quality of a person who has 15 years of experience can be judged by a test or coursework in which he or she engaged over a decade in the past. Konold et al. (2008) support this position when stating that the research base on teacher experience implies that something is acquired during the first few years that becomes a stronger predictor of student achievement, and dichotomies often emphasized in the teacher quality debate (certified/not certified, masters degree/no masters degree, etc.) are somewhat negated by experience in the field. These preparation measurements are entirely too variable, and the relationship between these preparatory factors and student achievement may well lie within how they are applied within the context of actual teaching. In order to understand any indicated relationship, researchers must again delve deeper than a simple "yes/no" answer.

Subject matter knowledge.

In the literature base, knowledge of subject matter is explored primarily through a measure of content coursework credits, but occasionally actual tests of subject-matter knowledge are administered to teachers. The latter are considered to be more valid than the former primarily because there is rarely contextual evidence provided concerning the nature of the coursework or the performance of individuals in content-related courses.

The literature base tends to indicate that what a teacher knows about what he is teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning gains (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Harris and Sass, 2007; Monk, 1994), and this is particularly emphasized in the content area of mathematics (for example, see Brewer, 1997).

Classroom effectiveness.

Heck's (2007) category of "classroom effectiveness" is described in the literature base with terms such as "teaching behaviors, methodology, approaches, and time on task." Several articles investigate even more detailed factors, addressing specific behaviors such as organization, speech quality, or connection to curriculum standards. In order to simplify this discussion of classroom effectiveness, it will be divided into two segments: (a) pedagogical content knowledge and (b) general pedagogical practices.

Pedagogical content knowledge.

As previously addressed, it is difficult to argue with the importance of establishing a strong knowledge base in the content to be taught. Rather than whether knowledge of content is important, it might be helpful to ponder *why* content knowledge is important. While there are exceptions, many studies of content knowledge in the literature base analyze teachers who provide instruction at fairly basic levels of content knowledge (i.e., elementary mathematics). These basic levels of content knowledge were likely surpassed by teachers during their post-secondary experience, yet there remains to be an indicated relationship between teachers' content knowledge and student achievement. It seems that the relationship may not be a result of content knowledge for the sake of direct application of that knowledge. In an effort to understand the role of content knowledge in action, researchers have turned to Shulman's pedagogical content

knowledge (1996), a term used to describe a teacher's knowledge of subject matter content in ways that are useful for teaching.

Lowenberg-Ball and Hill (2009) address pedagogical content knowledge as they discuss their increasing understanding of the multiple uses for mathematical content knowledge in teaching.

> When we scrutinized [instructional] tasks and responsibilities more closely, we saw that teaching is subject matter-intensive in ways that are often overlooked when teacher quality is seen as a matter of what courses one has taken, whether one is certified, or even how well one performs on a test of basic skills. (p. 89)

Sternberg & Hovarth (1995), in an article on establishing a protocol for teaching expertise, describe pedagogical content knowledge when comparing novices and experts in the classroom. They found that experts differ from novices in not only their level of knowledge but also how they are able to apply their knowledge. They assert that "experts bring knowledge to bear more effectively on problems within their domains of expertise" (p. 10). Smith and Strahan might have been witnessing the same phenomenon of expert knowledge in action when they noted that their expert teachers had a strong ability to diagnose student struggles and propose solutions (2004). Indeed, exploring how teachers use their content knowledge during instruction seems to provide insights into the learning experience. Compared to the quantity of material on the importance of content knowledge itself, there is less depth of material available on the relationship between student success and pedagogical content knowledge. Further contextualized studies of may provide additional insights, and looking at how teachers use their knowledge, asking

for journaling of thoughts, or asking teachers to reflect upon their responses to student struggles might help to better understand why and how pedagogical content knowledge is important.

General pedagogical practices.

Findings are fairly consistent in the literature, indicating that classroom practices are positively related to student achievement, but the literature is extremely varied in terms of how it represents classroom practices. Ackerman (2006) established a relationship between student achievement and curriculum standards, use of standardized tests and technology, the level of difficulty of tasks, frequency of homework, and individualized instruction. Hill, Rowan, & Lowenberg Ball (2005) found that quality teaching involved focusing class time on active academic instruction rather than classroom management, presenting materials in a structured format via advance organizers, making salient linkages explicit, and calling attention to main ideas. Smith and Strahan (2004) found much of the same but also found that a mastery orientation and frequent and varied assessment were included in the list of expert behaviors. Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Houts, and Morrison (2008), in a review of the literature on classroom effects on achievement, found value of providing feedback, stimulation of conceptual thinking and analysis, providing activities that are relevant to students, and intense, focused implementation of curricula.

It is difficult to compare and contrast the results in the literature base on classroom practices because, as represented in the above references, the conceptualization of "classroom practices" is rarely the same from one study to the next, but it should be noted that the importance of classroom practices is not met unchallenged in the literature

base. Ackerman (2006), for example, found no differences in achievement when traditional or constructivist pedagogical or assessment approaches were used, and Rowan, Correnti, & Miller (2002) did not find significant effects on student growth in reading and math when looking at teaching formats of presenting, monitoring performance, leading discussion, and providing feedback.

While the literature base makes a fairly strong case for the positive impact of certain teaching practices, it is questionable whether one can state that there is a specific practice (or set of classroom practices) that will be effective for everyone and in all contexts. Much of the research on classroom practices measures behaviors or practices that are very specific in nature. Rowan, Correnti, & Miller (2002) question studies emphasizing a particular practice, asserting that we "should not expect a single instructional variable to explain the classroom-to-classroom differences in instructional effectiveness…..many small instructional effects would have to be combined to produce classroom-to-classroom differences in instructional outcomes" (p. 22). In addition to questioning the studies indicating an effect for highly specific practices, one also might question whether these studies can be generalized in a comprehensive manner. Will these practices be equally effective in multiple content areas? Will the practices be effective at multiple grade levels? A reliable framework of quality teaching would have to determine what is common across grade levels and subject matters, what is unique to particular areas of content, and what might work for only certain ages or developmental levels of students (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

Pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical practices, in tandem.

There appears to be an intricate relationship between Shulman's (1996) pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical practices. Ericsson's theories of expertise present a clear picture of the importance of both pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). In Ericsson's theories, the coach provides critical guidance and feedback for the learner such that deliberate practice is maximized and the greatest amount of growth occurs. This act of guidance and feedback requires a depth of pedagogical content knowledge as well as a strong base of knowledge and skills with general pedagogical practices, and it is a direct reflection of how learning occurs in the classroom. Without proper knowledge of how to best guide the student toward increased understanding and improved skills, the coach may not maximize the deliberate practice in which the student engages. Without proper knowledge of how students grow and process the material/skill being explored, the coach may not provide the feedback necessary for deliberate practice to continue at an optimal pace and level. A classroom-based, contextualized exploration of student success may provide additional insights and understanding into the roles and importance of pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical practices, and their intricate relationship.

Building/Community-Level Factors

Organizational theory views social systems as being multilevel, and in educational systems this means that there are many layers to a school's environment (Wiseman, 2005). Developing a clear understanding of educational phenomena requires an examination of the hierarchical context in which the phenomena is situated.

According to Wiseman, "…what happens at each level of the school system happens within the context of and is nested within each successive layer" (p. 9).

Exploring the phenomenon of student success within the nested structure of schooling requires that we move beyond the scope of the teacher and classroom. This idea is emphasized when Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) point out that, when experts face new situations and tackle new tasks, they behave like novices. Nunan's (1988) study of a well-qualified, successful ESL teacher with thirteen years of teaching experience found that, when assigned to teach a disparate group of mature learners, she felt lost and described herself as behaving like a beginning teacher. If success were situated solely within the teacher/classroom, then students should have experienced equal success regardless of the schooling context. This nested nature of schooling requires that we move beyond the teacher and also explore the building and community level in which successful learning takes place.

Student characteristics.

In this study, student characteristics were explored at the building/community-level through mean student demographical and achievement information annually published and available for public access. While student characteristics are explored as a building/community level factor in this study, it should be noted that the literature base often explores student characteristics as a more individual-specific phenomenon, with general explorations of race, gender, and socioeconomic status and relative implications for overarching student success.

The evidence is mixed concerning the relationship between student achievement and race, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (SES) of students. On one hand,

there is a base of literature claiming that student characteristics such as poverty and English Language Learner (ELL) status are negatively correlated with outcomes (eg., see Darling Hammond, 2000). Leana and Pil also find a negative relationship, noting that poverty negatively and significantly correlates with student achievement (2006). Rowan, Correnti, & Miller (2002) also analyze student characteristics, but they look at student growth instead of student achievement. Researchers conducted a multilevel analysis with different applications of value added assessment and found that gender, SES, minority status, and number of siblings had effects on achievement status but virtually no effect on growth.

Another aspect of research literature looks at the effects of student characteristics but then compares these effects with the effect of having a quality teacher. Darling Hammond (2000) found that well-prepared teachers can exert a stronger influence than student background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status. Sanders & Horn (1998) agree, indicating that "race, socioeconomic level, class size, and classroom heterogeneity are poor predictors of student academic growth. Rather, the effectiveness of the teacher is the major determinant of student academic progress" (p. 247).

Slightly different from the above is the research that examines matching race between teacher and student, reflecting an attempt to manipulate the situational context in order to produce something that might be more ideal for students. Again, results are mixed. For Ehrenberg, Goldhaber, and Brewer (1995), only the match of black teacher and student enhanced students' gain scores. Dee (2004) found the opposite, that assignment to an own-race teacher was associated with substantive gains in achievement

for both black and white students. It is worthy to note that these matching studies do not

necessarily take into account the quality of the teachers being matched to students.

Sanders & Rivers (1996) found that students of different ethnicities respond equivalently

within the same quintile of teacher effectiveness, a result that might cause some to

question results that indicate a race matching effect for student growth. Could it have

been that Ehrenberg, Goldhaber, and Brewer (1995) found their unique results because

the students matched to black teachers happened to be matched with teachers of highest

quality in the study? Might Dee (2004) have simply been working with a situation in

which teachers were of similar quality across the board? As noted in previous areas,

without delving into the context, it is difficult to state exactly what is represented by

indicated relationships.

Policies, procedures, and organization.

School and community-level characteristics might also be represented through

policies, procedures, or malleable organizational conditions specific to a particular school

or district.

Every school or district's situational context involves the provision of varying

levels of support for educators. In the literature base, this might be represented by the

wealth of articles addressing professional development and mentoring opportunities.

Professional development and mentoring experiences are commonly organized by

schools and districts, and teachers are typically required to attend. This topic has a large

literature base solely devoted to the qualities of effective professional development, but

there is a smaller base that connects professional development with student achievement.

The results are very mixed, with some indication that professional development should be

content-focused and not pedagogy focused in order to impact teacher effectiveness

(Harris and Sass, 2007), while other sources indicate that there is no difference in student

achievement based upon content of professional development (Ackerman, 2006).

Professional development and mentoring experiences are often represented as

collaborative experiences among educators. In investigating student success, one might

consider exploring the general collaborative culture within a school building. It might be

said that each school and/or district reflects a certain degree of collaborative tendencies

among teachers, and this collaborative situational context may be a contributing factor to

student success within a school. Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, and Vanhover

(2006) address this thought when they note that "the assumption is that when teachers

work together to achieve a common vision, they will be able to change instructional

practices in important ways" (p. 169). Research has demonstrated that teachers (and

ultimately their students) benefit from opportunities to work and learn together (Louis,

Kruse, & Marks, 1996; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Trent, 1998; Walther-Thomas, 1997),

although this research has been primarily qualitative in nature, and large scale empirical

connections to student achievement have yet to be realized.

School resource characteristics, such as student/teacher ratio and class size have

also been addressed in the literature base. According to Darling-Hammond (2000),

student/teacher ratio & class size are rarely significantly related to achievement. Darling-

Hammond's data was collected at the state level, however, and different results have been

produced when approaching class size on a smaller scale. Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, for

example, found that class size has a significant effect on math and reading achievement

gains, especially in 4th and 5th grade (2005). Even on a smaller scale there are

inconsistencies in the literature base concerning class size, however, as Wright, Horn, & Sanders found no significant effect for class size (1997).

This study explored successful Spanish learning, defined as situations with consistently high levels of Spanish language growth as identified through hierarchical linear growth modeling. This exploration of successful Spanish learning situations presented the opportunity to establish deep understanding of the practices, characteristics, and situational contexts that contributed to specific instances of student success. This study was not limited to telling the shared, holistic and contextualized story of Spanish learning success. Rather, the story was further refined through the lens of Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework. Ultimately, this study produced a general, deep understanding of a complex, contextualized phenomenon as well as a discussion of successful Spanish learning driven by Goodwin's research-based framework representing "What Matters Most" for student success (2011).

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

Positioning of Self

The manner in which a researcher approaches study design is determined, in large part, by his or her paradigmatic assumptions, or "basic belief systems that represent underlying positions" (Shkedi, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) clearly express this position when they state that a research approach is based on "a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 19). While I have a tendency to view reality from a constructivist paradigm, I find my research approach to primarily reflect a utilitarian/pragmatic standpoint, valuing a study design that maximizes whatever sources of and methods for collecting and analyzing data that might best answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In other words, if a problem is best answered through the development of a deep understanding of personal experience, then the research design will reflect a constructivist approach, and there will likely be a predominance of open ended interviews and participatory observations during data collection. If the problem is best answered through objective experiments or other quantitative measures, then the research design will likely reflect more of a post-positivist paradigm. Finally, if, as in this study, the research problem calls for a combination of methods that might reflect multiple paradigms, then the researcher should apply such a combination. To me, this is practical, as it maximizes the available opportunities for data collection and offers the greatest depth of understanding of the problem. A pragmatic response to the research questions posed in this study results in assuming an embedded, multiple case approach to conducting research.

Embedded Multiple Case Study Design

For the problem set forth in this study, an embedded multiple case study design offered the opportunity to explore, in depth, the nature of successful Spanish learning through an inductive, constructivist lens while also applying quantitative measures to objectively assess specific teacher/classroom and building/community-level factors common to the successful Spanish learning context. A carefully established rationale guided the selection of embedded multiple case study design, including the fact that this study (a) required a holistic case study, (b) involved more than one bounded case, (c) qualified as being both explanatory and exploratory in approach and (d) sought to understand successful Spanish learning as a nested, or embedded phenomenon.

Yin (2003) indicates that case study research is appropriate when investigators hope to "(a) define research topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual or complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence" (p. xi). This study intended to view successful Spanish learning through multiple lenses rather than simply one isolated characteristic, it looked at successful learning as being contextually defined and complex, and it required the application of multiple sources of evidence. As such, case study design was optimal for the needs of this study.

Merriam (1998) suggests that including multiple cases in a study makes the findings and interpretations more compelling. The logic behind choosing a multiple case study instead of a single case study was driven by the position that studying multiple cases of the same phenomenon might corroborate, qualify, or extend the findings that

might occur were there to be only one case. This multiple case study consisted of three cases representing consistently successful Spanish learning.

Case studies may be qualified as being explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). While case studies are typically classified in one of these three categories, this case study potentially met the requirements for both exploratory and explanatory case studies. An overarching exploratory approach was assumed for this study so that the nature of successful Spanish learning might be explored at length and in a manner unhindered by a confining and limiting a-priori theory. While the study design and data collection were not restricted by the confines of an established theory, the literature base was not completely ignored. Instead, the literature base was reflected upon throughout the duration of the study. The explanatory nature of this study becomes more evident in the discussion section of this dissertation, with Goodwin's "What Matters Most Framework" serving as a conceptual lens through which to distill the complex story of successful Spanish learning (2011). Miles and Huberman suggest that a conceptual framework provides the researcher with the opportunity to gather general constructs into intellectual "bins" (1994, p. 18). Baxter and Jack (2008) suggest that a conceptual framework serves to anchor a study and may be referred to at the stage of data interpretation. Heeding suggestions by Miles and Huberman as well as Baxter and Jack, this study produced (a) a rich exploratory narrative reflecting the nature of successful Spanish learning as well as (b) a simplification of results through an existing theoretical framework of student success.

According to Simons (2009), "case study is not synonymous with qualitative methods… [although] it is a common misunderstanding" (p. 19). The questions asked in

this study required different types of data in order to achieve desired answers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, but the quantitative data played a supporting role in the interpretation of results. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data provided a better understanding of the problem than if only one type of data were to have been utilized. This integration of multiple types of data was a pragmatic decision, as it allowed the researcher to take advantage of the strengths of both types of data and allowed the exploration of a greater variety of research questions (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

Embedded case studies are studies in which different levels or sources of data are collected (Yin, 2003; 1989). The key factor determining an embedded design in this study was the nested nature of the context in which learning took place. Student learning at the classroom-level was nested, or embedded, within the greater context the building and community. Baxter and Jack (2008) cite the benefit of embedded case design to illuminate the case through analysis "*within* the subunits separately (within case analysis), *between* the different subunits (between case analysis) or *across* all of the subunits (cross-case analysis) (italics in original)" (p. 550). Adopting an embedded multiple case study approach to conducting research allowed for consideration of this nested context during the exploration of successful Spanish learning.

Participant Selection

Defining and selecting the cases.

Stake (1995) sees the case as being a "specific, complex, functioning thing" (p. 2), a description fitting for the inherently complex yet specific phenomenon of high quality foreign language teaching. According to Stake (1995), the primary consideration

when selecting a case should be "to maximize what we can learn" (p. 4). Creswell

concurs (2007), noting that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to "select

individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of

the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 125). Yin (1994) would

add that one might consider multiple cases as multiple experiments and select cases

according to "replication logic" (p. 45).

Taking into account the suggestions of Stake, Creswell, and Yin, the cases for this

study were selected purposively, in an effort to provide the best representation of the

phenomenon across three separate cases of successful Spanish learning. Potential cases

for this study emerged during the analysis for a previous study investigating student

growth in the foreign language classroom (Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). Hierarchical

Linear Modeling (HLM) indicated differences in student growth among the 23

participating schools in the study, allowing for the identification of schools in which the

most positive and least positive (or even negative) growth took place over the course of

five years. Guba and Lincoln (1981) conceptualize the optimal case studies as "revealing

the properties of the class to which the instance being studied belongs" (p. 371). In order

to "reveal the properties of the class", selection was conducted in such a way as to

determine the best possible representatives of successful Spanish learning, defined in this

study as situations in which students exhibited the most positive growth in Spanish

proficiency. As such, three school situations were connected to the greatest overall

longitudinal student growth in Spanish proficiency over time (as indicated through HLM

analyses), these three Spanish learning contexts were selected, and the "successful

Spanish learning" found in these buildings/communities served as the bounded cases in this study.

Selecting Spanish teachers, administrators, peer educators, and students.

The three bounded successful Spanish learning situations for this study qualified as multi-level embedded cases, each consisting of a teacher/classroom level nested in a building/community level. Selection of participants for this study was done in such a way as to provide the greatest depth of understanding of the phenomenon at both the teacher/classroom and building/community level. Spanish teachers were selected based on their direct association with classrooms of empirically indicated "successful Spanish learning" during a 5 year, longitudinal study of Spanish language development in 23 Spanish learning classrooms across the Midwest (see Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012). These empirically identified classrooms served as the teacher/classroom level context to be explored during this study. Data were also collected from administrators, peer-educators, and students in the same building, and this data was intended to better understand both the teacher/classroom level and the building/community level contexts of successful Spanish learning. Administrators and peer-educators who participated in interviews for this study were selected through 'stakeholder analysis' (Burgoyne, 1994), a selection technique whereby interviewees were selected based on their identification as significant for gaining an understanding of day-to-day occurrences of a certain phenomenon. In this study, Spanish teacher-participants identified administrators and peer-educators most familiar with factors associated with successful Spanish learning.

Because this study explored a phenomenon that took place at the high school level, students associated with the study were minors. As such, student protection was of

primary concern, and student participation in this study was not taken lightly. All foreign

language learners were invited to participate in an anecdotal narrative of a specific

foreign language learning experience. Student participation was elicited through

invitation on the first day of field observations, and consent and assent forms were sent

home with all Spanish learners. All anecdotal narratives were completely anonymous, as

each student was provided with a pre-paid and addressed envelope in which to place the

anecdote for mailing purposes. There was no need for the teacher or any peer to be aware

of whether a student decided to compose an anecdotal narrative, and the researcher was

the only individual who had access to the anecdotal narratives.

Students (and their parents) were not the only individuals from whom permissions

were sought during this investigation. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals were

secured prior to the investigation, institutional approval was secured from each institution

prior to the onset of the investigation, and consent was secured from teachers, peer-

educators, and administrators prior to their participation. The IRB application, assent

forms, and consent forms are available in Appendix A. In disseminating the results of the

study, pseudonyms were utilized in an effort to protect all participating teachers,

administrators, and students.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Creswell (2007) points out that data collection in a case study "involves a wide

array of procedures as the researcher builds an in-depth picture of the case" (p. 132).

Denzin (1978) refers to this utilization of multiple sources of data across time as

triangulation of data, and in case study research, it may include activities such as 1) direct

observation within the case environment, 2) interviews with case participants or with

those possessing intimate knowledge of the case, and 3) analyses of artifacts from the

case environment, such as written documents. An overview of the data collection

instruments is provided in Table 2. The remainder of this section addresses, at length,

each of the data collection instruments utilized during this study.

Table 2: Overview of Data Sources						
Data Source	QUAL or quan?	Teacher-data?	Building-level data?	Case 1: Kaylynn	Case 2: Sandy	Case 3: Jasmine
Unstructured interviews	QUAL	Yes	Yes	3	3	3
Peer/Administrator interviews	QUAL	Yes	Yes	3	1	1
Student anecdotal narrative	QUAL	Yes	No	0	2	2
Elicitation interview	QUAL	Yes	No	1	1	1
Matrix observations	quan	Yes	No	3	8	7
Field observations	QUAL	Yes	Yes	3	8	7
Belief survey	QUAL + quan	Yes	No	1	1	1
Artifacts	QUAL	Yes	Yes	50+	50+	50+
Demographical information	quan	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Table 2						

Qualitative data collection and procedures.

Structured and unstructured interviews.

Stake (1995) suggests that the "interview is the main road to multiple realities" (p. 64), and Simons (2009) suggests that interviews allow people to "reveal more than can be detected or reliably assumed from observing a situation" (p. 43). Interviews presented multiple strengths as sources of data in a study. They were easily adaptable to multiple contexts, they allowed the researcher to note non-verbal clues, they allowed for flexible inquiry in unanticipated directions, and they provided access to data in the form of the respondent's personal perspectives and words (Burton & Bartlett, 2009).

In this study, unstructured interviews were utilized to gather the perspectives and experiences of the practicing Spanish teachers associated with successful Spanish learning. Unstructured interviews were selected because of their tendency to access the context of behavior and provide a way to understand the meaning of that behavior (Siedman, 1991). Additionally, the informal nature of unstructured interviews encouraged "unexpected disclosure of issues interviewees would have preferred to keep private" (Simons, 2009, p. 44). In this case, the researcher intended to understand which teaching practices and behaviors were prevalent in successful Spanish learning situations, the underlying motivations for choosing such practices, and the contexts that enabled the integration of such practices.

Structured interviews were utilized with administrators and peer-educators because of the limited time during which multiple topics needed to be addressed. These more formal interviews allowed the researcher to "standardize interview topics and

general questions", thus optimizing conditions limited by time constraints (Shkedi, 2005, p. 59). Interview protocols are available in Appendix A.

Elicitation interviews.

This study utilized elicitation interviews in engaging teachers to reflect upon their own practices. Elicitation interviews are based upon the simple idea of inserting a visual object, such as a photo or a video segment, into a research interview (Harper, 2002). Originally, photo elicitation was utilized by Collier (1967), an anthropologist who noted that using photos with interviewees sharpened memories and elicited longer and more comprehensive responses. Simons (2009) also suggests the use of photographs, indicating that they lower anxiety, provide a context for reflection, and help to avoid an expected response. She also suggests that the listening stance is critical in engaging participants in analyzing their own practices. She suggests facilitating deep reflection through simple probes such as "have you thought about?, why?, In what way?, and for instance, give me an example"(p. 48).

In this study, elicitation interviews applied carefully sculpted questions in coordination with classroom artifacts and photography to drive reflection and analysis concerning foreign language teaching practices and behaviors. In analyzing practices, it was hoped that teachers would reveal implicit motivations driving their use of particular behaviors and insights as to their level of pedagogical content knowledge.

For all interviews in this study (unstructured, structured, elicitation), dialogue was recorded via a highly sensitive digital voice recorder. Even though "a respondent's uneasiness with being recorded" is considered to be a drawback, "most researchers find that after some initial wariness respondents tend to forget they are being taped"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 109). All dialogue was transcribed by the researcher and entered into a qualitative database (MAXQDA10) for analysis.

Observations.

Observations are valuable in that they "provide a first hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a second hand account of the world obtained in an interview"(Merriam, 1998, p. 94). In this study, observations offered the opportunity to witness the natural context where successful Spanish learning took place.

Qualitative participant observations took place at all levels of Spanish instruction taught by each teacher, and the observations were conducted in an effort to best understand the teaching behaviors and practices during classroom instruction. The participant observations allowed for identification of behaviors or practices not previously identified or considered. As suggested by Creswell (2007), an observational protocol was utilized in order to record both descriptive and reflective notes in the field (see Appendix A for observation protocol).

Student experience through anecdotal narratives.

Van Manen (1999), in addressing the reflexive nature of pedagogical practices, raises the interesting possibility that "no matter what teachers say their feelings and intentions really are, what seems ultimately more important is how the students *experience* them (p. 21, italics in original text). In this study, Spanish learners in each school were invited to produce a simple anecdote about a single Spanish learning experience. In an effort to represent the most diverse collection of perspectives, students-participants were sought from all levels of Spanish learning (1, 2, 3, and 4) at each school. Students were provided with a prompt to guide the writing of the anecdotal

narrative. The prompt, as follows, was modeled after Van Manen's (1999) narrative directive utilized in eliciting the student voice concerning teacher pedagogical practices.

> Describe a specific experience with your Spanish teacher. In your description, refer to how the teacher talked, acted, behaved, or used certain gestures. Describe the kinds of things that were said, shown, taught, or learned in this lesson or school situation. Describe what the experience was like for you and how you felt.

The formal invitation to participate in the anecdotal narrative is found in Appendix A.

Collection of artifacts.

Burton and Bartlett (2009) note that qualitative artifacts offer an opportunity to concretely compare and contrast different institutions, present the potential to reveal data not known by research-participants, generate further questioning, and stimulate further discussion. In this study, artifacts were collected at the classroom, building, district, and community level. Each teacher provided a series of random lesson plans, student exemplars, and other items that the teacher deemed to be important to understanding successful Spanish learning. In addition to these classroom artifacts, building and district pamphlets, newsletters, and other relevant items were collected in order to better understand the context of successful Spanish learning. Finally, Bartlett and Burton (2007) address the potential value of photographic evidence in depicting school organization and teaching style. As such, photos of the community, building, and classroom were taken during the study and were collected from past sources (i.e., newspaper), and they served as qualitative snapshots to represent the situational context of successful Spanish learning.

Quantitative data collection and procedures.

Matrix observations.

In the positivistic-quantitative research approach, the preferred observation technique is of detached and objective observation, and the researcher observes the context while guided by a tool to aid with focus (Shkedi, 2005). The rationale behind utilization of objective, guided observation is that such procedures will increase the validity of the data by limiting the influence of personal biases and assumptions. Quantitative, outsider matrix-driven observations were conducted in all "successful Spanish learning classrooms" to gather data concerning types and frequency of teaching practices. This quantitative data informed and built upon the qualitative data gleaned during participatory observations, and it enriched the holistic story of successful Spanish learning produced during the data analysis phase of the study.

The Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching Observation Schema (COLT) guided the outsider objective observations in this study. The COLT was developed and tested in 1983 by Spada and Frohlich (Carroll, 1988), and an accompanying coding manual was published in 1995. The COLT is a positivistic-quantitative informed matrix that provides detailed evidence concerning the frequency of specific teaching practices such as the amount of Spanish spoken, the types of group work utilized, and the types of materials applied during a lesson. In 2005, Moeller secured permission from Spada and Frohlich to adapt the COLT for an observational, classroom-based study, and she adapted the COLT to include the additional categories of modes of communication (see Appendix B for a copy of the adapted matrix). Moeller's adapted COLT was utilized in this study of successful Spanish learning. During

classroom observations, a tally mark was entered accordingly for each occurrence of a particular behavior during a class period. At the end of a class period, the researcher recorded the total occurrences for each behavior. These totals were entered into a quantitative database (SPSS) according to qualifiers such as teacher, lesson type and level of Spanish.

Foreign language teacher beliefs and practices survey.

The Foreign Language Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey was designed by Dr. Aleidine Moeller in 2002. It addresses several of the teacher-level factors mentioned in the literature base, such as beliefs, experience, pedagogy, content knowledge, degree, and professional development experiences. In 2010, the survey was updated to include statements on technology, and the updated instrument was piloted with a group of 20 teachers.

In this study, the survey was administered to the three Spanish teachers associated with statistically indicated successful Spanish learning, and the results were added to the quantitative SPSS database. See Appendix B for a copy of the Teacher Belief Survey.

Demographical statistics.

Demographical statistics were publicly available for each school, district, and community context of successful Spanish learning for this study. These situational context statistics served to provide a deeper understanding of the communities, districts, and schools in which successful Spanish learning took place. This data was added to the quantitative database (SPSS) in preparation for analysis of contextualized successful Spanish learning.

Data Analysis

For each individual case in this study, data were analyzed at both the teacher/classroom level and the building/community level, and these analyses were followed by an investigation of relationships between these levels. Upon completion of the within-case analysis at the individual case level, a cross-case analysis ensued, and the researcher compared results among cases. Again, this first took place at the sub-unit level of cases in order to reflect the embedded nature of the cases.

Analyses for this study resulted in a thorough narrative of each individual case and an overarching research-driven representation of shared successful Spanish language learning. Heeding recommendations by Baxter and Jack (2008) that a conceptual framework serve to anchor a study and be referred to at the stage of data interpretation, narrative results fed into a discussion driven by an existing conceptual framework. In this study, Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework allowed for and served as a conceptual framework for understanding the results of this study (2011). A What Matters Most Framework-driven discussion allowed for a return to the original, holistic issue of student success and a final simplification of the complexities that were inherent to the research-based story of successful Spanish learning. The overarching data analysis and meaning-making process might be represented visually as in Figure 1.

Case 1

Data Collection: QUAL + quan	Data Analysis: QUAL + quan	Individual Case Report
Building/Community level	Building/Community level	Building/Community level
Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level

Case 2

Data Collection: QUAL + quan	Data Analysis: QUAL + quan	Individual Case Report
Building/Community level	Building/Community level	Building/Community level
Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level

Case 3

Data Collection: QUAL + quan	Data Analysis: QUAL + quan	Individual Case Report
Building/Community level	Building/Community level	Building/Community level
Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level	Teacher/Classroom level

Draw Cross Case conclusions *within* Building/Community level and Teacher/Classroom level

Draw cross case conclusions *between* building/community level and Teacher/Classroom level

Write cross case report

Revisit cross case report through lens of Goodwin's "What Matters Most Framework" (2011)

Figure 1: **Embedded Multiple Case Study Design for Successful Spanish Learning Study**

Based on information and figures in Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007

Within Case Analysis

The embedded nature of this case study reflects the nested nature of successful learning, with teacher and classroom level factors nested within the context of building and community level factors. Both qualitative and quantitative data were utilized to explore each of these levels of successful Spanish learning. Qualitative data were utilized to provide deep and rich descriptions and understandings, and the quantitative data provided a greater level of depth and understanding through 1) confirming or disconfirming what was observed during qualitative analysis, and 2) providing additional detail not necessarily possible through the collection of qualitative data.

In an embedded study, the analysis of all data begins at the single case level for each sub-unit, implying for this study that both quantitative and qualitative data be completely analyzed within each case and at each level (teacher/classroom and building/community) rather than general pooling across cases (Yin, 1989). First, a *within-level* analysis was conducted independently at the building/community level and the teacher/classroom level. Next, a *between-level* analysis was conducted, emphasizing the relationships between emergent teacher/classroom-level & building/community-level themes.

In order to analyze the quantitative data alongside the qualitative data, the researcher first manipulated the quantitative data (matrix observation data, belief survey data, proficiency scores, demographical details). SPSS was utilized in order to conduct a basic descriptive analysis of the raw quantitative data, all output was organized into summary tables and charts, and these quantitative tables were stored for reference during

the analysis of qualitative data and for potential integration into the narrative case descriptions.

There was a preponderance of qualitative data for this study, and MAXQDA10 assisted in storing, organizing, and retrieving data such that the researcher was able to most effectively and efficiently focus cognitive resources on meaning-making during the analysis process. In qualitative data analysis, the researcher reduced the gathered information to reflect answers to questions being investigated (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Data were reduced to units that qualified as being "the smallest piece of information about something……that is still interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 345). Codes were assigned to the units of data, and the coded data was aggregated into meaningful categories. While engaging in this reduction and reconstruction process, the researcher constantly compared newly coded data units and overarching categories with previously coded data and categories, making adjustments and changes to the overall conceptual schema as indicated by the data. Once established, categories were then analyzed at a more conceptual and abstract level, searching for relationships between and among categories such that a thematic, conceptual schema for successful Spanish learning could be ascertained (Merriam, 1998).

Cross Case Analysis

During the cross-case analysis phase, the researcher seeks to build "abstractions across cases" (Merriam, 1998, p. 195) and "a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details" (Yin, 1994, p. 112).

Upon completion of within case analysis, the cumulative results were again analyzed at the whole case level, involving whole case pattern-matching and explanation-building. This cross-case pattern matching and explanation building allowed the researcher to see "processes and outcomes that occur across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 172).

Again, the embedded nature of the phenomenon required that data analyses be conducted first at the level of individual sub-units (teacher/classroom and building/community). Once within-level abstractions were built across cases, cross level-analyses were conducted to identify relationships among emergent cross-case themes. The product of this multi-stage cross case analysis resulted in an overarching research-driven narrative of shared successful Spanish learning.

Study Validation

According to Yin (1989), case study researchers should employ multiple means by which to address construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability of the study design. In this study, each of these concerns was taken into consideration. Construct validity was sought through the utilization of multiple sources of evidence and having an expert review a draft of the case study report. Internal validity, or the confidence in the relationships between variables, was protected through the use of triangulation of multiple data sources and methods, member checking, and multiple cooperative yet independent codings and iterations of qualitative data based upon feedback and discussion. Internal validity was also addressed through pattern matching and explanation building applied during the analysis phase of the study (Yin, 1989).

Reliability and external validity were more difficult to address in this case due to the nature of the context in which this study was conducted. External validity was not sought in the traditional sense, although it should be noted that some qualitative researchers address a concept of external validity that differs from the traditional "generalizable to external populations". Rather than generalizing to external populations, one might view external validity in case study as dealing with generalizing the results to existing theories (Yin, 1998). Thus, it is accurate to argue that there is little basis for scientific generalization when considering multiple case study design, because the purpose is to generalize to theoretical propositions, not to populations as in statistical research. As a result, this study was not necessarily conducted in an effort to establish externally generalizable results in the statistical, post-positivistic sense. Rather, the intent was to provide an in-depth exploration of successful Spanish learning, combining both qualitative and quantitative data in order to generalize to existing theories and spur further research, discussion, and understanding. In this particular case, the study results were generalized to a specific existing framework, Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework (2011), in order to generate a focused understanding of the research-indicated story of successful Spanish learning.

Chapter 4

Results

Three situations of successful Spanish learning were explored in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in each situation, with data sources providing insights at both the building/community level as well as the teacher/classroom level. A general overview of each case is provided in Table 3, followed by narrative case reports that provide a greater depth of understanding for each specific case of successful Spanish learning.

Table 3: Overview of Cases			
Building/Community-Level Information			
	Sacred Learning	Linderville	Singleton
Enrollment (2012)	1057 (9-12)	255 (8-12)	243 (9-12)
Percent poverty (based on free/reduced lunch)	9.8	40.8	24.4
ELL percentage	0	4.4	0
Percent minority	12.9	11.8	.08
Mean composite ACT score	24.4 (2011) 23.8 (2010)	26 (2011) 20.9 (2010)	22.7 (2011) 21.4 (2010)
Graduation rate (2011)	99	86.4	92.6
College attendance rate	94	73	67.2

(2011)			
Teacher/Classroom-Level Information			
	Kaylynn	Sandy	Jasmine
Spanish levels currently teaching	4	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
Years in education	9	37	5
Degrees	BSED 7-12 Spanish; Projected completion of MAED in 2013	BAED Spanish and English; MA EDAD	BAED 7-12 Spanish
Table 3			

Within Case Narratives

   Sacred Learning High School: Unified Approach and Strong Convictions.

   Sacred Learning High School is a prominent private, parochial 9-12 school in the heart of the Midwest. Of the three schools involved in this study, Sacred Learning High School is comparatively large, with over 1,000 students in attendance. It is also situated within one of the largest cities of the state and is fed by ten affiliated parochial K-8 buildings. Sacred Learning High School enjoys very supportive and active community patrons, which a Spanish teacher illustrated when describing a dedicated donor who provided a Smartboard for every affiliated classroom in the middle and western portion

of the state. This support and dedication is further emphasized by the number of individuals participating in a recent, optional survey conducted by the school's strategic planning committee. More than 1300 "stakeholders" chose to go on-line to the survey site, and the district superintendent expressed sincere appreciation for the "many individuals who truly care about Sacred Learning and were willing to provide their heartfelt opinions and suggestions for the school's future."

Families wanting their children to attend Sacred Learning High School pay tuition, and a school administrator cited that this choice to pay for an optional educational experience in a city with a well-respected public educational system reflects a desire for "something different". He continued by explaining that "this difference is very much our faith…a unifying point and a source of pride", but the tuition being paid also means that there are high "academic expectations coming from parents and a willingness to support us….and what we're trying to accomplish is very high."

Because of the size of Sacred Learning High School, there is more than one teacher of world language. In fact, there are six teachers of Spanish, two of whom are part time instructors. While a multiplicity of teachers often equates to a multiplicity of approaches, this Spanish department is uniquely uniform. One Spanish teacher compared the Sacred Learning Spanish department to her previous experiences at other institutions, describing the Sacred Learning Spanish program as a comparatively "seamless" experience for students, with instructors having similar approaches, similar use of Spanish, similar passion for learning, and a unified conviction in what they are doing.

As I approach Sacred Learning High School, a young gentleman waits and holds the door for me. There are still 25 minutes before the academic day officially begins, and yet the halls are packed as I navigate my way to Kaylynn Hughes' classroom. Students sit on the ground or lean against lockers, lounging, chatting, and sharing a quick bite of food prior to the start of the day. All are dressed in uniforms, and most are sporting shorts on this chilly Midwestern February morning. The warning bell rings, and the jammed hallways are quickly deserted. The time for socialization has ended, and it is time to focus on learning.

"Fracasar no es una opción": A Nurturing, Can Do Attitude.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe is a symbol of Mexican identity, history, and culture. She is considered the key figure in acceptance of the Catholic religion by the indigenous peoples of Mexico. She also holds a central position as you enter the classroom of Kaylynn Hughes, a dynamic, creative, and student-focused teacher of upper-level Spanish at Sacred Learning High School.

Figure 2: Nuestra Señora

In Kaylynn's classroom, the Virgen de Guadalupe is prominently displayed next to the whiteboard at the front of the classroom, reinforcing that this is a place unified by faith as well as by an emphasis on learning. Rules are displayed on orange-framed sheets highlighted on a bright blue background: "speak at appropriate times, listen to the person talking, respect our classroom, keep hands to self, use affirming language" – these rules

emphasize respect and appreciation for the people and things in the learning environment. These are all underscored by a poster emphasizing "Excelencia". On the board is a running list of classroom products that will be expected of students over the course of the coming two weeks. There is little room for misunderstandings in this classroom, as behavioral and academic expectations that are communicated via classroom décor are consistently reinforced through Kaylynn's actions and classroom approach. Respect for others, love for unifying faith, and value for academic excellence bear prominence in this Spanish learning environment.

Excitement and enthusiasm seem to flow naturally and sincerely from Kaylynn Hughes. She feels like a cheerleader who also manages to serve as a skilled guide in a classroom full of language learners. Kaylynn plans every lesson with an emphasis on authentic and meaningful communication with language and she models risk taking by remaining in Spanish for the entirety of the lesson and using exaggerated actions, voice inflection, and visual aids to ensure successful communication.

Kaylynn's adopts an endearing "can do attitude" as well as literal "can do approach" for each class period. Every class begins and ends with a list of "can do statements" to drive meaningful learning and according to which students and Kaylynn assess their progress. She stresses her beliefs about the importance of dedication and attitude in being a successful learner, asserting that by "bringing a positive attitude and a dedicated work ethic to class every day, you will succeed." Kaylynn believes this whole-heartedly, in fact, and declares to students that, in her classroom, "fracasar no es una opción/*failure isn't an option.*"

Kaylynn is a product of the educational program at a major university in the same town in which she teaches. She comes from a family of educators, with both her mother and sister practicing education. Kaylynn entered the field because it "felt right", but she's surprised that she ended up in Spanish. Her personal experience as a classroom-based language learner was abysmal, and she shares that her skills in Spanish are not due to excellent classroom instruction but rather reflect a semester during which she studied in Spain. Closing my eyes and listening to the classroom interaction, Kaylynn's Spanish is beautiful. It rolls off of her tongue, fluidly and seemingly without effort, as she masterfully crafts input that is both within reach of yet challenges students. Part of the motivation that Kaylynn expresses for entering the field of Spanish teaching was to prove that her unfortunate experiences as a classroom Spanish learner did not represent the only way to learn Spanish. She continues to seek the ideal learning environment, currently through efforts toward an advanced degree in education. Kaylynn strives to mimic the real-life immersion that proved personally effective during her study-abroad experience, and observing her in action provides a momentary glimpse into what such an endeavor might entail.

Emerging themes within the Sacred Learning/Kaylynn Hughes case.

The story of Spanish instruction through the lenses of Sacred Learning High School and Kaylynn Hughes is one of unified and high expectations in a caring atmosphere. The emerging themes in this multi-level case included: (a)building/community unified in faith and expectations, (b) building/community focused on learning, (c) seamless department approach, (d) can do/fracasar no es una opción

attitude (e) meaningful and authentic use of L2-like an immersion, (f) gentle yet influential approach. Interactions between themes were primarily emphasized through unified focus on student learning with expressed high expectations.

Linderville High School: A Rural Hub of Academic Excellence

Linderville High School is the most geographically remote of the three schools in this study. It is decidedly rural, with livestock, corn and soybean fields in every direction as you exit the building. Officially, Linderville High School serves four separate rural communities, and public-access records indicate that the district serves an economically struggling population, with nearly 41% of the student population taking advantage of the free and reduced lunch program.

While some might pause at such economic obstacles, Linderville staff merely made a brief mention these struggles and instead focused primarily on the positive aspects of the surrounding communities. The largest community served by Linderville public schools is a community of approximately 800, and it is described as being the "most thriving" with "a grocery store…….a few new housing developments…...and a couple of restaurants." While some might not see the appeal in a rural-situated life, the Linderville High School principal explains that "this has always been kind of a destination place, and a lot of people have come here and stayed. They've enjoyed the communities….we have pretty good financial support here, and when teachers need things, they get it for the most part…..people are just committed." The district superintendent adds that academic standards might be a draw to the district, noting that Linderville has earned a reputation of dedicated staff, with students from larger

communities outside of the district opting into this rural educational situation. Unlike many rural communities whose futures appear at risk, he notes that "The consistency of Linderville's enrollment remains with more students moving into the district, and projections continue to show strong enrollment figures in the future." Linderville High School appears to be a thriving hub of educational excellence with an expressed commitment to a "nurturing, challenging, and disciplined environment".

While in the office waiting to meet the Linderville High school principal, I was intrigued to hear Spanish being spoken in the cafeteria and school hallway by high school learners of Spanish. I also found myself colliding with unexpected occurrences of written Spanish, frequently crossing paths with randomly placed labels throughout the school building. In the main office of the school, for example, the clock is labeled "el reloj", and the gym doors are labeled "el gimnasio". The value of these small occurrences of Spanish within the building was underscored when I received direction to find the Spanish classroom by going "down this first hall, turn, continue past the gym, exit the building by the side doors, pass the first door of the modular building, and enter via the second door to the external modular". The Spanish classroom is completely detached from the school and is as far from the building as a classroom can be, and yet Spanish permeates the main building, both via written and spoken word, all the way to the main office.

Purposeful and Strategic Effort = Success

Wind speeds were in excess of 50 miles per hour on my first visit to Sandy Fredricksen's classroom. Opening the door to the modular building against the force of

the wind was inhibiting, but the classroom itself extends welcoming arms to students and guests. Entering Sandy's classroom feels like walking into the setting of a carefully orchestrated, professionally designed, and enriching experience. Walls for student work coordinate with educational posters that present the cultural topic driving the posted work. Pods of desks suggest a large emphasis on group work. Strategic placement of student journal bins allow for efficient transitions and movement during learning. There are piñatas and papel picado hanging from the ceiling...not in an overbearing or afterthought sort of display, but rather a carefully orchestrated display of eye-catching and cultural artifacts. This classroom yells "fun" but also insists on "strategically designed efficient learning".

Careful analysis of the room reveals one specific piece that emerges repeatedly amidst this purposeful classroom design. It's not fancy or terribly eye-catching, but it is found on every wall in the classroom. This 8x11 piece of paper contains the bold-typed words "Esfuerzo = Éxito", and this "effort = success" assertion very simply yet eloquently captures Sandy Fredrickson as a teacher of Spanish.

Figure 3: Esfuerzo = Éxito

Everything that Sandy does is strategic and contributes toward the effort=success recipe that she emphasizes on a daily basis. Her expectations, which are shared on the first day of the year, set the stage for the effort=success environment. By second semester of Spanish 1, there is an explicit and unwaveringly

enforced "No English" rule in Sandy's classroom, a rule that might make some shake in their boots but works without a hitch in this effort=success environment. Sandy's behavior expectations, which are also very explicit, demand responsible and efficient use of time, noting – in bold type – "We will use each class period completely to help you learn". She's not kidding, and in fact Sandy utilizes a digital timer to ensure that they "use each class period completely", and every single activity is timed throughout the entirety of every lesson. Interestingly, Sandy underscores that her expectations are not selfish and that they are chosen strategically so that students can maximize their learning. Sandy shares that appropriate behaviors allow her "to do my very best teaching so that [students] can do [their] very best learning".

This idea of "effort=success" translates into something bigger than classroom learning for Sandy, and she stresses that she strives to integrate experiences that will "set [students] up for success….and translate into maybe something more complicated in the future." This emphasis on life-relevant lessons for success manifests itself in multiple manners, with a few examples being purposeful discussion of and practice with efficient transitions, using time wisely, honoring scheduled appointments, the power of honesty and integrity, and completing required tasks. While these firm and high expectations allow for fluid instruction in the classroom, Sandy values them also because they will help students be successful in life.

Sandy entered the field of language education during the AudioLingual era of memorization and mimicking, but her classroom is far from AudioLingual in methodology. Sandy asserts that her current approach reflects a concerted and purposeful

compilation of the many techniques and methodologies to which she has been introduced at conferences and professional development experiences, through educational books, or during observations of other teachers. Concepts or strategies that she finds intriguing or potentially beneficial for learners are carefully tested and reflected upon, and techniques bearing successful results find a permanent home in her classroom.

Sandy has strong convictions regarding how she approaches instruction in her classroom, and she strives to share her knowledge and skills with others. According to her principal, Sandy is an active presenter at state and regional conferences, and she also assumes a leadership role during staff development efforts in her building. The principal smiled slyly as I left our interview, noting "Sandy is an inspiration here, and I will never let her retire". In spite of this established reputation of excellence and leadership, Sandy modestly insists that "none of this is mine, I stole everything", reminding me that her classroom approach reflects a carefully molded combination of ideas and approaches originating from external sources. The magic that is witnessed in this classroom is unlike anything that I've seen anywhere, however, and it would be an injustice to call it anything other than the "strategically and purposefully compiled and tested Fredrickson approach".

Emerging themes within the Linderville High/Sandy Fredrickson case.

The story of successful Spanish learning through the lenses of Linderville High School and Sandy Fredrickson is one of dedication, high expectations, and effort-driven success. The emerging themes in this multi-level case included: (a) dedicated building/community that will not allow students to fail (b) building focusing on the

positive, (c) strategic design of instruction driven by effort=success orientation, (d) high expectations enabled by effort = success orientation, (e) life-long learning for students and teacher, and (f) leader in school and state. Relationships between these themes expressed themselves primarily as mutual support and collaborative efforts for student success.

Singleton High School: Enduring Educational Roots in a Steadily Growing Community.

When planting a tree, application of root stimulator helps to ensure successful establishment of roots and longevity of the plant. According to historical records, the Singleton school system served as the root stimulator for the community of Singleton. Records indicate that the decision to initiate a school system ensured establishment of the community, which began as a railroad town in the late 1800's (CALMIT, 2005). While the city outgrew the railroad era, it found renewed success and growth through a continued emphasis on education and a newfound emphasis on agriculture. Today, the school system serves the community of Singleton as well as multiple surrounding agricultural and rural communities, and these communities offer a unified, committed dedication to their public educational system.

Singleton defies odds that tend to be stacked against communities in rural situations, and it exhibits steady, strong, and vibrant growth. This is not recent news, and Singleton has a history of growth. According to past census data, the only ten year period that Singleton recorded a population drop was from 1900-1919. Since then, the population has experienced an upward climb. Continued strength in this community may

be attributed to its location in relation to two major cities, one within 30 minutes and one within 50 minutes, qualifying this community as a "bedroom community". The community chamber of commerce executive director was quoted in 2011, noting that the population growth may be "partly due to the progressive nature of the community," with recent additions including , but not limited to, a new Senior Center, an aqua center, a middle school, a ball complex, and a brand new library. Singleton is not your typical rural community. Rather, it presents itself with a strong, growing, progressive front, and it is a city with roots firmly planted in education.

Pride in the Singleton educational system is evident during an interview with the principal of Singleton High School, and she duly notes that there is a definite air of commitment and high expectations for education within the community. "We have great kids here. They are polite and committed.…What we have walk in our door is really good." Singleton High School staff works strategically to build upon "what walks in the door", and several supports have been established to assist students in their paths to success. The school has developed a "floating homeroom program" that has gained attention at the state level. They hired a paraeducational professional who coordinates specific study groups as an intervention for students who might need extra assistance but not qualify due to an identified need. An annual survey of graduates drives decision making to identify and improve upon weaknesses within the organization. Finally, this school celebrates behaviors that contribute to academic success through overt recognition during the school day.

A Youthful Shot of Adrenaline

During the past four seasons, the Singleton High School volleyball team has compiled a 123-13 record, with state tournament appearances and semifinal finishes. There are new players and a new coach this year, but the team is getting similar results. The coach, also a Spanish teacher of focus in this study, is in her fifth year in education, and Jasmine Marks is already well recognized due to her high level of dedication to both academics as well as athletics in a school and community that places great value on both. When discussing the volleyball team, Jasmine situates the enjoyed success within the context of community, passion, and hard work. "I'm very lucky to be coaching in a community like this….. The girls that play volleyball, they love it. They're willing to put in the time and hard work necessary to follow in the footsteps of past teams."

Title of Head Volleyball Coach alone is often enough to convince a small community that a person must have a strong streak of dedication, but then Jasmine reveals that she is also involved with coaching track and basketball, she manages off-season club volleyball, she is a member of the homeroom coordination team, she is the loving mother of a demanding toddler…..and she is the only teacher of Spanish in the district. Her principal smiles broadly as she proudly notes, "I take credit for hiring [Jasmine]", and she continues by raving about Jasmine as someone who has been "like a shot of adrenaline for the building. She's come in, she got involved in the community, she teaches at the church, and she does a lot of different things, and that's been terrific……. As a teacher of Spanish she's been very effective, but as a teacher and a community member, she's been equally effective." Clearly, Jasmine Marks models the

highly involved life that is so typical of contemporary high school students, and as such

she relates very well to the balancing act that students must undertake in order to be

successful on multiple venues. Jasmine Marks' coaching philosophy of "community,

passion, and hard work" crosses over into her classroom, as do the high expectations that

she holds for herself as an individual who is highly involved in multiple life endeavors.

While enjoying much success with both academics and athletics, Jasmine Marks

maintains an air of humility. She is a young teacher, not yet having completed 5 years of

teaching, and she repeatedly mentions that she is still "figuring out her curriculum,

figuring out who she is as a teacher". Jasmine actively seeks to understand herself as an

educational professional, and her principal described Jasmine's professional growth

efforts as "self-motivated", citing impressive curriculum development goals as evidence

of this motivation. Jasmine's passion and yearning for self-understanding might be

evidence of her orientation toward growth and process in the classroom, and while she

asserts that she is still defining her instructional practices and approaches, her

management of classroom behavior and learning are decidedly certain: unyielding and

high expectations for excellence.

Jasmine began her post-secondary education in the biological sciences, but she

switched to Spanish education and joined the family trend, with a mother, brother, and

sister also practicing or studying to be Spanish teachers. She also married a man who

became a Spanish teacher, and thus Jasmine is surrounded with a supportive network of

family members who talk the talk and walk the walk in the world of language

acquisition. In a district where she is the only teacher of foreign language, this network supports her journey as she defines who she is as a teacher of Spanish.

Jasmine's classroom boldly greets visitors with cheerful, bright orange walls covered with student work, and masking tape strategically placed on the floor promises an educational game during the learning process. As Jasmine navigates the room, her tall and confident presence makes you sit straight in your seat, and a single, carefully directed stare silences mouths quickly.   Classes are sprinkled with dry humor that students devour, and students roar with laughter but do not get caught up in the humor too much to miss out on record-breaking transition time from one activity to the next.

Jasmine Marks' current instructional approach is heavily influenced by her post-secondary educational program, and she approaches lesson development through reflective consideration of techniques and approaches that will most benefit her learners. "We learned the different

Figure 4: Wall of "Goal Writing Verbs"

methodologies and all the research behind everything, so I find that helpful [when considering] 'is this really gonna benefit what I'm doing or the kids?'". This reflective emphasis in planning carries over into the classroom, and Jasmine purposefully integrates reflective practice for students in her classroom. In fact, analyses of Matrix Observations revealed that 15% of instructional time was devoted to reflective activities during

observations of Jasmine's instruction. An entire wall is dedicated to verbs for utilization when writing measurable goals to promote reflective growth throughout each learning unit in the classroom. Jasmine Mark fuels her classroom with high expectations and unwavering dedication, and she is a teacher-practitioner who operates within a reflective framework and extends that framework to her students' learning process.

Emerging themes within the Singleton High School/Jasmine Marks individual case.

The story of Spanish achievement through the lenses of Singleton High School and Jasmine Marks is one of high expectations, high involvement, and reflective growth. The emerging themes in this multi-level case included: (a) thriving community/building rooted in education (b) building/community emphasis on interventions for success, (c) growth oriented, reflective instructional design, (d) developing teacher identity and (e) high and unyielding expectations, and (f) visible presence in community and school. Relationships between themes were expressed primarily as collaborative and proactive support of student success, and progressive orientation encouraging and supporting growth and novel instructional approaches.

Cross Case Narrative: A Shared Story of Success

Development of the shared story of Spanish learning success for this study required multiple steps of cross-case analysis. Initially, independent analyses at each sub-level (teacher level and building/community level), resulted in level-specific shared stories of student success. Upon establishment of cross-case stories of success at both levels, there were additional analyses to explore the interactions among the themes at

each level. Figure 5 presents the results of the cross case analysis for this study. The

content within the triangular figure represents the emergent teacher-level themes related

to successful student Spanish learning, and the shaded content in which the triangle is

embedded represents the building and community level. The arrows represent

relationships between sub-levels, with two-way arrows indicating two-way relationships

and one-way arrows representing one-way relationships.

Legend

☐ = building level

☐ = teacher level

➔ = relationships

Removal of Distractions

Climate of Collaborative Commitment

Spanish-Focus Enhancing Instructional Design

Encouraging Teacher Growth

Strategic Classroom Management

High Expectations

Reflective Approach

Figure 5: Shared Story of Successful Spanish Learning
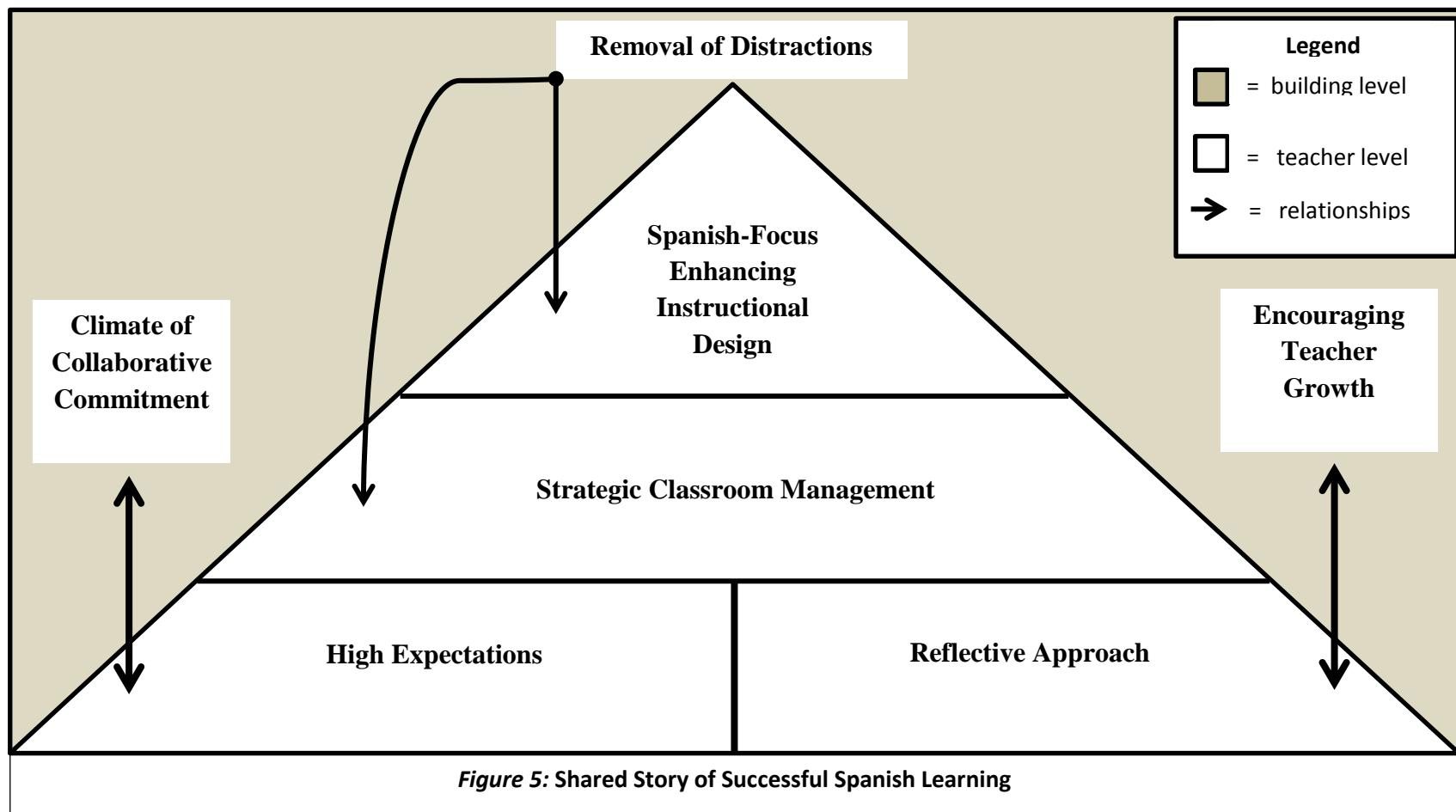
The community and building level story of successful Spanish learning boils down to one overarching theme of "the high priority classroom", otherwise coined "focusing on learning", "supporting learning", and "encouraging the learning process". Cross case analyses revealed the high priority classroom as involving staff and community collaborative commitment to student success, encouragement of staff professional growth, and removal of student distractions through scheduling and organization.

Collaborative commitment to student success.

A consistent thread throughout the building-level story of student success was collaborative commitment to student success. This collaborative commitment was envisioned, holistically, as a wide-spread dedication to student success through unified and devoted staff and communities supportive of schools' educational efforts.

The conversation of commitment to students often began with discussion of the surrounding communities, with community commitment expressed during all interviews for this study. Sandy, for example, noted "I find that the community is really, really supportive. I think in all the years, this is my 20th year here, in all the years that I've been here, I've only really had 2 parents who have actually complained to me." A Spanish teacher at Sacred Learning expressed a similar experience with high levels of parental support for student learning. "Parents are awesome. If I have an issue with a student, I can send an e-mail and say "this is going on, I could use your backing" or "call" and 9 out of 10 times, I have parent support. It's not "well, what are you doing wrong". It's "okay, we'll have a talk with so and so". While teachers at Fredrickson and Sacred Heart

addressed parent and community support through the lens of Spanish learning, Jasmine

Marks viewed community support through a broader lens due to her heavy involvement

in coaching. "There's definitely community support…..everybody shows up to support

the kids. At music concerts, the gym is full wall to wall. They come to sporting events,

they you know, come write stuff about us in the [local] newspaper, and people check the

school website."

Administrators and teachers also shared their thoughts on building and

community commitment to students when they shared how staff rally to support those

who struggle, as was evidenced as the Linderville High School Principal shared,

"[Students] come here and they're amazed at the commitment our teachers have to the

kids. And that you're not gonna be allowed to fail. I mean if you fail up here, you have

certainly completely shut down, because people will stay on you and stay on you." The

Singleton principal described commitment to success more concretely, through a

description of the many student interventions that staff offer for students, noting a desire

to "give students extra help" and "encourage excellence".

When individuals stressed the importance of commitment, they most often used

the pronoun "we", thus emphasizing the collaborative nature of this commitment. The

Linderville principal alluded to this idea when she described her staff as being "willing to

collaborate and share ideas to bring [a struggling] student up. You know, 'why is this

student successful here and not here….what are tips and strategies to help them be

successful.'" Jasmine Marks describes this culture of collaborative commitment as part of

what attracted her to accept a teaching position. She declared that she was impressed with

the " mix of younger teachers and older teacher and everyone collaborates, and…..I don't think there's a single teacher who I couldn't go to and talk and shoot stuff off of."

It is important to stress that a nature of collaborative commitment is not necessarily inherent to school culture. In fact, it was expressed that the development of this sort of climate of collaborative commitment seemed to be the result of strategic hiring, attracting staff who share the vision of collaborative commitment, and a gentle culling of staff who did not share the vision. This purposeful hiring was evidenced as the Linderville principal shared, "I'm committed as a principal to hiring excellence. And I when I'm interviewing, I gotta know that they are gonna walk into this school, and they're gonna be able to build relationships with kids, with staff, because I think when you get that connection and you build those relationships, people care about it, and that's when they're gonna be committed and dedicated and investing the time to make everything better."

Support/Encourage teacher growth.

In each school, teachers indicated that they were encouraged to and afforded the liberty to seek professional growth in multiple venues. Administrators appreciated teachers' efforts in growth-seeking, as they were equally dedicated to identifying the most efficient and effective path to student success Kaylynn's principal shared this sentiment of encouraging growth seeking for the sake of school-wide improvement when he noted "…there's research out there….there are best practices out there. Let's be active in finding those best practices and bringing them into our school." In each of these

schools, Spanish teachers were actively seeking growth, and growth seeking was actively encouraged.

Spanish teachers in this study indicated that it is not always simple to find valuable professional development opportunities. Jasmine Clarks, whose coaching schedule limits the opportunities in which she can participate, was forced to be a bit more creative with her growth seeking, but she noted that "our ESU does webinars to improve student achievement and they let you do those things….and I am always reading research and things like that." Fortunately for these teachers, discussions with administrators revealed a progression toward increasingly flexible definitions of "professional growth" and support for less traditional pursuits for growth.

Schools flexibly defined "professional growth experiences", and this was reflected as the Sacred Learning principal shared "we've expanded our definition of what professional development is and what we pay for". This flexible encouragement for professional growth was described in a very basic sense as "encouragement for sharing" with Sacred Learning's World Language Department Chair seeking department level-growth through "buying into sharing's a good thing. It's not competitive… if you're sharing with everyone, your whole department is growing, and it works for everyone then. More traditional forms of growth were sought as well, with examples such as learning communities, conference attending, advanced degree seeking, and participation in state-level initiatives cited as paths commonly sought for growth.

Removal of distractions through scheduling and organization of learning.

Cross case analyses at the building level revealed a concerted effort to remove distractions through purposeful scheduling and organization of learning. In each school, students enjoyed a great deal of instructional continuity from one year to the next, even from one semester to the next. At all schools, there was an effort for students to remain with the same teacher from one semester to the next during the academic year. In terms of vertical advancement across levels of Spanish learning, Singleton and Linderville enjoyed scheduling continuity through the availability of only one main teacher of Spanish. At Sacred Learning, this continuity and was more difficult to accomplish because of the many teachers to whom students might be exposed during their Spanish learning experience. According to Kimberly, a Spanish teacher at Sacred Learning, the high level of continuity across the learning experience resulted in "a shorter adaptation phase" for students as they transitioned from one teacher to the next. This lessened "adaptation phase" for students increased the time available for focusing on learning. Kimberly expanded upon this concept as she shared, "we are so similar in our approaches to how we teach the languages and so when you start in 1st year, the students just seamlessly travel into 2nd year….they are already trained in the style….like we all use pictures, we all use photovocabulary, we all try to speak a lot of Spanish….so it's not like there are radically different styles that students need to work with. We're all just very similar."

Achieving this "seamless experience" with a shortened "adaptation phase" transpired naturally in the Singleton situation because students remained with Jasmine for

the entirety of their learning experience. For Sandy Fredrickson, while this year welcomed a second Spanish teacher, this second teacher worked with only one class of 1st year Spanish, and the two teachers regularly met so that the newcomer could access Sandy's materials, a move that likely increased the probability of a "seamless experience." According to interviews and observations, these seamless transitions in Spanish learning were manifested in all schools as students journeyed through up to four years of common grading approaches, beliefs about communication with Spanish, classroom expectations, and instructional approaches.

Class size also arose as a possible organizational factor that might contribute to successful Spanish learning. In many high school classrooms, it is not unheard of for teachers to have class rosters of around 30 students, yet none of the observed classes presented high numbers of learners. In observations, the largest class size at any level was 24 students, with the average 1st year class at 20 students and the average 4th year class size at 10 students. While there was not a strong emphasis by teachers or administration on class size as a significant factor in academic excellence, both Jasmine and Sandy noted appreciation for smaller classes.

Schedule interruptions during the school day can be a concern for practicing teachers hoping to focus on their content, as interruptions to scheduling can easily distract and pull attention from the learning focus. The schools in this study held academics in high regard and strove to minimize such interruptions, something that was evidenced as Sacred Heart's principal shared "The classroom has a very high priority and….we try and hold classroom time as being kindof precious, and we don't have a lot of interruptions in

the schedule and that sort of thing. I think that permits our teachers to focus their time on encouraging the learning process."

Classroom/Teacher Level: Design and Practice Elements Allow Spanish Learning Focus

As with building and community level analyses, the teacher level analyses revealed an emphasis on factors that promote efficiency in the classroom. Unlike the building and community level, teachers focused not on successful learning in general, but rather they emphasized design and practice elements strategically and purposefully utilized in order for students to successfully interpret and communicate with Spanish. These design and practice elements were situated in two main emergent themes: Classroom Management and Instructional Design.

Strategic classroom management: Setting the stage for learning.

When asked what they perceived to be the major contributors to student success in the Spanish classroom, teachers routinely responded by noting classroom management. According to Jasmine Marks, for example, "to be successful in any classroom, you have to have good classroom management."

For administrators participating in this study, classroom management frequently boiled down to behavior management, represented well when the Sacred Learning Principal shared a desire that "when teachers are in the classroom, they aren't spending a lot of time with discipline issues." For Spanish teachers in this study, classroom management became a much more complex issue than simply avoiding "discipline issues". Spanish teachers' management approaches boiled down to a combination of

strategic procedures, high expectations, encouragement, and a growth orientation that might promote efficiency with learning and enable students to focus available resources on communicating with Spanish. Classroom management, in essence, laid a foundation for efficient language learning, and classroom management included the subthemes of (a) general procedures and organization, (b) risk taking environment, and (c) growth orientation.

General procedures and organization.

In field notes, the words "trained" and "programmed" arose on more than 10 occasions because of the level of efficiency that was witnessed. In one instance, I found it almost humorous, noting "students seem trained to use their time well. They seem to care about getting things done efficiently. Students are told 'you have 3 minutes to cut' and they literally jump up and run to get scissors to do the cutting…It's almost funny." Maybe it was almost funny, but it was also very efficient, and these teachers valued the efficiency, exemplified when, in the aforementioned instance, efficient paper cutters were rewarded with "Ustedes trabajan muy eficientemente. Estoy orgullosa de ustedes/*You work very efficiently. I'm proud of you."* According to words and actions of teachers in this study, learning occurred in a more efficient manner when specific procedures were followed and classroom organization contributed to rather than distracted from learning. In other words, they strategically structured their classroom organization and daily procedures in such a manner as to maximize the efficiency of Spanish language learning.

Each of the Spanish teachers in this study utilized general procedures and classroom organization to maximize use of classroom time and prepare students for

learning. Teachers approached classroom organization in unique fashions, but there was a shared purpose of organization to support efficient classroom instruction. All Spanish teachers strategically organized their classrooms to maximize learning, but different instructional approaches necessitated different and unique organizations. Kaylynn Hughes frequently utilized pairwork throughout her instruction, and desks were therefore situated in six rows to quickly facilitate the organization of pairs. Sandy Fredrickson organized desks in pods, and there was a preponderance of group work during her instruction. Jasmine Clark's coaching background and personal preferences drew her to regularly integrate games, competitions, and hands-on activities, and desks were arranged in a circular formation to allow for significant physical movement at the center of the classroom.

During the first of my classroom observations, I was struck by the efficiency of transitions, and although I made note of them, I considered that this would be an anomaly. With the advent of observations of the second teacher, my field notes reflect surprise and excitement "Again, transitions to pairs and groups happens seamlessly, without fanfare, as soon as [the teacher] says 'go'." The same was observed during my final observations, with speedy transitions constituting a shared time-saving feature of classrooms in this study.

Matrix observations analyses revealed that teachers, on average, integrated five different learning activities during each class period, with some classes including as few as three total activities and some classes including as many as eight different activities. When teachers have only around 40 minutes with which to work, speedy transitions are

necessary if they hope to efficiently and successfully navigate students through their mean five daily activities. Strategic classroom organization played a minor role in these efficient transitions, as desks were organized according to activities which were favored during instructional time. Smartboard and overhead projectors also helped, as each teacher relied on projecting components of the lesson plan, with periodic transitions projected to aid efficient progression of instruction. All teachers also provided students with specific transition deadlines to help motivate students to move efficiently. Not all teachers verbally expressed an awareness of their efficient transitions, although Sandy Fredrickson shared an earnest and purposeful focus on transitions, citing that she had gone to the extent of addressing "what is a transition" with her 2nd year Spanish students, because their transitions has been sufficiently chaotic that she had to strategically train them, beginning with simply understanding what transitions were and how they contribute to learning.

Similar to transitions between activities, all teachers were also very purposeful about the transition into each class period through daily introductory material that issued students into the content of the day. For the three teachers in this study, in the words of Kaylynn, "every class begins before the bell". Each teacher used different terms to describe these introductions, but all served the same purpose, as expressed in Jasmine's words to "review, refresh, and get in gear for class". Students were expected to complete these activities each day, placing the daily introductory activity in an assigned location. Teachers placed high value on these preparatory activities, with two teachers expressing, in the words of Jasmine Marks' "if [students] are not in their seat working on it, even

before the bell rings, they're tardy." Each teacher utilized the Smartboard or projector to facilitate the "introductory activity" process, and teachers were able to tackle routine activities such as taking attendance and lunch count while students prepared themselves to engage in the meat of the lesson. Again, teachers utilized the daily introductory activity as a sort of procedural strategy to maximize use of time for learning in the classroom.

Finally, each teacher took advantage of several minor procedural routines that contributed to the maximization of time use in the classroom. The passing out of tests, homework, journals, or other "basket-situated classwork" seemed to be a routine and automatic activity in each situation. Students knew that, if there was something in a particular basket, they should hand it out to the class as soon as they entered the classroom, and this was a procedure that seemed to contribute to efficient use of time. Students knew how to access make-up work in the event of an absence, and they knew how to do this without having to use the teacher's time. Each teacher placed instructional material or daily lesson plans on the internet, and this use of technology lessened the time that would normally be utilized in class to distribute materials to or share intentions with students.

Risk-taking environment.

"They don't feel so afraid". "I try to create a comfortable atmosphere where you can make mistakes". "The first thing I tell them is that you just have to go out on a limb". These statements come from the three Spanish teachers in this study, and each of these statements uses different adverbs and adjectives, but these modifiers are describing

the same concept: risk taking in the classroom. Risk taking was highly valued by each of the teachers in this study, and each of the teachers in this study shared this perspective with their students from the very first day of classes.

While discussing the importance of helping students to take risks, Kaylynn expressed the belief that "this is a sort of motivation that must be provided for all students." It seemed that each teacher in this study agreed with this sentiment, but the three Spanish teachers chose differing approaches when establishing an environment in which students would be motivated to take risks.

Kaylynn sought a "comfortable classroom" through emphasizing respect and appreciation for others in an atmosphere where risk-taking would be necessary. "I have a real thing about you can't laugh at people or make fun of anyone or anything, because you're really putting yourself out there, and so I try to create a very comfortable atmosphere where you can make mistakes." In such an atmosphere, it was Kaylynn's hope that students might feel confident making mistakes while in the company of supportive, like-minded peers.

In encouraging risk-taking, Sandy focused on the inherent mistakes that are natural to the process of engaging in real communication. Emphasizing that mistakes are natural, normal, and not something to be punished helped students to feel more confident, as she shared, "if you are trying to speak the language, and you get across what you want [the person] to understand, then you have communicated…..when you're talking, I don't care if you get the 'al' or the 'a la'…..I might correct them, but no native speaker will ever correct them on that." Sandy shared that, while she is the product of a program that

emphasized memorized perfection and personally experiences anxiety when speaking Spanish in public, her focus on natural and mistake-embracing communication with her students helps to decrease their fear of mistakes even when in the presence of native speakers. "I don't think that they feel that intimidation and they don't have that fear when they go out [by native speakers] because they have done it so much here."

Jasmine approaches the establishment of a "risk taking classroom" in a more direct manner. She is honest with her students, explaining that "they have to be okay with making mistakes. Cuz it's gonna happen. It's not like math where 2+2 =4…..they have to be willing to make mistakes and step out of their comfort zone sometimes."

In discussions with Spanish teachers, it emerged that Kaylynn, Jasmine, and Sandy shared one approach by which they encouraged students to take risks. Each of these teachers modeled risk-taking on a daily basis with an audience of adolescent learners. On the second day of my observations, Kaylynn placed a chant on the Smartboard, and she opened the classroom windows. She then explained to the class "hoy somos los maestros de las otras clases en Sacred Learning/ *today, we're the teachers of other classes at Sacred Learning".* Students giggled, and Kaylynn then proceeded to lead them through one of the loudest chants that I have witnessed. She modeled risk-taking, amidst supportive giggling of students, and surely there were a few non-Spanish classes that were introduced to an energetic, fun, and slightly loud chant. This seemed like a uniquely bold way to encourage risk-taking until I visited the remaining two teachers in this study, and each teacher proceeded to engage in similar, if not nearly the same, risk-taking modeling. These teachers not only expressed the

importance of risk-taking to their students; they also modeled it through their words and actions on a daily basis.

Growth-oriented environment.

Risk taking was also encouraged through each teacher's insistence for focus on growth in the classroom. With an orientation on reflective growth, mistakes are seen as valuable: they are an opportunity to improve, to identify misunderstandings, to redirect the course of action such that the desired objective is achieved. Each teacher in this study emphasized a growth orientation, and while one might lump this within the category of "risk-taking environment", the level of emphasis that each teacher placed on this particular aspect of learning warranted a separate and unique category dedicated to growth-oriented environment.

Each of the Spanish teachers in this study dedicated considerable effort toward engaging students in self-regulatory activities emphasizing reflective growth. More specifically, Jasmine engaged her students in a structured, unit-based goal writing process driven by higher order thinking verbs and classroom evidence, yielding a growth portfolio. Sandy daily spoke of the connection between effort and success and also engaged her students in a structured, unit-driven goal writing process that fed into a portfolio. Kaylynn daily transformed her lesson objectives into "can do statements" by which to drive learning and reflection for both students and the teacher. Through these activities, all three teachers asked students to consider measureable outcomes for specific activities over a specified duration of time, and all three teachers asked students to reflect on their level of success regarding relative attainment of outcomes (or goals). Teachers

alluded to several motivating factors for immersing students in a growth-oriented and reflective process, such as "give them self-confidence by….showing them that they can [achieve the goals]" and "see all these things [in the learning process] that they are in control of". Sandy was the most descriptive of her rationale for this process, indicating that it "really helps them be more successful, and it makes them be more metacognitive about their learning, and then I think they realize that they're in control of their learning, that they become more autonomous."

Instructional Design.

In discussions with school administrators, classroom instruction emerged as being the central feature contributing to high levels of student performance in the Spanish classroom. Jasmine's principal shared this sentiment when noting that "High Spanish achievement, I really think, is a direct result of her instruction…. she really is a master teacher, and I can't imagine what she'll be like 10 years from now." Administrators also admired the time and dedication that such instruction required of these teachers, making comments such as "her planning is just incredible, because that kind of stuff takes a lot of time." Teachers themselves discussed instructional design at length, and the classroom observations conducted during this study reflected strategic manipulation of activities and materials to allow students to fully focus on the task of communicating in the Spanish language.

No two classrooms in this study were exactly alike, and teachers' written lesson plans were of varying formats, but their overarching approach to instructional design reflected shared characteristics. All engaged in a backward design approach to drive the

planning of classroom instruction, and all relied on various strategies, practices, and tools to maximize engagement during instruction.

Backward Design.

Each Spanish teacher in this study began her lesson or unit planning by establishing student performance outcomes to drive the planning of instruction. These "student performance outcomes" were called different things by teachers, such as "goals" or "objectives" or "end point", but the same idea was reflected by each teacher's unique terminology: real-life student performance outcomes that might serve to direct the development of unit and lesson plan content. Teachers noted that this "beginning with the end" approach helped them ensure that instructional activities efficiently contributed to progress toward the desired goal, a sentiment that was reflected as Kaylynn shared, "When you build lessons based on objectives, you first think about what you want students to ultimately know or be able to do, and then build your activities in a way that leads them to that point."

Sandy and Jasmine's words nearly mirrored Kaylynn's description, but they addressed backward design from the unit-planning perspective. Sandy shared, "By building lessons backward, I think about what I want the students to be able to do at the end of the unit.…. If I know what they have to be able to do at the end of the unit, it is easier to plan activities to get to that point." Sally noted, "I think where I want my students to be and what do I really want them to get out of [the unit]…I think of the end.…. So every lesson is going to have to be built toward them being able to [reach the] end goal."

According to the Teacher Belief Survey, all teachers agreed or strongly agreed that planning should be conducted with a focus on students' needs. This backward design approach allowed teachers to emphasize students' needs as they carefully and strategically scaffolded the learning process, breaking down large tasks into small steps and emphasizing steady and efficient student progression toward identified outcomes. Teachers voiced appreciation for this scaffolded design, noting that it gave students more confidence and made them feel empowered. Sandy alluded to this idea of careful scaffolding yielding confidence as she described a mini cultural activity. "I have the big poster of *Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park*, and

Figure 6: Instructional Sequencing Emphases
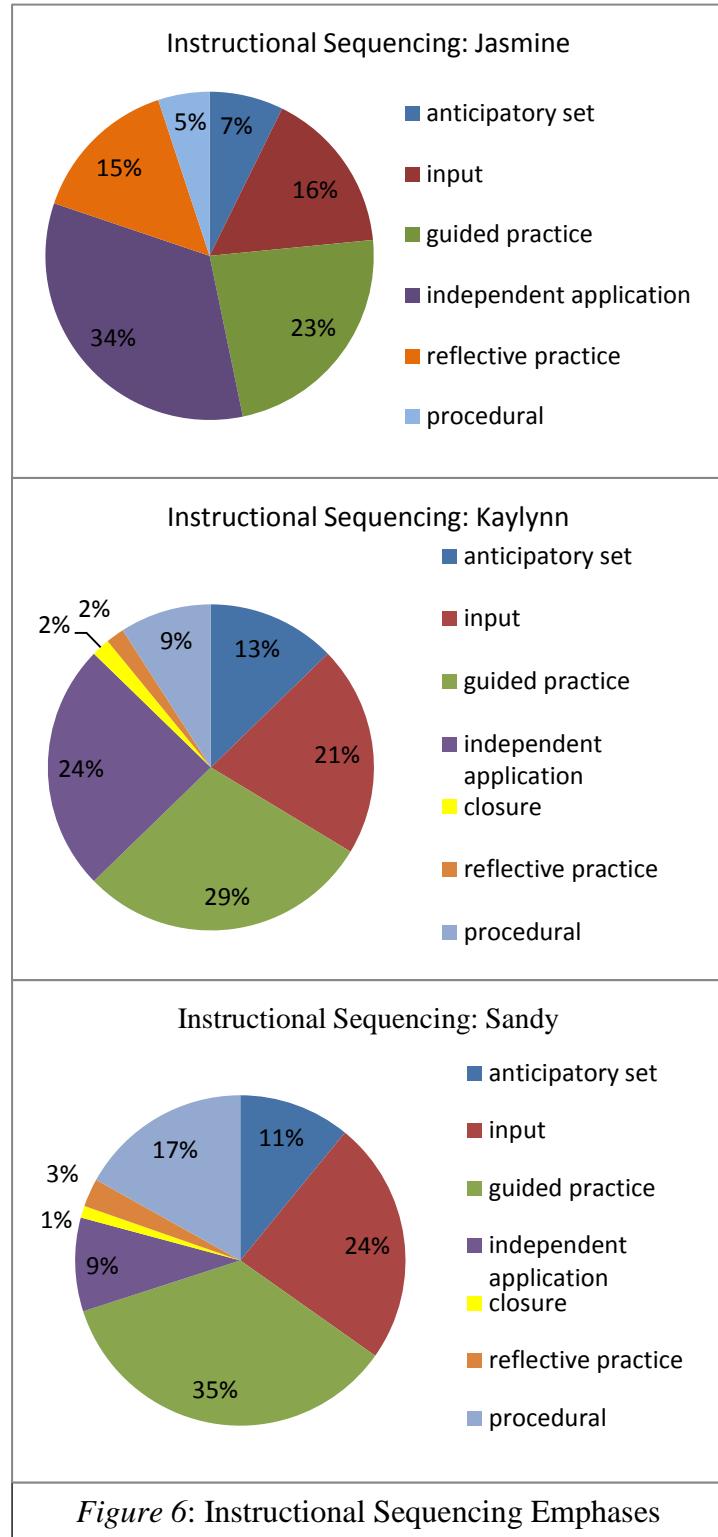
then I start out 'What do you see?', because everybody can answer that. You don't have to be a genius. 'I see a dog, I see a balloon, I see whatever.' So everyone can participate. It gives them confidence. You're using the language. 'What do you see? What are the colors? What's the theme?' Pretty soon because they've looked at it long enough, those questions are easier to answer."

Each teacher ordered her instruction similarly, with specific shared steps during the instructional sequence. The adapted COLT allowed for a detailed collection of the different components of each teacher's lesson, and deeper analysis of lesson content revealed that, while teachers shared specific instructional sequencing, they emphasized different components in the instructional sequence (see Figure 6). In discussing the instructional sequencing that I witnessed during observations, teachers suggested that the described sequence was a pattern that is frequently relied upon in the classroom, although they didn't necessarily use what might be considered "textbook terminology" to describe the sequencing. Kaylynn, for example, described her relied-upon sequencing as being "I always lay it out the same – there's the little calentamiento/*warm up*, objectives, and then introduction, and then notes, and then the activities, then closure."

Maximizing engagement.

A backward design approach focusing on student outcomes and carefully scaffolded sequencing provided teachers with a skeleton for instruction, but consideration of other factors resulted in the actual activities in which students would engage during a class period. Each of these factors fell within the umbrella of "maximizing engagement" and included frequent change of activities and formats, active and accountable

participation, and tools for efficiency. This term "maximizing engagement" was coined "student-centered" by Kaylynn, "keep them participating and really working" by Jasmine, and "keep the students engaged in what we are doing and what our goals are" by Sandy.

Purposeful activity development.

Previously in this manuscript, it was addressed that Matrix Observations revealed the integration of a mean total of five instructional activities during each class period. During interviews, it was expressed that this planned number of activities was supported by a desire to provide content variety and frequent change of focus.
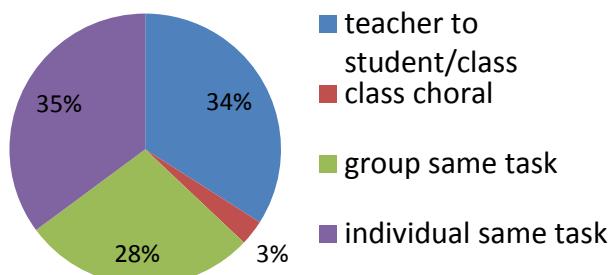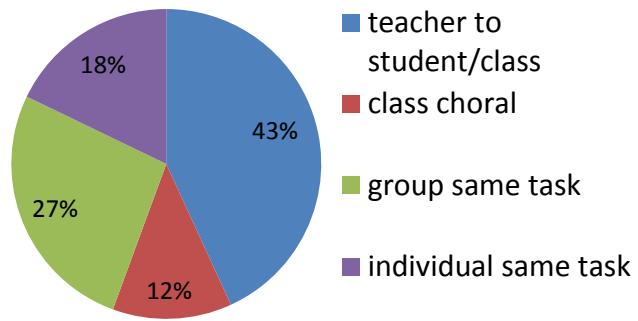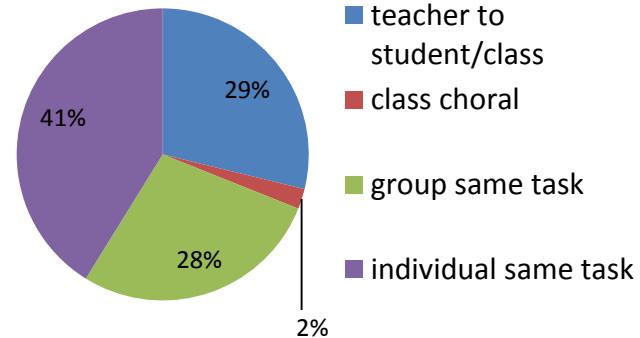

Figure 7: Variety through Activity Organization

Sometimes the variety and frequent change was related to a "fun factor", or, as Jasmine noted, "I think varying it up and not doing the same thing over and over again

keeps it entertaining". Sandy shared a similar thought but used the word "engaging" when she shared, "[the class is] engaging because we don't go for long periods of time doing the same thing ….so it doesn't become stale or old."

While teachers appreciated the entertainment factor of frequent activity change, administrators admired what they perceived to be teachers' strategic and creative addressing of objectives through integration of multiple activities. Jasmine's principal shared a particular appreciation for this when she shared, "what I really value about her instruction is….she has one objective, and she teaches the kids that objective over and over and over during a lesson….and she just kind of spirals it, and it works so well. They might study conjugation of verbs by doing a partner activity, and then they might do a video activity, and they're getting up and doing a movement activity, and it's all on that objective, and they think they're getting away

Student Modality: Jasmine

interpretive 49%
interpersonal 38%
presentational 13%

Student Modality: Kaylynn

interpretive 43%
interpersonal 20%
presentational 37%

Student Modality: Sandy

interpretive 59%
interpersonal 33%
presentational 8%

Figure 8: Variety through Student Modality
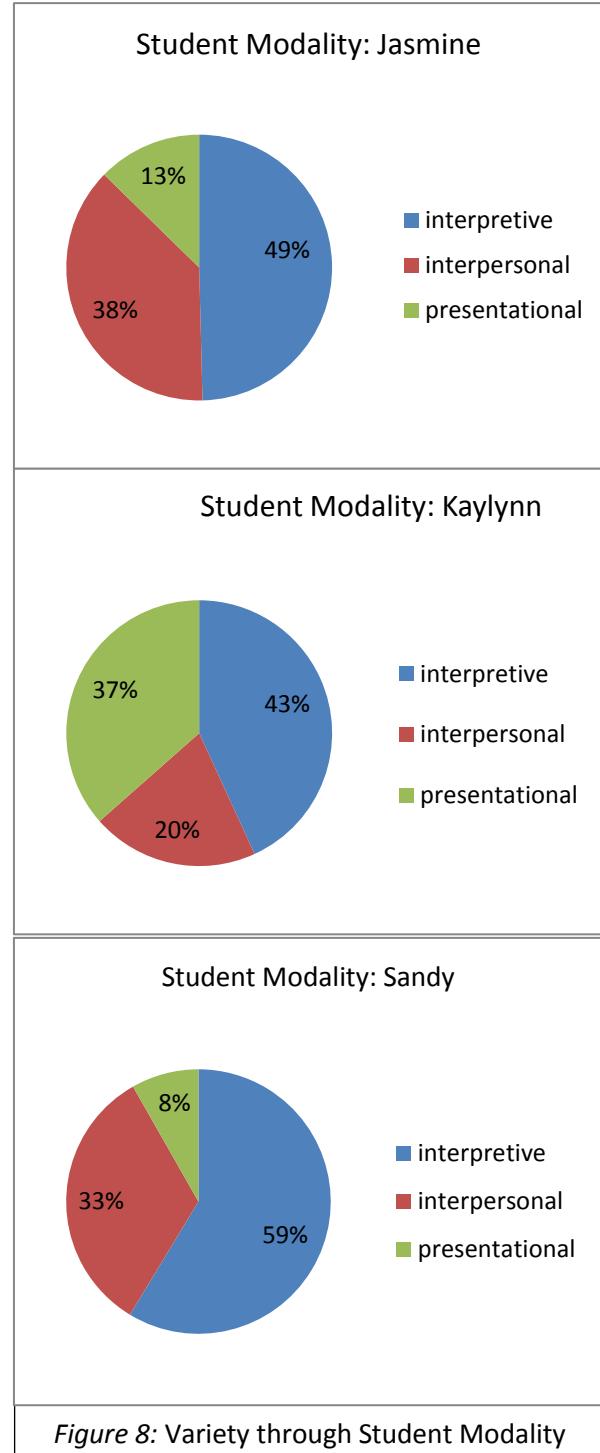
with something and it just works perfectly." The sentiment of "multiple different activities aimed at meeting the same objective" was evidenced during analyses of matrix observations. Activity organization and student modality were both explored through matrix observations, and each of these represented a form of activity variety in the classroom. While teachers emphasized a limited number of specific, measurable objectives during each class period, activities to meet those objectives were chosen in such a way as to integrate multiple types of classroom organization (group work, individual work, choral work, etc.) and different communicative modalities (interpretive, presentational, interpersonal). Figures 7 and 8 reflect this nature of variety among integrated activities as evidenced through Matrix Observations analyses. Variety was observed in terms of whether students worked alone, in groups, responded in choral as the teacher sought student input, or responded individually as the teacher led a discussion. Jasmine noted the purposeful manipulation of activity modality when she shared "I make sure I hit different areas, like we do a lot of listening (interpretive), and they hate it with a passion, but then we do reading (presentational) and writing (presentational) as well." While individual teachers emphasized different organizational combinations or modalities, there was shared purposeful integration of activity variety across all levels of learning and at each school.

Active and accountable students.

Teachers purposefully sought to create activities that might force students to be active and that would hold them accountable during classroom participation. On the Teacher Belief Survey, all three teachers expressed strong agreement when considering

whether "students should actively participate in the learning process." During interviews and observations, it emerged that teachers primarily sought this active and accountable approach through the integration of "educational play" or through minor manipulations of traditional activities such that they reflected active, accountable endeavors.

Sandy's principal shared her admiration for the active and accountable learning in the Spanish classroom when she shared, "[Sandy] just doesn't let them sit. Their brains are actively thinking for 47 minutes every day. She's got them moving, and it's stuff that, you know, kids enjoy playing games. But by golly, you can play games, but you're gonna learn, and there's some information that you're gonna be held accountable for to play this game." In observations at each school, this sort of "educational play" was witnessed. While this is not the sole interpretation of "active and accountable", it was interesting to see that all teachers in this study enjoyed the integration of active play with a learning objective. With each "educational play" variant, students worked toward classroom objectives through a hands-on competition or cooperative, high-spirited endeavor. During the activity, observable physical participation represented accountability. With this recipe for "educational play", teachers were able to design activities that contributed to the lesson outcome, required active participation, and held students accountable for learning.

A second example of "active and accountable" was described by the Sacred Heart principal as he recalled a classroom observation in which he witnessed the manipulation of a traditional activity such that it required increased levels of activity while maintaining the accountability. He described observing "different cards on each of the desks,

and….when the music stops, [students] get up and move to the next desk, and the answer the next question. And you can accomplish the same thing with a worksheet with 30 questions on it, but the kids think that this is really neat, and it's an engaging activity." Games and minor manipulations of traditional activities to increase the active participation and accountability were frequently utilized in manners such as these in order to promote active learning and infuse accountability.

The Heart of the Matter: Communication with Spanish

In the end, everything that teachers did during their strategic classroom management and purposeful instructional design contributed to efficient Spanish learning in the

Use of Spanish: Jasmine

- exclusively Spanish — 53%
- 50/50 Spanish/English — 9%
- exclusively English — 11%
- English from students only — 25%
- primarily Spanish — 2%

Use of Spanish: Kaylynn

- exclusively Spanish — 83%
- English from students only — 17%

Use of Spanish: Sandy

- Exclusively Spanish — 93%
- English from students only — 7%

Figure 9: Teacher and Student Use of Spanish
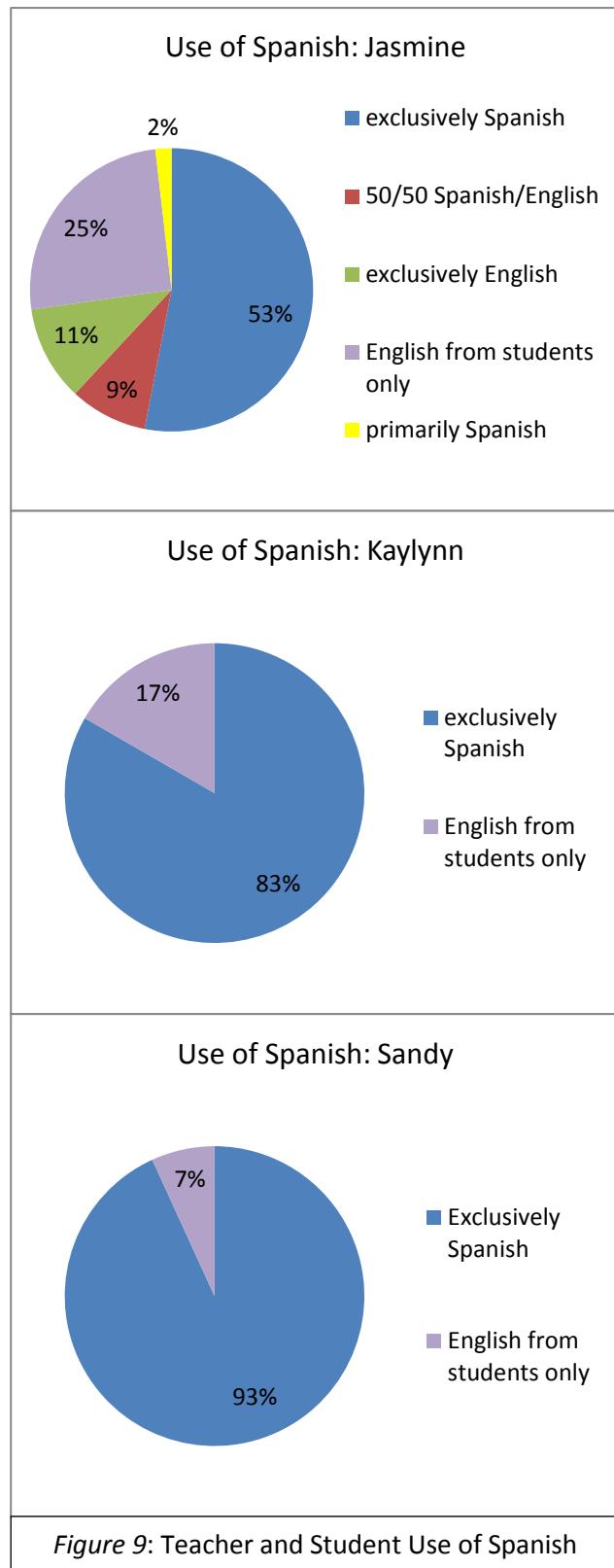
classroom. Even the building level factors might be extrapolated to be considered a component of the equation to streamlining the learning in these three Spanish-learning classrooms. With buildings and communities valuing learning, a schedule removing distractions, classroom procedures, organization, and strategies to minimize time off task and maximize efficient use of time on task, and an environment embracing risk taking and valuing growth over perfection, teachers and students were left with the opportunity to focus on the heart of the matter: communication using the Spanish language. During observations of and conversations with teachers, shared characteristics of classroom language use emerged. These shared characteristics might be summarized through the phrase "Purposeful and Modified for Learners".

**Use of Spanish: Purposeful and Modified for Learners.**

Teacher Belief Surveys revealed that all three teachers strongly agreed that "teachers of Spanish should speak in Spanish the majority of the time", and Matrix Observations provided evidence that these teachers acted according to their beliefs about language use in the classroom. Analyses revealed that each teacher used a large quantity of Spanish in the classroom. Kaylynn and Sandy used nothing but Spanish for the entirety of all lessons observed, with the only English in the classroom coming from learners. Jasmine used less Spanish, but her choice to not use Spanish was purposeful. On one day of observations, her students were finishing a chapter and were therefore engaging in their routine chapter-based reflections and the writing of new goals. As a teacher who values growth and reflection, Jasmine expects students to operate at high levels of cognition when engaging in these reflections and goal writing, as evidenced by

her insistence that students include "measurable goal verbs" from a list of "Bloom's Taxonomy based-higher order thinking verbs." Jasmine's use of English during these reflective, goal writing sessions was therefore purposeful, as novices certainly would not have been able to function at equivalent levels of writing in their second language. Sandy, who operated according to a "No English allowed in the classroom" policy, corroborated this idea of "purposeful use of Spanish and English" when she shared that she does occasionally use English. She noted, "It's very rare [that I use English]. If they're having some really major difficulty, or they're not understanding something, like when I'm explaining El Encierro/ *running of the bulls*. We watched the film in Spanish, and it was in Spanish. And I would give them a translation if they needed it, and it was very brief."

Listening to these three teachers deliver instruction, Kaylynn most nearly approaches native-speaker level of oral Spanish production, but it should be remembered that Kaylynn teaches only upper levels of Spanish. In fact, according to Sandy, using only Spanish with lower level, beginning learners might actually be more difficult than using Spanish with upper level, advanced learners, because language must be manipulated in such a way that novice learners will understand what is being communicated. Sandy indicated that this is a skill that has come with hard, dedicated work, sharing that moving to "only Spanish in [lower level classrooms], it really upped my own skills, because you really have to know how to circumlocute in Spanish like there's no tomorrow. And you have to think…. 'what do I have in this room that's gonna

help me explain or what can I draw or what can I do that can help me to communicate this'."

Manipulating materials in the classroom or modifying speech to increase comprehensibility was a common thread among teachers when discussing or observing the use of Spanish. Matrix observations pointed to teacher integration of multiple materials during classroom instruction, and informal observations and discussions revealed that these varying materials were strategically integrated in order to ensure successful communication in the classroom. Kaylynn, for example, relied heavily on visuals
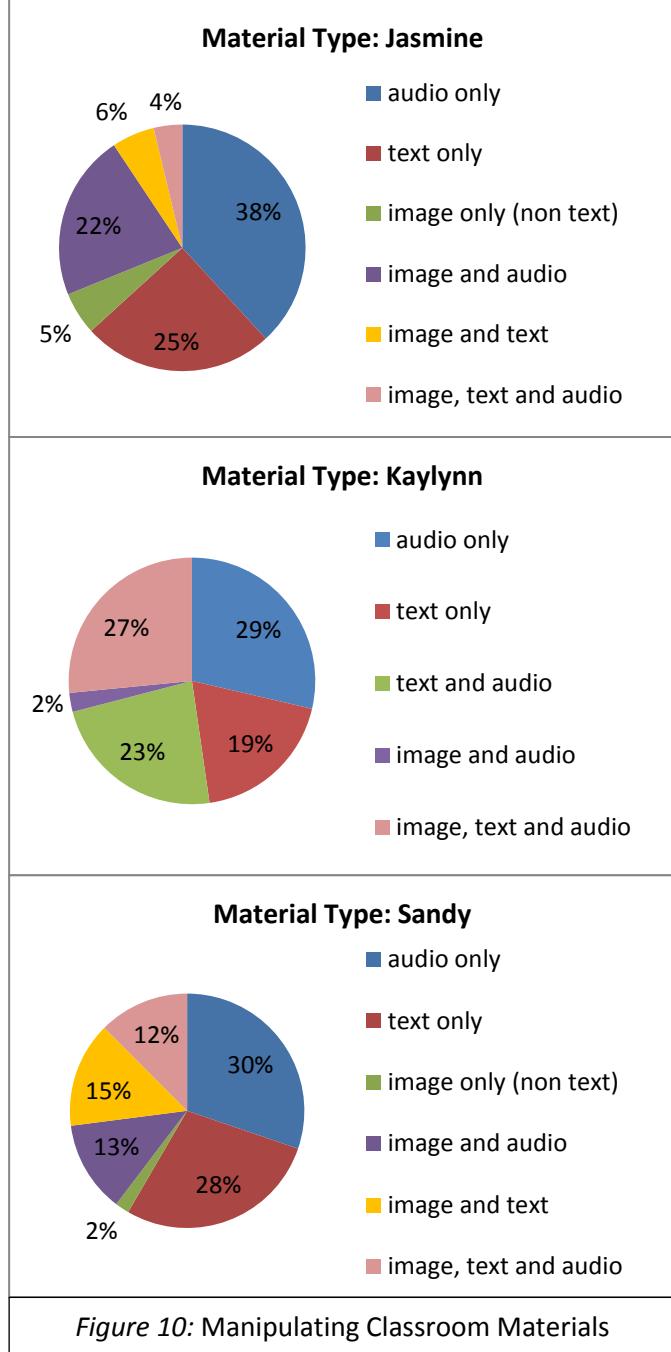
Figure 10: Manipulating Classroom Materials

to augment text and teacher voice (image+text+audio), especially digitally available graphics that might be manipulated and combined with Spanish text on the Smartboard. This strategic combination of visuals, text, and teacher-voice audio enabled Kaylynn to

introduce all new vocabulary without using a single word of Spanish. Jasmine integrated several language manipulation aids, one example being the provision of a cloze text script for a brief video of native speaker communication (image+text+audio). The lesson itself was originally intended to use only the video content (image+audio) in an exercise focused on comprehension of native spoken Spanish, but Jasmine felt that students might be more successful with additional aids for comprehension. She found a script for the video, and she strategically removed vocabulary to help students narrow their focus during the viewing activity. The activity was impressively successful, with the script text serving to access background knowledge prior to viewing and narrowing focus for listening during viewing. Students emerged from the activity with the confidence that they were fully capable of understanding native speakers communicating in Spanish.

The reflective, high expectations practitioner.

This strategic and purposeful combination of classroom management, strategic organization and procedures, careful design, material manipulation, language modification, and purposeful use of Spanish produced what the Sacred Learning principal described as "kind of our own little mini immersion time for students." His words are a fairly accurate description for what was observed during my visits to Spanish classrooms. While this story of "successful mini immersion experiences" is nearly complete, two foundational and shared themes were heavily emphasized by all individuals interviewed during data collection. Each of these teachers was highly reflective in her approach to teaching, and each also approached every educational endeavor with consistently high expectations.

Teachers expressed through word and action that, without a foundation of high expectations, even the ideal combination of classroom organization, procedures, and atmosphere might result in mediocre learning at best. While each teacher expressed this concept in a different manner, all nonetheless approached each and every classroom endeavor with an air of very high expectations for behavior and effort. Jasmine, the youngest teacher in this study, found that her high expectations initially inspired a bit of resistance in students, but simplifying larger tasks and maintaining her expectations produced positive results as students realized that they were capable of rising to meet her expectations. She shared, "I had high expectations which led to some frustration with the Spanish 2 students because they have pulled the 'well we didn't learn that' card on me. But if you increase the expectations, they'll rise, the top kids and the middle kids will rise, the lower kids will struggle, but eventually they, it may not be an A, but it will still be passing. If I stick to my guns and hold my standards high, the kids get there with grumbling but they get there. And they learn that they can do it."

Sally's high expectations revealed themselves as being very pragmatic in nature. She strives to prepare students for life beyond the classroom walls, and holding high expectations accomplished this while also maximizing classroom time for learning. Sally's principal described her consistently high expectations with the words "the kids know that she means business. She sets her expectations incredibly high, and she is not afraid to push those kids to meet them. And she'll do anything….. She gives them absolutely no slack…..I mean, it's amazing. She's just "by golly, you're not gonna have any excuses, you're gonna meet these expectations".

In Kaylynn's case, the high expectations came across very evidently as she expressed in all seriousness "fracasar no es una opción/*failure is not an option*". Kaylynn's department presented a very unified front of high expectations that carried over into each classroom. This unified front has strengthened during a concerted effort to heighten expectations, as evidenced when her principal asserted "when you want to raise the bar, heighten the expectations……if you don't believe in what you're asking kids to do, it's very easy to give in to the kids and the parents, who are going to fight you on it. But if you firmly believe that what you're doing is right, and we do…..our Spanish department is very good. We kind of lock arms together and say, 'all right, we're doing this'. And we believe it can be done."

Observations and interviews also revealed a reflective nature as being integral when striving for successful student experiences. For these three teachers, having a reflective nature might be viewed through two lenses. They were reflective practitioners who planned and taught with a student-centered focus, and they were reflective professionals continually seeking growth and improvement.

As reflective practitioners, teachers continually searched for repeat student errors and then purposefully planned to attack the errors in the next class. Sandy echoed this need to be ever-reflective during instruction, noting that "you cannot teach without thinking. We're not in the now. It's always, 'what's next' and walking around and thinking, 'Oh my gosh. I have problems with that. I have to fix that.' Or, 'this is okay'….You have to be thinking all the time. You just can't coast." Teachers purposefully integrated assessments of all types, formal, written, oral, performance-

based, informal, formative, always reflecting on the progress that their students were

making and then adjusting in order to meet the dynamic needs of their learners. Jasmine

echoed this sentiment as she described her reflection on outcomes of a recent quiz. "I try

to treat quizzes as diagnostic tools. Instead of feeling badly if students don't perform well

or getting mad at the students, I use them to inform my teaching. After a quiz, I know

exactly what the students do and do not understand and can revise my lessons

accordingly….It's helpful for me to reflect on students' performance to make myself a

better teacher."

As reflective professionals, teachers continually sought to improve upon

weaknesses or enhance their strengths in order to benefit their students. Each teacher was

active in professional development pursuits, some formal and some informal, and all

expressed a desire to know more, improve, and provide a better learning opportunity for

students. Kaylynn voiced this "search for improvement" when she shared, "I know that

we already do a lot, but I always want to know how I can make it better. You know, how

can I make it better?" Jasmine concurred, sharing, "I'm constantly changing and

constantly doing research on what's good and what's not [for students], and… I feel like,

if I become stagnant, I'm doing a huge disservice to all of my students."

Relationships within and between Building/Community and Teacher/Classroom

Levels

Part of the attraction for adopting an embedded case design approach to research

for this study is the allowance to examine relationships within and between the different

levels comprising the embedded nature of the phenomenon. In this study, shared

relationships were identified within the teacher/classroom level in forms such as teachers'
expectations and reflective nature supporting effective classroom management and
instructional design, and sound classroom management laid the foundation for
instructional design. There were also relationships between the teacher/classroom level
and the building/community level. A building climate supporting growth encouraged
teachers who were primarily growth oriented to continually seek self-improvement, and
teachers then shared their new knowledge and contributed to the overall quality of the
building-at-large. A building climate of collaborative commitment jived well with
teachers having high expectations, as all were able to work in a unified and reciprocal
manner to progress toward ever-greater levels of student success. Finally, building
policies and procedures emphasizing the reduction and elimination of distractions to
learning enabled teachers to focus, first and foremost, on their classrooms and the task of
moving students toward successful Spanish learning.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Understanding Shared Spanish Learning Success through Goodwin's "What Matters Most Framework"

Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework provides a simplified, research-based lens through which to understand the story of student Spanish success that emerged during this small-scale, situated case study. Goodwin asserts that the What Matters Most Framework may serve to help educators "survey the entire system…to determine whether they may have left any important 'parts' still in the box" (p. 10). This discussion section is led through an effort to determine how the story of successful Spanish learning aligns with and/or contradicts Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework.

This study explored three situations that had been empirically tested to repeatedly present successful student Spanish learning. Qualitative and quantitative exploration of the phenomenon ensued, resulting ultimately in a narrative shared story of student Spanish learning success. Table 4 depicts the extent to which these shared situations converge with and diverge from the principles set forth in the What Matters Most Framework for Student Success.

Table 4: Story of Student Spanish Success through What Matters Most Framework			
What Matters Most Themes	**What Matters Most Touchstones**	**High Achievement Spanish Learning**	
Guarantee challenging, engaging, and intentional instruction	**Teachers must focus on….**	**Examples of Convergence**	**Examples of Divergence**
	Setting high expectations and delivering challenging instruction	• All teachers identified high expectations as important	• Teachers were concerned more with strategic design for successful communication and less with "challenging instruction"
	Fostering engaging learning environments and meaningful relationships with students	• Teachers focused on fostering an environment to encourage risk-taking and designing activities to ensure engagement	• Meaningful relationships were not stressed uniformly by all teachers

		• Administrators insisted students knew that "teachers cared"	
	Intentionally matching instructional strategies to learning goals	• Objective-driven instructional design was utilized by all teachers	
Ensure curricular pathways to success	**School systems must focus on….**	**Examples of Convergence**	**Examples of Divergence**
	Providing all students with high-expectations curricula	• Teachers had high expectations and designed their own classroom materials, thus theoretically creating high expectations curricula	• This was not mentioned at the building-level • Teachers did not specifically use the term "high-expectations" when describing their curricula
	Providing all students with	• Goal writing and "can do"	• Not mentioned at building-level

		processes presented students with the opportunity to personalize learning	• Teachers did not mention personalizing learning
	personalized learning opportunities	processes presented students with the opportunity to personalize learning • Teachers named students and building/community activities when developing in classroom materials	• Teachers did not mention personalizing learning opportunities. While they integrated student names into material, they did not uniformly emphasize "personalization" as a prime consideration when planning learning
Provide whole-child student supports	**School systems must focus on…**	**Examples of Convergence**	**Examples of Divergence**
	Providing real-time supports in keeping with the ounce-of-prevention principle.	• Buildings have homerooms, study halls, tutor programs in place; • Reflective instructional	

		approach afforded immediate adjustment for student needs • Teachers' instruction emphasized eliminating distractions, careful scaffolding, and manipulating materials and language to provide specific student supports	
	Addressing the deep causes of student performance: home environment, prior knowledge, interest and motivation.	• Goal writing and "can do" approach connects student interest and motivation to course content • Introductory activity and strategic planning takes advantage of prior knowledge	• Mention of addressing home environment was not uniform, but all schools indicated a highly supportive community and parents

		• Educational play incited student motivation and interest	
Create high-performance school cultures	**School leaders must focus on….**	**Examples of Convergence**	**Examples of Divergence**
	Raising the quality and reducing the variance among classrooms within the school	• All schools supported teacher growth and collaboration for student success • All teachers actively sought improvement and engaged in regular reflective practice • Departmentally, Spanish instructional quality was uniform; Sacred Learning was called a "seamless" experience	

	Creating a culture of high expectations for academics and behavior	• High expectations were common at the classroom level • "Collaborative commitment to student success" could be construed to equate to high expectations for students	• The phrase "high expectations" was not specifically used at the building level, although policies and procedures were cited that would qualify as representing high expectations (not late homework)
Develop data-driven, high-reliability district systems	**School systems must focus on….**		
	Setting clear, "no excuses" goals for teaching and learning	• A "No excuses" approach Building policies and procedures paved the way for teachers to focus on successful learning in their classroom • "Fracasar no es una opción",	• This was not specifically stated but rather was an emergent, overarching theme based on all data • Building policies/procedures/no failure approach certainly might

		effort = success were common statements from teachers	represent "no excuses" but are not examples of data-driven or high-reliability district systems • It may be that this was a factor that simply was not addressed because of the emphasis of a phenomonen that occurred in a specific content area and in specific classroom.
	Attending to the "core" business of schooling: great teachers and teaching	• Teachers at the heart of this study were great teachers and provided great teaching (based on observation and interview accounts) • Administrators expressed intent	• This study focused on only Spanish teachers and their practices when exploring student success

		to hire "only the best" for their schools	
	Developing a healthy preoccupation with failure, prevention, and intervention	• Teachers reflective approach to instruction by teachers in this study could be seen as a healthy preoccupation with prevention and intervention • An emphasis on growth allowed teachers to identify struggles or weaknesses • Buildings indicated interventions to support students	• These reflective and growth orientations may have been specific only to the Spanish teachers

Notes: Adapted from Goodwin, 2011, p. 159 with permission from McRel Publishing, 2012

Table 4

This study presented three unique examples of high levels of student Spanish success as situated within three separate high schools. As can be seen Table 4, the shared story of success aligns fairly closely with what Goodwin identifies as being important in yielding student success. In the cross-case results, commonly shared themes extend beyond the content of Goodwin's framework, but this is not to say that these themes were not relevant to high achievement in the classrooms at the heart of this study. In fact, Goodwin is careful to argue that, in seeking the perfect recipe for student achievement, we too often complicate things rather than focusing on what is most important. In other words, themes extending beyond the scope of Goodwin's framework do not indicate unimportant pieces in the story of student success. Rather, according to Goodwin (2011), while still important, they are not the pieces *that matter most* in the story of student success. Viewed through the lens of the "What Matters Most Framework", these teachers might be said to reflect Goodwin's "Simply Better approach"….with a few additional perks.

It should be noted that the "What Matters Most Framework" is not necessarily designed for a teacher-level exploration of success. While there was a certain amount of exploration into building-level factors involved in successful Spanish learning situations, the bulk of this qualitative case study was certainly devoted to the teacher/classroom-level story of student success. In spite of this preponderance of teacher-level exploration, it seems that the "What Matters Most Framework" effectively aids in clarifying and simplifying the story of student success as addressed throughout this study. There was a high degree of convergence between study findings and the What Matters Most

Framework as indicated in Table 3. Occasions of touchstone divergence may indicate a

lack of evidence (i.e., not indicated at building level), but in other instances may indicate

an alternate emphasis to represent the same touchstone. For example, within the What

Matters Most theme of "Guarantee challenging, engaging, and intentional instruction",

study results diverge on two occasions. In "setting high expectations and delivering

challenging instruction", it was noted that there was no direct and confirming evidence

that instruction was actually coined "challenging". Rather, teachers emphasized high

expectations combined with strategic design to allow for successful communication. This

does not imply that instruction was not challenging. Instead, this solely implies that data

pointed to an alternative theme that was uniformly expressed as being more important

through the voice of teachers and administrators. Strategic design to allow for successful

communication may surely equate to challenging instruction, but this was not an

expressed emphasis of those in this study. The same may be true for the term

"meaningful relationship". This fairly common term was not emphasized by teachers in

this study, who opted to stress the need to foster an environment that encouraged risk-

taking. Again, this does not mean that the classroom was void of "meaningful

relationships" between teachers and students. In fact, there were many instances during

observations that might have been considered "meaningful interactions". To assign these

various observed interactions greater or specific meaning without teacher and principal

confirmation during interviews, however, would be misrepresenting the data. As with the

previous example, this divergence may simply serve as an indication of what teachers

expressed to be of primary importance in guiding students toward successful learning. It

does not indicate that Goodwin's "meaningful relationship" touchstone is absent from

classrooms; it may simply indicate an alternate means by which to express this concept or

a teacher/administrator preference placed on related yet different qualities.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study told the story of three specific and unique situations in which high

Spanish achievement was situated. In each of these situations, buildings and

communities emphasized supporting instructional staff so that they could focus on the

classroom. With this collaborative emphasis on the classroom, learning was maximized

in a supportive and high-expectation laden environment by instructors who were

reflective in nature and focused on improving the learning opportunities for their

students. In the words of one of the principals in this study, the outcome seemed to be a

bit of a "daily, mini immersion", that allowed students to maximize their learning

experience.

While we certainly cannot generalize the results of this study to the greater

population of Spanish teachers and learners, it has provided valuable insights that might

drive us to question what we value in the classroom. There was nothing magical or

mystical about what was shared among these three situations. A simple combination of

high expectations, strategic system and classroom-level supports for student learning, and

an ardent love for continual growth and improvement resulted in a successful Spanish

learning experience for students in these three scenarios. The outcome of this study very

much mirrors Goodwin's What Matters Most Framework and points to a story suggesting

that "we can make a tremendous difference for students---especially if everyone is on the

same page and working to the same ends" (2011, p. 160). This is the shared story of

student Spanish success, and it is also a message of hope for those associated with the

teaching and learning of Spanish. The shared story resulting from this study points to the

real possibility of hope for system-wide student success - magic, mysticism, and fancy

tricks not required.

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Appendix A

IRB Documents

Institutional Approval

Consent and Assent Forms

Interview Protocol

Qualitative Observation Protocol

Institutional Approval Form

November, 2011

Name of Superintendent,

During the academic years of 2005-2010, (name of teacher), a Spanish teacher in your district, participated in a large scale study of the development of proficiency in the foreign language classroom. After a detailed analysis of student proficiency data, (name of teacher) emerged as being a teacher whose students consistently produce proficiency scores that are among the highest in the state of Nebraska.

It is because of the outstanding performance of (name of teacher) and her students that you are being contacted. A follow-up study is being conducted with three of the teachers whose students were among the highest achievers in Nebraska. The purpose of this study is to move beyond stating that teachers make a difference by describing exactly *how* foreign language teachers make a difference in student achievement. Few studies offer much insight into exactly what the teachers who produce the greatest achievement gains are doing, what characteristics or skills they possess, or what they attend to in their teaching (Lowenberg-Ball & Hill, 2009). This study attempts to offer these very insights through a deliberate and thorough exploration of the classrooms and schools of teachers whose foreign language learners repeatedly score among the highest in the state.

Data will be collected through multiple manners during this exploration of high quality foreign language teaching. Participating Spanish teachers will be asked to complete one survey of their beliefs and practices, and they will be asked to engage in a nationally recognized assessment of their Spanish proficiency. Interviews will be conducted with the foreign language teachers, their peer-educators, and their administrators. Classroom observations will be conducted, and classroom artifacts will be analyzed for insights related to high quality foreign language teaching. Finally, students of (name of teacher) will be invited to participate in a focus group interview and/or the writing of an anecdotal narrative of an experience with their teacher.

All participation in these activities will be voluntary, permission will be secured from all involved teachers and administrators prior to any involvement, and individuals may choose to remove themselves from participation at any time. Because minor students are involved, both student assent and parental consent will be secured prior to any student participation in a focus group or anecdotal narrative. All student decisions to participate are done in a strictly confidential and anonymous manner, and students are free to choose to not participate in the study without experiencing any negative repercussions.

There is no cost for participation in this study.

Prior to formally approaching any individuals for participation in this research, institutional approval must be secured from each organization associated with this study. Please complete the attached institutional approval form enclosed in this mailing, and return the form to project staff using the envelope provided. Please retain this explanatory page for your personal records.

Should you have any questions pertaining to the research associated with this study or regarding the institutional approval process, please do not hesitate to contact any of the research staff as listed on the next page.

Thank-you,

Janine Theiler

High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Institutional Approval Signature Form

Please complete the following in order to reflect whether your organization grants institutional approval.

Should you not have the accompanying envelope for this form, feel free to send it to:

Janine Theiler, 118 Henzlik Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0355

Yes, _____ grants institutional approval for the conduction of this research.

No, _____ does not grant institutional approval for the conduction of this research.

_____   _____

Signature   Position/Title

_____

Date

_____

Printed Name

Student Assent and Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Anecdotal Narrative

Title of Project: High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Purpose: While we know that teachers make a difference in student achievement, we do not know much about *how* this happens. This study presents an opportunity to follow the teaching of Spanish teachers whose students consistently produce some of the best levels of proficiency in Nebraska. Your Spanish teacher is one of those teachers.

Procedure: We would like to invite you to share your thoughts and experiences about learning Spanish so that we can better understand what contributes to student achievement in the foreign language classroom. We invite you to do this by writing a brief personal story, or anecdotal narrative, that shares a specific experience about learning Spanish language or Spanish culture with your current Spanish teacher.

If you choose to write an anecdotal narrative, please follow the directions on the attached page. When you have finished, place the attached assent/consent signature form and the anecdotal narrative sheet in the enclosed, pre-paid and addressed envelope. Seal the envelope and place it in the mail. The narrative writing, enclosure of materials in the envelope, and mailing of materials should require approximately 30 minutes of your time. Please keep this explanation page for your personal records.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be protected as you write and submit your personal Spanish language or Spanish culture learning story. Because you write the narrative on your own time and return it in the mail, the only people with access to the story are you, your parents/guardians, and the primary investigator for this study. The primary investigator will read the story and transfer your story to an electronic file. For your protection, your hard copy story will be destroyed as soon as it is transferred to the electronic file. During the transfer, any information that might identify you will be eliminated, and any names will be changed to fake names. When the research results are shared, your name will never be used, and any information that might identify you will be eliminated so that you may feel safe in sharing your Spanish language or culture learning story. All electronic data files will be destroyed as soon as research related to this study is finished, likely in August, 2012.

There are no known risks or benefits associated with writing this personal story. You do not have to write an anecdotal narrative if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, you can also choose to stop at any time or request that your story not be used. If you have any questions at any time, please contact one of the researchers listed on the anecdotal narrative form.

Parent/Guardian Consent: Your parents or guardians will be asked to give their permission for you to share an anecdotal narrative. Please read and discuss this with them, and together decide whether you will participate.

On the following page, you will find the student assent and parental/guardian consent form. Please read it carefully and together, with your parents/guardians, decide whether to participate in writing the personal narrative.

A Note to Parents and Guardians:

If you have any questions about your child's participation in thus study, please feel free to contact one of the investigators listed at the bottom of this form. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about this study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), telephone 402.472.6965.

You are free to decide to not permit your child to participate in a focus group or to withdraw your child at any time without adversely affecting their or your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, your child's school, your child's teacher, or your child's grades. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled.

<div align="center">

SIGNATURE DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED ASSENT and CONSENT

</div>

If you sign this form, it means that you and your parents (or guardians) have read everything on this form and the previous research explanation page, and you have discussed the written narrative activity. Your signatures indicate that, together, you have voluntarily made the decision whether to participate in the writing of an anecdotal narrative.

_____   _____

Signature of student   **DateDate**

_____

Signature of parent
    In my judgment, the parent/legal guardian is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in the writing of this anecdotal narrative.

_____ _____

Signature of investigator   **Date**

Name and contact information of investigators

Janine Theiler, PhD candidate,	Aleidine J. Moeller, PhD,
Principal Investigator	Secondary Investigator
Home (402-782-2273)	Office: 402- 472-2024
Email: jtheiler@windstream.net	E-mail: amoeller2@unl.edu

Anecdotal Narrative (Personal Story) of My Spanish Learning Experience

Describe a specific Spanish language or Spanish culture learning experience with your current Spanish teacher. In your description, refer to how your teacher talked, acted, behaved, or used certain gestures. Describe the kinds of things that were said, shown, taught, or learned in this Spanish language or Spanish culture lesson. Describe what the experience was like for you and how you felt. Again, please focus on a particularly memorable classroom lesson or a school-related activity that **emphasizes learning Spanish language or Spanish culture**.

High Quality Foreign Language Teaching Staff

Janine Theiler, PhD candidate

Principal Investigator

Phone: 402-782-2273

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Dr. Aleidine Moeller, PhD

Secondary Investigator

Phone: 402-472-2024

E-mail: amoeller2@unl.edu

Informed Consent Form for Participation in the High Quality Foreign Language Teaching Study

Title of Project:

High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Purpose of Project and Research:

The purpose of this study is to move beyond simply stating that teachers make a difference by describing exactly *how* foreign language teachers make a difference in student achievement. Few studies offer much insight into exactly what the teachers who produce the greatest achievement gains are doing, what characteristics or skills they possess, or what they attend to in their teaching (Lowenberg-Ball & Hill, 2009). This study attempts to offer these very insights through a deliberate and thorough exploration of the classrooms and schools of teachers whose foreign language learners repeatedly score among the highest in the state.

Procedures:

You are invited to participate in this study because you were identified as a Spanish teacher whose students repeatedly produce proficiency scores that are among the highest in the state. Your participation would involve the following data collection procedures:

Individual Interviews:

There will be a minimum of three unstructured interviews, each lasting approximately 45 minutes. These interviews will be conducted by the principal investigator and will provide insights concerning your training, classroom practices, beliefs about teaching, and the context in which you teach. These interviews will be scheduled at your convenience, will be conducted at a secure location in the school building, and will be digitally audio recorded, but they are recorded solely for the purpose of transcription.

Elicitation Interview:

An elicitation interview uses artifacts (such as a lesson plan or student product) to drive interview questions about thoughts and beliefs behind our actions. There is one elicitation interview involved in this study, and it will last approximately 45 minutes. It will be conducted by the principal investigator, will be scheduled at your convenience, will be conducted at a secure location in the school building, and will be digitally audio recorded. The digital recording is done solely for the purpose of transcription.

Observations:

Observations of your classroom instruction will be conducted in order to understand the classroom practices that result in the highest levels of student achievement. Three total informal observations will be conducted during this study, and three formal observations will be conducted of each level of Spanish that you teach. For the informal observation, the principal investigator will sit at the back of the classroom, observe classroom activities, and record her thoughts on paper. For the formal observation, the principal investigator will sit at the back of the classroom, observe classroom activities, and record the frequency of specific activities on a matrix. These activities do not require any additional effort for the classroom teacher, as the observations are of classroom instruction that would have taken place even if the investigator were absent from the classroom.

Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey:

Completion of the "foreign language teacher beliefs and practices survey" will lend insights into the beliefs and practices of teachers with whom high achievement is associated. The belief survey may be completed in the location of your choice and at your convenience. Completion of the survey will take approximately 20 minutes.

Proficiency Assessment:

Completion of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) will lend insights into the content skills necessary in order for students to exhibit high achievement in the Spanish classroom. The OPI and the WPT will both be paid for by ACTFL, and you may take the assessment at your convenience and in any location with access to a telephone (OPI) or internet (WPT). Each assessment will take approximately 30 minutes.

Classroom Artifacts:

You will be asked to identify any artifacts that represent who you are as a teacher of Spanish. These items may include but will not be limited to lesson plans, assessments, certificates, and student products. The principal investigator will digitally capture these items for future analysis. Participation in this data collection procedure should not require more than 15 minutes of your time.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits:

Your participation in this study has the potential to provide you with insights regarding your own teaching practices, skills, and beliefs. Your participation also has the potential to provide the foreign language acquisition community with insights into what is required to increase student achievement in the foreign language classroom.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential by the project investigators. Interviews will be digitally recorded, but the digital recording will be done solely for the purposes of completing transcriptions. Transcriptions will be conducted by the principal investigator associated with this project, pseudonyms will be used to identify participants, school, and community in place of actual names, and all identifying characteristics will be deleted. All hard copy, original documents related to research in this study will be transferred to the primary investigator's computer immediately upon return to her office following the collection of data. All hard copy, original documents will be destroyed following their transfer to digital files. All digital files will be destroyed upon completion of all research related this study, estimated to be August, 2012.

Results of research will be disseminated via a doctoral dissertation, professional journals, and conference presentations, but no identifying characteristics of participants will be revealed throughout these endeavors.

Compensation:

There is no compensation associated with this research.

Opportunity to ask questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the research study. You may contact the investigators at any time using the contact information listed at the bottom of this form. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about this study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Freedom to withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or your school. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research project. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented.

_____   _____

Signature of research participant   Date

Name and contact information of investigators

Janine Theiler, PhD candidate,	Aleidine J. Moeller, PhD,
Principal Investigator	Secondary Investigator
Home (402-782-2273)	Office: 402- 472-2024
Email: jtheiler@windstream.net	E-mail: amoeller2@unl.edu

Informed Consent Form for Participation in an Individual Interview

Title of Project: High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Purpose of Project and Research:

The purpose of this study is to move beyond simply stating that teachers make a difference by describing exactly *how* foreign language teachers make a difference in student achievement. Few studies offer much insight into exactly what the teachers who produce the greatest achievement gains are doing, what characteristics or skills they possess, or what they attend to in their teaching (Lowenberg-Ball & Hill, 2009). This study attempts to offer these very insights through a deliberate and thorough exploration of the classrooms and schools of teachers whose foreign language learners repeatedly score among the highest in the state.

Procedures:

You are being invited to participate in an interview because you have been identified as a peer-colleague or administrator with insights that may be significant for gaining an understanding of the day-to-day occurrences leading to high quality foreign language teaching. This individual interview is designed to glean your insights regarding the high quality foreign language teaching that is taking place in your school. Participation in the individual interview will require approximately 45 minutes of your time, and it will be completed in person at your school. Only you and the principal investigator will be present during the interview. During the interview, the principal investigator will be asking you questions about your knowledge, perceptions of and experiences with the high quality foreign language teaching that is taking place in your school and community. Digital audio recording of the interview will be done only for the purpose of transcription of the interview.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

   There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits:

   There are no benefits specific to your participation in this study.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential by the project investigators. Interviews will be digitally recorded, but the digital recording will be done solely for the purposes of completing transcriptions. Transcriptions will be conducted by the principal investigator associated with this project, pseudonyms will be used to identify participants, school, and community in place of actual names, and all identifying characteristics will be deleted. All personal notes taken and any documents obtained during the study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the primary investigator's office until they are transferred to digital files and stored in the primary investigator's password protected personal computer. All hard copy, original documents will be destroyed following their transfer to digital files. All digital files will be destroyed upon completion of all research related this study.

Results of research will be disseminated via a doctoral dissertation, professional journals, and conference presentations, but no identifying characteristics of participants will be revealed throughout these endeavors.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participation in an individual interview.

Opportunity to ask questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the individual interview. You may contact the investigators at any time using the contact information listed at the bottom of this form. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about this study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

Freedom to withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in the individual interview or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or your school. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in the individual interview associated with this research project. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be provided with a copy of this consent forms for your records.

_____   _____

Signature of research participant   Date

Name and contact information of investigators

Janine Theiler, PhD candidate, Principal Investigator Home (402-782-2273) Email: jtheiler@windstream.net	Aleidine J. Moeller, PhD, Secondary Investigator Office: 402- 472-2024 E-mail: amoeller2@unl.edu

Interview Protocol for Individual Interviews & Focus Group

High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Location _____

Interviewer _____

Date of Interview/focus group _____

Time of Interview/focus group _____

I.   Consent and Introduction

(a) <u>Informed consent form has been previously signed.</u>

(b) <u>Introduce self, describe objective of the interview, and provide</u>
<u>suggestions for the interview.</u>

"Hello, my name is Janine Theiler. I am a researcher associated with the High Quality Foreign Language Teaching study. I will conduct this interview. I am investigating the beliefs, practices, knowledge, and skills of high quality foreign language teachers. I am very interested in learning about your thoughts and experiences."

"I am digitally recording this interview/focus group. When I report results from this study, no specific names will be given. I am digitally audio recording the interview/focus group so that I have a detailed record of your thoughts."

"I have several questions to go through, and this interview/focus group should take no more than 45 minutes. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. All thoughts are important so please don't be afraid to give your opinion."

"Are there any questions before we begin?"

Interviews conducted with participants in the High Quality Foreign Language Teacher study may include, but will not be limited to, the following questions:

Question Set for Administrator and Peer Educator <u>Formal Interviews</u>:

1. For how long and in what capacity have you known (name of Spanish teacher)?

2. What can you tell me about (name of Spanish teacher) as a teacher of Spanish?
   a. Classroom practices, knowledge, skills, beliefs, continuing development

3. What can you tell me about (name of Spanish teacher) as a faculty member of (name of school)?

4. What can you tell me about the students of (name of school)?

5. What can you tell me about the atmosphere of (name of school) when considering the learning of a second language?

6. What can you tell me about the atmosphere of (name of school and community) concerning learning in general?

7. What can you tell me about the atmosphere of (name of community) when considering the learning of Spanish?

Question Sets for Foreign Language Teacher <u>informal interviews</u>:

Initial Interview – background and context information, allowing for deviation based on conversation or as initiated by teacher-participation:

1. Tell me about how you came to teach Spanish.
    a. In general?
    b. At this school?

2. Tell me about your training for teaching.
    a. Tell me about your training related to pedagogy & content (language and culture).
    b. Did this training prepare you for teaching?

3. Tell me about your continued growth as a teacher.
    a. Specific experiences that have impacted you as a teacher?
    b. Specific resources that you rely on to grow?

4. Tell me about teaching Spanish in (name of community).
    a. What advantages do you consider to be specific to teaching in this community?
    b. What challenges do you consider to be specific to teaching in this community?

5. Tell me about teaching Spanish in (name of school).
    a. What advantages do you consider to be specific to teaching in this school?
    b. What challenges do you consider to be specific to teaching in this school?

6. Tell me about the support system that you have in (name of school).

7. Tell me about the students in (name of school).

Question Sets for Foreign Language Teacher (continued):

Interviews 2 & 3: Factors involved in high quality teaching

Interviews will pull from but not be limited to the following:

1. What do you think contributes to the high achievement exhibited by your students?

2. What does it take to be a successful foreign language teacher?
    a. Beliefs about language learning?
    b. Skills with language and culture?
    c. Skills with classroom practices/pedagogical practices?
    d. What does it take to be a successful foreign language teacher in your school and community?

3. What does it take to be a successful foreign language learner?
    a. What does it take to be a successful foreign language teacher in your school and community?

4. What is involved as you prepare to teach Spanish?
    a. At the lesson level?
    b. At the unit level?
    c. At the semester level?

5. Tell me about what decisions drove today's (or a recent) lesson.

Question Set for Foreign Language Teacher <u>Elicitation Interview</u>:

1. What does this artifact tell me about your teaching (referring to particular classroom artifact chosen by teacher as evidence of his/her practices)?

2. I am going to describe a situation from today's lesson, and I would like you to share what knowledge or beliefs might have inspired your words or actions. (Describe specific situation).

3. Tell me about these pictures that I have taken of your classroom/building/community). (Show pictures).

4. Tell me about the feedback that you provided on these activities (referring to student artifacts in classroom).

Focus Groups conducted with student-participants in the High Quality Foreign Language Teacher study may include, but will not be limited to, the following questions:

1) Why do you think that students of (teacher name) consistently perform among the best in the state when it comes to Spanish proficiency?

2) What about your school makes this high achievement possible?

3) What about your community makes this high achievement possible?

4) What else would you like to tell me about (teacher name) to help me understand what it is like to learn Spanish with her?

5) How is learning with (teacher name) different from learning with other teachers?

Observation Protocol: High Quality Foreign Language Teaching

Location _____

Observer _____

Date/Time of Observation _____

Observations	Thoughts/Reflections

Appendix B

Quantitative Observation Matrix

Teacher Belief Survey

TIME	ACTIVITIES & EPISODES	PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION		CONTENT		CONTENT CONTROL	STUDENT MODALITY	MATERIALS		Teacher language	Student

PARTICIPANT ORGANISATION

1	T→S/C	Class
4	S→S/C	Class
5	Choral	Class
6	Same task	Group
7	Different tasks	Group
8	Same task	Indiv.
9	Different tasks	Indiv.

CONTENT

10	Procedure	Manag.
11	Discipline	Manag.
12	Form	Language
13	Function	Language
14	Discourse	Language
15	Socioling.	Language
16	Narrow	Other topics
17	Broad	Other topics

CONTENT CONTROL

18	Teacher/Text
19	Teacher/Text/Stud.
20	Student

STUDENT MODALITY

Interpretive
Interpersonal
Presentational

MATERIALS

26	Minimal	Text Type
27	Extended	Text Type
28	Audio	Type
29	Visual	Type
30	L2-NNS	Source
31	L2-NS	Source
32	L2-NSA	Source
33	Student-made	Source

Teacher language / Target language

	L1
	L2

Student / Target language

	L1
	L2

Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey (2012)

Part I: Educational Experiences and Background

1. Educational background:

Degrees or Certifications	School or Institution
Example: BA in K-12 Education with emphasis on German	*Peru State, NE*

2. Prior teaching experience:

Area	Yes	No	Subject Area/Assignment	Number of years?
Elementary-Middle (K-8)		**If Yes:**		
High School (9-12)				
College: undergraduate program				

College:

graduate

program

Private

School/Tutor

3. If you have had other teaching or education-related experiences that might contribute

to our understanding of your current teaching practices, please describe them here.

4. Your current position/employment (2011-2012):

Position/title

School

City

State

5. For how many years have you been at the position indicated in question # 4? _____

6. How many total years of teaching experience do you have? _____

Part II: Teaching Scenarios

Consider each of the following scenarios related to teaching the Spanish language to your

students. Describe your response to each scenario.

Scenario # 1: You have been asked to teach in a classroom with access to computers and the internet for students and instruction. How would you use this technology in your teaching of Spanish?

Scenario # 2: You find that several students are struggling to learn a Spanish language concept that you are teaching. What strategies would you use to help the students master the concept? Why would you use that/those particular strategies?

Part III: Classroom Practices

Think about the practices that you use in your classroom to teach the Spanish language. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement as a description of your classroom practices?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My students memorize vocabulary through lists.						
I call on students to provide correct answers to questions.						
The textbook drives my lesson plans.						
I have students work in small groups.						

I primarily lecture to

students

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My students interact with authentic Spanish materials (i.e., websites).						
My students develop individual products to demonstrate learning.						
I use the national/state standards to determine course content.						
My lessons focus on grammar.						
My students learn from classmates.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have students self-assess their own performance.						
I continually assess student progress.						

I use technology to engage

students with native

speakers.

I control technology use in

my classroom.

I focus assessment on

vocabulary and grammar.

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Somewhat Agree**	**Somewhat Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
I adjust course content according to the students in my classroom.						
I have students assess each other's work.						
I assess using pre-prepared chapter tests.						
I use technology to present Spanish vocabulary.						
I assess through a question and answer format.						

Part IV: Beliefs about Teaching

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about teaching the

Spanish language.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The most effective method for students to learn grammar is through direct instruction.						
Lesson plans should be shaped based on the needs of the students.						
Teachers should select classroom content based on student interest.						
Teachers should create a community of learners in the classroom in which everyone learns from each other.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Grammar rules should be learned through exposure to texts and examples in context.						
Content must be relevant to the students' lives in order						

to maintain interest in

Spanish learning.

Students should do most of

the talking in the classroom.

Teachers of Spanish should

speak in Spanish the

majority of the time.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students should actively participate in the learning process.						
The primary role of the student in the classroom is learning the information presented by the teacher.						
The teacher represents the main source of knowledge in the classroom.						
Students learn best when working in groups with other students.						

Part V: Technology Practices

Think about your teaching practices for the Spanish language. Check the box that most accurately represents how frequently you use the following technology applications in the classroom.

	Every Day	Weekly	At least 2x/month	At least 1x/month	At least 1x/semester	Less than 2x/year	Never
Voicethread							
Blogging							
e-portfolio							
Websites in Spanish							
Glogster							

	Every Day	Weekly	At least 2x/month	At least 1x/month	At least 1x/semester	Less than 2x/year	Never
PowerPoint							
Skype							
GoogleDocs							
Voki							
Photopeach							

	Every Day	Weekly	At least 2x/month	At least 1x/month	At least 1x/semester	Less than 2x/year	Never
Toondoo							
Videos in Spanish							

Wikis

Other (name)

Other (name)

Part V: Technology Practices, continued…

If you indicated that you utilize technology, please briefly share your rationale for

integrating technology into the Spanish learning classroom.

Part VI: Influence of Methodologies/Techniques –

Check the appropriate box to indicate how much influence the following methodologies

or techniques have on your teaching practices.

	Very much influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence	I'm not familiar with this.
Total Physical Response (TPR)					
Cooperative group learning					
Differentiated learning					
Task-based instruction					
Teaching culture based on products, practices, and perspectives that define it					

	Very much influence	**Some influence**	**Very little influence**	**No influence**	**I'm not familiar with this.**
Standards-based instruction					
Constructivist learning theory					
Scaffolding					
Multiple intelligences					
Authentic assessment					

VII: Follow-up Questions:

1. Describe what the concept "student-centered teaching" means to you, and explain how it does or does not apply to your teaching.

2. Describe what the concept "building lessons based on objectives/backward design" means to you, and explain how it does or does not apply to your teaching.

3. What else would you like to share about your teaching of the Spanish language?

Appendix C

Figure C.1: Use of Spanish Disaggregated by Level

Figure C.1: Use of Spanish Disaggregated by Level