

Section I: Instructional Content and Pedagogical Approach

The context of the redesign was a class that I taught for the fourth time in Fall 2019. *SPAN 4538: Variation in Spanish* is an upper-level class for Spanish majors. It meets twice a week in a face-to-face context. It typically enrolls fifteen to twenty-five students, mostly seniors. One difference this semester is that the course is typically offered in the Spring semester; my department decided to change the course to Fall for curricular reasons.

The target area of the redesign was an assignment that I have used repeatedly in SPAN 4538, in which the students are required to read and write a summary of academic articles that are relevant to the class on a weekly basis. Despite the fact that I had built some scaffolding into the course, the students continued to struggle with this assignment and reported that it took a lot of effort and they didn't see the point of it.

The learning outcome connected to this assignment is the ability to read and summarize dense texts. This is a subset of the general academic skills that I try to teach in all my classes. It also exposes my students to sociolinguistic analysis and methods, a focus of the class, and teaches them information about varieties of Spanish in the world.

In the past, I had attempted to scaffold the assignment by (1) inviting a librarian to the class to discuss resources and databases that students could use to search for academic articles, (2) spending time with the students discussing how to organize and plan their approach to reading academic articles, (3) providing examples of article summaries on Carmen, and (4) providing a guide on Carmen that students could use to organize their reading.

As an intervention, I decided to change the way that I provided these resources. Rather than inviting a librarian to class, I made some articles available on Carmen for students to choose from, and added a link to the library resource guide that the librarian had created. I increased the class time that I spent on (2), (3), and (4), rather than expecting students to do these activities on their own. I spent time at the beginning of the semester explicitly explaining why I thought the assignment was useful and how it connects to real-world problems. Finally, I instituted a peer-review process using the same rubric that I used for grading the article summaries.

Section II: Development and Planning

In Spring 2018, I participated in the UCAT Course Design Institute for a different class, *SPAN 3401: Advanced Grammar*, which I coordinate. I applied the backwards design principles that I learned through the Course Design Institute to the assignment for ITIL. I had requested to work with a small group on redesign through UITL, but the small groups did not get off the ground in time for me to take advantage of this resource. Instead, I used three main strategies for developing the IR:

(1) Conversations with colleagues about teaching

I discussed my plans for redesign with colleagues in my department and in other departments. They provided feedback, ideas about their own courses, and thoughts about student perceptions of coursework and assignments.

(2) Observations of classes and consultations with graduate student instructors and lecturers

As coordinator of an advanced-level undergraduate course in my department, I supervised eight sections of the gateway course for Spanish majors and minors this fall. This meant observing six instructors' classes, meeting with instructors to discuss their teaching, and meeting with undergraduate students and instructors when problems arose. Given that I was spending a significant amount of time thinking about teaching and meeting with experienced instructors, I took the opportunity to discuss teaching with them and reflected on the preparation and skills of our Spanish majors and minors.

(3) Consultations with students, including office hours meetings and a mid-semester evaluation

I explicitly invited oral and written feedback on the course from students. This took place in daily written "attendance questions," during office hours consultations, and in the form of a midterm teaching evaluation administered during class time.

Section III: IR Implementation

(1) In the first week of class, I explicitly discussed the reasons why I think the assignment is useful (see Appendix for class slides). I also provided examples of good article summaries in English and Spanish and discussed the elements of an academic article. I distributed a worksheet that students could fill out to identify the main idea, introduction, conclusion, lit review, data, etc.

(2) In the second week of class, all the students read the same article for homework and filled out the worksheet. In the second class meeting, they brought their own academic article summary to class and did a peer critique using my rubric, which I provided to them. I also discussed reading academic articles and went over the library guide with them.

(3) In the third week of class, students turned in a revised version of their article summary, using comments from their peers and the rubric to improve their work, and turned it in to me for further comments and a grade. After reading the summaries, I suggested strategies and resources for improving their work during class time, and allowed any student with a 75% or lower to revise and resubmit their work.

(4) For the second academic article assignment, students were allowed to select their own article (from a selection available on Carmen) and went through the peer review process again before submitting their final draft. The same policies applied.

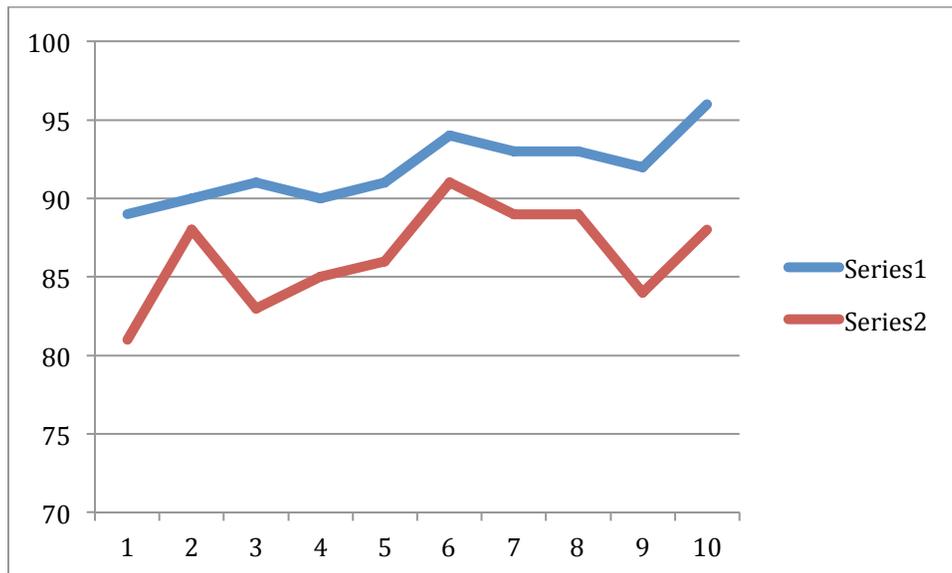
(5) At this point, I was ready to let it go; it seemed like the students had gotten the hang of the assignment. However, on the midterm evaluation, students expressed that they enjoyed the peer review process, so we returned to the draft - peer review - submit model in Weeks 8-12 of the semester.

(6) This meant that students submitted fewer article summaries (one summary every two weeks rather than one summary each week), but that they went through a peer review process using the rubric before turning in the final version. It also meant spending class time on peer reviews every other week.

Section IV: Assessment

I present here three methods of assessment:

(1) Student grades on the assignment



In Fall 2019, shown in blue, student grades on the assignment averaged 92% over the course of the semester and showed a steady improvement, as shown above. In 2018, student grades on the assignment averaged 86% and showed greater inconsistency, as shown in red on the chart above.

However, this could be the effect of more dedicated students or of more lenient grading on my part. On a separate grading category, short essays, 2019 students averaged 91%, while 2018 students averaged 86%.

(3) Quantitative & qualitative measures from the midterm evaluation

- "Overall" measure on mock SEI - 4.2 (2018) vs. 4.6 (2019)
- Workload (1 low, 5 high) - 3.84 (2018) vs. 3.25 (2019)
- Level of effort (1 low, 10 high) - 8.03 (2018) vs. 7.75 (2019)

Three quantitative measures from the midterm evaluation indicate that the 2019 students felt better about the class than the 2018 students. The "overall" score on a mock SEI came in higher, at 4.6 in 2019 compared to 4.2 in 2018. Student rated their impression of the workload for the class lower in 2019 (3.84 out of 5) than in 2018 (3.25 out of 5). Finally, students rated their own level of effort slightly lower in 2019 (7.75 out of 10) than in 2018 (8.03 out of 10).

In narrative comments, in each class one student expressed concern about the article summaries. However, in 2018, a student expressed that reading academic articles was difficult, while in 2019 a student thought that the article summaries might be too difficult 'for some students.' While these comments are not dissimilar, it may be meaningful that the 2018 student clearly expressed their own difficulty with the assignment, while the 2019 student speculated that some (other) members of the class might be struggling with the assignment.

(3) Qualitative feedback from students regarding the assignment

My general impression is that 2019 students were calmer and less concerned about the article summaries than 2018 students. One measure of this impression is that I had far fewer resubmissions (for students who earned below 75% on article summaries). This is something that would not show on the overall average grades since the grade for the resubmission overwrites the grade for the original submission. I also allowed students to turn in additional article summaries as a method of extra credit in each semester; in 2018, I received 17 additional article summaries from eight students for extra credit, while in 2019 I received just one. To me, this indicates that students felt more confident about their grade and weren't just "fire-hosing" to bring their grade up.

While my specific memories of the 2018 class are hazy, their narrative feedback on SEIs indicates that while some students were very pleased with the class, other students were unhappy with the workload and organization. I don't have my 2019 SEIs yet, but several students have come up to me to thank me for the class and let me know that it was their favorite class of the semester/year/major. I think I was able to make a better connection with this class than the last one, which is probably not just due to the article summaries but to the individual personalities of the students in the class and also the fact that they were not second-semester seniors getting ready to graduate. However, it's worth saying that pretty much everything else in the class was identical; I used the same syllabus, the same homework assignments, and the same slides as the last time I taught the course, so the only major change in content was the approach to the article summaries.

Section V: Reflection

The results of the assessment point to the value of the revised approach to article summaries. In particular, reducing the number of article summaries turned in, but increasing the amount of time dedicated to each summary seemed to be an effective learning strategy that resulted in better quality of learning and less stress for the students. I believe that the peer review process was also useful for them; for another assignment

category, short essays, I piloted a peer review opportunity and noticed that students who took advantage of the peer review produced better writing. I think this was less because of the comments they received from their peer evaluators and more because of the process of revising and reflecting on their own writing. I am likely to keep peer review in my syllabus in the future, particularly given that the student response was so positive.

As for me and my teaching, I think it's important for me to keep in mind the level of the students that arrive in my classes. Some of them are extremely well-prepared academically, have good command of Spanish, and have little trouble with academic reading and writing skills. Others are not well-prepared and struggle for a variety of reasons. My goal is to be able to move those in the latter category forward, and that means meeting them where they are instead of wishing they were better prepared. A student from the 2018 class wrote to me recently, requesting a letter of recommendation, and told me that my class was the first class in which she had ever written a research paper or read academic articles. I find it surprising and disappointing that this could be true of a graduating senior in our program, but clearly this is a curricular problem rather than the fault of the student.

The process that I went through with IR is not unlike the process that I go through with any class that I teach and re-teach, trying to keep things that work and change things that are not working. It was useful to discuss and write about teaching and students with other people, and that is something that I will try to continue to do. I think I'm most likely to make use of teaching support services that are closely linked to my department, though perhaps I'll be able to do another program like the Course Design Institute in the future.

Artículos académicos

- ¿Por qué vamos a aprender a leer y resumir artículos académicos en esta clase?

Goals

- My job **is** to teach you a set of skills.
 - Critical thinking
 - General academic skills (reading, writing, research)
 - Sociolinguistic analysis and methods
 - Information about varieties of Spanish in the world



- La habilidad de leer, entender, y resumir textos densos es imprescindible en el mundo de hoy
- Lo vamos a practicar con la sociolingüística, pero estas técnicas te van a servir para muchos contextos
- En caso de que sigas con estudios avanzados, te dará un “leg up”

Metas específicas

- Extraer información de un texto denso (“general academic skills”)
- Poder evaluar los argumentos y los métodos de un estudio (“critical thinking”)
- Aprender cómo estructurar un estudio académico y cómo informar sobre el tema (“general academic skills”)
- Dar contexto académico a la información que aprendemos sobre variedades del lenguaje (“sociolinguistics, Spanish”)

Ejemplo

Reading summary #4
Language, nation, and empire in early modern Iberia
Miguel Martínez

Martínez, Miguel. "Language, Nation and Empire in Early Modern Iberia." *A Political History of Spanish The Making of a Language* (n.d.): 44-60. Web. 16 Jan. 2016.

Language, Nation and Empire rejects the possible establishment of a single authoritative narrative on the complex relationship between language and empire in early modern Spain. Martínez argues the history of the Spanish language is not a result of uncontested triumph of the empire, but rather the consequence of a complex and interconnected set of social, political and linguistic factors. Although some scholars cite both the publication of Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana* and the Emperor Charles V Castilian speech in Rome as the two "milestone" events granting international prestige and universality to the Spanish language, the article questions their potential to effectively impose linguistic homogenization on a linguistically-diverse 16th century Iberian Peninsula. Substantial evidence provided throughout the text suggests it is actually "necessity" which drives the expansion of the Spanish language and *not* a notion of Spanish imperialist pride (contrary to earlier assertions by some). The intricately complex relationship between national identity and language is undeniably present in analyses of early modern Spanish history.

Otro ejemplo

Resumen: La distribución del voseo en Hispanoamérica

Benavides, Carlos. "La distribución del voseo en Hispanoamérica." *Hispania* 86.3 (2003): 612-23. Print.

El autor, un profesor de la Lingüística Hispánica en la Universidad de Massachusetts Dartmouth, afirma que los factores históricos, sociales, políticos, y económicos han determinado la presente distribución del voseo en Hispanoamérica. Al fin del siglo dieciséis el voseo comenzaba a desaparecer en España debido a la confusión sobre su uso. En Hispanoamérica, los primeros virreinos (como México, Perú, y el Caribe) tuvieron un contacto más íntimo con España y desarrollaron el sistema pronominal peninsular, sin voseo, mientras que otras regiones que no fueron virreinos o que se convirtieron en sedes virreinales mucho más tarde utilizaron el voseo más extensamente. La razón que el tuteo predomina en los países que fueron parte del virreinato de la Nueva Granada (Colombia, Venezuela, y Ecuador) que se convirtió en virreinato muy tardíamente, es porque había mucho contacto comercial y cultural entre estas regiones y el Caribe y España. Hoy en día, el voseo inestable existe en Bolivia y Ecuador, el voseo estable existe en Centroamérica y en el Río de la Plata, y el voseo de Chile es un síntesis del tuteo y el voseo.

Bibliografía anotada

- Información sobre bibliografías anotadas:
- <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>
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