

19: 7th WorldLanguage Conjugations PreInterview

Teacher: I like this lesson because it's going to show, doing the worksheets, getting the students understanding the grammar and the vocabulary, and then tomorrow it'll tie in a really hands on, functional way to apply the language.

Teacher: The goals for today's lesson is to help students acquire more vocabulary. When we start the year off teaching Spanish, I ask them, 'why did you take this class?' A majority of the time, students say, 'we want to have a fluent conversation in Spanish.' I've really been able to break it down for them and say what makes up a conversation and trying to help them see that conversation starts from just these basic sounds and then to the letters, to the vocabulary, to putting together correct sentences.

We talk about our overarching goal, or theme, in the classroom is that they are global citizens and that to communicate effectively is important as a global citizen in another language as well as to understand the culture. To be able to do that, we need to have clear sentences and learning things that students would sometimes think is boring, such as grammar or the vocabulary or the rules of the language is important so that they don't sound unintelligent in Spanish.

We play around with it in English. Also, how would it sounds if this person came up to you and asked you a question in really broken English? A lot of times, we talked about our attitudes to tourists or to [00:02:00] foreigners coming to Hawaii or to America in general and that they're like, 'we really don't have patience.' I said 'just think just the opposite. If you went to their country, they're not going to have patience for you if you keep stumbling through your words. It's important for you to study this because you can apply it.'

I think the balance is being a teacher of middle school, is then tying in those more engaging opportunities such as cooking days or bringing in guest speakers so that they can actually try to use their language skills and to see that they are making progress.

Teacher: Today, we're going to do a lot of formative assessment with the white boards. Instead of just calling on one student at a time, having all the students answer at the same time and if they just hold up their white boards, a lot of times the peer corrections come in. They'll look at each other's white board and they'll be like 'that's not it', 'oh yes it is.' They'll defend their answers if they really know they're correct. It becomes a great teaching tool among the peers. Today's going to be a lot of formative.

Eventually, this is going to tie into a summative conversation. In quarter three, we're going to be talking about ordering food at the restaurant, so students are going to be able to have to put these conjugated verbs and sentence structures into a conversation with me, actually. In quarter three is part of their summative assessment for speaking.

Teacher: First, I think it's how much I've planned for every lesson. I've learned a lot of times that the success of the class has been dependent upon how much I, as a teacher, have really

put thought into it and structured the lessons. [00:04:00] There are other things that I do to build in the management. From the very beginning we talk about why are you here and what are your expectations. I learned this from another teacher. It's called an I-chart.

Basically, it's my goal as the teacher, is to get you to reach independence. We have a section of the students are expected to do this and I as your teacher, I also have a certain expectation, and you guys have a certain expectation of me.

A lot of times now, instead of making an I-chart with the students, I'll just say 'okay, when you guys are going to work on this in your partner groups, I expect you to stay on task, I expect you to only talk about this, but then what do you think I'm going to be doing? Am I just sitting here having fun?' I was like, 'no, I have an expectation.' I asked the students, 'what do you think I should be doing while you're in your groups?' Sometimes they'll say 'you should come around and talk to us or listen to us' and then that also puts an expectation back on me.

An equal balance of power and cooperation is something that I try to create in the classroom as a facilitator of the learning and not necessarily as the director saying 'you have to do this.' Really helping students to take ownership of their learning and that they actually want to. I think students love learning and they want to do things. They want to know if I do this, this makes me independent or this helps me achieve independence.

Teacher: I'm hoping for them to really talk about grammar today, their infinitives in English, infinitives in Spanish. One of the things I do enjoy teaching about Spanish level one is that we do still look a lot at the English language and they're like, 'oh, we should know this. We should know the parts of speech.' It is a great, I think, integrated review [00:06:00] for the English department as well as they're learning Spanish. The better they know their own native language, then they'll be able to learn any other target language.

I do expect them to be talking about grammar, infinitives today, conjugation. At some point, I think, we'll be looking at why are you in this class and helping them remember that the bigger reason why we're learning this lesson is because we want to have conversations in Spanish. In order to do that, we need to have this basis of conjugating these verbs in the present tense and clearly communicating.

Teacher: They love white boards, from my experience. I learned this trick also from another teacher. Just let them draw for about 30 seconds. Just let them have fun with their utensils and they say, 'okay, erase it. It's work time, so let's get focused on the review.' We're going to review a lot. I think that students are also going to enjoy this lesson because it's such a functional piece. We're going to be studying about how to use the verb 'to go' in Spanish. With that verb, it's so functional in so many settings. You can say your future plans with it. You can say your direction where you are going. It's actually fairly easy to use and apply and I think that they are going to feel very successful with it at the end of today, tomorrow, with this.

Teacher: In particular, at this school, we have a lot of military students and we have a lot of students that come in with a Latino background and their parents maybe did not teach them Spanish or their parents were in the generation where they [00:08:00] were told 'no, you don't learn Spanish.' It's interesting to see that these kids are coming in saying, 'no, we want to learn how to speak Spanish and talk to our grandparents,' or 'when we go to Mexico' because a lot of them still will visit the country that their family is originally from. They'll say, 'we want to be able to have a conversation and know what people are talking about when we go.'

I think, very personally, that's one way I've noticed just being at this school is how it relates to them. In other ways, to other students that might not have a Latino background, we talk. The students want to travel and they want to be bilingual. They think it's really neat. They think it's amazing and I think there's just an internal motivation for them to want to explore the world and see their future possibilities.