

The Attitudes of Classroom Teachers toward Early Language Learning



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Introduction

A collaborative Iowa and Nebraska project, IN-VISION, was awarded funding by the U.S. Department of Education's Technology Challenge Grant program for the five-year period of 1997-2002. This project is unique in addressing the challenge of providing Spanish instruction in small, rural, public, and private schools in Iowa and Nebraska. These schools have limited financial resources and little access to qualified foreign language teachers. The project instructional model adds Spanish to the curriculum in kindergarten through sixth grade (K-6) by providing extensive support in technology hardware and software, Spanish language, Hispanic cultures, and curriculum integration to non-Spanish-speaking classroom teachers who reinforce weekly Spanish classes taught by non-certified native speakers.

The director of the project contracted with the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center and the Research Institute for Studies in Education at Iowa State University for the project evaluation that is required of all federally funded projects. The evaluators designed a plan that would provide feedback to the project staff about project performance, effectiveness, and impact. The focus of this paper is the impact of these elementary school foreign language programs on the attitudes toward early language learning of the classroom teachers in rural schools who participated in this project.

Literature Review

Although attitudes of students in elementary school foreign language programs have been studied (Rhodes, Thompson, & Snow, 1989; Heining-Boynton, 1990; Kennedy, Nelson, Odell, & Austin, 2000), few studies have examined the attitudes of classroom teachers toward the elementary school foreign language program, especially in a project where the classroom teacher plays an integral role in teaching the language. Burstall's 1975 study, however, provides an example. In this study, Burstall examined attitudes of classroom teachers in schools in which French was taught by "class teachers who had received special in-service training, rather than by specialist teachers of French" (p. 388). Among both eight- and nine-year-olds, the students' achievement in French was "consistently rated more highly in those classes where the French teacher's attitude towards the class was considered 'positive' than in those classes where the French teacher's attitude was considered 'non-committal' or 'negative'" (p. 398).

In examining the challenges faced by administrators in implementing an elementary school foreign language program, Dewar (1998) notes that classroom teachers may resist adding a foreign language program because they feel threatened by the fact that they do not know a foreign language. He explains that these teachers may fear that they will be required to teach the language.

Even in programs where there is a foreign language specialist, the attitude of the classroom teachers toward the program can play an important role in the program's success. Armstrong and Rogers (1997) report that one of two elements that had a strong impact on third-grade students learning Spanish from a language specialist in their own classrooms was the "supportive presence of the classroom teacher during the Spanish lesson" (p. 30). The classroom teacher provided disciplinary back up, assisted with and participated in the lessons, and served as a good role model of a language learner.

Background of Project

In order to recruit school districts as participants, the project staff first met with administrators of small rural schools in Iowa and Nebraska to overview the project. Interested administrators invited project staff to give the faculty a presentation about the nature and benefits of the project and the level of commitment required of the school district and teachers. Next, a vote was held, and if the majority of the faculty agreed, the school district became a project school.

To establish the elementary school foreign language program in the collaborating districts, project staff designed a program that used as Spanish instructors both the elementary school classroom teachers and non-certified native speakers of Spanish. The role of the native speaker was to teach a Spanish class 15 minutes each week and that of the classroom teacher was to support and extend in their classrooms the Spanish lessons taught by the native speaker.

The classroom teachers, the majority of whom had had no experience with other languages and cultures, received extensive training from project staff in Spanish language, Hispanic cultures, technology skills, and curriculum and technology integration. They received this training in a summer institute prior to the first year of instruction and in two-hour sessions held via telecommunications twice each month

throughout the school year. The classroom teachers also were provided with computers, software, and extensive resources in Spanish and Hispanic cultures (Trayer, 2001). The classroom teachers received a modest stipend for their participation in the project. In addition, after one year of participation, teachers were provided a 10-day summer trip to Costa Rica that included a home stay and classes in a Spanish language institute.

Project staff developed the elementary school foreign language curriculum used in the project with input from elementary school classroom teachers and both K-6 and secondary Spanish teachers. The curriculum, which was designed for use at any grade level that is beginning the study of Spanish, focuses on developing students' Spanish communication skills, connecting Spanish activities to concepts taught in the elementary school curriculum, and cultural topics. The curriculum also includes strategies for integrating technology into classroom Spanish lessons.

During the first year of instruction, classroom teachers were provided with a Spanish video series developed for students in grades K-2, *SALSA* (Georgia Public Telecommunications Commission, 1998), from which they were asked to show their students a 15-minute segment twice each week. In the final three years of instruction, teachers were asked to show lessons from the videotape series *Español para ti* (1995/1996), because this series was designed for use in all elementary grades. Numerous software materials and Spanish activity and resource books were also provided to the classroom teachers (Trayer & Knoche, 2002).

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan developed by project evaluation staff includes accountability measures, and effectiveness and impact indicators for students, teachers, and stakeholders (Rosenbusch, Garcia, & Padgitt, 2002). This paper focuses on the project's impact on classroom teacher attitudes toward the Spanish language, Hispanic cultures, language learning, the elementary school foreign language program, student progress in learning, and the project itself.

Method

Subjects

Subjects for this study represent two cohorts of teachers. In the first academic year of instruction (1998-1999), 51 teach-

ers (Cohort 1) in 8 schools participated in the project. In the second year of instruction, teachers in 7 of the 8 schools continued and were joined by teachers (Cohort 2) in 7 additional schools. By the final project year (2001-2002), there were 98 teachers from 14 schools participating in the project. For both Cohorts 1 and 2, data are reported only for teachers who continued in the project from the time their cohort joined.

At the beginning of their project participation, all but three classroom teachers reported themselves to be at the Novice-Low to Novice-Mid range, a pre-proficiency level for Spanish speaking ability, on the Self-Assessment of Spanish Speaking Skills instrument developed by, and used with permission of, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), Washington, DC.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Evaluators examined attitudes during the four project years using a variety of instruments (Table 1), most of which also examined other aspects of the project that are not reported here. Not included in this article are teachers' attitudes about technology training and use and teachers' attitudes toward the summer study trip to Costa Rica, both of which will be addressed in separate articles.

Teachers. Classroom teachers (Cohort 1) attending the introductory institute in the summer of 1998 completed the *Summer Institute Reflection* form at the end of each day of the institute. This form consisted of 6 open-ended questions that teachers responded to on-line by completing response text boxes. The questions on this form asked teachers to evaluate the content of the institute and to indicate, "What I need is . . ." and "If I had more time I would like . . ."

As project activities were initiated in the fall of 1998, the Cohort 1 teachers were asked to provide feedback on the challenges and

satisfactions of their experiences in the classroom. To do so, they completed the *Teacher Reflection* form, which provided an open-ended format for teachers to reflect on their classroom teaching of Spanish language and culture, their work with the native speaker and project staff, their in-service experience, their work with the *SALSA* video and other support materials, the technology support provided, their use of technology, and any other aspects of the project that were important to them. Teachers were asked to complete these reflections during every two weeks of the first two months of the project and then on a monthly basis through the end of the first semester of teaching (Fall 1998).

The *Teacher Cultural Awareness Questionnaire* was developed in collaboration with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). This questionnaire was designed to address teachers' attitudes and feelings about (a) the Spanish language, (b) Spanish-speaking people and their cultures, (c) learning Spanish, (d) teaching Spanish to children when they themselves are not proficient in the language. The survey consisted of 12 attitude items for which responses ranged on a 4-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Teachers were also asked to describe in an open-ended format their feelings about learning Spanish and their level of confidence in having the needed knowledge and skills to effectively teach Spanish to their students. Responses for this section consisted of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "not confident" to "very confident" and an open-ended section for explaining further their responses.

Cohort 1 teachers completed a *Project Evaluation* in the summer of 1999 after the first year of instruction. Both cohorts of teachers completed a similar evaluation in May of 2000. A similar final *Project Evaluation* was completed by both cohorts in the fall of 2001. These surveys are divided into three major sections. The

first section measures teachers' perceptions of and personal experiences with general aspects of the project (not reported here). The second section measures their perceptions of the impact and effectiveness of the project, and the third section consists of open-ended questions that allow teachers to express ideas and describe accomplishments not addressed elsewhere in the questionnaire. Response categories varied by section and within sections and consisted, for example, of five-point Likert scales ranging from "highly effective" to "unacceptable" and "increased a great deal" to "decreased a great deal;" four-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and from "very effective" to "not at all effective;" three categories for indicating the impact of the project on their teaching from "to a large extent" to "not at all;" and open-ended questions.

Project School Visits. An evaluator conducted site visits in each of the twelve project schools in February and March, 2001. The purpose of the site visits was to learn more about how the program operates in each school and to gather qualitative information on the project's impact on teaching and learning. Data from informal discussions held with project teachers during the site visit are reported here. One day was spent in each school, and the school principal was asked to arrange the day's schedule.

Results

Summer Institute Reflection

The project began with a summer institute for both Teacher Cohorts 1 (5-day institute) and 2 (4-day institute) in which project staff offered instruction in Spanish, Hispanic cultures, and strategies for integrating Spanish into the curriculum, among other topics. Both cohorts rated the quality of the content of the summer institutes high with mean responses falling in the top three categories of the Cohort 1, 5-point Likert scale and the Cohort 2, 6-point Likert scale.

In their reflections on the institute, both cohorts indicated that the Spanish language lessons in which they participated had been helpful in preparing them for their responsibilities in teaching the language in the coming school year. They appreciated that project staff made them feel successful as language learners and modeled strategies they could use in introducing Spanish to their students. In fact, Cohort 2 teachers rated the Spanish language instruction and information on Hispanic cultures as the "most useful" parts of the institute.

Cohort 1 indicated that if they had had more time, they would have liked to use

Table 1. Overview of Instruments From Which Data Are Reported.

Focus of Evaluation Reported	Instrument Title	Completed By	Collected
Reflections on Learning Spanish	Summer Institute Reflection	Teacher Cohort 1	Summer 1998
Reflections on Teaching Spanish	Teacher Reflection	Teacher Cohort 1	Fall 1998
Attitudes toward Spanish and Hispanic Cultures	Teacher Cultural Awareness Questionnaire	Teacher Cohort 1 Teacher Cohort 2 Teacher Cohorts 1 & 2	Summer 1998 Summer 1999 Fall 2001
Attitudes toward Teaching Language and Culture	Project Evaluation	Teacher Cohort 1 Teacher Cohorts 1 & 2	Summer 1999 Spring 2000
Attitudes toward Teaching Language and Culture	Teachers' Final Project Evaluation Report	Teacher Cohorts 1 & 2	Fall 2001
Project Impact on Stakeholder Attitudes	Project School Site Visit Questions	Teachers Cohorts 1 & 2 (and stakeholders)	Spring 2001

that time to practice Spanish, discuss further how to integrate Spanish into the curriculum, organize the many materials received, and plan lessons. Cohort 2 teachers would have liked to meet with other grade level teachers and/or with other teachers from their school to work on implementation ideas.

Fall 1998 Teacher Reflections

As the Cohort 1 teachers initiated Spanish language instruction in their classrooms, their comments consisted primarily of neutral descriptions of classroom activities. Most of their evaluative comments, however, were positive and supportive reflecting their own and their students' enthusiasm for the project. Comments from subsequent reflection periods during the semester indicated that their enthusiasm and excitement about participation in the project continued throughout the semester. Further, most teachers believe that the program is effective with students. The last comment period overlapped with parent teacher conferences for some teachers who commented on parents' positive perceptions and opinions of the project.

Many of the positive comments throughout the semester focused on the SALSA videotape series and related resource materials, with teachers noting that the students enjoyed watching the videos. Teachers also commented on the work of the native speakers and most of these comments were supportive and complimentary of their work and relationship

with the students. Some teachers comments, however, reflected initial confusion about the native speaker's role, including concern that the native speaker spoke only Spanish with the children and dissatisfaction with the amount of time the native speaker spent with students (which, at that point, was 15 minutes per week but was later extended to 20 or 30 minutes) and with the limited amount of planning time the teacher had with the native speaker. The following comments illustrate these concerns:

- *I think [the native speaker] needs more leeway in speaking English to the students. With only 15 minutes to spend, a lot of time seems to be wasted on trying to get the kids to understand what she is trying to say.*
- *The students look forward to [the native speaker] but they also find speaking totally in Spanish is very confusing... they want her to speak English also.*
- *[The native speaker] has been energetic and well prepared. She has held the children spellbound by speaking only Spanish. I know this confuses the children a little but I feel it's a positive part of the program. It required the children to really apply themselves to understand the concepts being taught, as well as exposes them to what the language really sounds like. The 15 minute time frames has not really been adequate, a 30 minute time slot would be more productive. Perhaps in the future that could be a possibility.*

Teachers' criticisms about the project, although few in number, focused on the large amount of time involved in the training, planning and preparation for teaching, and administrative work resulting from their participation in the project. Teachers also expressed concerns about their effective use of the Spanish language, their ability to teach Spanish, and the appropriate balance between Spanish and the grade level curriculum. Some teachers, perhaps those who view the curriculum as a set of independent, mutually exclusive subject content areas, expressed the view that Spanish was just one more time-consuming (and less important) subject to be added to the day's lessons.

- *My biggest problem is trying to get to all my subject areas every day. I'm incorporating the vocabulary throughout the school day...doing extra activities to enhance the SALSA lessons is causing me to not get to all my other academic areas.*
- *I am finding it harder to fit Spanish concepts into my daily routine...I feel that I have to make choices. The students are enjoying Spanish, but I feel for me to do a good job I need to spend more time on it (at least 20 minutes a day). This time is hard to find.*

Most teachers, however, increasingly provided indicators of Spanish use and integration into the curriculum including daily work with the calendar and weather, writing stories using Spanish words, playing number games in Spanish, and research-

Table 2. Cohort 1 and 2 Teachers' Attitudes About Learning and Teaching Spanish Language and Culture—Frequency of Responses (2001).

Attitude Statement	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion	Valid responses	Mean	Standard deviation
1. I like the sound of Spanish being spoken.	0	2	68	22	4	92	3.22	.47
2. I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted.	0	1	57	27	11	85	3.31	.49
3. I think that Spanish speakers are sincere and honest.**	0	2	58	15	21	75	3.17	.45
4. I believe that people of Hispanic heritage should play a greater role in our society.	0	16	51	9	19	76	2.91	.57
5. I would rather spend my time studying something other than Spanish.	3	59	21	2	11	85	2.26 (2.74)*	.56
6. I'm not really interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better.	22	65	2	0	7	89	1.78 (3.22)*	.47
7. I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible.	0	10	64	18	4	92	3.09	.55
8. The more I learn about Spanish-speaking people and their cultures, the more I like them.	0	2	60	18	16	80	3.20	.46
9. I believe learning Spanish is a waste of time.	37	57	1	0	0	95	1.62 (3.37)*	.51
10. I'm interested in learning more about Hispanic peoples and cultures.	0	5	74	13	4	92	3.09	.44
11. I do not intend to continue the study of Spanish when the IN-VISION project is over.	11	51	12	0	22	74	2.01 (2.98)*	.56
12. I think learning Spanish is fun.	0	6	64	23	2	93	3.18	.53

*This is an adjusted mean using reversed score values to allow for inter-item comparison

**A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .02$) between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers

Table 3. Cohort 1 Teachers' Attitudes About Learning and Teaching Spanish Language and Culture—Frequency of Response (2001).

Attitude Statement	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion	Valid responses	Mean	Standard deviation
1. I like the sound of Spanish being spoken.**	0	0	26	8	0	34	3.24	.43
2. I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted.	0	0	23	9	2	32	3.28	.46
3. I think that Spanish speakers are sincere and honest.	0	0	22	8	4	30	3.27	.45
4. I believe that people of Hispanic heritage should play a greater role in our society.	0	2	19	4	8	25	3.08	.49
5. I would rather spend my time studying something other than Spanish.***	1	23	5	0	5	29	2.14 (2.86)*	.44
6. I'm not really interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better.***	10	22	1	0	1	33	1.73 (3.27)*	.52
7. I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible.	0	2	23	6	3	31	3.13	.50
8. The more I learn about Spanish-speaking people and their cultures, the more I like them.	0	0	23	6	5	29	3.21	.41
9. I believe learning Spanish is a waste of time.***	14	19	0	0	0	33	1.58 (3.12)*	.50
10. I'm interested in learning more about Hispanic peoples and cultures.	0	0	26	6	2	32	3.19	.40
11. I do not intend to continue the study of Spanish when the IN-VISION project is over.***	6	18	3	0	7	27	1.89 (3.11)*	.58
12. I think learning Spanish is fun.	0	1	21	11	1	33	3.30	.53

*This is an adjusted mean using reversed score values to allow for inter-item comparison

**A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .05$) between baseline and follow-up measures

***A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .02$) between baseline and follow-up measures

ing information on Hispanic foods and holidays. One teacher, in reflecting on her participation in the project through the first semester had found a satisfying role:

- *It has been fun and exciting for my students as well as for me. I don't look upon myself as a teacher of Spanish as I am definitely a learner myself. I view myself as a facilitator—using the great materials provided to facilitate the children's learning of Spanish.*

Teacher Cultural Awareness Questionnaire

The *Teacher Cultural Awareness Questionnaire* was administered twice to each cohort of teachers (Table 2). For baseline data it was administered to the Cohort 1 teachers in the summer of 1998 and to Cohort 2 in the summer of 1999. As a follow-up measurement it was administered to both cohorts in the fall of 2001 using methods similar to those in previous years. Prior to analyzing the data, score values were reverse-coded/converted on items stated in the negative (Items 5, 6, 9, and 11) so that all items would have the same response order. This process facilitates inter-item comparison and interpretation. Since scale values range from 1 to 4, the midpoint of the scale is 2.50. Thus, means above 2.50 indicate positive attitudes about Spanish-speaking people, their culture, and Spanish language learning, while means below 2.50 indicate negative attitudes.

Cohorts 1 and 2. Table 2 presents the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for all teachers on each of the 12 attitude items as measured at the follow-up in 2001. Due to attrition, the number of Cohort 1 teachers still participating in the project in the fall of 2001 was 34, while the number of Cohort 2 teachers was 62, for a total of 96 teachers.

The attitudes of teachers in both cohorts are generally positive; the means (and converted means) for all items are above 2.50 and range from 2.74 to 3.37 (Table 2). Only three items have means lower than 3.0. Items with the highest means (or converted means) are: Item 2, "I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted" (mean 3.31); and Item 9 (reverse coded and worded) "I believe learning Spanish is worth my time" (converted mean 3.37). In contrast, the item with the lowest mean is Item 5 (reverse coded and worded), "I would rather spend my time studying Spanish" (converted mean 2.74).

An independent t-test indicated significant differences in the responses of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers to Item 3, "I think that Spanish speakers are sincere and honest." Cohort 1 teachers were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement than were Cohort 2 teachers.

Cohort 1. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations for the first cohort of

teachers in the follow-up are presented in Table 3. For this cohort of teachers, means (and converted means) range from 2.86 to 3.30. Items with the highest means are, Item 12, "I think learning Spanish is fun" (mean 3.30) and Item 2, "I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted" (mean 3.28). Only Item 5 has a mean lower than 3.0 (reverse coded and worded here), "I would rather spend my time studying Spanish" (converted mean 2.86).

Cohort 2. Similarly, Table 4 presents the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for Cohort 2 teachers. Means and converted means for this group range from 2.68 to 3.35, with means for three items lower than 3.0. Items with the highest means are the same as those for all teachers combined, Items 2 (mean 3.32) and 9 (converted mean 3.35). The items with the lowest means are Item 4, "I believe that people of Hispanic heritage should play a greater role in our society" (mean 2.82) and Item 5 (recoded and reworded), "I would rather spend my time studying Spanish" (converted mean 2.68).

Comparison of Cohorts 1 and 2. A paired t-test was conducted to determine change in teachers' attitudes since the baseline measurement was administered. These results reveal some interesting variations between the two cohorts.

For Cohort 1 teachers (Table 3), statistically significant differences were found

Table 4. Cohort 2 Teachers' Attitudes About Learning and Teaching Spanish Language and Culture—Frequency of Response (2001).

Attitude Statement	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Agree	4 = Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion	Valid responses	Mean	Standard deviation
1. I like the sound of Spanish being spoken.***	0	2	42	14	4	58	3.21	.49
2. I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted.***	0	1	34	18	9	53	3.32	.51
3. I think that Spanish speakers are sincere and honest.***	0	2	36	7	17	45	3.11	.44
4. I believe that people of Hispanic heritage should play a greater role in our society.**	0	14	32	5	11	51	2.82	.59
5. I would rather spend my time studying something other than Spanish.	2	36	16	2	6	56	2.32 (2.68)*	.61
6. I'm not really interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better.***	12	43	1	0	6	56	1.80 (3.20)*	.44
7. I plan to learn as much Spanish as possible.	0	8	41	12	1	61	3.07	.57
8. The more I learn about Spanish-speaking people and their cultures, the more I like them.***	0	2	37	12	11	51	3.20	.49
9. I believe learning Spanish is a waste of time.***	23	38	1	0	0	62	1.65 (3.35)*	.52
10. I'm interested in learning more about Hispanic peoples and cultures.**	0	5	48	7	2	60	3.03	.45
11. I do not intend to continue the study of Spanish when the IN-VISION project is over.***	5	33	9	0	15	47	2.09 (2.91)*	.54
12. I think learning Spanish is fun.***	0	5	43	12	1	60	3.12	.52

*This is an adjusted mean using reversed score values to allow for inter-item comparison

**A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .05$) between baseline and follow-up measures

***A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .02$) between baseline and follow-up measures

on 5 of the 12 attitude items. Cohort 1 teachers had a higher mean response on the follow-up measurement than they did on the baseline for Item 1, "I like the sound of Spanish being spoken." Thus, as a group, they like the sound of Spanish being spoken better at the end of the project than they did at the onset of the project, an indication of a more positive attitude toward the sound of Spanish.

Cohort 1 teachers also had a statistically significant lower mean response (when reverse coded) on the follow-up than they did on the baseline measures for the following items: Item 5 (reverse coded and worded), "I would rather spend my time studying Spanish;" Item 6 (reverse coded and worded), "I'm interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better;" Item 9 (reverse coded and worded), "I believe that learning Spanish is worth my time;" Item 11 (reverse coded and worded), "I intend to continue the study of Spanish when the IN-Vision project is over." In each case, the change consists (when reverse coded) of fewer "strongly agree" responses and more "agree" or "don't know/no opinion" responses rather than an increase in "disagree" responses. These data, however, do indicate less positive attitudes for these items at the end of the project than at the onset for Cohort 1.

For Cohort 2 teachers, statistically significant differences were found on 10 of the 12 attitude items. Cohort 2 teachers had

a higher mean response, indicating a more positive attitude, on the follow-up measurement than they did on the baseline for the following items: Item 1, "I like the sound of Spanish being spoken;" Item 2, "I believe that Spanish speakers are sociable and warm-hearted;" Item 3, "I think that Spanish speakers are sincere and honest;" Item 4, "I believe that people of Hispanic heritage should play a greater role in our society;" Item 8, "The more I learn about Spanish-speaking people and their culture, the more I like them;" Item 10 "I'm interested in learning more about Hispanic peoples and cultures;" Item 12, "I think learning Spanish is fun."

These teachers also had lower means (when reverse coded) on the following items: Item 6 (reverse coded and worded), "I am interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better;" Item 9 (reverse coded and worded), "I believe that learning Spanish is worth my time;" Item 11 (reverse coded and worded), "I intend to continue the study of Spanish when the IN-Vision project is over." The change in attitudes consists of fewer (when reverse coded) "strongly agree" responses and more "agree" or "don't know/no opinion" responses rather than an increase in "disagree" responses. Nevertheless, these data indicate less positive attitudes on these items at the end of the project than at the onset of the project for Cohort 2.

Project Evaluation Reports

Perceptions of Support for the Project.

In the second section of both the Project Evaluation and the Teachers' Final Project Evaluation Reports, teachers were asked to characterize their support for the project as well as the support of other teachers, administrators, and parents. Response categories consisted of a four-point Likert scale ranging from "strong support" to "strong opposition." Means above 2.50 indicate support for the project, while means below 2.50 indicate a lack of support for the project.

In the Fall 2001 follow-up, the combined cohorts of teachers reported that support for the project among constituent groups remained generally high (Table 5). The teachers of both cohorts characterized their own support as strong or moderately strong (mean 3.46), with only 3 out of 95 in moderate opposition to the project, and 1 in strong opposition. Teachers also rated their school administrators as displaying strong or moderate support for the project (mean 3.31) and rated other teachers involved in the project as moderately supportive of the project (mean 3.18). Parents were rated as moderately supportive of the project (mean 3.02).

Frequencies, means, and standard deviations for Cohort 1 in the follow-up are presented in Table 6. For this cohort, the highest level of support for the project is reported to be the teachers' own support

Table 5. Cohort 1 and 2 Teachers' Support for the Project—Frequency of Response (2001).

	4- Strong support	3- Moderate support	2- Moderate opposition	1- Strong opposition	Total Valid Responses	Mean	SD	% Strong or Moderate Support
a. Your support	49	42	3	1	95	3.46	0.62	96%
b. Other teachers involved in the project	26	60	9	0	95	3.18	0.58	91%
c. School administrators*	33	57	4	0	94	3.31	0.55	96%
d. Parents	9	78	7	0	94	3.02	0.41	93%

* A t-test indicates significant differences between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers ($p < .05$)

Table 6. Cohort 1 Teachers' Support for the Project—Frequency of Response (2001).

	4- Strong support	3- Moderate support	2- Moderate opposition	1- Strong opposition	Total Valid Responses	Mean	SD	% Strong or Moderate Support
a. Your support	19	14	0	0	33	3.58	0.50	100%
b. Other teachers involved in the project*	6	27	0	0	33	3.18	0.39	100%
c. School administrators	16	17	0	0	33	3.48	0.51	100%
d. Parents	6	26	1	0	33	3.15	0.44	97%

* A t-test indicates significant differences ($p < .02$) between baseline and follow-up measures

Table 7. Cohort 2 Teachers' Support for the Project—Frequency of Response (2001).

	4- Strong support	3- Moderate support	2- Moderate opposition	1- Strong opposition	Total Valid Responses	Mean	SD	% Strong or Moderate Support
a. Your support	30	28	3	1	62	3.40	0.66	94%
b. Other teachers involved in the project	20	33	9	0	62	3.18	0.67	85%
c. School administrators	17	40	4	0	61	3.21	0.55	93%
d. Parents	3	52	6	0	61	2.95	0.38	90%

(mean 3.58). In fact all of the teachers reported having either strong or moderate support for the project. They also report strong or moderate support by other teachers involved in the project (mean 3.18) and their school administrators (mean 3.48). Cohort 1 teachers also reported parents to be very supportive of the project (mean 3.15).

Similarly, Table 7 presents the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for Cohort 2. Means for this group range from 2.95 to 3.40. Items for the highest mean scores are the same as those for all teachers combined, although consistently lower: teachers' own support (mean 3.40), school administrators (mean 3.21), and other teachers (mean 3.18). Parents were rated as moderately supportive of the project (mean 2.95).

On the follow-up in 2001, an independent t-test indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the mean responses of the first and second cohorts on their ratings of school administrators and parents (Table 5). Cohort 1 had a higher mean response for support for the program by school administrators (mean 3.48) (Table 6) than did Cohort 2 (mean 3.21) (Table 7). Similarly, Cohort 1 had a higher mean response for support for the program by parents (mean 3.15)

(Table 6) than did the Cohort 2 (mean 2.95) (Table 7).

A paired t-test was conducted to determine change in teachers' attitudes from the baseline measurement. In 1998 Cohort 1 rated other teachers' support for the project higher than they did in 2001 (Table 6). No other statistically significant differences were found for the ratings of Cohort 1; for Cohort 2, no statistical differences were found between baseline and follow-up responses (Table 7).

Project School Visits

Cohort 1 and 2 teachers were asked to identify their initial concerns when they learned their schools would be participating in this project. They reported that they initially experienced mixed emotions about participating. They were simultaneously nervous, excited, and concerned about doing a good job, particularly given their lack of Spanish-speaking skills and their lack of expertise in teaching Spanish. Relatively few teachers, however, reported that they initially did not want to participate in the project for these reasons. Most of the teachers describe themselves as initially excited because they felt it was a good opportunity for their students to learn a second language. For example, one upper elementary teacher reported the following:

- *Though this was our first year, most of us were excited because we could see the kids were excited. We could see how much they learned, and we felt good about that both as teachers and also as parents. Also, most teachers indicated they were excited about the prospect and challenge of learning a second language themselves.*

When teachers were asked if they would make the same decision to participate in the project again today, with surprisingly few exceptions, the teachers said they would agree to participate in the project if they had to make the decision again. However, almost all teachers also indicated that they did not initially fully understand or anticipate the long-term implications of participating in the project, nor did they fully understand all of the expectations that their participation entailed.

In terms of the projects' benefits for them, many teachers said the project challenged them to learn something new, which is personally revitalizing and energizing. Similarly, many said that the project facilitates personal growth and confidence, while others said that the project unified them as a group and fostered the sharing of ideas.

Many teachers said they have more empathy for students and a renewed

understanding of how difficult learning can be. One teacher said she learned to be quieter and more patient with students, because learning requires attention. Another teacher said her students often correct her pronunciation but asserts it is important for students to know the teacher is not perfect; and a third teacher said she tells her students they have to help her get ready for a test in Spanish, which they love.

Many teachers said they were surprised at how easily they could find ways of incorporating Spanish into their daily activities. Integration was easier than they had anticipated, as one teacher reported:

- I'm even more excited about the project this year. The kids love it and use it without my asking them to. Students love to learn something others don't know.

Another teacher reported that the primary benefits of the project to her are that she can now converse with Hispanic parents. Although she may not always use the language correctly, she feels she is building a relationship with them and feels they appreciate her efforts.

Discussion

As teachers reflected on the summer institute that comprised their first intensive training in preparation for project participation, they reported feeling encouraged about the Spanish language skills they had acquired even though they were minimal. The project staff's approach in teaching key vocabulary and phrases had allowed the teachers to experience success as language learners and helped them believe that they could succeed at introducing Spanish to their students.

The primary concerns teachers expressed at the end of the institute related to how they would integrate Spanish into the curriculum. They reported that they would have liked more time for discussion with others who teach the same grade level and those who teach in their own school to better define their plans for Spanish integration. Teachers who viewed content areas as separate subjects taught at defined times in the day still reported problems finding time for Spanish in the curriculum at the end of the first semester. More emphasis and examples in the summer institute on integrating Spanish into a theme-based elementary curriculum might have helped these teachers better meet the project goal of curriculum integration.

By the end of the first semester of teaching, many teachers reported having included Spanish numbers and language

into students' class work and integrated information on Hispanic cultures into their curriculum. In fact their enthusiasm for teaching Spanish remained high and continued so throughout the entire project period.

Concern expressed by some teachers during the first semester focused on the Spanish classes taught by the native speaker. These concerns related to the length of the class, which in some schools was 15 minutes each week. Project staff addressed these concerns and lengthened the classes taught by native speakers to 20 or 30 minutes once a week in all schools.

Some teachers also expressed concern about the native speakers' exclusive use of Spanish in teaching the students, believing the practice to be confusing to students. Since at the summer institute the project staff would likely have modeled the use of the target language as the language of instruction in the Spanish classes for teachers, this concern is surprising. Perhaps teachers did not remember their own success in learning Spanish when they were taught in the language. This concern might also be related to a need for the native speakers teaching the children's classes to learn how to modify their language to make it comprehensible to beginners who are young children. Although the project staff provided training for the native speakers, providing extensive experience in developing this skill would be important before the native speakers begin classroom teaching.

Another concern expressed by teachers during the first semester, and echoed by their principals during the project school visits, were the extensive administrative demands the project staff and evaluators made on their time. Although valuable data were collected through the numerous forms and questionnaires, gathering only essential data by expedient means would reduce the paperwork burden on teachers.

All teachers reported relatively positive attitudes toward Spanish speakers and Hispanic cultures and toward learning the Spanish language both at the beginning and the end of the project. The data, however, reveal important differences between Teachers in Cohort 1 and 2 over time.

Teachers in Cohort 1, who had participated in the project over a 4-year period, reported significantly less positive attitudes on some items at the end of the project when compared to the beginning. At the end of the project, Cohort 1 teachers were less convinced that learning Spanish was worth their time, they were less positive toward spending time study-

ing Spanish, less interested in getting to know Spanish-speaking people better, and were less inclined to continue the study of Spanish when the project was over. Cohort 2 teachers had more items with significant changes from the baseline. These included more positive attitudes toward Hispanics, considering them sociable and warm-hearted as well as sincere and honest, and expressed more interest in learning about Hispanic peoples and their culture.

A degree of caution should be exercised in examining these findings. The fact that Cohort 2 teachers had a larger number of positive changes in attitudes than did Cohort 1 teachers may be the result of a combination of factors, including their more recent participation in staff development, the recency of their trip to Costa Rica, or the shorter duration of their participation in the project. Alternatively, there are twice as many Cohort 2 as Cohort 1 teachers. Consequently, each individual's response has a greater effect on the Cohort 1's group mean than it has on Cohort 2's mean.

Additionally, caution should be exercised in examining the increase in less positive attitudes. In particular, the mean responses were generally positive on the baseline measure. Consequently, it would be difficult under the best of circumstances to sustain such positive attitudes. Moreover, since the change consists of fewer "strongly agree" responses and more "agree" or "don't know/no opinion" responses rather than more "disagree" responses, the change is a matter of degree, not a shift in the direction of their attitudes. More importantly, these changes may reflect the toll the project can take on classroom teachers, who assume these instructional responsibilities as an "overload." In that case, appropriate modifications could be made to the instructional model to modify the effects of "burn out."

Teachers in both cohorts had reported during the baseline evaluation that support for the project was high among other teachers, administrators, and parents. By the time of the follow-up evaluation, teachers in Cohort 1 reported that the support for the project by other teachers' in their cohort had decreased significantly.

Two factors may be related to this less positive attitudes toward the project perceived by teachers in Cohort 1 at the end of the project. The length of time participating in the project may have been impacting the attitudes of the teachers in Cohort 1. These teachers had been participating in the project for four years, in contrast to three years for teachers in Cohort 2. They may have been tiring of

project demands and looking forward to the end of their obligation to the project. They also may have felt that they had reached the level of Spanish language learning and cultural understanding that they were able to accomplish or that was necessary for them to possess to integrate Spanish into the curriculum at their grade level. Because they would have participated in the trip to Costa Rica three years earlier, the excitement and motivation from that experience may also have been waning.

Teachers in both cohorts reported that they had grown personally through the experience. They reported that they now were more unified and willing to share ideas as a group. They had increased in empathy and understanding of how difficult learning can be for some students. They reported that if given the opportunity to make the decision about participating in the project again, they would participate.

Conclusion

Although Dewar (1998) reports that classroom teachers may fear teaching in a language they have not previously studied, the classroom teachers in this project reported feeling enthusiastic and excited about integrating Spanish into their classrooms, in spite of being at a pre-proficiency level for Spanish speaking ability. The fact that they received training prior to the start of the year in which they were to begin integrating Spanish into their curriculum seems to have been a critical element in the project's success. Although both cohorts wished for more time for preparation before the start of their teaching, they began enthusiastically.

Teachers were appreciative of the material support they received from project staff for their teaching, such as the videotape series and Spanish resource materials, and they clearly relied on the weekly classes taught by the native speaker language associate to assist them in teaching Spanish. In fact, teachers successfully appealed to project staff to increase the length of these classes to 30

minutes/week. The responsiveness of the staff to their needs was no doubt an important aspect in a sense of support for them in carrying out their task.

Teachers' attitudes toward the Spanish language, Spanish-speaking people and their cultures, learning Spanish, and teaching Spanish to children while not being themselves proficient, remained positive throughout the project. The decrease in attitudes observed, while significant, was not such that teachers' attitudes changed from positive to negative, rather, from strongly positive to positive. Various factors may have played a role in this shift in attitudes, for example, a change from viewing the project as an exciting new phenomenon, to that of seeing the project as just one more subject to be integrated into the curriculum. Additionally, the extra time and effort the project required was, no doubt, somewhat wearing over time.

Yet in the final year of the project, teachers reported that, if asked, they would make the same decision to participate in the project again. They recognized the personal growth that they had experienced and appreciated the confidence they had gained. Additionally they felt more unified as a group and found that shared ideas had stimulated their own teaching. Teachers also gained a renewed understanding of the challenge of learning, particularly for some students, and greater empathy for them.

As a project of renewal for teachers, this project provided important benefits. As a means of effectively teaching the Spanish language to elementary school students, an analysis would need to be made of the growth in students' Spanish language skills over the project period. Should students make significant growth, this program model would be an important one for school districts facing tight budgets and limited access to qualified foreign language teachers to consider. Its viability, without important outside funding as was available to this project, would be a key question to examine.

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