
SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

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IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The Benefits of Second Language Learning*

During the 1990s, there was renewed interest in language learning, especially with regard to Spanish and Asian languages in North America. There is now a growing appreciation of the role that multilingual individuals can play in an increasingly diverse society, and there is a greater understanding of the academic and cognitive benefits of learning other languages. The last decade has seen an emerging global interest in international languages and second language education. This has led researchers, policymakers, educators, employers, parents, and the media to reexamine the advantages of second or additional languages.

The 1990s have also been characterized as the “Decade of the Brain.” Increased research on brain development throughout the 1990s has focused attention on the learning process and developmental issues. Some of this research has analyzed the effect of language acquisition on the brain. The results of these studies have generated media interest in how early learning experiences, including first and second language acquisition, promote cognitive development. Most experts agree that making it possible for children to learn a second language early in life and beyond is entirely beneficial. A summary of the many benefits of learning a second language follows.

Personal Benefits

An obvious advantage of knowing more than one language is having expanded access to people and resources. Individuals who speak and read more than one language have the ability to communicate with more people, read more literature, and benefit more fully from travel to other countries. Introducing students to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures gives greater depth to their understanding of human experience by fostering an appreciation for the customs and achievements of people beyond their own communities. Ultimately, knowing a second language can also give people a competitive advantage in the work force by opening up additional job opportunities.

* Adapted: <<http://www.languagemagazine.com/internetedition/nd99/pg23.html>> Kathleen M. Marcos, Assistant Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics Center for Applied Linguistics. Adapted from “Second Language Learning: Everyone Can Benefit.” *K-12 Foreign Language Education: The ERIC Review*, Volume 6, Issue 1, fall 1998.
<<http://www.accesseric.org/resources/ericreview/vol6no1/langlern.html#1>>

For many people, there's something inherently enjoyable about successfully speaking in another tongue. Learning a new language can be an intensely challenging and rewarding experience.

Cognitive Benefits

Some researchers suggest that students who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not (Bamford and Mizokawa). Other studies suggest that bilingual individuals outperform similar monolinguals on both verbal and non-verbal tests of intelligence, which raises the question of whether ability in more than one language enables individuals to achieve greater intellectual flexibility (Bruck, Lambert, and Tucker; Hakuta; Weatherford).

Academic Benefits

Parents and educators sometimes express concern that learning a second language will have a detrimental effect on students' reading and verbal abilities in English. However, several studies suggest the opposite. Knowing a second language, according to the latest research on reading, can really help a child comprehend written languages faster and possibly learn to read more easily, provided that children are exposed to stories and literacy in both languages (Bialystok "Effects of Bilingualism"). By age four, bilingual children have progressed more than monolingual children in understanding the symbolic function of written language. By five, they are more advanced than monolinguals and bilinguals who have learned only one writing system, in understanding specific representation properties, even in English.

The positive effects of bilingualism were also documented in an American study analyzing achievement test data of students who had participated five years or more in "immersion" type international language programs in Fairfax County, Virginia. The study concluded that students scored as well as or better than all comparison groups and continued to be high academic achievers throughout their school years (Thomas, Collier, and Abbott). Numerous other studies have also shown a positive relationship between foreign language study and achievement in English language arts (Barik and Swain; Genesee *Learning*; Swain).

Societal Benefits

Bilingualism and multilingualism have many benefits to society. Canadians who are fluent in more than one language can enhance Canada's economic competitiveness abroad, maintain its political and security interests, and work to promote an understanding of cultural diversity within our nation. For example, international trade specialists, overseas media correspondents, diplomats, airline employees, and national security personnel need to be familiar with other languages and cultures to do their jobs well. Teachers, healthcare providers, customer service representatives, and law enforcement personnel also serve their constituencies more effectively when they can reach across languages and cultures. Developing the language abilities of the students now in school will improve the effectiveness of the work force later.

The Benefits of Learning Spanish Language and Culture

In this century, different languages and cultures will increasingly influence our lives. In the Americas, Spanish and the Latin American cultures will have a great impact. In Latin America, you need not only to speak Spanish, but also to be familiar with the culture to be successful.

Today, Spanish rivals English as the language of choice in the Americas with 250 million native Spanish speakers in the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and North America. In twenty years, one out of every six people living in the United States will be Spanish-speaking.

In Canada, our social and economic connections with the Spanish-speaking world are growing and developing at an exponential rate. In the last three decades, there has been a significant increase in Canadians of Spanish-speaking origin.

There are other reasons to consider learning Spanish:

- *A world language:* 300 million people speak Spanish, making it one of the largest markets for business and one of the most useful languages in the world for travel.
- *Better understanding of English:* Much of the vocabulary of English has Latin origins by way of French. Since Spanish is also a Latin language, studying Spanish will provide insights into English vocabulary. Similarly, both Spanish and English share Indo-European roots, so their grammars are similar. The learning of English grammar is enhanced by studying the grammar of another language, for the study forces you to think about how your language is structured. It is not unusual, for example, to gain an understanding of English verb tenses and moods by learning how those verbs are used in Spanish.

- *Knowing our neighbors:* Many Canadians are of Spanish-speaking origin. Knowing Spanish enhances our opportunities to communicate with our neighbours.
- *Cultural understanding:* Knowing another language gives us a window into that culture's way of knowing and being. In our increasingly interdependent and connected global society, cultural understanding is critical.
- *Learning other languages:* If you learn Spanish, you will have a head start in learning the other Latin-based languages such as Portuguese, French, and Italian. Spanish may even help you learn other languages such as Ukrainian and German, since they too have Indo-European roots and have some characteristics (such as gender and extensive conjugation) that are present in Spanish but not English.
- *Spanish literature, the arts, and film:* Spanish also offers a wealth of literature, both modern and traditional. Spanish-language films continue to receive praise from the film industry and viewers. Spanish music, dance, and art forms have influenced contemporary popular and classical culture.
- *Employment opportunities:* Canadian companies and businesses provide services or have subsidiaries in Latin America. The reverse is also true. Many Latin American countries are important trading partners with Canada and the United States. Spanish is useful for those planning a career in one of the helping professions and any occupation that involves international trade, communications, or tourism.
- *Travel and tourism:* Because there are so many Spanish-speaking countries and they are relatively easy to travel to, many Canadians frequently visit Spanish-speaking countries. While it is possible to visit Spanish-speaking countries and get by with English only, speaking Spanish provides greater opportunities to meet new people, communicate with local people, and gain insights into the communities and cultures.
- *Easy for English speakers to learn:* Because of its Latin roots, a similar alphabet, and regular pronunciation rules, Spanish is one of the easiest languages for an English speaker to learn. Spelling of Spanish words closely corresponds to their pronunciation. The mastering of Spanish grammar presents a bigger challenge for speakers of English.

The Second/International Language Learner

Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Language is acquired at various rates and in different ways throughout a learner's stages of growth, developing progressively according to individual characteristics and criteria. Students enhance their language abilities by applying their knowledge of language in ever new and more complex contexts with ever increasing sophistication. They reflect on and use prior knowledge to extend and enhance their language knowledge and understanding.

Junior/Senior High School Learners

Language and literacy development begins with the child's earliest experiences with language. The development of oral language, reading, writing, viewing, and representing are interrelated processes. Early years learners actively engage in acquiring language and constructing their own understandings of how oral and written language works. Language learning in the early years is fostered through experience and play. Social interaction is also a vital part of the students' social, emotional, intellectual, and linguistic development.

The middle years may be an especially significant and challenging time for both learners and teachers. Myriam Met argues the following:

Middle school students are characterized by a number of developmental changes—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. These changes and the feelings they bring about have implications for language instruction and learning. Great care should be exercised in activities that require students to generate physical descriptions or comparisons. Students may feel awkward about their appearance, may be reluctant to stand before the class for individual presentations, and should be allowed more sheltered opportunities such as small group or student-teacher interaction. The need for movement necessitates activities that physically engage students. Hands-on materials and manipulatives provide opportunities for movement while addressing the needs of kinesthetic and tactile learners. Group work allows students to move about the room. In middle school classrooms, it is not unusual to see small groups of students stretched out or seated on the floor.

Piaget has suggested that the middle years are the time children move from the stage of concrete to formal operations. How new concepts are acquired will be influenced by maturational development. The difficulty many middle school students experience in mastering abstract grammar concepts may not be as much a reflection of aptitude as of cognitive maturity. These students will benefit more from concrete experiences, such as vocabulary presented through direct experiences, manipulation of real objects, and pictures, all set in a meaningful context. (“Middle Schools” 2–3)

Middle and senior years learners need many of the same classroom and school supports that create a welcoming and motivating learning environment for younger learners. However, there are some significant differences between older second language learners and younger ones. First, there is evidence from brain research that older second language learners use related but different parts of their brain to learn a second language. This suggests a different learning process, one that is more dependent on the student’s first language. Research suggests that older learners are able to “transfer” many first language skills to their second or additional language (Curtiss; Johnson and Newport).

However, their first language will influence skills in the new language in terms of accent, intonation, and other factors. This does not mean that older students will be less able to become proficient in the additional language, only that some aspects of their first or dominant language will carry over into their second language. Equally important is the overall exposure and opportunity to use the language in everyday situations. The more time devoted to language learning the greater the proficiency achieved (Curtain and Pesola).

Factors That Influence Multilingual Development

It is important that teachers and parents recognize that there are a number of personal factors or individual characteristics which affect learners and their capacity to learn an additional language. These factors are beyond the control of the teacher or school, but are important to consider as they are one of the reasons learners will acquire language at different paces. Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa identifies ten key factors that have an impact on individual learners. The ten key factors include aptitude, timing, motivation, strategy, consistency, opportunity, the linguistic relationship between the languages, siblings, gender, and hand-use. For the purpose of this document we will look at nine of the factors which are most relevant for language learners in high school settings.

Aptitude: Every individual is born with a certain aptitude for different life skills. Aptitude is based on inherited genes. While teachers cannot influence how much aptitude a learner has, they can make the most of what does exist, and shore it up by using the other nine factors.

Timing: This refers to the windows of opportunity in a person's life when second language learning is facilitated by various factors. Research has shown that the preschool years and the period up to approximately age 12 are a particularly important period in children's linguistic development. During this period and especially during the first three years of life, the foundations for thinking, language, vision, attitudes, aptitudes, and other characteristics are laid down. Since 50 percent of the ability to learn is developed in the first years of life and another 30 percent by age eight, early childhood development programs have the opportunity to encourage early learning and development. This does not mean, however, that 50 to 80 percent of one's intelligence, wisdom, or knowledge is formed during early childhood. It simply means that during the first few years of life, children form their main learning pathways in the brain (Bloom). There are six main pathways to the brain. They include learning by sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, and doing (Dryden and Vos). Later in life, everything an individual learns will grow from the information gained during these early years. Between four and seven years old is a wonderful window for learning new languages. Learners who enter Spanish Language and Culture programs with bilingual or multilingual early childhood and school experiences may initially have an advantage or progress more rapidly than monolingual children. The learning of an additional language in the high school years may be more challenging for certain learners. However, it is equally important to recognize that older learners benefit from their increased knowledge and experience of the world, as well as their first language literacy and language skills. Older learners have a more extensive and well-developed range of first language skills which they can apply to their second language learning.

The debate over whether it is better to begin learning a second language at an early age or to wait until students are more mature has not been resolved. There is, however, some evidence in support of starting second language learning early. As indicated earlier there is evidence that there are some differences in the brain processes between learning a second language as a young learner and as an older learner. Students who begin learning at an earlier age have a greater exposure to the language over time. Older learners are more likely to reflect aspects of their first language, especially in their oral production in terms of intonation, register, and rhythm of speech. Although the increased cognitive abilities of older students may, in part, compensate

for the reduced amount of time spent on language learning in the case of late entry, students cannot be expected to attain the same level of skill and knowledge as those who begin in kindergarten or grade one.

Motivation: Learners' preparedness for learning international languages is partially dependent on their motivation, which includes both positive and negative, as well as internal and external factors, such as how a student feels about the language being learned, and the attitude of other significant persons such as parents and peers. A positive relationship with the language teacher facilitates communication and motivates students.

Strategy: In her study, Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa found that families who had a well-developed plan that provided for good language learning opportunities were more successful in developing bilingual language skills. In a school setting, it is equally important that an effective instructional plan is in place for the implementation of Spanish Language and Culture programs.

Consistency: It is critical that second language learners are exposed to language learning opportunities in a consistent and continuous fashion. In a school setting this translates into the importance of scheduling Spanish Language and Culture programs to provide for well-sequenced and consistent language learning opportunities.

Opportunity: A student may have a great motivation to learn an additional language, but if they do not have the opportunity to practise it in meaningful situations, they will never truly become proficient. It is important that sufficient time be allocated for Spanish Language and Culture programs during the school day. Students and parents can supplement and enhance classroom language learning experiences by seeking out or building opportunities for language learning in the home and in the community, as well as participating in related extra-curricular activities sponsored by schools.

The Linguistic Relationship between Languages: This simply means whether or not the language being learned and those that the learner is already fluent in share a common historical root. For example, German and English share roots, as do the Romance languages, or Latin languages, of Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Romanisch. If the learner's first language shares roots with the second language, then the second language is easier to learn due to the similarity of grammar, vocabulary, and sound systems and the fact that learners may more easily transfer their first language skills. It is important that teachers be aware of the linguistic diversity present in the classroom and the language skills of students. Such knowledge will enable teachers to respond to learner needs and characteristics much more effectively and will assist in assessing student learning.

Gender: There is evidence that women and men approach language learning from different parts of the brain. Men tend to localize language in the brain to a rather small and specific area and are relatively literal in their appraisal of conversations, whereas women tend to have their language skills spread out over a wider area of the brain, giving greater importance to things such as intonation, facial movements, and body language. Teachers need to consider gender differences in planning for instruction. It is important to use a variety of instructional approaches that respond to diverse student characteristics.

Hand-Use: Most people have their main language area of the brain in the left frontal and parietal lobes, but unexplainably, a small percentage (30%) of those who write with their left hand and 5% of those who write with their right hand may actually have language spread out over a greater area. This is not to say that this special group are better at international languages than others, but rather that they may favour different teaching methods.

While all ten factors affect all learners, they will do so in different ways. Such individuality is what gives researchers and educators awe at the human capacity for language, and what challenges policy makers and administrators to re-think an individual approach to language education.

Brain Research and Second Language Learning

Brain research has provided greater insights into how language learning happens or is processed in the brain and the significance for second language teaching. Researchers have conceptualized the brain as being composed of four distinct elements: the reptile brain, the emotional brain, the “little brain,” and the thinking brain (Jensen; Dryden and Vos; MacLean). The brain stem, sometimes called the reptile brain, controls many of our body’s involuntary functions such as breathing. The mammalian or emotional brain is located in the center of the brain and stores memory. Therefore, *learning is easier if it is made emotional or fun*. In fact, the door to learning is emotion (Jensen; MacLean; Dryden and Vos).

Where does thinking about the language we are learning take place? Our cortex, or thinking brain, includes the motor cortex and the sensory cortex. Within the cortex, there are many kinds of intelligence centers. Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner (*Frames and speech*) has spent many years analyzing the human brain and its impact on education, including language learning. Gardner says that we have several types of intelligence:

Linguistic Intelligence: The ability to read, write, and communicate with words.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: The ability to reason and calculate.

Musical Intelligence: The musical ability highly developed by composers and top musicians.

Visual-Spatial Intelligence: The ability to master position in space. This intelligence is used by architects, painters, and pilots.

Visual Intelligence: The ability to memorize visually and use the imagination.

Kinesthetic Intelligence: The physical intelligence used by dancers and athletes.

Social Intelligence: The ability to relate to others, used by salespeople and motivators.

Introspective Intelligence: The ability to know one's inner feelings, wants, and needs.

Natural Intelligence: The ability to learn by exploring nature.

Implications for Language Learning

The implications of brain research and multiple intelligence theory to second language teaching are many.

1. *Learning is experiential:* We learn by engaging in real hands-on activities and tasks.
2. *Learning uses all senses:* Reinforce learning with pictures and sounds, learn by touching, learn by tasting, and learn by smelling (Dryden and Rose).
3. *Learning should be fun:* The more fun it is to learn a language, the more one will want to continue. Learning while playing is an effective way to learn because it creates emotional attachments, and emotion is the door to learning (Jensen; Dryden and Vos; Dryden and Rose).
4. *Learning is best when in a relaxed but challenging state:* Avoid stress. Research shows that 80 percent of learning problems are stress-related (Stokes and Whiteside).
5. *Learning through music and rhythm:* Music is an effective way to learn a new language. Often one can remember the songs learned in early childhood. We do so because lyrics combined with music are easier to learn (Lozanov; Campbell; Brewer and Campbell).

6. *Learning through action:* Learning activities that use the body and the mind together are powerful tools for learning. While traditionally, we encouraged students to sit all day long, we now know that we learn more when we move as we learn. Utilize learning strategies that include physical interaction and encourage students to dance and move to the rhythm when learning a second or third language (Gardner *Frames*; Doman; Dryden and Vos).
7. *Learning by engaging with others:* Having students practise a language by talking to each other over a meal, for example, is a great way to learn (Gardner *Frames*; Dryden and Vos).
8. *Learning by reflecting:* It is important to let children take time to “simmer.” There is a silent stage to language learning. First children absorb the language. Later they begin to speak (Krashen *Fundamentals*).
9. *Learning by linking:* “The more you link, the more you learn” (Vos). Anything can be linked when learning a second language, including numbers and new vocabulary words (Dryden and Vos). For example, link numbers and words in a playful way (Dryden and Rose). Reciting the numbers from one to ten in Spanish in rhythm is an effective way to begin language learning—“*Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez.*”
10. *Learning uses the whole world as the classroom:* Real life experiences and situations engage learners, and bring meaning and context to the learning process (Dryden and Vos).

Considerations for Effective Spanish Language and Culture Programs

International language programs are complex and multifaceted, providing a rich environment for the learning of language and culture.

Effective international languages learning environments are those in which

- the individual and collective needs of students are met
- there is a supportive climate that encourages risk-taking and choice
- diversity in learning styles and needs are accommodated
- connections to prior knowledge and experiences are made
- there is exposure to a wide range of excellent models of authentic language
- use of the Spanish language is emphasized
- quality multimedia, print, human, and other resources are available and applied in a supportive, meaningful, and purposeful manner

Spanish Language and Culture programs strive to provide a rich language learning environment, stressing communicative competence, high academic achievement, and enriched cultural experiences that maximize student opportunities for learning.

Time

The amount of time allocated to Spanish Language and Culture courses across western Canada may vary. Generally, these are optional courses or subjects. For the purpose of this document, we have assumed that students at each grade level will experience 110 to 125 hours of classroom-based Spanish language and culture instruction.

If the amount of time is reduced, then the expected level of achievement should be adjusted accordingly.

When planning for instructional time in Spanish Language and Culture programs, administrators and teachers should carefully consider the impact of scheduling on the linguistic development of the students. In the junior high school and high school settings, it is recommended that Spanish Language and Culture language courses be scheduled to ensure maximum continuity of exposure to the language throughout the school year. If students lose contact with the language for long periods of time, whether on a weekly or a yearly basis, added time must be taken to review previously-learned material that may have been forgotten. Students benefit from using the language on a daily basis.

Prior Knowledge

The Spanish Language and Culture Program of Studies assumes that the students will have limited or no previous knowledge of the Spanish language upon entry into the program. In situations where the majority of students do have previous knowledge of the Spanish language, schools may offer an accelerated program or may assess students and plan courses to suit the students' individual needs. In all cases, students' language levels should be assessed and programs adapted when necessary to meet individual language learning needs.

Students who already have a second language, particularly one that is related to the Spanish language, will often learn additional languages more quickly and more easily than those beginning their study of a second language.

Class Groupings

In some situations, students from two grades may have to be combined into one Spanish class. As well, many classrooms will contain students at the same grade level with varying proficiency levels. By organizing the classroom activities around a task or a content-related project, students of different ages and different levels of ability can be accommodated in a single classroom. Although all students will be working on similar tasks or projects, expectations will be different for each grade or sub-group. Careful planning from year to year and across grade levels will ensure that students experience a variety of learning activities on a broad range of topics.

Opportunities for Language Use and Real-Life Applications

Proficiency-based instruction, which focuses on what students can do with what they know, is critical. Classroom activities that engage students in meaningful and purposeful language use should predominate. Reports suggest that in middle schools where proficiency-based approaches are used, a larger and more diverse population of students experience success (Met “Middle Schools”).

Students will be more successful language learners if they have opportunities to use the language for authentic and meaningful communication in a broad range of contexts. In addition, the curriculum supports and encourages the real-life application of language learning through meaningful contact with fluent speakers of Spanish and authentic Spanish texts, such as newspapers, magazines, electronic communications, and multimedia resources.

While it is important to have a rich language environment in the classroom, it is also important to attempt to provide co-curricular and extra-curricular activities during which students have the opportunity to use and develop their Spanish language skills. Such school- and community sponsored activities as language camps, visits to cultural facilities, pen pals, plays and performances, language clubs, school visits, and exchanges are important. It is also important to encourage students to continue the development of their Spanish-language skills by using the language for personal enjoyment, listening to music, attending Spanish cultural events and performances, and accessing and using self-study resources.

Choice of Topics and Tasks

The choice of learning topics and tasks should be guided by the needs, interests, and daily experiences of the students, as well as the recommended areas of experience. In the curriculum, different areas of experience and themes are suggested as possible organizers to guide the choice of tasks. The recommended areas of experience are reflected in the learning activities which form part of the next section, Achieving the Outcomes.

Language of Instruction

It is expected that classes will take place in the Spanish language in order to maximize exposure to the language. Spanish language should dominate classroom interaction, whether the teacher or the students are speaking. Learners will sometimes use their first language, especially in the early stages of learning, but will move to the Spanish language as they gain more skill and knowledge. There may be some situations where a few minutes of class time will be used for reflection on the learning process in English or for the development of cultural understanding or skills.

Program Support

Effective Spanish Language and Culture programs depend heavily on collaboration among a range of stakeholders. Students, parents and parental organizations, teachers, school administration, central administration, ministries of education, members of the local community, members of Spanish-speaking communities, post-secondary institutions, Spanish cultural institutions, and other stakeholders all play crucial roles in supporting Spanish language programs. Special attention needs to be paid to ensure that the opportunities for collaboration are maximized.

Resources

Planning lessons and assembling resources for the Spanish Language and Culture program means more than finding a good text with accompanying workbook and audiotapes. As much as possible, students should work with all kinds of authentic audio and print materials and resources, including documents and texts that were designed for Spanish speakers as well as materials prepared for second language learners. These resources should also be appropriate for the age, the developmental level, and the linguistic level of the students. Textbooks and materials should set accessible goals that provide learners with a sense of accomplishment and closure.

Other important characteristics of effective learning resources are:

- Materials should be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity found in schools—a variety of learning styles, interests, abilities, attention spans, and backgrounds.
- Activities should reinforce positive aspects of students' self-image.
- Learning should be made concrete through contextualized vocabulary presentations and the extensive use of visuals such as pictured vocabulary, videos, and charts.
- Exercises and activities should include hands-on student involvement, whether through the use of manipulatives or other forms of physical interaction.
- Instructional experiences should emphasize the development of understanding rather than the decontextualized memorization of vocabulary lists and grammar rules.
- Abstract concepts should be made accessible through concrete experience and scaffolding of complex tasks.
- Interaction with peers should be integrated into these materials to provide for the cognitive and social benefits of pair and group work.
- Materials should be seen by students as relevant to their interests. (Met "Middle Schools")

The Role of the Teacher

The teacher is the key to success in the Spanish classroom. Effective teaching demands a broad range of teacher knowledge and skills both in the Spanish language and in second language pedagogy.

Spanish Language and Culture teachers must be proficient speakers of the language, have a good understanding of Spanish culture, and possess a strong background in a variety of second language teaching methodologies. In addition, teachers will benefit from experience, professional development, and expertise in

- responding to diversity in the classroom and using multilevel groupings
- cooperative learning and student-centred learning
- multi-media and computer-assisted learning
- resource-based language learning

Teachers should continue to engage in professional development in order to maintain or improve their proficiency in the Spanish language and keep their teaching skills current.

The classroom climate created by the teacher cannot be over-emphasized. Students will respond positively to an encouraging teacher and a warm, supportive, and accepting learning environment. Clear expectations and strong classroom management skills are necessary to allow students to perform to their potential.

Student Motivation

When students value their learning, believe they can succeed, and feel in control of the learning process, they develop motivation, or the desire to learn. Teachers can foster students' motivation to learn by

- instilling in each student a belief that s/he can learn
- helping students become aware of their own learning processes, and teaching them strategies for monitoring and enhancing these processes
- assigning tasks and materials of appropriate difficulty, and making sure that students receive the necessary instruction, modelling, and guided practice to be successful
- communicating assessment processes clearly so that students understand the criteria by which progress and achievement are measured
- helping students set realistic goals to enhance their learning
- helping students celebrate their own and classmates' learning progress and achievements within the school community and the broader community
- ensuring that instruction is embedded in meaningful learning events and experiences
- modelling personal enjoyment of Spanish language learning, and communicating the value of learning another language for later success in the world beyond the classroom
- involving students in the choice of themes, topics, resources, and activities around which learning experiences will take place, to foster a sense of ownership
- creating inclusive, risk-free classroom communities where curiosity is fostered and active involvement in the learning process is valued and shared
- providing uninterrupted time for sustained engagement with appropriate Spanish print and non-print resources
- providing collaborative learning experiences that enable students to exchange ideas and perspectives, develop a sense of purpose, and build a sense of community

The Physical Environment

The Spanish Language and Culture classroom is the main instructional area in the school where Spanish language teaching and learning occur. Its size, design, and contents should be able to accommodate a variety of language learning activities. Of course, a permanent location is preferred whether it is a special language room shared by several teachers or the Spanish teacher's own classroom. This will provide learners with a sense of stability and familiarity; reduce the Spanish teacher's preparation time, as all materials can be displayed in the classroom as necessary and stored in one location; and eliminate the inconvenience of transporting instructional materials. The physical layout of the room is best determined by the Spanish Language and Culture teacher.

Notes