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An Evaluative Study of the Returned Missionary Class at
Brigham Young University

Arwen T. Wyatt

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

An Evaluative Study of the Returned Missionary Class at Brigham Young University

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This thesis reports on an evaluative study of the first 300-level Spanish class at Brigham Young University, often referred to as the returned missionary class. The information gathered describes the history of the class and changes in curriculum and goals over the years. It also describes students who have taken the class: native Spanish speakers, heritage speakers, returned missionaries, students from lower levels, students with a background in another Romance language, and presents information as to how well the class has met the needs of each group of students, as well as suggestions to better meet student needs.

Results indicate that there is a general satisfaction with the first 300-level Spanish class across the different categories of Spanish students in this class. Data also indicate that additional review of the class may be beneficial in order to 1) increase horizontal articulation, 2) better meet General Education requirements, 3) increase the student preparedness from Spanish 206 to 321, and 4) improve instructor training.

Keywords: Returned missionary, evaluation, Spanish, upper-division Spanish, lower-level Spanish
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As learners of second language move from basic language classes to more advanced language classes, there eventually comes a point at which lower-level meets upper-level in a great “meeting of curricular” minds, and language-focused courses give way to articulation of upper-level literature-based courses. Spanish 321 is the first 300-level Spanish class offered in the Spanish and Portuguese Department at Brigham Young University. Students in the course come from very different backgrounds in Spanish language and preparation, and thus have different needs, which can often be difficult to meet. It is this curricular junction point that serves as a basis for my study.

The origin of this thesis stems partially as a result from the department’s continued curricular interest and concern for 321. In the department there seem to be two major areas of concern regarding Spanish 321: the need for the course to (1) meet the needs of several different student populations, and (2) fulfill specific program and university requirements and needs. Each of these two areas will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Different Student Populations

Spanish 321 is the first 300-level course that brings together different groups, including non-returned missionaries, returned missionaries, heritage learners of Spanish, and native Spanish speakers. The needs of each of these groups are briefly discussed below.
Non-Returned Missionaries Who “Come up Through Lower Levels”

Non-returned missionaries are students who have not served a mission for The Church or Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. When men and women turn 18 years old, they have the option to serve a proselytizing mission for 24 months (men) or 18 months (women), and can serve throughout the world. While many returned-missionaries learned a language through contact on their mission, non-returned missionaries learned the language of their choice in classroom settings. Up to now, women have constituted the majority of the lower-level students. They tend to lack confidence in speaking and grammar when placed with returned missionaries, native speakers, and heritage language speakers because they have not had a significant immersion experience. One student shared,

“I think coming into the class having switched [from a different class one week into the semester], being younger, and not having served a mission, I definitely felt behind for starting [sic]. And…even from there throughout the course I always felt like, I had to work a lot harder to keep up with them [RMs], …because of all of the grammar skills that we were working on just sounded right to them because they had spent so much time abroad, whereas I had to study it and really memorize it from the book.

They generally enroll in Spanish 321 with the intent to minor in Spanish or Spanish Teaching, or to earn a BYU Language Certificate. Non-returned missionaries need continued opportunities to develop their speaking skills, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary, and confidence.
Returned Missionaries

The term returned missionary, or RM as they are commonly referred to, identifies someone as having served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. They spend anywhere from 18 months up to 2 years teaching in whatever language is spoken in the country, or area, they serve in. RMs are not completely homogenous in their language exposure and language backgrounds. For example, Spanish-speaking returned missionaries from serving in the U.S., or even Japan, are different linguistically when compared with Spanish-speaking returned missionaries from Argentina. There are also instances when a missionary’s service time is shortened, due to health for example.

Unlike other student populations that enroll in Spanish 321, returned missionaries often enroll in order to take the Spanish 16-credit challenge exam, to fulfill a university General Education requirement, or to earn a BYU Language Certificate. They may lack confidence in their fluency, pronunciation, and grammatical accuracy when compared with native speakers. They often need to work on these aspects of language.

Heritage Speakers

As the Hispanic population in the state and across the U.S. increases, so do the number of heritage speakers. In 2012, the Hispanic/Latino population made up 13.3% of Utah’s population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Valdés (2001) defined a heritage language student as someone “who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English” (p.38). Heritage speakers have different characteristics and vary according to generation in language abilities and literacy. Valdés (2001) divided them into three different categories: recent immigrants to the U.S., first-
and second-generation speakers, and third- and fourth-generation U.S.-born Hispanics. Recent immigrants differ in their English proficiency and may or may not be educated formally in Spanish. Heritage speakers of the first- and second-generation also vary in their Spanish and English language skills. For example, they may speak Spanish in the home, but receive their formal education in English. The group of third- and fourth-generation U.S.-born Hispanics is described as receptive bilinguals, understanding oral Spanish but lacking other literacy skills.

Heritage speakers often enroll in 321 with the intent to major or minor in Spanish or Spanish Teaching or to take the 16-credit exam. They may lack confidence in their knowledge of grammar when compared with RMs and native speakers, since the former groups have an intuitive and innate knowledge of grammar. In addition to grammar, they need to develop skills in literacy, including knowledge of writing conventions such as spelling and accent marks (Potowski, 2001).

**Native Speakers**

Like heritage speakers, native speakers often enroll in 321 with the intent of majoring or minoring in Spanish, Spanish Teaching, or Spanish Translation. They are generally highly competent users of Spanish, but they may lack an explicit knowledge of grammar. Depending on their educational background, they may also need additional instruction regarding orthographic skills (including writing conventions) as well as an introduction to literary text analysis.

Given the varying skills and confidence levels of these different groups of students, it has proven challenging for the department to design a single course to meet all of their needs.
Program and University Requirements and Needs

Program Needs for Spanish Majors: Grammar and Composition

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese wants Spanish majors and minors to have a foundation in grammar and composition. In the late 1960s, the department restructured Spanish 321 and 322 as a two-course sequence to teach grammar and composition. However, students who choose not to major or minor in Spanish generally take only 321 without going on to 322; hence, it has been problematic to view 321 and 322 as a two-course sequence, leaving the department to struggle over the years with the issue of what content should be included in 321 as a stand-alone course.

University General Education Requirements

For many years, the university has allowed returned missionaries from foreign language-speaking missions to fulfill General Education requirements by taking a single 300-level language course. In its “Languages of Learning Foundation Document” (2012), the university outlines its expectations for courses that fulfill this requirement:

1. The world languages option is filled by completing a culminating course that follows several semester hours of college course work in a foreign language or its equivalent.

2. The primary focus of the culminating course will be on using the language to explore the literatures, cultures, and histories of the native speakers of the language. The courses will also give attention to grammar, pronunciation, and similar matters in order to improve skills of interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication in a foreign language.
3. The culminating course will be taught primarily in the language being studied. Exceptions to this criterion may be made only with the explicit approval of the Faculty General Education Council (FGEC).

Because 321 is the only Spanish course that many of these students take, the department has attempted to structure it as to fulfill GE requirements, necessitating the inclusion of literary and cultural content in addition to grammar and composition.

Need for Program Articulation

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese has made numerous changes in the curriculum with regard to vertical and horizontal articulation in an attempt to address both departmental and student needs, yet there remain questions and doubt as to what curriculum meets the most significant needs of both sides. Articulation has been a concern among foreign language learners for many years.

Byrnes (as cited in Lange, 1982, p. 115) describes vertical articulation as “the continuity of a program throughout the length of the program.” It is the sequencing of language courses from the beginning course to the end course of instruction. As students continue upward in Spanish courses, vertical articulation enables a student to progress without feeling unprepared for the next level. With good articulation students feel a smooth flow upward from course to course.

Horizontal articulation refers to the coordination of multi-sectioned language courses. Departments must be able to ensure consistency between different sections of the same course. It is important for all who are teaching to know what the expected outcomes and what the specific goals are of each level and each course. Additionally, it is equally important for both language teacher and language learner to know what is
expected so that all become equal partners in the language learning process. Gabbitas (2011) affirms that

Ideally students should be confident that they will achieve the same objectives in any section of a given course. Horizontally, the curriculum should be consistent across sections. A similar curriculum, including syllabi, texts, and assessment instruments, can contribute to facilitating parallel content, which in turn may contribute to achieving the same objectives. (p. 26)

Need for Continued Focus on Language as Well as Literature

The “language-literature gap” describes the difference between lower- and upper-level language courses. It refers to the difference, or gap, between the lower level focus on language learning courses, and the change in emphasis to literature in the upper-level classes. For many years this has been a concern, which has been difficult to overcome and has remained particularly challenging in terms of articulation. In her dissertation, Kraemer (2008) points out that many scholars “have approached the problem of articulation from the point of literacy,” and “their research has focused mainly on a holistic curriculum that implements literature from the very beginning. Only [a] few studies have focused on continuing to improve language skills in the upper-level courses” (pp. 2-3).

Language learning mostly stops when a student reaches upper-level classes, which can pose some problems for students without significant experience abroad. Graman (1987) asserts “teachers expect students in the upper-division courses, though usually not in lower-division courses, to be proficient in oral and written communication in the developing language. This developmental gap is too wide to bridge unless language
programs lessen expectations with regard to proficiency at the upper level or increase them at the lower level” (p. 931). For the students coming from classes where there is not much writing and mainly inauthentic speaking situations, it can be daunting to rise to the level of the more experienced students. Though there will be challenges for native speakers and heritage speakers, they will not have the same type of “gap” experience as the lower level students. The language-literature gap mainly affects the courses that students take after 321; the overall language skills of RMs, heritage speakers, and native speakers may better prepare them for subsequent literature courses, whereas non-RMs may lack the necessary vocabulary to understand literary readings. In reality, all groups need a continued focus on language, which unfortunately may not occur after 321.

In summary, the first 300-level classes entail a complicated mix of program goals and student needs that the department has attempted to address simultaneously. Over the years, many changes have been made to the content and structure of Spanish 321 in an attempt to address these issues. Significant department changes in articulation were made in Fall 2006, when Spanish 101 and 102, which are intended for true beginners, became pass/fail courses. Spanish 105 and 106 were newly designed courses introduced to the curriculum for students with two or more years of high school Spanish, and Spanish 205 was created as a new second-year course to fulfill General Education requirements for non-returned missionaries. Spanish 206 was introduced as the bridge course for those who continued to the upper-level Spanish courses.

Additionally, the department has made changes in which course returned missionaries are expected to take in order to fulfill GE requirements. Historically it began as Spanish 321 and then changed to Spanish 302. From 302 it changed to Spanish 315,
and then reverted back to Spanish 321. At the present time, however, it is unclear to what extent the current content of Spanish 321 is meeting all of the needs of the department, students, and faculty.

**Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this thesis is to review the historic changes made by the department to the returned missionary courses and bridge courses, the reasons behind each change, and the extent to which these changes have met the needs of the various student populations enrolled in the course. Specifically, the study proposes to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the objectives and goals of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for the first 300-level Spanish class and how have they evolved over the years?

2. How well is the Spanish 321 class meeting the needs of the following groups of students: heritage speakers of Spanish, native Spanish-speakers, Spanish-speaking returned missionaries, non-returned missionaries, and speakers of other Romance languages?

3. How motivated are students to continue their study of language after taking Spanish 321?

4. How well is Spanish 206 preparing non-returned missionaries for Spanish 321?

5. What changes might be made to the curriculum to better meet students’ needs and those of the department?
This chapter has provided an overview of the issues of interest related to Spanish 321 and offered a review of literature pertaining to the study. Chapter 2 will present the methodology and instruments used to collect data. Subsequently, Chapter 3 will discuss in more detail the history and goals of the returned missionary class as it has changed over the years. Student and faculty perspectives regarding the Spanish 321 class will be introduced in Chapter 4. The concluding chapter, Chapter 5, will provide a discussion of data, all resulting conclusions, and final researcher recommendations.
CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the Spanish 321 course, this study investigates the class’s history and changes over the years as well as students’ perceptions of the course. In this chapter, the procedures of this study will be explained, including the research questions, participants, instruments, and data analysis.

Participants

The participants for this study were students registered in Spanish 321 during Winter Semester 2013. During any given semester the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University has approximately 600 to 700 total students enrolled in the course. In Winter Semester 2013 there was a total of 638 students officially registered. Of the 638 registered students, 421 students (65%) of students completed and returned questionnaires to the researcher.

Participating students represented the different background categories and experience previously mentioned in Chapter 1. Many, if not most, had lived in a Spanish-speaking environment for eighteen to twenty-four months. From among the 421 students, 85% (344) reported having served a mission, 3% (15) self-identified as native Spanish-speakers, though two students indicated they were both a native speaker and heritage speaker. Heritage speakers represented 7% (30) of the students. Students who experienced coming up through the ranks numbered 23, or 5%. Only 1% (5) of the students were speakers of other languages, mostly Romance. Four students did not indicate any Spanish background at all. It should also be pointed out that some students fell into one or more background categories. Additionally, there were five students who
had “other” experiences with Spanish, which they were allowed to provide in an open-ended question.

Students who only marked the “other” category indicated the following information: lived in Mexico and was an exchange student in Spain, born and raised in Mexico until the age of 19 but Spanish was not their native language, and studied Spanish in high school and enjoyed it. Additionally, one student wrote they were born in South America and moved to the U.S. at the young age of thirteen. It may be deduced that this student might be a heritage speaker; however, that category was not marked on the student’s questionnaire. These students were not placed into any other category (native speaker, heritage speaker, lower-level learner, or Romance language learner).

**Student Questionnaire**

It was determined, in conjunction with the researcher’s thesis chair, that the response rate for the student questionnaire would be higher by visiting each class and requesting volunteers instead of administering it electronically. The number of completed questionnaires represents those students who were in class on that particular day the researcher visited. After IRB approval was obtained, the researcher visited 20 sections out of 24 taught; the remaining four sections were not visited due to logistics and researcher schedule constraints. At times, a small number of students arrived late but in enough time to still complete it; others arriving too late to class did not complete the questionnaire because it would have significantly detracted from instruction time in the class.

The researcher contacted teachers via email and requested convenient days and times in which to visit their class. Once a visit was scheduled, the researcher made a brief
announcement at the beginning of class soliciting voluntary help. Subsequently, the IRB consent form was passed out to each student stating the protocol, and if students chose to participate they accepted the conditions of the study by signing at the bottom of the consent form. They were informed that if they consented by signing the IRB form, they could then choose to volunteer and fill out the survey in class.

While students were reading the IRB form, the researcher passed out the questionnaire to each student. A subsequent announcement was made that those who chose not to participate could complete an alternate activity while the remainder of students completed the questionnaire. The alternate activities provided were studying pages of their textbook, addressing questions to the professor, preparing for a daily test, or working toward the completion of a homework assignment. It was reiterated that the students should only sign the IRB form if they were going to fill out the questionnaire. Those who did not wish to participate turned in blank forms at the same time that both of the forms were collected from all students, thus insuring that no negative attention would be drawn to those choosing not to participate in the study.

Students were asked regarding their background in Spanish and to mark any and all of the following that applied:

- I am a native speaker of Spanish
- I am studying Spanish as a heritage language – my parents or ancestors spoke Spanish
- I served a Spanish-speaking mission and the mission name
- I took lower-level Spanish classes at BYU (101, 102, 105, 106, 205, 206)
- I took lower-level Spanish classes at another university or college
• I speak another Romance language (Portuguese, French, Italian, Romanian)

• Other

Following the background part of the questionnaire, students were asked why they were taking Spanish 321, and to mark all that applied:

• To take the 16-credit Exam in Spanish

• To fulfill a General Education requirement

• To fulfill a requirement for a Spanish major (Spanish BA, Spanish Translation, Spanish Teaching)

• To fulfill a requirement for a Spanish minor

• Other

The next part of the questionnaire asked students to rate their satisfaction with their experience in Spanish 321, up to that point of the semester, on a Likert scale. Response options were “very dissatisfied,” “somewhat dissatisfied,” “undecided,” “somewhat satisfied,” and “very satisfied.” The survey also consisted of options for students to answer questions in an open-ended manner.

Next on the questionnaire, students were asked to grant the researcher access to their final Spanish 321 grade as part of the study. If students gave their consent by providing their BYU Identification Number on the questionnaire, the department’s Executive Administrative Assistant then provided the grades, which were anonymous. In light of the different background of students the researcher was interested to see if any correlation between background and final grades could be made. A total of 280 students consented; these results will be presented in Chapter 5.
The researcher was particularly interested in collecting data from students who had not served missions and had taken lower-level Spanish classes, in particular Spanish 205, 206, and the conversation classes Spanish 311 and 312. Most students not having served a mission have generally taken lower-level Spanish courses to reach and prepare themselves for Spanish 321. The researcher was interested in seeing if these students felt prepared for the Spanish 321 class if they had taken any of the previously mentioned classes. If students had taken any of the classes, they were directed to a separate section of the questionnaire, which asked the following questions:

- How well do you feel Spanish 206 prepared you for Spanish 321?
- How well do you feel Spanish 205 prepared you for 206?
- How well do you feel that Spanish conversation classes prepared you for Spanish 321?
- What changes, if any, would you make to BYU’s lower-level Spanish classes in order to better prepare students for 321?

The same type of Likert scale was used for students to answer the preceding questions. They were given the options of “Not at all”, “Poorly”, “Somewhat”, “Fairly”, and “Very well”. At the very end students again had the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions on how the lower-level courses could better prepare students coming through these courses for Spanish 321.

On the back of the questionnaire, students had the opportunity to include their name and contact information if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview with the researcher. From the information provided by those willing to be interviewed, the researcher chose one or two students from each different background category to
interview. Each interviewee was contacted by phone or by email and a subsequent interview was arranged that lasted anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes. At the beginning of the appointed interview time, the interviewee was presented with a second IRB consent form explaining the interview procedures and that participating was voluntary and there would be no form of compensation.

**Faculty/Staff Participants**

In order to elicit a perspective other than the students’, three faculty members were chosen to be interviewed. Dr. Alan Meredith, a Spanish Pedagogy professor, was selected because of his longevity in the department and experience on the Curriculum Committee; Quina Hoskisson, a Spanish lecturer, was chosen due to her experience supervising part-time faculty members who taught Spanish 321, participating on the Curriculum Committee, and teaching the class herself; and Dr. Jeffrey Turley, professor of Hispanic linguistics, was chosen to represent the linguistic section and for also having taught Spanish 321 for a number of years.

One administrator was chosen to be interviewed, Cherilee DeVore, to ascertain additional information and history regarding Spanish 321 due to her longevity within the department, 41 years. The three faculty members and administrator were interviewed for approximately 25 minutes each.

**Data Analysis**

Microsoft Excel was used to input and categorize the questionnaire data. Each question from the hard copy was given a corresponding number. The data from each question of the questionnaire was input into one master Excel document, including the open-ended answers. Filtering the document for different data, the researcher was able to
synthesize information, compare data, calculate descriptive statistics, and group open-ended answers by theme. SPSS software was used to compare the mean grades of the various groups of students enrolled in 321.

Recorded interviews of student and faculty interviews were transcribed to Word documents using free online transcribing software at https://transcribe.wreally.com/. Additional sources of information included minutes from department meetings, online archives of the BYU Undergraduate Catalogue from the 1960s through the present, the BYU Learning Outcomes website, and syllabi from instructors who taught Spanish 321 in Fall 2013. These data were compiled, along with the faculty interviews, into Word documents and hand-coded by theme.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, summarizes the history and goals of the first 300-level class at BYU. In Chapter 4 the students’ perspectives on the class will be presented.
CHAPTER 3

HISTORY AND GOALS OF THE RETURNED MISSIONARY CLASS

This chapter summarizes the history and goals of the returned missionary class at BYU, which at various times has been called Spanish 321, 302, and 315. The chapter begins with a history of the course, its objectives, and the ways in which it has changed over the years. Following this historical description, the chapter examines the objectives and content of Spanish 321 at the present time. Sources of information for this chapter included interviews with three long-time faculty members and the department secretary, minutes from department meetings; online archives of the BYU Undergraduate Catalogue from the 1960s through the present, the BYU Learning Outcomes website; and syllabi from instructors who taught Spanish 321 in Fall 2013.

Lower-Division Credit for Returned Missionaries

Approximately forty to fifty years ago, young LDS adults were called to serve as Spanish-speaking missionaries throughout the world. And not unlike today, upon completion of their mission they often began their college studies at BYU. Prior to 1970 there was not an official Spanish 16-credit exam that RMs could take. Students received sixteen graded credits for the lower-level classes, which were provided by the LTM (Language Training Mission) in Provo, Utah. Historically the LTM was a complex designed and constructed near the BYU campus in 1976 which was a place for all LDS missionaries to prepare for mission, both English-speaking and foreign languages. Previous to it being called the LTM, it was called the MLI (Missionary Language Institute).
Beginning in 1970, the department decided Spanish students should no longer receive academic grades from the LTM/MLI, but should take a class in order to receive credits and grades. The class appointed at the time was Spanish 321. When students enrolled they received the 16 lower-level Spanish grades based on the final grade received for the class, or the final grade from another class if it happened to be different. According to Cherilee DeVore, the majority of students took Spanish 321 because it was thought to be a preparation for the test, a fact that still exists today.

Dr. Alan Meredith related that when he was a 321 student, the course was taught by a graduate student and was primarily grammar focused. Afterwards he took Spanish 322, which at the time was the second half of 321 and focused on style and writing. His particular section of Spanish 322 happened to be a pilot course taught by Dr. Kay Moon using a manuscript for a literary analysis book. As a result of the pilot, a new course, Spanish 339, was created and became an introduction course to Spanish literature.

In 1972 the department started giving a 16-credit exam in conjunction with Spanish 321 classes, which seemed a good fit. It was also in this year that the grades for the challenged classes were determined by an actual 16-credit exam, with the exception of the grades for Spanish conversation courses. The conversation classes were, and still are today, Spanish 211R and 212R. The grades awarded for these classes were the same grades students received as their final Spanish 321 grade. A short number of years after that it was decided to give every student A’s for those courses regardless of the final grade in 321. The rationale for this was the fact that most of the students had chiefly spoken Spanish while living abroad, and therefore in comparison to other students coming from the 200-level courses, had much greater speaking abilities. It was thought
that most, if not all RMs, would easily surpass the achievement requirements for the conversation classes.

Some years later it was decided to have instructors of Spanish 321 assign the grades for 211/212R, based on the students’ speaking skills as demonstrated in class (generally through oral presentations), and provide those grades to the department; Cherilee DeVore handwrote these on each form. Most students qualified for the highest grade; however, teachers occasionally had concerns about a student’s speaking ability. In most cases it was a student who served Spanish-speaking stateside, or had slightly less abroad experience for some other reason. These cases were the exception rather than the rule.

Currently, the grading for the conversation classes is completely disconnected from students’ performance in 321. This is a direct result of the efforts of Dr. Alan Meredith and Dr. Jerry Larson, who developed a scale for assigning grades for lower-division Spanish courses based on students’ performance on the 16-credit exam.

**A General Education Course for Returned Missionaries**

By the mid 1980s, evidence from departmental documents suggests that many faculty members were not satisfied with the content of Spanish 321. In a departmental memo, the department chair, Dr. Ted Lyon, expressed that there seemed to be a “general dissatisfaction” with the way 321 and 322 were currently taught, and recommended that a tempered approach be taken into consideration in accordance with the “department’s mandates to teach stylistics, grammar, syntax and vocabulary,” taking into account “who will be teaching the class and what they [the teacher] can adequately handle.” The memo mentioned difficulty in finding teachers qualified to teach the course as well as concern
regarding the content of the course, and noted that students were upset and frustrated due to feeling the class was beyond their understanding. The department was struggling to define what the 321 and 322 would be and how to create the curriculum to meet the department’s expectations.

Other concerns expressed were that vocabulary should be taught in some type of meaningful context and that there should be a usage study to determine the most frequently-used words in Spanish; a department linguist would perform this research. The department also felt that 321 was functioning as an advanced class, and not as a third-year grammar class. Students came to the department chair’s office complaining that “the class was far over their heads” and they felt they could “never make it as majors in Spanish.”

At approximately the same time, the university was in the process of changing requirements for courses that fulfilled General Education (GE) credit, and the department recognized that changes would need to be made to the returned missionary class in order to satisfy GE requirements in Spanish. As a result, it was decided to address the problems with Spanish 321 by creating a separate course for returned missionaries, “Spanish 302 - Advanced Spanish Grammar, Reading, and Culture,” which would count for GE credit. In order to fulfill GE requirements, the new course would incorporate elements of culture, literature, and history as well as grammar. Spanish 321 would continue to be offered as a separate course for Spanish majors and minors, but would focus mainly on grammar.

It was intended that the new Spanish 302 course would build on returned missionaries’ enthusiasm for the culture in which they served and introduce them to
aspects of the culture that they did not encounter on their mission. It was hoped that such a course would encourage more returned missionaries to consider majoring in Spanish. Dr. James Taylor was a driving force behind the idea of Spanish 302 being a magnet course that, according to Dr. Meredith, “would not be pure grammar, but an introduction to literature, a little bit of introduction to culture, and then a grammar and writing component as well, to kind of get them excited about taking Spanish rather than just have them take one course and then go off and do their majors in some other field.”

This new GE course for returned missionaries was first taught in 1985 and continued to be taught for two decades, although at one point it was renumbered due to subsequent developments. The creation of a new Spanish 310 course in 1994, which was done in order to offer a pre-major/minor skills review course for non-returned missionaries, led to confusion among students because 310 was a higher number 302 but was intended for less advanced students. As a result, in 2002 Spanish 302 was renumbered as 315, and this course continued to serve as the course that fulfilled GE credit for returned missionaries. Spanish 310 was renumbered as 301 and continued to be offered until 2006, when Spanish 206 replaced 301 as the bridge course between lower- and upper-division courses as explained in Chapter 1.

**Changing the GE Course from Spanish 315 to 321**

Beginning in approximately 2004 the department decided to revisit the content of Spanish 315. After offering Spanish 302/315 for nearly two decades, some faculty members, particularly in the Linguistics section, expressed concerns that 315 was just a “fluff class” that failed to provide a solid foundation in grammar. Other faculty were concerned that students were not learning the writing skills they needed for upper-
division courses. As a result, Spanish 315 was discontinued in 2006, and 321 once again became the GE course for returned missionaries. Spanish 321 and 322 were again to be considered part of a two-course sequence, with catalogue descriptions as follows:

*Third-Year Spanish Reading, Grammar, Culture, and Composition I and II.* Two-semester sequence provides and intensive study and practice with Spanish grammar, vocabulary and writings incorporating cultural and literary readings. Note: Span. 321 is the first class for returned-missionaries. Span 321 fulfills the “Skills: Languages of Learning.”

Dixon Anderson’s textbook *Patterns in Spanish*, which had previously used by some instructors of 321, was adopted as the text for all sections of the course. In order to retain the emphasis on literature and culture required for GE courses, a committee chaired by Dr. Lynn Williams assembled a packet of readings with accompanying vocabulary exercises to supplement the Anderson text.

**Revisiting the Content of Spanish 321**

Soon after 321 replaced 315 as the GE course, concerns began to arise from both faculty and students about the content of the course. The adjunct faculty members who taught 321 disliked the Anderson textbook, and linguistics professors expressed the view that most adjunct faculty did not have the linguistic preparation to use the book successfully. Student comments on course evaluations also reflected a dislike of the new curriculum. Minutes from department meetings recorded that the department was losing majors at an alarming rate and Spanish 321 had become a class that was “not student-friendly.”
Adding to the dissatisfaction of some faculty members was the fact that the Anderson textbook was intended to be used in Spanish 322 as well as 321, creating a two-course sequence. It was pointed out that most students only took 321 and did not to continue on to 322, or if they did, it was semesters later or toward the end of their studies instead of immediately after 321. This reality made it difficult to consider 321 and 322 as a two-course sequence.

In the face of these challenges, in 2008 the department once again revised the content and goals of Spanish 321. The course description was (and remains) as follows:

*Third-year Spanish Reading, Grammar, and Culture.* Intensive study and practice with Spanish grammar, vocabulary, and writings incorporating cultural and literary readings.

It was agreed that *Patterns of Spanish* would be dropped, and that all adjunct faculty who taught the course would use the textbook *Repase y escriba*. A couple of linguistics professors continued to use a version of the Anderson book, translated and revised by Dr. Jeff Turley as *Modelos de español*.

**Spanish 321 in 2013**

At the present time, Fall Semester 2013, there are 24 regular sections of Spanish 321 (not counting sections taught through study abroad programs or the BYU Salt Lake Center), with a total enrollment of 628 students. These sections are taught by 13 different faculty members, comprising five full-time faculty and eight part-time faculty.

In terms of course objectives or learning outcomes, the Fall 2013 online class schedule simply says “Outcomes not found”; however, the BYU Learning Outcomes website lists the following objectives for the course:
Linguistic competence: Demonstrate an increased understanding of the Spanish language, including grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary.

Familiarity with important literary texts: Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and analyze Hispanic (Spanish and Latin American) literature (e.g., short story, essay, poetry).

Effective written communication: Demonstrate the ability to communicate in Spanish through written expression.

The current textbook used in most sections of Spanish 321 is Repase y escriba: Curso avanzado de gramática y composición (6th ed.), by Maria Canteli Domenicis.

Following is a description of the book from the website of the publisher, Wiley:

This perennial best-seller, written for Advanced Grammar and Composition or Advanced Composition and Conversation classes, combines solid grammar coverage with contemporary readings from a variety of sources, including literature, magazines, and newspapers. Short passages precede each reading, introducing the author and the context before delving into the vocabulary, comprehension questions and conversation prompts. The Sección léxica teaches readers proverbs, idioms, and word families. The text also offers topics for creative compositions with guidelines. With updated literary and cultural readings, Repase y escriba includes an "oral exchange," to make the text more useful when stressing conversation.

An examination of the syllabi from the different sections of 321 reveals that although there are general commonalities among the different sections, including an emphasis on grammar, reading, and composition, there are also important differences,
especially in terms of the learning outcomes for the course; in fact, the greatest variance among the syllabi is in the learning outcomes. Appendix C consists of a table showing the learning outcomes, textbook, compositions, tests, and other assignments for each instructor of 321. Some courses list the “official” outcomes for 321 as per the BYU Learning Outcomes website; other courses list outcomes that refer to ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines; still others list outcomes so specific and inclusive that they resemble the outcomes for the entire Spanish major. Five professors do not have any outcomes listed in their syllabus.

There is also a division among the faculty in the textbooks used. All of the professors use *Repase y escriba* except for two full-time Spanish Linguistics faculty, who use the book *Modelos de español*.

Each 321 section includes a composition requirement. The number of compositions ranges from three to four compositions and different sections vary in the number of word requirements per composition, some 250 words, and others less. Students write roughly the same types of compositions. There is a little variance between writing a *carta formal* or a *carta informal*. There is one section where students are assigned the opinion topic they must write about. In almost all sections students are permitted two drafts and the final grade is an average of the two.

Each 321 section also has additional assignments, tests, and presentations. The topics for the presentations are either predetermined grammar concepts or a culture topic. Each section includes *lecturas*, but the numbers vary, as do the actual texts read and the number of homework assignments. The professors with literature backgrounds seem to have more *lecturas* than those with a linguistic background.
In summary, the different sections of 321 are similar in terms of content and assignments, but they differ substantially in terms of the stated learning outcomes, and to some extent in the readings assigned and the approach to teaching grammar. Much of this variation seems attributable to the particular background of the instructor. In spite of these differences, it appears that there exists a general agreement among instructors of 321 as to the purpose and content of the course.

**Continuing Concerns About Spanish 321**

At the present time, a number of issues concerning Spanish 321 continue to be discussed among department faculty. Among these issues are the changing nature of the student population; the need for an emphasis on grammar; the need for teaching students how to write; the need for continued development of students’ speaking skills; and the transition from Spanish 206 to 321. Each of these issues will be briefly discussed below, based on information from minutes of department meetings and faculty interviews.

**Changing Student Population**

As Spanish 321 has changed, so has the population of its students. When Spanish 315 was the course that fulfilled GE credit, the only students taking 321 were Spanish majors and minors, and the occasionally ambitious RM who desired a grammar-heavy course over Spanish 315. Since that time, student expectations have evolved. Now that 321 has replaced 315 as the GE course, most students take the class to prepare for the 16-credit exam, to take it, and to boost their GPA.

The students are generally divided into two groups: returned missionaries and those who complete Spanish 205/206. Approximately two-thirds of the students will not go on to upper-division grammar and literature classes. The two groups vary in their
characteristics; students coming up through the ranks have had a solid exposure to grammar, but their speaking skills are limited. In contrast, the RMs have good speaking skills but limited knowledge of grammar. It had been theorized that the lower-level students who reached 321 actually had better grammar skills than RMs; however, this turned out not to be the case. Dr. Meredith shared the following information about the language skills of RMs:

When we tested them several years ago and came up with a bar graph that showed the range of scores in grammar, conversation, and listening comprehension, the best of our kids coming through the ranks were not as good as the worst of the missionaries. There was some overlap on a couple of areas and it may have been grammar, but [between] the conversation and the listening comprehension there was a gap between the two bars. There was a little bit of overlap on the grammar. So the kids coming up through the ranks were still lower overall. The best grammarians coming up through the ranks were better than the worst missionaries [at grammar], but most of the missionaries were much better.

The question of how to address changing student needs with department curriculum needs and resources has continued in recent years. In 2011 faculty member Dr. Orlando Alba suggested the possibility of having a separate section for native Spanish speakers, but there is nothing more found in the records regarding the matter. In sum, the department has increasingly recognized that Spanish 321 is no longer a generic group and should look at different levels of preparations of students that take the class.
Concerns About Grammar

The issue of grammar and how to incorporate it into Spanish 321 has long been an issue. Part of the issue has been the textbook, *Patterns for Spanish*. Although written by a superb grammarian, it has been a difficult book to implement with the part-time faculty who teach most sections of 321, and who have expressed dislike for the book. The linguists have argued for a solid grammar course, which was the reason that this book was initially adopted to be used for two semesters. However, changing Spanish 321 to a GE course created a problem. The strong grammar orientation of the book, in and of itself, it does not fulfill the GE requirements for the inclusion of literature and culture.

In 2011 the department discussed whether to resurrect Spanish 315 and restructure the curriculum or not. The rationale for this discussion was the argument that part-time faculty were better prepared to teach at the 315 level, whereas the full-time faculty were more knowledgeable of how to deal with errors and extemporaneous items. However, the part-time faculty were to go back to teaching 315, this could potentially put the department in a dilemma as to who would teach 321.

Concerns About Writing

Throughout the years there have been concerns and complaints from faculty that the students in upper-division Spanish literature classes do not write well. In 2008 the department discussed the fact that Spanish 322, the course dedicated to the teaching of writing, was not helping students improve in writing. Within the department, the student writing conversation continued into 2009 and many questions were raised: Are expectations too high for writing? Can writing assignments be changed to better help students focus and learn how to express themselves clearly, and understandably, and
logically? How can we help students have more confidence, have good writing skills, and be better prepared as they leave the university?

One concern raised by faculty was the perception that students lose their fluency the longer they are back from their missions. Subsequently, if students do not take 322 immediately, or wait toward the end of their studies to take it, they have lost fluency. They likely have already taken the other literature courses where they will write and would not benefit from the course. Other concerns included the need for time to be allowed in the syllabus to teach how to write different genres – for example, how to teach the students the difference between a narrative, essay, and story. In addition, it was observed that students do not have the same linguistic ability to write in an L2 as they do in their native language, and that they may not even be good writers in their native language.

Concerns about the teaching of writing have continued to the present time. It has been generally acknowledged that it is difficult to teach writing in just one or two classes, and that fixing all of the writing problems in 321 and 322 is just not possible. Quina Hoskisson summarized the problem as follows: “In 321 there are barely four compositions and there just is not the time to engage in the full writing process and introduce the basic genres. Even 322 is not going to fix everything.”

**Concerns About Speaking Skills**

Faculty members have periodically pointed out that neither Spanish 321 nor subsequent classes are designed to continue to develop students’ speaking skills. Although we expect our majors to finish at the Advanced Low level or better in an American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency
Interview (OPI), there have not been many resources or help available to those students who do not speak at that level. The following is ACTFL’s descriptor for Advanced Low speakers:

Speakers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest.

Advanced Low speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events.

Responses produced by Advanced Low speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker’s dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low speakers tends to be uneven.

Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.

Advanced Low speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly.

Although the department continues to offer conversation classes, which provide opportunities to continue developing speaking skills, it is often difficult for students to fit these into a semester’s schedule. Furthermore, the conversation classes do not currently count toward a major or minor, which is a disincentive for students to enroll in these classes.
The Transition from Spanish 206 to 321

Another ongoing issue is the extent to which Spanish 206 prepares non-returned missionaries for Spanish 321. This issue came up in department discussion in November of 2010 when students coming up through the lower-levels were noted as needing additional grammar and better oral skills. In transitioning from lower-level language classes to the upper-division classes there has always seemed to be a quantum leap in which non-returned missionaries struggle to function at the level of students who have served missions. Additional data on students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of Spanish 206 as a preparation for 321 will be reported in Chapter 4.

Observations From Long-Time Faculty Members About Spanish 321

Many of the above mentioned challenges concerning Spanish 321 were succinctly summarized by full-time faculty members. Dr. Alan Meredith stated:

The problem is a division as to what 321 should be. Linguists want it to be a language course with a focus on grammar and language in general. Spanish 321 is now the *de facto* returned missionary class. Most part-time faculty aren’t qualified to teach a grammar class. There is a need for language development beyond the rules, something to shape written and oral skills. We would have part-time faculty teach 315 and linguistic faculty teach 321 and 322. If we went back to 315, we would have to have rigorous training. We would need to have part-time people in on the planning.

Quina Hoskisson added, “There are multiple problems and needs but we are trying to dump them all into Span. 321. 321 was always a class we could not define.
Everybody thinks that 321 has to fix everything. No matter what the book or who the teacher is it will not fix the problem for every student.”

Dr. Howard Quackenbush summarized the frustrations concerning 321 in a department meeting, stating that when he came to BYU 41 years ago we were talking about 321 and we are still talking about 321 and he will leave and we will still be talking about 321.

This chapter has reviewed the history and goals of the returned missionary class from the perspective of faculty members and department personnel and documents. The following chapter will examine the current Spanish 321 class from the perspective of students enrolled in the class.
CHAPTER 4

STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON SPANISH 321

This chapter will report on students’ perspectives on Spanish 321. The first section of the chapter summarizes results of the student questionnaire, addressing the questions of why students enrolled in 321, how satisfied different groups of students are with the class; how motivated they are to continue studying Spanish after completing 321, what suggestions they have for improving 321, and how well Spanish 206 is preparing non-returned missionaries for Spanish 321. Following the results of the student survey, the average grades that each group of students earned in 321 are reported and discussed. The chapter concludes by summarizing interviews with five students: a native Spanish speaker, a returned missionary, a Spanish heritage speaker, a Romance language speaker, and a student from the lower levels.

Results of Student Questionnaire

Students’ Reasons for Enrolling in 321

One of the survey questions asked students why they were taking Spanish 321. Table 1 summarizes the responses of native speakers, heritage speakers, returned missionaries, students who came up from lower-level classes, and speakers of other Romance languages.
Table 1

*Student Responses to the Question “Why are you taking Spanish 321?”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16-credit exam</th>
<th>GE requirement</th>
<th>Spanish major requirement</th>
<th>Spanish minor requirement</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native speakers (15)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Speakers (30)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned missionaries (344)</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from lower levels (23)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers of other Romance languages (5)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, returned missionaries overwhelmingly enrolled in 321 in order to take the 16-credit exam, and to a lesser extent, to fulfill a GE requirement. The responses of the other groups of students were more evenly spread across the other categories of reasons for taking the class. It is interesting to note that relatively few students in any category were taking the class as a requirement for a Spanish major.

Responses from the “other” category revealed additional reasons why students enrolled in 321. Reasons for taking the class ranged from the desire to continue to learn Spanish, to improve Spanish grammar and writing, to better teach Spanish at the MTC, to facilitate better connection to the Latino community. Students’ responses to the “other” category, along with the number of mentions of each response, are listed in Table 2.
Table 2

*Student Responses to “Other” Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire to continue learning Spanish and improve</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a Language Certificate</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of Spanish language</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill requirements for other majors</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore the possibility of majoring/minoring in Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double major</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourteen students indicated that they intend to earn a language certificate. The Center for Language Studies (CFLS) offers the students an increasingly popular opportunity to earn a BYU Language Certificate, which is an endorsement of advanced language coursework and ratings for ACTFL writing and speaking assessments. According to the CFLS website, students are required to take one language, one civilization, and one literature class with minimum grades of B- in each course. Students are assessed in their speaking ability through an OPI, and a Writing Proficiency Test (WPT), which result in an assessment of Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior.

**Students’ Satisfaction with Spanish 321**

Another survey question asked students how satisfied they were with Spanish 321. Students’ responses are summarized in Table 3.
Table 3

*Student Responses to the Question “How satisfied are you with Spanish 321?”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat dissatisfied</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage speakers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administration of the questionnaire started approximately six weeks into the Winter 2014 semester and continued for approximately 4 weeks. As is evident from the table, a strong majority of students in all five groups indicated that they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the course. Only a small handful of students indicated that they were “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.” However, due to the timing of the questionnaire, results may have been different had it been given later in the semester.

**Students’ Plans for Taking Additional Spanish Classes**

Another area of interest to the current study was how likely students were to take additional Spanish classes after 321. As mentioned in Chapter 3, it was hoped that the returned missionary course would interest students in studying Spanish and in taking additional classes. Students’ responses are summarized in Table 4.
Table 4

*Student Responses to the Question “How likely are you to take additional Spanish courses beyond Spanish 321?”*

As can be seen, native speakers and students who “came up through the ranks” from lower-level Spanish courses were the most likely to plan on taking additional classes. Only about half of returned missionaries, and an even smaller proportion of heritage speakers, planned on taking additional classes.

**Students’ Suggestions for Improving Spanish 321**

An open-ended survey question asked students what suggestions they had for improving Spanish 321. Their responses, along with the number of times each response was mentioned, are listed in Table 5. The table includes only those responses that were mentioned by two or more students.
Table 5  
*Students’ Suggestions for Improving Spanish 321*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Suggestions</th>
<th>Total Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More speaking/Improve fluency/pronunciation (applying grammar through speaking)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less homework and busy work</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague assignments/better explanations of concepts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slower Pace</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More organization/better class organization</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More interactive course/learning activities</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More involvement with the Latin American community and native Spanish speakers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information/focus on 16-Credit Exam</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish lab/TA for additional practice</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorter tests</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start course with harder concepts like subjunctive Include more advanced concepts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More grammar and grammar review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored with concepts or lectures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer sections with different proficiency levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More writing opportunities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on expanding vocabulary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening everyday vocab or from different countries</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Spanish literature</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate class from 16-credit exam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More practice in class to better understand</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More homework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change textbook</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a placement test to verify this is right class</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More video usage/visuals/examples</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online practice program</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More of classroom material for additional practice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real world application</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to all answers to the activities in textbook</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have oral test/exams</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less vocabulary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide list of conjugations for native Spanish speakers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most commonly mentioned response (49) was students desiring more speaking opportunities, pronunciation, and improved speaking fluency. This indicates
that even though many students, including RMs, are already speaking at an advanced proficiency level, there is still a desire to continue practicing and better their speaking skill, even solidifying the grammar concepts through speaking. One student wrote, “Involve more speaking/conversation exercises to help us maintain and refine what we’ve learned.” Another commented, “Include opportunities for students to interact, help, and talk with native speakers on a regular basis (translating at school, links to good Spanish speaking films, language groups, etc.).”

The next most frequent response (22) addressed homework; students wanted less of it and often felt it was busy work. This was followed, in number, by students responding and desiring better explanations of concepts (10) followed by a slower course pace (9). In contrast to a slower pace, there were some students (6) who indicated that they would like to be challenged with harder concepts. Rounding out the bottom of the list are those two native Spanish speakers who would like conjugations provided for the verbs.

**Students’ Satisfaction with 206 as Preparation for 321**

Students who took Spanish 206 prior to 321 were asked to complete a separate section of the questionnaire asking how well they felt 206 had prepared them for 321. From all student responses, there were only 11 students total who took Spanish 205. The majority of students (9) were from the lower-levels; however, there were two returned missionaries who had taken 206 prior to serving a mission. Students’ responses to this question are summarized in Table 5. As is evident from the table, more than 50% indicated that 206 prepared them “fairly well” to “very well” for 321.
Table 6

*Student Responses to the Question “How well did Spanish 206 prepare you for Spanish 321?”*

An additional question asked students to recommend changes for BYU’s lower-level language courses. The most frequent response was the recommendation for more organization during class time and better training of the graduate teaching assistants. Students were aware that class time was often lost to a lack of organization; assistants would be searching for the correct PowerPoint or something on their computer. More emphasis on grammar was also recommended and using grammar in speaking. One of the students who took Spanish 206 prior to a mission said that she felt very comfortable completing the assignments, but not with conversational speaking and listening in class. She had declared a Spanish minor but dropped it due to her lack of confidence in speaking. On a positive note this particular student did serve a Spanish-speaking mission and is now much more at ease in speaking Spanish.

**Students’ Grades in Spanish 321**

In order to further investigate differences between the five groups of students enrolled in 321—returned missionaries, native speakers, heritage speakers, students who “came up through the ranks” from lower-level courses, and speakers of other Romance languages—students were asked on the questionnaire to grant permission for the
researcher to access their final grade in Spanish 321. A total of 263 students gave their consent. At the end of the semester, the researcher obtained these students’ grades from the university’s data system. After converting the grades to the 4-point scale used in calculating grade point averages, the mean grade for each group of students was calculated. Results are shown in Table 6 (the number of students in each group is shown in parentheses).

Table 7

Student Grade Point Averages by Group in Spanish 321

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean grade</th>
<th>St Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returned missionaries (n = 220)</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speakers (n = 6)</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage speakers (n = 14)</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from lower-level classes (n = 20)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance language speakers (n = 3)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is evident from Table 6, all five groups had relatively high mean grades, in the B+ range (3.3) or better.

Because of the small sample size of some of the groups, it was judged inadvisable to perform an analysis of variance to compare the group means. However, a $t$ test was performed comparing the mean grade for students from lower-level classes with that of returned missionaries. Results of the independent groups $t$ test [$t (238) = 1.98, p = .049$] showed that the mean grade for students from lower-level classes ($M = 3.48$) was significantly lower than that of returned missionaries ($M = 3.68$).

A Profile of Five Students Enrolled in Spanish 321

The following section will outline and describe each student interviewed from each different language background—coming up from lower levels, Romance language, heritage speaker, native speaker, and returned missionary—and describe his or her
experience in Spanish 321. Included in each summary is a balance between both positive and negative impressions of the course, as well as students’ recommendations. It should be noted that although the five students were selected in order to represent the different student populations that enroll in the class, each student is a unique individual whose views may not be identical in every way to other members of the same group.

**Hannah: From lower-level Spanish to Spanish 321**

“My Spanish classes here at BYU have definitely taught me some great ways that I personally learn a language…and are things that I want to, at least experiment with or carry with me however I choose to apply Spanish.”

Hannah (all names have been changed) is a sophomore majoring in Spanish Teaching. She began studying Spanish in the northeastern U.S. when she was in the seventh grade. In ninth grade she had a teacher from Colombia who was really enthusiastic and she caught that enthusiasm and continued through AP Spanish in high school. As a freshman she took Spanish 206 at Brigham Young University, followed by Spanish 321. Her only experience abroad is spending 16 days in Peru performing humanitarian work with her family. Prior to the interview Hannah received a mission call to Natal, Brazil, where she will spend the next 18 months. Upon returning to college, she will decide whether to continue with her Spanish major.

For Hannah the experience in Spanish 321 was “pretty intimidating.” In a class of approximately 30 students, only 5 of them were women and out of the entire class she indicated that only a few were not RMs. Among the intimidating factors were experience, age, and ability. Hannah mentioned two ways in which experience manifests itself in the classroom. She indicated that she felt much younger than other students because RMs
1) spoke very fast in Spanish and 2) talked about their missions all the time. These students have one and half to two years of experience living abroad and on their own with many life experiences that other students do not have. As a result of this experience, RMs are able to speak at a much quicker speed and higher level than can be attained by attending class and this was fairly intimidating to Hannah. Toward the end of the semester, Hannah connected with a fellow female student, recently returned from a study abroad in Spain, who hadn’t served a mission either. She felt that she was not wasting the other student’s time by studying together and that it was helping her too.

Despite her feelings of intimidation, Hannah affirmed that these intimidating factors were ultimately a good challenge:

Even though it was intimidating to be in a class with RMs, by the end I was really grateful for just hearing them speak all the time and just the little phrases that I picked up from them helped to recreate a more authentic Spanish culture in the class which I really appreciated . . . These students who had recently returned were still really enthusiastic about the language and didn't want to speak English even if they could.

The most difficult part of this class was the lack of preparation that she felt from Spanish 206. She described her 206 class as fairly disorganized with approximately 10-15 minutes per day used to try to get the projector working or finding the PowerPoint for the day. The teacher lacked the ability to explain certain Spanish concepts and at times responded, “Oh, it’s easy” and then would move on. As a native speaker, the teacher did bring an authentic accent, which was appreciated. The highlight of Spanish 206 according to Hannah was Betty, la fea. She enjoyed the cultural authenticity and speaking of the
series; it was current and relevant. Hannah recommended more writing opportunities for Spanish 206, clearer goals, and more in depth discussion of concepts and topics, as well as development of themes from the *Betty, la fea*.

In contrast with her experience in 206, Hannah’s teacher in Spanish 321 was a big part of her success. The teacher was very organized, focused, and used the book so that Hannah could later refer to it on her own outside of class. She encouraged students to come to her office, which Hannah did several times. For the writing assignments in Spanish 321, Hannah wished to use the writing lab, but the students in this section were not permitted to do so. "It's one thing to receive corrections from your teacher after she has corrected them, . . . but to sit down with someone and be able to have a direct discussion as they're correcting your paper . . . is a really valuable thing."

Rick: A Romance Language Background

"I felt like a fish out of water to be honest, but it helped me push myself."

Rick is a married student who currently participates in the ROTC. He served an Italian-speaking mission in Milan, Italy and speaks Italian with brothers, who also speak the language. Because of this he has been able to keep up on his Italian language. He took Spanish 101-202 at BYU Idaho and afterward took a yearlong break from Spanish. After transferring to BYU, he resumed Spanish studies in Fall 2012 by enrolling in Spanish 206 and then taking Spanish 321 the following semester in Winter 2013. He is taking the course as a requirement for his Latin American Studies major.

Rick’s first Spanish class was Spanish 206. He had very positive comments about the graduate teaching assistant who taught the course and said that she explained things well. However, he felt that the class was extremely rushed and felt sorry at times for the
instructor because certain elements would have to be skipped in order to keep up with the class schedule. To Rick there seemed to be a lot of busy work, and he felt that the “vocabulary was shoved down the throat.” There seemed to be lists and lists of vocabulary and not enough time dedicated to learning or using them. As a result, Rick felt that 206 hardly bolstered his language at all.

Apart from the aspects of Spanish 206 that he disliked, Rick did enjoy Betty, la fea as part of the curriculum. Although he did not like the program itself, he felt it provided a useful context for learning the grammar concepts and the vocabulary.

After Spanish 206, Rick immediately took Spanish 321. In retrospect he described his experience in Spanish 321 as worthwhile. Although he was a minority and “felt kind of . . . not inferior, but definitely at a lower level,” he felt there were benefits to being around all of the Spanish-speaking returned missionaries, which he said “helped me raise my level.”

Rick mentioned a number of positive factors regarding Spanish 321. One of the things he found helpful was getting some of the nuances of the language from his classmates. These Spanish bits of jargon were things that one doesn’t learn in a classroom setting, but abroad. In the future, when he travels abroad, he would like to use some of them. He also felt that students in the class embraced his background with a different language. He reported that other students would “ask me questions like ‘How do you say this word in Italian?’ I’m like, ‘Well you this ____.’ [And] they’re like, ‘Oh that’s so cool!’ So it was really fun.”

Apart from the students, Rick also explained that the teacher in Spanish 321 was very helpful in making the experience both fun and successful. She had a very
enthusiastic approach to teaching the class and “would make this grand entrance with a
greeting to class which started the class nicely.” The instructor generally did a good job
of breaking down complex concepts and treated the students fairly. The review sessions
the instructor held were very comprehensive:

She would give us a whole comprehensive review on what we went over in the
chapter or in the section. And she would just let us go and have us all talk about it.
Obviously we had to do it in Spanish, but I loved that class period because it
helped me understand some of the concepts that I've been missing. So that was
SUPER good.

One additional helpful practice in the class was requiring students to use recently
learned vocabulary words in their essays. Rick felt the quantity of vocabulary in 321 was
appropriate, as opposed to the long lists in Spanish 206. It helped that the teacher
integrated the vocabulary with the grammar concepts.

Rick was thoughtful in his recommendations for improving Spanish 321. He
would have liked an hour and a half class every day, although he acknowledged that this
might not be feasible. He also suggested that when the class did an activity, which
involved working with a partner or in groups, it would have been nice to move around to
different places instead of “just speaking to the same people and picking up the same
mistakes.” Rick felt the tests could also be improved upon by including essays as part of
them, instead of having purely multiple-choice questions. In commenting on the
assignment for students to give presentations in which they would explain a grammar
concept, Rick recommended the following idea:
I'd like to see that [the presentations] kind of expanded a little bit in making 15-minute oral arguments about something—your major, or about a political view, or about like engineering. Cause I think it's our major that's what's going to matter and you're taking Spanish to help forward you in your major and so if you do speeches and learn some vocab about the stuff that you learn, the stuff you're very passionate about, I feel like that would be more beneficial. It could be in class or something in her office, but I feel like that'd be a better assessment tool than just like getting up and explaining grammar concepts.

**Vivi: A Heritage Speaker of Spanish**

“I did learn some new things in it and I was very satisfied because I did get the grade that I thought I was gonna to get.”

Vivi's parents came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic. She was born in the U.S. on the East Coast and raised in a predominantly Hispanic town in New Jersey. She grew up speaking only Spanish in the house because her parents had a rule that since they didn't know what she and her brother were saying in English, they could not speak in English at home. She remembers taking one Spanish class in middle school; however, it was soon canceled after she completed it because it was considered a waste of time for both teachers and students due to the high level of bilingualism within the community. Spanish 321 was the first Spanish class that Vivi took at BYU as a freshman.

The Spanish 321 class turned out to be a very easy class for Vivi. She took the class as a “back burner” class to raise her GPA, as well as to take the 16-credit exam, and not necessarily for the improvement of her Spanish, though there were new things she did
learn. Her section of 321 was similar to Hannah’s in terms of gender, with most students
being male and only about five females.

Vivi attributed part of the easiness of the class to her previous knowledge of
Spanish. Her vocabulary was broader than that of the RMs, whose knowledge was
limited to gospel vocabulary. After tests, she and fellow classmates would often compare
their grades and “brag about how they got an A and didn’t study.” She found that she
was able to perform well on tests without much preparation.

One suggestion Vivi has for improving 321 is to increase the attention given to
developing writing skills, and to teach more formal styles of writing. She explained that
“as we went on talking about past tense, the past tense writing assignment became a little
more difficult to write, just because you had a lot more to pay attention to rather than just
talking, writing like you were speaking to someone.” She also had difficulty with written
accents. Vivi felt that focusing a little bit more on the writing aspect of class would help
heritage speakers because “we are raised speaking it but not writing it as often. So I
found those writing assignments really helpful.” A specific example from her writing in
class was the use of the word *librería* as opposed to *biblioteca*. The instructor corrected
her usage and she realized that she had been “using that incorrectly for a really long time
and didn’t know.”

**Analie: A Native Speaker of Spanish**

“*Even though I was a native speaker, I feel like most of the students knew more than I.*”

Analie is married and a native Spanish speaker originally from Tijuana, Mexico.
She is studying Public Health. She took Spanish 321 to fulfill a university GE
requirement and because of some friends who had taken the class previously and highly
recommended it to her. She was excited to take the class because even though she is a native speaker, there is some grammar that she didn't know, or at least did not know how to explain to classmates.

Analie was chosen to be interviewed by the researcher based on her completed questionnaire and because she had marked the lowest possible number on the Likert scale indicating that she was not at all satisfied with Spanish 321. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher was confused about Analie’s positive responses to the questions because she expressed dissatisfaction on paper. The interview was paused briefly to discuss the difference and it turned out that Analie had misunderstood the ratings and believed that the number one on the scale represented the most satisfied. Needless to say, this changed the course of the interview and made for a pleasant surprise.

Analie’s overall experience in 321 was a good one and it was not a hard class for her. On the first day of class she felt afraid because the teacher explained that native speakers should not be in the class; she expressed the fear that “maybe it can happen at the middle of the semester they [the department] will just kick you out because you are a native speaker. You don’t suppose to take this class.” The teacher explained that Analie would need to go to the department to ask if she could be in the class, which she did, and was informed that it was okay to be in the class. Similar to Hannah’s experience, Analie’s class turned out to be one in which the classmates contributed and enjoyed participating. She said, “The RMs were always curious and asking when they didn’t understand something . . . they really knew a lot of Spanish and I think because of the missions they were like, also in love with the culture, not Mexican culture, but with Latin culture.”

Even though Analie was a native speaker, she felt that the other students knew
more than she did. Her classmates asked her about something and her response was that it just “sounded” right. She explained, “I felt like I was still learning my own language.” Fortunately, the instructor was good at explaining grammar principles and making sure students understood. What she was experiencing was the inability to explain linguistic concepts she had internalized as a native speaker, and not lesser knowledge or difficulty in understanding. Part of the instructor’s success was incorporating humor into the class. She would often make jokes regarding the principles, which made it easier for Analie to remember. She felt the teacher also helped the class prepare well for the tests.

As a result of taking the class Analie was able to learn Spanish vocabulary that she was not familiar with. In reference to the Spanish 321 textbook, she said, “I think was good but it was writing [similar in style] from Spain, so there were a few words and things that we don’t use in Mexico and so that kind of makes me confused [sic].” Occasionally the teacher would ask Analie how something was said in Mexico or ask about her experiences there. This was a successful way of incorporating culture into the class, and Analie felt that by asking about her experiences in Mexico, the instructor was showing respect for her background, making her feel that she could contribute in a positive way to the class.

**Brian: A Spanish-Speaking Returned Missionary**

“I’m planning on practicing medicine, and I feel that I would really enjoy serving the Latin American community and working with them. Becoming immersed in the language and culture is kind of like the best way I feel for me to learn it [Spanish] and retain it”.

Brian grew up in California experiencing contact with the Spanish language and culture. His grandmother was originally from Mexico but never spoke Spanish with him.
and neither did Brian speak it in the home growing up. He is married and returned from a
mission in Sinaloa, Mexico and Baja California Sur. At the time of the interview he had
recently graduated with a Biology degree and was waiting to hear from medical schools.
He took Spanish 321 at the end of his college career and a number of years after his
mission experience.

Like the other students interviewed, Brian felt that his experience in Spanish 321
was overall positive. “It wasn’t like a blow your mind great class, but it wasn’t a terrible
class,” he said. He especially appreciated the different kinds of Spanish that he came into
contact with in class from other students as well as the teacher. He also enjoyed
completing a presentation and being introduced to various genres of writing through the
writing assignments. There were many resources that he felt were available to him, online
and through the department such as the writing lab. For help with writing assignments he
mostly went to his father and his brothers for help.

Brian is part of a minority of students who take the class a couple of years after
their mission experience. More common are the students who take the class immediately
after completing their mission and who are still fresh with their language skills. He felt
that his speaking ability was slower and not what it used to be and felt he was losing it.
Because of this and his future profession he recommended including ways for students to
immerse themselves in the language and becoming involved linguistically with native
Spanish speakers, culturally, and within the Hispanic community itself.

One specific suggestion he made was to connect students more to the culture.
“Language is very much a cultural thing.” He suggested that there be opportunities in the
community to work with schools and children and possibly get variable academic credit
or by incorporating this into the course. It was frustrating not to have all of the answers for the book and would have been nice to have all of them available online. Because 321 is mostly a grammar class, the majority of the writing feedback is grammar-based instead of content-based, and he wondered if it would be appropriate to be given content feedback on the writing, and not just grammar correction feedback. Another suggestion was to have an online system for students to submit and record their homework completions and quiz scores as it is cumbersome to log and track them currently.

In the course of his interview the idea of measuring success was discussed when asked what were the factors, from the class or teacher, he attributed to more success or less success in Spanish 321. The readings from the book were enjoyable and provided little cultural tidbits and contributed partially to the success, but success also depends on how you are measuring it. He said the following in terms of success and how it is measured:

For example, did I get an A on the test [16-credit]? You know well, then the best thing I could do is do practice problems through the practice tests. But if you’re measuring success like, did you enjoy your experience and did you feel like you learned a little more about Spanish and then also about the Spanish culture and stuff like that, then doing literature reading I felt was better.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will discuss the findings from Chapters 3 and 4, organized according to the five research questions for the study:

1. What are the objectives and goals of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese for the Spanish returned missionary class and how have they evolved over the years?
2. How well is the Spanish 321 class meeting the needs of the following groups of students: heritage speakers of Spanish, native Spanish-speakers, Spanish-speaking returned missionaries, non-returned missionaries, and speakers of other Romance languages?
3. How motivated are students to continue their study of language after taking Spanish 321?
4. How well is Spanish 206 preparing non-returned missionaries for Spanish 321?
5. What changes might be made to the curriculum to better meet students’ needs and the department’s?

Objectives for the Returned Missionary Class and their Historical Evolution

The history of the Spanish class for returned missionaries is given in Chapter 3. In contrast to the heavily grammar-oriented class that Spanish 321 originally was, it has now evolved into a General Education course that includes an emphasis on culture, literature, and composition, in addition to grammar. In spite of the cultural and literary additions, however, it is still perceived as primarily a grammar class.
One question raised by this study concerns the cultural content of 321. Though there is some evidence from student interviews that culture is addressed by means of classroom discussions or student presentations about experiences in different countries, as well as some from the readings, grammar is the primary class element. The question can be raised, how is the term *culture* defined for the purpose of 321? There may be a cultural dimension, but it is not overt, and it may be worth considering the inclusion of cultural content beyond the readings in the textbook and beyond students’ mission experiences.

The literary component of 321 is another issue raised by this study. The learning outcomes for 321 currently say the course exposes students to “important literary texts.” One might ask whether all of the readings from *Repase y escriba* qualify as important literary texts. Most of the reading selections from the book are from well-known Hispanic writers, but they may not carry the same importance and value as other, more well-known works. If exposure to important literary works is indeed a goal of 321, it might be worth considering supplementing or replacing some of the texts in *Repase y escriba* with other texts.

**How Well Spanish 321 Meets the Needs of Different Student Groups**

In general, all groups of students enrolled in Spanish 321 – returned missionaries, native speakers, heritage speakers, students from lower-level classes, and speakers of other Romance languages – appear satisfied with the course. Following is a brief discussion of each student group’s experience in 321.
**Returned Missionaries**

Returned-missionaries, who make up the majority of the students within the classes, find the course to be more overall satisfactory than not. These students have the highest-grade average of any group of students in the class and overwhelmingly desire to continue speaking Spanish, to continue improving pronunciation and vocabulary, and to look outward toward the Hispanic community. As returned missionaries, they are not homogenous in their Spanish language experience either; some students feel the rate of class is too quick, others too slow, and many desire additional help outside of class. As more and more RMs return from various places throughout the world having served various durations, as well as circumstances of immersion, they may benefit from additional placement testing. Nevertheless, on the whole returned missionaries seem satisfied with 321.

**Native Spanish Speakers**

The Spanish 321 class is not really designed for native speakers— they need more help with Spanish writing conventions (accent marks, etc.), conjugations, and knowledge of the grammar terms. Explicit knowledge of grammar in the class is taught from the perspective of non-native speakers. Nevertheless, the overall satisfaction rating seems adequate among native Spanish speakers. It may be desirable at some point to create an upper-division Spanish for Native Speakers course as some other universities have done in order to further challenge them while also assisting them with their specific needs, which are very different than other 321 students.
**Heritage Speakers of Spanish**

Heritage speakers in Spanish 321 also appear to be satisfied with the course and are mainly enrolled in order to challenge the 16-credit exam. They find the class fairly easy and feel that there is some amount of busy work in class and from the book as indicated in comments. Based on their grades and the student interview, they are performing well though they need instruction in issues common to heritage language speakers, such as incorrect word use (ex. librería vs. biblioteca) and with formal writing. They may also benefit from more specific placement and language diagnostic testing.

**Students from Lower-Level Spanish Classes**

Judging by their grades, these students seem to be performing acceptably well in 321, and in general the students appear satisfied with the class, despite feeling somewhat intimidated by the returned missionaries. It should be recognized that they still need opportunities to continue developing their speaking skills, but 321 may or may not be the place for this. Also, the fact that the mean grade in 321 for this group of students is significantly lower than that of returned missionaries suggests there is a still a gap between these students and others. Additional assistance may help their performance and continued progression since these students are more likely than any other group of students to continue taking Spanish beyond 321 and to major in Spanish.

At the beginning of each semester it would be good, as Hannah commented, for students to meet briefly with their professor to specifically discuss additional resources and helps that may be available to them. One potentially helpful idea is to request or identify stronger students in the class who may serve as mentors to the lower-level students. This would have a positive impact on lower-level students by enabling them to
gain assistance from a student with more language experience in the class, practice speaking with a student whose speaking is more likely stronger than theirs, while also fostering a sense of cooperative learning. Ideally it would be beneficial for these students to continue practicing speaking and writing skills.

**Speakers of Other Romance Languages**

The small number of students in this category appears to be satisfied with the course though they have a different language background. Reported grades indicate they are succeeding as well. One student commented they would like to start off with harder grammar concepts such as the subjunctive, instead of the preterit and imperfect, having already mastered the concept. Another student reported that they “had been looking forward to more grammar study and kind of an all-lower-classes-in-one type class they had experienced in French 321.

**Students’ Plans for Continuing to Study Spanish After 321**

Of the students who “came up through the ranks,” four out of five reported that they planned to take additional Spanish classes after 321. Among native Spanish speakers, two out of three planned to take additional classes. For returned missionaries, however, the proportion was much lower, with only about half of students planning to take additional classes. It is unclear from this study to what extent students’ experience in 321 had on their plans for taking additional Spanish classes. Given the constraints on today’s college students in terms of time and money, it may be unrealistic to expect a single class to have a measurable impact on a large number of students’ academic plans.
Spanish 206 as Preparation for 321

Because only 16 students responded to the survey question “How well did Spanish 206 prepare you for Spanish 321?” it is difficult to draw conclusions about this particular research question. Students’ attitudes toward Spanish 206 appear to be mixed, depending largely on the instructor they had. Students’ most commonly-mentioned recommendation to improve the class indicated that instructors needed better training and to be better organized in class, although again, the experiences of the small number of students who responded to this question may not be representative of all students’ experiences in 206. Additional writing opportunities and covering some of the briefly covered class topics more in depth would also be advantageous.

Recommended Changes to the Curriculum

The final research question of the study will be addressed by first considering possible improvements to Spanish 321, followed by possible changes to Spanish 206.

Possibilities for Improving Spanish 321

Because returned missionaries constitute 85% of the student population of Spanish 321, it is important for the department to not lose sight of their needs while balancing them with departmental needs. An overwhelming majority of these students take the course to challenge the 16-credit exam, but also desire to continue developing their language skills. Most of the students have little in the way of formal language instruction and are therefore in need of formal grammar instruction, introduction to literature, writing, as well as culture.

The demands asked of Spanish 321 are very high. It needs to fulfill GE requirements, which calls for a course that combines an emphasis on literature, culture,
grammar, and composition; thus, 321 can only address each of these topics to a limited extent; it cannot be an advanced grammar course, for example, nor can it teach students all they need to know about writing.

Because most students appear satisfied with the current content of 321, it seems logical that the course should maintain its current focus, but work to refine certain aspects. This includes first defining the terms used in reference to the course: culture, literature and “important literary works”, grammar, and composition. Since students seem to perceive that 321 is mostly a grammar class, they are not recognizing other aspects in the class such as culture and literature either because they are unaware or it is less prevalent. For example, students may recognize culture as the day-to-day customs rather than the cultural themes most likely encountered in readings. As per the learning outcomes it may be important place more emphasis on the “important literary works” rather than the short reading contained in *Repase y escriba*.

Additional refinement should include an agreement upon common learning outcomes among instructors. As indicated in Appendix C, the learning outcomes differ from section to section; some are the same, while others are completely different, and some sections have no outcomes listed. Common course learning outcomes would result in better horizontal articulation, as would agreement in text and focus among instructors teaching the course.

One bit of surprising feedback from most students is the desire to continue practicing their speaking skills. While difficult to find additional time during class, there are creative ways that this could be incorporated. Most of the students are required to give presentations either on a grammar concept or a cultural aspect. It may be beneficial
to consider a different type of presentation, such as a debate as mentioned by Rick in his interview. Oral assignments in Spanish can also be shared back and forth between teacher and students through Digital Dialogue on Learning Suite. These can be very short ranging from 1-3 minutes. Very short speaking presentations can also be done outside of class to the teacher, or students can do activities similar to OPIs, to develop advanced and superior speaking skills.

Although there is a limit to the number of compositions that students can write in 321, opportunities to include additional writing, which would benefit heritage, RMs, and lower-level students. One of the concerns indicated by Hannah in her interview is that her teacher wanted to see what the students could produce without any assistance, eliminating the ability to use the writing lab. There is diagnostic value in knowing what the students can produce and what they need help with. But if students are never able to work with a writing tutor, they lose the tutoring experience of sitting down with someone face to face. If teachers want to evaluate students’ ability to write without help, they could have students enter a computer lab in the JFSB and type a timed response to a prompt, which could then be emailed or placed in a class folder. As a side note, this prompt could also function for a speaking task too.

The writing assignments in 321 currently consist of writing compositions in two drafts, but more and much shorter timed-writing responses that could be incorporated outside of class and used solely to evaluate grammar, instead of content. One innovative approach is used in Linguistic Accuracy classes at Brigham Young University’s English Language Center as a means of improving an L2 student’s linguistic accuracy “though a systematic method where students wrote for 10 minutes each day, received corrective
feedback on their writing, tracked their progress, and worked towards implementing what they learned in new compositions”. (Hartshorn, 2008) The key is in providing feedback that is 1) manageable, 2) meaningful, 3) timely, and 4) constant. While this class is specifically dedicated to improving grammar through writing, the idea could be implemented in 321 and even in the lower-level Spanish classes to a certain degree. Students receive a form (see Appendix C) and then tracked their linguistic errors. As students become cognizant of repeated mistakes, they become more linguistically aware and are able to fix the mistakes themselves.

Writing, as well as reading, and speaking can be incorporated more in the lower-levels. Placing more emphasis on content than grammar, at least for some writing assignments, may be one way to increase writing without stifling motivation due to incorrect grammar usage. L2 reading strategies, such as scanning, could be taught at the 101-level with positive results at the lower level, and in future classes.

**Possibilities for Improving Spanish 206**

In light of the fact that some students reported having less-than-ideal instructors in Spanish 206, it may be worth revisiting the process by which student instructors are assigned to courses. Perhaps the most important thing the department can do to ensure that students have a quality experience in 206 is to assign only the best graduate student instructors to teach this class, even if it requires flexibility in scheduling in order to accommodate the schedules of the best graduate students. Results of the study show that a far higher proportion of students who take 206 and 321 plan to minor in Spanish, as compared with the general population of 321. Given that these students have already invested approximately two years in studying Spanish, they certainly deserve to have
highly-qualified instructors in 206, which is intended to prepare them to perform at the level of returned missionaries in 321.

In conclusion, Spanish 206 and 321 may be the most important Spanish courses offered by the department – 206 because it prepares a small group of dedicated students for continued study as Spanish majors, and 321 because it enrolls more students than any other course, and for many students is the only Spanish course they will take. While the results of this study suggest that most students are currently satisfied by these courses, it would make sense for the department to continue to focus attention on improving the courses to ensure that they represent the best language learning experience that BYU has to offer.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in special regard to the student population at Brigham Young University and can therefore not be generalized to other groups. BYU is unique in that no other university has such a high concentration of RMs in upper-division Spanish classes, thus minimizing external generalizability.

Additionally, there are a number of limitations in terms of time. The responses to the questionnaire were given about a third to two-thirds of the way into the semester. Were the questionnaire to have been given towards the end, student attitudes may have been different. Moreover, the views and comments of interviewed students reflect only their own personal views and are not representative of other student’s views. The questionnaire and interviews were conducted during only one semester, giving a simple snapshot of Spanish 321 Winter Semester 2014. Spanish 321 changed significantly
within the past decade and so data are limited to current Spanish 321 curriculum and practices as opposed to Spanish 321 as a non-GE fulfilling course.

It would have been helpful to include the Spanish Language Certificate as an option for students to mark in the section that asks why they are taking Spanish 321. Some students did provide that information in the other category, however it is likely that some students may not have offered that information even if they were intending on getting the certificate. It is important to also consider that Spanish 321 is not the entry port into Spanish for every student. While many RMs do enroll first in Spanish 321, there are a number who for various reasons, first enroll in either Spanish 205 or 206.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As a result of this investigation of Spanish 321, one area in need of further investigation is Spanish 322. For example, similar review of Spanish 322, with particular reference to writing would be beneficial. The same type of investigation could also be carried over into Spanish 206, as well and into Portuguese classes. Student placement is another area ripe for future investigation. Because of varying student language experience and background, it is difficult to accurately test and place students. Not everyone from 206 goes to 321, and not every student starts in Spanish 321.

Anecdotally, the researcher, when completing lower-level Spanish courses and preparing for the first upper-division class, was advised by fellow university student associates that Spanish 302 was good preparation to take before going into Spanish 321 especially for those who had not served missions. The benefit being that one is exposed to a large group of very knowledgeable RMs who speak very well. However, as appealing as this might have been, the ticking of the graduation timeline did not allow for
space or time for the course. Diving right into Spanish 321, as Hannah did, was the researcher’s decision, however, linguistically Spanish 302 might have been a better option considering the subsequent struggle in Spanish 321. The point of this information is to help illustrate that student placement is a key factor in student success and that departments can assist in proper placement.

**Conclusion**

Though most students appear to be generally satisfied with the first 300-level course of Spanish at Brigham Young University, it is not feasible for one class, Spanish 321, to meet the needs of all Spanish language students and solve all language deficiencies. Language and linguistic concepts must be recycled throughout coursework as students advance in their language studies. While there are certain pedagogical practices that may be implemented to improve the course, most important is for faculty to continue training, and for the department to continue coordinating in order to achieve a cohesive course, thus providing the best curriculum in terms of articulation and to achieve identified course outcomes.
REFERENCES


Questionnaire for Spanish 321 Students

1. What is your background in Spanish? Please mark all that apply.
   
   ___ I am a native speaker of Spanish
   ___ I am studying Spanish as a heritage language – my parents or ancestors spoke Spanish, but it is not my first language
   ___ I served a Spanish-speaking mission
       *Mission name:_____________________________________________________________________
   ___ I took lower-level Spanish classes at BYU
       *Please circle the courses you took:
         101  102  105  106  205  206
   ___ I took lower-level Spanish classes at another university or college
   ___ I speak another Romance language (Portuguese, French, Italian, Romanian)
       *Language: _______________________________________________________________________
   ___ Other: _______________________________________________________________________

2. Why are you taking Spanish 321? Please mark all that apply.
   
   ___ To take the 16-Credit Exam in Spanish
   ___ To fulfill a General Education requirement
   ___ To fulfill a requirement for a Spanish major
       *Please circle your major:
         SPANISH B.A.  SPANISH TRANSLATION  SPANISH TEACHING
   ___ To fulfill a requirement for a Spanish minor
   ___ Other: _______________________________________________________________________

3. How satisfied are you at this point with your experience in Spanish 321? Circle one.

   1 Very dissatisfied  2 Somewhat dissatisfied  3 Undecided  4 Somewhat satisfied  5 Very satisfied

4. How likely are you to take additional Spanish courses at BYU beyond 321? Circle one.

   1 Very unlikely  2 Unlikely  3 Undecided  4 Likely  5 Very likely
5. What changes, if any, would you suggest in order to improve Spanish 321?

(over)

6. What is your age? ________

7. What is your sex?   ____ Male  ____ Female

This questionnaire is part of a study examining Spanish 321. If you did would be willing to participate in a short interview, please provide the following information:

Name:_________________________________________________________
Phone #:_______________________________________________________
Email:________________________________________________________

*COMPLETE THE REMAINING SECTIONS ONLY IF YOU DID NOT SERVE A SPANISH-SPEAKING MISSION.

If you took Spanish 206 at BYU . . . (if not, skip this question)

8. How well do you feel that Spanish 206 prepared you for Spanish 321?

   1   2   3   4   5
   Not at all Poorly Somewhat Fairly well Very well

If you took Spanish 205 at BYU . . . (if not, skip this question)

9. How well do you feel that Spanish 205 prepared you for Spanish 206?

   1   2   3   4   5
   Not at all Poorly Somewhat Fairly well Very well
If you took a **Spanish 311/321** conversation class at BYU . . . *if not, skip this question*

10. How well do you feel that Spanish conversation classes prepared you for Spanish 321?

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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Fairly well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
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11. What changes, if any, would you make to BYU’s lower-level Spanish classes in order to better prepare students for 321?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**
## Appendix B

**Spanish 321 Syllabi Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
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This table provides a summary of the assignments for each week of the course. The description column is left blank for now, but will be filled in as the course progresses.
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<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Compositions (number, type, # of drafts)</th>
<th>Other assignments/Exams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackwell</td>
<td>None listed</td>
<td>Repase y escriba</td>
<td>4 composiciones en dos borradores: - Auto-descripción - Narración en el pasado - Carta formal - Artículo de opinión</td>
<td>- 33 tareas - 9 lecturas - 9 pruebas - 4 exámenes - Examen final - 16 Credit Exam Practice - Presentación en grupos</td>
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<td>Deaton</td>
<td><strong>Gramática</strong></td>
<td>Repase y escriba</td>
<td>3 composiciones a lo largo del semestre en un borrador - Auto biografía - Narración de un evento - Carta informal</td>
<td>- 10 Pruebas - Presentación en grupos - 9 lecturas - 4 exámenes - 24 tareas - Examen final</td>
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Consolidar su dominio de la gramática española y de la estructura de la oración en español.

Mejorar su capacidad de redactar en español.

Mejorar su nivel en el lenguaje hablado a través de presentaciones en clase y trabajos en grupo.
| Fails | El estudiante hará un repaso de los aspectos gramaticales más difíciles del español y demostrará su entendimiento de ellos tanto en exámenes como al escribir y corregir composiciones. También recibirá una introducción a literatura mediante la lectura e interpretación de textos. Recibirá una introducción a las culturas españolas y latinoamericanas y sabrá identificar sus países. | **Modelos del español** | 4 composiciones en dos borradores (250 palabras): - Auto-descripción - Narración en el pasado - Reseña de película - Artículo de opinión | - 4 lecturas - 3 Exámenes - Examen final - Presentaciones culturales - Pruebas |
| Hoskisson | **Language and Grammar:** Demonstrate an increased understanding of the Spanish language, including grammar, sentence structure and pronunciation. **Cultura y Literatura:** Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and analyze Hispanic (Spanish and Latin American) literature (i.e. short story, essay, poetry). **Oral Proficiency:** Show oral proficiency in the Spanish language through class discussions and interaction with peers. **Writing:** Demonstrate the ability to communicate in Spanish through written expression. | **Repase y escriba** | 4 composiciones en dos borradores - Autobiografía - Narración en el pasado - Un informe o una opinión | - Vocabulario - 9 pruebas - 3 exámenes - Examen final - Presentación en grupos de 2 o 3 sobre algún punto gramatical o léxico |
| Knapp | None listed | **Repase y escriba** | 4 composiciones en dos borradores: - Auto-descripción - Narración en el pasado - Carta formal - Artículo de opinión | - 25 tareas - 14 lecturas - 4 pruebas - 4 exámenes - Examen final - Presentación cultural |
| López | **Writing & Grammar:** Write informal and some formal correspondence, narratives, descriptions and summaries of a factual nature according to appropriate conventions, with precision and detail in the major time frames of past, present, and future with solid control of aspect. Demonstrate, through written examinations, mastery of authentic grammatical and stylistic patterns of standard literary Spanish  
**Reading:** Understand fully and with ease the main ideas and most supporting details in connected discourse found in conventional narrative and descriptive texts of any length and on a variety of general interest topics, such as news stories, explanations, instructions, anecdotes, or travelogue descriptions, being able to compensate for limitations in their lexical and structural control of the language by using real-world knowledge and contextual clues. Go beyond comprehension of the facts in a text, and to begin to recognize author-intended inferences.  
**Speaking:** Consistently explain in detail and narrate fully and accurately in all time frames and with advanced level performance across a variety of topics; Provide structured arguments to support their opinions constructing hypotheses, with limited patterns of error; Discuss some topics abstractly, especially those relating to their particular interests and special fields of expertise  
**Listening:** Understand, with ease and |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Repase y escriba** | 4 composiciones en dos borradores:  
- Auto-descripción  
- Narración en el pasado  
- Carta formal  
- Artículo de opinión | 26 tareas  
- 15 lecturas  
- 4 exámenes  
- Examen final  
- Pruebas |
López continued — confidence, conventional narrative and descriptive texts of any length as well as complex factual material such as summaries or reports; Follow some of the essential points of more complex or argumentative speech in areas of special interest or knowledge; Derive some meaning from oral texts that deal with unfamiliar topics or situations, comprehending the facts presented in oral discourse and recognizing speaker-intended inferences.

**Culture:** Students will be able to identify, describe and understand selected cultural differences and features of the Spanish Speaking world in various areas, such as history, literature, geography, sports, cuisine, manners and customs (Based on *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2012*).

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<tr>
<th>Mella</th>
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<th><strong>Repase y escriba</strong></th>
<th>4 composiciones en dos borradores</th>
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| Regnet-Larson | **Life-long Reading:**  
Develop the habits and skills of life-long readers.  
**Spanish Communication:**  
Develop the four major language skills in Spanish (speaking, reading, writing and listening comprehension) in a variety of formal and informal situations, narrating and describing in all time frames and successfully handling linguistically unfamiliar situations.  
**Essays and Research Papers:**  
Write essays or research papers in Spanish that are characterized by clear theses, good organization, and coherent analytical argumentation using style and language appropriate to the university level.  
**Analysis and Interpretation of the Spanish Language:**  
Identify and analyze significant aspects of the Spanish language.  
**Analysis and Interpretation of Spanish Artifacts:**  
Identify and analyze significant works of art, architecture, and music of Spain or Spanish America and place them in their cultural and historical context; interpret and critically analyze works of Hispanic literature. | **Repase y escriba**  
4 composiciones en dos borradores  
- Auto descripción  
- Narración en el pasado  
- Una carta formal  
- Artículo de opinión | **Presentaciones en grupos**  
- 10 lecturas  
- 10 pruebas  
- 35 tareas  
- Examen final |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rey &amp;</th>
<th>Ayudar al alumno a consolidar su dominio de la gramática española y de la estructura de la oración en español, puliendo el español que ha aprendido en los países de habla castellana. Acercar al alumno a diversos aspectos de la literatura y cultura del mundo hispanohablante a través de lecturas apropiadas. Ayudar al alumno a ampliar su vocabulario en español mediante el estudio de diversas lecturas. · Ayudar al alumno a mejorar su capacidad de redactar en español; el alumno tendrá que escribir varias composiciones sobre temas relacionados con las lecturas estudiadas en clase.</th>
<th>Repase y escriba</th>
<th>4 composiciones en dos borradores: - Descripción - Narración - Exposición - Argumentación</th>
<th>4 exámenes - 14 lecturas - Vocabulario</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stallings, G.</td>
<td>Obtener un entendimiento más profundo de la lengua, mediante el estudio gramatical y léxico. Ampliar el vocabulario y comprensión de la lengua mediante lecturas literarias y ejercicios de comprensión. Dar los primeros pasos en el análisis literario. Desarrollar la habilidad de escribir el idioma en contextos de nivel académico.</td>
<td>Repase y escriba</td>
<td>4 composiciones: - Narración - Opinión - Argumentación – La eutanasia pasiva - Carta formal</td>
<td>4 exámenes - 10 lecturas - 10 pruebas</td>
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<td>Turley</td>
<td>Demonstrate competence in writing short essays in Spanish that conform to the &quot;advanced&quot; level as described in the ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Demonstrate, through written examinations, mastery of authentic grammatical and stylistic patterns of standard literary Spanish.</td>
<td>Modelos del Español</td>
<td>3 composiciones</td>
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| Williams, M. | None listed | Repase y escriba | 4 composiciones en dos borradores:  
- Autobiografía  
- Narración en el pasado  
- Carta formal  
- Informe o artículo de opinión | - 26 tareas  
- Presentaciones en grupo de un tema gramatical  
- 4 exámenes  
- 9 pruebas  
- 16 Credit Exam Practice |
| Witherspoon, T. | None listed | Repase y escriba | 4 composiciones:  
- Carta a la familia  
- Narración  
- Opinión  
Carta formal  
Carta formal  
Narración  
Opinión  
Carta formal | - 29 Tareas  
- 14 lecturas  
- exámenes |
APPENDIX C

LINGUISTIC ACCURACY CHART LOG
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APPENDIX D

LINGUISTIC ACCURACY WRITING PROMPT
Prompt C: We Are the 99%

There is always a gap between the richest people in a country and the poorest. Do you believe this gap is increasing or decreasing in your country?

Discuss the consequences of this change using specific details and examples to support your answer.

Started  Self-correction
Draft 1: □ - Mon  □ - Wed
Draft 2: □ - Wed  □ - Fri
Draft 3: □ - Submitted with Packet

How Much Did You Enjoy this Prompt:
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1  2  3  4  5

Comments:

Prompt D: Handout: Hand up or Handicap?

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

"You can't get rid of poverty by giving people money."

Use specific details and examples to support your answer.

Started  Self-correction
Draft 1: □ - Tues  □ - Thurs
Draft 2: □ - Thurs  □ - Next Mon
Draft 3: □ - Submitted with Packet

How Much Did You Enjoy this Prompt:
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

1  2  3  4  5

Comments:
APPENDIX E

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT
Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by Arwen Wyatt, graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University, to determine students’ attitudes towards Spanish 321, and if applicable, Spanish 206, as well as students’ backgrounds who are enrolled in Spanish 321. You were invited to participate because you are currently enrolled in Spanish 321.

Procedures
Your participation in this study will require the completion of the attached questionnaire, which should take approximately 7 minutes of your time. Your participation will be anonymous and you will not be contacted again in the future, unless you give your consent to be interviewed. If you agree to participate in the questionnaire, you may sign your consent at the bottom of the back of this paper.

If you agree to participate in the questionnaire, the following will occur:

• You will complete the questionnaire during class and return to researcher.
• At the end of the questionnaire, you will have the option to consent to an oral interview, by providing personal contact information. During the interview you will be asked further questions about your experiences in Spanish 321 and 206.
• At the end of the questionnaire you will also have the option to give consent for researcher to access your final Spanish 321 grade through the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Consent will be given by providing your BYU student number.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in a later interview by providing your personal contact information, the researcher may contact you; otherwise you will not be contacted further. Five students will be interviewed and the interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. You may give your consent to participate in a further interview by providing your personal contact information at the end of the questionnaire.

If you agree to participate in the interview, the following will occur, if the researcher contacts you:

• You will be contacted by the researcher via email or telephone.
• You will participate in an interview during which you will be asked questions about your experiences in Spanish 321 and 206 if applicable.
• The interview will be recorded with a recording device to ensure accuracy in reporting your statement and will take place in the researcher’s office at a determined time and place mostly likely on BYU Campus.
Risks/Discomforts
This survey involves minimal risk to you. Possible discomfort may result from sharing views and opinions.

Benefits
The benefits may impact the Department of Spanish and Portuguese by helping increase knowledge about Spanish 321 and assisting in improving the class and curriculum.

Confidentiality
The research data will be kept the researcher's office, 176 UPC on a password-protected computer and only the researcher, or researcher's advisor Dr. Blair Bateman, will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be kept in the researcher's locked office. Direct quotes may be used in the report of data in the thesis or in a presentation, however no personal identifying information will be included; any direct quotes used will be anonymous. Data will be reported only in the thesis and all grade information will be kept anonymous. Any correlations between backgrounds and grades could be reported in the thesis, however all results will be strictly anonymous and grade information will not be linked to anyone personally. Upon termination of the study all audio recordings, grade information, and questionnaires, will be destroyed.

Participation
You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to answer for any reason. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without jeopardy to your class status, grade, or standing with the university.

Compensation
You will not be paid for being in this study.

Questions about the Research
I will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem you may contact me, Arwen Wyatt at arwen_wyatt@byu.edu 801-422-4632, or my advisor, Dr. Blair Bateman at blair_bateman@byu.edu.

Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants
If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the IRB Administrator at A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu; (801) 422-1461. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants.
The completion of this survey implies your consent to participate. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached survey and return it when completed. Thank you!

**Statement of Consent**
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name ________________________________

(Printed) ____________________________ Signature ____________________________

Date ____________________________
Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by Arwen Wyatt at Brigham Young University to determine the following questions:

1) What are the department’s objectives and goals for the Spanish returned-missionary class and how have they evolved over the year?

2) Determine how well the Spanish 321 class is meeting objectives for each of the following groups of students: heritage speakers of Spanish, native Spanish-speakers, Spanish-speaking returned missionaries, nonreturned missionaries, and speakers of other Romance languages?

3) Determine how motivated students are to continue their study of language in Spanish 321

4) Determine how well the bridge course is preparing nonreturned missionaries

Determine what changes might be made to the curriculum to better meet students’ needs and the departments’

You were invited to participate because you are a student in Spanish 321.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:
• You will be given a “Consent to be a Research Subject” form to sign and informed that your participation is completely voluntary.
• You will participate in an interview during which you will be asked questions and invited to respond and give your opinion and any other appropriate answer.
• Interview will last approximately 30 minutes (total time commitment)
• Interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statement and will take place in the researcher’s office at a determined time and place mostly likely on BYU Campus.

Risks/Discomforts
There are minimal risks for participation in this study. You may, however, feel some discomfort or anxiety when answering questions or when being audio recorded. If you feel embarrassed about answering a particular question, you may choose to decline to answer or not participate.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefits to the subject. There will also be no extra credit or compensation in any form. It is hoped, however, that through your participation the researcher may learn about Spanish 321 and may be able to assist the Department of Spanish and Portuguese in improving the class and curriculum.
Confidentiality
The research data will be kept in the researcher's office and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be destroyed.

Compensation
As a participant, you will not receive any form of compensation for participating in an interview.

Participation
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate or may withdraw at any time without jeopardy to your grade or standing within the university.

Questions about the Research
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Arwen Wyatt at arwenwyatt@hotmail.com or 801-422-4632 for further information.

Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name ___________________________ ___________________________ ___________________________
(Printed) Signature Date
Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction
This research study is being conducted by Arwen Wyatt at Brigham Young University to determine the following questions:

1) What are the department’s objectives and goals for the Spanish returned-missionary class and how have they evolved over the year?  
2) Determine how well the Spanish 321 class is meeting objectives for each of the following groups of students: heritage speakers of Spanish, native Spanish-speakers, Spanish-speaking returned missionaries, non-returned missionaries, and speakers of other Romance languages?  
3) Determine how motivated students are to continue their study of language in Spanish 321  
4) Determine how well the bridge course is preparing non-returned missionaries  

Determine what changes might be made to the curriculum to better meet students’ needs and the departments’.

You were invited to participate because you have taught Spanish 321 or were involved in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese curriculum decisions.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- You will be given a “Consent to be a Research Subject” form to sign and informed that your participation is completely voluntary.  
- You will participate in an interview during which you will be asked questions and invited to respond and give your opinion and any other appropriate answer.  
- Interview will last approximately 20 minutes (total time commitment)  
- Interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statement and will take place in the researcher’s office at a determined time and place mostly likely on BYU Campus.

Risks/Discomforts
There are minimal risks for participation in this study. You may, however, feel some discomfort or anxiety when answering questions or when being audio recorded. If you feel embarrassed about answering a particular question, you may choose to decline to answer or not participate.

Benefits
There will be no direct benefits to the subject. There will also be no extra credit or
compensation in any form. It is hoped, however, that through your participation the researcher may learn about Spanish 321 and may be able to assist the Department of Spanish and Portuguese in improving the class and curriculum.

**Confidentiality**  
The research data will be kept in the researcher’s office and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be destroyed.

**Compensation**  
As a participant, you will not receive any form of compensation for participating in an interview.

**Participation**  
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate or may withdraw at any time or without jeopardy to your employment or standing within the university.

**Questions about the Research**  
If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Arwen Wyatt at arwenwyatt@hotmail.com or 801-422-4632 for further information.

**Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants**  
If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

**Statement of Consent**  
I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name  ___________________  ___________________  ____________  
(Printed)  Signature  Date