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Spanish Language Learning and Supporting Strategies
in Mixed Classrooms at the Secondary Level

Jorge Vasquez

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

Spanish Language Learning and Supporting Strategies in Mixed Classrooms at the Secondary Level

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Master of Arts

Students in the United States take language courses for various reasons. Many Spanish heritage language learners (HLLs) and the majority of second language learners (L2Ls) enroll in Spanish classes in the United States. Based on state demographics, sometimes immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries join HLLs and L2Ls in mixed classrooms. Many times, these groups take classes together, even though their language abilities, motivations, and linguistic needs differ significantly. Such a learning setting presents challenges for them as well as for instructors. This study builds upon and reinforces findings from previous studies regarding teaching mixed-classes. Data were gathered from 41 students taking AP Spanish at the secondary level through pre- and post-questionnaires, journal reflections, observations and interview with four of the participants. Findings reveal that all groups enjoyed working together in a mixed-classroom setting. Additionally, their language learning experience progressed as they worked collaboratively and learned reciprocally. The study found that scaffolded debates and class discussions aided students with their language learning. Furthermore, the study shows the need to help students with reading and literacy skills, listening skills and acquisition of Hispanic cultures. Lastly, the study also shows the importance of instructors' approaches, practices and materials to teaching mixed-classes and the need for focused and individualized instruction for better results with each group.

Keywords: heritage language learners, second language learners, mixed classrooms, motivation, scaffolding, differentiated-instruction, reading, literacy skills, methods of instructions

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When students in the United States discuss reasons for taking a foreign language class, sometimes, one will hear: “I need to fulfill the language credit to be able to go to a four-year university.” (Shedivy, 2004). Other reasons may include interest in state scholarships, elective course requirements and personal interest in learning another language. Many school districts offer additional language classes for those who want to continue learning languages beyond the two-year recommendation for many universities. Additional language courses offer students more opportunities to learn academic language and thematic units that explore cultures in the Hispanic world (Carreira & Kagan, 2011).

With the growing population of Hispanics in the United States, Spanish remains one of the most common languages taught at the secondary level. In 2009, Spanish was taught in 93% of high schools in the United States (Rhodes & Pufhal, 2010). Spanish programs tend to have the highest numbers of student enrollment. Such classes have students with various backgrounds and motivations for learning a language. Many students want to learn how to better communicate with family and friends in their communities. Sometimes this is referred as integrative motivation that language learners need in order to be successful with members of other cultural communities (Gardner, 2007). Moreover, heritage language learners (HLLs) from various languages are also interested in the career and economic benefits of knowing their heritage language at an academic level (Cho, 2000). Second language learner’s (L2Ls) motivation and attitude toward studying past the required two years is complex, yet the way instructors present the material and language in context plays a big role in student’s attitudes and motivation toward the language (Zhao, 2015). L2Ls who have traveled abroad or have had a positive language

learning experience may also sign up for additional language courses to improve their language skills and understanding of the culture.

The Problem

One of the challenges of teaching Spanish classes at the secondary level is to provide differentiated instruction to more effectively teach students with varying levels of language proficiency. This is particularly evident when one takes into account the fact that many students come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences with languages. Most Spanish advanced placement classes will have a combination of mostly HLLs, native Spanish speakers (NSSs) and L2Ls. The wide spectrum of language skills and abilities makes it harder for teachers to deliver instruction that meets everyone's needs (Russell & Kurisak, 2015).

Paradoxically, most teachers receive very little training in differentiated-instruction and pedagogical practices that are cognitively appropriate for all students (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Some foreign language teacher programs may provide specific training on differentiated-instruction, but such may not address the full spectrum of situations that language instructors find in the classroom. Additionally, most teacher-training programs focus on teaching languages to L2Ls and not HLLs. Hence, many instructors have been concerned with teaching HLLs, L2Ls and non-native English students who may require a different curriculum because of their specific needs (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). This poses a challenge for teachers who work in districts that do not necessarily have the resources or enough HLLs to justify the creation of separate classrooms, which may make it more feasible and convenient to provide these instructors with instruction on the specific needs of heritage, second language and non-native English speakers.

Subsequently, since most instructors at the secondary level teach in mixed-classroom environments, it is crucial for them to have the proper training and resources in order to be

successful. On the one hand, effective instruction for HLLs and L2Ls will likely result in greater interest in the language and culture. Such interest in language learning can help students find ways to integrate the foreign culture in their own communities. On the other hand, students in language courses that do not provide strategy instruction or implement pedagogical practices that differentiate individual learning differences and interests may become frustrated and discouraged and lose interest in learning languages altogether (Landrum & McDuffie, 2010).

Most of the literature has either focused on HLL classes or L2Ls to the neglect of mixed classrooms (Carreira, 2014). This is problematic for some students since most HLLs and NSSs learn a language in a mixed-classroom context where the focus is primarily on L2Ls. It is also problematic for instructors because many of the textbooks primarily focus on teaching languages to L2Ls with very little emphasis on HLLs (Valdés, 2005). This leaves instructors with the task of creating their materials and pedagogical activities based on district curriculum and local resources. Subsequently, the lack of pedagogical materials, teacher training regarding mixed, and sometimes large classes with students from various backgrounds make it very difficult to provide quality and meaningful instruction to all students. Thus, addressing this gap in the literature and exploring it with new strategies and pedagogical materials and activities that address the needs of all students linguistically and culturally will provide instructors and students with the necessary tools to be effective in mixed classrooms.

Research Questions

Provided that most instructors at the secondary level teach in mixed classrooms environments, this study was designed to explore more about what HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs believe are their strengths and weaknesses in their language skills as well as their cultural knowledge. One of the main goals of the study is to learn from the results of the qualitative data

and find patterns among HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs in order to implement pedagogical practices and create activities that effectively address the learning needs of students in the AP Spanish Language and Culture class. Hence, I pose the following research questions:

1. What do heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers believe are their strengths in their language skills and cultural knowledge?
2. What do heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers believe are their weaknesses in their language skills and cultural knowledge?
3. What in-class learning activities seem most helpful to heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers?
4. In what ways do heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers improve their language learning over time?

Overview of the Study

The current study took place at Copper Hills High School, in West Jordan, Utah. Copper Hills High School is a public school that has over 2,700 students. It should also be noted that 30% of students are minorities and the school had 455 (17%) students eligible for free or reduced lunch during 2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). According to the Jordan School District (2017), the school has an 18% of students participating in AP courses with a 68% passing rate, which is above state average.

Students at Copper Hills High School were recruited from the AP Spanish class to participate in this study. The class was made up of HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs. I was both the researcher and the instructor for this course. All participants who elected to participate in the study were given a pre-questionnaire at the beginning and a post-questionnaire at the end of the semester. During the course of the first semester, students wrote bi-weekly reflections regarding

their progress, struggles and experiences learning the six themes and cultural comparisons in the AP Spanish class. Furthermore, one student from each category mentioned above was selected for an interview that asked additional questions from the journal reports. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed and coded. Lastly, I kept a log of student comments and personal observations throughout the semester in order to have different sources of information for the final data analysis. The study took place during the first semester the 2017-2018 school year.

Definition of Terms

Heritage language learner: According to Valdés (1997), a heritage language learner is an individual “who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken. The student may speak or merely understand the heritage language and be, to some degree, bilingual in English and the heritage language.” Beaudrie and Ducar (2005) have expanded that definition to mean someone who has experienced a relatively extended period of exposure to the language, typically during childhood, through contact with family members or other individuals, resulting in the development of either receptive and/or productive abilities in the language, and varying degrees of bilingualism.

Second language learner: Individuals who interact directly with other non-native and native speakers of the target language (Bloom & Gascoigne, 2017). In a second language class environment, second language learners receive comprehensible input and feedback from their interlocutors. Most of the language classes offered at the secondary level focus on teaching second language students.

Native speaker: The variety of language skills and personal experiences makes it harder to define a native speaker. The term native speaker and heritage speaker are sometimes used interchangeably. Some researchers agree that native speakers are individuals who came to the

United States after puberty and who are learning English as a second language (Escobar & Potowski, 2015).

Outline of Thesis

This chapter has introduced the motivations for which I have proposed this study and has briefly described what the study will comprise. Chapter 2 will review the literature on the current state of affairs regarding teaching languages in mixed classrooms. It will also review previous research on the topic of differentiation of instruction and best practices in a foreign language classroom context. Chapter 3 will describe in detail the methodology and data analysis that this study contains. Chapter 4 will present the results of the quantitative analysis as well as several participant responses from written reflections, interviews and open-ended questions from the pre and post-questionnaire. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the data described in Chapter 4, including ideas for best practices and suggestions for future research topics. Chapter 5 will end with the contributions this study has made to the field of foreign language teaching.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter reviews the literature related to the main areas of interest of this study, which focuses on research conducted regarding HLLs, and L2Ls in mixed-classroom contexts. That being said, in the past HLLs have also been referred to as native speakers (Valdés, 2005). The reason for this may be attributed to the fact that HLLs tend to sound more native-like in terms of phonology (Fairclough, 2012). Most of the research in the United States has focused on HLLs. This literature review will focus on HLLs and L2Ls. Examining the linguistic differences and learning expectations of these distinct groups is very important for understanding how teachers can be more effective in differentiating instruction, delivering the content, using materials that are appropriate for each group, and putting into practice more effective pedagogy in language classrooms.

Many researchers commonly agree that HLLs should be taught separately if at all possible, from L2Ls, specifically at the lower levels of instruction (Beaudrie, 2011; Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2006). The reasons researchers give for separating students into their own classrooms will be addressed more in detail later in this chapter. Even though separating HLLs from L2Ls would be ideal in some contexts, such is not the case in most Spanish programs. In many cases, schools do not have enough diversity or number of students to justify such programs. Other challenges may include lack of school funding, a shortage of native teachers or language teachers with high levels of language proficiency. In fact, the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) surveyed 240 higher-education Spanish programs and of the 146 programs that responded, only 17.8% reported having a program for Spanish speakers or HLLs. Furthermore, a large majority of the respondents reported insufficient enrollments, a lack of

funding and lack of trained instructors (Ingold, Rivers, Chávez, & Ashby, 2002). US federal and state education policies have substantially weakened or eliminated Spanish heritage language (SHL) programs at both primary and secondary levels (Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012). The reality is that most language learners study a language in mixed-classroom settings, yet most of the literature focuses on teaching specific groups like HLLs or L2Ls to the neglect of mixed classrooms (Carreira, 2016). This chapter will present the contexts in which mixed classrooms may be more beneficial to students learning languages. It is important to know what the current practices are and look to the research on HLLs and L2Ls for guidance on ways to implement best practices.

The term “mixed classrooms” is frequently used when referring to classes that enroll HLLs and L2Ls together. Thus, the term “mixed” refers to the learner type such as HLL and L2L in the same class and not the language methods intended to teach such students. Unfortunately, the methods and materials designed for teaching HLLs and L2Ls together are almost non-existent (Carreira, 2016). Such fact is concerning, but not surprising. As was stated previously, many language programs for HLLs and L2Ls tend to lack enough funding for appropriate textbooks and materials as well as training instructors on how to teach students with different language backgrounds. Sadly, as Valdés (1997) points out, the expectation is that HLLs will conform to traditional practices usually reserved primarily for L2L classes instead of getting materials and instruction that address their specific language needs and interests. Thus, many instructors find themselves using the same textbooks and curricula they have always used, which is unfortunate since such materials, curricula and pedagogical practices are almost always exclusive for teaching L2Ls. Creating class environments that respond to the linguistic needs of

HLLs and L2Ls is important to be an effective language instructor in the 21st century. The next section discusses and compares the differences, similarities, and needs of each group.

Linguistic Differences and Similarities between HLLs and L2Ls

Research between HLLs and L2Ls has mostly focused on grammatical knowledge and the learning motivation of such groups. In most cases, HLLs begin language classes in a traditional language setting with greater levels of language proficiency and understanding of the culture than L2L students who have studied the language for a few years (Escobar & Potowski, 2015). This is in part due to the fact that many HLLs are exposed to language learning early in life, mostly at home in a more naturalistic setting (Carreira, 2016). Such circumstances offer them advantages regarding phonology and a more native-like production of the language (Au, Knightly, Jun, & Oh, 2002). Consequently, many Spanish HLLs can understand and engage in conversations regarding everyday life. Most HLLs are comfortable and feel confident with speaking their heritage language at home. They have had more practice with every day expressions than academic language. In a survey of college HLLs, 68% of HLLs rated their listening skills in Spanish as advanced or native. Furthermore, 82% rated their Spanish-speaking abilities in the intermediate or advanced categories, according to the ACFTL scale (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). That being said, there is also research that shows some HLLs do not feel as confident in their language skills, particularly third and fourth generation HLLs who often lack the fluency of most second-generation HLLs living in the United States (Lynch, 2008). The opposite is true for L2Ls since they do not have such opportunities at home or their communities where English is the majority language.

Because of those advantages over L2Ls, many researchers have recommended separate classes for HLLs and L2Ls, particularly at the lower levels of instruction where the focus for

L2Ls is not on the content, but rather an expansion of functional skills in the language (Beaudrie et al., 2009; Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005). HLLs still need to be exposed to the formal and academic aspects of the language, but some researchers argue that such a thing would be more beneficial in a macro-based (top-down) approach, whereas L2Ls benefit more from micro-based (bottom-up) approaches at the beginning stages of language learning (Kagan & Dillon, 2009). For example, instructors may give HLLs an authentic reading material to encourage communication and discourse at first, with a form-focused task as a supporting role. The same authentic material can be given to L2Ls, but form-focused instruction guides and sustains the task with the ultimate goal of producing communication from students at the end. Learning conditions that encourage reciprocal learning may be more desirable in upper-level or more advanced language courses, making it more practical to have HLLs and L2Ls in mixed-classes.

Secondary-level Spanish 3 or 4 courses may not match the rigor or standards of upper-level university courses, but they do expose students to more complex structures of the language as well as additional content with more emphasis on themes and cultures. Such learning circumstances may level the playing field for HLLs and L2Ls in the learning process. Students in the study I conducted were enrolled in AP Spanish, which gives more emphasis to the themes and cultural understanding of Hispanic cultures than it does to the grammatical and structural aspects of the language. In that context, HLLs and L2Ls in mixed classrooms have a better opportunity to expand their language learning and skills even though they may have different needs with the language.

Other studies support mixed-classes in different contexts. In fact, some research suggests that HLLs and L2Ls would in fact benefit from each other strengths and weaknesses in upper-level courses where the emphasis is not so much on the language skills per se, but rather the

content of the classes (Potowski, 2002). For example, HLLs can be the source of authentic language input during class activities for L2Ls, which in turn can help HLLs learn explicit grammatical rules from L2Ls since that is an aspect of the language in which they have an advantage over HLLs in most cases (Edstrom, 2007). Creating activities where students with different language backgrounds help each other through reciprocal learning may prove effective for all groups involved. The fact is that all students need top-down and bottom-up approaches to progress in their language development and achieve higher levels of language proficiency. Students with different backgrounds can help each other by building on their strengths. Reciprocal learning may also complement learning for HLLs and L2Ls on a cultural level. HLLs can help introduce L2Ls to the various Hispanic cultures; such is needed to successfully and appropriately interact in multicultural communities.

Many HLLs at the secondary and university level find Spanish courses irrelevant, particularly at the beginning levels where the focus is on grammar and basic communicative tasks. Oftentimes HLLs have subconsciously acquired many of those language structures (Potowski, 2002). As a result, many L2Ls may feel overwhelmed and intimidated by the HLLs language skills. Simultaneously, a university study also found that HLLs felt intimidated by L2Ls knowledge of formal academic Spanish and explicit knowledge of the language (Potowski, 2002). Therefore, Carreira (2016) suggests a few critical features of successful mixed-classes, including: HLLs and L2Ls working collectively for reciprocal learning, separating the two populations for targeted instructional interventions and providing content that is meaningful and authentic for both populations. Such approach can greatly help HLLs and L2Ls since their learning needs are different. Nonetheless, they also share some linguistic similarities.

In terms of linguistic similarities between HLLs and L2Ls, they mostly occur when dealing with grammatical aspects of the language. For example, Montrul et al. (2008) points out that both groups make similar mistakes in terms of tenses, aspect and mood. Lynch (2008) did some research among lower-proficiency HLLs and L2L students enrolled in a Spanish course at the University of Miami. The data were collected by way of oral interviews and analyzed for their grammatical features. The analysis showed clear similarities between HLLs and L2Ls in their linguistic levels. The results found no significant differences between the groups in terms of gender-agreement, aspect, mood, word order, and the use of the subjunctive and conditional. In another study, Montrul et al. (2008) also found that HLLs and L2Ls make the same kind of grammatical mistakes, though L2Ls made their mistakes in their oral speech while the HLLs made the same mistakes in written assignments. Thus, we see that HLLs and L2Ls would benefit from their language and cultural strengths and weaknesses through reciprocal learning in mixed classrooms. The next section will explore some of the learning motivations HLLs and L2Ls bring to the language classroom and the ramifications such conditions create for instructors and students.

Learning Motivations between HLLs and L2Ls

Motivation in language learning has been researched extensively. Gardner (1985) divides the concept of motivation into instrumental and integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation is more pragmatic, people usually want to learn a language to obtain a job or for traveling purposes. Integrative motivation goes deeper in terms of language and culture. Individuals usually want to know the people who speak the language, leading to deeper cultural competence (Gardner, 2001). Research shows that in the United States, Spanish HLLs' motivations for taking language classes are different than for L2Ls. For example, Spanish HLLs main reasons for

enrolling in Spanish are to improve their fluency and learn a more standard and academic Spanish (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005). Other research also shows that students enroll to improve their reading and writing skills (Mikulski, 2006), which in turn may help them obtain better jobs as proficient bilinguals. Moreover, some HLLs, second and subsequent generations want to keep their heritage language alive in the United States and be able to communicate with family and friends in their minority communities (Carreira & Kagan, 2011).

On the other hand, L2Ls motivations for learning languages differ significantly. Reynolds, Howard and Deák (2009) researched language study motivations among 401 first-year language in courses for 19 different languages at University of Pennsylvania and Drexel. Forty percent of the respondents were designated as HLLs, the rest were L2Ls. The results found that HLLs not only had positive attitudes towards their heritage language, but also had high levels of integrative motivation for learning the language, whereas L2Ls main motivation was instrumental, to fulfill university requirements or for traveling purposes. Integrative motivation is essential in language learning since it helps learners accept and become part of the culture at deeper levels. Consequently, student motivations for learning languages pose implications for instructors who must create environments and learning opportunities that focus on student's interests. When learning is student-centered, it provides a good environment for positive motivation about language learning. McCombs and Whisler (1997) explain learner-centered teaching as an approach

...that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and

achievement for all learners). This dual focus then informs and drives educational decision-making (p. 64).

Student-centered classrooms lead to greater student motivation for learning languages and cultures. Masters and Forster (2000) point out it is important to ensure low-achieving students are brought to a level of minimum standards while still making sure that high-achieving students are challenged enough to create positive learning motivation. This is why differentiated instruction is an important topic of discussion in mixed-classroom contexts given the fact that not all students start at the same level.

Differentiation of Instruction

Differentiated classrooms begin with two premises: there are content requirements in the form of standards and students who will vary as learners (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2016). Such principles are of great importance in a language classroom, particularly among HLLs and L2Ls where the variation of learners and interest on content may be different. In the current education system, indications are that most teachers make few proactive modifications based on learner variance and needs (Tomlinson et al., 2003). In a language classroom, this becomes a big problem, due to the fact that a teacher's approach to teaching may determine the success or failure of language learning (Landrum & McDuffie, 2010).

Differentiation of instruction also needs to be addressed when it comes to assessment in a language classroom. HLLs and L2Ls perform differently according to the tasks given to them. For example, if a task requires implicit or explicit knowledge, this may require significant literacy skills, which may put HLLs at a disadvantage with L2Ls (Carreira, 2012). This is why it is important for instructors to be comprehensive and constant in their formative assessment in

order to change instruction and plans as needed, which in turn may help the struggling students and challenge the high-achievers as well.

Linguistic differences among students in language classrooms create challenges, however; such can be overcome through careful planning and targeted instruction, which is also part of differentiated instruction. Although L2L programs focus mostly on explicit instruction, HLLs also benefit from explicit language instruction when it is focused and targeted (Bowles, 2011). Focused-instruction can serve a few purposes, including the use of a more standard Spanish among students, a higher understanding of syntactic elements of the language and the development of higher level thinking which may benefit all students involved. As can be seen from the research, differentiated instruction is one of the many key elements of successful mixed-classes.

Conclusion

To meet the challenges and be successful in teaching HLLs and L2Ls in mixed classrooms, instructors need to rethink their curriculum, pedagogical materials, and add instructional practices that provide differentiated instruction. Such classes need to give emphasis to the linguistic needs of all learners. They also need to address the interest of HLLs and L2Ls in ways that motivate students toward deeper language and culture learning. In some cases, instruction may require separating student populations for targeted instructional interventions, while for others it may involve cooperative learning activities that result in mutual learning.

The present study aims to understand even further how students at the secondary level in an AP Spanish Language and Culture program make progress over time, succeed in their learning experiences, and provide feedback to the instructor on possible pedagogical practices that may more fully meet their language learning needs. As instructors reflect on their approaches and best

practices, it is important to remember that language learning goes beyond the classroom. By providing differentiated language instruction and meaningful learning experiences in mixed classrooms, instructors are more likely to give students the learning tools they will need to be successful in the acquisition of language and cultural competence.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The present study was designed in order to investigate AP Spanish Language and Culture students' beliefs about their language skills and cultural understanding of the language as well as the ways in which they approach and succeed with their language learning experience. The study was designed to gather detailed data with the ultimate goal to implement future pedagogical practices that would help enhance the language learning experiences of future students in Spanish mixed classrooms.

Participants and Classroom Context

All students who signed up for the AP Spanish course were invited to participate in this research study. The participants ranged from sophomores to seniors and were between the ages of 15 and 17 at the time the study began. Three additional students were added to the class two weeks after the study began. One was a heritage language learner who had previously taken Spanish at Copper Hills. The other two students were native Spanish speakers from Guatemala and Colombia. The two native Spanish speakers already mentioned had been assigned by their academic advisors to Spanish 3 classes in different class periods. After a few casual conversations with these individuals and additional meetings with their academic advisors, they were invited to instead take the AP Spanish class. All students enrolled in the AP Spanish class participated in the study. There were 41 students in total, thirty females and eleven males. There were 31 seniors, seven juniors and three sophomores. The participants came from various backgrounds and places, including México, Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Perú, Chile, Spain and the United States. There were 23 heritage language speakers, nine Spanish native speakers, eight English native speakers and another English native speaker who had previously been enrolled in an immersion program during elementary school in Utah. The

majority of heritage learners were second generation living in the United States and most spoke Spanish at home, church and at school with their Hispanic friends. Most native Spanish speakers had recently arrived to Utah within the last two years and were still in the process of learning English. English native speaker's exposure to Spanish included four years of Spanish classes in a formal academic setting starting at the middle school level. A few of them had parents who had served missions for their church in a Spanish-speaking country. The rest of English native speakers did not have any other connection to the language and culture, except in academic contexts.

Copper Hills High School, where the study was conducted, offers Spanish 1, 2, 3, 4, and AP Spanish. However, it only offers one section of the AP Spanish Language and Culture class during the second period of the day. It is a one-year long course and takes place every other day on A days according to their schedule. The course is designed to help students gain knowledge of thematic topics with an emphasis on cultural comparisons with their own culture. Student placement for language courses at Copper Hills is problematic because some students come from different school districts that may have different language learning goals. The Jordan School District has determined that students who sign up for AP Spanish should be at least on the intermediate mid-level from the ACTFL scale. The district has also determined students' language proficiency goal as intermediate high at the end of the course. In order to assess student's language proficiency level, students take the AAPPL test, administered through ACTFL, at the end of the course, in order to assess their language progress. The test is also administered through ACTFL. Students at Copper Hills always take the AAPPL test at the end of the year to determine their language proficiency level. However, knowing the language proficiency of all students enrolled may be difficult if they took the AAPPL test during middle

school or if students transferred from other countries or districts that do not share such data. It should also be noted that there are no requirements to be able to sign up for the AP Spanish class, which means that students who did not take a Spanish class previously would still be able to sign up, provided that they showed language proficiency at the intermediate levels.

Procedure

Because I was also the instructor for the class, it was important that the students not feel obligated to participate in the study. Therefore, Dr. Gregory Thompson, my thesis chair, a Spanish Pedagogy professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University, introduced the study to the students with a scripted recruitment announcement. This was done in an attempt to make the students feel more comfortable about saying no. All students in the AP Spanish class decided to participate in the study, including three more students who enrolled at later dates during the first quarter of the school year. During the first two weeks of school, I provided students with the consent and assent forms and gave them two weeks to bring them back with all the signatures required. I received all the forms by the end of August and announced to the class that the study would be starting the following week. I began gathering data for the study during the first week of September and ended the process of data gathering at the end of December, right before students left for Christmas break.

Sources of Information

The main tools for gathering data were pre and post-questionnaires, student's journal entries every two weeks, teacher log of student comments and observations, and four interviews, one interview with a heritage speaker, a native English speaker, a native Spanish speaker, and an immersion student.

Pre-questionnaire. During the first week of September, I administered a pre-questionnaire to the participants (see Appendix A). I administered the pre-questionnaire through Qualtrics on Google Classroom, which is our main website for assignments and announcement purposes. This took place during class time and students used Chromebooks, which I provided for them, to complete the survey. I remained present in class during this time in order to help students with any complications. During the process, a few students asked for help on how to access the link and some asked definitions for certain words they did not understand. I answered their questions about word meanings and gave additional instructions for some students who were not familiar with surveys or typing accents marks on a Chromebook. No issues arose during the time students worked on the pre-questionnaire. It took about thirty minutes for all participants to finish the pre-questionnaire. Once all participants reported completion of the pre-questionnaire, we resumed class as usual.

The pre-questionnaire included questions about students' demographics, attitudes toward learning Spanish and their reasons for enrolling in the class. It also included self-reflection questions that probed their confidence in their language skills in all modes of communication and their cultural understanding; their previous experiences with Spanish classes, and their learning expectations for our class. Most of the questions were adapted from the ACTFL Can Do Statements beginning at the intermediate level benchmarks. Given the fact that a few students did not know English very well, I provided an English and Spanish version of the pre-questionnaire on Qualtrics. I encouraged students to choose their preferred language and answer the questions accordingly.

Journal Entries. The participants were assigned journal prompts every two weeks as part of the curriculum (see Appendix B). The questions for the journal prompts were

administered through Google Forms in our Google Classroom website. The questions were also provided in English and Spanish. The participants were instructed to choose their preferred language and answer accordingly. This was important for the study so that students would be able to express their experiences and answer questions that provided detail for future data analysis of each of their responses. The participants received 10 points for completing the task as thoroughly as possible. As part of the process, I read all student answers in order to assign a grade as well as for data analysis purposes. The participants were not very specific in their answers on their first journal entry. Consequently, I instructed them to be more thorough and detailed for future journal entries. The participants started the journal entries in the month of September and ended in the month of December. Due to holiday breaks, parent-teacher conference days, and end of the quarter days; there were a couple of weeks during the study in which students did not receive much instruction, in which case I did not assign a journal entry. It should also be noted that a few participants, mainly NSSs and some HLLs struggled completing

some of the journal entries throughout the study. The participants completed six journal entries in total. No more written data were gathered after the month of December.

Teacher Log of Student Comments. I kept a log of student comments during class as well as reactions to lessons and assignments. I wrote these notes periodically and as often as time permitted me. Some of notes came from conversations I had with students about class and any concerns they may have had about their performance. Other notes were simply personal observations and self-reflections after class. The observations were based on interactions with students as well as journal entries from students.

Post-questionnaire. In the middle of December, right before going on Christmas break, students took the post-questionnaire (see Appendix D), which included the same questions as the pre-questionnaire and some additional questions about their overall experience in the class, their language learning progress and how they managed their language learning experiences. Once again, this took place during class and students used the Chromebooks I provided for them. I remained present to answer any questions or concerns. At this point, students did not have many questions since they were familiar with the format and the expectations. Once again, just like the pre-questionnaire, the post-questionnaire was provided in English and Spanish. I encouraged students to choose the language with which they felt most comfortable and be as thorough as possible with their responses in the opened-ended section of the post-questionnaire.

Interviews. During the week prior to Christmas break, I selected four students for exit interviews. Students were selected during class on a random basis. First, they were separated into the four categories: heritage language learners, native English speakers, native Spanish speakers and immersion students. Next, students in each category were counted and received a number for identification. In order to randomly choose a student from each category, I used a random

number generator online. Students awaited to see if their number had been chosen by the online generator. During the first time, the native Spanish speaker and heritage speaker who were chosen declined to participate in the interview. At that point, I used the random generator again. The second time, all students whose number was chosen decided to participate in the interview. At this point of the study, there were seven native Spanish speakers, twenty-three heritage learners, eight native English speakers and one immersion student. However, since there was only one immersion student, I put him in the HLL category for data analysis purposes since his language skills resembled more those of HLLs. The interviews were conducted in my class during *grizzly ops*, which is a half an hour period set apart by the school to help students with their assignments, make-up work, etc. This was done in order to make it more convenient for students and the interviewer. Most of the questions were already predetermined, (see Appendix C). I asked students some additional questions based on their responses to journal entries and personal classroom observations. The interviews were recorded on two computer devices in case one device failed during the process. The native English speaker and immersion student decided to speak in English during the interview. The native Spanish student and heritage speaker decided to speak in Spanish during the interview, though the HLL student reverted to English phrases and words throughout the interview. Each interview lasted about 10 minutes each. I transcribed all the interviews in the language in which it was spoken. No more data were gathered after that point.

Data Analysis

I analyzed data throughout the course of the study. At the beginning of the semester, I read student's responses on the pre-questionnaire regarding their reasons for taking AP Spanish and their expectations for the class. I used that information to guide my instruction and approach

to the classroom in order to create an environment that encouraged risk-taking, positive attitudes toward each other and hard work.

Next, during the course of the study, I read every student journal entry in order to give them a grade for completing the task and to receive feedback from students on classroom practices and delivery of instruction and content. I read carefully all the journal entries a few times to get a sense of student's perceptions of their language learning experience, their success, and frustrations learning Spanish in our class. During the reading process, I found specific themes and patterns from student responses regarding their success, struggles, and in-class activities that were helpful to them. I created tables that showed the themes I found for each category of students in this study. Furthermore, I sought and received help from my thesis chair and committee members in order to help me identify further findings or patterns from the data I analyzed from the journal entries.

In addition, I took notes from student responses in the open-ended section of the post-questionnaire in order to get additional ideas of their overall learning experience. My notes showed patterns that further confirmed findings from all data sources of information.

During the first and second semester, I spoke with and helped each student who had expressed concerns or a desire for additional help. Moreover, I used student's feedback and comments to adapt teaching practices in a way that would help create a positive learning environment that promoted risk-taking and collaboration among all students. For example, some of the native English speakers expressed having high levels of anxiety during presentations in class. I used that information to create small group activities that would still require them to present information, but in a more comfortable setting. Additionally, based on student's feedback at the end of the semester, we began having scaffolded instruction. Language instruction

involved classroom debates and tasks that included all the modes of communication, interpersonal, interpretive and presentational on any given class. I used information I gathered from the teacher log of student comments as I conducted interviews with students about their experiences in the class. Some of the comments were my own interpretation of certain events in class while others were the exact comments I heard students make about their language learning experience. Ultimately, all sources of information were crucial in identifying the themes and findings, which will be presented in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter, I will describe the results of the data analysis. I should note that not all data collected were useful for answering the questions of the study at hand. Therefore, I present in this chapter the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analyses as they relate to the research questions previously outlined. The results are presented by topic and in reference to the questions of the study, with priority given to the qualitative portion of the data analysis. The qualitative portion of this study provided detailed and meaningful information as it relates to this study and the groups of language learners involved. Qualitative results from the pre- and post-questionnaire are presented, along with a presentation of the findings from student bi-weekly reflections, teacher log of student comments and exit interviews with students from each category studied. Although there were numerous student responses within each data source, I only used representative examples of responses that give more detail as it relates to answering the guiding questions for this study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Students Strengths in Their Language Skills and Cultural Understanding. The first research question sought to gain an understanding of student's self-efficacy with regards to their awareness of their language abilities as well as cultural understanding of the Hispanic world. During the study, which lasted about four months, students were introduced to thematic units with an emphasis on cultures from the Spanish-speaking world. Although the literature focuses mostly on the linguistic and learning differences between HLLs and L2Ls, this study included a group of native Spanish-speaking students who had recently arrived in the United States and had been in the U.S. school system no longer than two years. Additionally, such students were still in the process of learning English. Even though this group resembles HLLs, they had more

advanced language skills and Hispanic cultural background than the other two groups due to the length of time they had lived in a Spanish speaking country. Therefore, such students were under a different category. Through the rest of the data analysis, their responses will be under the native Spanish speakers' (NSS) category.

In general, student's perceptions of their own language skills changed for some of the language skills reported, but their initial and final opinions remained consistent, except for NSSs. Table 1 and 2 below show the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire regarding their self-evaluation on their perception of their strongest and language skill.

Table 1

Pre-questionnaire: Which of the following would you say is your strongest skill in Spanish?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	
Listening	13	4	0	17
Speaking	8	1	7	16
Reading	1	1	1	3
Cultural Knowledge	2	1	0	3
Writing	0	2	0	2

Table 2

Post-questionnaire: Which of the following would you say is your strongest skill in Spanish?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	
Listening	15	5	1	21
Reading	1	2	3	6
Speaking	5	1	1	7
Writing	1	1	1	3
Cultural Knowledge	1	0	1	2

The items on the table are ranked from highest to lowest in terms of the number of mentions for each language skill. The majority of HLLs and L2Ls reported in the pre and post-questionnaire that their strongest skill in the language was listening. Such findings confirm my personal observations of students during class activities. They enjoyed listening to me speak in the target language. They also enjoyed when NSSs would discuss the AP themes and make comparisons of the U.S. culture and other Spanish-speaking countries. I should point out that it was mostly lower-proficiency HLLs and all L2Ls favored activities where NSSs would talk about their countries and explain cultural facts and experiences in the United States as newly arrived immigrants. In fact, several HLLs and L2Ls favored class debates and discussion in which they would listen to differing views and learn cultural products, practices and perspectives from various Spanish-speaking countries. One HLL student expressed in his bi-weekly reflection:

Carlos: We should do more of these activities (have debates and class discussions on the specific Spanish AP themes as it relates to cultures), I enjoy hearing people's comments and how they get all excited about it.

Even though the results show HLLs and L2Ls enjoyed listening to class debates, they liked them for different reasons. Not all, but most HLLs felt comfortable with listening and would occasionally be part of the debates. To the lower-proficiency HLLs, listening to debates and class discussion was a way to be in their comfort zones since a few of them felt inadequate around what they perceived "true Hispanics or native speakers" Some HLLs felt that their Spanish was not "authentic or good enough", compared to their NSSs peers. At times, they would find themselves code-switching in order to express themselves and their opinions on certain topics. It took some HLLs a few weeks to feel comfortable expressing their ideas in class.

As part of my job as the instructor and based on their feedback during some classes, I explicitly made clear that all students were learning Spanish and made it a point to all students that no one would ever be allowed to make fun or demean students for how they spoke the language or if they had a strong accent. I never corrected students in front of others for their pronunciation in Spanish. I personally encouraged NSSs to help me clarify misunderstandings and provide feedback to others in a compassionate manner.

To help create a collaborative classroom environment, students began each class with speaking activities in the target language. The activities were designed to help them get to know each other and discuss the AP Spanish themes. Additionally, students received a new seating chart every two weeks to help them get to know everyone in the class on a personal level. A few times, I assigned certain NSSs and HLL students to sit next to struggling L2Ls. This was done in order to help struggling students feel comfortable and gain confidence in their language skills.

With regards to L2Ls, they also enjoyed listening to class debates and discussions, but they were more focused on improving their listening skills in order to successfully interact with me, HLLs and L2Ls, who they felt spoke very fast and differently and it was hard to keep up sometimes. Here is an example from the bi-weekly reflections of how one L2L student felt regarding listening to a class debate:

Lydia: This week I learned the reasons that some people prefer to be called Latino/a instead of Hispanic, and vice-versa. The debate was very interesting because it also helped me to practice my listening skills.

L2Ls main motivation for being in the AP Spanish Language and Culture class was to pass the test at the end of the year. It was crucial for them to improve their listening skills and

hear Spanish from a variety of countries. They enjoyed the class because it had many students from different Spanish-speaking countries.

On the other hand, and as might be expected, seven out of eight native Spanish speakers initially reported that their strongest skill was speaking in the language. Most of them held that view throughout the study, but in the post-questionnaire, some of their responses and beliefs about their strongest skills had changed. Three reported reading as their strongest skill, the rest of them each chose speaking, writing, listening and culture as their strongest skill. Students were exposed to authentic listening and reading materials throughout the semester, which may help explain why their perception of their strongest skill in the language changed over the course of the study. Their reading skills were superior to those of HLLs and L2Ls. Even though they consistently reported a dislike for reading homework assignments, they always performed well during in-class reading assignments and most NSSs would get the highest scores on the reading sections of the AP Spanish practice test, which was performed once every month. In summary, most HLLs and almost all L2Ls believed their strongest language was listening. Most NSSs believed speaking was their strongest skill.

Students Weaknesses in Their Language Skills and Cultural Understanding. The second question of the study sought to find out student's beliefs about their weakest language skill and struggles with cultural understanding. Tables 3 and 4 below show the results of the pre- and post-questionnaire regarding their self-evaluation of their weakest language skill.

Table 3

Pre-questionnaire: Which of the following would you say is your weakest skill in Spanish?

Response	No. of mentions		Total
Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	

Reading	10	0	2	12
Speaking	4	6	0	10
Writing	7	0	1	8
Cultural Knowledge	2	2	4	8
Listening	1	1	1	3

Table 4

Post-questionnaire: Which of the following would you say is your weakest skill in Spanish?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	
Reading	13	2	2	17
Writing	8	1	1	10
Cultural Knowledge	1	0	4	5
Speaking	1	4	0	5
Listening	0	2	0	2

The items are ranked from highest to lowest in terms of the number of mentions for each language skill. Just like in the pre-questionnaire, students could only choose one skill as their strongest or as their weakest skill.

The results show that highest number of mentions for weakest skill in the language overall was reading in Spanish. However, each group reported a different kind of struggle. For example, HLLs reported in the pre-questionnaire at the beginning and the post-questionnaire at the end of the semester that their weakest skill was reading comprehension. In order to get specific detail about their learning struggles, I asked students follow-up questions in the bi-weekly reflections. They were encouraged to be as thorough as possible in their responses. From my personal observations, students who struggled the most wrote very detailed descriptions in the bi-weekly reflections. The following table includes a total count of all mentions regarding the question in the bi-weekly reflections: What aspect of Spanish (reading, listening, writing, speaking or culture) are you struggling with and why? The responses include all answers from

every student response to the bi-weekly reflections. Students completed a total of six reflections every two weeks during the study.

Table 5

Bi-weekly reflections: What aspect of Spanish (reading, listening, writing, speaking or culture) are you struggling with most and why?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learners	Native English Speakers	Native Spanish Speakers	
Reading	90	6	3	99
Writing	29	4	2	35
Speaking	14	19	0	33
Listening	13	16	2	29
Cultural understanding	7	8	6	21
Nothing	1	0	10	11
Grammar	2	6	2	10
Vocabulary	3	5	0	8

As can be seen, HLLs overwhelmingly struggled with reading, writing, and literacy skills. Many of them expressed concerns about the homework reading materials, which were assigned almost on a daily basis. The reason for this was that almost 40% of the AP Spanish test deals with reading authentic materials. During personal conversations with some HLLs and discussions, I often overheard students express their concern about the readings. Although most HLLs were able to communicate in Spanish with ease, many HLL students struggled considerably with many of the reading assignments, which were exclusively authentic materials, newspapers, literature, and academic reading in the target language. The following comments are responses from students regarding why they struggled with reading assignments. Their answers to the question in Table 5 provide more detail into how HLLs struggled with reading assignments:

Richard: Reading! I have never really read anything in Spanish; my parents never put me to read in Spanish.

Mariela: Reading! Reading (both understanding what it is saying and reading aloud) is definitely my weakest point. I can speak, I can write, but when words are not familiar to me and things are worded differently, sometimes it is just hard to connect the concepts.

Carlos: Reading is hard for me because I have trouble understanding what is telling me or comprehending the question given at hand. I do not know how to improve there. I think just learning what it is trying to tell me is my best chance.

Jennifer: I am struggling to be able to read in Spanish. Some words just do not make sense to me and some assignments get harder for me. I can pronounce the words good sometimes, but the problem I have is understanding what the question is trying to ask.

After reviewing the data from the different sources of information, I noticed that only three HLLs reported doing some reading in Spanish before joining the AP Spanish class. Such fact may explain why they significantly struggled with the reading section of the course. None of the post-reading activities were helpful to them if they did not understand the content.

Oftentimes, students would have to answer multiple choice and open-ended questions to check for comprehension. On rare occasions, students would take a quiz the next class to check their reading comprehension and to see if they had essentially read the assignments. HLLs struggles with reading became distracting and frustrating for some students who lacked literacy skills to get meaning from the context. Some sought help during the course of the first semester and would regularly come to class to read homework assignments with me in order to better understand the material. One HLL mentioned the following during a one-on-one reading activity with me:

Alanis: I read the article a few times last night and I felt I was reading in another language.

Another HLL who had previously been with me in a mixed-class in Spanish 3 Honors the previous year made a comment regarding her experience in AP Spanish:

Cassandra: I have struggled more in this class than in my Spanish three class. The readings are hard, but I still like how I am more able to express myself and learn more about the culture as we speak.

On the other hand, L2Ls reported speaking in the target language as their weakest skill. This was evident from class discussions and conversations with them. At the beginning of the semester and throughout the study, most L2Ls would get high levels of anxiety whenever they were called upon to answer questions or speak Spanish in front of their peers. At first, I avoided calling on them to answer question in front of class. As the semester progressed, I began to give them more speaking tasks in front of class. The bi-weekly reflections provided detailed descriptions of how students felt about speaking in the target language. Regarding their beliefs on their weakest language skill, a few L2Ls commented the following on the bi-weekly reflections:

Ryan: I am struggling with speaking because the only place I get the chance to is in class and even then, it is not very much. I lack the confidence to speak.

Lydia: I still feel like I am struggling with speaking the most just because school is the only place I get to practice my speaking skills.

Megan: Speaking and writing because I do not usually know which conjugations to use so my grammar is not very good, and I need to expand my vocabulary so I can better express myself.

Marissa: Speaking, (hardest or weakest language skill) because especially when being called on in class it feels pressuring when I know that I should be better.

Kiara: Probably speaking (weakest skill) and depending on the accent listening (trying to understand language variation and accents from various Spanish-speaking countries). I can listen and catch words, but sometimes people are speaking so fast and it is hard to keep up.

L2Ls struggled throughout the study with their speaking abilities. Their concerns included lack of confidence and anxiety when speaking in front of class. For some students, their anxiety about speaking in front of class was in part due to a lack of understanding about what was being asked of them. Some students would need clarification in English as to what they were being asked. I always encouraged them to speak in the target language and use English if needed. L2Ls also reported that limited language was a factor that affected their speaking abilities, since most could only practice speaking in the AP Spanish class. Such themes were consistent throughout the semester in which the study took place.

During the month of October, I conducted formal interviews with all students regarding their grades as well as their learning experiences. One of my observations was that students would get high levels of anxiety whenever they had to speak Spanish in front of class. Regarding her struggles with speaking in the target language, one L2L commented:

Megan: This class causes me to have a lot of anxiety and it is the hardest class I have ever taken.

This student as well as two other L2Ls ended up dropping the class at some point during the year. After talking to them about the class, all reported one of the main reasons for dropping the class was due to high levels of anxiety in class. Their high levels of anxiety and inability to

express themselves in Spanish when paired with HLLs or NSSs was more than they could handle.

Perhaps one of the reasons L2Ls experienced high levels of anxiety and difficulty expressing themselves is that the AP Spanish class was conducted completely in Spanish with a few exceptions. Such students came from previous language classes where speaking in the target language was not a main goal. Additionally, some felt overwhelmed being around HLLs and NSSs who spoke fast and with greater confidence.

Even though L2Ls reported frustration with their speaking abilities, some saw it as a positive learning opportunity and their perceptions changed over time. During a final interview with a L2L student, concerns and benefits of speaking in class were expressed in the following words:

Lydia: I was somewhat nervous at first just to see how everything would go, all the different people in the class, but it has been really good. Everybody is super nice, and it has been a good experience to learn how to speak the language more and learn more about the cultures. At the beginning, my weakest skill was probably speaking because I got nervous and would just forget the words that I wanted to say. I think that just being thrown into it is kind of... and being made to speak to more people has been really helpful; and being able to learn from the native speakers and their accents and stuff has been helpful.

The following quotes include a follow-up conversation with Lydia, a L2L student regarding speaking Spanish in class:

Interviewer: In one of your reflections, you mentioned that. I am quoting here: “I feel like my speaking has been as good as usual” This is from the last reflection. It says that

you feel you have hit a plateau in your speaking. Could you explain a little more about that?

Participant: I just feel like at the beginning I was, towards the, a little after the beginning I was able to say the things I wanted to say. I do not know if it is because right now I am not trying as hard as I was at the beginning or something. I just do not feel like I can speak as well. It is weird. I cannot think of why that would be, but I do not know.

Interviewer: Just to follow up with that. Is there anything that your instructor could do to help students like you, who want to improve or are struggling with their speaking skills?

Participant: I think just, maybe picking on me more in class, even though I probably would not want to. It will help me improve in the long run.

The last comment by Lydia was instructive feedback, which I quickly implemented in class. I began giving L2Ls more opportunities to speak in front of class and in smaller settings with other NSSs and HLLs. I asked one L2L student to give a formal presentation of one of the AP Spanish themes. All her peers congratulated her for how well she presented and the progress she had made learning the language. In conclusion, L2Ls struggled with speaking during the first part of the semester, but most were able to assimilate into the classroom culture, which in turn helped them with their speaking abilities.

Finally, when asked about their struggles and weakest skill in the language, the majority of NSSs reported to having no specific struggles. Paradoxically, some NSSs reported to have struggled with the cultural aspect of the AP Spanish class. Such became a theme for them for the remainder of the study. Such concerns were expressed in the opened-ended section of the post-questionnaire and the bi-weekly reflections. Here are specific comments a NSS from Chile made regarding their struggles with learning culture in the AP Spanish class:

La cultura de algunos países es muy diferente a la mía y estoy aprendiendo de eso, no es difícil, pero es lo único que puedo decir que no se mucho al respecto. Es interesante aprender cómo tenemos tantas prácticas diferentes.

Another student from Colombia reported the following:

Podría decir que ninguna, pero la única que no me siento "confident" con ella es la cultura ya que esto cambia mucho de acuerdo con el país de origen de la persona y no conozco mucho sobre otras culturas más que la de mi país.

During a formal interview with a NSS from México, he expressed his experience learning about so many Hispanic cultures. In his mind, he had never thought about Latin culture until he came to the AP Spanish class. Additionally, NSSs would often struggle with word meanings and language variations during class discussions and debates on the AP themes and culture. Very often, students from Chile, Venezuela, Guatemala, and México would find themselves defining what certain words and phrases meant to them in their country of origin. Though confusing at first, such discussions also became learning opportunities for the HLLs and L2Ls who would often become intrigued by such conversations.

Most Helpful Activities for Language Learning in Class. The third question of the study sought to find out what in-class learning activities were most helpful to students. Since each group had different linguistic and cultural needs, I used various classroom activities to help reach as many students as possible. All groups expressed that certain class activities and assignments were more beneficial to their language learning than others. From the participants written reflection responses, interviews, and teacher observations, four main factors were identified that significantly helped students learning Spanish: small group activities and conversations, one-on-one help from the instructor, reading assignments in class, and class

debates and discussions on AP Spanish themes. Each of the factors reported will be discussed individually for more details.

Table 6 shows the results from the bi-weekly reflections regarding the question: What activities, if any, helped you learn a concept in the last two weeks? The responses include the total numbers from all responses by students throughout the semester, which includes six reflections per student.

Table 6

Bi-weekly reflections: What activities in class, if any, helped you learn a concept in the last two weeks?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	
Small group activities and conversations	47	22	9	78
One-on-one help from instructor	17	11	5	33
Reading assignments in class	17	6	1	24
Class debates and discussions	12	9	4	25
Vocabulary learning activities in class	13	4	0	17
Note taking in class	8	6	0	14
Vote with your feet	4	3	2	9
Class debates	4	4	1	9
Explicit grammar instruction	1	2	2	5
Quizzes on homework	4	0	1	5
Peer-to-peer feedback	1	1	1	3

Small Group Activities and Conversations. It is important to note that HLLs, L2Ls, and NSSs all reported small group activities and conversations were helpful to their learning in the AP Spanish class. Small group activities included all the modes of communication, interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. Lower-proficiency HLLs and L2Ls felt speaking activities and group work in a small setting eased their anxiety levels and would allow them to more freely express themselves in the target language. Small group settings also allowed for L2Ls and HLLs

to learn from each other reciprocally. Even NSSs reported to enjoy small groups, such would give them opportunities to become leaders in their small groups and share their cultural knowledge and background.

The following citations are responses from students in each group to a question on the bi-weekly reflections: What activities in class helped you learn a concept in class in the last two weeks?

HLL student: The things that help me are the out-loud talking that we do in class in small groups. I love it because I not only get to learn new things, but also learn about new people. It can definitely be intimidating to be paired with the natives, but I learn to get over the fear and just do my best.

HLL student: The one time where we would answer what beauty was with a partner helped. Some of my partners had better vocabulary than me, so that strengthened my literature and helped me understand bigger words. Also, my partner may not be so well at Spanish, so I have to be prepared to help.

L2L student: Always with Spanish, and me, I find the best help when I work with others, especially those who we both can help each other and see each other succeed on whatever we are working on.

L2L student: Doing stuff in smaller tables helped, because it was easier to have one-on-one conversations with other students and I was more comfortable asking questions in the smaller group.

NSS student: Las actividades de conversaciones en pareja, con las que podíamos ayudarnos el uno al otro con algunos conceptos que no entendíamos. Me acuerdo de que

aprendí que significa la palabra “marimacho” por una compañera con la que estuve que me la explicó.

NSS student: Hablar con nuestros compañeros y responder las diferentes preguntas que hay en la pizarra la verdad siempre me ayuda a aprender tanto palabras nuevas como diferentes perspectivas de un tema, ya que como todas las personas de la clase son de diferentes lugares su cultura influencia sus respuestas hacia esas preguntas.

Students were able to help each other during guided and scaffolded activities in smaller groups. Given these points, attitudes toward each other were very positive. Even though they were aware of each other’s’ strengths and weakness, they knew that they could work to complement each other by sharing their abilities with the language. Students from each category expressed their sentiments on this topic in a final interview with me. The following quotes are small transcriptions from the final interview with one HLL, one L2L, and one NSS. The results from the exit interview with a native-English speaker who had participated in an immersion program were not included here. His responses were similar to the interview with the L2L student. The following conversations exemplify student views on how they felt learning with and from each other in a mixed-classroom environment. The following is a conversation with a HLL student:

Interviewer: ¿Sientes que una clase mezclada con estudiantes de diferentes orígenes como la que nosotros tenemos beneficia a personas como tú? o, ¿sientes que el enfoque es más en los demás? ¿Qué piensas?

Participant: Me siento, a veces me siento mejor de que estoy en una clase que como todos somos de diferentes niveles, no es un lugar, como se dice, vas a sentir que, si tú hablas, that you are going to get judged. Like, creo que todos en la clase entienden muy

bien que todos tenemos diferentes niveles de español. Pero, este, estamos todos aquí para aprender más y no solo para saber más español, sino mejorar nuestro español. Creo que es algo muy importante porque hay muchos estudiantes aquí que son native Spanish speakers, pero no saben muchas, ¿cómo se dice? no saben, nunca han escrito, nunca han leído. Esta clase tiene a muchos estudiantes que quieren hacer eso. Entonces es un buen ambiente.

One L2L student said the following during the exit interview:

Interviewer: As you think of your experience and the class that we have, which has students with different backgrounds. Do you think that students like you would benefit from being in mixed classrooms?

Participant: I really like it how it is right now because everybody, like you said, can learn from each other. It has been really helpful to learn from the natives how they would say stuff and if I don't know something, it's easy to ask them. They are really nice at explaining it. I think having the mixed environment is also better because we can learn how to interact with other people. It is really nice being able to learn from them.

Regarding the same question, a NSS said:

Interviewer: ¿Sientes que una clase mezclada con estudiantes de diferentes orígenes como la que nosotros tenemos beneficia a personas como tú? o, ¿sientes que el enfoque es más en los demás? ¿Qué piensas?

Participant: Pues siento que es igual y siento que los que están aprendiendo aprenden como más rápido y como yo también aprendo palabras nuevas, cosas nuevas que en México no sabía.

Students felt that it was beneficial for all to be in the same class and learn from each other. The response from the HLL student reflected the opinion of the majority of HLLs who felt inadequate about their language abilities, yet felt the class environment fostered Spanish and culture learning for all students. All things considered, the majority of students in each group felt it was important to learn from each other and build on their strengths.

One-on-One Help from the Instructor. During the course of the study, all students sought help from the instructor for various reasons. Some HLLs and almost all L2Ls would often come to class and ask me to read the homework material with them. During those reading sessions, we would read together and stop every so often to check for comprehension and clarify doubts. The following quotes are comments from HLL student reflections regarding this topic:

HLL student: Sometimes Mr. Vasquez gives us tips on how to read a text and gives us vocabulary words to help us with the homework.

HLL student: The activities in class this week was probably doing the reading activities in class and getting help from the teacher. Being able to ask questions and having a one-on-one conversation with someone that can actually help you is extremely helpful.

I should point out that few HLLs sought my help, and those who did, reported having great success. There were four HLLs who consistently sought my help every week with reading comprehension assignments.

At least half of L2L students would come to my class on a weekly basis to ask for one-on-one help. From my personal observations, students who sought individual help achieved the highest scores on assignments and significantly improved their language learning. However, L2Ls main goal was mainly to learn the language in preparation for the test. A few of them would often insist on getting instant feedback on their reading and writing assignments in order

to improve. It should be noted that they were more independent in completing their assignments. L2Ls motivation and desire to be prepared for the AP Spanish test at the end of the year was a main goal for seeking one-on-one help.

NSSs sought help from the instructor but for other reasons. Regarding the question on activities that helped them, they only mentioned five times one-on-one help from instructors as something that was beneficial. NNSs often struggled turning in their assignments. Some of them worked after school and had little time to complete assignments. Others felt overconfident about their skills; though they had positive views about the class, they did not necessarily have high motivation to turn in their assignments. Whenever they sought my help, it was usually to ask me for an extended deadline to turn in assignments, including the bi-weekly reflections, reading and writing assignments.

Reading Assignments in Class. The third factor that significantly helped most students was reading activities in class, except for NSSs. Reading activities often included activation of prior knowledge, during and after reading activities. Some activities included group work among students, which is why many liked working in small groups together in order to help each other. Both HLLs and L2Ls reported that reading activities in class were helpful in the language learning process. From their bi-weekly reflections, they expressed:

HLL student: Going over the Lecturas during class has really helped...I feel they help a lot with my memory because I can be very forgetful sometimes, so this is like a little review/refreshing on my memory.

L2L student: I really liked when we went through the reading about Ernesto and his father in class. It was good to see that some people around me were also struggling with it and I liked how an explanation was given for all of the answers.

NSSs on the other hand did not enjoy any sort of reading or pre-reading activities in class. In fact, most thought it was a waste of their time. When asked: What activities or methods of teaching have not helped you to be successful in this class so far? a NSS said the following:

NSS student: A pesar de que me gusta corregir las lecturas para ver en qué me equivoqué, me aburre un poco y recuerdo que hubo una clase en la que nos pasamos toda la hora corrigiendo una de las lecturas de la tarea paso por paso y eso no sé, me aburre porque no me ayuda.

It was evident from student's performance that NSS did not struggle as much with readings and the content of the class. Nevertheless, they often struggled doing their own work. Reasons for not turning reading assignments included lack of effort, work after school and extra-curricular activities. Most NSSs and at least half of HLLs often struggled to do the work required for the class, which is why they often had the lowest grades in the class as opposed to L2Ls.

Class Debates and Discussions on AP Themes. Class debates became some of the most exciting parts of the AP class for many of the participants. All groups of students reported in their reflections their enjoyment of the class debates and discussions. Class discussions and debates had different learning effects on each group. For HLLs, it was an opportunity discuss in detail issues of identity and assimilation of culture in the United States as a Latino. For L2Ls, it was the perfect opportunity to listen to authentic language input and cultural knowledge, which would help them for the AP Spanish test section of cultural comparisons. For NSSs, it was an opportunity to express ideas freely in a way that allowed them to promote the pride they had in their cultural practices, products and perspectives. The following comments were made by

students during class. They state in more detail student's views on how class debates helped them in their language learning:

HLL student: I liked when that debate happened in class! I think it helped me understand the thoughts of others and how modern-day problems and how others might see Latinos.

HLL student: My best experience in class was our class discussions about families, and different opinions on Hispanic, and Latino. I like hearing debates, and discussions about how one feels about a subject, or how they lived from their country. I really liked the debate on Hispanic and Latino, and I learned different perspective from people who came from a different country.

L2L student: The day in class where everyone had a big debate helped me learn more about conversing in Spanish. It was helpful to hear dialogue about current issues and to hear so many different opinions. I really like how we talk about relatable things in this class.

L2L student: The debate was very helpful to learn about families and differences in cultural aspects. I learned a lot from hearing people's input and opinions.

NSS student: Pienso que el debate que tuvo el profesor con la estudiante Valeria me dejo identificar la diferencia entre ser latino e hispano.

NSS student: Sinceramente, me gustó mucho el "debate" (si lo podemos llamar así) que tuvimos sobre identificarse como hispano o latino. Quiero que quede claro que nada de lo que dije fue en contra de nadie y respeto la opinión de cada uno con respecto al tema porque todos tenemos diferentes perspectivas sobre el asunto. Lo que me gustó de esto fue que me dio la oportunidad para pensar más sobre diferentes situaciones, lo que me hizo expandir mi pensamiento en español, porque últimamente pienso en inglés sobre los

temas académicos o políticos ya que esto lo veo en el colegio, lo cual es en inglés. Me ayudó mucho a soltar algunas trabas que tenía con palabras en español y me hizo estar pensando constantemente en español, lo que me ayudó en la semana a entender más fácilmente las lecturas y los audios escuchados en clase.

The last comment by the NSS student is instructive since it reflects how all groups of students felt about debating issues regarding the AP themes in class. I overheard a few times students from each group report that after debating in class on certain topics, they would have more ideas to express on their writing assignments and it was easier to understand readings related to topics debated in class. In summary, HLLs liked debates because they learned about culture and issues of Hispanic identity in the U.S., L2Ls liked learning culture and improving their listening skills, and NSSs enjoyed expressing their strong opinions and cultural background on issues they felt were relevant for them.

Students Self-Report on Improvement of Language Learning. The fourth question of the study sought to find out how students from each group improved their language learning over time; specifically, what practices helped them individually improve on the language skills with which they struggled the most. As has already been stated, HLLs struggled mostly with reading and writing assignments, as well as turning in homework, which mostly dealt with reading and listening comprehension activities. L2Ls struggled mostly with speaking in the target language and listening comprehension. Later in the study, some L2Ls also reported to have struggled with reading, specifically large amounts of unknown vocabulary and the time they had to spend in order to complete such assignments. NSSs struggled mostly with cultural understanding of the

Hispanic world. They also struggled with completing their homework assignments, which indirectly affected their learning since they were always playing catch-up.

The following table shows data from the opened-ended section of the post-questionnaire, which was the last assignment students did as part of the study, except the four students who participated in the final interview. The question asked: What do you struggle with most in class?

Table 7

Post-questionnaire: What do you struggle with most in class?

Response	No. of mentions			Total
	Heritage Language Learner	Second Language Learner	Native Spanish Speakers	
Reading	17	4	2	23
Speaking	6	10	0	16
Turning in homework	8	0	5	13
Writing	7	4	1	12
Listening	4	6	0	10
Culture	1	0	3	4
Vocabulary	1	2	0	3
Grammar	1	1	0	2

At this point, it is obvious that students expressed the same struggles regarding their language learning abilities during the semester in their bi-weekly reflection. This question simply reinforces the findings throughout the study since it was their final conclusion and perception of their language learning experience. However, in order to answer the fourth question of the study, which focused on what they did to improve their language learning, students were asked a follow-up question: How did you overcome the challenges you described in the previous question? The following table shows the themes found in their responses.

Table 8

How did you overcome the challenges you described in the previous question?

<i>Post-questionnaire:</i>		
Response	No. of mentions	Total

	Heritage Language Learners	Second Language Learners	Native Spanish Speakers	
Read more often/Re-read material	10	4	3	17
Help from the teacher	6	4	0	10
Reading out loud	8	6	0	8
Listen more Spanish/ class materials again	2	6	0	8
Remove distractions/cellphone or music	4	2	0	6
Look up words	0	4	0	4
Write more often	3	0	0	3
Reminders	1	0	2	3
Still working on it	1	0	1	2

As shown above, HLLs and L2Ls found themselves re-reading the material in order to understand it. For some this was helpful, but for others it was just another busy task.

Additionally, HLLs and L2Ls were the two groups of people who mostly came to class to get help from me regarding reading assignments. It was evident from my conversations with HLLs that many of them lacked good reading skills in both languages. Some even admitted to me during one-on-one help sessions that they had short attention spans and would often find themselves getting distracted by their cellphone devices whenever they would get stuck on the reading or when they felt the readings were boring or irrelevant to them. One HLL said:

Jennifer: I read, but I get distracted and forget everything within seconds after I just read it.

Another HLL said:

Putting everything away, my phone and having my full attention on the book I try my hardest not to get distracted from something else and only think about what I am reading.

Other HLLs used some of the reading strategies used in class for their homework assignments. Here is a comment from a HLL regarding the question on table 8:

HLL student: With the reading, I read over the articles multiple times until I start to understand. Also, I read the questions beforehand, so I have an idea as to what the article is about and what I should look for when reading. Another thing that has helped is highlighting the words I do not know and later looking them up and writing synonyms next to those words, so I know what they mean.

Another HLL mentioned:

HLL student: Like I said, I have overcome those challenges because of most of the help I received from either the teacher or a Spanish speaker, for example my parents. I also used to Google a lot, to search up the strong vocabulary in the reading.

A few HLL and L2L students found it helpful to read the assignments aloud for better comprehension. Additionally, some students began doing extra reading in Spanish that was not part of the curriculum. In their opinion, such activity helped them focus more and it was helpful for improving their phonology as well. This is something that one HLL student explained in detail to me during the final interview. The following conversation is part of a final interview with an HLL student. In it, she describes what she did to be successful in the class:

Interviewer: Dime ¿cuáles son algunas cosas efectivas que tú has hecho para ser exitosa en la clase?

Participant: Creo que fue leer más libros en español, porque yo siempre he leído mucho. Siempre leo, pero en inglés y me acuerdo de que me decían que leyera mucho para que mejorara como hablaba yo en inglés porque había un tiempo que yo no hablaba inglés. Me recordé un poquito de eso y dije pues voy a leer libros en español para ver si eso me mejora más. Leía mucho nomás en mi cabeza y ya después un día voy a leer out loud

para ver cómo me oigo. Entonces, empecé hacer eso. Es más duro hacer eso, pero creo que he mejorado mucho en leer.

Interviewer: ¿Sientes que la lectura en voz alta te ha ayudado con tu comprensión?

Participant: Sí.

L2L students who struggled with reading also used reading strategies they had learned in Spanish class. Nevertheless, sometimes the content and its vocabulary were too overwhelming for them. Even though they had better literacy skills in English and tried to transfer those reading skills to their Spanish reading assignments, they still struggled.

L2L student: I try to use context and infer what the prompt of a question is. However, this is not helpful if I do not understand the keyword(s) in a question or sentence (ex. the verb or the main subject).

I ask questions or translate things. Asking questions is probably better than having no idea what a word in the article means because there will not be a dictionary in hand for the final.

L2L students struggled mostly with speaking. The context in which they were made to speak had a big influence on how well they performed. Regarding how they would overcome their speaking struggles some expressed:

L2L student: Honestly, I would just try to use Spanish as much as I could with the people I could, and I would just ask if I did not know what something meant.

L2L student: Just do the best I can with what I know and ask the more fluent peers around me, mostly the people who grew up speaking Spanish. They are usually really helpful, and they are pretty much the reason I am not getting an F right now.

L2L student: For me, it was extremely helpful to go onto lyricstraining.com, as it helped me focus on the details. Doing that made it easier to understand what was happening in the class as well as speaking. It also helps me to go on Duolingo as it roughly has the same effects. I also had to get over the fear of talking to my teacher when I needed help and since then it has made this class much easier.

Even though L2L students struggled during the study and beyond with speaking in Spanish, they sought help from their peers, instructors and any technology tool that may have helped them enhance their ability outside class. From personal conversations, some L2Ls even reported going to community and church activities in Spanish to get more opportunities to practice their Spanish. Most importantly, it was the positive attitudes of HLLs, NSSs and the instructor toward them that made them more comfortable about speaking and learning from their mistakes.

Different from HLLs and L2Ls, NSSs struggled with culture, turning in homework and some did struggle with reading assignments as well. Regarding their struggles with culture, they simply talked about misunderstandings in word meanings and phrases during class discussions. Learning about other Spanish-speaking countries and their cultures was new to most of them, but they enjoyed learning about others and would often look for opportunities to share their cultural practices and customs. Class debates on topics like the environment or globalization allowed them to delve deeper into the perspectives of Hispanic cultures. Most of their cultural questions would often get resolved during class discussions or debates. Regarding how he overcame his struggle with learning culture, one student reported the following:

NSS student: Pues tratando de buscar información sobre culturas, trabajando en distintos tipos de comparación entre los países.

Perhaps most notable was their struggle with turning in their assignments on time. Most assignments dealt with reading authentic materials and answering questions for comprehension. Even though they had better-reading Spanish abilities and habits than the two other groups, many NSSs had personal struggles at home or work after school. Regarding how she overcame her homework struggles one student said:

NSS student: Dejando de preocuparme por los problemas personales, tratando de enfocarme y sintiéndome más tranquila y relajada, despejando mi mente de cualquier otra cosa y poder realizar bien mi trabajo.

Two NSSs did struggle with reading authentic materials. In order to overcome their challenges, they often re-read the material or put away electronic devices to concentrate better. One student commented:

NSS student: Leyendo varias veces en mi casa, desde pequeña me han inculcado que tengo que leer para poder entender y así también ampliar mi vocabulario.

This particular student's comment shows one of the advantages NSSs had over HLLs and L2Ls since they grew up reading in Spanish. Even though two of them struggled, they still had an easier time than the students in the other two groups.

Other NSSs were very honest about their lack of effort to work on the material. One student said:

NSSs student: no los he superado porque sigo siendo flojo jejeje.

Two NSSs simply reported putting reminders on their phone to turn in the work in a timely manner. To summarize, NSSs struggles with learning about other Spanish-speaking countries and their culture were valid, but they usually resolved them through class discussions. The two students who reported struggles with reading simply re-read the material, but they never

felt it was necessary to seek my help unlike HLLs and L2Ls. Finally, their struggles with homework remained even after the study concluded.

Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter has included students' responses to the questions on the pre- and post-questionnaires, bi-weekly reflections or reports regarding their progress, interviews with four students with additional questions regarding their responses on their bi-weekly reflection reports, and the teacher log of student comments and observations during class.

The pre- and post-questionnaire section mainly included questions about student's demographics, motivations for taking Spanish AP, beliefs regarding their language ability and final conclusions of their learning progress. Though some of the data was not used for answering the questions of the study, some of the student responses provided feedback to me about their motivations and previous experiences in class, so that I could be a more effective teacher in a mixed classroom. The open-ended section of the post-questionnaire provided meaningful data as it relates to the questions of the study.

Student responses on their bi-weekly reflection reports, final interviews, teacher log of student comments and class observations were crucial in order to triangulate the final data findings and report it with answers from students that provided detail regarding their language learning experience in the AP Spanish class.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter will present a discussion of the key research findings presented in chapter 4. The first section focuses on addressing the findings of the study with reference to each research question in the study. Additionally, I will reference other studies that found the same results as this study. The second section presents the pedagogical implications. The last section is a description of the limitations of this study with suggestions for research in the future followed by the conclusion.

Research Question 1 and 2: What do heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers believe are their strengths and weaknesses in their language skills and cultural knowledge?

The first and second questions of the study investigated learners' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses in their language abilities and the ramifications it would have in their performance and language learning experience in the AP Spanish class. The findings of this study to some extent echo those of previous studies regarding HLLs in terms of functional abilities, specifically their listening skills (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Most HLLs were able to understand instruction in Spanish. Occasionally, some low-proficiency HLLs would get lost when NSSs would use unfamiliar words or phrases. However, it was not a main issue for them. In many cases, they would simply turn to the person next to them for clarification.

The study found that L2Ls also felt very confident in their listening skills, both at the beginning and end of the study. Moreover, the data from the bi-weekly reflections and final interviews also reinforced the findings of Edstrom (2007), who found out L2L learners felt that studying with HLLs and non-native English speakers had a positive influence on their listening comprehension skills and learning about cultural differences. Such was a positive outcome since

L2L students needed to show some knowledge regarding the themes of the Spanish AP class and provide comparisons with their own culture on the AP test.

The breadth of language skills and personal experiences makes it harder to distinguish between HLLs and NSSs. Having said that, students who identified themselves as NSSs reported that speaking was their strongest skill. It is fair to say that HLLs and L2Ls acknowledged NSSs superior speaking skills. The presence of students who had just arrived to the United States became an asset to the instructor and the class since it gave more opportunities for the other groups to hear authentic Spanish from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries including, Guatemala, Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, and Spain. Both HLLs and L2Ls reported to have benefited in terms of their listening and cultural understanding of the language by learning Spanish in that setting. Their vocabulary increased, and knowledge of language variation was expanded.

In terms of student self-reported language weakness, the study also confirms other studies regarding HLLs literacy and reading skills (Carreira, 2011). In mixed-classes, HLLs tend to enter language learning at a point when L2Ls have already developed some measure of disciplinary literacy (Moje, 2008). It was evident from the students' responses in the reflections and my personal interactions with students that HLLs overwhelmingly struggled with reading. Though L2Ls also struggled with reading, their literacy skills were superior and very often they were able to figure out meaning out of context if they knew the vocabulary. This study found that lack of vocabulary was a big challenge for L2Ls who may have had great literacy skills, but who struggled and were distracted by spending significant amounts of time learning vocabulary meanings from authentic texts. More importantly, this study confirmed other previous studies that found L2Ls to have struggled with speaking in the target language among HLLs and non-

native English speakers (Potowski, 2002). In this study and the one just quoted, L2Ls felt embarrassed or afraid to speak or use their Spanish in the class. Some L2Ls experienced high levels of anxiety during speaking class activities, which is why three L2Ls eventually dropped the class. Such result suggests that some of the L2L students should have not been enrolled in the AP Spanish class in the first place.

Even though only two NSSs reported reading as their weakest language skill, their struggles were genuine and significant. However, those who reported such simply read again and that solved their problems. Such students did not need the intervention an additional help that I offered to HLLs and L2Ls throughout the study and beyond.

Finally, I did not expect NSSs to struggle with culture, but that was a theme that came out from the interviews, post-questionnaire responses and bi-weekly reflections. One reason they may have thought culture was their weakest skills is because they had never been exposed explicitly to culture in the Hispanic world and they were made aware of it in the AP Spanish class. Once again, I do not think this was a main problem for NSSs because whenever questions about words or phrase meanings arose, students discussed them during class debates and class discussions. It did not affect their performance in the class, in fact, it complimented it. The sharing of cultural knowledge from NSSs was something that always engaged all students in the class. To some extent, NSSs struggles with cultural misunderstandings indirectly proved beneficial to HLLs and L2Ls, since their knowledge of culture and vocabulary were expanded as a result and it gave them knowledge they could use in the Spanish AP test at the end of the year.

Research Question 3: What in-class learning activities seem most helpful to heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers?

The third question of the study was crucial in order to understand and analyze possible effective teacher and student practices in mixed language classrooms. As already stated in chapter four, the study found four factors that helped students be successful in their language learning more effectively: (1) small group conversations and activities, (2) individual help from the instructor, (3), reading assignments in class, (4) class debates and discussions. This study also confirms other findings regarding students working together in upper-level language classrooms. A study found that HLLs in mixed classrooms assisted L2 partners often with language tasks; which in turn helped HLLs have more opportunities to share cultural and linguistic knowledge, which also boosted their confidence in their language skills (Blake & Zyzik, 2003). In this study, NSSs added another component of culture and language learning that not even HLLs could add. NSSs background from other countries and accents provided HLLs and L2Ls with more sources of authentic language input and an expanded cultural knowledge of the Hispanic world. This study also confirmed the findings of another study with HLLs and L2Ls who reported positive experiences from working collaboratively by learning of and being aware of their strengths and weaknesses (Bowles, 2011). As expressed in chapter two of the literature review, Carreira (2011), suggests that HLLs and L2Ls in mixed classrooms must have opportunities for targeted instruction as well as reciprocal learning in order for classes to be effective.

From the perspective of the instructors, sometimes there is little time in the schedule to provide one-on-one help. Nevertheless, this study found that from the perspective of HLLs and L2Ls, there are great benefits to their language learning and development when students interact

with their instructor. They can provide the instructor feedback on their learning progress and struggles and receive instant helpful feedback for their language development as well.

Reviewing assignments in class was an effective activity for HLLs and L2Ls, but not for NSSs. Some researchers, Potowski (2002) and Quintanar-Sarellena et al. (1993) have suggested peer-tutoring in mixed classrooms as a way to promote collaboration among students in the different categories. This is particularly important because as this study shows, students had different levels of language proficiency, yet the high expectations for the AP Spanish class were the same for all students. NSSs and more proficient HLLs are able to help lower-proficiency HLLs and L2Ls who may be struggling. Even though L2Ls and some lower-proficiency HLLs indicated that they felt intimidated by NSSs, scaffolded and guided debates were also helpful for their listening comprehension and cultural knowledge. They were beneficial for classroom engagement if the issues debated were personal and meaningful to the students.

Research Question 4: In what ways do heritage learners, second language students, and native Spanish speakers improve their language learning over time?

The fourth question of the study tried to get an insider's perspective from student's opinions regarding what personal practices or habits of studying help language learners be more effective in their language development as well as being successful in mixed classrooms.

In this study, most HLLs and L2Ls found that (1) reading more often, (2) getting instructor help and (3) reading out loud helped them improve their language learning. In general, it appears that an overriding issue for HLLs is literacy skills. Other studies have found that this is an area where HLLs struggle and where L2Ls have an advantage over them (Edstrom, 2007). This study found that the HLLs and L2Ls who had extra opportunities for language input outside the classroom improved faster and had more success in the class.

As for NSSs and HLLs, they struggled with turning in their homework assignments, which indirectly affected their language learning. Related to this issue is the Latino achievement gap. Other studies have found that the factors behind the Latino achievement gap are very complex; they include lower levels of parental education, poverty, frequent relocation, and lack of access to high quality schools (Carreira & Beeman, 2014). Some other studies have reported instructors in mixed classrooms tend to have higher expectations for HLLs and NSSs (Potowski, 2002). However, in the context of the AP Spanish class in this study, all students were held to the same standards and expectations. If anything, L2Ls, were at a disadvantage linguistically, yet they performed better than HLLs and NSSs with respects to their grades and in some cases their language progress.

Pedagogical Implications

By way of summary from the study results, table 9 lists key recommendations regarding HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs in mixed classrooms. Each recommendation will be discussed in further detail.

Table 9

Pedagogical implications: Teaching HLLs, L2Ls, and NSSs in mixed-classes

Domains	Recommendations
Language proficiency	Identify lower-proficiency HLLs and L2Ls early in the semester.
Collaborative learning	Pair non-native English speakers with lower proficiency HLLs and L2Ls
Staying in the target language	Require all students to speak in the target language, but consider small group conversations at the beginning
Reciprocal learning	Give students tasks with reciprocal learning as the main goal
Positive learning environment	Help create a positive learning environment that promotes risk-taking and constructive feedback
Materials for mixed classrooms	Use technology tools to implement authentic materials that are relevant and meaningful to all groups involved

The first obvious pedagogical implication would be to find out early in the semester what student's beliefs are regarding their strengths and weaknesses with their language skills in order to provide targeted instruction or adapt instruction that is adequate for each population. The instructor must find out early in the semester the lower-proficiency HLLs and L2Ls, some of them may not have high confidence in their speaking skills and should not be given higher expectations than needed. Additionally, most L2Ls feel overwhelmed and experience high levels of anxiety when speaking in front of class. Such is not the case in small group settings. Instructors may also consider not calling on them as often at the beginning of year in order to give them time to adjust to class expectations and learning goals.

Second, if the mixed-classroom has a large number of non-native English speakers, instructors may consider pairing them often for activities with lower-proficiency HLLs and L2Ls. NSSs in this study reported to have learned English from their interactions with L2Ls. Conversely, L2Ls reported to have improved their listening skills and vocabulary from interacting with NSSs. Giving NSSs specific tasks to help others in class empowers them and helps the instructor manage the class more effectively. Storch (2011) maintains that pairing high-proficiency students with lower-proficiency ones can result in greater collaboration among students.

Third, it is important to speak the target language all the time in upper-level classes or AP Spanish language courses. Instructors may consider doing checks for comprehension with L2Ls during and after class to make sure they are understanding or to clarify any misunderstandings. Such action may help lower anxiety among some of them, it may also create good repertoire with students who are considering dropping the class as it was the case in this study. Having said that,

instructors may need to be flexible and explain directions and expectations for homework assignments in English to L2L students. One of the biggest frustrations of L2L students in this study was confusion regarding homework assignments. Explaining any outside of class assignments to L2L students will help them focus on doing the task, instead of L2L students trying to figure out what the teacher meant in Spanish.

Fourth, the instructor must strive to create tasks and activities that target each specific need from students in each category. This study showed that HLLs struggle with reading and writing, L2Ls struggled mostly with speaking in the target language and NSSs struggled mostly with completing their assignments. The study also showed that group work in class and scaffolded reading during class may help HLLs and L2Ls mostly. However, group work and tasks among all categories must include reciprocal learning for all students. After a debate or class discussion, instructors may consider forming smaller groups to give L2Ls opportunities to speak in a non-threatening setting. Furthermore, after small group conversations, instructors may also consider including tasks that require writing and reading collaboratively among NSSs, L2Ls, and HLLs in order to help them with their literacy and grammatical skills. Moreover, instructors should identify HLLs and NSSs who may struggle to do the work required. They should have various opportunities to lead class discussions and feel empowered. Even though there is not much a teacher can do outside of class, students should have opportunities to lead when they are in class. Ultimately, every class should include tasks in all modes of communication and give each group of students an opportunity to practice the mode of communication with which they may be struggling the most. To encourage improvement for all groups, the learning must be reciprocal and should make all students feel they are learning something. This is important so not all focus is given to the struggling and lower-proficiency students, but higher-proficiency

students must also feel they are learning something and not just contributing. Based on observations, the instructor may also consider separating the three groups of students for targeted language to optimize the learning experience.

Fifth, the classroom environment must be positive and make all students feel they have unique skills that will help their peers in one way or another. In a study conducted by Edstrom (2007), revealed some negative perceptions of students working in mixed-classes. L2Ls reported feeling intimidated speaking in front of NSSs and HLLs. L2L students tend to have negative attitudes toward HLLs and NSSs if they feel they are at a disadvantage or do not receive the help needed. In this study, all group of students were able to create good relationships and get to know each other on a personal level by speaking in small groups in the target language. I believe another element of helping create a positive classroom environment included speaking about the AP Spanish themes in a non-threatening environment. The speaking tasks included open-ended questions that encouraged sharing one's views on different topics with follow-up questions. Students were also able to exchange their views about their cultures, see (Appendix E). Language mistakes should be talked about in a constructive way. Furthermore, peer-to-peer feedback may be more effective on writing assignments than just instructor's feedback. The classroom environment must also give students ample opportunities for risk-taking in order to improve over time. This is a challenge because some students with high-anxiety may not be willing to take risks. In such cases, the instructor may considering identifying HLLs and NSSs that can support L2Ls in their learning and provide feedback in a compassionate manner. As a final point, even though it is a challenge, instructors should look for ways to provide one-on-one help to struggling students and use HLLs and NSSs as resources in order to provide individual help to those who may need it the most.

Sixth, concerning materials and activities used in class; instructors should always use authentic materials that are both interesting and meaningful to all groups of students in mixed classrooms. HLL and NSS students in this study showed great interest in topics regarding perceptions of Latinos in the United States. Such conversations always led to great discussions and good opportunities for L2Ls to understand the perspectives of people in the Hispanic world. Class discussions or debates should be followed up by readings regarding the subjects debated and writing assignments that encourage critical thinking.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Given the classroom numbers and make-up, the number of participants may be a limiting factor in the study, at least in terms of statistical analysis. Not all data collected for this study was useful in answering the questions of the study. Had I had a larger number of students, it would have been valuable to compare pre and post data gain scores to provide a quantitative approach to this study as well. Furthermore, the number of HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs were not equal, which makes it harder to generalize certain findings due to the smaller number of L2Ls and NSSs enrolled in the class. For example, a more equal proportion of HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs could prevent one group from taking all the attention. A more balanced number of each group may also provide a better setting for collaborative work and reciprocal learning among all students.

Arguably, a second limitation of this study is the degree to which the findings can be generalized to other settings, particularly less-commonly taught languages or school demographics may affect the number of students in each category. The reader is left to decide which of the findings in this study may be meaningful to them, based on the context in which they teach, since this was an AP Spanish class at the secondary level.

On the topic of future research, further studies may focus on researching instructor practices and student perceptions of their language ability at the middle school and elementary levels. This may be important to know in order to help students at the secondary level. Next, this study and its questions focused on the qualitative data analysis. There needs to be a bigger sample of participants in order to get a meaningful quantitative analysis. Researchers may consider doing a more quantitative approach that identifies student's perceptions of the language at the beginning and end of the semester for gain scores to see if there is growth. Such study would need more participants, but would prove helpful in order to identify which groups of students are making more progress in terms of their language skills. Such feedback can help instructors identify areas of targeted instruction for each category. Another topic of future research may include more effective implementation of technology tools and practices in mixed language classrooms. The research shows that materials for mixed-classes are almost non-existent (Carreira, 2016), yet new technology tools may provide a solution to those issues in more effective ways.

Conclusion

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of secondary level mixed classrooms by exploring students' views on their perceptions of language ability and how it affects their language learning in a mixed-classroom setting. Furthermore, the presence of NSSs and their contribution to the class curriculum was significant to teaching Spanish in a mixed-class in the United States. Both HLLs and L2Ls benefited from their language abilities and cultural knowledge. However, I should note again that classroom make-up in this case might not be realistic in other contexts, especially for less commonly taught languages or school demographics. While there have been a few studies comparing HLLs and L2Ls perceptions of

the language and learning experiences, most have been done at the university level (Edstrom, 2007; Lynch, 2008; Potowski, 2002). This study compliments the previous studies quoted, but it adds additional information of what is like to be HLL, L2L or NSS student in a mixed-class at the secondary level.

In summary, this study as well as others quoted show that HLLs, L2Ls and NSSs can be successful together in mixed classrooms at more advanced levels of language classes. Even though they have different linguistic and cultural needs, they can all experience meaningful learning if the learning environment is set up for their success. However, their success in their language learning is largely dependent on the instructor's methods and pedagogical practices that benefit and give focus to all groups. The classroom content, environment and opportunities for reciprocal, collaborative and independent learning are essential elements of successful mixed classrooms at any level of instruction.

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Appendix A

Pre-questionnaire

I would like you to help me by answering some questions concerning your experiences with the Spanish language. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to answers openly as this will help me have success in this study.

Background: In this section, please complete the table with your background information.

It is okay to write answers such as “not applicable” or “I don’t remember”.

	Yourself
Age	
Sex	
First Language	
Nationality	
Length of residence in the US	

	Mother	Father
First Language		
Second Language		
Nationality		
Length of residence in the US		

Language Contact with Spanish: In this section, please checkmark the box that is most appropriate for you.

- Do you speak in Spanish in any of the following contexts? If yes, please indicate the frequency by checking the appropriate box.

	N/A	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
With your mother						
With your father						
With your grandparents						
With your siblings						
With your relatives						
With your friends						

At work At church At school At social events Others, please specify:

2. Do the following people address you in Spanish? If yes, please indicate the frequency by checking the appropriate box.

	<u>N/A</u>	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Your mother						
Your father						
Your grandparents						
Your siblings						
Your relatives						
Your friends						
Other, please specify:						

Please choose the appropriate answer for you.

1. Do you watch TV or movies in Spanish?

never 1-3 hours a week 4-6 hours a week 7 hours or more

2. Do you listen to music in Spanish?

never 1-3 hours a week 4-6 hours a week 7 hours or more

3. Do you read books, online articles or newspapers in Spanish?

never sometimes often always

Self-efficacy: Please choose the answer that best applies to you.

1. I can understand when someone speaks to me in Spanish.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

2. I can hold casual conversations in Spanish.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

3. My reading skills in Spanish are:

developing average competent fluent

4. My writing skills in Spanish are:

developing average competent fluent

5. Which of the following would you say is your strongest skill in Spanish?

reading speaking writing listening cultural knowledge

6. Which of the following would you say is your weakest skill in Spanish?

reading speaking writing listening cultural knowledge

7. I can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

8. I can make presentations on some events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

9. I can write on topics related to school, work, and community in a generally organized way.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

10. I can usually understand a few details of what I overhear in conversations, even when something unexpected is expressed.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

11. I can sometimes follow stories and descriptions about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

12. I can talk in an organized way and with some detail about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

13. I can deliver organized presentations appropriate to my audience on a variety of topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

14. I can write organized paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

15. I can understand information presented in a variety of genres on familiar topics, even when something unexpected is expressed.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

16. I can understand the main idea and some supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

17. I can express myself fully not only on familiar topics but also on some concrete social, academic, and professional topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

18. I can deliver well-organized presentations on concrete social, academic, and professional topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

19. I can write on a wide variety of general interest, professional, and academic topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

20. I can understand the main idea and most supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest, as well as some topics of professional interest.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

21. I can follow stories and descriptions of considerable length and in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

22. I can understand texts written in a variety of genres, even when I am unfamiliar with the topic.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

23. I can express myself freely and spontaneously, and for the most part accurately, on concrete topics and on most complex issues.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

24. I can deliver detailed presentations, usually with accuracy, clarity and precision, on a variety of topics and issues related to community interests and some special fields of expertise.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

25. I can write extensively with significant precision and detail on a variety of topics, most complex issues, and some special fields of expertise.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

26. I can understand discussions on most topics that deal with special interests, unfamiliar situations, and abstract concepts.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

27. I can sometimes understand extended arguments and different points of view.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

28. How would you rate your overall ability in Spanish?

developing average competent fluent

Cultural Understanding: In this section, please choose the answer that is most appropriate for you.

29. I can compare and contrast some behaviors or practices of Hispanic cultures and my own.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

30. I can sometimes identify cultural stereotypes or exaggerated views of Hispanic cultures.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

31. I can sometimes recognize when I have caused a cultural misunderstanding and try to correct it.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

32. I can use some appropriate cultural conventions such as body language, turn-taking, interrupting, agreeing, etc. when talking with others.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

33. I can describe how other cultures view major historical events differently.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

34. I can talk about a historical figure from Spanish-speaking countries.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

35. I can interact appropriately when I am a guest in the home of a friend from a Hispanic culture (bring a proper gift, converse on non-taboo topics, use proper etiquette, etc.)

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

36. I can explain how social, political, religious, and economic institutions reflect Hispanic cultural beliefs.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

37. I can recognize when something in Spanish is culturally inappropriate from the use of language, the tone of voice, or the body language.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

38. I can understand why a comment I made was offensive and decide what to say next time.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

39. I can give detailed descriptions about cultural events and respond to questions about them.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

Additional Information: Please provide complete answers for the following questions:

40. What are your reasons for being in a Spanish AP class?

41. What are some specific things you have struggled with in your previous Spanish classes?

42. What are some of the things you expect to learn in AP Spanish class?

43. What do you think I could do to help you be successful in this class?

Appendix B

Weekly journal prompts

1. What did you learn this week that you did not know before?
2. What was your best experience in class this week?
3. What was your worst experience in class this week?
4. Was there anything in particular you struggled with? If so, what?
5. What activities in class, if any, helped you learn a concept this week?
6. What was the hardest assignment you did in the last two weeks? Why was it hard?
7. What aspect of Spanish (reading, listening, writing, speaking or culture) are you struggling with most and why?
8. What aspect of Spanish culture did you learn this week that you did not know before?

Appendix C

Possible interview questions at the end of the study

1. What language skill did you feel was your weakest at the beginning of the semester?
2. Possible follow up question: Do you think you have made progress with this skill? If so, explain how?
3. Which learning activity during class do you feel helped you learn a hard concept?
4. What was the hardest things you have struggled with so far in the class, how did you overcome it?
5. What are some effective things you have done to be successful in this class?
6. What are some activities you would recommend the instructor to continue using? Explain why you feel that way.
7. What are some activities you would not recommend your instructor to continue using? Explain why you feel that way.
8. In one of your reflections, you mentioned "_____". Could you explain a little more what you meant by that?
9. Is there anything your instructor can do to help you be successful with the skill you have struggled with?
10. As you think of your experience and the class that we have, which has students with different backgrounds. Do you think that students like you would benefit from being in mixed classrooms?

Appendix D

Post-questionnaire

Self-efficacy: Please choose the answer that best applies to you:

1. I can understand when someone speaks to me in Spanish.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
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2. I can hold casual conversations in Spanish.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------

3. My reading skills in Spanish are:

developing	average	competent	fluent
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4. My writing skills in Spanish are:

developing	average	competent	fluent
------------	---------	-----------	--------

5. Which of the following would you say is your strongest skill in Spanish?

reading	speaking	writing	listening	cultural knowledge
---------	----------	---------	-----------	--------------------

6. Which of the following would you say is your weakest skill in Spanish?

reading	speaking	writing	listening	cultural knowledge
---------	----------	---------	-----------	--------------------

7. I can handle social interactions in everyday situations, sometimes even when there is an unexpected complication.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------

8. I can make presentations on some events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------

9. I can write on topics related to school, work, and community in a generally organized way.

strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree
-------------------	----------	-------	----------------

10. I can usually understand a few details of what I overhear in conversations, even when something unexpected is expressed.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

11. I can sometimes follow stories and descriptions about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

12. I can talk in an organized way and with some detail about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

13. I can deliver organized presentations appropriate to my audience on a variety of topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

14. I can write organized paragraphs about events and experiences in various time frames.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

15. I can understand information presented in a variety of genres on familiar topics, even when something unexpected is expressed.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

16. I can understand the main idea and some supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

17. I can express myself fully not only on familiar topics but also on some concrete social, academic, and professional topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

18. I can deliver well-organized presentations on concrete social, academic, and professional topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

19. I can write on a wide variety of general interest, professional, and academic topics.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

20. I can understand the main idea and most supporting details on a variety of topics of personal and general interest, as well as some topics of professional interest.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

21. I can follow stories and descriptions of considerable length and in various time frames. I can understand texts written in a variety of genres, even when I am unfamiliar with the topic.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

22. I can express myself freely and spontaneously, and for the most part accurately, on concrete topics and on most complex issues.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

23. I can deliver detailed presentations, usually with accuracy, clarity and precision, on a variety of topics and issues related to community interests and some special fields of expertise.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

24. I can write extensively with significant precision and detail on a variety of topics, most complex issues, and some special fields of expertise.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

25. I can understand discussions on most topics that deal with special interests, unfamiliar situations, and abstract concepts.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

26. I can sometimes understand extended arguments and different points of view.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

27. How would you rate your overall ability in Spanish?

developing average competent fluent

Cultural Understanding: In this section, please choose the answer that is most appropriate for you.

28. I can compare and contrast some common products of Hispanic cultures and my own.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

29. I can compare and contrast some behaviors or practices of Hispanic cultures and my own.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

30. I can sometimes identify cultural stereotypes or exaggerated views of Hispanic cultures.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

31. I can sometimes recognize when I have caused a cultural misunderstanding and try to correct it.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

32. I can use some appropriate cultural conventions such as body language, turn-taking, interrupting, agreeing, etc. when talking with others.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

33. I can describe how other cultures view major historical events differently.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

34. I can talk about a historical figure from Spanish-speaking countries.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

35. I can analyze and explain some cultural perspectives of individuals and institutions within a society.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

36. I can interact appropriately when I am a guest in the home of a friend from a Hispanic culture (bring a proper gift, converse on non-taboo topics, use proper etiquette, etc.)

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

37. I can explain how social, political, religious, and economic institutions reflect Hispanic cultural beliefs.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

38. I can recognize when something in Spanish is culturally inappropriate from the use of language, the tone of voice, or the body language.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

39. I can understand why a comment I made was offensive and decide what to say next time.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

40. I can give detailed descriptions about cultural events and respond to questions about them.

strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree

Additional Information: Please provide complete answers for the following questions:

41. What are some specific things you have struggled with in our AP class?

42. How did you overcome the challenges you described in the previous question?

43. What activities or teacher's methods of teaching have helped you to be successful in this class so far? Be specific.

44. What activities or teacher's methods of teaching have NOT helped you to be successful in this class so far? Be specific.

45. What are some activities your instructor could incorporate moving forward to better help you in the language learning process?

46. What are some activities your instructor could incorporate moving forward to better help you in the language learning process?

Appendix E

Speaking tasks at the beginning of class

Instrucciones:

- 1) Escoge un tema o pregunta de la caja.
- 2) Pregunta a tu compañero sobre un en una de las cajas.
- 3) Discutan sus experiencias sobre el tema.
- 4) Pide a tu compañero que firme su nombre sobre la caja.

Ejemplo:

Compañero A: *¿Qué opinas sobre _____?*

Compañero B: *_____ En mi opinión...*

Compañero A: *Una experiencia que he tenido con respecto a ese tema es _____...*

Compañero B: *Otra cosa que yo sé sobre el asunto es...*

- 5) Encuentra a otro compañero y repite el proceso. Discute todos los temas o preguntas en las cajas.

¿Cuáles son las causas de la pobreza en el mundo?	Los países ricos ¿tienen la responsabilidad de ayudar a los países pobres?	Define la belleza y da ejemplos específicos de cosas que consideras bellas	En tu opinión, ¿qué se puede hacer para reducir o eliminar el consumo de drogas?	¿Crees que la elección de Donald Trump como nuevo presidente de E.E.U.U. ayudará el mundo a mejor? ¿De qué manera?
Describe tu opinión sobre el tema de inmigración en Estados Unidos	Nombre tres diferencias culturales de E.E.U.U. y un país Latino con respecto al <i>medio ambiente</i>	¿Estás a favor o en contra de la investigación científica con animales? ¿Por qué o por qué no?	¿Cómo crees que podría eliminarse el racismo?	Describe algunas características típicas de una familia en tu país

<p>¿Cómo ha cambiado la definición de la familia en tu país en las últimas décadas?</p>	<p>¿Qué destrezas aprendes en casa que no puedes aprender en la escuela?</p>	<p>¿Cómo afectan las redes sociales el autoestima de los jóvenes?</p>	<p>Describe los beneficios de la tecnología con respecto a la educación de los jóvenes</p>	<p>Razone tres posibles soluciones para acabar con la crisis económica en algunos países Latinos</p>
<p>¿Cuáles carreras profesionales tienen mayor impacto en el mundo?</p>	<p>Describe tres tradiciones y valores sociales únicos de tu cultura</p>	<p>¿Cuáles son algunos desafíos de vivir en el mundo contemporáneo?</p>	<p>¿Qué significa ser Hispano o Latino? ¿Cuál de los dos términos prefieres y por qué?</p>	<p>¿Consideras que es fácil para los jóvenes estadounidenses emanciparse hoy en día? Compara el tema con un país Hispano</p>