

Implementing the Video Lessons



Which grades is this for?

1. K-8. The first batch of 100+ ten-minute Spanish videos has 80+ lessons designed to get lower elementary started on the language and culture, and many of these lessons are appropriate for and used by students all the way up to 8th grade. Thirty other lessons are Cultural Insights targeted at grade 4 and up. The second batch of 100+ videos contains 45+ lessons for lower elementary, 30 mostly language lessons targeted at upper elementary, and 30 Cultural Insights for grade 5 and up. The third and fourth batches continue the lessons.
2. Schools tend to use all of the first batch with upper elementary.
3. By request we are making some lessons specifically for certain junior highs.

What if we already have a Spanish program?

Click here to see how our instruction can go along with yours and how the Fluency Builder software and video lessons relate to each other.

My staff is not bilingual. What if our students have questions?

The instruction is based on previous interaction with staffs and thousands of students on site and in distance learning who felt free to ask questions, make comments, and submit drawings and other work. Let's keep that going. Input from students and staff is a terrific way to build lessons that are engaging and personal. And let's not be alarmed by each other; every school has staff with polarized views.

Does the video instruction require staff training or facilitation?

You need to know how to play our files on computers in Windows Media Player or QuickTime. You may need to know how to feed the lessons into a large screen for group viewing. Facilitation involves seating students at a proper distance from the screen, and making sure they are ready with common materials when necessary.

How is the video instruction actually implemented?

- Have your tech person download our files. We post an average of several lessons a week. View them together as a class or at computer stations. Let students revisit the lessons as the schedule allows. Viewing and participating as a group is best for many lessons the first time around. When you download them to your school server, you must make sure the videos are not publicly accessible and that they cannot be downloaded and copied from your server.
- Apple users play the lessons in QuickTime with the free [Flip4Mac](#) plug-in.
- Show the videos on any screen.

- Download any handout masters ahead of time.
- Some handouts are just words and graphics for reference, and others are for interacting by pointing, marking, or sometimes writing. Our Fluency Builder software—not included with the videos—is a battery of dynamic electronic activities that allow students to respond to text and pictures in a variety of ways. Our videos use more paper-and-pencil activities as the lessons advance, but we do not emphasize paperwork.
- Participate with the class or catch up on work while you supervise. Many teachers do both. Above all, show interest.
- See our assessment chart to track or let students track their progress. We think of progress as (1) maintaining an exposure to the instruction and (2) using the language voluntarily during the school day and beyond. We use some paper-and-pencil work, but we let schools decide how to deal with performance. Our experience shows that adding paper work squelches many teachers' interest in adding foreign language instruction. Some teachers record the written work, but with different purposes. Most teachers just keep the kids engaged. Participation and various activities can be recorded.
- See scheduling and time allocation in the section below.
- Most schools include K-3 in the first year, some do their whole K-6.
- When you order the Fluency Builder, we send a link to download it to your school server. Run it on your network or install it on individual computers. Either way, the cost is according to how many computers use it.

What about time allocation?

Most students should do half of the video sessions at least twice. We add 75-90 language and culture lessons a year, apart from the 30 Cultural Insights (grade 4 and up).

Try to average 10 minutes a day on a video lesson or in the Fluency Builder software. That is a far better goal than trying to finish a certain number of lessons. Ten minutes a day makes a powerful impact over time, and it's usually better to repeat half the lessons than to keep barreling through.

What learning modalities are involved?

Listening, reading, speaking, movement. Students move, point, repeat, count, sing, say, predict, recognize, associate, reply to a speaker, consider other points of view, empathize. More writing will be involved farther into the sequence for older students.

What are the learning objectives and expectations?

Students will learn many useful and typical grammatical concepts and vocabulary sets that they (and staff) can use within the school community. Expect more and more

students to blend Spanish into their conversation. Some philosophy says a student should speak only 100% in the target language. This ignores the powers of context demonstrated by innumerable field results. There are terrific reasons for using native language as context for learning another.

Besides the incentives in our assessment chart, you can use simple incentives. Extra credit in language arts or social studies can encourage the adventure throughout the day. Often, nothing more than your enthusiasm is needed.

The repeatable video sessions and the software cannot replace a competent onsite language teacher, but they hold the important advantage of being able to reinforce certain elements more than an onsite person can.

In a range of response types, students will demonstrate that they comprehend Spanish commands, greetings, basic conversation, and descriptions spoken at normal and near-normal speeds, as well as comprehension of the text forms of much of the same content. Students will pronounce with increasing accuracy. They will ask questions and make comments that show they appreciate differences and similarities between traditional U.S. culture and that of other countries and groups. Students will develop a greater hunger to take part in the world beyond their neighborhood and to learn languages other than Spanish. Their skills in their first language will increase as they learn about the nature of language and the relationships between languages. They will learn many things directly related to other curriculum.

What can be done to encourage language learning?

Momentum. Please remember that we are interested in cultivating fluency within restricted sets of vocabulary that can be used during the school day or elsewhere. Insisting that students use 100% Spanish when trying to speak any Spanish words is a good way to intimidate everyone. Languages are mixed as necessary all the time in the multilingual world of business and everyday life. We encourage everyone to use a mixture of English with Spanish whenever it's necessary to keep momentum while speaking. For instance, "Señora Williams, quiero a book, please." (Mrs. Williams, I want a book, please.) Later, students might increase the Spanish to, "Señora Williams, quiero a book, por favor."

Safety. Reward courage and momentum. Kids will find all kinds of opportunities to use the language, and even more so if you provide small, enjoyable incentives such as points that accumulate toward a not-too-distant reward or celebration. Resist dwelling on inaccuracies when students are being brave enough to try to communicate in a new language. People need to feel safe with it. However, a competent Spanish-speaking staff member might (1) keep a list of weak spots to address as a group every day or so, and (2) establish an understanding with the class that the adult may sometimes gently interject a correction. Students would need to know that they are not expected to restate themselves, only to continue speaking and to note the correction. Some students are highly eager to restate themselves on the spot. But this should be optional and not praised too loudly.

Do you have evidence for the success of your instructional tools?

Both our Fluency Builder software and our video lessons are meant to show children that another language can become a regular, useful part of life. The first year of the video

lessons had a fairly rough start, and then strong, positive feedback began coming in during the second semester. It came in much stronger early in the second year. The feedback is now the same as when the instruction was delivered in person on site in a regular classroom. Schools report that parents say the language is used beyond the classroom in daily life and that the kids are excited about the content.

1. The qualitative evidence for the onsite instruction that our system is based on is very strong. The positive praise coming from parents was nonstop and of a high order, because it told of all the places where students used Spanish in ordinary contexts of life. That was the founding administration's main goal. Performance during seven years was high on language and cultural measures in the form of verbal and physical responses, text exercises, inductive discussions, co-leading and role-playing. Elementary educators from around Indiana observed the performance, as did local patrons.
2. Many of these activities were later introduced into distance-learning, where similar, though less pronounced, results were obtained. Video lessons that are done correctly have important advantages over most distance learning programs.
3. Video instruction can be a legitimate, integral learning tool for any age group. The principle we look for in the field of educational media is whether the videos are designed to elicit a range of responses that are characteristic of significant interaction and learning. Schools have long used videos and TV shows that do not reflect these qualities, and researchers not grounded in educational media have sometimes concluded that language videos are ineffective with young children. A correct conclusion would be that instruction that is not properly designed and utilized is ineffective. Furthermore, we have the unusual capacity to update lessons within hours of feedback. This is important because half the lessons should be repeated at least once.
4. The Fluency Builder replicates many onsite activities, and is essentially a gentle bundle of research-based educational psychology with language as the content. It has some advantages over a human teacher, and has been tested thousands of times. We update it in response to feedback. We release an advancing Fluency Builder each year.

Does foreign language instruction do anything for basic skills?

Another way this question is often asked is, "Why are the kids studying another language if they don't even have their English scores where they should be?" The objection is easy to answer, since language study strengthens language skills. More and more reports say that kids who participate in foreign language study in elementary school have shown improvement in standardized assessments, basic skills, and other important areas.