UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

WHAT EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHERS DO: A CASE STUDY OF 5 HIGH-ACHIEVING UNIVERSITY SPANISH INSTRUCTORS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2017

WHAT EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHERS DO: A CASE STUDY OF 5 HIGH-ACHIEVING UNIVERSITY SPANISH INSTRUCTORS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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Para mi hija Natalia. Espero haberte inspirado a seguir tus sueños, aunque veas lo imposible que sea. Mi querida corazón de melocotón, eres la luz que me ha guiado cuando más he querido dejarlo todo atrás. Como siempre me dices, ¡sí se puede mami, sí se puede!

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to my chair, Dr. Lawrence Baines, for his patience, guidance and encouragement throughout this dissertation journey. His careful critique of my work never allowed me to be mediocre. Thank you to the members of my committee, Dr. Neil Houser, Dr. Courtney Vaughn, Dr. Sally Beach and Dr. Sánchez-Naranjo, for the memorable learning opportunities you have created for me as well as your encouragement to grow as a scholar. I extend a very special thank you to Dr. Jeannette Sánchez-Naranjo for her invaluable guidance and mentorship. Her support has been monumental throughout this process.

I was able to successfully complete this dissertation thanks to the unwavering support of my husband, Carlos and my daughter, Natalia. Their encouragement got me through the toughest stages of dissertation writing. Through tears of frustration, sleepless nights, fears and doubts, they never questioned my potential. I am so grateful for the countless sacrifices Carlos made for this to become a reality. It was a sense of relief to know our daughter was always in good hands.

I would like to thank my parents, Terry and Lyn Borden, who have always supported my educational endeavors. I am indebted to them for instilling in me the dedication and discipline to do whatever I undertake well. I would also like to thank my in-laws, Sara, Arturo, and Lindsay Alca who stepped in to help maintain a stable routine for Natalia when I could not be there myself.

Finally, I am grateful to all the instructors who willingly participated in this study: Without your participation, this dissertation would not have been possible.

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Abstract

The quality of instruction in foreign language classes can be widely variable. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to uncover the approaches to instruction enacted by five high-achieving university Spanish instructors at a doctoral-level university in the southwestern United States. Findings indicate that high-achieving university Spanish instructors shared the traits of enthusiasm, clarity, high levels of student engagement, well-established control, and care. Embedded in these behaviors, high-achieving instructors were observed to employ the use of activities that developed communicative competence. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening in the target language, and some aspects of Task-based Language Teaching were also evident, although specific approaches in each of these areas varied by instructor based on language background and teaching philosophy. Student-performance in courses taught by high-achieving instructors was significantly higher in all four skill areas—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—than the performance of students in courses taught by low-achieving instructors.

Findings support the notion that approaches to instruction have a palpable, practical impact on student learning. Engaging courses and caring instructors contributed to positive language-learning experiences and relatively higher levels of learning.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Spanish Teaching and Learning in the United States

Since the 1980s, the study of Spanish at the university level has continued to grow, with enrollment consistently surpassing the study of all other languages combined (Lacorte & Suárez-García, 2014). The ability to speak and effectively communicate in Spanish in the workforce is viewed as a highly desirable quality, affecting hiring needs and salary potential for college graduates (Cortina, De la Garza, & Pinto, 2009). Considering the increasing influence of Spanish in the US, it is fair to say that its presence contributes to the notion that Spanish is in fact the country's second language. As a result, the way Spanish is taught and learned in U.S. universities requires further examination.

At present, there is a strong focus on American Council for Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines and National Standards Frameworks, which provide cultural, linguistic and learning objectives to guide the field of foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. However, the guidelines do not promote any specific methodology as a route to meeting objectives. Perhaps due to a wide range of conflicting theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and teaching practices, Spanish teaching methodology in the US is quite elastic (Lacorte et. al., 2014). Among theoretical models, SLA theories support the negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), as well as focus on form (Long, 1991). Pedagogical differences have bifurcated teaching practices into two camps: traditional methodologies that focus on grammatical form, and communicative methodologies that give way to a wide interpretation of FL teaching.

Statement of the Problem

As the Spanish Language Coordinator of first-year courses at a large research institution in the southwest United States, I supervise and train over 40 Graduate Teaching Assistants and Instructors. The job includes conducting teaching evaluations to ensure that all of the instructional staff are able to lead well-designed, effective classes. The results of teacher evaluations over the past two years have exposed disparities in the quality of instruction in the first and second year course sequence.

In addition to teaching evaluations, universities across the U.S. often use Student Evaluations of Teachers (STEs) to gauge teacher effectiveness within their institutions (Cashin, 1999; Clayson, 2009). The rationale behind their popularity is simple: a single numeric score can be used to compare instructors with one another, against the department as a whole, and across the university. A typical question used to determine effectiveness states: Overall, Instructor X's teaching effectiveness was, 5 (excellent), 4 (very good), 3 (good), 2 (fair), and 1 (poor).

In many cases, high stakes decisions rely on the scores received from STEs, potentially affecting tenure, promotion, class assignments, and retention. At the institution in the present study, the numeric score from the STEs, weighted at 30% of the overall score, and the teaching evaluation, weighted at 70%, are combined to establish a ranking of instructors. This ranking is used to give preference to high-achieving instructors for course assignments. These data provide information regarding strengths and weaknesses in the language program, including overall teacher effectiveness.

An abundance of recent research has uncovered the controversial nature of STEs, finding that they are susceptible to bias; due particularly to the fact that student comments may focus on arbitrary elements such as: attractiveness, expected grade, gender, and native vs. non-native speakers of Spanish. The percentage of students who respond to course evaluations is another variable. In the spring of 2015, over half of the STEs collected at Southwest University had response rates of less than 60%. Some research has found that easy teachers get better scores and more challenging teachers get worse scores (Pounder, 2007).

To this end, the quality of professors may not be objectively evaluated through the use of STEs alone. In the K-12 system, the findings of numerous studies indicate that experienced, effective teachers are the single most influential factor affecting student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti & Miller, 2002; Stronge, 2007; Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009).

In addition to the use of teacher observation instruments and STEs, the professional literature on teacher effectiveness has produced a number of studies on qualities possessed by effective teachers. However, the lists of characteristics often provide only checklists of "skills, practices, and qualities, with little or no agreement" (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010, p. 113). Additionally, Devlin & Samarawickrema (2010) have reported that many of these studies lack a clear methodology, thus affecting generalizability to a variety of contexts outside the ones examined.

As the Spanish Language Program (SLP) underwent a major shift in curricular ideology (moving from a traditional grammar-based program to a proficiency-based

one), the evaluation process began to examine specific characteristics that promoted a proficiency-based orientation. A criterion-referenced observation and evaluation instrument was created to identify and measure behaviors thought to promote proficiency in the classroom.

However, there is a general sense that teachers do not perceive the evaluative process as a useful one (Weisburg et. al, 2009). Evaluations are typically short and infrequent; once a semester or once per year during a 50-minute class period. The flaws associated with the culture of evaluation created an expectation that all teachers would receive good evaluations (Weisburg et. al, 2009). At this stage in the process of the SLP reform, whereby extensive training and observation has already occurred, most teachers have indicated a desire to understand how to become better, more effective language teachers.

There are a number of reasons the Spanish language teachers are experiencing difficulty moving from a traditional, grammar-focused program to a more communicative, proficiency-based one. First many university instructors often do not see themselves as teachers at all (Kember, 1997). In fact, many tend to view themselves as scholars of their discipline, operating under a different set of considerations than schools at the K-12 level. Additionally, only a small number of universities require any kind of training for academic staff (Dewar, 2002). Finally, a teacher's perception of efficacy is based on a set of beliefs in the ability to influence student learning (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Thus, the feedback received on STEs may provide a false sense of efficacy and feed into the cycle of ineffective teaching, while causing the language

instructor to feel reinforced concerning beliefs about student satisfaction, learning and achievement.

The Changing Landscape of Foreign Language Teaching

During the last several decades, there has been a clear shift in foreign language teaching approaches; moving from traditional grammar-based approaches to those that include interactive and communicative methods (e.g., Krashen,1982; VanPatten, 1993). Some of the trends that reflect this shift include:

1) The Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards, 1999; 2006)
2) Communicative language teaching (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Nunan, 1989),
3) Proficiency-based teaching (ACTFL, 2012) and assessment such as the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) (ACTFL, 2013)
4) Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) (Nunan, 1989)
5) Focus on form (SLA) (Spada, 1997)

As changes in approaches have gained popularity, there is a compelling need to update both the way foreign languages are taught, as well as the models for evaluating FL teaching (Bell, 2005). The September 26, 2001 report of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (H.R. Rep. No. 107-219, 2001) identified foreign language as the single greatest need in the intelligence community. In a global society, it is inevitable that both cultural knowledge and familiarity with another language will be needed to make connections between nations, states, and organizations. Countries such as Japan (Kubota, 1998) and China (Kirkpatrick & Zhichang, 2002) have already started requiring at least one foreign language at the primary and another language at the secondary level. India, Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines use a second official

language in their governing systems. In order for the US to remain competitive in the global market, attention to expanding linguistic and cultural knowledge is necessary.

The Center for Economic Development (CED) (2006) adds to this notion stating, 'to confront the twenty-first century challenges to our economy and national security, our education system must be strengthened to increase the foreign language skills and cultural awareness of our students. America's continued global leadership will depend on our students' abilities to interact with the world community both inside and outside our borders' (n.p.). As a result, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Parternship for 21st Century Skills (P21) developed a skills map to guide educators in fostering 21st Century Skills across the curriculum (P21, 2009).

In the case of the present study, the make-up of instructional staff examined in each case consists of a wide-range of professional backgrounds; including some who have scanty formation in SLA and Language Teaching. One of the outcomes of this research seeks to connect observations of instruction to relevant literature on SLA and language teaching pedagogy.

Rationale for Research

The quality of teaching is highly variable in introductory Spanish classes. Students who have poor teachers may develop negative attitudes toward Spanish and learn little of the language, while other teachers ignite student interest and develop students' communicative competency effectively. While teaching evaluation tools provide insight into effective teaching, there remains a need to examine approaches to instruction within the context of Southwest University's language program. This

research aims to observe the behaviors of high-achieving language teachers in a communicative and proficiency-based, Spanish language program at a doctoral level university in the Southwest. The research also seeks to determine if differences in student achievement exist in between high-achieving and low-achieving teachers in the areas of speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Significance of the Study

This research explored *how* high-achieving instructors approached instruction in a communicative and proficiency-based language-teaching context. The results of this study may provide insight on how to improve the Spanish language program at Southwest University and increase teaching quality in general.

Research Questions

This study investigates three research questions:

1) How do high-achieving instructors in a proficiency-based, communicative Spanish Language Program approach instruction?
2) How are high-achieving instructors alike and how are they different?
3) What is the effect of high-achieving instruction on student performance?

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This review of the literature investigates the relationship among Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, and Foreign Language teaching, including shifts in SLA theory and research. The brief discussion includes overviews of the pedagogical trends in grammar instruction, the Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task Based Language Teaching. The epistemological paradigm shift in assessment practices is also examined as it relates to FL teaching and learning. Finally, effective teaching behaviors in both general and FL education are discussed and connected to measurable qualities from the basis of administrator evaluation.

Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, and The Teaching of Foreign Languages

The field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is rich and varied, encompassing aspects of psychology, linguistics, sociology and education (Pica, 2005). As a research base, the term SLA has gained popularity in the way it contributes to the teaching and learning of languages (Kramsch, 2000). However, research in SLA has created some confusion with perhaps the more practical nature of applied linguistics, which is concerned with aspects of mediating between SLA theory and educational practice. Kramsch (2000) argues that applied linguistics is essentially the larger field of study that includes SLA research; a shift in prior thinking in the field.

Brumfit (1995) defines applied linguistics as 'the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue' (p. 27). As Bygate (2005) points out, the applied linguist must discover *how* a particular concept

can be used systematically in the pedagogical sense, as well as *how* its impact on learning can be either measured or evaluated by the teacher. Thus, the theories that are developed and examined must also be applicable to real-world contexts.

In many ways, researchers remain hesitant to propose pedagogical transformations based on their sometimes limited sample of particpants, while teachers are often too busy to investigate what researchers have discovered (Ellis, 1997). Until the fields of applied linguistics and language pedagogy more consistently bridge the gap between theory and practice, teachers must continue to draw on their knowledge of current findings in SLA to inform pedagogy.

Theoretical Trends in FL Teaching and Learning

Despite countless studies in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), there is no consensus amongst linguists with regard to: a) how language is acquired, and b) how language should be taught (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Some of the most contentious aspects of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) stem from Chomky's theory of Universal Grammar and Krashen's Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis (Thomas, 2004).

In terms of Universal Grammar, Chomsky (1965) makes the argument that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for organizing language. As a result, there is an assumption that all languages have a common structural basis known as *Universal Grammar* (UG). According to Chomsky, grammar of a language describes a grammatical competence (as opposed to performance) of the native speakers of that language. Grammatical competence is defined as the native speakers' tacit knowledge of the grammar of their language (Chomsky, 1965). This grammatical competence is determined by drawing out native speakers' innate knowledge about the grammaticality

of sentences generated in their first language, as well as about the interpretation of sentences (e.g., noting indefinite or paraphrase forms). A Universal Grammar, however, is not a description of the grammar of an individual language (e.g. Spanish, or English). It is, more befittingly, a theory of grammar.

Closely associated with the theory of Universal Grammar is the issue of explaining the acquisition of grammar known as the *Logical Problem* (Foster-Cohen, 1999; Hawkins, 2001). The Logical Problem confronts the question of how children acquiring their first language are able to acquire the grammar so quickly and uniformly in a relatively short period of time, usually around the age range of 18-30 months. Based on Chomsky's UG theory, this grammatical acquisition is possible because children are predisposed with an innate language faculty, facilitating the acquisition of language (Sadighi & Bavali, 2008). As learners develop a second language (L2), White (1989) proposes the idea that "UG is fully available to L2 learners and functions just as it does in L1 acquisition" (p.48).

Considering this assumption, Krashen's (1982) Acquisition vs. Learning Hypothesis asserts that second language acquisition (SLA) is a subconscious process similar to the way a child learns his or her first language. The learner is not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language, but instead develops a "feel" for correctness. Thus, "acquisition is 'picking-up' a language" (Krashen, 1982). Language learning, on the other hand, refers to the conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. Krashen (2012) claims that language learning can be compared to learning *about* a language.

In Krashen's view of acquisition, it is argued that that one acquires language in a predictable order of grammatical structures. This is also referred to as the Natural Order Hypothesis. Many studies have been conducted to test and support this theory (e.g., Bailey, Madden, & Krashen, 1974; Dulay & Burt, 1974, 1975; Fabris, 1978; Fathman, 1975; Kessler & Idar, 1977; Makino, 1980). L2 instruction taught in a natural order would offer multiple opportunities to communicate that trigger natural acquisitional processes.

In addition to Krashen's (1982) Natural Order hypothesis, Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) point out that some form of comprehensible input must also be present during learning. In fact, VanPatten (1993) suggests, "an absence of comprehensible input is consistent with non-successful first and second language acquisition" (p. 436). Krashen (1982) also subscribed to the theory of comprehensible input, coining the Input Hypothesis in the process.

The Input Hypothesis takes from the notion that language is acquired in a predictable order of grammatical structures (Natural Order Hypothesis) to configure input that will be understood by the learner. Krashen (1982) represents the language learners' current level of competence as *i*, while the next stage is depicted as *i +1*. As mentioned earlier, language learners move through stages in the process of fully acquiring language. In order for this to occur, Krashen makes the following claim about the input hypothesis: "a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage *i* to stage *i* + *1* is that the acquirer understand input that contains *i* + *1*, where "understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message" (p. 21). Therefore, classroom instruction should contain input that is *just* beyond where the

student is now (*i +1)* during as much of the class period as possible in order for students to maximize language acquisition. The importance of comprehensible input as essential to understanding the basis of early instructional methodologies discussed later in this section, as well as what has evolved in current instructional practices.

Conversely, in the field of SLA, Comprehensible Input and Communicative classrooms have maintained popularity since the 1980s (e.g., Krashen & Terrell 1983; Krashen 1990; Ray & Seely, 2002). There is now a general consensus that form-focused grammar instruction also facilitates the acquisition of L2 grammatical forms (e.g., Doughty, 2003; R. Ellis, 2008; Lightbown, 2004; VanPatten, 2002).

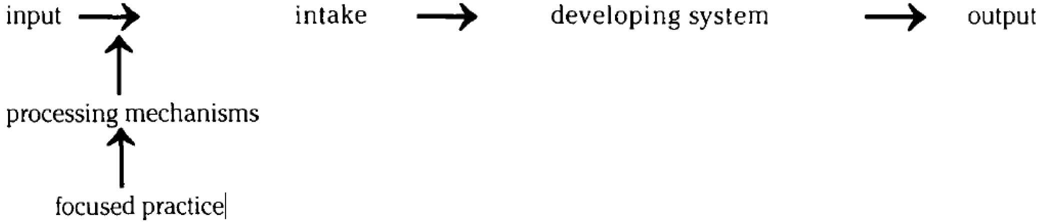
In early L2 adult instruction, a grammar-first approach may be more suitable to the needs of learners (Scheffler, 2011). According to Scheffler (2011), teachers in adult foreign language classrooms should capitalize on learners' ability to think abstractly and logically, and provide systematic grammar and communicative practice. Moreover, explicit grammar knowledge may in some cases aid in the access to more comprehensible input (Scheffler & Cinciala, 2011). Being able to identify certain grammatical constructions in spoken or written discourse may help the learner relate it to the relevant rule, resulting in increased comprehension (Scheffler & Cinciala, 2011). Morever, increased comprehensibility results in the increased likelihood of grammatical forms being processed in the input (VanPatten, 2004).

However, the role of input as it relates to what L2 learners produce in the output phase remains incongruent. VanPatten (1993) claims that the input learners receive is processed in a certain way, and that the learner's linguistic system develops nonlinearly over time. In other words, the language produced by learners at various stages in the

language acquisition process will look very different, and will not necessarily mimic the input received. Copious research in SLA demonstrates this phenomenon time and time again (e.g. Lightbown, 1985; McLaughlin, 1990).

In contrast to traditional explicit grammar instruction in FL teaching, where input is given for the sole purpose of focused practice and forced output, Input Processing and its implications for instruction (e.g. Processing Instruction), focuses primarily on what is done with the input before it is practiced as output. It is understood that the theory of Input Processing (VanPatten, 2004) "refers to the strategies and mechanisms learners use to link linguistic form with its meaning and/or function" (p. 1). Figure 1.1 depicts what this looks like when grammar instruction focuses on input.

Figure 1.1 Grammar Instruction that Focuses on Input (VanPatten, 1993)

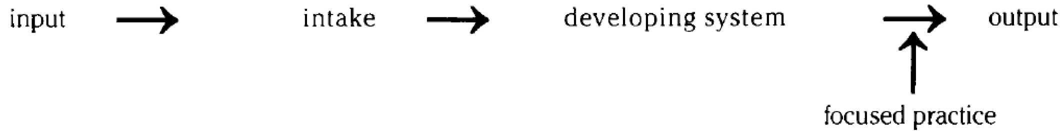


As depicted in Figure 1.1, Input Processing concerns itself with what happens during the process of receiving *input* and moving it toward *intake*. A variety of definitions of *input* have been discussed above (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991), essentially describing it as language that ciphers meaning. VanPatten (2004) defines *intake* as "the subset of the input that has been processed in working memory and made available for further processing" (p. 6).

In order to contrast the difference between input and instruction, it is imperative to examine what happens in a traditional classroom where explicit grammatical forms

are taught for the purpose of producing structured output using those forms. Figure 1.2 depicts this below (VanPatten ,1993).

Figure 1.2 Traditional Explicit Grammar Instruction in Foreign Language Teaching



In a theoretical sense, the explicit teaching of grammar itself is not the problem, but rather what is asked of students with regard to what they do with the input they receive. VanPatten & Cadierno (1993) posit that the value of grammar instruction as output contradicts the important role of input in the language acquisition process. As a result, it is hypothesized that altering how the input is processed will show greater gains on the language knowledge actually internalized by the L2 leaner.

Apart from the role of input in SLA, theories of output as they relate to SLA have also been widely researched. According to Swain (1995; 2000), output is of great importance in learning language on a deeper level, as it requires learners to exert more mental effort in its processes than perhaps input does. For output to occur, the learner has to “do something with language” (Swain, 2000, p. 99). The linguistic form and meaning that is created in the utterance forces the learner to discover what he/she can and cannot do. This discovery, or *noticing* as Swain (2000) calls it, aligns with other research claims that connect attention to form with language acquisition (Ellis, 1994).

While there are several ways in which learners pay attention to, or *notice* output, the result of the exchange is a collaborative dialogue between the cognitive, meaning-making of the exchange, and the output, or utterance (Swain, 2000). Moreover, “collaborative dialogue is a dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving

and knowledge building" (p. 102). This understanding of the dialogic exchange in language teaching and learning is paramount when considering the sociocultural aspects involved in the learning process. This takes from the Vygotskian notion that language can be used as a powerful semiotic tool to carry out distinctive mental activities than can be accomplished without it. The use of language as a both a cognitive and semiotic tool can "be considered simultaneously as a cognitive activity and its product" (p. 101). From a pedagogical standpoint, a sound rationale exists for engaging students in collaborative work that focuses on input as well as output.

In sum, L2 learners approach the pathway to SLA in different ways. Not all learners benefit equally from similar instructional strategies, nor do all grammatical features respond equally to instruction (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). In other words, successful instruction is multi-faceted. According to Skehan (1996), the curriculum needs to be multidimensional, utilizing components of both grammar instruction and communicative language usage with the general goals of accuracy, fluency, and complexity.

The next section explores trends relevant to both language programs in K-12 settings as well as in Higher Education settings; first through discussion of more traditionally grammar-based methods, followed by proficiency-based approaches, and finally, approaches that combine both. Methods and approaches include: The Audio-lingual Method, Cognitive-Code Approach, Grammar-Translation Method, The Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, and Task-based Language Teaching.

Historical Trends in the Teaching of Grammar

Historically, the teaching of grammar has been synonymous with foreign language teaching (Rutherford, 1987). A resurgence of grammar-based instruction is apparent in current research as it relates to its role in SLA (El-Dali, 2010). Grammar Instruction has many definitions, but essentially is meant by any attempt by the language instructor to directly intervene in the process of interlanguage construction by providing samples of specific features for learning (Cadierno, 1995). Interlanguage refers to the language produced by a second language learner that often contains grammatical features not found in either the learner's native language or the language being acquired. This essentially means that explicit grammar is used to help the learner bridge the gap between the first and second language by highlighting grammatical structures, which define the language being used.

There are three principal grammatical methodological approaches to explicit language teaching that are still embedded in some of today's curriculum. The first, the Audio-lingual Method (e.g., Fries, 1945; Lado, 1964), was designed by structural linguists to teach grammatical structures that are very carefully sequenced from basic to more complex, while the vocabulary is strictly limited to the early stages of learning. This methodology ties mimics a behavioral school of thought whereby language learning is considered a behavioral process. The proponents of Audio-lingual Method assumed that language learning was due do habit formation and over-learning; therefore the structure of the methodology relied on mimicking of forms, memorization of certain sentence patterns, and manipulative drill exercises to minimize learner errors. Error

correction was encouraged so as to prevent further mistakes, and the lessons rarely moved beyond the sentence level.

The second approach, known as Cognitive Code approach, (Jakobovits, 1968, 1970) viewed language learning as hypothesis formation and rule acquisition, rather than habit formation. Grammar is considered important, and rules are presented either deductively or inductively, depending on learner preferences. One of the differences between the Cognitive Code approach and the Audio-lingual Method is that error analysis and corrections were used constructively as part of the learning process. In other words, the teacher's role was to facilitate the peer and learner's self-correction as much as possible as part of the normal language acquisition process. The Audio-lingual Method was much more teacher-centered in this regard, whereby the teacher was solely responsible for error-correction. In the Cognitive Code approach, the level of structure covered still mainly focused on sentence orientation, and the materials written and used were derived from Chomsky's early work in generative grammar (1965). Generative grammar refers to attempts to give a set of rules that will predict which combinations of words will form grammatical sentences.

The third approach, known as the Grammar-Translation Method, has been used for centuries as the primary method for studying foreign languages (Sapargul & Sartor, 2010). Originally given the name The Classical Method, Grammar-Translation (GT) was used to translate literary texts. This method has undergone criticism due to its lack of oral communication, thus leaving out one of the main components of linguistic competence; the ability to speak in the target language (Savignon, 1991). GT was teacher-centered, where students were required to focus their attention on grammar and

vocabulary by reading and translating written texts in the target language. It was thought that this process would lead to a deeper understanding of the grammar of students' native language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Additionally, dissecting grammar rules and examining grammatical structures was thought to help students grow mentally by broadening their language, literature, and historical knowledge (Sapargul & Sator, 2010). However, the chosen classical texts in the target language were often written in language that was difficult to understand and presented without culture, theme or style. It's popularity as an instructional methodology waned in the late 1900s as a result of its tediousness and lack of interaction between students, as well as its absence of opportunity to communicate in the target language (Savignon, 1991).

In more recent grammar instruction, the grammar itself may consist of direct presentation of the grammatical structures with practice using the structures, or be presented without practice. It can also involve the learners discovering grammatical rules themselves without any presentation or practice through the use of various sources such as free voluntary reading with visual aids to increase meaning. Additionally, "grammar instruction can be conducted by simply exposing learners to input contrived to provide multiple exemplars of the target structure" (Ellis, 2006 p. 84). All of the past and present approaches to grammar teaching rely on explicit teaching of grammatical concepts and structures; a stark contrast to the methods and approaches discussed in the next section.

The Natural Approach

Krashen and Terrell developed the Natural Approach in the early 1980s as a response to Krashen's prior theories and research on second language acquisition. One

of his foci related to the natural order hypothesis. The natural order hypothesis states the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early, others late, regardless of the first language of a speaker. However, this does not mean that grammar should be taught in this natural order of acquisition (Krashen, 1991). Essentially, Krashen tells us that the input students hear and read needs only to be comprehensible because the acquisition of grammatical structures will occur when the learner is ready, and therefore, grammar need not be sheltered, omitted, or ignored during instruction as a consequence. In other words, the learner can read a text that contains grammatical structures he or she has never seen and still be able to understand its message, even though the production of those structures by the learner may not be internalized until much later in the acquisition process.

The main focus of the Natural Approach method is a focus on communicative competence through aural comprehension, early speech production, and speech activities. All of the components focus on 'natural' acquisition of language; much like a child learns his native tongue. This environment then lowers the learners' Affective Filter, allowing for maximum language acquisition and low anxiety. The instructor understands there will be a silent period where the learners may not produce language, and this will progress naturally into speech, as the learner is ready. The teacher speaks only the target language and class time is committed to providing input for acquisition. Students may use either the language being taught or their first language. Errors in speech are not corrected, however homework may include grammar exercises that will be corrected. Goals for the class emphasize the students being able use the language to

talk about ideas, perform tasks, and solve problems. This approach aims to fulfill the requirements for second language learning and acquisition by providing grammar exercises for students to practice while allowing class time to be maximized with input in the target language.

Communicative Language Teaching

In this section, Communicative Language Teaching will be discussed in detail, as it is the pedagogical and curricular framework adopted by the university examined in this study. Task-based Language Teaching follows this discussion, as it encompasses extensions of the communicative classroom and the communicative approach by examining the use of language tasks and collaboration.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) came about in response to new insights on theory and research in language learning and teaching in Europe and North America during the later part of the 20th century (Savignon, 2007). Krashen's (1982) *Monitor Model* is one of many theoretical underpinnings of the approaches surrounding CLT. In the case of Europe, its countries became more dependent on one another while simultaneously; the language demands of a growing immigrant population were increasing. As a result, the Council of Europe responded by developing a notional-functional schema for language learners, which asserted such notional concepts as time, location, frequency, and sequence, as well as communicative language functions, such as, complaint, request, acceptance or denial (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 2007). This rebranded curriculum, which contrasted that of the existing grammar-based syllabus, became widely accepted by language teaching specialists and curriculum developers. Thus, the communicative approach (CLT) was born.

CLT has sustained itself as a mainstay in FL curriculum and instruction since the 1960s (Canale & Swain, 1980; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Mangubhai, Howard, & Dashwood, 1999; VanPatten & Lee, 2003; Williams, 1995). While some disagreement still exists among researchers pertaining to its interpretation and implementation CLT, it is currently most aptly defined as an *approach* to FL teaching founded on an amalgam of related strategies used to develop communicative competence via the medium of the target language used almost exclusively in classroom instruction (Mangubhai, Howard, Dashwood & Son, 2004).

The modern view of CLT as an *approach* is important to note here, as earlier conceptions of CLT more closely resembled a *method* that reduced instruction to primarily oral discourse lacking interpretive content (Tucker, 2006). The current understanding of CLT is bolstered by research examining the importance of both sociocultural and symbolic competence that enhance the notion of communicative competence, bringing to light the contextual and social rules that mirror native-like speech (Leung, 2005). For the purpose of the current discussion, *communicative competence* consists of the ability of L2 learners to interact with one another by negotiating meaning (Savignon, 1971)

Clearly, communicative competence alone lacks many of the features of an authentic exchange between native speakers of a language. Thus, *sociocultural competence* denotes an understanding of the social constructs of language that includes a willingness to open oneself toward other cultures alongside the ability to negotiate meaning, while simultaneously considering the social and cultural norms as they relate to conventions of language use (Savignon, 2002). Additionally, *symbolic competence*

brings language learners to derive information not only from the information provided but "from the symbolic power that comes with the interpretations of signs and their multiple relations to other signs" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 252).

More specifically, the literature has identified some common characteristics often observed in CLT classrooms (Mangubhai, Howard, & Dashwood, 1999; Savignon, 2002; Williams, 1995). These features include: limited emphasis on form, error correction, and explicit instruction on grammatical rules and forms, substantial emphasis on fluency and appropriate use of the target language within the notional and functional schema, the use of authentic materials and resources, classroom activities and tasks that encourage the negotiation of meaning, spontaneous conversation and trial and error among participants (between students and students and teacher), an interactive classroom environment that promotes risk-taking and encourages student ownership and constructivism of language.

Berns (1990, p. 104) expands this summary of CLT in the following way:

1. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication, that is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers and writers use to make meaning; we communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in writing.

2. Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development and use in second language learners and users as it is with first language users.

3. A learner's competence is considered in relative, not absolute, terms of correctness.

4. More than one variety of a language is recognized as a model for learning and

teaching.

5. Culture is seen to play an instrumental role in shaping speakers' communicative competence, both in their first and subsequent languages.

6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.

7. Language use is recognized as serving the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual functions, and is related to the development of learners' competence in each.

8. It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language, that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes, in all phases of learning.

Learner expectations and attitudes have increasingly come to be recognized for their role in advancing or impeding curricular change.

As the literature surrounding what is considered CLT contains conflicting theories regarding what constitutes the approach, it is left open for teachers to interpret how CLT should be implemented in the classroom. Spada (1987) purports that even with a carefully prescribed pedagogy for CLT, there is no guarantee such procedures are implemented. In fact, teachers tend to teach in a way that is consistent with their own personal philosophy of teaching and learning (Woods & Çakır, 2011). This means that they often incorporate methodologies consistent with their individual teaching styles and experiences. To this end, Spada (1987) investigated the possible relationships between instructional differences and learning outcomes in a communicatively-based ESL program through the use observations consistent with the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching scheme, as well as pre and post-tests designed to measure language proficiency outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that

teachers in a CLT program do not implement a communicative approach in the same ways, and as a result, produce students who attain a variety of proficiency levels.

Adding to the body of research on TL proficiency outcomes in CLT programs, Hubert (2011) conducted a study on FL production in university Spanish-language courses at an institution subscribing to the CLT approach. Like many institutions that have adopted a CLT approach, linearly designed grammar textbooks remain as the foundation for the curriculum and are divided by chapter across the first few semesters. Thirty-two students were randomly selected from the first four-semester sequence of Spanish courses to participate in the study (8 students per section). Written data from first drafts of compositions and recorded oral interviews were collected and analyzed to determine the degree of TL production of elicited grammar topics covered in each course. The findings across the course sequences indicated an overall increase in length and grammatical complexity. However, even as students progressed through the more advanced courses of language study, Hubert (2011) discovered that most of the students continued to avoid many of the grammatical structures presented to them in class in both data sources. The author suggests a need to encourage higher frequency prompts that target specific grammatical structures, although this recommendation defies established guidelines produced by ACTFL (2012) regarding realistic levels of language proficiency and hours of instruction needed to achieve those levels. This study reinforces the disconnect between the complex variety of understanding of the CLT approach among language educators and the implementation of appropriate instructional strategies to meet specific language program goals.

Despite the uncertainty among teachers regarding the CLT approach and implementation in the classroom, Savignon (2002) strengthens the existing body of literature that summarizes its core tenets by describing what CLT is *not*. First, CLT is not limited to face-to-face oral communication, but rather all activities that involve learners in interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning. Thus, these negotiations would not be limited to oral face-to-face communication, but would also include reading and writing in a contextualized manner appropriate to learner needs. Additionally, CLT does not eliminate the focus on metalinguistic awareness or grammatical features of language, as is believed by many educators. Finally, Savignon (2002) reminds us that no single textbook or curricular set is appropriate for the CLT classroom, as a rigid curriculum does not align with the overarching objectives of the CLT approach; in particular, due to a lack of “context of situation” (p. 213).

In contrast to the Natural Approach, the primary role of the teacher in CLT classrooms is one of facilitator, who acts as a participant while the students are engaged in interpretation, expression in the target language and a negotiation of meaning throughout. Jacobs & Farrell (2003) notes the paradigm shift of teacher roles in CLT from teacher-centered, product-oriented and part-to-whole approaches to a learner-centered, process-oriented, and whole-to-part orientation of teaching and learning. Likewise, CLT classrooms focus specifically on communicative ‘tasks’ to build communicative competence. The next section explores the role of ‘task’ in the communicative classroom as an approach to FL teaching that goes beyond CLT.

Task-based Language Teaching

A central component of CLT consists of communicative tasks. Thus, the basis for Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), as the name indicates, centers itself around 'tasks.' We must begin by clarifying the definition of tasks in the language classroom; in principal to distinguish them from other devices used to elicit TL, such as activities, exercises, or drills. It is important to note before doing so, that language pedagogues have yet to fully agree about what constitutes a task (Crookes, 1986). Several definitions have developed from research and pedagogic literature including the following descriptions of 'tasks':

1) A task is 'an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process' (Prabhu, 1987, p. 24).
2) A task is 'an activity in which meaning is primary, there is some sort of relationship to the real world, task completion has some priority, and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome' (Skehan, 1996, p. 38).
3) A task is 'a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Examples of tasks include painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book, taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a check, finding a street destination, and helping someone across a road. Task [means] the hundred and one things people *do* in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between.

Tasks are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists' (Long, 1985, p. 89).

4) A communicative task is 'a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention in principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right' (Nunan, 1989, p. 10).

The above definitions encompass a wide variety of possible interpretations, but all address these dimensions of the task: the scope, the perspective from which the task is viewed, its authenticity, the linguistic skills required for performing the task, the psychological processes of the task performance, and the outcome(s). Taken from combination of two views of language acquisition, tasks possess both psycholinguistic motivations as well as sociocultural elements. In other words, the psycholinguistic features of tasks have a compelling influence on the way learners process language in performance, and potentially how they acquire a second language. Drawing on the work of Vygotsky, the sociocultural implications approach language learning as socially constructed through interaction (Ellis, 2000). As a result of these views, Ellis (2003) identifies the following critical features of a task:

1) A task is a work plan.
2) It involves a primary focus on meaning.
3) It involves real-world processes of language use.
4) It can involve any or all of the four language skills.
5) It engages cognitive processes.

6) It has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

The work plan can be interpreted in the form of teaching materials, but the results of the activity may or may not produce communicative behavior. The focus on meaning indicates that a task will incorporate some kind of gap, which requires a negotiation of meaning whereby students use language in order to close it. In terms of real-world processes of language use, these result from the performance of a task, including the misunderstandings and negotiation of meaning via questions and answers that occur in real-world communication. With regard to the application of tasks involving the four language skills, there are infinite possibilities for task design that focus on one or more at a time. In this way, tasks resemble exercises typically completed in language courses. The cognitive processes involved in tasks support Bloom's Taxonomy (2001) in the employment of classification, ordering, reasoning and evaluating skills needed to complete the task. Finally, the defined communicative outcomes frame a specific goal for the task, allowing the teacher to determine when students have finished a task.

If these criteria are met, it is easy to make a distinction between a task and a situational grammar exercise. Considering a task requires that all of the criteria be satisfied, a grammar exercise veers away from a focus on meaning, because the learners are aware that the activity is meant to practice correct usage of language rather than to negotiate meaning. Additionally, tasks can be unfocused or focused. As the name denotes, unfocused tasks frame a general use of communicative language, whereas focused tasks are meant to provide opportunities for communication using a particular

linguistic feature, such as a grammar structure. Notwithstanding, focused tasks must still adhere to the task criteria previously outlined.

The distinction between tasks and situational grammar exercises is an essential one, being that they can be attributed to the distinction between 'task-*based'* and task-*supported* learning (Ellis, 2009). Task-based learning requires a syllabus and course design whereby the content is informed by the tasks to be completed. On the other hand, task-supported learning uses a structural syllabus and often calls for presentation-practice-production (PPP). PPP is often considered a task, though it results in a situational grammar exercise.

Yet another interpretation of this idea is defined by the identification of strong and weak forms of the task-based approach. A strong form of the TBLT would support tasks as the central until of language teaching. Weak forms of TBLT mirror task-supported learning; the program design would purport that tasks were the main focus of language instruction, but would actually be embedded in a more complex pedagogic content. According to Skehan (1996a), the weak form of TBLT could be compared to general Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and even compatible with traditional PPP, rather than well-thought out guided tasks.

Despite the potential for learner L2 development and great appeal in terms of authenticity, TBLT is not without its critiques; many of which are rooted in the emphasis on meaning. For example, in communicative tasks, both learners and native-speakers pay more attention to communicating meaning, but are not as concerned with the exact form they use to convey the message. Additionally, in communicative tasks, learners often avoid the structures they are not comfortable with (linguistic breakdown)

(Skehan, 1996). Another view argues that there is no empirical evidence to support the theoretical underpinnings of TBLT or to show that this approach to teaching is superior to traditional approaches. Lastly, it is a common view that beginner language learners need to be taught grammar in order to be able to communicate, or they will lack the needed structures to produce discourse (Swan, 2005). However, TBLT can be input providing as well as output providing, thus allowing students to progress through a silent period before requiring production. This assumption that students *need* grammar to communicate contradicts the lower levels of proficiency as outlined in the ACTFL guidelines. Grammaticalization takes place over time, and typically involves many hours of input and practice.

To address the role of teacher monitoring during tasks, it is worthwhile to discuss the framework for designing task-based lessons. Ellis (2003) outlines three distinct phases necessary in the design of a task-based lesson, although, only the main task phase is obligatory. These stages include:

1) Pre-task (framing the activity, establishing an outcome, completing a similar task via whole class activity or modeling, planning time,)
2) During task (specific time or open-ended, number of students)
3) Post task (repeat performance, reflecting on task, consciousness-raising tasks)

In the pre-task phase, it is paramount to frame the activity to motivate the learners, contextualize the activity, activate prior knowledge, and to provide ways to organize what they will be required to do and the expected outcomes. Some ways of doing this include predicting, brainstorming, mind mapping, and asking questions. In performing a similar task, the teacher uses the dialogue to stimulate and scaffold

learners' performance of the task, giving them the tools to facilitate self-regulation when performing the main task on their own. Several studies suggest that the strategic planning component of the pre-task phase has positive effects on fluency, accuracy, and complexity during the production stage of the task (Foster, 2001; Ortega, 1999) These pre-task strategies help give learners the framework needed to successfully in a given task, and therefore, help control the kind of output produced during the task itself.

During the task, parameters of time can influence language production in different ways. When a time limit is set, teachers can encourage fluency during the task, as the learners will not have the same time as an unlimited task to reformulate, self-correct and produce more accurate discourse (Ellis, 2003). At this stage of the task-based lesson, it makes most sense for students to work in pairs or groups to complete the task, as they are more willing to take linguistic risks with their peers than with the teacher in a one-on-one interaction. This peer-interaction also has the potential for language acquisition to occur, due to the fact that peers tend to help correct one another, and do not fossilize the errors committed by one another. It also provides the space needed for their own speech to be used as comprehensible input, allowing learners to be "pushed to mobilize their emerging grammatical competence (Nunan, 1991).

The post-task phase offers several options with a capacity for enrichment and extension of the task. The first option, repeating the performance, can improve language production in terms of complexity. In this way, learners receive another opportunity for practice, either under the same conditions as the task itself, or under different ones (switching partners, individually etc.). Reflecting on the task requires the attention of students to think about different aspects of the task, including how they dealt with

communication problems, and offers an opportunity for students to consider how they might improve their performance on the task. Finally, through consciousness-raising tasks, learners can begin to pay attention to common errors made during tasks. This may mean analyzing a transcript of speech or writing, identify errors, and explain them.

The task-lesson design in many ways mirrors an ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) by moving through stages of interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes of communication. This is, of course, if all phases of the task-lesson design are implemented. As mentioned earlier, tasks can combine one or more of the four skills, and have a focus on input or on output. Input-oriented tasks have the potential to increase vocabulary (e.g. reading/listening) and help students to notice form in a non-traditional way (e.g. writing, speaking, input-processing, Vanpatten & Cadierno, 1993). Swain (1995) proposed that output-oriented tasks (production) can: (1) help students generate better input through the feedback that students' attempts elicit, (2) force learners to pay attention to grammar, (3) allow learners to experiment with language and test out hypotheses about the grammar of the TL, (4) help automatize existing L2 knowledge, (5) help learners develop discourse skills by producing longer production texts, (6) develop the learners' personal voice by allowing them to engage in tasks they are interested in contributing to. Thus, the production process essentially increases opportunities for students to gain proficiency.

TBLT inherently adheres to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, particularly when the task-complexity matches the level of the learners. For example, at the Novice-Mid level for speaking, learners: "can communicate minimally by using a number of isolated words and memorized phrases limited to the particular context in which the

language has been learned" (ACTFL, 2012, n.p.). Similarly, the Novice-Mid writing guidelines indicate that learners "can supply limited information on simple forms and documents, and other basic biographical information, such as names, numbers, and nationality. Novice Mid writers exhibit a high degree of accuracy when writing on well-practiced, familiar topics using limited formulaic language" (n.p.). Thus, tasks that require listing, ordering, sorting, sequencing, ranking, categorizing or classifying items would be appropriate for the students' level of proficiency. Additionally, the use of the TBLT approach models rational teaching which begins with objectives and moves through tasks to evaluation (Tyler, 1949), and second, because of its purposeful and functional uses of language, as well as its learner-centered focus.

The importance of experience, relevance, and learner-centered orientation has its origins in Dewey's (1913) work. In experiential learning, the immediate personal experience is the central point in which learning occurs. Here, the learner brings a subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts and ideas, while at the same time creating a space for testing hypotheses and validity of ideas during the learning process (Nunan, 1989). In sum, TBLT has the potential to bridge the gap between dependent and independent language users, drawing on prior knowledge, carrying that knowledge through task-dependency, practice in recycling previously learned material, an active learning process of engaging in one of three modes of communication, the opportunity to reproduce that practice, and finally, reflect on it.

The Paradigm Shift of Language Assessment Protocols

Just as theory, research, and practice in SLA and FL teaching and learning have changed dramatically over the past several decades, FL assessment has also experienced

a transformation, as epistemological positions transitioned from positivist to post-positivist views at the start of the 20th century. This shift in world-views and values was considered revolutionary. The ideologies of Newton, Descartes, Dalton, Maxwell, and Darwin in the 17th-19th centuries were derived from the perspective of the world as a machine, consisting of mechanical laws, whereby knowledge could only be constructed by fragmenting thoughts and problems into tiny pieces (its parts), in order to place it back in logical order (Capra, 1982). It was not until the early 20th century that physicist Albert Einstein proposed his theory of relativity, thus expanding the understanding of space and time in terms of interconnectedness, or by looking at the relationships between things (Capra, 1982).

While the field of science is discussed here, it serves as an illustrative example of the paradigm shift in the 20th century from positivist to post-positivist ways of knowing that can be seen across a wide variety of fields (Berman, 1981; Capra, 1982; Merchant, 1992). Side by side, these views of knowledge can be summarized within the context of assessment in general education, as well as to examine the shifts in assessment in FL education. However, it is worth mentioning that while the shift in epistemology in language teaching and assessment appears momentous, it represents a very small change along a spectrum that includes post modernistic, post structural, and critical theories of knowledge (Gannon & Davies, 2007; Ricento, 2009). Moreover, for the purpose of the present study, table 2.1 provides a concise synopsis of the contrasting views between positivist and post positivist thought (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001).

Table 2.1 Comparison between positivist and post-positivist thought

Positivism	Post Positivism
A focus on individual parts void of context	Emphasis on the whole, contextualized
Emphasis on separation	Emphasis on integration
General Focus	Specific focus
Knowledge as objective and quantifiable	Knowledge as subjective and not quantifiable
Top-down	Bottom-up
Standardized	Diverse
Emphasis on the product	Emphasis on product as well as process

The findings in SLA and FL Pedagogy research inform the application of teaching practices, while the simultaneous shifts in epistemology have equally affected the assessment practices used today. Shrum & Glisan (2010) expand this notion to examine assessment in terms of an assessment paradigm shift in FL education. Table 2.2 provides an adapted summary of the old vs. new paradigm with regard to assessment practices in FL education (Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Table 2.2 Old vs. New Paradigm in FL Assessment Practices

	Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Purpose of Assessment	Evaluation and grade assignment	Assessment of proficiency and growth according to standards, evaluation of instruction and curriculum, improve student proficiency, connect instruction & assessment
Timing and type of Assessments	End of instruction, *either* summative *or* formative, paper-and pencil or textbook-generated exams.	Backward design to encourage goals in guiding instruction, both summative and formative, assessments include multiple measures in language performance, tasks are authentic
Content/Format of Assessments	Discrete-point grammar and vocabulary, right vs. wrong answers,	Integrates the 3 modes of communication & standards, open-ended

	decontextualized	responses, allows for diversity in language
Role of Student	Limited opportunities to demonstrate proficiency, encouraged to give only correct answers, not involved in planning or assessment	Receives rubric or assessment protocol beforehand, encouraged to create with language, many opportunities to demonstrate proficiency gains, has a role in assessment planning, receives frequent feedback
Role of Teacher	Administers grades and provides only corrective feedback	Gives clear expectations for performance targets prior to assessing students, provides clear feedback, uses assessment data to inform curriculum & instruction
Grades and Feedback	Points awarded for correct answers, corrective feedback only	Rubrics delineate a range of performance possibilities, points are distributed to include both accuracy and creativity, descriptive feedback is provided to encourage improvement

As can be seen from the table above, FL assessment practices have experienced the transition from positivist to post positivist thought in a dramatic way. This holistic approach to FL learning and assessment is due to the creation of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards, 2006), as well as the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines* (ACTFL, 2012); both of which have provided a clear focus for K-16 language educators in terms of goal-setting and understanding how well students can be expected to perform across benchmarks of language developed described in the guidelines. As a result, FL teaching and assessment have evolved from discrete-point, grammar driven paper-and-pencil tests, to assessments that emphasize

communicative and performance-based use of the target language (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, Koda, Swender & Sandrock, 2006).

In spite of the fact that many K-12 and university-level FL programs continue to subscribe to older models of FL teaching, learning, and assessment, the language program examined in the present study has committed to reforming the language methodologies and materials used in curriculum, instruction and assessment, in an effort to adhere to the current trends and movements in FL research and education. While this shift has been a lengthy process, other K-12 and post-secondary programs have made this transition with relative ease (e.g. Davin, Troyan, Donato & Hellman, 2011; Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Huebner & Jensen, 1992; Smith, 1984).

One such program at the University of Southern California (USC) opted to eliminate the idea of semester-based language requirements all together in favor of adopting the attainment of a minimum proficiency-level to be demonstrated by students in order to complete language studies (Smith, 1984). The assessment given to students in this case was developed to measure oral and reading proficiency at the end of two hundred hours of language study (three semesters). As expected, teachers in the program were forced to abandon archaic ways of teaching grammar and vocabulary in favor of communicative activities to engage students in real-world contexts, as well as activities to develop L2 reading skills.

In order to preserve the development of grammatical accuracy, Smith (1984) explains that language students completed homework and computer-based lab activities to practice the structural components of language needed to participate in activities during class time the following day. The proficiency levels were followed over the

course of five semesters and initial results showed a significant increase in both conversational and reading proficiency. USC determined the minimum passing score for conversational proficiency to be a 4 out of 10 on an evaluation instrument designed by the USC Foreign Language Executive Committee. The instrument was tested and deemed valid by collecting data from administration by novice instructors. The conversation assessment consisted of a conversation about a picture, where the student and instructor engaged in an exchange that included a greeting, small talk, and the search for a topic over which both participants could comment. Over the course of five semesters, the average score on the conversational proficiency measure increased to 6.3 out of 10, indicating that students were attaining higher levels of proficiency as the program established itself.

The reading measure in this study also showed improvement over the five-semester period. The reading exam consisted of an authentic text pertaining to a familiar topic ranging from 90-300 words in length, followed by a series of multiple choice questions to measure the students' global competence rather than knowledge of specific details. The USC language committee determined 65% to be the minimum proficiency score on this assessment, and over the course of the five-semesters examined in this study, student scores moved from 50% in the first semester to 71% in the fifth semester. Overall, Smith (1984) reported that the move toward proficiency-based instruction and assessment did not affect accuracy to a significant degree, but rather, increased students' ability to participate in meaningful conversation, read and understand authentic texts, and improved overall attitudes toward language learning.

However, some apprehension still exists as programs move toward proficiency-based assessment. One of the fears of assessing proficiency is that too much emphasis is placed on the development of oral proficiency, thus setting aside potential learner variables that have an effect on the development of L2 proficiency (Huebner & Jensen, 1992). Some of these variables include: aptitude, attitude, motivation, student needs and interests, and learning styles. Additionally, many believe that an overemphasis on oral proficiency would overshadow the development of other skills crucial to language proficiency such as, reading, listening, writing, and cultural understanding (Huebner & Jensen, 1992). Nonetheless, numerous studies of which an emphasis on oral proficiency was measured against more traditional measures concluded that student achievement did not suffer in the other skill areas as a result (Borden, 2012; Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Huebner & Jensen, 1992). Several notable post-secondary level studies have supported the use of ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) training to inform proficiency-oriented practices (Dodds, 1992; Freed, 1987; McMillen, Villar & Mueser-Blincow, 1993). Results of those studies indicated higher student self-confidence in speaking, student satisfaction with the curriculum, improvement and implementation of real-life communicative activities, testing materials, and higher performance on assessments provided by the respective departments. These findings support the growing trend in K-12 and post-secondary programs with regard to both proficiency-based instruction and assessment.

In order for a proficiency-based curriculum and assessment protocol to be successful in any language program, Sandrock (2015) encourages teachers to adopt the principles of backward design (see Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Backward design

involves first the identification of clear performance goals. The focus on goals and performance guidelines provided by *The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards, 2006) and the ACTFL guidelines (ACTFL 2012) have been a common place to start in this process (Adair-Hauck et.al, 2006).

The second step of backward design includes the creation of assessment tasks designed for learners to demonstrate those goals. Current research in FL teaching calls for these assessments to measure performance in an authentic way. As Wiggins (1998) points out, authentic performance assessments mirror the tasks and encounters learners face in the real world. Many of these task types were discussed in detail previously in the literature on CLT and TBLT.

The final consideration in backward design involves the instructional plans that are made to determine what learners need to know and be able to do in order to flourish in the assessment tasks. In addition to the implementation of curricular activities, learners are made aware of the language expectations and standards meant for them to meet. In fact, a major component of a successful proficiency-based language teaching and assessment includes the sharing of criteria with students before the assessment, as well as clear feedback to improve both learner performance and to improve instruction and learning (Adair-Hauck et. al, 2006, Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Sandrock, 2015).

While the professional literature reinforces the implications for assessment protocol in FL education, the implementation of proficiency-based authentic performance tasks still lags behind what has been suggested in the research. This is illustrated by the continued use of textbook-generated, discrete-point assessment

measures that allow only for quantifiable information to be gleaned from their results (Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; Wiggins, 1998, Shrum & Glisan, 2010). The struggle to hold on to antiquated beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment is connected to teacher effectiveness overall. The next section examines many of the traits that contribute to teaching effectiveness across the disciplines. First, effective teaching behaviors and traits are discussed in the realm of general education. Then, research on teaching effective in FL education is examined. These factors are of high importance when considering student achievement and overall learner satisfaction in FL courses.

Defining and Identifying Behaviors of Effective Teachers in General Education

An underlying theory in teacher evaluation is that effective teaching behaviors can be identified, are stable, and fairly consistent in their effects on learners across all learning contexts (Andrews & Barnes, 1990). According to Stronge (2007), the concept of effectiveness is an ambiguous one, due in part to the complex nature of teaching. While many explanations of effective teaching have been developed, Dewar (2002) broadly defines effective teachers as those through whom learners are able to learn what has been outlined in specific, clear, and measurable goals and objectives of the course. On the other hand, many researchers claim that a universally accepted definition of effective teaching simply does not exist (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Nonetheless, it is generally accepted in the professional literature that effective teaching is not discipline specific, as the most important qualities possessed by effective teachers transcend academic disciplines (Dewar, 2002; Tate, 1993).

Similarly, a teacher's impact is significant, so it becomes a challenge to define exactly what constitutes effectiveness in teaching, as well as how to measure it. This is

an important consideration given that many variables outside the teacher's control also play a role in measures of effectiveness. However, in terms of student achievement, mounting evidence suggests that specific characteristics and behaviors are important in effective teaching. A plethora of research has produced extensive lists compiling the results of hundreds of studies outlining what are considered to be the most salient variables in teacher effectiveness.

For example, an early survey of educators examined the behaviors that make effective teachers. Boag (1989) reported the following 15 most rated qualities:

1) Enthuse students
2) Treat them as individuals
3) Know the subject
4) Be loving and warm
5) Teach to learn
6) Empathize with students
7) Relate to others
8) Be fair, firm and flexible
9) Be organized
10) Prepare students for life
11) Manage classroom
12) Have high self-esteem
13) Have a sense of humor
14) Be a complete person
15) Take risks

Another study reporting on a review of more than 70 studies of effective teaching at the post-secondary level indicated the following characteristics associated with superior teaching (Feldman, 1976):

1) Stimulates student interest
2) Clear and understandable
3) Knowledge of subject matter
4) Preparation and organization of the course
5) Enthusiasm for teaching and content
6) Friendliness (concern and respect for students)
7) Helpfulness (availability)
8) Openness to others' opinions

In a separate compilation of research from 22 effective schools, Cruickshank (1990) identified seven domains to summarize effective teaching behaviors:

1) Teacher character traits
2) What the teacher knows
3) What the teacher teaches
4) What the teacher expects
5) How the teacher teaches
6) How the teacher reacts to pupils
7) How the teacher manages the classroom

Although Stronge's (2007) analysis of prior research illuminated inconsistencies in defining effectiveness, his examination yielded characteristics of effective teaching (Cawelti, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Marzano, Pickering & McTighe, 1993;

Tucker & Stronge, 2005). These commonalities included the following characteristics: the teacher as an individual, teacher preparation, classroom management, and the way a teacher planned, taught, and monitored student progress. The collective of those qualities exemplified an effective teacher.

Similarly, Hativa et. al (2001) suggested that "exemplary teachers are well prepared and organized, present the material clearly, stimulate students' interest, engagement, and motivation in studying the material through their enthusiasm/expressiveness, have positive rapport with students, show high expectations of them, encourage them, and generally maintain a positive classroom environment" (pp. 701-702).

According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2002), five core propositions form the foundation of skills, knowledge, dispositions and beliefs of effective teachers:

1) Teachers are committed to students and learning.
2) Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3) Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5) Teachers are members of learning communities.

MacGregor (2007) analyzed various frameworks of effective teaching, providing a comprehensive list of descriptors; many of which have been outlined above.

1. There is a high degree of student engagement.
2. The teacher designs and delivers effective instruction.

3. The teacher effectively uses assessment for student learning.
4. The teacher uses assessment for student learning.
5. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of students.
6. The teacher selects and communicates clear instructional goals.
7. There are clear classroom procedures.
8. The teacher demonstrates content knowledge.
9. The teacher uses high quality questioning/discussion techniques.
10. The teacher demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness.
11. The lesson reflects the teachers' knowledge of resources.
12. The teacher communicates clearly.
13. The teacher provides feedback to students.
14. The organization of classroom space is conducive to learning.
15. The teacher uses anticipatory set.
16. The teacher provides lesson closure.

Despite the findings outlined in more recent literature in the previous sections, White, Wyne, Stuck & Coop (1987) concluded upon review of 300 studies that no single behavior relates directly to student learning and achievement. Instead, clusters of behaviors can be linked to effective teaching. These clusters include, time management of instruction, management of student behavior, instructional presentation, instructional monitoring and instructional feedback.

In an attempt to synthesize the abounding research in teacher effectiveness overall, Dewar (2002) purports empathy and accessibility to be the most consistently mentioned elements of good teaching. Empathy encompasses a vast number of the

descriptors of good teaching mentioned in the previous research. It includes areas of connecting to student interest, understanding students, and staying relevant in trends and topics relating to current student life to connect deeper to student backgrounds. Thus, getting to know students allows this kind of empathy and is key to being an effective teacher.

Accessibility on the other hand is quite simple, as it constitutes an easily solvable organizational issue. According to Dewar (2002), students view accessibility as a major aspect of effective teaching. This term again encompasses many of the behaviors and characteristics previously discussed including, providing feedback, being available to provide that feedback, organization and timely information related to assignments, among others.

Walls, Nardi, vonMinden & Hoffman (2002) have suggested that a composite of effective teaching behaviors emerging from prospective, novice, and experienced teachers accurately describe an effective teacher. The categories that emerged from the research were derived after sorting several hundred verb-referent statements on effective teaching generated by educators in three groups: 30 pre-service teachers, 30 novice teachers, and 30 experienced teachers. The domains included: (1) Emotional Environment (*caring, empathy, helpfulness)*; (2) Teacher Skill (*clarity, preparedness, organization)*; (3) Teacher Motivation (*enthusiasm, relationship to students)*; (4) Student Participation (*engaging)*; and (5) Rules and Grades (*control)*. Reliability of the five categories was confirmed after two independent scorers yielded 97 percent agreement in the classification of 100 verb-referent statements. Descriptors of each of the categories mirror many of the characteristics reported in research on teacher

effectiveness. The study is both representative of the conglomeration of previous studies on teacher effectiveness, but has the added attribute that it is relatively simple, easy to understand, and its variables are observable.

Nonetheless, visibly lacking in current research in higher education are richer descriptions of those teaching behaviors that are specific to FL teaching. A thorough examination of the behaviors in general education and FL teaching demonstrates that effective teaching is not necessarily based on some universal laws, in particular because good teaching can occur in a multitude of ways (Kivunja, 2014). In addition, it is possible that what is effective in one area, context or era, may not be so to the next. The next section examines several descriptors of effective FL teaching to expand on previous research in general education.

Empirical Research on Effective Foreign Language Teaching

In an effort to improve the quality of FL teachers in United States, many of the professional organizations (e.g. ACTFL, National Standards) have issued standards in FL teaching and learning. However, most of the standards that support effective language teaching are based on research conducted in non-discipline-specific fields of general education (Bell, 2005). Some of these generic standards include: lifelong learning (professional development), leadership skills, professional skills, overall communication, and an awareness of diverse populations. The sole qualities related to FL teaching indicate that the teacher should be able to communicate the language proficiently and be able to teach about the target culture.

A study conducted by Brosh (1996) examined effective FL teaching from the perspective of 406 high school students in research specific to effective FL teaching. Four desirable behaviors emerged from the findings:

1) Knowledge and command of the target language.
2) Ability to organize, explain, and clarify, as well as to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students.
3) Fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice.
4) Availability to students.

The NBTPS (2002) Standards for World Languages Other Than English (WLOE) concur with the research by Brosh (1996), offering an expanded list of nine standards for accomplished teachers. The standards describe the important facets of accomplished (effective) teaching; often coexisting as a result of consistent accomplished practice.

1) Knowledge of Students
2) Knowledge of Language
3) Knowledge of Culture
4) Knowledge of Language Acquisition
5) Fair and Equitable Learning Environment
6) Designing Curriculum and Planning Instruction
7) Assessment
8) Reflection
9) Professionalism

While the aforementioned traits and behaviors specific to effective FL teaching expand on the existing professional literature in general education, we must also

consider the perspective of administrators, or those responsible for evaluating FL teachers. In general, administrators seek to identify particular effective teaching behaviors during the evaluation process. Jacob & Lefgren (2008) outlined these characteristics to include dedication and work ethic, overall organization, classroom management, being a role model to students, maintaining positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and raising student achievement. Thus, administrator evaluations of instructional staff appear to encompass a broader set of characteristics that go beyond teacher knowledge, skill and intelligence, but also measure affective considerations including interpersonal relationships between students and teacher, and a caring attitude toward students (Harris & Sass, 2009). The following section examines FL teacher evaluation to round out the connection between student and administrator perceptions of effective FL teaching.

Evaluation in the FL Classroom

It is commonplace to see evaluation of FL teaching carried out by administrators with limited or nonexistent L2 background in K-12 settings. In addition, it is quite likely that K-12 administrators who studied some foreign language in school did so during a very different era in FL education. In this way, administrators are put at a disadvantage as observers in these classrooms (Wallinger, 2000). Along the same lines, post-secondary FL evaluations are often administered by language coordinators with varying degrees of background and formation in FL pedagogy, or by upper administration whose sole focus of study is or has been literature. Thus, language activities that include conjugating verbs and translating sentences may appear impressive to the

observer/evaluator while lacking in ability to effectively help students acquire language (Wallinger, 2000).

As a result, several frameworks have been developed for administrators to help guide in the evaluation process. As with any evaluation instrument, the desire is to quantify and measure effective teaching in some way. The National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages (NADSFL, 1999) suggests that observers should watch the students as much as or more than the teacher. Specifically, NADSFL recommends the following for teachers:

1) Use the target language (TL) most of the time
2) Incorporate visual cues to enhance comprehension while in the TL
3) Use the space wisely to foster participation and classroom management
4) Engage all students
5) Manage instructional time
6) Move from yes/no questions to open-ended questions as per level appropriateness

The observers are directed to pay attention to student interactions in the following ways:

1) Respond to prompts from the teacher and communicate in the FL
2) Full-class participation and engagement in activities

Additionally, NADSFL (1999) outlines detailed activity types that are considered best practices during these observations. It is recommended that activities are student-centered in nature, whereby students are given opportunities to practice the TL through paired or small group work. Administrators are directed to pay attention to clear and comprehensible instructions given by the instructor, as well as follow-up

activities or conclusions that justify the paired or small group work. The observation of students in a learner-centered environment would then include use of the TL in these activities, participation in the paired or small group work, and demonstrable comprehension of completed activity.

FL classroom observers are also encouraged to notice the instructor's incorporation of practice in all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening in culturally appropriate ways. Conversely, students are expected to be able to use all four skills as prompted by the teacher. The structure of all of these elements should occur in a classroom safe classroom environment that encourages students to experiment and create with language. Based on NADSFL (1999) documents for observing FL teachers, Wallinger (2000) suggests that teachers do the following to create this kind of classroom environment:

1) Model and reciprocate respect for students and encourage respect between students
2) Be patient and add humor to encourage participation
3) Have good control of class in a positive way
4) Allow appropriate wait time for student responses
5) Use verbal and nonverbal cues while waiting for student repsonses
6) Be mindful in error correction
7) Scaffold strengths to improve areas of weakness

Finally, the classroom space should be observed for evidence of resources that can be used to reinforce contextual learning of the TL (Wallinger, 2000). This area may be expanded to include the use of appropriate technology in so far as it enhances or

facilitates language acquisition. At an appropriate point in the lesson observed, administrators should also expect to see some kind of formal or informal assessment that demonstrates student performance in real-life situations.

Following in the footsteps of the above framework, the Colorado State Model Educator System (2016) mirrors many of the descriptors listed in the NADSFL (1999) documents. Seven standards have been designated for observation of effective teaching and include:

1) Demonstration of pedagogical expertise content knowledge
2) A safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for students
3) Effective planning and delivery of instruction which contributes to student learning
4) Teacher reflection on the practice
5) Demonstrable leadership
6) Teacher responsibility for student growth

Additionally, many other states have adopted elements of the NADSFL (1999) framework (e.g. Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio). More recently, the Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning (TELL) Project is being adopted as a comprehensive measure of teaching effectiveness in South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, among others. The evaluation instrument includes seven domains: environment, the learning experience, collaboration, planning, performance and feedback, professionalism, and learning tools. These domains encompass a range of effective teaching behaviors that have been repeatedly mentioned in this review of the

literature on the subject. In all of these types of evaluation instruments, the descriptors are measured on a 4 or 5-point scale (Beaudrie, Brown & Thompson, 2004).

Overall, research on teacher effectiveness is quite complex due to the nature of varied teaching styles and teaching contexts. However, there is a general consensus on what defines effective teaching, and we rely on this consensus to evaluate current language programs and teaching faculty. It is noteworthy to mention that evaluation of teaching effectiveness is best approximated when the instrument is designed and developed for the specific purpose of evaluating FL teaching (Beaudrie et. al, 2004).

Of course, the impact of effective teaching extends beyond the behaviors, qualities and traits discussed above. It also influences student learning outcomes in any given course. As student achievement is one of the primary classroom goals for administrators and teachers, the connection between effective teaching and student performance will be discussed next.

Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement

Bourgeoning research in teacher effectiveness and student achievement has primarily focused on studies in reading and math from the elementary to secondary level. Results from numerous studies in these fields indicate the significant role effective teachers play in positive student performance (Stronge, 2013). In the field of foreign language pedagogy, language educators have also begun to recognize that teachers, apart from the method or materials they use, are vital to understanding and improving the quality of language teaching and learning outcomes (Freeman Johnson, 1998). However, limited empirical research evidence exists in student achievement as it relates to teacher effectiveness to date (Akbari & Allvar, 2010).

In one study aimed to measure student achievement in reading in math for 4600 fifth-grade students, Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Grant (2011) developed a hierarchical linear model (HLM) to estimate the growth for all students in the sample to predict the expected level of achievement for each individual student. The researchers controlled for possible variables, calculated the students' residual gain scores, and traced them back to the individual teachers. The mean residual gains associated with effective teachers ranged from two standard deviations below the expected scores to two standard deviations above expectations. According to this research and others like it, even slight increases in standard deviations are equated with learning outcomes equaling anywhere from two months to a year of advantage over courses taught by ineffective teachers (e.g.,Nye, Konstantopoulous & Hedges, 2004; Leigh, 2010).

Specifically, the students in the top quartile teachers' classes scored in the 54th percentile for reading and the 70th percentile for math. The difference between student scores in the top quartile teachers' classes and those in the bottom quartile teachers' classes was a 30-percentile point difference. It bears mentioning that there was no statistically significant difference in achievement between the two quartiles at the start of the school year. Stronge et. al (2011) concluded that the 30-percentile point difference was attributed to effective teaching in the top quartile classrooms.

It is also known that apart from teacher effectiveness, there are several factors that contribute to student performance. The variance in factors such as the individual student, home life, the school, the direction of the school by principal or other administration, peer effects, and the teachers contribute to the variability, or individual differences, in student achievement (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Hattie (2003) estimates

that teachers may account for approximately 30% of variance involved in student performance. Thus, teacher effectiveness plays an important role in student success, both while the student is taught by said effective teacher and potentially beyond.

In fact, the cumulative and residual effects of quality teaching on student achievement may determine overall student growth in any given program. In terms of cumulative effects, Sanders and Rivers (1996) discovered that students who had received instruction from highly effective teachers over the course of three years score an average of 50 percentile points higher in math assessments than those taught by ineffective teachers. Numerous studies have also confirmed the positive cumulative effects of courses taught by effective teachers (e.g., Jordan, Mendro & Weerasinghe, 1997; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). On the other hand, extended exposure to ineffective teaching has been shown to negatively affect student growth by an average of approximately five percentile points per year (Gordon, Kane & Staiger, 2006; Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

Conversely, the residual impact of a teacher's effect may affect student learning longitudinally (Stronge, 2013). Studies on cumulative effects of teacher effectiveness have found that residual effects of both effective and ineffective teachers remain years later, regardless of the effectiveness of subsequent instruction (Sanders & Horn, 1998; Mendro, Jordan, Gomez, Anderson & Bemby, 1998). One study concluded that students exposed to ineffective instruction for even one year, although followed by high-achieving instruction, were unable to exceed the level of achievement of peers who had been taught by effective teachers throughout (Mendro et. al,1998)

The consensus in studies on teacher effectiveness and student performance and achievement indicates there is indeed an impact on student learning. Both positive and negative effects are both cumulative and residual, while gains in courses taught by effective teachers are significant. Thus, teacher effectiveness is arguably one of the most important factors for improving student achievement.

Chapter Summary

The review of literature in this chapter seeks to provide a framework for the context of this study with regard to research in SLA, trends in instructional methodologies, teacher effectiveness in general and FL teaching and evaluation of effective teaching, and the impact of effective teaching on student achievement. This study aims to extend the knowledge of effective teaching behaviors. The hope is that the results will help shape future models for FL teacher preparation and evaluation that reflect the most salient behaviors of effective FL teaching.

Chapter 3: Method

Introduction

The results of teacher evaluations over the past two years have exposed disparities in the quality of instruction in the first and second year course sequence. As instructors are only observed once a year for 50 minutes, it is difficult to describe what effective language teachers do in their classes. At the same time, the feedback received on Student Teacher Evaluations (STEs) may provide a false sense of efficacy for language instructors. Thus, ineffective teaching is often perpetuated and inadvertently reinforced.

Restatement of the Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand *how* high-achieving instructors approached instruction in a communicative, proficiency-based Spanish language program. The following three questions guided the research:

1) How do high-achieving instructors in a proficiency-based Spanish Language Program approach instruction?
2) How are high-achieving instructors alike and how are they different?
3) What is the effect of high-achieving instruction on student performance?

Case Study

My goal was to describe *how* high-achieving instructors approach instruction, and to learn about the similarities and differences between them. A first step in case study research is to adequately develop and understand the case being examined (Stake, 1995). Case study research demands "close examination of people, topics, issues, or programs," (Hays, 2004, p. 218) which constitute a case, or, that which can be deemed a

"bounded system." As Hatch (2002) describes, "defining the boundaries, or specifying the unit of analysis the key decision point in case study design" (p. 30). In the context of the present case study, the bounded unit pertained to approaches to instruction among high-achieving Spanish instructors in higher education.

While there are several approaches to examining systems within case study research, the purpose of the research determines the appropriate methodology, such as case studies that are either exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive (Yin, 2003). The use of exploratory case studies was not appropriate for this research, as "fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses" (Yin, 2003, p. 6), and not useful for the research questions. Explanatory case studies might be inappropriate because their purpose is to suggest "clues to possible cause-and-effect relationships" (Yin, 2003, p. 7). Thus, the descriptive case study method was chosen, as its purpose serves to develop a document that brings to light all the parts of an experience; in this case, the experience in the classroom as high-achieving, effective language teachers (Stake, 1995).

Research Design

The present study employs the use of quantitative statistics as part of the case study to help answer the research questions for several reasons. One of the reasons is to "gain information about different aspects of the phenomena that you are studying or about different phenomena" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 102). To further support the rationale for this study design, a case study is deemed successful only when comprised of the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources (Yin, 2003). This data may contain both qualitative and quantitative components to the extent that the triangulation

of these data sources leads to a reliable understanding of the case (Yin, 2003). As Yin (2015) points out, "the ideal triangulation would not only seek confirmation from three sources but would try to rely on three different sources" (p. 88). The following sections outline the specific design of this study including the participant selection, the program and university context, data collection sources and methods, data analysis, data management, and self-reflexivity.

Participants

Participants were selected for this study through purposeful sampling of instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). As Patton (1990) describes, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 169). Specifically, I applied the strategy of criterion sampling to examine instructors and GTAs who received a 4.0 or better average on the combined score of STEs and teaching evaluations conducted by the language coordinators. This technique allowed for a review of cases that met this predetermined standard, as it is the criterion that distinguished high-achieving instructors from their peers. According to Patten (1990) "criterion sampling can add an important qualitative component to an ongoing program monitoring system" similar to the one we have in place at our institution with regard to evaluation and training (p. 177).

The Spanish Language Program (SLP) utilizes a weighted average (30%) of the numeric score received on question six of the Student Teacher Evaluations (STEs) stating:

> Teacher's overall effectiveness was: 1-poor, 2-fair, 3-good, 4-very good,5-excellent.

The remaining 70% of the score results from the average received on the criterion-referenced evaluation tool used to observe and evaluate teachers. Categories on this tool rate from: 1-unsatisfactory, 2-below target expectations, 3-needs further evaluation, 4-approaching target expectations, 5-exceeds target expectations. The 30/70 average was used to determine which of the instructors and GTAs would be classified as *high-achieving* for the purpose of this study (Stake, 1995).

The target population was defined as all by-the-course instructors and graduate teaching assistants (n=5) who received an average of 4.0 or higher on the combined weighted average (30/70) of their STEs and departmental teaching evaluations. To minimize variation among participants, all those sampled were also teaching the same Introductory Spanish 1115 course during the fall semester of 2016. A total of 5 (2 males and 3 females) met these criteria. Two of the 5 participants were native speakers of English (one male and one female) and 3 were native speakers of Spanish (one male and two females) who taught Spanish as a foreign language. Additionally, 2 were GTAs (one male and one female) and the other 3 were by-the-course instructors (one male and two females).

From the target population, consent to participate in the study was solicited from the accessible population (n=5) as they were all under my supervision for teaching first-year courses. From the group of 5 by-the-course instructors (n=3) and GTAs (n=2), all 5 gave written consent to participate in the study (two males and three females).

The number of participants was considered sufficient (based on the nature of this study) for the following reasons:

1. One of the aims of this study was to examine the similarities and differences in approaches to instruction among high-achieving teachers through within-case analysis.
2. Given the somewhat condensed amount of time for data collection, as well as the fact that I, the researcher, was the sole data collector, the level of involvement required by the data collection procedures and the extent of information to be amassed from various sources would not have been attainable with a larger number of participants. A sample of 5 was sufficient to provide and describe the phenomena.

Permission to carry out the study was obtained by the Institutional Review Board, as per university requirements. Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, they read and signed the approved consent form which detailed of the purpose of the study, duration of participation, benefits and risks, and their rights to obtain further information about the study, as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any time (Sin, 2005).

University and Program Context

In order to understand the unique context of the SLP at SW University, it is important to describe the background of the program's construct. The SW University lower-division SLP serves approximately 4400 students per academic year. The instructional staff is comprised of 20 by-the-course instructors, 19 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), one first-year coordinator and one second-year coordinator. By-the-course instructors generally teach four courses per semester and the GTAs teach only two so that they may focus on graduate coursework. The majority of instructional staff,

including GTAs, has no formal FL pedagogical training, and holds (or is in pursuit of) Master of Arts degrees in Spanish Literature, Art, and other areas unrelated to language teaching.

In an effort to update the instructional staff on best practices and current research in FL theory and pedagogy, the SLP provided several weeklong professional development sessions conducted by ACTFL experts beginning in 2012. Some of the training included: an understanding of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in terms of what students can do with language at the various proficiency levels, workshops on teaching for communication, sessions on assessment of language performance, and working in the three modes of communication. The idea was to help guide the previously traditional-based program toward a proficiency-based one.

The training process has continued over the past three years via requests from instructors who wish to better their teaching practices. At the start of each academic year, instructors are provided with two full days of training related to different aspects of the courses they teach. Some of these sessions have included: how to teach L2 learners to read, how to work with texts in the second language classroom, classroom management, scaffolding knowledge, and course management. A one-day workshop is organized at the start of the spring semester and usually includes an invited guest to address specific pedagogical needs in the lower division courses. Additionally, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) experts such as Bill VanPatten have visited the institution to talk about the methodology and realities of what students can do with language at the novice and intermediate level. Funds were also provided during the spring of 2016 for instructors to attend a session given by Dr. Stephen Krashen on the

use of Comprehensible Input (CI) and the importance of reading in L2. In sum, the efforts of the coordination team continue to seek out and provide meaningful professional development opportunities to professionalize the SLP and enhance the knowledge based of the instructional staff and teaching effectiveness as language instructors in a communicative, proficiency-based curriculum.

In the lower division courses, comprised of a four-semester sequence, the students use the textbook *Puntos de Partida* (Dorwick, 2012). The chapters are divided among the four courses as follows:

1) SPAN 1115-Beginning Spanish, Chapters 1-6
2) SPAN 1225-Beginning Spanish Continued, Chapters 7-11
3) SPAN 2113-Intermediate Spanish, Chapters 12-15
4) SPAN 2223-Intermediate Spanish Continued, Chapters 16-18

Each instructor and GTA is provided with a course calendar of day-to-day communicative activities that include clearly defined learning objectives. Students in the first-year sequence are given task-based proficiency assessments in reading, speaking, writing and listening.

In order to better understand these assessments, a brief description of each is included here. However, a more detailed description of the assessments will be discussed later in this chapter. In Spanish 1115 (the course used as the focus in this study), students read two short texts and answer questions related to the main idea, the meaning of words in context, and the making of lists; all of which are based around content the students have studied in class. There are two speaking assessments; one interpersonal and one presentational. The interpersonal speaking assessment requires

students to identify objects, describe people and things, and list actions from pictures. The presentational assessment requires students to produce a video in the target language about a range of topics related to novice-level proficiency (school, home, clothing, family). The writing assessments consist of a composition about a familiar topic, and three written exams (two midterm exams and a final). On the written exams, students are asked to approach level-appropriate tasks using reading and writing skills to communicate a message about familiar topics. Finally, students' listening skills are evaluated via two short listening assessments consisting of four audio/video segments, each with a series of multiple choice questions.

At present, roughly 14 of 39 teachers have received unsatisfactory teaching evaluations and low STE scores in the past twelve months. The first and second year language coordinators, me and my colleague, have implemented a remediation plan for the fourteen instructors rated unsatisfactory that includes: observations of other Spanish classes, reflections on those observations relating directly to areas of weakness reported in their teaching evaluations, lesson plan design and implementation, and re-evaluation by the coordinators. New instructors and GTAs have been paired with senior mentors who provide support during the first year teaching in the SLP.

The goal is to improve the overall teaching effectiveness among instructional staff, while significantly reducing the number of unsatisfactory teaching and student evaluations.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Classroom Observations

Table 3.1 Timeline and frequency of classroom observations

Instructors	**Timeline and Frequency**		**Total**
	October 2016	November 2016	
Carolina	2	2	4
Christina	3	1	4
Esther	3	1	4
Drexler	2	2	4
Pablo	2	2	4

Table 3.1 depicts the number of classroom observations for each instructor over the duration of a two-month period. Each observation was conducted during a 50-minute period in Spanish 1115 (Introductory Spanish) course, and the participants were made aware of which days their classes would be visited. According to Friedrichs & Ludtke (1975), "participant observation registers perceptible actions in 'natural' situations on the basis of a preset scheme" (p. 3). The purpose of the observations was to examine how each of the participants approached instruction within the 'natural' situation of everyday classroom instruction. Hancock and Algozzine (2015) suggest that observations, unlike interviews, may present more objective data that allow researchers to verify if participants actually do what they say they do when asked in interviews.

As an unobtrusive observer, the participants knew they were being observed, and this contributed to nonverbal communications as I sat in the back of the classroom and took notes during my observations. Considering I did not teach any part of the classes I observed, nor did I offer any assistance or feedback, speak or answer any questions, my role as researcher placed me on the 'observer as participant' side of the participant-observation continuum (Glesne, 2006). As a result, this perspective granted

me the opportunity to see how participants understood the setting. Hatch (2002), suggests that this type of observation also provides the "opportunity to see things that are taken for granted by participants and would be less likely to come to the surface using interview or other data collection techniques," as well as to "better understand the contexts in which such phenomena occur" (p. 72).

In order to effectively approach the first observation, I considered Erickson's (1986) framework, "What is happening, specifically, in social action that takes place in this particular setting?" to serve as a guide (p. 121). While everyday life is largely invisible to us, this broad question allowed the observation each class with fresh eyes by "making the familiar strange and interesting again" (p. 121) through systematic documentation of specific details. The guided question allowed me to avoid assuming any particular conclusion or outcome of the first observation. The following three observations were focused on *how* instructors approached instruction

As denoted in Table 3.1, the observations were conducted at the midpoint of the semester. The rationale for selecting this time frame was to observe classes that were representative of well-established courses, thus eliminating other factors that may have convoluted the nature of the research. Participants were able to fully focus on instruction at this point in the semester as opposed to the plethora of administrative responsibilities present at the beginning of the course. Also, the content of the course was more substantial in terms of language use and student production than at the beginning of the semester. The observations were concluded in November as final presentations, the Thanksgiving Holiday, dead week and final exams would have interfered with the regular instructional schedule.

Field Notes

Data generated through observations were collected through of field notes. The field notes served to denote approaches to instruction specifically relating to FL teaching. The descriptions of contexts, both temporal and instructional, student and teacher directed interactions, actions taking place in the classroom structure as they referred to approaches of instruction, and conversations, were written in as much detail as possible via use of Microsoft Word on a laptop computer (Hatch, 2002). I chose this method over the use of handwritten notes in order to be able to more effectively manage the data, in particular, for making additions, deletions and cutting and correcting.

For all observations, I sat in the back of the classroom to minimize distraction. My notes began each observation with the date, time, location, observations about the physical space, and the objective of the lesson either verbally stated or written on the board. This process served to “develop vicarious experiences” and a sense of “being there” that would be used in the data analysis (Stake, 1995, p. 63). Once instruction was under way, both student to teacher and teacher to student talk were recorded verbatim, as the observations were not audio or video-recorded. I made clear distinctions in my field notes between observed phenomena and my reactions, comments, questions to be reserved for post-observation interviews and ties to some of the categories used to guide my observations. These distinctions were noted in parentheses or in bold.

After completing observations, the raw field notes were reorganized to delineate the different segments of instructional activities and interactions between the teacher and students. This process allowed for direct interpretation of the events and aggregation of variables and categories that were defined during observations (Stake,

1995). The use of direct interpretation helped me to question each instance, understand, and explain the data using the framework of generally accepted effective teaching behaviors as a guide. The resulting questions and interpretations were recorded as interpretive memos and used to help formulate questions included in the semi-structured interview protocol. Both aggregation of frequencies and coding were used to discover patterns emerging unexpectedly from the analysis and those guided by the research questions.

Interviews

Table 3.2 Timeline of Semi-structured interviews

Instructors	**Interview Timeline**	**Total**
Carolina	November 15, 2016	1
Esther	November 16, 2016	1
Drexler	November 16, 2016	1
Pablo	November 21, 2016	1
Christina	November 30, 2016	1

Table 3.2 shows the timeline of semi-structured interviews conducted post-classroom observations for each participant. As the immediate result of observation is description, but not understanding, the interview helped me gain perspective and "provide additional information that was missed in observation, and can be used to check the accuracy of the observations" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103). Additionally, as the research questions helped me formulate *what* I wanted to understand in this study, the interview questions were the means to gaining that understanding (Maxwell, 1996). A semi-structured interview protocol was chosen rather than a structured one. As a result,

the interview questions were tailored for each participant's classroom experiences and approaches to instruction. The ability to pose open-ended and follow up questions granted deeper understanding of the complex behaviors of the case "without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 653). The importance of this qualitative information served to gather background information on each of the participants that may have had an impact on their overall effectiveness as FL teachers.

The post-observation interview sessions were organized in two parts: The first phase included questions about each participant's background as it related to how they came into language teaching, education, and personal histories. The principal goal of this phase was to establish a clear picture of the participants' unique journeys as language teachers, as well as to set the stage for comparisons among participants' similarities and differences. Additionally, through descriptions of participants' history of language teaching and learning, I sought to examine factors that may have shaped their enactment of effective instruction at the university level. The second phase served to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' pedagogical beliefs with regard to knowledge of students, communicative language teaching, language proficiency, the importance of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), lesson planning, collaboration and reflection.

The interviews lasted between 30-45 minutes and occurred in person the week following the observation of classes. A portion of the questions were generated based on my collection and preliminary analysis of field notes. In this way, I was able to draw on the individual experiences in each classroom observation, thus making the interviews

unique to the participants' individual classroom environments as opposed to a standard set of interview questions solely soliciting background data.

All of the interviews were recorded using Garage Band software and then transcribed with the help of Voice Base software. Considering the notion that "transcription *represents* an audiotaped or videotaped record, and the record itself *represents* an interactive event," it was paramount to acknowledge the importance of its implications for interpretation once completed (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, p. 81). Lapadat & Lindsay (1999) have pointed out that researchers pursue the transcription process best suited for the aims of the research being conducted. Therefore, it is unlikely that researchers will ever come to an agreement on a standard set of rules to satisfy everyone. As such, I approached transcription as interpretive, and socially and culturally constructed. I also considered the following question when I began the process: "What is a useful transcription for my research purposes?" (Kvale, 1996, p.166).

Student Teacher Evaluation Comments

Anonymous student-generated comments from fall 2016 were collected and analyzed to examine consistencies and inconsistencies among the participants with regard to questions pertaining to student perceptions of the strong points of the course, weak points of the course, how the instructor could improve, and overall opinions of the course. The comment reports were only collected from participants teaching Spanish 1115, so that a richer context could be established. The rationale for including this data was to strengthen the connection between observed effective language teaching and perceived effectiveness from the perspective of students.

Quantitative Data: Four Skills Assessment Averages

Quantitative data was collected in an effort to examine the third research question regarding the impact on student achievement between high-achieving (effective) and low-achieving (less-effective) FL teachers. A series of independent t-tests was conducted to compare the class averages on each assessment between the five high-achieving instructors participating in this study and the five lowest achieving instructors. To minimize the instance of type I error in the statistical analysis, t-tests were deemed an appropriate measure to describe differences in student outcomes on each measure. The effect size for cumulative assessments in each of the four skill areas was also analyzed and reported. All data collected and analyzed came from instructors teaching the same course during the same semester.

Table 3.3 Four Skills Assessment Calendar-Fall 2016

Date	Reading Assessments	Writing Assessments	Speaking Assessments	Listening Assessments
September	Reading Comprehension 1		Picture-Based List	
October	Reading Comprehension 2	Written Exam 1 Composition		Listening Exam 1
November		Written Exam 2		Phone Message Listening Exam 2
December		Final Exam	Video Presentation	

Table 3.3 represents the assessment data collected by the researcher from the four-skills assessments conducted throughout the course of the semester. As these data

sources were part of the regular coursework and not in response to a request by the researcher, they were considered unobtrusive (Hatch, 2002). The dates listed below each assessment are indicative of the timeline of development of each of the four skills during the course of the semester and will be described in greater detail in the following section, whereas they were briefly outlined in the previous section discussing the institutional and program context.

The purpose of using the assessment averages as a data source was (1) to compare pre and post-test averages from the participants in this study belonging to the top quartile of instructional staff using multiple two-sample t-tests on all measures as part of the within-case analysis, as well as to compare the averages to those of the bottom quartile of low-achieving instructors; (2) to understand the potential connection between approaches to instruction and student achievement; and (3) to examine achievement in each of the four skills independently. Thus, the quantitative data on these uniform measures provided insight on effective teaching and student achievement with respect to those specific areas. The goal of "bias-free" quantitative and the admission of "bias-laden" qualitative research are both necessary to interpret the research findings and draw meaningful conclusions. The triangulation of data from all sources ensured that each of the research questions could be answered comprehensively.

Reading Assessments

The first reading assessment occurred relatively early in the semester (week 5) and consisted of a short letter from one student to another about experiences returning to classes for a new semester. At this point, students had studied topics including: greetings and leave-takings, basic descriptions of people and things, telling time, and

school subjects and verbs relating to everyday life in a school setting. The specific tasks involved in this assessment consisted of completing short phrases in English to demonstrate comprehension, matching pictures with vocabulary listed in the text, and listing words from the text defined in Spanish using basic language. All instructors were provided with an answer key for grading this assessment.

The second reading assessment occurred in the ninth week and was comprised of a short *how-to* article about buying clothing online. The text was a modified version of an authentic resource and included many familiar vocabulary words and phrases related to clothing and shopping, as well as some new expressions that required students to understood them through context. The tasks for this assessment included: choosing the main purpose of the article, choosing from multiple choice options about basic details in the article, matching words with definitions in the target language, and making associations via a checklist of words associated to the topic. Again, all instructors were provided with an answer key for grading this assessment.

Writing Assessments

The first written exam was administered during the eighth week of classes, after the completion of three textbook chapters working with greetings and leave-takings, basic descriptions of people and things, telling time, school subjects and verbs relating to everyday life in a school setting, and family life. While the exams measure a fair amount of writing proficiency, they also consist of several reading tasks that incorporate both skills. Specifically, the students read ads for different kinds of school programs and answered questions related to them, read descriptions of student routines and answered questions about them in English, and put in order the sequence of events, as

well as matching questions and answers. The writing tasks included: making lists about school subjects, frequency and locations, family members, describing people and schedules, and writing a letter about personal experiences in school. All instructors were provided with an answer key for grading this assessment.

The second written exam was administered during the twelfth week of classes and focused primarily on the topics of daily routine behaviors, verbs and vocabulary related to clothing and shopping, the house and some irregular verbs associated with descriptions of houses and dwellings, and talking about future plans. The skills required on this exam asked students to demonstrate a slightly higher level of proficiency in that they had to fill in information regarding future plans and read a calendar, ask and answer questions about making a reservation for a home rental abroad, write a text about someone's daily routine, categorize clothing appropriate for different social contexts, describe the house rented within the context of the exam, read and answer true/false questions about clothing preferences, and write an email about a trip and future plans for the remainder of the trip. Again, all instructors were provided with an answer key for grading this assessment.

The composition assignment focused on a real-world context that consisted of a student who wanted to join an international organization for Spanish-speaking students on campus. The students were asked to write an introduction to the group to compare and contrast school, social and clothing habits between the two cultures. The text ended with a few questions aimed at the students already in the organization to find out more about them. This assessment was graded with a rubric outlining specific criteria and was used by all instructors teaching this course.

The final exam was administered during finals week as a uniform final on December 13th. The exam was comprehensive and included reading tasks dealing with rental ads, matching descriptions of people with ideal mates, matching questions and answers, and matching descriptions with pictures. The writing tasks consisted of looking at pictures and describing what people were doing, writing about what people want to do based on short descriptions of preferences, talking about daily routines, and writing about a future trip over winter break. All instructors were provided with an answer key for grading this assessment.

Speaking Assessments

During the sixth week of classes, students completed a Picture-Based Listing Activity. In this assessment, students chose a partner with whom to complete an interpersonal speaking activity. The pairs selected a photo from a stack and were given one minute to look at it before speaking. The students then took turns describing the picture either by listing nouns and adjectives or forming sentences with lists of nouns and adjectives. The rubric allowed for a range of acceptable answers to accommodate the varied sub-levels of language proficiency of students at this point in the semester. However, the criteria were clear and uniform, and were used by all instructors for the grading of this assessment.

The Video Presentation assessment was completed near the end of the semester and due in the 16th week of classes. In accordance with the presentational mode of communication (ACTFL, 2012), students were given several weeks to prepare, practice, and record the video on one or more topics related to content learned throughout the course of the semester. The video was comprised of a recorded portion of 2-3 minutes

plus an introduction in front of the class on the due date. Again, all instructors were provided with a uniform rubric for grading this assessment.

Listening Assessments

The first Listening Exam was administered during the seventh week of classes. It consisted of four audio segments followed by a series of multiple-choice questions for each audio. The exam was created as a continuous video to remove any variability in the assessment among different sections of the same course. The video was created so that a one-minute countdown was given for students to read the questions before the audio file started to play. After the audio file played, there was a 30-second pause for students to re-read the questions before the audio played a second time. Instructors were given explicit instructions not to stop or start the video once it began playing and not to play it more than once. The topics included in the first listening assessment related to greetings and leave-takings, school subjects and descriptions, and family.

The Phone assessment was given during the eleventh week of classes. It consisted of a phone conversation between a secretary, her boss, and the boss' wife. There was a pre-listening activity included in the format of the assessment with suggestions on how to connect it to the overall objective and lesson for the day it was administered in class. However, each instructor incorporated it in his or her own way. The audio was played twice through with five accompanying multiple-choice questions soliciting basic information about the exchange between the participants of the conversation. The final question of the activity required students to pretend they were going to record an outgoing message to leave on their voicemail. An answer key was

provided to all instructors for questions 1-5 with criteria for granting points for the last question.

The second Listening Exam was administered to students during the thirteenth week of classes. This exam followed the same format as the first Listening Exam; one-minute to read questions followed by audio, a 30-second pause, and a replay of the audio. However, this exam included five audio segments as opposed to four in the first exam. The questions were multiple-choice and solicited basic factual information presented in the audio segments. The topics for this exam included: preferences and activities of different people, vocabulary definitions of clothing and household items, sales ads for clothing stores, and descriptions of school programs in different seasons in Spanish-speaking countries.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Coding was used as to construct concepts with and from the data. Coding frames and problematizes the data, increasing the possibility of uncovering the complexities within them (Czarniawska, 2004). However, it is important to note that "although coding may be part of the process of analysis, it should not be thought of as the analysis itself" (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 26). In other words, the significance of the work stems from how the codes and concepts are used, and not just by merely recording them or marking them down in some way.

Due in part to the quantity of data produced in this study, coding of approaches to instruction embedded in effective teaching behaviors was aided by an instrument considered for its validity in prior research (Walls, Nardi, vonMinden & Hoffman, 2002). Conclusions from research in effective teaching yielded excessive descriptors,

and lacked in validity as described in the research by Walls et. al (2002). For the purpose of this study, it was deemed appropriate to consider fewer codes embodying a variety of characteristics. The five major codes (see p. 46) refer to behaviors most frequently repeated in the literature in both general education and foreign language teaching. Category titles were modified to reflect observable behaviors, while maintaining the essence of their original descriptors. By and large, these effective teaching behaviors include:

1) *Caring* describes the way in which teachers display warmth, caring, helpfulness, and caring about students.
2) *Clarity* refers to teachers who create an effective learning environment. Factors such as, organization, preparedness, and clarity represent features of this domain.
3) *Enthusiasm* is represented by teachers who care about teaching and learning. They are enthusiastic and know their students well. They reflect on their practice.
4) *Engaging* describes authentically engaging, interactive learning with topics interesting and relevant to students' lives.
5) *Control* refers to effective classroom management, including clear expectations, high standards, and advocacy for student success.

Frequencies for each code were calculated and recorded based on data collected from the three data sources: (1) Classroom Observations; (2) In-depth Interviews; (3) and Student Teacher Evaluation Comments (STEs). The frequency tallies for all data sources were based on what Engeström (2001) refers to as the frequency of

mentionings, or, how often reference is made to each code. These *mentionings* may occur either explicitly or implicitly.

The process of coding was meant to search for the patterns, relationships, and tensions both within and across the data sources. It bears mentioning that the decision to code this way was born out of necessity amidst a large amount of data, despite the contradiction a pragmatic approach might convey considering the epistemological shift in language teaching from positivistic to post positivistic discussed in chapter two. Thus, as previously discussed, field notes embedded with interpretive memos from classroom observations were analyzed and interpreted. The text transcriptions from the in-depth interview and written STE comments were analyzed and interpreted using the same framework of codes generated from the literature in chapter two (Walls, et. al, 2002).

The following example, taken from one of Carolina's classroom observations, illustrates the coding process used for field notes as well as STE Comments:

Talking about clothing

Carolina-*Ok chicos, ya hablamos del estilo de ropa en Bolivia y ahora vamos a hablar de nuestro estilo personal* [Ok guys, we already talked about clothing styles in Bolivia and now we are going to talk about our personal style.]

The above excerpt was assigned 3 major codes and an interpretive memo in the following manner:

1. I first assigned the code *Clarity,* as Carolina gave clear instructions by stating the objective and preparedness by signaling transitions between one activity and the next (*Control)* .
2. Then I assigned *Engaging.* Carolina's chose an activity that allowed students

to talk about themselves and their interests.

3. Interpretive memo:

> In this instance, Carolina broke up a book activity in her own 3 parts. Based on the calendar provided to her, it was originally a fill-in prompt about style in different situations. Question for Carolina: What made you enact the activity in this way? (Classroom Observation Field Notes, October 14, 2016).

The following example, taken from part of Carolina's in-depth interview, illustrates the coding process used for interview transcripts and represents the typical length of each coded segment:

> **Carolina**-And my mom told me I needed to feel what it was like to be a stranger in a strange land. I didn't feel that way so much in Bolivia but in Japan I did. I think all of that made me empathetic and compassionate to my students. I know that it's scary, I know that it's overwhelming, and exciting at the same time. You have to be able to be sensitive to that energy. It's an exchange (November 15, 2016).

The above data excerpt was assigned two codes and an interpretive memo in the following manner:

1. This excerpt was assigned *Caring* as Carolina expressed empathy and compassion toward her students.
2. Then I assigned *Enthusiasm* as Carolina discussed the exchange of energy between student and teacher and sensitivity to student needs.
3. Interpretive memo:

> Carolina's experiences abroad and as a bilingual and bicultural person contribute to her empathy toward students. She appears to use her experiences to anticipate how students will react and what they will need.

Appendices A-E represent the full list of codes for each instructor generated based on research in effective teaching behaviors (see Walls, et. al 2002) and other

factors. Embedded in approaches to instruction in the five effective teaching domains used in this study, teacher qualities stemming from the proficiency guidelines provided the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), concepts from the literature on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) were also recorded as epiphanies which further corroborated high-achieving approaches to instruction, including similarities and differences (see Appendices A-E). Furthermore, teacher qualities emphasizing ACTFL strategies, CLT implementation, and TBLT helped to distinguish language instructors from those in other disciplines, thus enhancing the essence of the present study. A crude score of the five main codes was assigned to each instructor to further corroborate similarities and differences in approaches to instruction. Other codes generated in the data sources stemmed from the instructors during the in-depth interview in describing and explaining their approaches to language teaching and learning (which, in many cases, overlap with the professional language or terminology used in the effective teaching, ACTFL guidelines, CLT and TBLT literature). Instances of self-reported self-efficacy were also recorded in Appendix F.

It is worth mentioning that, in some cases, a sub code might be considered as part of multiple major codes although it might be listed under a single major code (for purposes of organization and clarity). For example, the sub-code, use of the target language, in addition to being considered under ACTFL guidelines in the appendices, might also be classified under a major code, such as effective teaching, as it refers to clarity.

Data Management

All written data sources, including interview transcripts, observation field notes and student evaluation comments, were stored on a laptop computer and only accessible through a private password. The data sources were titled according to their individual sources, and any printed data sources were securely stored in a locked filed cabinet in the researcher's locked office. The identities of the study participants were not disclosed to anyone other than the researcher, and pseudonyms were used to identify all data sources for participants who indicated maintaining anonymity throughout. The participants were guaranteed confidentially when informed of the research protocol and the safeguard of this confidentially was maintained throughout the course of the research.

Critical Self-reflexivity

As a program coordinator, my primary role was to provide the necessary tools for effective language teaching for instructors and GTAs. Some of those tools included, but were not limited to, day-to-day schedules with clear learning objectives and ideas for possible activities, training sessions related to areas of need, one-on-one help with lesson plan design, and well-defined syllabi and course assessments aligned with the language program goals and objectives, and course management assistance.

Chapter 4: Results & Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and Student Teacher Evaluation comments (STEs). It also examines quantitative data gathered from reading, writing, speaking and listening assessments. The findings are preceded by a brief portrait of each instructor's language teaching and learning experiences prior to beginning at Southwest (SW) University, beginning with Carolina and followed by Esther, Drexler, Pablo and Christina respectively. The findings are discussed for each instructor separately to highlight themes, patterns and relationships between the data sources in the larger case. A within-case analysis will also be presented to compare patterns, themes and relationships among the instructors, as well as to answer the research questions in the present study.

For the purpose of streamlining the data, an instrument organized by five main codes was used to discuss each instructor's approaches to instruction. The codes used were: (1) Caring; (2) Clarity; (3) Enthusiasm; (4) Engaging; and (5) Control.

Discoveries of various additional aspects of teacher approaches grounded in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, literature on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Task-based Learning and Teaching (TBLT) were recorded as supplemental support in defining instructor similarities and differences, as well as to distinguish effective language teaching from that in other disciplines. The comprehensive list of codes and sub codes are listed in Appendices A-E. Additional codes and sub codes were added to each appendix as needed for each instructor to assist in defining similarities and differences among approaches to instruction.

The frequency scores (indicated by *f)* denote how often the code terms were observed or reflected explicitly or implicitly in the data sources. It is relevant to note that frequency tallies are not analyzed as statistical evidence, but rather to describe trends or attributes.

The case study presented in this chapter was carried out with the following research questions in mind:

1) How do high-achieving instructors in a proficiency-based, communicative Spanish Language Program approach instruction?
2) How are high-achieving instructors alike and how are they different?
3) What is the effect of high-achieving instruction on student performance?

How High-Achieving Instructors and Graduate Teaching Assistants Approach Instruction

In response to research question one, regarding *how* high-achieving instructors approach instruction, the next section reports the findings of Carolina, Esther, Drexler, Pablo and Christina.

Portrait of Carolina

In this section, a portrait of Carolina is presented, describing her experiences as a language learner, early encounters as a music teacher, and finally her teaching experience as a language educator. Additionally, this profile examines her language teaching and learning philosophy in order to provide a context for understanding the manner in which she approaches instruction in her language classes. Her experiences further establish the distinction of the varied instructional staff.

Carolina, a bilingual instructor of Spanish, completed her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music at a West Coast university and spent several years living on the coast before returning to her hometown of Norman, OK. In reflecting on her language learning experience as a bilingual child, Carolina stated,

> I grew up speaking Spanish with my mom and my *abuela* and all my Bolivian family. We actually traveled to Bolivia a lot in the summers and that was great, but you know, going to school every day in English in Michigan made it hard to keep it. I was actually hungry for it. I knew if I wanted to keep it, I would have to do stuff. Luckily, I liked music so I would look for songs or books. Anything I could get my hands on. And, going back in the summers I would ask my family members *not* to speak to me in English (November 15, 2016).

While she studied music in college, Carolina also participated in a program for Native and Heritage speakers of Spanish. According to Carolina, this program played a vital role in her academic language development in Spanish, but more importantly, it connected her to her cultural heritage. She also claimed that this program helped her better identify with both sides of her cultural persona after feeling like she did not quite fit in to either one growing up.

From an early age, Carolina studied piano and guitar. At age thirteen, her music teacher, who was studying music pedagogy at the university, asked her to help teach piano lessons to some of the students she did not have time to attend to. The recollection of her teacher's words made a profound impact on Carolina from that moment on. Carolina felt 'empowered' by that experience when her music teacher told her, "as you teach, you learn" (November 15, 2016).

A culmination of Carolina's experiences as a music teacher and the beginning of her path as a language educator took shape upon graduation from college. With a background in music and Spanish language, Carolina took her first job as a bilingual

teacher's assistant at the elementary level. Carolina reflected on this experience during our in-depth interview.

> It was a great experience. It made me realize I did *not* want to be an elementary school teacher, but it gave me a good teaching experience. I learned a lot and I was even allowed to bring in music sometimes. I learned I could use music to teach things like geography or history, lots of things (November 15, 2016).

By Carolina's account, this marriage of music and teaching helped Carolina realize,

> there was something about teaching that really felt right. It felt like something I could never get sick of, kind of like music, because I knew I would never stop learning and that each situation is unique (November 15, 2016).

It is important to note that Carolina's teaching experience did not include any formal coursework on language or music pedagogy for that matter. However, upon returning to her hometown, she applied for a position as an adjunct instructor of Spanish and simultaneously pursued a Master of Arts in Human Relations. Her teaching career from that time to the present day has been spotted with directing music ensembles, teaching music courses and teaching Spanish language courses. Overall, her attitude toward language and language teaching can be reflected in the following excerpt from our in-depth interview.

> I learned through my experience teaching music to college students that I loved the energy of undergrad students. And, I love language. In fact, I love languages so much that I am not threatened by hearing a language I don't understand. When I hear a language I don't understand, I think about how much I enjoy the music of it. And, I know that in learning another language, it forces you to understand another perspective, and it encourages humility. That feeling of not knowing is *teaching* you something, and I tell my students that; let that feeling *teach* you something! (November 15, 2016).

Additionally, Carolina discussed the connection she makes between being a performer, an artist, and teaching. She described the exchange of energy between her and her

students as one that sets the stage for learning to occur. Her passion for language and music ignites her interaction with students in the classroom.

The preceding portrait of Carolina reveals her passion for teaching and learning stemming from a very young age. The experiences with her early music teaching and the connection with her Spanish-language identity provided her with a blueprint of the kind of teaching that helped her learn as a young student. Taken together, her music teaching and learning and language teaching and learning served to inform her approaches to instruction in her language classes today.

Observed Approaches to Instruction During Carolina's Classroom Observations

Table 4.1 represents the observed theme of effective teaching practices drawn from the literature discussed in Chapter Two (see p. 46). The table includes frequencies of observed approaches included in the in-depth interview and collected from comments in the Student Teacher Evaluation comments, and will be referenced later as those data sources are discussed. However, for this section, the discussion of the findings in table 4.1 will pertain only to Carolina's observed approaches to instruction as they relate to effective teaching over the course of four classroom observations.

Table 4.1 Codes and Frequencies for Effective Teaching-Carolina

Codes	Classroom Observations (4)	In-depth Interview	STE Comments	Total
Caring	5	**5**	**7**	17
Clarity	**11**	2	5	18
Enthusiasm	9	**5**	3	17
Engaging	**10**	4	**9**	**23**
Control	**14**	1	0	15
				90

In regards to approaches to instruction during classroom observations, Carolina was observed most frequently in the following areas as seen in Table 4.1: (1) Control (f=14); (2) Clarity (f=11); and (3) Engaging (f=10).

While three main areas stood out, Carolina's instructional activities regularly combined *all* of the aforementioned behaviors simultaneously. For example, each of the four classes observed began in the same way; students were greeted by name as Carolina engaged in personalized conversations in the target language (*enthusiasm*), and both verbally and visually stated the objective of the class in chorus while signaling the chalkboard (*clarity)*. The personalized conversations provided Carolina with opportunities to get to know her students better each day both personally and in terms of academic needs. This interaction, in turn, appeared to engage students in the lessons (*engaging)*, as they were expected to participate via routines established by Carolina's daily modeling (*control)*. Each class observed was then followed up with a short warm-up activity that provided a context for the language objective, again establishing a routine set of behaviors and expectations on the part of the students (*control)*.

In regard to clarity, it was evident in the four classes observed that Carolina was very familiar with the day-to-day course schedule she was provided from the Spanish Language Program (SLP), as she followed the scheduled activities pre-planned for the course in addition to adding her own materials (*engaging)* that helped to personalize and contextualize the lessons.

For example, in Carolina's lesson on 'talking about clothing styles,' students enacted the routine of personalized conversations and the statement of the objective, followed by a guiding question that served as a warm-up activity. The students were

asked, “Who are the well-known designers in the US?” “What do they design?” “What is the clothing like?” (Classroom Observation Field Notes, October 14, 2016). Here, the students were asked to talk about a familiar topic, it related to their interests, the warm-up routine was established, and instructions regarding the type of interaction requested (interpersonal) were clearly given. The next activity incorporated an authentic resource, an article from *Vanidades* magazine of Carolina’s Bolivian aunt, a well-known clothing designer. Carolina spent some time scaffolding the text by showing photos of the clothing they would see while soliciting students to describe what they saw. Then, a pre-reading activity was given and the activity concluded with a post-reading follow-up. Carolina kept students interested by personalizing the content of the reading and allowing her students to get to know her and her family in a unique way. She also embedded reading strategies into the activity that would be needed for upcoming assessments (*enthusiasm*, *clarity*). The final activities reverted to pre-assigned prompts from the textbook relating to the same topic on an interpersonal level. The students were asked to move around the room and interview one another about personal style. The sequence of the activity involved reading, writing, speaking and listening. Again, Carolina’s choice of sequencing and additional materials simultaneously piqued student interest, while providing activities that fostered community.

As noted above, Carolina’s approaches to instruction during classroom observations also uncovered language teaching strategies rooted in ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, approaches to instruction aligning with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). One of the primary observations was that Carolina remained in the TL at least 90% of the time as recommended by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

Like the previous description of effective teaching behaviors, occurrences of speaking, listening, and activities that develop communicative competence were also observed. For example, in a segment of a lesson about the weather, Carolina told her students they were going to talk about activities in different weather scenarios (*clarity)*. The questions for this activity were prepared by the course textbook. While students asked and answered these questions in the TL (*speaking and listening*), Carolina asked personalized follow-up questions (*enthusiasm)*. During one of the personalized conversations, a student asked her how to say "to build a snowman" (Classroom Observation Field Notes, November 9, 2016). Rather than giving the translation, she helped the student figure it out. The student was able to incorporate this expression as the whole class shared the activities discussed in pairs (*speaking and listening*). Then, the students were instructed to come up with questions to ask different partners about activities during their favorite seasons, the clothing worn during that time, and reasons why those seasons were their favorite (*activities to develop communicative competence*, see Appendix A). The sequence illustrated in this example demonstrated a skill progression, moving from simple memorized chunks of language or simple created language into asking and answering questions and the creation of language (*clarity)*. Additionally, the sequence further supports the use of activities to develop communicative competence, as well as the use of negotiation of meaning, and knowledge on the part of the instructor of the proficiency level of the students. Through scaffolding and preparation in the first part of the activity, students were provided with the linguistic resources to move toward the upper limits of language production appropriate for the course proficiency level.

The remainder of the lesson repeated this pattern with content relating to familiar topics that aligned with the proficiency level of students in a beginning language course. Carolina's use of CLT and Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches varied by classes observed, but overall, the sequence and choice of activities fostered the development of communicative competence, while task-based activities were used as instructional strategies.

Approaches to Instruction: Carolina's In-depth Interview

In this section, the discussion of the findings in table 4.1 pertains only to Carolina's observed approaches to instruction during the in-depth interview. Carolina mentioned the following areas most frequently (as seen in Table 4.1): (1) Entusiasm (*f*=5); and (2) Caring (*f*=5).

Carolina expressed the notion of enthusiasm in terms of her reflective practice in two ways: from the perspective of a life-long learner, as well as from the practice of teaching. As a life-long learner, Carolina suggested that her involvement in issues of social justice outside the classroom played a vital role in her reflective practice inside the classroom. During the in-depth interview, Carolina stated,

> I think it's something that is important to me as a member of our society, as a mom, and I see it as part of my mission with language teaching. Part of learning language is, you know, learning compassion, curiosity, and to celebrate ways of thinking within your culture and new cultures. It is something I think about regularly and it informs my teaching (November 15, 2016).

Carolina went on to discuss how seeking out areas of interest to her as a life-long learner allowed her to reflect on the needs of her students and her goals as a language educator, thus modifying instruction or including topics, texts, or discussions that foster student engagement from multiple perspectives. Carolina also discussed language learning as a life-long learning pursuit, stating,

> It's like I said, learning a language and engaging with languages is a life-long thing, like music. Music is very similar in the sense that it is so deep and so never-ending. You'll always be learning more. So, I keep learning more by reading, etc. (November 15, 2016).

With regard to the teaching practice, Carolina admitted to spending most of her time reflecting on her teaching once the semester was over. However, she also explained that when a lesson goes awry, she often seeks out a colleague with whom to discuss the issue who might either affirm the same issues in other classes or offer suggestions for improvement. Carolina also mentioned spending a few minutes between classes to quickly reflect on parts of the lesson that worked well or needed improvement, thus making modifications before the next class on the same day.

Carolina mentioned her fondness for teaching many times (*enthusiasm)*. As she recalled a successful interview for her first university Spanish teaching position, Carolina stated,

> I found I loved it. I found I could incorporate music, culture, dancing and excitement. I could incorporate my *own* cultural heritage and my love of the language. And, knowing that you never stop learning and if you can make that contagious, you can make people excited about learning language (November 15, 2016).

One of the unique observations during the in-depth interview was that Carolina communicated the idea that happy teachers make happy classrooms, and one of the things she attributed to maintaining happiness was the balance between work and home life, as well as the ability to be creative in her work. Carolina voiced,

> Sometimes I just need to disconnect a little bit. I spend time with my daughters and I am very protective of that time with them to have experiences with them apart from work (November 15, 2016).

Additionally, the relationship with her students was discussed in the following way during the in-depth interview:

> I try and I listen. I am genuinely interested in my students. I remember and I don't forget. I always remember things about my students. I ask them what they are passionate about. I believe that you can't lead people if you don't love them (November, 15, 2016).

Carolina also discussed her instructional choices with regard to content, skill type and differentiation. She expressed an emphasis on changing the rhythm of the class and considering learning preferences as needed by her students. Additionally, Carolina discussed that she talked a lot about her family with students as another way to connect with them on a more personal level.

Coupled with her enthusiasm, Carolina mentioned several times that human connection was a vital component in her view of teaching (see Appendix A). She explained this by comparing teaching to playing music.

> When you play music with and for people, you're not playing from behind some kind of wall. You're picking up their energy and you have to be able to be sensitive to that. It's not that you're a performer as a teacher, but a good performer of any art pays attention to that exchange, and I try to do that when I teach (November 15, 2016).

The overlap of references to knowledge of students and human connection also provided some context for mention of caring (f=5) during the in-depth interview. Carolina's descriptions and tone with regard to empathy toward students were quite rich as she stated,

> As a musician and language learner myself, I think I am able to understand when, and have empathy for my students when they make the same certain mistakes over and over again. I can understand that their approach is a very 'English' way of speaking, and that's fine. We can still work on it and I tell them that, which I think is helpful for them (November 15, 2016).

Embedded in other aspects of Carolina's teaching approaches, her background as a bilingual and bicultural person, as well her background as a musician, influenced

the emphasis on culture in her approach to instruction. During her in-depth interview, Carolina recalled,

> I learned a lot about Latin American music and Bolivian music that I heard growing up. I realized I could use music to teach about culture, geography, history, lots of things (November 15, 2016).

In particular, Carolina discussed the use of music to highlight grammar in context. She described the use of a particular song to teach about the present progressive that also contextualized *Carnaval* and certain times of the year that were being studied in class at that time.

Similar to Carolina's classroom observations, speaking and listening were considered of equal importance in Carolina's approaches to instruction. During the in-depth interview, she stated,

> I think of writing, speaking and listening when planning my classes. I am very conscious of that. I try and consider those things and write notes in my lesson plans for the activities and how they will play out. Like *hablar* here and *escuchar* there (November 15, 2016).

In addition to incorporating speaking and listening in her classes, Carolina also mentioned the importance of contextualization of those activities.

Perceived Approaches to Instruction Via Student Comments

This section will refer to table 4.1 regarding Carolina's approaches to instruction. However, for this part of the discussion, it will only refer to the frequencies relating to STE comments made by students at the end of the course. The two most frequently voiced attributes of Carolina's approaches to instruction (Table 4.1) were: (1) *Engaging* (*f*=9); and (2) *Caring* (*f*=7). Students noted aspects of the course such as,

> Sra. Carolina was enthusiastic about teaching us. This course engaged all the parts that are involved in learning a language. She was so amazing in the way she engaged her students. She tried to make every lesson interesting (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Students also emphasized the infectiousness of Carolina's enthusiasm for teaching, noting that it made the students excited to learn too.

STE comments also pointed to Carolina's sense of empathy and helpfulness throughout the course. Students spoke of her positive attitude making them want to keep trying even when the course became overwhelming, her encouragement, compassion, and strong sense of comfort felt by students in her class.

Apart from effective teaching behaviors, students commented on the integration of all four skills throughout the semester, using words like "everyday use of various concepts," and "interactive" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). One student commented, "although we are learning to speak and understand Spanish, she [Carolina] also integrates culture through reading and writing" (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Although not mentioned as frequently in the comments, Carolina made an impact on her students' experiences in the class. One student commented, "she [Carolina] is one of those teachers that gets so excited about teaching their subject" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Carolina's enthusiasm for teaching was echoed in several other comments as well.

Summary of Findings-Carolina

Overall, the frequencies of effective teaching behaviors throughout the classroom observations, in-depth interview and review of the STE comments revealed some inconsistencies throughout. Student engagement was observed in the classroom observations and STE comments but not as highly during the in-depth interview as compared to other areas. In terms of enthusiasm, both the classroom observations and in-depth interview revealed commonalities with regard to this area of effective teaching.

However, the STE comments emphasized Carolina's infectious enthusiasm for the subject above all else. It is clear from the data that Carolina's zest for teaching was transmitted to her students.

Drawing from additional frequency data in Appendix A, speaking and listening indicated a strong correlation between the skill focus and development in Carolina's course. Carolina's use of activities to develop communicative competence was observed during the classroom observations but not so during the in-depth interview or the STE comments. This could be due to Carolina's priority of focus (human connections) and a lack of understanding on the part of the students with regard to CLT and proficiency-based language instruction. Finally, Carolina's positive interaction with her students and focus on communicative activities was well-received by her students.

Portrait of Esther

This section chronicles Esther's experiences and perceptions about language teaching and learning from the perspective of a second language learner of English in Spain. Additionally, her teaching experiences in different academic settings are discussed. In sum, this portrait intends to provide the framework through which Esther's reflection on learning and development as an effective and high achieving instructor might be understood.

Esther, a native Spanish-speaker from Spain and by-the-course instructor, first began studying English when she was very young in a bilingual school. She attributes that experience to have "helped her grasp the language much faster than some of her friends who began studying at a later date" (November 16, 2016). In contrast to some of

her friends in different programs, Esther realized early on in her university studies the importance of hearing the target language during instruction.

> Some of my friends had taken English in middle and high school, for nearly seven years, and could not speak almost any English at all. They would tell me it was because their teachers would explain everything in Spanish, and when they did the exercises or had to read, that's when they used English (November 16, 2016).

Esther recounted her experience learning English as one that included exclusive use of the target language.

During her undergraduate studies in Spain, Esther had the opportunity to tutor English to kids with discipline and academic problems during her internship in English studies and Language Teaching. She also began to teach Spanish to adults living in Spain at the time, which she compared as the most similar experience to teaching undergraduate students in the U.S. Esther stated that her experiences as a second language learner influenced her teaching in that,

> I think it has made me be more aware of the importance of emphasizing certain things, like emphasizing the importance of communication rather than accuracy. I saw that also in Spain. They focus so much on being grammatically correct that you can't get past a certain level. As long as you can say what you want, even if it's not completely correct, it allows you to move on as a learner (November 16, 2016).

Esther continued her English studies during a study-abroad program in the U.S. and after returning to spend a few years in Spain, she made the decision to apply to the same U.S. university in pursuit of a Master of Arts degree in Spanish Literature. She knew she wanted to teach and this was the path that would afford her the opportunity to do so.

In contrast to Carolina, Esther received some formal training in FL teaching under the European Framework that embraces the CLT model. However, like Carolina, her positive experiences and success as a second language learner influenced her

decision to teach in a way that proved to be fruitful. As Esther described during our in-depth interview,

> I have had some really good teachers, and I remember having some teachers that I felt like didn't really want to be there. When I started teaching and I liked it, I realized that a very big part of it was engaging students in different ways. Like, I know that maybe I was supposed to explain something in a certain way, but I knew that some students were not going to be able to get it if I only explained it in that way (November 16, 2016).

The above portrait of Esther reveals the connection between what she took away from her studies as a second language learner and her approaches to FL instruction today. Additionally, not only was her tutoring and teaching experience in Spanish the single most influencing factor in her decision to pursue teaching in the U.S, but also one that established the foundation for her philosophy of teaching. Both her learning and teaching experiences in English and Spanish have shaped her philosophy of curriculum and instruction to date.

Observed Approaches to Instruction During Esther's Classroom Observations

Table 4.2 represents the observed effective teaching practices stemming from the literature discussed in Chapter Two (see p. 46). The table includes frequencies of observed approaches included in the in-depth interview and collected from comments in the Student Teacher Evaluation comments, and will be referenced later as those data sources are discussed. However, for this section, the discussion of the findings in Table 4.2 will pertain only to Esther's observed approaches to instruction as they relate to the four classroom observations.

Table 4.2 Codes and Frequencies for Effective Teaching-Esther

Codes	Classroom Observations (4)	In-depth Interview	STE Comments	Total
Caring	1	2	5	8

Clarity	**11**	**7**	**6**	24
Enthusiasm	5	**4**	4	13
Engaging	**7**	3	**8**	18
Control	**13**	2	0	15
				78

Esther's approaches to instruction from the perspective of effective teaching behaviors were observed most frequently in the following areas as seen in Table 4.2: (1) Control (*f*=13); (2) Clarity (*f*=11); and (3) Engaging (*f*=7). With regard to control, Esther's use of classroom management was evident throughout each of the four classes observed. For every one of the activities enacted, Esther began by modeling the desired outcome followed by a countdown in the target language to signal the start of the activity. During paired or small group activities, Esther regularly monitored the room to keep track of time and encourage students to stay on task and in the target language. To conclude each activity Esther said, "un aplau" and the class would chime in responding "soooooo" (*an applause*).

The consistency of routines established in Esther's classes connected observed behaviors of classroom management with clarity (*f*=11). The patterns created in her lessons signaled for students to pay attention to her gestures and common TL phrases used to signal different aspects of the tasks at hand. These TL phrases and gestures created clear, digestible chunks of information for students to be able to follow along and understand what was expected of them in each activity.

Finally, student engagement (*f*=7) was observed by the choice of activities Esther incorporated into her classes in conjunction with the use of routines and TL phrases to keep students engaged. For example, in one observed lesson, Esther told the students they were going to look for apartments in Madrid on airbnb.com. Her students

were observed showing excitement (facial expressions, vocal reactions and pointing to pictures on their computers) when choosing a place they would like to live. They were given a time limit to choose a new home and were then asked to present the details of the apartment to the class in the target language. Esther built on the activity by telling the students that they had to call to reserve the apartment but there was a problem. The person could not respond and they had to leave a message for the owner. Finally, the students listened to a phone message and had to answer some questions about it. The entire lesson was created around the assessment.

Like Carolina, Esther remained in the TL 100% of the time during each observation, exceeding ACTFL's recommendation of 90% TL use during instruction. Additional discoveries uncovered in Esther's observations indicated that speaking, listening and writing were incorporated in the observed lessons with relative equality. Esther's classes followed a logical sequence *(clarity)* that required her students to engage in TL activities that promoted at least three of the four skills each day. In one part of a lesson, Esther began the class by stating the objective of the day; talking about future plans, and personalized some questions about what students normally do on the weekends. Next, she modeled the structure the students would need to move toward mastering the objective and told students they would write several questions to find out about their classmates' plans using ideas from the text. This led into a paired activity that required students to listen to each other and engage in interpersonal communication about their future plans. The progression of difficulty in the language tasks simultaneously suggested that Esther's activities were intended to help her students

develop communicative competence by engaging in dialogue, use of the appropriate TL, and taking into account the proficiency level of her students.

Approaches to Instruction: Esther's In-depth Interview

In this section, the presentation of the findings in Table 4.2 pertains only to Esther's observed approaches to instruction during the in-depth interview. Esther discussed the following areas most frequently in as seen in Table 4.2: (1) Clarity (f=7); (2) Enthusiasm (f=4); and (3) Engaging (f=3).

In terms of clarity, Esther attributed her ability to explain things well as one of the principal reasons she became interested in teaching languages. As mentioned earlier, Esther was exposed to a second language (L2) at an early age. During the in-depth interview, she recalled that in her bilingual program,

> I was good at explaining to my classmates about English. I got it, and so I felt that I could explain things well and understand how foreign language works. I thought, maybe I should tutor students (November 16, 2016).

Then, as Esther reflected on the influence learning a second language has had on her approach to instruction, she discussed the realization that certain aspects needed to be emphasized to students via communication. For example, Esther's position on the use of the TL for maximizing input required her to find ways to be clear in her communication with her students so the input could be comprehensible.

> I use certain expressions to transition into commonly-used activities. So, for example when I say *vamos a ver* (let's look at/see), or *vamos a practicar* (we are going to practice), the students have an expectation of what we are going to do. And, even when they don't totally understand, I am very physical (gesturing) and I think that helps. I try to use anything I can to help them understand what they are supposed to do (November 16, 2016).

In addition to the importance placed on clear communication, Esther made several comments about getting to know her students (*enthusiasm)*, both from an instructional and personal perspective. From an instructional side, Esther stated,

> Sometimes I think about the activities in my daytime class and nighttime class and have to consider my group of students. Maybe for the night class I stop to think about an activity I *didn't* do during the day that would be better for the students at night. Maybe this other group of students is not in love with this type of exercise and are not going to grasp what I need them to, so I find one that deals with the same topic and do that one instead (November 16, 2016).

Esther's approach to knowing her students on a personal level relies heavily on the importance of oral interaction with one another.

> I really like to emphasize the importance of interaction. I need my students to feel comfortable speaking with each other and other people. And so, I feel that by getting to know them personally, they feel more comfortable to do that with other students (November 16, 2016).

As a result of Esther's attempts to get to know her students personally, she expressed a genuine desire to create activities that are engaging and relevant to them (*engaging)*. Part of the rationale for doing so was expressed during a portion of the in-depth interview discussed Esther's portrait, earlier in this section. To reiterate here, Esther emphasized how much she enjoyed teaching, thus creating a desire to inspire her students to enjoy the learning process equally. She mentioned,

> I try to show them how this thing they are learning can be applied to a real-life situation, and I think that's the best thing for them to understand.

Esther went on to say that she perceives her students see value in real-life contexts, as they keep students focused and engaged in the activities.

In addition to teacher skill, teacher motivation, and student participation, Esther placed a high value on the use of the TL in her classes. For Esther, the significance of using the TL stemmed from her experiences as an L2 learner of English; due in part to

the comparison of her experience to that of her friends. The extensive use of L1 in some of her friends' L2 courses was surprising to her. She explained that some of her language teachers did not speak the dominant language (Spanish) and that hearing the TL (English) at all times was the most helpful aspect in her language acquisition during her early English coursework.

In conjunction with TL use, Esther expressed the importance of speaking in several instances throughout the in-depth interview. In one of those instances, Esther stated,

> My approach to FL teaching is interactive and very focused on practicing speaking. I mean, I also think it's important to read and write, and we do, but to me, speaking is probably the most important. So, I want my students to work with many different people to get better at speaking. If you don't have anyone to speak with, what are you going to do? (November 16, 2016).

Esther's reflection of how speaking practice played a significant role in her L2 development led into a further reflection on L2 use in the classroom. Esther discussed the focus on meaning *vs*. accuracy in detail stating,

> In Spain, for example, well and I am sure it happens everywhere, but some people are so focused on being grammatically correct that it seems like they can't get past a certain level. And, they are so focused on that. But, it doesn't matter if it's completely perfect. It's ok. As long as you can say what you want and get your message across, you can keep moving on. And, that's how you learn (November 16, 2016).

Perceived Approaches to Instruction Via Student Comments

This section will again refer to table 4.2. Moreover, for this part of the discussion, it will only refer to the frequencies relating to STE comments made by students at the end of the course. The two most frequently reported attributes of Esther's approaches to instruction were: (1) Engagin (*f*=8); (2) Clarity (*f*=6); and (3) Caring (*f*=5).

Student engagement (*engaging)* was mentioned in student comments on STEs with explanations such as,

1. She made the work fun and interesting.
2. La profesora was very good at making the class interesting and encouraging everyone to participate.
3. She made the information not only easy to learn but fun to learn also (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

The remaining STE comments included similar descriptors of Esther's teaching with regard to student interest in the course. Additionally, the students expressed Esther's sense of caring (*f*=5) with adjectives such as, *approachable, understanding,* and *caring* (STE Comments, Fall 2016). One student commented,

> My professor is very understanding. She is flexible with her students and wants them to do well. She really cares and makes learning fun and bearable, even when you are awful at Spanish (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Clarity (*f*=6) was mentioned by Esther's students in conjunction with her use of the TL in class. As such, *mentionings* of Esther's teaching approaches stemming from the literature on ACTFL guidelines, CLT and TLBT (see Appendix B) are intertwined with frequencies of effective teaching in Table 4.2. STE comments revealed mentions of Esther's use of the TL, speaking activities, and a focus on meaning over grammar.

For example, STE comments often referred to Esther's teacher clarity as it related to her use of the TL. For example, one student mentioned,

> The professor spoke to us only in Spanish and helped us to understand Spanish better through her ability to explain things (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Additional STE comments revealed satisfaction with the ability to carry on a conversation, indicating the influence of speaking in Esther's class. One student

expressed feeling as though a significant amount of Spanish had been learned. In fact, so much so that the student felt holding a conversation with someone fluent in Spanish was a real possibility after having taken Esther's Spanish 1115 course (STE Comments, 2016).

In relation to speaking, STE comments also indicated that focus on meaning helped students gain confidence during speaking activities. One student stated,

> At first, the constant speaking in Spanish threw me off a little, but I realized it was necessary and that it didn't matter if I made a mistake as long as I could be understood (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Summary of Findings-Esther

Data from the classroom observations, in-depth interview and STE Comments reveal commonalities across the three data sources (see Table 4.2). In terms of effective teaching behaviors, the frequencies of *Clarity* and *Engagement* were evident throughout. While neither Esther nor the students frequently commented on *Control* (*f*=13), the classroom observations indicated those behaviors to be the most prevalent. It can be inferred that established classroom management routines contributed to Esther's ability to clearly communicate with her students using the target language, as the ability to communicate well was suggested by Esther during the in-depth interview as well as from students' perceptions in the STE Comments.

Engaging was most frequently mentioned (*f*=8) in the STE Comments, indicating the students' perception of Esther's teaching to be engaging and interesting to them. The classroom observations and in-depth interviews mentioned this aspect of her teaching less frequently (*f*=7; *f*=3; respectively). However, the researcher's primary

focus during classroom observations was to observe Esther’s teaching rather than the students’ perceptions or reactions to teaching. Additionally, Esther’s classes were primarily focused on speaking, as discussed during the in-depth interview, and may have been inherently interesting to students due to the real-world contexts surrounding the speaking tasks. Finally, the frequencies of *Caring* were mentioned only in the STE comments. While frequencies of empathy and caring observed or mentioned during the classroom observations and in-depth interview did not yield the highest numbers when compared to other aspects of effective teaching, there were several instances in the data sources to support their significance.

It was uncovered during the in-depth interview and through STE comments that the use of the TL, speaking, and focus on meaning were also important factors in Esther’s approach to instruction. As discussed earlier, the use of the TL was not recorded as frequently as it was observed during the classroom observations due to the fact that Esther maintained instruction in Spanish 100% of the time. However, the emphasis on speaking in all three data sources was evident. Congruent with the notion that speaking relies on negotiation of meaning between interlocutors, it is a logical assumption that the focus on meaning was highly observed, mentioned and reported across the data sources.

Portrait of Drexler

In this section, I shall present a portrait of Drexler, describing his journey as a language learner and teacher of Spanish as a foreign language. Additionally, this profile examines his language teaching and learning beliefs in order to provide a context for understanding the manner in which he approaches instruction in his language classes.

Drexler's path to teaching again delineates the unique experiences that further establish the distinction of the varied instructional staff present in this university context.

Drexler, a native English-speaker, native-Oklahoman and by-the-course instructor, began his language studies after completing his undergraduate work in Philosophy. He spent a semester in law school and realized he did not like it. Later, he enrolled in the Spanish Education program and began taking Spanish courses as part of his degree requirements. During his upper division coursework, he recalled,

> Some of the professors encouraged me to go on with the Spanish M.A program. And so, I was a philosophy major to begin with and Philosophy is almost purely theoretical, and I thought literature was great because it has a theoretical component but language has a practical component as it is also something we use every day (November 16, 2016).

He further commented that his studies in undergraduate courses in a grammar-based program did little to prepare him for oral or listening proficiency, and that it was not until his graduate studies that he began to discover language fluency through reading and contact with native-speakers on a regular basis. Drexler completed a month-long study abroad program in Guanajuato, Mexico that launched his gains in proficiency. Additionally, Drexler's positive experiences in his Spanish courses encouraged him to change his course of study to pursue a Master of Arts in Spanish Literature.

Once a graduate student in Spanish Literature, Drexler began to teach as a GTA. At the beginning of his experience he recalled,

> I didn't really know what I was doing. They sort of just threw me in the classroom and I had to figure it out. I look back on some of the classes that I taught in the very beginning and sort of cringe. It's everything you're not supposed to do: reading straight from the textbook, not speaking in Spanish, and not being confident enough to speak in Spanish at that point (November 16, 2016).

Upon completion of his Master of Arts degree in Spanish literature, Drexler was hired by the department chair to teach Spanish Language courses as a by-the-course instructor. He was cognizant of the shift in his approach to instruction since his first days in the classroom. As Drexler compared his teaching now vs. then he stated,

> I think my classes are much more communicative now. I still teach grammar, and probably more than I should, but I think I used a mixed approach. I do some grammar-focused work followed by communicative activities. I think what I have learned over the last three years is that what my students really need at this level is input in the target language (November 16, 2016).

The aforementioned portrait of Drexler highlights his journey as both a language learner and teacher. His beliefs about his own language foundation, moving from a grammar-based program into later more input-heavy graduate studies, which complemented his oral proficiency through more frequent exposure to input and literature are illuminated as well. Both his learning and teaching experiences in Spanish have shaped his beliefs about curriculum and instruction up to the present moment.

Observed Approaches to Instruction During Drexler's Classroom Observations

Table 4.3 denotes the observed effective teaching practices stemming from the literature as modeled in the findings for Carolina and Esther. The full list of codes and frequencies for Drexler can be found in Appendix C. Table 4.3 includes frequencies of observed approaches included in the in-depth interview and collected from comments in the Student Teacher Evaluation comments, and will be illustrated later as those data sources are reviewed. However, for this section, the discussion of the findings in Table 4.3 will pertain only to Drexler's observed approaches to instruction.

Table 4.3 Codes and Frequencies for Effective Instruction-Drexler

Codes	Classroom Observations (4)	In-depth Interview	STE Comments	Total
Caring	2	6	7	15
Clarity	**14**	6	10	30
Enthusiasm	**6**	**11**	**10**	27
Engaging	**8**	**9**	**10**	27
Control	6	2	1	9
				108

Over the course of classroom observations in Drexler's Spanish 1115 course, the following approaches to instruction were observed with the highest degrees of frequency: (1) Clarity (*f*=14); Engaging (*f*=8); and (3) Enthusiasm (*f*=6).

Clarity was embedded throughout each of the four lessons observed. Drexler began each class by clearly stating objectives in terms of communicative functions such as, talking about future plans, talking about clothing, describing houses, and talking about the weather during different seasons of the year. Additionally, Drexler followed a routine (*control)* each time he introduced a new activity that included giving short, explicit instructions, modeling or showing an example, and checking for comprehension before setting students free to approach the language task *(clarity)*. There was additional support for students via the use of written instructions to accompany spoken TL to ensure that all students were aware of what was expected of them.

Drexler encouraged student participation and engagement (*f*=8) in several ways. One of his strategies incorporated the use of personalized questioning as a bridge between specific language functions and tasks. For example, during a lesson on describing houses and living situations, Drexler asked several students where they lived, what the house was like, whether they had roommates, and what their roommates were

like. This set a context for the task: describing what we look for in a roommate. In addition, opportunities for students to share personal information with the class contributed to Drexler's knowledge of his students (*enthusiasm)* on both a personal and academic level (*f*=6).

Drexler organized his classes containing new content in such a way that students moved from Novice-mid production toward the ceiling of Intermediate-low using communicative contexts as the unit of structure. In a sample lesson on clothing descriptions, Drexler demonstrated his knowledge of language acquisition by presenting a clear objective (*clarity)*. Then, he modeled different tasks in the TL beginning with true/false or either/or questions (Novice-low/mid). Next, students were asked to create a description of a person's clothing for the class to guess. Several activities of this type were executed before students were finally asked to come up with questions to ask and answer with classmates (Intermediate-low).

Considering approaches to instruction grounded in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, the use of CLT and TBLT, Drexler, like Carolina and Esther demonstrated an unexpected emphasis on speaking, listening, use of the TL and TBLT approaches, including most significantly the "pre" and "during" phases of TBLT (see Appendix C).

As mentioned in the previous section, Drexler began each of his classes by stating the objective in the TL followed by personalized questions to solicit student input. This interpersonal exchange is one of the ways speaking and listening occurred frequently in his classes. Additionally, Drexler gave the students many opportunities for paired and small group work to complete language tasks which required students to

speak and listen exclusively in the TL. This was also the context in which Drexler maintained use of the TL throughout and encouraged his students to do so as well.

In conjunction with speaking, listening, and use of the TL, much of Drexler's class structure was observed to take on a task-based approach to FL instruction. Expanding the description in the previous section, Drexler created one task in which students were asked to find out about and describe what they look for in a roommate. The pre-task phase revolved around finding out about students' current living situations, setting up a context for the activity involving personalization, scaffolding of necessary grammar and vocabulary, and modeling how to ask questions and answer them. Next, Drexler provided an authentic context to complete the task. Students were told they had just arrived in a Spanish-speaking country to study for a year and had to find a roommate. An extension of the pre-task involved time for students to create questions that would indicate the best fit for becoming roommates. During the task, students were instructed to interview one another and record answers to share with the class, thus determining which of their classmates would be best-suited or ill-suited for becoming roommates. The post-task phase in this case required students to report on their interview results and tally the highest-rated potential roommates from the class. Task-based activities like this one were present in each of Drexler's observed classes, suggesting a pattern for the use of TBLT in his approach to FL teaching.

Approaches to Instruction: Drexler's In-depth Interview

In this section, the presentation of the findings in Table 4.3 pertains only to Drexler's observed approaches to instruction during the in-depth interview. Drexler

discussed the following areas most frequently in as seen in Table 4.2: (1) Enthusiasm (f=11); (2) Engaging (f=9); and (3) Caring (f= 6).

In terms of enthusiasm (f=11), Drexler expressed that knowing what his students need in his classes is one of the principal factors in his approach to lesson planning and instruction. During the in-depth interview he stated,

> If you walk into class on a Monday and you're trying to get a lot of output from your students, a lot of times, it's not going to go well. And on Friday, it would not be a good idea to try a heavily grammar-based activity because the students are active. They want to participate and a speaking or interactive activity would be better for them (November 16, 2016).

Drexler also communicated the importance of organizing his classes to help his students work on skills they would otherwise not be able to outside of class (*clarity)*. Based on comments during the in-depth interview, he assessed student needs by familiarizing himself with the course curriculum and by personalizing questions relating to the language objectives as way to informally assess them. Lastly, he recalled a talk he attended at the beginning of the semester to indicate the influence it had on his teaching.

> And he said, don't forget what you didn't know. I really think sometimes as teachers we don't realize how little students know. So, I try to put myself back in that place to give them what they need (November 16, 2016).

Another predominant aspect of Drexler's approach to instruction is the significance of engagement (f=9). Drexler expressed his students' interest in hearing personal anecdotes from his travels and experiences. Drexler used these personal experiences to engage the students in topics embedded in the curriculum such as, teaching the preterit vs. imperfect, for example. He recalled,

> I really try to make it personal, and so for example I've used trips I've taken to teach the past tenses in context. Then, because they are so interested in what I've done, they listen more closely and I can create listening or comprehension activities from that. I love talking to students about Costa Rica and Spain and

> they get so much more out of it, and it makes the lesson much more interesting (November 16, 2016).

An attitude of empathy (*caring)* toward Drexler's students was also evident during the in-depth interview (*f*=6). He indicated on several occasions that he wanted his students to feel comfortable in his classes. While comparing a more grammar-based approach with a communicative one, Drexler voiced that a communicative approach could have the potential to put students on the spot. His aim is to give his students appropriate amounts of input for this to occur. To demonstrate his perspective, he stated,

> CLT makes students step out of their comfort ozone and engage in spontaneous language. I try to reconcile this to some degree by incorporating humor. I want everyone to feel comfortable. And, I recast their mistakes rather than telling them, 'that's not correct' (November 16, 2016).

Drexler also indicated that speaking practice was one of the skills that could not be practiced as much outside the classroom. Thus, he pointed out that speaking and listening activities were the dominant focus in his classes. During the interview he stated,

> Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are the days I find my students are most teachable. They've had a day to absorb a good amount of input and get on their feet. This is when I try to implement a lot of speaking and listening activities. On Fridays, I like to try and incorporate something fun, but they want to participate and speak, so I try and create something fun for them to do around culture (November 16, 2016).

Writing was also explicitly indicated as being very important in his classes. Drexler's response to a question about the role of each of the four skills best explains why.

> Well, they're all really important, so you can't really separate them. You need to practice all of them regularly (November 16, 2016).

Drexler also discussed the negative impact a communicative approach might have if writing and reading were deemphasized in a language course. Drexler felt his own proficiency gains were attributed to reading and writing in the TL, supporting his response about the integration of all four skills.

Similarly, Drexler's preferred use of task-based approaches to instruction was illustrated in his views of language from a philosophical perspective. As previously discussed, Drexler's background in philosophy influenced his interest in languages due to their theoretical and practical components. According to this perspective, Drexler expressed a view of language use as a practical, every day skill. As such, he stated,

> Maybe you're trying to describe how to do something or tell a story. The function is not really focused so much on the nuts and bolts of the language of grammar, even though grammar is necessary for that function, but you know you're focused on getting your students to perform a certain task to find out what they can *do* with language (November 16, 2016).

Perceived Approaches to Instruction Via Student Comments

This section will again refer to table 4.3. Moreover, for this part of the discussion, it will only refer to the frequencies relating to STE comments made by students at the end of the course. The three most frequently reported attributes of Drexler's approaches to instruction were: (1) Enthusiasm (f=10); (2) Engaging (f=10); and (3) Caring (f=7).

Drexler's STE comments revealed that students felt Drexler knew what they needed (*enthusiasm)* and made efforts to get to know them personally throughout the semester. Some of the comments relating to his knowledge of students are listed below for reference (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

1. Professor 'Drexler' always interacted with the class in a very personable way.

2. He did a great job connecting with everyone.
3. I really liked the instructor's interaction with the students.
4. He knew what we needed so we could all be on the same page.

Student engagement was also referenced throughout Drexler's STE comments throughout. One student commented, "he used our goals and future motivations to help us learn the course material" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Another student summarized Drexler's course by stating, "he kept students fully engaged in every class period and did a great job of thoroughly teaching the course. I'm impressed" (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

The personal relationships created between Drexler and his students was also evidenced in student perceptions of his empathy and caring throughout the semester (*f*=7). Students commented on this aspect of his teaching in the following ways:

1. He has an ability to teach a language so patiently and he is always there for his students.
2. Professor 'Drexler' was always willing to assist in learning new words.
3. Drexler was very helpful and made the course easy to understand.
4. Very interactive, positive and respectful atmosphere.

Drexler's STE comments also implied a connection between perceptions of the student/teacher relationship as it pertained to elements of culture taught. One student commented,

> He got excited about Spanish-speaking cultures and about the class itself. He has such an amazing amount of experience that he taught Spanish in a way that gave a background for why the language worked in a specific way. I believe this digging into the culture allowed me to learn the language on a deeper level than I thought possible (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

Other students commented on Drexler's use of videos, food and music as positive additions to the course that increased interest and understanding of the Spanish language and culture.

Students commented both on Drexler's use of Spanish as well as his encouragement and expectation to use the TL during interpersonal communication. STE comments mentioned Drexler's use of repetition and question types (like those discussed in the previous section on classroom observations) to reinforce comprehension before moving on to other topics. One student stated, "the professor pushed us to use Spanish, even if we felt we did not know much" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Because of Drexler's encouragement toward use of the TL, students expressed satisfaction with the amount of speaking incorporated in his classes. In particular, one student highlighted the love of partner and group work to help with speaking and listening skills.

Summary of Findings-Drexler

As indicated in Table 4.3, data from the classroom observations, in-depth interview and STE Comments reveal some commonalities across the three data sources. In terms of effective teaching behaviors, the frequencies of engagement and enthusiasm were evident throughout. Additionally, both Drexler and his students perceived empathetic and helpful behaviors with relative frequency.

Also uncovered in the data was the epiphany that speaking activities were observed, discussed and perceived by students as a primary feature in Drexler's course (see Appendix C). Listening was observed and discussed in the classroom observations and in-depth interview, but students did not imply its significance to the same degree of

frequency on the STE comments. It is possible that a lack of understanding between the relationship of speaking and listening exists among students. Drexler's use of the TL was observed and commented on by students, implying that Drexler implements the use of 90% TL in his courses as well, as recommended by ACTFL.

Finally, Drexler's approach to instruction as observed during classroom observations and discussed during the in-depth interview suggest a proclivity to task-based activities as the basis for meeting language objectives in class. While students in Drexler's courses appeared to pay closer attention to the relationships they built in his classes than the activity types, a task-based approach to language teaching may have contributed to student success congruent with Drexler's effective teaching behaviors.

Portrait of Pablo

In this section, I will present a portrait of Pablo, examining his experiences as an early English language learner, his journey as a graduate student, and finally his teaching experience as a GTA. This profile also examines his beliefs about his own self-efficacy with regard to language teaching and learning. In order to provide a context for understanding the manner in which he approaches instruction in her language classes, Pablo's language teaching philosophy is also discussed. This is yet another illustrative example of the varied instructional staff present in this university context.

Pablo, a native Spanish-speaker and GTA in Spanish, was introduced to English in Colombia during high school. Pablo clarified that studying English was a requirement and recalled the experience as one that was not particularly demanding in that the focus was primarily on grammar. It was not until he came to study a Master of Arts degree in Spanish that he started *really* practicing his English and learned to speak

it well. In his daily life, Pablo seeks out opportunities to practice his English when he can by watching the news and television in both English and Spanish, as well as by speaking with native English speakers around the university.

However, Pablo's teaching career began in Colombia, where he taught basic English courses. Later, as a graduate student in Arkansas, he began to teach courses in Spanish for native-speakers of English. His teaching experience expanded as he continued on to pursue a Ph.D. in Spanish Literature in the present institution described in this study. While reflecting on his journey as a language educator, Pablo expressed a high sense of self –efficacy stating,

> I think I like teaching because I like languages. When I started teaching, I started to enjoy it and really liked it. You know, I think I am good at it too. I feel comfortable in the classroom and I believe I have the skills to teach (November 21, 2016).

Pablo's philosophy and approach to language instruction can be described as communicative in nature. While discussing the ways in which he thought learning a second language affected how he approached his teaching, Pablo stated,

> I think I can understand better how the process [of language learning] how the process is for them. First of all, it's hard to learn a second language. So I think my purpose when I teach them is to communicate. So, I know they are probably going to make several mistakes, but I think that the most important thing when you're teaching and learning a second language is that you can express yourself. It doesn't matter if you're not perfect, but you can still do it (November 21, 2016).

The above portrait of Pablo describes his central philosophy as it applies to his approaches to FL instruction today. Additionally, his sense of self-efficacy in the classroom has made his teaching experience an enjoyable one thus far. Both his interest in learning and teaching in English and Spanish have shaped his approaches to curriculum and instruction to date.

Observed Approaches to Instruction During Pablo's Classroom Observations

Table 4.4 represents the observed theme of effective teaching practices. The full list of codes and frequencies for Pablo can be found in Appendix D. Table 4.4 includes frequencies of observed approaches included in the in-depth interview and collected from comments in the Student Teacher Evaluation comments, and will be referenced later as those data sources are discussed. However, for this section, the discussion of the findings in table 4.4 will pertain only to Pablo's observed approaches to instruction over the course of four classroom observations.

Table 4.4 Codes and Frequencies of Effective Teaching-Pablo

Codes	Classroom Observations (4)	In-depth Interview	STE Comments	Total
Caring	5	3	4	12
Clarity	**20**	5	5	30
Enthusiasm	7	**7**	**5**	19
Engaging	**9**	**5**	**9**	23
Control	**18**	4	4	26
				110

Over the course of classroom observations in Pablo's Spanish 1115 course, the following approaches to instruction were observed with the highest degrees of frequency: (1) Clarity (*f*=20); (2) Control (*f*=18); and (3) Engaging (*f*=9).

Classroom Management (*control)* was observed throughout the entirety of each class observed (*f*=18). Pablo demonstrated clearly established routines in each lesson, varying the content and enactment to keep students interested and *engaged* (*f*=9). For example, Pablo began one class by asking his students to act out different verbs or point to vocabulary items in and around the room. Afterward, he paired students to look for two reflexive verbs to act out in front of the class. Each pair was given clear time limits

and student participation was encouraged as the pairs acted out their verbs in front of the class. Student choice in choosing verbs and vocabulary personalized this activity and generated further student interest and engagement. Pablo also monitored the room during small group and paired activity to effectively manage the time allotted for each exercise. As a result, the physically proximity to his students appeared to encourage them to stay in the TL as well.

Pablo's use of classroom management (*control)* was facilitated teacher skill (*f*-=20). With regard to clarity, Pablo used gestures, visual aids and classroom routines to communicate messages to students. Tied to classroom management, Pablo waited until students were seated and looking at him before giving instructions for a paired or small group activity. For example, during an activity in which students were asked to describe a distinct photo in each group, Pablo gave instructions in a short, concise manner. Next, he modeled each of the components of the activity before students began to produce their own descriptions. This lesson began by acting out verbs and vocabulary as discussed earlier, and progressed into interpersonal descriptions including the same vocabulary used in the warm-up activity. The sequence and development of activities throughout the lesson, as well as the others observed, followed a logical structure appropriate for the language objective of the class: talking about future plans.

Although Pablo maintained a similar sequence and structure in all four of the classes observed, the personalization, student choice, and interactive components of each activity kept students interested and engaged throughout (*engaging)* (*f*=9). For example, during a lesson on *talking about daily routines*, students paired together to talk about their routines on a typical Saturday. After a few minutes of discussion, Pablo

added a challenge to the activity by asking classmates to share what they learned from their partners. Then, he projected an image of a girl and asked about her normal daily routine. This provided an opportunity for students to create with language and share their predictions with the class on the board. Finally, he asked the students to look at the student work on the board to make any corrections necessary. Rather than providing corrections for his students, Pablo gave them ownership in the process, encouraging them use metalinguistic awareness to develop their language skills.

The use of the TL in Pablo's classes was evident throughout as he remained in Spanish 100% of the time. Pablo was able to do this in a beginning level course by using comprehensible language and by employing the use of pictures to serve as visual aids when presenting new vocabulary. Additionally, he ensured student comprehension by occasionally asking students for a direct translation. However, in addition to teacher use of the TL, Pablo encouraged his students to remain in Spanish during paired and small group activities. Due to the high frequency of TL use in Pablo's classes, students spent a great deal of time hearing TL input and speaking throughout the classes observed. Again, it appeared that Pablo's established routines (*rules and grades)* contributed to the expectation that students were to use the TL as often as possible during class.

In Pablo's case, the combination of effective teaching behaviors such as control, clarity, and engagement, was enhanced by the implementation of activities used to help students develop communicative competence (see Appendix D). As discussed above, the structure of Pablo's classes provided students with multiple opportunities to access comprehensible TL input. In addition, the majority of the activities enacted in Pablo's

classes revolved around negotiation of meaning for topics such as, finding out about a friend's weekend plans, describing clothing preferences, talking about daily routines, or activities in different climates or seasons. As Pablo frequently asked students to report on their classmates responses, he was also able to conduct informal evaluations and adjust his teaching accordingly.

Approaches to Instruction: Pablo's In-depth Interview

In this section, the presentation of the findings in Table 4.4 pertains only to Pablo's observed approaches to instruction as they relate to the in-depth interview. Pablo discussed the following areas most frequently in as seen in Table 4.4: (1) Enthusiasm (*f*=7); Engaging (*f*=5); and Control (*f*=4).

Pablo approached his relationship to students (*enthusiasm)* in unique way. One the one hand, the depth in which Pablo involves himself personally in the lives of his students was quite traditional. However, he indicated that teaching in any language program involves a deep knowledge of the academic context, institutional context, and knowledge of the students taught. Pablo's perspective on getting to know his students became clear during the in-depth interview as he stated,

> It is important for me to know my students because I know in this job I am dealing with people. In Colombia, and I'm sure here too, there are some teachers that *really* care about their students' personal life, and there are others who leave a gap between the student and the teacher (November 21, 2016).

Pablo expressed he was more like the second type of teacher. When asked if this might be attributed to differences between the role of teacher vs. student in Colombia, he replied,

> I don't think it is cultural. I am a shy person and this [type of dynamic] better fits my personality. I am very easy-going and relaxed.

The way in which Pablo discussed his approach toward instruction with his students suggests a relationship between student engagement (*f*=5), and teacher motivation. He commented on student engagement in this way,

> I try to start with an interesting topic. I listen to my students' answers and opinions about their real lives and I try to use that information to catch their attention (November 21, 2016).

Pablo also discussed the importance of enjoying the materials used in class. From his perspective, interesting content makes for better learning experiences.

Lastly, Pablo expressed the significance of establishing routine (*control)* in his classes (*f*=4). When asked specifically about his routine warm-up activity, Pablo indicated two reasons for beginning his classes in this way.

> First, I try to get them up out of their seats so they can wake up, because most of the time they come to class tired. The second reason is to review basic verbs and vocabulary they *need* to be able to communicate. So, when they are saying and doing the action I think they can memorize them better (November 21, 2016).

Pablo also mentioned the importance of other aspects of classroom management such as pairing different students together and switching partners often. Pablo felt this type of classroom management was beneficial to students to avoid distractive behavior and to promote listening skills in his classes.

It was clear from the discussion during the in-depth interview that Pablo's approach to instruction was not based on explicit grammar-instruction, but rather a focus on meaning. As previously mentioned in his portrait, Pablo believes that it is normal to make mistakes when communicating in a foreign language because the message can be understood regardless. Adding to this belief, Pablo stated, "it is my responsibility as a teacher to teach how to communicate in a language. That is my objective" (November 21, 2016).

Thus, Pablo's approaches to instruction rarely involve explicit grammar teaching out of context. In fact, he mentioned on several occasions during the in-depth interview that one acquires the grammatical structures through reading in the TL. He also noted the text should be enjoyable to the reader. Adding to this notion, Pablo expressed a connection between reading, listening, and speaking (see Appendix D) as he stated,

> The first thing is reading because it is hard to understand another language. So, after you get to a certain level with reading, you can start speaking, and of course listening which are the most important parts of communication (November 21, 2016).

Perceived Approaches to Instruction Via Student Comments

This section will again refer to table 4.4 regarding Pablo's approaches to instruction. However, for this part of the discussion, it will only refer to the frequencies relating to STE comments made by students at the end of the course. The three most frequently reported attributes of Pablo's approaches to instruction within the theme of effective teaching were: (1) Engaging (*f*=9); (2) Enthusiasm (*f*=5); (3) Caring (*f*=4); and (4) Control (*f*=4).

Pablo's STE comments revealed that many students enjoyed the participatory, interactive nature of his class. Adjectives such as, *fun, engaging, interactive,* and *active* were used to describe student experiences regarding student engagement (*f*=9). Additionally, students noted they felt connected to their classmates because of the high levels of interaction. Not only did they feel that Pablo got to know them well but also their peers. Another student expressed Pablo's knowledge of his students (*enthusiasm)* by showing appreciation for the way he corrected errors in class.

> He also doesn't over-correct when students struggle or make mistakes when trying to speak Spanish (STE Comments, Fall 2016).

In addition to students' perceptions of interaction and community in Pablo's class, some students indicated his understanding nature (*caring)* was a positive feature of the course (f=4). Words like *supportive, understanding,* and *patient* were used to describe Pablo's approach to instruction. Finally, some students reported Pablo's classroom management style to be suitable for their learning preferences (*control)* (f=4). Interestingly, all four mentions of classroom management pertained to Pablo's warm-up routine of gesturing, repeating and acting out verbs. STE comments suggested that the repetition helped them learn better.

STE comments also referred to Pablo's class as *communicative*, and students mentioned completing many *speaking activities* as a helpful part of the class. Additionally, STE comments indicated both their use of the TL as well as the teacher's. One student commented, "I liked the fact that *we* did not speak English for the most part" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Another student mentioned that having heard Spanish all semester, he was now able to speak and understand basic Spanish much better.

Summary of Findings-Pablo

As indicated in Table 4.4, data from the classroom observations, in-depth interview and STE Comments reveal some commonalities across the three data sources. In terms of effective teaching behaviors, the frequencies of control, engagement and enthusiasm were evident throughout.

Additional data sources (see Appendix D) also indicated that speaking activities were observed, discussed and perceived by students as a salient feature in Pablo's course. Use of the TL was observed frequently during classroom observations and

mentioned on the STE comments, implying that Pablo implements the use of at least 90% TL in his courses as well, as recommended by ACTFL.

Finally, Pablo's approach to instruction as observed during classroom observations and discussed during the in-depth interview suggest a focus on meaning as the center for classroom activities. However, similar to Drexler's students in the previous section, Pablo's students appeared to pay closer attention to the relationships they built in his classes than the activity types.

Portrait of Christina

This section presents a portrait of Christina that chronicles her journey in languages as an undergraduate student, her observations through study abroad, as well as her experiences in teaching and learning as a GTA. Additionally, her teaching experiences in different academic settings are briefly discussed. In sum, this portrait intends to provide a construct through which Christina's reflection on teaching learning and as an effective and high achieving instructor might be understood.

Christina, a native-English speaker and GTA, began studying Spanish as an undergraduate student. When asked to reflect on how and when she came to study languages, Christina reported that it was not part of her original plan. In fact, she was studying Business at the start of her college career. However, she quickly realized that she did not particularly enjoy her Business classes, but rather appreciated her Spanish courses. In particular, Christina recalled how she felt when she began to gain proficiency in the language. "It just makes me feel like I'm part of the coolest club in the world" (November 30, 2016).

At one point in her undergraduate career, Christina was encouraged by her professors to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Spanish Literature. After her junior year in college, Christina studied abroad for a month in Spain through a Spanish Honors Society scholarship she received. She benefitted from it so much she applied for another scholarship, and was able to study abroad for another three months as a recipient of said scholarship. This time, her study abroad occurred immediately following her graduation. Christina chronicled some of her discoveries during that time stating,

> When I was studying abroad, I noticed that in the museums the translations of the titles between Spanish and English were terrible. It made me feel even more that, if I, as an undergraduate student that certainly wasn't fluent at the time felt like there was a discrepancy in those translations, I was missing a lot. So, being a native English-speaker, I wanted to bridge the gap for myself in that process, and I have always liked literature. It made me want to read the original works instead of the translations (November 30, 2016).

Upon returning from her time abroad, Christina started her graduate career in Spanish Literature at the institution examined in this study. As is a relatively common anecdote for many first-time GTAs, Christina recalled her first impressions of teaching in this way:

> I was thrown and without any training whatsoever besides the methodology class that we were required to take. It was the same semester that we started teaching, which I did not find particularly helpful. However it did give me some ideas. At the beginning of that time there weren't many training sessions available to graduate students (November 30, 2016).

However, Christina's teaching evolved over the course of her graduate program as she continued to pursue her Ph.D. in Spanish literature at the same university. Christina paused briefly from her graduate studies to pursue a teaching position at a private high school, where she reported being afforded many opportunities to collaborate on curriculum-related issues, as well as attend state and regional language-

specific conferences through school funding. The combination of her time as a GTA and high-school teaching contributed to her knowledge base as a language educator.

Additionally, as a second language learner of Spanish, Christina approaches her teaching from the standpoint of setting high expectations for her students. Specifically, Christina expressed

> There's nothing special about me besides time and dedication, and so, I don't feel bad for them if it's hard because they [the students] decided to study this language and I feel like, if I can do it, then they can do it. I'm not like some genius. It doesn't matter if they are or if they aren't because it takes time and effort and more than just natural talent, I think. And so, I impress that upon my students (November 30, 2016).

The above portrait of Christina reveals the connection between what she took away from her studies as a second language learner of Spanish, her interest in language as it relates to literature, and her approaches to FL instruction today. Moreover, not only was her exposure to Spanish the single most influencing factor in her decision to pursue two graduate-level degrees, but also one that established the foundation for her philosophy of teaching. Both her learning and teaching experiences have shaped her philosophy of curriculum and instruction to date.

Observed Approaches to Instruction During Christina's Classroom Observations

Table 4.5 represents the observed theme of effective teaching practices drawn from the literature discussed in Chapter Two (see p. 46). The table includes frequencies of observed approaches included in the in-depth interview and collected from comments in the Student Teacher Evaluation comments, and will be referenced later as those data sources are discussed. However, for this section, the discussion of the findings in table 4.5 will pertain only to Christina's observed approaches to instruction over the course of four classroom observations.

Table 4.5 Codes and Frequencies for Effective Teaching-Christina

Codes	Classroom Observations (4)	In-depth Interview	STE Comments	Total
Caring	4	4	**6**	14
Clarity	9	11	3	23
Enthusiasm	**10**	**13**	**4**	27
Engaging	**12**	**11**	**4**	27
Control	**9**	7	1	17
				108

Christina's approaches to instruction demonstrated effective teaching practices during classroom observations. Christina was observed most frequently in the following areas as seen in Table 4.5: (1) Engaging (*f*=12); (2) Enthusiasm (*f*=10); and (3) Control (*f*=9).

In contrast to the previously discussed instructors, each of Christina's classes observed was very different. A high degree of student engagement was observed (*f*=12) as she implemented a variety of activity types within each lesson and across the four classes. For example, the day prior to the first observed class, Christina and the class created a story using target grammar structures and vocabulary. For homework, the students wrote a summary. During the class observed, Christina began by asking students to stand up and retell what they remembered about it. All students were engaged in the activity, attentively listening for details to avoid repetition. Next, Christina asked the students to form groups, compare their summaries, and create a final draft of the document. The students appeared to be personally invested in the story because they had ownership in creating it, and the follow-up activities encouraged peer-review and the writing process. In Christina's other observed classes, the use of video, music, task-type and frequent partner switching contributed to a high degree of

engagement. Students gave the appearance they were also quite interested in these types of activities based on the researcher's observations of their frequent laughter, humor, and body language (smiling, eye contact).

In terms of Christina's enthusiasm (*f*=10), classroom observations suggested she knew exactly what her students could do, thus arranging either independent or guided practice for certain activity types. For example, during a listening activity from the textbook, students were given time to read the questions to themselves before hearing the audio played twice. Rather than comparing answers in pairs before reviewing as a class, Christina called on students individually to share. This was a contrast to the former, which she used during other listening activities. However, in this class, Christina spent a great deal of time scaffolding the content and had already informally evaluated her students twice before completing the activity via paired interviews and shared information about the students' partners. The choice to enact the listening activity as independent practice suggested that Christina was aware of her students' capabilities on this task.

On a personal level, Christina also appeared to know her students quite well. This was evident in the students' relationships to one another as well. It was observed in her classes that Christina often followed up activities with personalized questions to find out more details about her students. This was a frequently used strategy in the classes observed and students also appeared to employ the same technique when working together in paired or small group work.

Control (*f*=9) was also observed differently in Christina's as compared to other instructors. Christina did not follow a prescribed routine of warm-up activities or ways

in which she introduced activities. However, she maximized class time by using paired and group work to distribute materials or set up her workspace for the next activity. Additionally, Christina carefully monitored the room and engaged with pairs and small groups during language tasks, suggesting this time was used to personalize instruction and monitor the time required to complete an activity.

Activities involving speaking and listening (see Appendix E) were observed simultaneously in the classroom observations. Each of Christina's lessons incorporated tasks that required students to engage in interpersonal communication. During one lesson, Christina showed a segment from a silent movie regarding a phone conversation. The students role-played a possible dialogue between the two people on the screen (*engaging)* and acted it out for the class. Then, the students were asked to imagine receiving a phone call and describe possible reasons why someone would not be able to talk (*engaging)*. These activity types alternated between student-to-student interaction of speaking and listening and teacher-to-student interaction.

Christina also demonstrated a deep understanding of her students' proficiency-level in the TL. Discussed previously to some degree, her knowledge of students may play a role in this understanding. During the lesson about a phone conversation, Christina posed questions that moved from novice-level to intermediate. For example, when writing and acting out the dialogue, students could employ the use of memorized chunks of information, isolated words and commonly used expressions. However, the follow-up activity was spontaneous. As students were asked to come up with reasons they might not be able to talk on the phone, they were forced to create with language, an intermediate level proficiency marker. Additionally, most of the interpersonal

interaction between students required them to practice asking and answering questions, also indicative of intermediate level tasks. Connected to Christina's knowledge of her students' proficiency level range, the aforementioned choices in classroom activities to develop communicative competence were often based on a communicative framework; either using task-based approaches or other communicative task types (see Appendix E).

Approaches to Instruction: Christina's In-depth Interview

In this section, the discussion of the findings in table 4.5 pertains only to Christina's observed approaches to instruction during the in-depth interview. The following areas were mentioned most frequently: (1) Enthusiasm (*f*=13); and (2) Engaging (*f*=11).

Similar to the classroom observations, Christina's level of enthusiasm was highly evident (*f*=13). During the in-depth interview, Christina expressed this understanding by talking about a shared knowledge of English with her students.

> I think about my own learning of Spanish and the concepts that I needed to break down for myself. And so, like one thing that I do for my students are flow charts that have yes or no questions. I feel like it helps them and I can explain things like this during my office hours in English, which is our shared native language (November 30, 2016).

Having gone through the process of learning Spanish herself, Christina often relies on activity types would have helped her when she was learning to inform instruction. One of the approaches to instruction she employs looks at language learning from a practical standpoint.

> I feel like I got gypped at my university because it was so grammar heavy and I did not want my students to have the same experience. It doesn't mean grammar is not important, but we can use grammar as a tool to aid students in being able to attack practical language tasks (November 30, 2016)

Christina also discussed the importance of building a rapport with her students. She expressed that each class and semester contains a different set of dynamics and that it is important to know your students to be relevant to them. One of the ways she accomplishes this goal is through personalization of content. As discussed in her classroom observations, Christina often follows up or extends activities with personalized questions to get to know students better. She also discussed using photos, videos and other examples from her family or personal life to bridge that relationship with her students.

The use of personal artifacts and content serves two purposes. On one hand, they create a sense of classroom community, but on the other, they pique the interest of the students and engage them in the topic (*f*=11). In addition to personalization of content, Christina indicated that she considers student interest and engagement (*engaging)* when planning her lessons. She stated,

> Students do better when they switch to different types of activities. I try to make sure they get in at least two language skills like listening, speaking or writing, and I want to keep them moving. I also try and make sure we aren't doing the same *type* of activity all class period because it's boring (November 30, 2016).

Similar to Carolina, Esther, Drexler and Pablo, speaking and listening were discussed during the in-depth interview and often in the same sentence. Christina expressed the significance of working on speaking and listening skills relative to their practicality in communication. She stated,

> We are working on a lot of things at once but I try to focus on different aspects of speaking we have already started or need to get better at. So, for example, the students might have to listen and watch something, then describe what is happening. I think narration and description are a big deal (November 30, 2016).

Christina also explained several task-types in reading, writing, listening and speaking that indicated her knowledge of the proficiency-level of her students (see Appendix E).

At the novice level moving toward intermediate levels of proficiency, it is common to see task types that mirror this description given by Christina during the in-depth interview.

> Even small tasks like writing yourself a grocery list and taking it to the store with you. You use reading and writing, and you might even have to interact with someone at the store. It's a normal everyday thing if you go to the store and you have a question, you have to be able to ask the question and listen to the response and possibly answer back if you know how to get that information (November 30, 2016).

Her knowledge of daily tasks in real-life situations allowed Christina to tailor her classroom activities to facilitate and develop communicative competence in that way. Based on the copious descriptions of language tasks involving finding out missing information, it was also clear that task-based approaches were part of her approach to instruction. Christina also employed this approach because of its ability to help develop all four language skills, stating,

> Students find they're naturally better at different skills and I think it's helpful when they are working on solving a task because their strengths and weaknesses complement each other and they see what they're good at and what still needs work (November 30, 2016).

Perceived Approaches to Instruction Via Student Comments

This section will again refer to table 4.5 regarding Christina's approaches to instruction. However, for this part of the discussion, it will only refer to the frequencies relating to STE comments made by students at the end of the course. The three most frequently voiced attributes of Christina's approaches to instruction in Table 4.5 were: (1) Caring (*f*=6); Engaging (*f*=4); and (3) Enthusiasm (*f*=4).

Overall, Christina's students found her approach to instruction *encouraging, helpful*, and *caring*. One student commented, "I liked how she was very helpful but knew how to keep everything fair" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Several students coupled Christina's willingness to encourage and help with the notion of fairness.

Students in Christina's Spanish 1115 class also expressed the interactive nature of the course as a source of engagement (*f*=4). One student reported appreciation for Christina's ability to keep students engaged, not wasting a single minute of class time. Like the classroom observations and in-depth interview, students also differentiated Christina's knowledge of students on both an academic and personal level (*enthusiasm)*. For example, one student mentioned that Christina gave the students multiple opportunities to get something in class, while another commented on the close-knit family the class had formed because of Christina's personalization.

In addition to enthusiasm, frequent comments regarding Christina's fairness were interpreted to mean that students felt respected at the proficiency-level they currently obtained. For example, the student who commented on her helpfulness while being fair, continued to say, "She always made sure that we were all on a level playing field" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Christina's in-depth interview supports these comments by students, as she spent a great deal of time discussing language proficiency with her students in the four skills throughout the course of the semester.

Similarly, students indicated that speaking was a high priority in Christina's class and that speaking was an enjoyable part of the course. One student reported, "I like how she required us to speak a log during class because it helped me, and I wouldn't have [spoken] if it was not required (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Finally,

student comments suggested that Christina employed the use of a variety of activities to develop communicative competence, including task-based exercises (see Appendix E). One student commented, "I really enjoyed that this course was proficiency-based because I feel as if that helped me more than just memorizing vocabulary words" (STE Comments, Fall 2016). Other students commented on *accomplishing language tasks* regularly as well as the *communicative* nature of Christina's course.

Summary of Findings-Christina

As indicated in Table 4.5, data from the classroom observations, in-depth interview and STE Comments reveal relationships across the three data sources. In terms of effective teaching behaviors, the frequencies of engagement and enthusiasm were evident throughout. While caring did not yield high frequencies in classroom observation or the in-depth interview data, perhaps the personalized nature of Christina's courses resulted in a sense of being cared for and encouraged as suggested in the STE comments. Appendix E illuminated similarities across the three data sources in speaking and proficiency-level of students. Furthermore, Christina incorporated many activities to develop communicative competence as well as task-based approaches.

How Are High-achieving Instructors Alike and How Are They Different?

This section presents a within-case analysis of the similarities and differences in effective teaching behaviors and instructional approaches among instructors Carolina, Esther, Drexler, Pablo and Christina. Table 4.6-4.11 summarize the frequencies of the data across all three sources: Classroom Observations (denoted by O), In-depth interview (denoted by I), and STE Comments (denoted by C). The frequencies in bold

represent the data sources in which effective teaching behaviors and approaches to instruction were observed to the highest degree. Additional analysis of codes and sub codes relating to self-efficacy (see Appendix F) are also discussed here to answer research question two: *How are high-achieving instructors alike and how are they different?*

Table 4.6 Summary of Findings-Enthusiasm

	Carolina			Esther			Drexler			Pablo			Christina		
	O	I	C	O	I	C	O	I	C	O	I	C	O	I	C
Enthusiasm	**9**	**5**	3	**5**	**4**	**4**	**6**	**11**	**10**	**7**	**7**	**5**	**10**	**13**	**4**
Total	17			13			**27**			19			**27**		

Table 4.6 shows enthusiasm was evident among all high-achieving instructors in this study across nearly all the data sources. However, the domain of enthusiasm was highlighted most frequently in Drexler (*f*=27) and Christina's (*f*=27) classes, interviews and STE Comments. Of the five instructors, enthusiasm was observed least frequently in Esther's classes, interview, and STE Comments (*f*=13). In the classroom observations (O), all five high-achieving instructors personalized questions in the TL to find out more about their students, and used this information for various reasons. First, either consciously or subconsciously, engaging with students in this way appeared to serve as a method of informal evaluation used to tailor further instruction. Additionally, it set the stage for creating a classroom environment conducive to learning. Lastly, personalized questions enhanced contextualization in communicative activities and fostered a community atmosphere in which students felt comfortable with one another experimenting with language.

Through *mentionings* of enthusiasm during the in-depth interviews (I), each instructor emphasized the importance of investing the time to get to know their students both personally and academically. All five instructors mentioned how they made a point to remember specific details about students as a way of engaging them in the classroom community and to identify students' strengths, weaknesses and personal interests. Of the five high-achieving instructors, Pablo was the only one who expressed keeping a bit more distance from his students due to his shy personality. It should also be noted that Carolina's STE comments did not mention personalization to the same degree as the others, however; it may have been overshadowed by students' perceptions of her passion for teaching which were echoed throughout. Overall, the effort on the part of the instructors to get to know their students (*enthusiasm)* was positively received by students based on the STE Comments (C) discussed in the previous sections, and contributed to student satisfaction of the course overall.

Table 4.7 Summary of Findings-Engaging

	Carolina			Esther			Drexler			Pablo			Christina		
	O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C
Engaging	**10**	4	**9**	**7**	**3**	**8**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**9**	**5**	**9**	**12**	**11**	**4**
Total	**23**			18			**27**			**23**			**27**		

Table 4.7 denotes the second common thread among four of the five high-achieving instructors in this study related to student participation. The most frequently recorded instances of engagement occurred in Carolina (*f*=23), Drexler (*f*=27), Pablo (*f*=23), and Christina's (*f*=27) classes. The data sources revealed that student engagement was evident in Esther's approach to instruction but not to the same degree as the other instructors (*f*=13).

However, each instructor approached instruction for similar learning objectives in different ways. In the classroom observations (O), a lesson on ‘talking about clothing people wear for different occasions’ was interpreted in unique ways to engage students in each of the different classes. Nevertheless, the personalization aspect of each lesson inspired student participation, encouraging students to find out more about their peers and instructor. In all classroom observations, students appeared to be fully engaged in the lessons, using the TL, and interested in the topics and activities.

Engagement was also discussed in detail during the in-depth interviews (I). Each instructor expressed a genuine desire for investing the time in lesson planning to look for authentic, interesting, and relatable materials for their students. As a result, STE comments (C) revealed a sense of satisfaction with the course materials and the ways in which their instructors made the lessons interesting and engaging.

Table 4.8 Summary of Findings-Caring

	Carolina			Esther			Drexler			Pablo			Christina		
	O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C
Caring	5	**5**	**7**	1	2	**5**	2	**6**	**7**	5	3	**4**	4	4	**6**
Total	**17**			8			**15**			12			**14**		

While the perception of caring in Table 4.8 was not observed nor mentioned frequently during the classroom observations (O) or in-depth interviews (I), STE comments (C) indicated a high response-rate across the data; specifically in Carolina (*f*=17), Drexler (*f*=15) and Christina’s (*f*=14) classes. As discussed in previous sections detailing individual instructors’ approaches to instruction, students perceived their instructors to be caring, encouraging, and helpful throughout the course. Students

also commented in many instances that their instructors' encouragement made them feel more confident about learning a language.

Table 4.9 Summary of Findings-Clarity

	Carolina			Esther			Drexler			Pablo			Christina		
	O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C
Clarity	**11**	2	5	**11**	**7**	**6**	**14**	6	10	**20**	5	5	9	11	13
Total	17			**24**			**30**			**30**			23		

Clarity (Table 4.9) was observed frequently in all classroom observations (O) except Christina's. However, Christina used many classroom management techniques to establish communication (routines). Clarity was observed most frequently during classroom observations in Pablo's classes (*f*=20). Interestingly, none of the instructors besides Esther discussed the use nor the importance of clear communication during the in-depth interview (I). For Esther, giving clear instructions was viewed as one of her strengths as a language teacher during her early teaching experiences, as denoted in the frequencies recorded during her in-depth interview (I). Overall, Esther (*f*=24), Drexler (*f*=30), and Pablo (*f*=30) demonstrated use of clarity most frequently across the five instructors.

Table 4.10 Summary of Findings-Control

	Carolina			Esther			Drexler			Pablo			Christina		
	O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C	O	I		O	I	C
Control	**14**	1	0	**13**	1	0	**6**	2	1	**18**	**4**	**4**	**9**	7	1
Total	15			13			9			**26**			17		

Table 4.10 shows that classroom management (*control)* techniques were observed during classroom observations (O) at a relatively high frequency among the five high-achieving instructors, but was observed at the highest degrees in Christina,

Esther, and Pablo's classes. Established routines, seating configuration, monitoring of student work, and time management were common strategies used by all. The established routines carried out also appeared to guide students' understanding of what was expected of them during each class. In Drexler and Christina's classroom observations, the domain of *control* was not observed to the same degree as the other instructors. Nevertheless, it was an observed feature of their classes with a frequency approaching that of other aspects of their teaching, such as teacher motivation. Pablo's use of rules and grades was shown to be the most frequent among the instructors (f=26).

Apart from the five domains of effective teaching, speaking and listening were emphasized most among the five high-achieving instructors. During the classroom observations, students were given many opportunities to work in paired or small-group activities and encouraged to use the TL. Thus, each exchange of spoken language required a listening component on the part of the partner, group or whole class during most or all activities. Speaking and listening were also discussed frequently during the in-depth interviews as a main feature in the instructors' language courses.

STE comments revealed some differences between instructors regarding listening (see Appendices A-E). As previously discussed, this may be attributed to a lack of understanding about the two main components of a conversation on the students' part. In Esther, Drexler, Pablo and Christina's courses for example, STE comments did not mention listening to the same degree as speaking, whereas, in Carolina's courses they did. In Carolina's case, she was intentional in her explanations of student learning both during classroom observations and during the in-depth

interview. In other words, Carolina often gave the students explicit feedback about *which* aspects of language they were using (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Explicit attention to language skills was not expressed in the same way in the other instructors' courses.

Another similarity between the five high-achieving language instructors was the use of the TL during classroom observations. Target Language use was *observed* 90% of the time or more in each instructor's classroom observations. STE comments in Esther, Pablo and Drexler's courses also mentioned the positive impact that using the TL had on both listening and speaking development (see Appendices A-E).

Carolina, Esther, Pablo and Christina incorporated many activities to develop communicative competence in their classes. Drexler's classes incorporated some of these activity types, but as he mentioned during his in-depth interview, he believes explicit grammar instruction is still important. Thus, two of the classes observed included grammar drills from a workbook and appeared to be unrelated to the rest of the lesson. However, in the other instructors' classes, a clear sequence of activities was evident, progressing in skill and type, to foster the development of communicative competence. Discussion from the in-depth interviews of Carolina, Esther, Pablo and Christina indicated that focus on form was *not* a high priority in their classes, but rather a focus on meaning.

Apart from differences in the role of grammar in Drexler's classes, the implementation of communicative activities looked quite different in each instructor's class. In Carolina and Esther's classes, clear routines were observed, and lessons were developed around a central communicative language objective. In addition to a focus on

oral communication via speaking and listening, both Carolina and Esther incorporated the use of reading and writing in their lessons, as well as the use of authentic resources such as, videos, magazine articles, and websites in Spanish. In fact, the use of authentic resources was observed in each of the classroom observations. In addition, many of the activities in their classes required students to physically move to different locations in the room for partner work, both seated and standing. These classes were very active and interactive, incorporating all four skills frequently.

Pablo's classes clearly reflected his personality; relaxed, even-tempered and a bit distant (shy). Like Carolina and Esther, Pablo used specific routines in his classes to structure his communicative activities, but his lesson structure was very similar in each class and consisted of, a warm-up with physical activity, student-generated charades, paired and whole group question/answer activities from the textbook, and announcements for the next class. Pablo did not incorporate authentic resources in the classes observed, nor did he connect the activities around a central theme in the same way Carolina and Esther did. However, interpersonal communication between students (speaking and listening) was the primary focus in Pablo's classroom observations, as revealed during his in-depth interview. There was no explicit grammar instruction observed in Pablo's classes, as the focus was entirely on meaning.

Drexler and Christina tended to approach parts of their lessons using a task-based approach. Both instructors employed the use of info-gap activities and situational contexts in which students were asked to solve a problem. Task-based activities in their classes were contextualized and contained the pre and during-task phases. However, Christina was observed to incorporate the post-task phase more often than Drexler. As

both Drexler and Christina expressed their philosophies of language learning to be pragmatic and practical, a task-based approach aligns with their view on the function of language learning in a classroom setting.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

In addition to approaches to instruction, all five high-achieving instructors discussed their sense of self-efficacy as language teachers (see Appendix F). Even though self-efficacy was not originally a factor in instructors' approaches to instruction, it is worth noting that the instructors' expressions of self-efficacy were given authentically when asked to discuss their journey to become language teachers. In other words, the instructors' perceptions of self-efficacy were not solicited during the interview process.

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the ability to organize and execute the steps necessary to produce a given result. Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001) expand the term to define teacher-efficacy as a teacher's judgment of his/her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning. Esther and Pablo indicated high self-efficacy with regard to teaching languages during the in-depth interviews. Esther believed that she was good at explaining things and that language learning came fairly easily to her, while Pablo stated he believed he was good at teaching languages and had the skills to do so effectively. It is possible that Esther and Pablo's sense of self-efficacy is related to the fact they are native-speakers of the language they teach. This conclusion was drawn based on statements of self-efficacy made by Carolina (bilingual English/Spanish), Drexler (native English speaker), and Christina (native English speaker).

During her in-depth interview, Carolina discussed her ever-developing sense of identity as a bilingual, bicultural and biliterate person. For Carolina, much of her adult life has revolved around finding her identity in terms of language and culture, as well as professionally. Carolina's educational formation in music led her to teach music and eventually language, but she expressed feeling as though she did "not belong" among other language instructors whose backgrounds in language and literature were very different from hers. Carolina also mentioned that she sometimes doubts herself as a teacher, and at the last minute, scraps a lesson she spent time planning, out of fear it will not go well. Her comments suggest low self-efficacy, perhaps stemming from her dueling identities and path to language teaching, as discussed in Carolina's portrait.

Drexler and Christina also expressed self-efficacy to some degree when talking about themselves as language teachers. Both instructors mentioned a sense of frustration about their undergraduate experiences in language classes, which were heavily-grammar focused. As they both described, their Spanish language courses did little to develop their oral proficiency. As GTAs and Instructors, Drexler and Christina admitted to being thrown into the classroom with little to no preparation, while at the same time having to navigate the waters of language teaching alone. As a result, Drexler and Christina said they felt self-conscious about their abilities as teachers, and try extra hard to be competent practitioners.

The implication of teacher self-efficacy suggests that teachers who believe that they will be successful at educating students will achieve this aim due to the urge to be effective and adapt to specific situations (Hutchings, 2010). Thus, teachers who are willing to go beyond what is expected of them may have a positive effect on student

learning, as well as increased student performance. Research in teacher-efficacy has proposed that a strong sense of efficacy creates a conducive learning environment with high levels of student engagement (Allinder, 1994; Good & Brophy, 2003). Thus, high self-efficacy contributes to effective teaching as a whole.

Summary of Similarities and Differences

In sum, all five high-achieving instructors embodied similar effective teaching behaviors such as, enthusiasm, engaging, control, clarity, and student perceived caring. It was also uncovered that the implementation of proficiency standards stemming from the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines revealed similarities in terms of the focus on use of the TL, speaking and listening, whereas aspects of CLT and TBLT suggested greater variance among instructors. Overall, approaches to instruction were tailored to align with instructors' personal teaching philosophies and experiences, while being executed through the lens of effective teaching practices. The following section connects these teaching practices with student performance to determine whether instructional approaches of high-achieving teachers influences student achievement.

Effects of High-achieving Instruction on Student Performance

In this section, quantitative data were collected on the four-skills assessment averages to compare student performance between the five high-achieving instructors participating in the study and the five lowest achieving instructors, thus answering research question three:

What is the effect of high-achieving instruction on student performance?

To determine the impact on student performance between these groups, a series of independent t-tests was conducted to compare the class averages for each assessment.

The rationale for t-tests over another statistical method was to describe the differences in student outcomes on each measure. Effect sizes were also calculated for cumulative assessments in reading, writing, speaking and listening (Reading Comprehension 2, Final Exam, Video Project, and Listening Exam 2). In order to maintain the same ratio of instructors and GTAs in the low performing group, data from the three lowest-achieving instructors and the two lowest-achieving GTAs teaching the same course during the same semester were used.

To compare achievement means in courses taught by high-achieving instructors versus those taught by low-achieving instructors, tables 4.11 and 4.12 depict the averages on each assessment and for each instructor included in the data analysis.

Table 4.11 Four Skills Assessment Averages-High-achieving Instructors

	Carolina	Esther	Drexler	Pablo	Christina	High-achieving Mean
Reading						
Reading Comp. 1	93.5	79.2	92	88.9	90.2	**88.75**
Reading Comp 2	82.3	86.6	79.2	88	84.3	**84.08**
Writing						
Written Exam I	92.2	87.9	92	89.8	92.3	**90.08**
Written Exam 2	91.7	84.2	86.9	93.8	87.02	**86.72**
Composition	93	97.5	95.8	90.6	93.3	**94.04**
Final Exam	84.5	87.89	86	84.7	86	**85.82**
Speaking						
Picture-based List	92.7	88.7	95.3	94.1	88.3	**91.82**
Video Project	98	94	92.2	100	88.91	**94.62**
Listening						
Listening Exam 1	91.6	80.9	85.8	84.9	96.25	**87.92**
Phone Message	87.3	87.3	82.8	79.4	87.2	**84.80**

Listening Exam 2	84.7	80	83.4	86.6	89	**84.54**

Table 4.12 Four Skills Assessment Averages-Low-achieving Instructors

	Low-achieving 1	Low-achieving 2	Low-achieving 3	Low-achieving 4	Low-achieving 5	Low-achieving Mean
Reading						
Reading Comp. 1	83.3	88.15	78.8	87.79	89.4	**85.49**
Reading Comp 2	79.83	66.16	77.8	83.82	77	**76.92**
Writing						
Written Exam I	81.1	84.35	84.8	87.8	83.5	**84.31**
Written Exam 2	74.28	73.03	80.7	76.1	79.94	**76.80**
Composition	84	71.68	93.4	92.44	95.25	**87.36**
Final Exam	78.4	74.62	83.22	74.68	81.7	**78.52**
Speaking						
Picture-based List	87.9	92.5	87	83	86.3	**87.34**
Video Project	96.63	94.66	94.4	93.42	94.83	**94.79**
Listening						
Listening Exam 1	78.93	82.18	77.8	79.1	80.12	**79.63**
Phone Message	58.83	82	82.83	81.4	71.5	**75.31**
Listening Exam 2	81.3	82.36	78.9	75	81.5	**79.81**

At first glance, the mean scores for every assessment were higher in the high-achieving group than the low-achieving group, with the exception of the Video Project. The following sections will analyze and discuss each assessment by skill, reporting the results from t-tests and effect sizes for cumulative assessments in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Reading Assessments

Two reading assessments were administered in Spanish 1115 during the fifth and ninth week respectively. Since each of the reading assessments covered different topics, an independent t-test was chosen for data analysis rather than a paired t-test. Table 4.13 outlines the results of independent t-tests between the high-achieving and low achieving instructors on the first and second reading comprehension. Effect size for Reading Comprehension 2 is also reported.

Table 4.13 Independent t-tests for Reading Comprehension Assessments

Spanish Language Program Reading Comprehension Assessments						
Reading Comprehension 1						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
88.75	5.62	85.49	4.39	3.91	8	0.3364
Reading Comprehension 2						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
84.08	3.41	76.92	6.55	2.16	8	0.0629

The means for both reading comprehension assessments were higher in the high-achieving group overall. Reading Comprehension 1 showed no statistical difference between student achievement in classes taught by high-achieving instructors (M=88.75, SD=5.62) and low-achieving instructors (M=85.49, SD=4.39), $t(10)$ =3.91, p=0.3364. On Reading Comprehension 2, students in courses taught by high-achieving instructors

(M=84.08, SD=3.41) scored nearly significantly higher than those in courses taught by low-achieving instructors and (M=76.92, SD=6.55), $t(10)$ =2.16, p=0.0629. It bears mentioning that the level of content on Reading Comprehension 2 involved more sophisticated use of language and cumulative language skills than Reading Comprehension 1. The effect size for Reading Comprehension 2 (d=1.37; Δ=1.09) was found to exceed Cohen's (1988) convention for a large effect (d = .80), suggesting a high practical significance. Both Cohen's d and Glass'Δ were calculated to minimize error.

Writing Assessments

Two written exams were administered during the eighth and thirteenth week respectively. Since the first and second exam differed in complexity of language proficiency and content, independent t-tests were used rather than paired t-tests. Additionally, the written compositions and final exam means were compared using the same method. Table 4.14 outlines the results of the four written assessments.

Table 4.14 Independent t-tests for Written Assessments

Spanish Language Program Written Assessments						
Written Exam 1						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
90.08	1.94	84.31	2.42	4.71	8	0.0015
Written Exam 2						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*

86.72	3.15	76.80	3.39	4.79	8	0.0014
Composition						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
94.04	2.67	87.36	9.76	1.48	8	0.1780
Final Exam						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
85.82	1.36	78.52	3.95	3.91	8	0.0045

The means for all three of the writing assessments were higher in the high-achieving group overall. Written Exam 1 showed statistical differences between student achievement in classes taught by high-achieving instructors (M=90.08, SD=1.94) and low-achieving instructors and (M=84.31, SD=2.42), $t(10)$ =4.71, p=0.0015. Written Exam 2 also produced statistically significant results between student achievement in classes taught by high-achieving instructors and (M=86.72, SD=3.15) and low-achieving instructors (M=76.80, SD=3.39), $t(10)$ =4.79, p=0.0014. While the overall mean was higher in the high-achieving group, the composition did not yield a significant difference in student achievement between the high-achieving (M=94.04, SD=2.67) and low-achieving instructors (M=87.36, SD=9.76), $t(10)$=1.48, p=0.1780. The Final Exam revealed statistical significance in student achievement between courses taught by high-achieving instructors (M=85.82, SD=1.36) and low-achieving instructors (M=78.52, SD=3.95), $t(10)$=3.91, p=0.0045. Since the final exam represented cumulative student

performance, effect size was calculated to determine how much of a difference was present between the high-achieving and low-achieving groups. Both Cohen's d and Glass'Δ were calculated to minimize error. The effect size for the analysis of the final exam (d=2.47; Δ=1.85) was found to exceed Cohen's (1988) convention for a large effect (d = .80), suggesting a high practical significance.

Speaking Assessments

The first speaking assessment, an interpersonal activity between students describing people, objects, places and actions in a picture, took place during the sixth week of classes. The second speaking assessment, a presentational video project, occurred during the last week of classes during the semester. Again, due to the differing modes of communication in each of the speaking assessments, independent t-tests were used to compare student achievement in courses taught by high-achieving and low-achieving instructors. Table 4.15 indicates the results of the student scores.

Table 4.15 Independent t-tests for Speaking Assessments

Spanish Language Program Speaking Assessments						
Speaking Assessment 1-Picture Based List						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
91.82	3.17	87.34	3.43	2.15	8	0.0642
Speaking Assessment 2-Video Project						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*

94.62	4.45	94.79	1.66	0.087	8	0.9377

The speaking assessments revealed mixed results. The mean score was higher on Speaking Assessment 1 (Picture Based List) in courses taught by high-achieving instructors (*M*=91.82, *SD*=3.17) than in the courses taught by low-achieving instructors (*M*=87.34, *SD*=3.43). However, there was no statistical significance between the two groups (*t*(10)=2.15, *p*=0.0642). The second speaking assessment (Video Project) showed the mean scores to be slightly higher in the courses taught by low-achieving instructors (*M*=94.79, *SD*=1.66) than in the courses taught by the five high-achieving instructors (*M*=94.62, *SD*=4.45). As a result, there was no statistical significance shown between the two groups, *t*(10), *p*=0.9377. Further, both Cohen's and Glass' effect size value (*d*= -0.05; Δ=-0.10) suggested low practical significance.

Listening Assessments

Three listening assessments were given throughout the course of the semester. Listening Exam 1 occurred during the seventh week, the Phone Message activity took place during the thirteenth week, and Listening Exam 2 occurred during week 14. As the content and complexity varied in each of these assessments, independent t-tests were used to measure student achievement between the high-achieving and low-achieving instructor groups. Table 4.16 presents the results of the comparisons.

Table 4.16 Independent t-tests for Listening Assessments

Spanish Language Program Listening Assessments						
Listening Exam 1						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
87.92	5.99	79.63	1.65	2.98	8	0.0176
Phone Message						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
84.80	3.59	75.31	10.30	1.945	8	0.0877
Listening Exam 2						
High-Achieving Group		Low-Achieving Group				
M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
84.54	3.23	79.81	9.76	2.98	8	0.0441

Overall, the mean scores on the three listening assessments were higher in courses taught by high-achieving instructors. Results on Listening Exam 1 indicated a statistical significance between student achievement in courses taught by high-achieving instructors (M=87.92, SD=5.99) and those taught by low-achieving instructors (M=79.63, SD=1.65), $t(10)$=2.98, p=0.0176. The Phone Message listening assessment did not yield statistically significant results between high-achieving instructors and (M=84.80, SD=5.99) and low-achieving instructors (M=75.31, SD=10.30), $t(10)$=1.945,

p=0.087, although this assessment was worth only six total points and may have contributed to the discrepancy. Finally, Listening Exam 2 showed statistically significant results between courses taught by high-achieving instructors (M=84.54, SD=3.23) and those taught by low-achieving instructors (M=79.91, SD=9.76), $t(10)=2.98$, $p=0.0441$. The effect size for the analysis of Listening Exam 2 (d=0.65; Δ=0.48) was found to exceed Cohen's (1988) convention for a medium effect (d = .50), suggesting a moderate practical significance.

Summary of Quantitative Data

Table 4.17 Summary of Quantitative Data

Cumulative Assessments	P value	Significant	Effect
Reading			
Reading Comprehension 2	*p<0.0629*	Nearly	*High*
Writing			
Final Exam	*p<0.0045*	Yes	*Large*
Speaking			
Video Project	*p<0.9377*	No	*Low*
Listening			
Listening Exam 2	*p*<0.0441	Yes	*Moderate*

As depicted in Table 4.17, student performance in Spanish 1115 courses taught by high-achieving instructors showed superior performance in reading, writing, listening, and speaking over students who had low-achieving teachers. These results confirm findings from previous research on the impact of effective teaching and student achievement (e.g., Freeman Johnson, 1998; Stronge, 2013; Stronge, Ward, Tucker, & Grant, 2011). Except for the composition, phone message activity and the video presentation, independent t-test results revealed statistical significance on assessments in all four skill areas, indicating a positive effect on student achievement in courses

taught by instructors who employ effective teaching practices and promote activities to develop communicative competence, including the development of all four skills; reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Upon closer examination of the three assessments that did not yield statistical significance, it bears mentioning that the composition and video project were graded with rubrics. Thus, a subjective bias could be a potential culprit with regard to the higher scores reported in the low-achieving courses on these assessments. For example, instructors may have been more lenient with their students on the video project to allow room for creativity and effort rather than demonstration of language proficiency. The assessment may not have been a genuine indication of student competence with the language as the video allowed students to rehearse, repeat, and script responses, whereas an in-time assessment of speaking would have been more revealing. In addition, the phone message activity was worth so few points, it brings into question the validity of the assessment itself. After reviewing the averages across all the sections taught, there was little variance in the means for the phone message assessment across the Spanish 1115 sections taught.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the data sources from classroom observations, in-depth interviews, STE comments and common assessments were analyzed and discussed. Findings revealed that high-achieving instructors employ a number of common effective teaching behaviors to the benefit of their students' learning. It was also discovered that high-achieving instructors understand and consider approaches to instruction rooted in Southwest University's language program goals by providing students with

communicative language practice (CLT) centered around language proficiency guidelines. Nevertheless, instructional methodologies were varied among the instructors, as each one of their personalities, language learning and teaching backgrounds, and teaching philosophies contributed to their different approaches to instruction.

The results from classroom observations, in-depth interviews and STE comments showed that all five high-achieving instructors engaged students in interactive activities that help develop communicative competence and require participation (*engaging,* see Table 4.7). Clarity, or the ability to communicate clearly to students within an organized lesson, was the second domain in which all five instructors demonstrated similarities (see Table 4.9). The extent to which enthusiasm (enthusing students or using knowledge of students both academically and personally) was varied (see Table 4.6). In-depth interviews seemed to indicate this domain had more to do with individual instructors' personalities and views regarding the student-teacher relationship.

Similarly, the caring domain revealed differences among the instructors (see Table 4.8). Carolina, who grew up in a bilingual home and traveled extensively, and Drexler and Christina, L2 learners of Spanish, were observed and perceived by students to be more empathetic to students than Esther and Pablo, native speakers of Spanish. Finally, the frequency and methodology of control showed a wide range among the instructors (see Table 4.10). As noted in enthusiasm, this may have to do with instructor personality in combination with other effective teaching behaviors such as clarity.

The quantitative analysis of assessments given in the four skill areas showed a positive correlation between effective teaching and student performance. The mean scores for nearly every assessment were higher in the courses taught by high-achieving

instructors in reading, writing, speaking and listening. These results support the notion that a focus on oral proficiency does not negatively affect proficiency development in the other skills (Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Huebner & Jensen, 1992). Assessments that were graded with rubrics showed disparity in the grading practices, indicating possible misuse of the grading instruments by the instructors in either the high-achieving group, the low-achieving group, or both. Chapter five presents a conclusion, implications for further research and limitations of this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how high-achieving Spanish instructors approach instruction in a communicative and proficiency-based language program. Many of the effective teaching behaviors and language teaching strategies uncovered during this study can be readily implemented in university foreign language classrooms with very little investment time. In fact, language instructors may find that student achievement could be significantly improved upon doing so.

Participants of this study represented Spanish language instructors at the university level teaching an introductory Spanish course during the fall 2016 semester. This study was driven by the following research questions:

1) How do high-achieving instructors in a proficiency-based, communicative Spanish Language Program approach instruction?
2) How are high-achieving instructors alike and how are they different?
3) What is the effect of high-achieving instruction on student performance?

This qualitative case study examined the approaches to instruction employed by instructors designated as high-achieving based on teaching evaluation scores and student teaching evaluation (STE) scores. A goal of this study was to capture the elements of instruction utilized by effective teachers that emerge during any given day. Another aspect of this study considered the impact of effective instruction and student performance. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and student comments on STEs. Field notes, transcriptions and evaluation documents were analyzed during the coding process and guided by the existing body of literature pertaining to effective teaching behaviors (see p. 46). The instructors' inclusion of

language teaching strategies rooted in ACTFL Proficiency guidelines, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) strategies, and Task-based Language and Teaching (TBLT) was also observed and recorded to delineate similarities and difference among them. Thereafter, sub codes for traits and strategies naturally began to emerge. Quantitative data on assessments in the four skill areas were collected and analyzed to compare achievement scores between the courses taught by high-achieving and low-achieving instructors. The assessment data used for instructors in the low-achieving were comprised of the instructors who ranked in the bottom quartile based on the same criteria mentioned above.

The results indicated that high-achieving instructors share common effective-teaching traits that contribute to quality language instruction. However, the enacting of language teaching strategies aligning with proficiency-based and communicative approaches varies based on factors related to the individual's teaching and learning background, teaching philosophy, understanding of ACTFL guidelines, understanding of CLT, and personality. Individual views of self-efficacy also contributed to the instructors' approaches to instruction and enhanced teacher effectiveness.

Implications

Several implications can be derived from the results of this study. Many of the findings from this study support research by Hattie (2003), which suggests that teachers' approaches and practices inside the classrooms have not only statistical but also practical significance on student learning. Findings from the present study revealed such effective teaching practices to include enthusiasm, student engagement, clarity, caring, and well-established control. Additionally, high self-efficacy on the part of the

instructors may contribute to the way in which each instructor approached instruction in the present study. Embedded in effective teaching practices observed was also clear evidence of an emphasis on speaking and listening, exclusive use of the target language by both teachers and students, and the use of activities to develop communicative competence.

While Hattie (2003) purports that teacher effectiveness accounts for only 30% of student achievement, much of the previous research has not been able pinpoint exactly *which* approaches and behaviors are tied to student achievement. Many studies have included value-added models relying on large-scale database analysis and hierarchical linear models to determine effectiveness, thus offering little to further the conversation regarding effective teaching, particularly in FL education (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; Leigh, 2010; Nye et. al, 2007; Stronge, 2013). Previous studies have focused on the production of extensive lists through complex instruments used to measure effective teaching behaviors (cite). However, these lists take away the essence of good teaching by trivializing instruction and reducing it to a number score or list. As the results of effective teaching practices embedded with teaching strategies aligning with ACTFL proficiency guidelines and CLT were both present in this study, some assumptions and conclusions can be made regarding the connection between high-achieving instructors and student achievement.

First, the relationships created between the students and instructors and empathy shown toward students in this study (denoted as *enthusiasm)* were observed, reported and perceived by students as a fundamental aspect in creating a classroom environment conducive to language learning. A caring relationship with students can contribute to a

teacher's disposition, thus contributing to a positive classroom climate and potentially increasing a student's academic progress (Noddings, 2005; Stronge, 2007). Evidence of a clear knowledge of students aligns with previous research that effective teachers establish a caring relationship with their students (Peart & Campbell, 1999). Thus, students who experience a positive and supportive classroom environment tend to learn more from their teachers (Peart & Campbell, 1999). While this behavior may be commonplace in a K-12 setting, building relationships with students and showing empathy/helpfulness toward students in university general education courses is a relatively new concept.

The second implication to be reported from this study relates to the findings of student interest and engagement (*reported as engaging)*. Engaging students is of particular significance in the language proficiency development of students, as it ties research in teacher effectiveness to learner variables which include, motivation, student needs and student interest (Huebner & Jensen, 1992). In other words, the implication of engagement as reported in this study adds to the existing body of research specifically related to effective language teaching. Surprisingly, this aspect of teaching does not appear in much of the existing body of literature related to effective foreign language teaching (see Bell, 2005; Harris & Sass, 2009; Jacob & Lefgren, 2008; NBTPS, 2002). However, from the perspective of the students, interesting content and approaches to instruction on the part of their instructors contributed to high levels of satisfaction in the introductory Spanish course. Similarly, the in-depth interviews revealed that creating and looking for content that would be engaging for students was a high priority for the instructors in this study. With the exception of Pablo, the four remaining instructors

used materials outside of the required course to bring relative, authentic experiences, contexts, and activities to their classes.

In addition to high levels of student engagement, the use of clear communication (*clarity)* and classroom management (*control)* by the instructors contributed to student learning by setting clear expectations, monitoring student work during activities and promoting use of the TL throughout. According to Breaux and Whitaker (2006), the best teachers tell their students what they will be able to do at the end of a lesson. Classroom management is also instrumental in engaging students in their learning and maximizing the utilization of time on task (Good & Brophy, 1997). Clear, well-established routines and expectations were present in each and every class observed, and students indicated that their instructors' routines and communication contributed to the ease in which they learned Spanish during the course of the semester. It can be implied that the repetitive nature of established routines coupled with clear and comprehensible input in the target language reflected both effective teaching behaviors, as well as approaches to instruction that align with ACTFL Proficiency guidelines and CLT. Research by Krashen (1990, 1992) & VanPatten (1993) further supports this claim.

Finally, each of the instructors in this study represented a unique cultural, linguistic and educational background. Nevertheless, the differences in their approaches to instruction aligning with ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and CLT yielded statistically significant gains on student assessments in all four skill areas. Positive results in student achievement support previous research on proficiency-based and communicative curricula (Dodds, 1992; Freed, 1987; Glisan, Uribe & Hauck, 2007;

McMillen, Villar & Mueser-Blincow, 1993; and Smith, 1984). There remains a common misconception that focus on oral proficiency indicates that students will perform poorly in other skills (Glisan, Uribe & Adair-Hauck, 2007; Huebner & Jensen, 1992). However, the broader instructional implications suggest that the use of oral language is fundamental in the later development of reading and writing skills (Dyson, 1983; Genesee, 2006; Shanahan, 2006).

While the instructors in the present study were observed to focus primarily on speaking and listening, reading and writing were also incorporated frequently. As a result, cumulative writing assessments such as, Written Exam 2, and the Final Exam showed statistical significance when mean scores were compared between courses taught by high-achieving instructors and those taught by low-achieving instructors ($p<0.0014$; $p<0.0045$). Similarly, the cumulative reading assessment (Reading Comprehension 2) yielded a near statistical significance ($p<0.0629$) with a large effect size. In sum, a focus on oral-proficiency (*listening and speaking)* may not inhibit the development of reading and writing.

The gains in student-achievement relate to the positive cumulative and residual effects of effective teaching over time, as suggested in the research in reading and math. The findings in the present study regarding the long-term effects of effective teaching, indicate that some of the same cognitive principles used in learning math may be at work in language learning.

Conclusions

Researchers have reported that effective teaching is hard to define (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). The conclusions of this study may provide insight on what

approaches are taken by high-achieving teachers to encourage student performance and learning in language classrooms.

The first conclusion of this study suggests that specific effective teaching behaviors and approaches to instruction are commonly employed by high-achieving teachers that may increase student performance. However, the exact manner in which approaches to instruction incorporating ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, CLT and TBLT in each course varies by instructor, as discussed in chapter 4.

Each of the instructors emphasized the importance of knowing their students on both personal and academic levels, as well as creating lessons that were relevant and engaging. In addition, established routines and classroom management practices such as proximity to students, configuration of desks, partner work and assignment of responsibilities were commonplace in each class observed. Consistent modeling on the part of the instructors contributed to both effective classroom management as well as clear communication in the target language throughout. During moments in which instructors monitored student work, both empathy and helpfulness were key components.

The second conclusion of this study suggests that high-achieving Spanish instructors use the target language in accordance with the ACTFL recommendation of 90% or more, even in introductory courses. Furthermore, the choice to implement activities that develop communicative competence requires the use and consistent practice of all four skills, thus embodying the tenets of a communicative classroom that also align with the proficiency-level of students. The task-types for communicative

activities varied from instructor to instructor, however; the path to proficiency was provided equitably, as supported by student-performance on assessments.

Finally, significant differences in all four skill areas were present on assessments in courses taught by high-achieving Spanish instructors as opposed to those taught by low-achieving instructors. The cumulative and residual effects of poor instruction during the foundational courses in any language leave students who had poor instructors at a disadvantage in their future coursework.

The results of this study may be useful for those instructors who are struggling to incorporate proficiency-based learning strategies in a communicative classroom. Instructors can refer to the approaches observed and reported in this study to begin to draw on the major themes of effective language teaching within a proficiency-based and communicative language program. Additionally, language program directors and administrators who lack formal training in the field of SLA or FL pedagogy may be able to draw on the results to inform training and evaluation protocol of instructors and graduate teaching assistants in their programs.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

1) The results of this study describe clear instructional patterns and teaching behaviors that were observed and recorded throughout the data sources. However, the researcher was only able to observe each instructor four times over the course of a two-month period. In order to more thoroughly understand the embodiment of instructional approaches and effective teaching practices, it might have been beneficial for the research to observe additional classes ranging from the beginning to end of the semester.

2) The positivistic nature of the data may have caused the data analysis and coding procedures to appear more reductionistic than originally intended.
3) The instructors were made aware of the days and times in which their classes would be observed, thus, creating the possibly that the instructors created lessons they anticipated the researcher would like to see. One of the pitfalls of doing so might have skewed the results from the observation data if those lessons were atypical.
4) Despite the statistically significant differences in student achievement between high and low-achieving instructors, this research solely provided results on the behaviors and approaches of effective Spanish instructors. In addition to achievement data from low-achieving instructors, it may have strengthened the argument for effective teaching to know what ineffective teachers do differently. However, ineffective approaches to instruction were not the focus of this research.
5) Participants in this study were chosen based on criterion sampling from teacher and student evaluation scores. Therefore, some of the instructors may have felt intimidated by the process or pressured to perform in a certain way to support expectations of quality teaching.

Delimitations

1. The instructors selected to participate in this study were considered to be high-achieving based on teacher and student evaluation scores available to the researcher.

2. The observations, interviews, and student teacher evaluation comments took place during the fall 2016 semester only in Spanish 1115 courses and included instructors with various academic, linguistic and teaching backgrounds.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is important for researchers to continue to investigate the phenomenon of highly effective teachers, particularly in language instruction, as the research to date has primarily drawn on data from general education. As the sample of instructors observed in this study was quite small, further research in approaches to instruction by high-achieving language instructors on a larger scale would add to the conversation in language teaching pedagogy. However, future research might also consider what *ineffective* teachers do to identify common traits that could be used to guide improvement in teaching and student-performance. Results may indicate that ineffective teaching behaviors are not necessarily the inverse of effective behaviors.

The present study examined approaches to instruction by high-achieving instructors of Spanish. It is known that enrollment in university-level Spanish courses is at an all-time high for its practicality and desirability in the job market (Lacorte & Suárez-Garcia, 2014), thus approaches to instruction may be influenced by its utility. Therefore, studies of approaches to language teaching by high-achieving teachers in other languages such as, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian might examine the unique constructs of effective teaching and approaches to instruction under a different set of outcomes.

Additional studies may also consider the link between student-achievement and the identified behaviors and approaches to instruction presented in this study. As a clear

relationship exists between high-achieving instructors and student-performance, perhaps greater gains in proficiency could be made by identifying specific approaches and their impact on performance over time.

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Appendix A: Additional Codes and Frequencies-Carolina

Codes	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE comments
ACTFL Guidelines	Classroom Observations	In-depth Interview	STE Comments
Culture	3	**7**	3
Communities	1	3	0
Comparisons	4	2	0
Communication	3	2	0
Connections	3	1	0
Proficiency-level of students	**6**	2	0
Use of target language	6	0	0
Reading	3	3	**4**
Writing	5	3	**4**
Speaking	**11**	**5**	**4**
Listening	**10**	**5**	**4**
Communicative Language Teaching			
Activities develop communicative competence	**8**	3	3
Focus on meaning	2	4	0
Input Processing	2	2	0
Output Processing	3	0	0
Sociocultural competence	1	2	0
Focus on meaning	3	0	0
Negotiation of Meaning	6	2	0
Task-based Learning and Teaching			
Real-world context	4	4	1
Task-supported	0	0	0
Task-based	2	0	0
Pre-task	3	0	0
During-task	3	0	0
Post-task	3	0	0
Human Connection	X	5	X

Appendix B: Additional Codes and Frequencies-Esther

Codes	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE comments
ACTFL Guidelines	Classroom Observations	In-depth Interview	STE Comments
Culture	0	1	0
Communities	0	0	0
Comparisons	0	0	0
Communication	2	2	3
Connections	0	0	0
Proficiency-level of students	6	3	2
Use of target language	**5**	**5**	**6**
Reading	3	2	1
Writing	**8**	2	1
Speaking	**8**	**5**	3
Listening	**8**	3	1
Communicative Language Teaching			
Activities that develop communicative competence	**7**	2	2
Focus on meaning	2	**5**	**3**
Input Processing	0	0	X
Output Processing	0	0	X
Sociocultural competence	0	0	0
Negotiation of Meaning	3	2	0
Task-based Learning and Teaching			
Real-world context	2	3	0
Task-supported	0	0	0
Task-based	1	0	0
Pre-task	2	0	0
During-task	2	0	0
Post-task	2	0	0

Appendix C: Additional Codes and Frequencies-Drexler

Codes	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE comments
ACTFL Guidelines	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE Comments
Culture	1	4	**5**
Communities	1	1	2
Comparisons	2	2	0
Communication	3	4	3
Connections	1	1	2
Proficiency-level of students	5	2	3
Use of target language	**9**	3	**4**
Reading	3	3	0
Writing	5	**8**	0
Speaking	**10**	**9**	**4**
Listening	**10**	**9**	3
Communicative Language Teaching			
Activities develop communicative competence	6	2	2
Focus on meaning	6	4	0
Input Processing	2	2	0
Output Processing	2	0	0
Sociocultural competence	3	0	0
Negotiation of Meaning	4	2	0
Task-based Learning and Teaching			
Real-world context	3	2	1
Task-supported	1	0	0
Task-based	**7**	**7**	1
Pre-task	**7**	4	0
During-task	7	4	0
Post-task	5	0	0

Appendix D: Additonal Codes and Frequencies-Pablo

Codes	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE comments
ACTFL Guidelines			
Culture	0	0	0
Communities	0	0	0
Comparisons	3	2	0
Communication	4	4	2
Connections	2	0	1
Proficiency-level of students	8	4	2
Use of target language	**11**	3	**3**
Reading	3	**5**	0
Writing	3	2	0
Speaking	**9**	**5**	**6**
Listening	**10**	**5**	2
Communicative Language Teaching			
Activities develop communicative competence	**9**	3	1
Focus on meaning	8	**6**	0
Input Processing	0	0	X
Output Processing	0	0	X
Sociocultural competence	0	0	X
Negotiation of Meaning	4	3	0
Task-based Learning and Teaching			
Real-world context	3	4	2
Task-supported	0	0	0
Task-based	2	0	0
Pre-task	2	0	0
During-task	2	0	0
Post-task	1		

Appendix E: Additional Codes and Frequencies-Christina

Codes	Classroom Observations	In-depth interview	STE comments
ACTFL Guidelines			
Culture	5	5	3
Communities	1	1	0
Comparisons	4	3	2
Communication	2	3	0
Connections	0	0	0
Proficiency-level of students	**8**	**8**	**4**
Use of target language	6	5	3
Reading	4	5	2
Writing	5	6	2
Speaking	**11**	**9**	**4**
Listening	**11**	**8**	2
Communicative Language Teaching			
Activities develop communicative competence	**8**	**6**	**4**
Focus on meaning	4	5	0
Input Processing	1	2	0
Output Processing	0	0	0
Sociocultural competence	4	4	0
Negotiation of Meaning	3	4	0
Task-based Learning and Teaching			
Real-world context	4	3	3
Task-supported	0	0	0
Task-based	5	**6**	**4**
Pre-task	5	**6**	0
During-task	5	**6**	0
Post-task	5	4	0

Appendix F: Mentions of Self-Efficacy During In-depth Interviews

	Carolina	Esther	Drexler	Pablo	Christina
Self-efficacy during in-depth interviews	3	3	3	4	5

Appendix E: IRB Approval Form

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Approval of Initial Submission – Expedited Review – AP01

Date: September 12, 2016 **IRB#:** 7215

Principal Investigator: Ms Rebecca S Borden, M.Ed.

Approval Date: 09/12/2016
Expiration Date: 08/31/2017

Study Title: What Effective Language Teachers Do: Case Studies of High-Achieving University Spanish Instructors

Expedited Category: Category 6 & 7

Collection/Use of PHI: No

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above- referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Promptly submit continuing review documents to the IRB upon notification approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date indicated above.
- Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Aimee Franklin, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix G: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What professional background/training/certifications do you have?
3. What made you decide to become a language teacher?
4. Describe your journey as a language learner/teacher.
5. How does being a second language learner affect how you approach instruction?
6. How much time, on average, do you spend preparing for and planning lessons for the courses you teach?
7. How do you come up with your lessons?
8. What made you decide to do X activity in X way in your classroom on day X I observed?
9. Do you draw on personal skills or life experiences when planning lessons?
10. How often do you reflect on your teaching/lessons/students' experiences?
11. What do you do to get to know your students?
12. How would you describe your approach to FL teaching?
13. In your own words, how would you describe the overall approach to instruction at this institution?
14. What role do each of the four skills play in your classes and teaching?
15. How often do you attend conferences or professional development in the field?
16. How important is it for you to stay up-to-date on current classroom trends/instructional strategies?
17. How do you do that?
18. Were there any challenges in the transition from a traditional grammar approach to a more communicative one?