



¡Que Bello es el Sonido de la Poesía! Teaching Sounds and Culture through Poetry

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One beautiful Saturday morning while I was waiting for my favorite breakfast, oatmeal and toast, my mother had a wonderful story to tell my brothers and me. Mother always had a story to tell when she was cooking, but this time her story was different. It was full of beautiful words and characters, as usual, but the words had rhythm and rhyming words. I was fascinated by the way that mother was sounding, the flow and waves of the verses coming out of her mouth, the almost musical rhythm of the story, and the enchanting imagery that the words were creating for us. When the story ended I wanted to hear it again. My mother asked me why I wanted to hear the story again, and I said, "Because it sounded like music". Mother laughed and assured me that she knew more stories that sound like music. As a matter of fact, she was going to read to us more of those stories, every once in a while. Then she said "*Me alegro tanto de que les guste la poesía*" (I am so glad that you like poetry). Poetry, what a wonderful word.

Every time that I listened to a poem I felt happy, and when I was scared, I always asked mom or dad to please read to me a poem. What I liked the most was the calming effect that the sound of poems had on me. I did not understand why. Why did poetry have a different sound from other stories? Why was I captivated by the rhythm in it? Why did it make me feel the same way I felt when I sang at church, or at the school choir? One day I realized that the songs I had to learn for choir sounded like poetry when I read them. When I told my choir director about my realization, she said to me that songs are another form of poetry. My fascination with the sound of poems finally had a reason. It sounded like songs, and singing makes me happy.

As I grew older and started reading novels and Plays, perhaps because of my own limited knowledge of poetry in general, I just kept the memories and the sound in me privately. Little did I know that one day I was going to become a teacher, and that wonderful memory was going to follow me into my classroom. Just like my mother did, I read poems to my students. Teaching poetry has been limited for me to reading short poems and translating them into English. I want to give my students more than what I have given them so far, and I want them to be captivated by poetry the same way I am. . In the second language classroom is even more challenging because the students have to give meaning to the sounds of words, but at the same time it is a wonderful opportunity for increasing vocabulary and strengthening their used of prior knowledge. Everyone has a sound that affects them in a positive or negative way, using poetry I would like to put my students in touch with the sound of words and how they feel when they listen to it. Perhaps they will be able to understand that through sounds they can get meaning. In order to do that, I need to focus on right pronunciation and intonation as well as rhyme and rhythm. The sound can give meaning to words even when the listener does not speak the language in which the word was spoken. It is my intention to teach poetry

through the entire school year, but to start I have to provide my students with the tools they need to make of this an enriched experience that they will be able to use for the rest of their lives.

I taught Spanish I and II last school year at Providence High School in Charlotte, North Carolina. For the coming year I might teach Spanish III as well. Thinking about the different levels in which I will be able to use this unit made me come to the conclusion that phonics and phonetics are part of the tools that my students need. Second language acquisition is a slow learning process. If at an early stage of the process the students do not learn sounds correctly and keep repeating the sounds the wrong way, it will be very difficult to correct the bad habit later. There are numerous sound devices used in poetry, such as Alliteration, is the repetition of the same sounds. Assonance is the repetition of a vowel sound in words that are close to each other; this also includes diphthongs. Like alliteration, it is the sound rather than the letter used that is important. Consonance, on the other hand, is the repetition, at close intervals, of the final consonant of accented syllables or important words. Partial end rhymes are rhymes that are close but not exact. Onomatopoeia is a figure of speech in which words are used to imitate sounds. All of this can be used to teach pronunciation and intonation in the target language.

At the beginning levels of language acquisition, students are able to demonstrate some accuracy in oral and written presentations, when reproducing memorized words, but they have interference from their native language when they try to communicate beyond the memorized words or expressions. It is important that students feel confidence about their learning process by knowing that the teacher is there to model pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and oral expression. Students will be more eager to try reading in the target language if they have some background knowledge and teacher support.

The use of poetry in the second language classroom enables students to explore the linguistic and conceptual aspect of the written text without concentrating on the mechanics of language. Poetry can become a powerful tool in stimulating learning while acquiring a second language. The learner is likely to become intellectually, emotionally, and physically involved in the target language, as well as more aware of the new culture, and it can be taught in conjunction with music.

Objectives

The unit "*¡Que Bello es el Sonido de la Poesía!* Teaching sounds and Culture through Poetry" will help me accomplish a variety of goals. I will be able to introduce to the students Hispanic literature, using poems and songs that will help me establish a pronunciation and intonation chart, where students will be able to refer whenever they are not sure of the right sound in a word. There are two very important goals in this unit: to discuss the ways in which English and Spanish sounds differ, and to help students improve their pronunciation of Spanish. To achieve both goals I need to include in the background information of this unit knowledge of the articulatory system, its components and function. I need to teach the differences between letters and sounds, the classification of sounds, the similarities and differences between Spanish and English sounds, and the sound system of Spanish and its variation across the world.

The students use the target language for the specific purpose of communication. They experiment with non-verbal, communicative aspects of language (body language, gestures, and facial expressions) as well as verbal aspects (intonation, rhythm, stress, slang, and idiomatic expressions), while interpreting a poem.

Poetry is one of the best techniques to help teachers combine phonics and reading instruction in a way that is enjoyable and engaging for students. Today's society is visual and auditory oriented. This gives teachers the opportunity to bring back to the classroom the memorization and recitation of poetry which unfortunately has gone out of fashion. While text and speech are related, the actual sound of a poem constitutes an experience, for the person who recites and the listener. Rhythm and intonation give a special flavor to the recitation.

Second language acquisition becomes part of our students' lives when they begin to feel the language, and gain confidence to interact outside of the classroom in the target language. When the students learn and master the use of vocabulary, they become engaged in free-flowing conversations as they interact with one another. Poems that express strong emotions, opinions or ideas can be an exciting language-learning experience, through which students are able to develop vocabulary and cultural awareness.

The last goal of this unit is to create cultural awareness for the language learners. The students will be able to research poems and their authors, as well as to listen to music and poetry, which will allow them to see the importance of traditional values. The role of the family and the love Hispanics have for their countries. At the same time they develop love and respect for the United States of America. With poems such as "*Toda Intenciones Suprema*" by, Fernando Hervás, "*Amor con Amor se Paga*" by, José Martí, "*No te quiero sino porque te quiero*" by, Pablo Neruda, and "*Padre mío*" by, Jaime Sabines, the students will be able to develop listening, speaking, and reading skills in Spanish, and at the same time, they will be able to analyze cultural factors.

Background

Poetry is a literary genre that makes people fall in love with sounds and words, but perhaps it is also the literary form most difficult to teach. Our children nowadays are not exposed enough to poetry and they perceive it as a complicated way of writing. The main focus for teachers should be to teach the genre in a way that is meaningful and engaging to students.

In the second-language setting, it is important to analyze and practice the sounds in the target language. This will improve the pronunciation, and will help the students acquire more vocabulary by identifying the stem of words from the same family.

The Articulatory System

It is the system of joints in the mouth. It is comprised of three components: the temporomandibular joints, the muscles of mastication, and dental occlusion (the natural contact between the upper and lower teeth). The field of Articulatory Phonetics is a subfield of Phonetics. In studying articulation, phoneticians explain how humans produce speech sounds via the interaction of different physiological structures. Generally Articulatory Phonetics is concerned with the transformation of aerodynamic energy into acoustic energy. Aerodynamic energy refers to the airflow through the vocal tract. Its kinetic form is the actual dynamic airflow. Acoustic energy is variation in the air pressure that can be represented as sound waves, which are then perceived by the human auditory system as sounds. (*Antonio Qillis, 1981, Fonetica Acustica de la Lengua Espanola*)

In other words, speech production occurred when phonemic information is transformed into continued acoustic events through a sequence of movements of articulatory organs such as the jaw, lips, tongue, velum,

and larynx.

The Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English sounds

In consideration of the variation in syntax, semantics, and phonology among languages, it may seem impossible to learn a second language. For some languages of the same family, the similarities far exceed their differences, while in others the differences are commonly present, making it more challenging for the students. Regardless of the similarities or differences between languages, a person's knowledge of his or her native language directly impacts their target language acquisition.

In the case of an English speaker acquiring Spanish, there are many similarities that can be used to transfer information from English to Spanish. English is a Germanic language and Spanish is a Romance language, but they both have Latin in common. The first similarity among both languages is that they utilized the Roman alphabet. Still another is that thirty to forty percent of English words are Spanish cognates, meaning they have a related word in Spanish.

Cognates can be positive, when they have similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation in both languages. For example, the word "*familia*" in Spanish is similar to the word "family" in English and they have the same meaning. Other examples are: *lingüística/linguistics*, *fantasia/fantasy*. But, cognates can also be unreliable, they have similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation in both languages, but they also have additional meanings in one language that do not apply in the other language. Examples of unreliable cognates are the verbs "*asistir*" and "*atender*". *Asistir* is similar to the English word "to assist", but it can also mean -to attend-. Likewise "*atender*" is similar to the English word "to attend" that can mean -to take care of-. Other examples of unreliable cognates are *historía/history*, can also mean story or tale, *discusión/ discussion*, can be used as argument. Other cognates are completely false, when they have a total different meaning in each language. Example of a false cognate is the word "*éxito*" in Spanish means success, and the word "exit" in which means a way out.

Syntactical patterns can be helpful in transferring from English to Spanish and vice versa. Spanish nouns generally end in -ncia and English nouns often end in -nce. Spanish words ending in -oso/-osa and English words ending in -ous are typically adjectives. Spanish verbs that end in -ificar commonly correspond with English verbs ending in -ify. The English ending -tion generally translates to the Spanish ending -ción.

A major difference between these languages is the formation of the past participle. Spanish past participles most commonly end in "ado" or "ido", while English past participles end in "ed." Although these are the general forms, many irregulars exist in both languages. The most important distinction is that the past participle in Spanish, when used as an adjective, needs to agree in gender and number with the noun that it modifies, where as in English it does not.

There are important similarities and differences between Spanish and English phonemic and phonology. "Phonics," to a Spanish speaker, refers to a letter-to-sound correspondence, but to an English speaker it refers to "patterns of letters that yield certain sounds" ("Similarities and Differences....."). Even though both languages have five written vowels, Spanish has five corresponding vowel sounds, while English has more than fourteen vowel sounds. In Spanish "sounding out words" means separating words by syllables. In contrast, in English "sounding out words" involves pronouncing individual sounds and then blending them together. One important difference between the two languages is the existence of English sounds that do not occur in Spanish. Example ou, ow, eigh, th, wh, sl, spr, ng, gh. Also, in Spanish there is no distinction between "V" and "B." Learning Spanish can be challenging for an English speaker, but knowing the similarities and

differences between these languages can help with the process of language acquisition. (Eva Mendez, 2005, *Fundamentos de Fonología y Fonetica Española para Hablantes de Inglés*)

Classification of Sounds

Sound is one of the most important senses in humans. It helps us gather information about our environment. The sounds around us have been classified as non-speech sounds, when the sounds can't be conveyed into spoken words. These are the sounds that surround us, like a bird chirping or a car speeding on the street. If we put those sounds together, we are not going to be able to produce words. Others are speech sounds. These are the sounds given to letters; when we combine them they form words that we use in our speech. The last form of sounds is music, which is the art of arranging sounds in time, organized melodically, harmonically and rhythmically.

The Differences Between Letters and Sounds

Sounds can be produced by speaking or they can be heard when it is a non-speech sound. It is very important to understand that we use letters to convey sounds. In order to learn to read we must differentiate one letter from another and to attach the right sound to each letter. For skilled reading to develop, we must learn to do this without errors and without thinking about it. We need two capabilities that facilitate reading acquisition:

1. Alphabetic Principle, which is the realization that there is a relationship between the sounds that make up spoken words, and the sounds that letters make.
2. Phonological awareness, which involves the development of the ability to decompose spoken words into constituent sounds and then manipulate those sounds.

Learning the sounds of letters is a very important part of learning to read and to spell. Letters are classified as consonants and vowels, and we use the combination of both to produce meaningful sounds, speech sounds. Learning the sounds that letters symbolize in words is an important foundation of literacy. With this knowledge students can decode printed words, and construct the spelling of words in their spoken vocabulary. This helps students identify patterns in words (word families), how changing the first letter of a word changes the word and meaning, and patterns in phrases (a group of words that repeat in a constant pattern). This leads to the realization that written words can be used to represent speech. (Francisco Gaona, 1949, *Algunas Consideraciones sobre la Enseñanza de los Sonidos de la Lengua Española.*)

The Sound System of Spanish and its' Variation across the World

Spanish is a language whose phonemic pronunciation is easy to learn. As in English, the alphabet used is the Roman alphabet with an addition of four consonants: Ch (*Chosa*), Ll (*Luvía*), Ñ (*Niña*), and Rr (*Carro*), as well as five vowels (a,e,i,o,u). Each consonant has a sound attached to it and each vowel also has only one sound to go with it. Spanish words are formed by syllables, where each syllable represents a phoneme. In Spanish words, only one syllable per word is stressed; usually it is the one before last. This makes the intonation in Spanish highly regular, easy to read and melodic when reading poetry. (Eugenio Martínez Celdrán, Ana M. Fernández Planas, *Manual de Fonetica Española: Articulaciones y sonidos de Español.*)

Spanish is spoken in twenty- one different countries around the world. More than four hundred million people speak the language that was originated in northern Spain. Each region and each country where Spanish is spoken has its own mixture with the regional cultural languages. That has caused variations in the pronunciation of words and speaking accents. That is also true in the choice of vocabulary, where in different

areas the same object is named differently. For example a banana in the Dominican Republic is called "guineo" while in Mexico it is called "plátano" and in Venezuela "camburo." The reason for the differences in names for the fruit is because in Dominican Republic the word "guineo" comes from the Taino language of the indigenous population of the island over five hundred years ago. In Mexico the word "plátano" comes from the original Spanish language, and the word "camburo" in Venezuela comes from the Arawak language of the natives who populated that country for more than seven hundred years.

In occasions the same word can also be pronounced differently from country to country (Puerto Rico and Costa Rica for example), from continent to continent (Europe and South America), and from region to region (coast and mountains). For example in Puerto Rico the word *mango* is pronounced with an accent over the last vowel (o), while in Costa Rica the accent is placed over the first vowel (a). In Spain the word *zapatos* (shoes) is pronounced with the **z** sound similar to the *Th* in English, while in South America *z* is pronounced like **s** in English. In the mountains of the Dominican Republic the word *sol* (sun) is pronounced *soi* (instead of the L sound at the end of the word, they have a Spanish i sound), while in the coastal area is pronounced *sol* (keeping the L sound at the end of the word.)

As vast as the Spanish language is, the real richness of it is in the culture of each country where the language is spoken. Latin America shares a common basic culture, inherited from our Spanish roots, but each country has its own mix of races and cultures, from the natives found at the time of the discovery, the Africans brought later on in our history, to the immigration of Asians and Europeans in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. These factors make each culture unique, but tied like roots to the trunk of an old tree.

With this unit I intent to teach my English speaking students sounds, pronunciation, and intonation, as well as cultural similarities and differences, using poems from various Latin American authors. *Jorge Luis Borges*, *Federico García Lorca*, *Pablo Neruda*, *Nicolas Guillén*, *Gabriela Mistral*, *Rúben Darío*, and *Rosario Castellanos* are some of the authors that will help me to accomplish the main purpose of the unit, which is to enrich the student lives' through their second language learning process. It is my hope and wish that teachers and students all over the world embrace the Spanish language and culture, with the same love that I have felt developing the unit.

Strategies

Pronunciation has been neglected in the second language setting for years, partly because it seems to be more difficult to improve than other skills, and the emphasis has been on intelligibility, which is the ability to make one self clear and understood despite a foreign accent, but sometimes pronunciation gets in the way of intelligibility. The best way to achieve fast results on pronunciation is by constant practicing. That is way I plan to spend the first ten to fifteen minutes of each class on pronunciation activities. My biggest question when I started writing this unit was, how do I start teaching pronunciation?

In the coming school year I will teach Spanish I, Spanish II, with the possibility to also teach Spanish III. Teaching lower levels of a second language class is very similar to teaching first graders how to read in their native language. To teach the phonetic of a language, it is essential to start with the sound of the alphabet letters and the combination of them. To help students not only identify the sound of certain combination of letters when listening to it, as a class will prepare a chart of pronunciation patterns. For example the vowel "a"

in Spanish, it's pronounced like "ae" in English or like in the word "cat". The students will be able to look at the chart as their reference for sounds. To reinforce this strategy I will use dictation of words and sentences, by calling out words in the target language, while the students attempt to write them using correct spelling.

Pronunciation instruction includes intonation, stress, and rhythm. The importance of pronunciation is even more distinct when the connection between pronunciation and listening comprehension is considered. As listeners to spoken language, we are used to certain rhythms and intonations. If the patterns of rhythm and intonation are unfamiliar, it can be difficult for the listener to get the meaning. The listener needs to know the pattern of intonation of the language in order to interpret speech accurately.

In Spanish, intonation is highly regular. Words are generally stressed in the syllable before last. Because of that poetry is a good literary genre to use in class when teaching intonation.

Alcemos una muralla Juntando todas las manos; Los negros, sus manos negras, Los blancos, sus blancas manos. Una muralla que vaya..... Nicolás Guillén.

This poem is named "*La Muralla*" written by *Nicolás Guillén*, a Cuban author. I am planning to use this poem as one of the first in class, because of the simplicity of the words used in it, as well as the repetition, alliteration, and rhyming words. This poem will help the class focus on repetitive sounds. The poem should be read by the teacher first to give the students a sense of mood as well as intonation. After that, students will have the opportunity to recite the poem (or part of it) using the strategies learned for correct intonation and pronunciation.

With the pronunciation chart previously created in class, students will be able to self- monitor their pronunciation. To help students self- monitor the intonation, a good strategy is to draw pitch lines/curves over the words, and blacken the stressed syllable. With these visuals, students will be able to hear the intonation more clearly and without the help of the visuals after few practices with them.

Ex. 1) **Alcemos una muralla**

When practicing pronunciation and intonation with students, it is important to give them many opportunities to listen and to repeat. A good exercise is to clap or play a percussion instrument while saying the words of the poem. On the upbeat, the clapping should be louder than on the downbeat, and stronger on the stressed syllable.

Pronunciation activities can be enjoyable for students and satisfying to teachers. When my students work in groups, they like to help each other with the assignment. Teachers can take advantage of activities that students enjoy the most, to reinforce the goal of the specific lesson. In my case, I plan to use a group activity to play around a little with the song "*Burbujas de Amor*" by the Dominican author *Juan Luis Guerra*. Dividing the class in groups of four, I will give them the lyrics of the song and I will instruct them to give the song their own rhythm and I will also ask them to change the words that they think can be changed while still making sense. After each group finishes the exercise, and we all listen to the different rhythms and word changes, I will play the song to them so they can listen to it. At the end, we will discuss the mood of the song and the feelings they took from the experience. With this strategy, students should be able to brainstorm about sounds, rhyming words, pronunciation, and correct intonation. At the same time they will be exposed to culture and cultural rhythms.

Afuera.... Venimos rendidos Desde Nazareth Yo soy carpintero De nombre José.

Adrento..... ¿Eres tú José? ¿Tu esposa es María? entren, peregrinos No los conocía.

In the second language setting, one of the most important aspects of poetry for the students is the rhythm. Students have a tendency to pay more attention, and be more interested in the rhythm than the full meaning of the poem. They are happy with a vague idea of the meaning. This can be very useful for the teacher if he/she is willing to experiment a little. The poem above is recited at church all over Latin America during Christmas. It represents the seeking for lodging of Joseph and Mary before the birth of Jesus. This poem can be recited by two groups of students. One represents Joseph and Mary (*afuera*) and the other represents the people inside their houses (*adentro*). This activity can be done in many different ways, but the importance of it is that students will read and identify patterns in pronunciation, intonation and rhythm. They will also learn new words to enhance their vocabulary and they will be exposed again to culture.

Students need to learn sounds correctly and keep repeating the sounds to create good pronunciation habits. Through the use of poetry and poems like "Yuntas" by *César Vallejo*, students can use repetition to record in their memory the sound and patterns of words.

Students gain an appreciation for reading, listening, writing, and analyzing poetry. It is my opinion that teachers should incorporate all the above areas of literacy to help the students develop their knowledge of the second language as well as their native language. By writing in a poetic way, students will explore rhythm, rhyme, and vocabulary in general. Their creativity will be enhanced. When analyzing poems, students have to use critical thinking which is beneficial for the second- language learner. Studies show that students that develop critical thinking skills retain information for a longer period of time and are better at solving problems.

Not all students have the ability to express themselves in writing. Writing is one of the least favorite areas of language arts for students. The second language class is even more challenging to students. I like to use two main activities with my students to help them develop their writing skills while acquiring vocabulary. In the first activity I provide a word to the students and they have to write a rhyming word to go with it. After they have their sets of rhyming words, they get to write sentences using the pair of words. The sentences can be silly, funny, nonsense or serious. The other activity demands even more creativity from the students. I asked them to close their eyes and draw on a piece of paper the first image they get while closing their eyes. After students finish drawing, I instruct them to write a free verse poem about their drawing. With this activities my goal is to help the students develop writing skills in the target language, skills that will transfer and be very useful in their native language. Also it helps their creativity to flow, and to guide their writing, and it gives them practice in use of the target language. The students will use new and old vocabulary, which help them to achieve the goal of mastering the language.

An important part of second language acquisition is to develop cultural awareness. Second language learners will not fully embrace the target language if they can comprehend the cultural background. Nowadays it is more common to see students looking for information about other cultures and also having more diverse group of friends. This makes the situation better for the second- language teacher, but nevertheless it is the responsibility of the teacher to expose the students to all aspects of the culture as possible. Poems like "*Amor con Amor se paga*" by *José Martí* and "*No tequiero Sino porque te Quiero*" by *Pablo Neruda*, display sensual way that Hispanic men court women. In each poem you can almost feel the love in the air, and Hispanic women expect and like to be court by gentlemen. Parents are an essential part of any child's life, but in Hispanic culture, it goes beyond childhood, into adulthood. In the Hispanic culture older members of the family are seen as the ones with wisdom, and full of life experiences that we can learn from. Also it is common that

younger members of the family are care givers for the elderly in the family. *Jaime Sabines* in his poem "Padre towards their parent. Songs also are good poems that can be used to teach certain aspects of the culture. *Juan Luis Guerra* is a Dominican song writer, in his song "Buscando Visapara un Sueño", the author talks about the reality of the Dominican immigration. What Dominicans are willing to do to come to the United States, seeking a dream of a better life and opportunities. A song brilliantly written by *Ricardo Arjona*, an author from Guatemala wrote "El Mojado" a song that talks about the wet back immigrants who cross the river between Mexico and the United States in hope to achieve the American dream.

Spanish is a vast language with intensity and soul, with variations along its frontiers and surprising mixed of flavor and rhythm. So much to offer to the world, so much to teach. Where should I start?...

This unit will meet the following competency goals of the North Carolina Standard Course of Studies:

- Competency goal #1, 1.01, 1.02, 1.03, 1.05, and 1.06. The learner will engage in conversation and exchange information and opinions, orally and in writing in the target language.
- Competency goal #2, 2.01, 2.02, 2.03, 2.04, and 2.06. The learner will understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics in the target language.
- Competency goal #3, 3.02. The learner will present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in the target language.
- Competency goal #4, 4.01, 4.02, 4.05, and 4.07. The learner will gain knowledge and demonstrate understanding of the relationship among practices, products, and perspectives, of cultures other than his/her own.
- Competency goal #5, 5.01, 5.02, 5.03, 5.04, 5.06, and 5.10. The learner will develop insight into the nature of language and culture by comparing his/her own language (s) and culture (s) to others.
- Competency goal #6, 6.01, 6.02, 6.03, and 6.04. The learner will acquire, reinforce, and further his/her knowledge of other discipline through the foreign language.
- Competency goal #7, 7.02, 7.03, 7.04, 7.05, and 7.06. The learner will use language and/or demonstrate culture knowledge and understanding within and beyond the school setting for personal, educational, and professional growth and enrichment.

Activities

Tell students that want to know which alphabet they use to write in English. They will say, the Roman alphabet. Next tell them that Spanish also uses the Roman alphabet, but the letters are pronounced somewhat different from English. Now write the letter "A" on the board and ask someone to name the letter. Probably they will say ey-ee (English pronunciation saying the ABCs). Then ask them to pronounce the words **cat** and **bat**. Tell students that the letter A in Spanish has the sound as the letter A has in **cat** and **bat**, and that the sound and the name of the letter are the same. Then pronounce the letter in Spanish and let the students repeat after you. Continue with the letter "B", as Spanish teachers know, it is pronounced equal to the letter "V" and both can be pronounce hard or soft, depend on where are located on the word. Ask the students to pronounce the letter B in English and name it as well. Then name it in Spanish and pronounce it for them, let them repeat after you. You might hear, Spanish is pronounce as it is written, you can tell them yes it is pronounce as written and that is the main reason why learning correct pronunciation is very important. If you can pronounce the letters correctly you will spell words correctly.

Continue by telling students that the letters "B" and "V" are pronounced equal and that they can have a hard or soft sound. Pronounce the verb *Beber* in Spanish and ask them to repeat after you. Then tell them that the first B is hard and the second B is soft. Instruct students to pronounce the verb *Beber* again, this time to put a

pencil under upper and incisors before they pronounce it. If they can feel that air scape around the pencil when they pronounce the second "B", they have just learned that "B" can have a soft or hard sound depend where is locate in the word.

Introduce each letter of the alphabet showing the students that even though we use the same symbols in Spanish and in English, the pronunciation can be very different. After naming and pronouncing all the letters of the alphabet, tell students that they are going to help you create a pronunciation chart that is going to help them remember how to pronounce each letter. Using a poster board create a pronunciation chart with two words per alphabet letter. The Spanish words on the chart will also be rhyming words. For example "A"-
mama, dama

"B"- *beber, deber*

When the pronunciation chart is completed, place it in a visible area in the classroom. This will allow students to refer back to it each time they need it. Also the chart should be use on the first ten minutes of the class everyday, to reinforce correct pronunciation regularly.

Lesson Plan #2

Objectives: The students will apply prior knowledge of correct pronunciation and intonation on Spanish language. Students will also be able to sound words and phrases out to help them read unfamiliar words, developing reading skills associated with poetry. Students will explore the target culture through well-known poems.

Activities

As a warm up ask students what they can tell you about poetry, and list all the characteristics of poetry mentioned (rhyme, rhythm, repetition, intonation, recitation.) Ask students how they feel after reading a poem, and go over each feeling and ask why. Then ask them what about when you don't understand some words. Does that make you feel different about poetry? Next tell them that poetry is a wonderful tool to learn new words and to practice correct pronunciation and intonation even if we do not know the meaning of a word.

Write an unfamiliar word on the board and ask students to pronounce it out loud. Repeat this about three to four times and ask if anyone knows the meaning of this word. Go over the meaning given and then tell students that by pronouncing words out loud and working with groups, you can often guess what the word means. Next distribute short reading poem to students. I would use a poem like, *Amor con Amor se Paga* by *Jose Marti*. Any other short poem that has unfamiliar words to the students will work as well.

Divide the class in groups of three or four students. Then instruct them to read the poem in their group one at a time, practicing different highlighted words in the poem. Encourage the students to cooperate with each other by working together on pronunciation and to decipher the meaning of words. After students worked with the poem on pronunciation and word meanings, ask them to translate the poem using common words and writing structure in English.

For the closing activity have students reading the poem out loud to compete for best intonation of the poem. The students that have better pronunciation and have learned and applied the rules can serve as judges. Have the students that want to compete read out loud the poem and wait for their scores. The student with the

higher score will be the winner and you can also have second and third place. At the end of the class tell students that they can acquire extra credit points by memorizing the poem and reciting it to the class the following day.

Lesson Plan #3

Objectives: The students will have the opportunity to listen, to read, to write and to speak on a variety of topics using the target language. The students will engage with authentic materials which will allow them to foster respect and appreciation for the target culture.

Activities

As a warm up review the vocabulary given to students in a prior class in preparation for this activity. Words such as *arroz, café, queso, yuca, mapuey, and pitisale*. Then instruct students to listen to the song *Ojala que llueva café en el campo*, by *Juan Luis Guerra*. Play the song for the students and ask them to write the words that they do not understand or are unfamiliar to them. After listening to the song, go over the unfamiliar words that students wrote while listening to the song.

Next put the lyrics of the song over the overhead projector and go over the meaning of each sentence of the song. Ask students to give their interpretation of the song. When finished going over the song, ask the students the following questions:

1. What does *Juan Luis Guerra* wants to symbolize with the title of the song?
2. What is the meaning of the produce and images mentioned in the song?
3. What does *Juan Luis Guerra* wants for his country?
4. What is the tone of the song?
5. Who are going to sing and Why?
6. What type of person do you think is the author of the song?

After the students answered the questions, tell them that they are going to research about the author. Provide them with a mini biography of *Juan Luis Guerra* and instruct them to expand on the biography. With all the researched data create a biography made in class of *Juan Luis Guerra*. Then tell students to go to www.dominicanrepublic.com.do and research about the country of the author. As a final activity teach students how to dance *merengue*, national dance of the Dominican Republic.

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