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# Facebook Interactions and Writing Skills of Spanish Language Students

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**FACEBOOK INTERACTIONS AND  
WRITING SKILLS OF SPANISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS**

BY

**WINDY GONZÁLEZ ROBERTS**

**B.S., Lesley University, 1990**

**THESIS**

Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION IN WORLD LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION**

CONCORDIA COLLEGE

DECEMBER 2009

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This thesis submitted by Windy González Roberts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in World Language Instruction from Concordia College has been read by the Examining Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

As the Committee Chairperson, I hereby certify that this thesis is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Office of Graduate Programs and Continuing Studies of Concordia College, and is hereby approved.

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**Dec. 18, 2009**

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Signature

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Date

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## ABSTRACT

Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) is an online social-networking site used by many high school and college students today in their personal lives. This thesis reports on an exploratory study which investigated the possible increase in writing skills of Spanish language students from incorporating a Facebook component into an otherwise standard college course.

Fourth semester college Spanish students were asked to complete weekly writing assignments in Facebook throughout the semester. Regular writing practice on varied topics in the familiar and informal environment of Facebook was expected to increase the language production and the writing skill of the students.

The study had several components. The researcher developed a syllabus integrating Facebook writing assignments with the rest of the course. Students completed an initial survey to determine their previous experience with Facebook and their disposition towards the use of computers in general. The entry writing skills of students were measured by applying a Standard-based Measurement of Proficiency writing rubric to an initial writing sample. The instructor monitored the performance of the students on Facebook throughout the semester. The writing skills of the students at the end of the semester were evaluated by applying the same rubric to a final writing sample. Finally, students completed a second survey containing specific questions about their experiences using Facebook as a learning tool throughout.

The students wrote substantially in response to the weekly assignments. The measurements revealed a clear increase in their writing abilities between the initial and

final writing samples. Students self-reported modest-to-considerable higher comfort levels and modest-to-considerable higher proficiency in writing due to the Facebook component. The results are clearly encouraging, but they are also somewhat tentative because of the study's exploratory nature.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The past twenty years have seen an enormous rise in the use of technology in foreign language instruction. The technologies available now are enormously better than they were previously. Twenty years ago computers were in the domain of specialists. Now computers are designed for everyone. The technological skills of today's young people are very substantial, often at a much higher level than the generation of adults who are teaching them.

There is now widespread agreement among foreign language educators that technology should be used in instruction. The use of technology is considered a "best practice," and the educational establishment is thereby encouraging practicing language teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching. The most important question that remains is implementation: Exactly what kind of technology should be used? How should it be integrated into the rest of the curriculum? These are delicate questions: a constant concern is to ensure that technology is being used as a tool to truly help students and not just as an instructor substitute or as an ineffectual drill and practice device.

In the mere three years since it became available to the public, Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) has grown into a social networking site used by more than 200 million people worldwide. Facebook, like foreign language instruction, is all about communication. It is multifaceted, supporting many types of communication: real-time written conversation, posts to walls read by many, photo-sharing, and so on. The interface of the entire site can be chosen to be Spanish, or any other common language. Many students are familiar, often extremely familiar, with how Facebook works.

Therefore, Facebook in many respects fits very well to the needs of foreign language instruction. It is a promising choice for the type of technology to be used.

Accordingly, the researcher created a large technology component based on Facebook in two sections of a fourth semester college Spanish class in Spring 2009. In a study attached to the course, the researcher also measured in an exploratory fashion the impact of the Facebook component on the writing of students. This thesis reports on the Facebook component and its effect upon student writing.

**Today's learners.** Prensky (2001) introduced a fundamental distinction that has guided the discussion of technology in education since. People born after 1982 are referred to as “digital natives.” The only world they know is filled with computer-based technology. Older people are at best “digital immigrants.” They grew up in a very different world and have adapted, often uncomfortably, to the new world. Prensky wrote,

It is amazing to me how in all the hoopla and debate these days about the decline of education in the US we ignore the most fundamental of its causes. Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.

Prensky even quoted Dr. Bruce D. Berry of Baylor College of Medicine, “Different kinds of experiences lead to different brain structure.” Regardless if this is the case, certainly the new experiences of the new generation have implications that need to be addressed in the education field.

**Technology in Foreign Language Instruction.** The widespread agreement that technology should be used in language teaching is based on scientific research (Chapelle, 2005; Blake, 2009; González Bueno, 1998; Leloup & Ponterio, 2003; Stepp-Greany,

2002; Zhao 2003). For example, Zhao's meta-analysis examined nine large studies. Zhao concluded that these studies demonstrated "an overwhelmingly positive effect of technology applications on language learning" (p. 19). The force of all these conclusions is reflected in the fact that teachers who do not use technology today are in danger of being "classified as out of touch" (Blake et al., 2008).

More specifically, computer-mediated communication (CMC) among students has been found to be useful when teaching and learning a foreign language (Kitade, 2000; Payne 2003; Chism, 2003; Chen, Liu, & Wong, 2007). Kitade (2000, p.163) emphasized the goal-oriented nature of CMC communication as contributing positively to second language acquisition. Kitade continued that it is an open question, however, exactly how CMC should be incorporated into the curriculum.

#### FACEBOOK AS A PROMISING INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL

Facebook is a social networking site. It is extremely popular among high school and college students. In fact, it is well known that this demographic originally formed the core of Facebook users, although now there are many other age groups among the 200 million users. Facebook is a carefully designed site which contains many of the elements that are used in computer-mediated communication in the foreign language classroom, as detailed below.

Figure 1.1: The researcher's Initial Profile Page for the Course



Figure 1.1 illustrates how Facebook appears to users. Users have many options for the language to be used, and Spanish is chosen in Figure 1.1, as it was for the course. Facebook offers a personal user profile (“mi perfil”), where users decide what information to post about themselves, such as their user name, a photo, a brief biography, and a list of personal interests. Users can post large collections of pictures (see “Ver fotos de mí” under the main photo). Users can write on each other’s “walls” (message boards) as illustrated by the paragraphs at the bottom right on Figure 1.1. Many other features are one click away from the initial page illustrated on Figure 1.1. For example, clicking on “Bandeja de entrada” lets users e-mail to one another privately. Similarly clicking on one of the icons at the bottom left opens up the instant messaging feature. Not shown is a

chatroom area. Users are told who is in the chatroom at any moment and can join and leave as they wish.

Many of the features of Facebook align well with good practice in foreign language classrooms. For example, the information available in personal profiles is crucial when trying to create community in the language classroom. The wall not only lets students write in a public forum, it also allows other students to comment on these writings in an interactive way. Long (1996, as cited by de la Fuente, 2003) says, “Negotiations of meaning among learners can facilitate the learning of a second language.” Facebook provides many opportunities for such negotiations. Another important best practice is to promote a student-centered environment while creating learning activities. Facebook allows room for this.

Facebook with all its CMC tools has the power to engage the students in what may be seen today as the “natural way.” This social network fits well with the trends of our students of today where participatory culture offers opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

Finally, there are four obvious ways that Facebook is promising for the foreign language classroom that cannot be overstated. First, this technology is internet-based. There is no need for a language lab or special software. It can be expected that many students have their own computer, and, assuming a typical school environment, these and other students can also use school computer labs. These computers are “pre-existing,” as they are already used for many purposes, both academic and non-academic. Second, one can expect that many students come to the classroom with useful previous experience with Facebook. Third, as opposed to textbooks and most co-curricular material, Facebook

is free; to use it, students need only to have an e-mail address and access to the Internet. Fourth, and most importantly, Facebook is ideal for out-of-class time, keeping valuable class time available for other activities.

Facebook being so new, there is not yet a substantial literature on Facebook in the context of foreign language instruction. However, there were a number of predecessors to Facebook. Boyd & Ellison (2007) introduced social-networking sites in general. McBride (2009) gave a good overview of social networking sites in a foreign language instruction context. She said, "Learning and language develop through interaction with others...SNSs are a promising tool for FL education in their capacity to be used by learners as L2 practice in a way similar to how they used by the majority of the young people in our society" (p.40).

#### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study introduced a new Facebook component to an otherwise standard fourth semester college Spanish class. It tested the hypothesis that this Facebook component would improve the Spanish writing skill of students. It concluded that indeed the Facebook component did improve writing skill.

The new Facebook component centered on weekly Facebook activities, ranging from posting and captioning photos from spring break to separate discussions about jobs, religion, and social justice. Participating students completed a survey at the beginning of the semester and a longer survey at the end of the semester. The first and last writing samples of participating students were carefully reexamined at the end of the semester using the same rubric.

The Facebook component itself is outlined in the main body of this thesis and then described in detail in Appendix D. A number of principles guided its creation as follows. First, many of the topics of the weekly Facebook activities were related to the rest of the curriculum in the Spanish course. It was important that students see the Facebook component not just as an “add on.” Second, the activities were also focused on the students themselves, in other words student-centered. Third, the Facebook component was designed to promote out-of-class interaction among the students. Students could see the work of other students, and they were generally asked to comment on the work of at least three other students per week. Through various rotations, students were required to interact with all their classmates, rather than just a few. This structure allowed for social aspects to the construction of knowledge as advocated by Pringle (2002).

One often talks about the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. There are ways to communicate orally through Facebook, by posting videos for example. However, the main parts of Facebook are based on reading and writing. The study tested improvement in writing rather than reading, as there were many more opportunities to evaluate writing in the context of Facebook and other class work.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THIS THESIS

Chapter 2 reviews some relevant literature. It covers research on digital learners, social network sites, computer-mediated communication in language instruction, and second language acquisition theories. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study. Enough detail is given to support possible replication by others. Chapter 4 addresses findings in detail and includes illustrative examples from the work of several students.

Chapter 5 summarizes results and addresses limitations of the study. It also gives recommendations for the future, not only for researchers but also for practicing instructors.

There are four appendices. The first three contain various documents associated to the course or the study. The longest one is then Appendix D which responds to a need described by Abrams (2006, p. 189): “We also need practical descriptions of how CMC can become a natural part of the L2 curriculum...How are assignments and tasks designed...What are some other practical considerations for teachers?” Appendix D describes with comments each one of the fifteen assigned activities. The fifteen activities are given both as they were assigned in Spanish and in English translation. This appendix also contains some excerpts of student work in connection with these activities. Instructors who decide to incorporate Facebook into their curricula should find this appendix useful.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents previous research relevant to this study. The first section focuses on overviews by leading SLA researchers of technology in the classroom. The second section discusses the relevance of being aware of the characteristics of the new generation of learners known as “digital natives.” The third section reviews and evaluates four studies in second language acquisition that have examined the ability of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to increase the students’ second language abilities. The fourth section exposes the increasing ways in which practicing language teachers are using social networking sites in their classrooms. The fifth section describes how two papers served as “practical guides” for the design of this study. The last section describes two theoretical frameworks which also influenced the design of this study.

Each section of this chapter is reviewing literature of a different nature. Some of the literature reviewed makes clear that there is a need for novel computer-enhanced curricula targeted at the current generation. Some of the literature reviewed played a role in the *design* of the Facebook component itself, as presented in Appendix D. Other parts played a role in the *assessment* of the Facebook component.

### TECHNOLOGY IN SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Salaberry (2001) critically traces the long interaction between second language instruction and technology from the early 1900s until today. His article gives perspective on current issues. He chronologically surveys the use of various technologies including phonographs, films, and language labs. Many of the issues of today had their analogs

when these earlier technologies were introduced into the classroom. Salaberry's tone is cautionary: time and again, there has been over-enthusiasm with new technology.

Therefore, this thesis carefully keeps the focus on actual language learning and not on the excitement associated to the new technology.

Leloup & Ponterio (2003) and Zhao (2003) each give an overview of how strongly the literature scientifically supports technology in language instruction as of six years ago. They both have sections addressing weaknesses in the literature. However, they both are positive in their final assessment. In regard to affect, for example, LeLoup & Ponterio report an overall favorable disposition of students towards technology, including "lower anxiety levels, higher interest, and greater student participation" (p. 1). Positive results are also reported in the categories of language awareness, language production, writing, and reading. Zhao, reviews nine major studies, and concludes that they show that technology has a positive impact on language learning. Rather dramatically, the studies show that "technology-supported language learning is at least as effective as human teachers, if not more so," (p. 7).

It is important to highlight that the studies reviewed by Zhao typically *replaced* face-to-face interaction with technology-supported language learning. Other authors such as Kraemer (2008) even enter into discussions about institutional savings obtained by replacing face-to-face interaction with technology-supported language learning. It would clearly be better for language learning to have *both* all the traditional face-to-face interaction and technology-supported language learning.

The late 1990s studies reviewed by Zhao were mostly language lab based. A key aspect of newer technologies is that the technological support is now out of class. This is

true of the curricular innovations reported on by Chism, Payne, and Antenos-Conforti discussed below, and the current study. Zhao is already reporting good results when technology-based learning replaces traditional teacher-driven learning. One can expect better results when technology-based learning is added to teacher-driven learning.

## DIGITAL NATIVES

There is a clear understanding in the literature that the current generation of learners is qualitatively different from previous generations. In fact, there are entire organizations such as CALICO (Computer assisted language instruction consortium) which are dedicated to modifying standard teaching to reach the new generation of students.

Chapter 1 and the current section title highlight Prensky's term for this generation: Digital Natives. McBride (2009, p. 37) lists terms other researchers have given to this generation: Millennial students, neomillennials, Generation M, and the Net Generation. This explosion of terminology indicates that many authors view current learners as substantially different from learners in even the recent past. The rise of Facebook alone clearly proves that student habits are rapidly changing. At the time the researcher proposed this study, Facebook had 58 million users. A year and half later, Facebook has 200 million users.

Returning to Prensky (2001), he expands that Digital Natives "have spent their entire lives surrounded by using computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age." Responding to this fundamental fact, "Today's teachers have to learn to communicate in the language and

the style of their students.” This *doesn't* mean changing the meaning of what is important, or of good thinking skills. But it *does* mean going faster, less step-by-step, more in parallel, with more random access, among other things.” Other authors also write in this “call to arms” style.

To understand better how this generation learns, Kassen & Lavine (2007) describes common characteristics of the Millennials. They write that these characteristics include “a preference for and reliance on graphics opposed to text; the desire for flexibility, options and customization; and a predilection for learning by doing and experimenting” (p. 237). Another neomillennial characteristic is the need for rapid results and quick feedback (Kassen & Lavine, 2007, p.237). These learners have developed hypertext minds. Kassen & Lavine also talk about the fluency in various media that digital natives have, and their need for a collective learning experiences. Kassen & Lavine (2007, p.254) echo Prensky in their conclusion, “If we hope to continue to educate for the future...we must understand the characteristics of our students, take advantage of already successful instructional strategies, and continue to consider new ideas such as immersion in educational virtual environment.”

Incorporating Facebook into a Spanish language course is designed to directly respond to the needs of Digital Natives, making use of their natural technological skills. Kassen & Lavine write of customization, and profiles of students are highly customizable, with pictures and status updates, for example. Student postings can get immediate feedback, from both instructors and peers. The chatroom can go at “twitch speed,” the speed preferred by Digital Natives according to Prensky (2003, p. 2). In general, the Facebook site offers many opportunities to multitask and parallels the non-

linear structure characteristic of these digital learners. Its whole purpose is to create a virtual community.

A specific concern of the researcher is that the national trends described by all the above authors may not apply so forcefully to all groups of students. The students at the school where the study is done on average have quite modest economic backgrounds compared to other colleges. One could question whether these students truly have access to all the “toys and tools of the digital age.” Accordingly, the study collects information about computer ownership and computer habits from the subjects.

#### STUDIES ON COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

This section reviews four studies on computer-mediated communication for the learning of second languages. The first study described an experiment not directly tied to a curriculum. The last three studies investigated the effectiveness of a curriculum. These three studies are particularly close to the present study.

In a 2000 study, Robert Blake investigated the use of different tools for computer-mediated communication. Using a synchronous chat program developed at UC Davis, Blake was able to record all textual entries at the same time students were carrying out networked discussion in pairs during their lab time. Part of Blake’s study demonstrated that incidental negotiations of meaning commonly occurred in networked learner/learner discussion: “carefully crafted tasks stimulated L2 learners to negotiate meaning which in turn, seems to affect their output.” According to the Interaction Hypothesis (Long & Robinson, 1998, as cited by Blake, 2000), conditions for second language acquisition are crucially enhanced by having second language learners negotiate

meaning with others in this way. Blake concludes CMC enables SLA. In a recent book, Blake (2009, p. 98) still reaches the same conclusion, “CMC can play a crucial role in stimulating linguistic interaction in a fashion that produces similar benefits to those generated by face-to-face collaborations.”

Blake’s research emphasized the negotiation of meaning done in chat room discussions. A typical negotiation of meaning reported by Blake (p. 124) was

Y: ellos estan a una sepultura  
[They are at a tomb.]

X: que es sepultura?  
[What’s a “tomb”?]

Y: cementario  
[a cemetery]

Other negotiations of meaning were similarly extremely brief and about similarly extremely specific topics, for example gender (*la pays* vs. *el pays*) or tense choice (*foe* vs. *era*). Students were thus helping each other fill in specific gaps in their knowledge. The Facebook study of this thesis was primarily asynchronous rather than synchronous. It was designed to also value negotiation of meaning. However negotiation of meaning in the Facebook study also included much higher negotiations: negotiations not just about words, but also about content.

Rebecca L. Chasm (2003) carried out an exploratory study in an intermediate French I class at a public university during one semester. Chasm placed the students in groups and assigned a short reading paragraph to each from the course textbook, which they were to discuss via chat, electronic mail, or electronic message board provided by the university. The instructor was involved in the chatting and e-mail, and had access to the electronic message board. This process was repeated throughout the semester and the

students had the opportunity to use the three communication modes. At the end of the semester, the students were asked their preference about the three communication modes. 90% said the electronic message board was their preferred forum. The students reported that the electronic board was easy to follow: postings were in chronological and hence logical order. Thus Chism found a context in which a form of primarily asynchronous communication, the electronic message board, was better than a form of purely synchronous communication, chatting. Advantages of the electronic message board included anxiety reduction and self-paced learning.

The Facebook study of this thesis was motivated in part by Chism's success with electronic boards. The majority of the activities were assigned in the asynchronous part of Facebook, i.e. the part most analogous to the electronic message board favored by Chism's students. Chism's arguments in favor of asynchronicity as the better environment are convincing.

J. Scott Payne (2003) also studied the use of asynchronous and synchronous discussion in the foreign language classroom and their benefits in second language acquisition. His study aimed to answer the question how online, asynchronous discussion, when used in conjunction with chat discussion, might strengthen L2 discourse in real-time discussion. He sought to find out if the use of these two media tools in tandem could facilitate language learning. The students were fourth semester German language students. The class met for 50 minutes every day from Monday through Thursdays. Thursdays were reserved for real-time discussion. At the beginning of the week, the students discussed in the asynchronous media the theme that was to be discussed Thursday in real-time. The students were given the option to have the discussion online

or face-to-face. The participants reported that the online medium made it easier to discuss. The students also reported feeling more inclined to participate in the class discussion, whether it was online or face-to-face, as result of the preparation via asynchronous media tools. It was apparent to the instructor that the asynchronous media tools had made students more confident and participated at a higher level in the Thursday exchanges. Payne, in contrast to Chism, is finding a situation where both asynchronous and synchronous communications have an essential role.

Payne stated his conclusions confidently. However his methodology was not systematic. For example, he wrote of simply hearing students using more advanced grammatical elements in their speech. There was no effort at all to quantify improvement. In the Facebook study of this thesis, there was numerical initial evaluation and also a numerical final evaluation of writing.

Enza Antenos-Conforti (2009) researched a potential use of a social networking site called Twitter ([twitter.com](http://twitter.com)). This site emphasizes brief communications, as it even limits posts to 140 characters. In the study, twenty-two students from two sections of an intermediate-level Italian course at a mid-size public university participated. This study was part of the regular curriculum and counted for 5% of the total grade of the course. Students were required to post twenty-eight updates and reply to fourteen tweets. The students participated in a daily exchange via Twitter pages by “microblogging” throughout the semester. Native speakers from Italy were also involved. Antenos-Conforti was able to report on the value of constant communication via Twitter. An interesting aspect was that the communication varied from synchronous to asynchronous.

A weakness in Antenos-Conforti's study was that she made no effort to directly measure student improvement in language skill. She had many survey questions where students self-reported on the level of their improvement. However, a typical tweet is just one sentence long and there is room for considerable skepticism that language skill actually improved from such a small amount of written interaction. In the study of this thesis, the quantity was larger, corresponding to 20% rather than 5% of the coursework, and writing skill was directly assessed.

One thing to note is that Blake, Chism, and Payne all reported on struggles of various sorts with technology. Blake needed technical support for his chatroom. Chism's students did not like e-mail and the chatroom in part because of they were "particularly difficult to navigate" (p. 152). Payne wrote his own software, both for asynchronous and synchronous communication. In contrast, Facebook is reliable and easily accessible. The existing features of Facebook could have easily supported all three of these studies. Similarly, Twitter communication corresponds to just a small part of Facebook, status updates, as pointed out by Antenos-Conforti herself (p. 84).

Another thing to note is that Chism, Payne, and Antenos-Conforti all reported on technology components which were part of a larger curriculum in college courses. These courses were thus hybrid, that is to say intermediate between non-technologically supported courses and completely online courses. In addition, in each case, the technology component was primarily completed out of the classroom. Payne approved of the erasing of boundaries: "With online asynchronous discussion tools, conversation can develop independently of the classroom environment. A topic that could emerge while online and then be addressed in the classroom. The inverse is also possible: conversations

can begin during class time and continue online after class” (p. 160). Antenos-Conforti made a similar observation, “Twitter provides a means by which learners can regularly use the L2 outside of scheduled class time, thereby extending the walls of the classroom and expanding the potential for learning” (p. 63). The Facebook study of this thesis shared these characteristics with the studies just reviewed.

#### CURRENT USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY PRACTICING LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS

It is important to understand exactly where practicing language teachers are with regard to social networking site use. The January 2009 issue of *The Language Educator* presented a convenient snapshot. It is clear that use of SNSs is still a novelty, practiced by a small minority of instructors. It is also clear that ACTFL, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, is highly encouraging their use. The two articles in this issue indicated typical uses, as follows. In the first article, Judy Damron discussed the use of Facebook as a communication tool in four of her college Korean language courses. “One method...I have found to connect with language students in a positive and easy way is through the social network, Facebook” (Damron, 2009, p. 41). The initial use of Facebook started as one of the students in her class suggested to announce a class event through Facebook. Damron wanted to communicate with her students at a level and in a way that was comfortable to the students. From then on, Facebook became not only the medium where sporadic events were announced, but also a place where students could congregate. The students joined the groups and use the site for communication and building relationships. The students were able to communicate not only among

themselves but also with their instructor. Damron summarized her use: “The casual format of Facebook and available information humanizes the teacher and allows the student to communicate with his or her teacher outside of a controlled environment---in the student’s territory” (p. 43).

Note that ACTFL was implicitly praising Damron’s extremely modest use of Facebook. Facebook was not being used directly for instruction. It seems that the primary language of communication is English, rather than Korean. The power of Facebook was not being harnessed even for language practice.

In the second article, Drew Forlano (2009) described his ongoing use of Ning ([www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)), an SNS like Facebook, in a high school Spanish class. Like in Facebook, students are able to exchange photographs and videos, pose questions in forums, collaborate in projects, and so on. At the moment, Forlano’s main use is an online exchange with an institute in Oaxaca, Mexico. The students from the two schools post videos and photos and answer questions about their daily lives. Forlano states, “Social networking sites have opened a door to a new type of exchange, one that can involve all your students, regardless of their ability to travel to another country” (p. 45).

Forlano is using Ning at a more curricular level than Damron uses Facebook. Students are practicing Spanish on Ning. Language learning is surely happening, but the emphasis in Forlano’s classroom is on cultural interchange. The study of this thesis in contrast emphasized language learning, with cultural issues present but secondary. It is generally viewed that best practices require a simultaneous emphasis on language and culture learning, and SNSs seem very promising as a supportive tool for both.

In the same issue of *The Language Educator*, the editors suggested that teachers consider several other SNSs intended specifically for language learning: Babel, Busuu, Italki, Livemocha, Spanglish, VoxSwap, XIHA Life, and xLingo (p. 44). All together, the material in *The Language Educator* suggests that teachers will become increasingly receptive to using tools like Facebook in their classrooms. This indicates potential interest in studies such as this thesis.

#### PRACTICAL GUIDES FOR INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

Two papers served as practical guides towards the design of the Facebook component presented in Appendix D. Chapelle's paper *Hints about CALL use from research* (2005) is designed to be used as a practical guide, as one can see from the title. One of the hints concerned planning: "CMC provides a mechanism for valuable communication, but shaping the mechanism into valuable opportunities for learning is the pedagogical challenge...the overall finding is that teachers need to plan for good CMC exchanges" (p. 4). This emphasis on careful planning echoes similar recommendations from Blake (2000) and Payne (2003). The Facebook component is carefully planned, with a sharp focus each week. Often the activities build upon other components of the course. For example, the Facebook discussion on "What do you like to do with your free time?" takes place during the chapter "Work and leisure." It should be added that planning for good CMC experiences in the language classroom is easier in 2009 than it used to be even in 2005, thanks to the good disposition that learners have developed towards the use of social networking sites.

McBride (2009) offers many cautions to teachers thinking about incorporating SNSs into their instruction. An obvious concern is privacy and the researcher of this thesis study took pains to keep the network strictly limited to the students enrolled in the two sections. Another concern is that writing on SNSs can often degenerate to the trivial. McBride writes, “Online socializing activities are often less about exchanging information and more about making symbolic gestures” (p. 40). It was ensured in this Facebook study that communication was nontrivial, mainly by requiring that initial posts be two or three paragraphs long. Similarly, the tone on SNSs can degenerate to a narcissistic “me-me-I-I-I” (Thorne & Payne, 2005, p.382; Sykes et al., 2008, p.532). The assignments in this thesis study commonly took “me” and “I” as starting points. However, these were always starting points only. The aim of this study conforms to McBride’s goal, “students’ self-expression leads them to better understand themselves and make connections with others whose perspectives they then also learn more about” (p. 41).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The Facebook component of the course was designed to align with two theoretical frameworks. The first is due to Chen, Liu, and Wong (2007) and is based on Krashen’s five hypotheses. The second is due to Zhao (2005). Both these references explicitly connect technology with language learning theories.

Krashen (1982) states that succeeding in learning a language requires not so much a deliberate study of grammar, but more importantly a large amount of natural interaction. One can see already that large amounts of practice outside of class, in

conjunction with the grammar studied in class, is essential in Krashen's view. Krashen elaborated this basic point into five hypotheses. These hypotheses, acquisition-learning, monitor, natural order, input, affective filter, have been very influential in foreign language instruction, if somewhat controversial (Shrum & Glisan, 2004). They are reviewed here (because the terminology is not at all self-evident):

1. *Acquisition-learning hypothesis*. Acquisition involves meaningful interactions in the target language without focusing on its form, in a way that mimics first language acquisition of young children. Learning here is in the limited sense of "book-learning" of grammar. Krashen's hypothesis is that both are important, but that acquisition takes priority over learning in these senses. Thus, language should be taught as a way to communicate rather than a set of rules to be learned.

2. *Monitor hypothesis*. In this hypothesis, Krashen states that SLA occurs best when students are able to use what they have learned to help guide what they are acquiring. Ideally, students will apply their learning of grammatical rules "to plan, monitor, and correct the language outcome of an interactive or writing communication" (Chen et al, 2007, p. 220). One of the three conditions of effective self-monitoring is enough time.

3. The *natural order hypothesis* says that students acquire grammatical structures in a predictable order. This predictable order does not exactly follow those of the first language but the patterns to second language are the same for children and adults. Good second language instruction must respect the natural order.

4. Krashen's *input hypothesis* is based on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. The hypothesis maintains that language acquisition is attained through human social

communication and that input should be one step beyond the student's current stage of linguistic competence.

5. The *affective filter hypothesis* refers to the fact that SLA is influenced by social-emotional variables. The hypothesis states that learners learn best when learning takes place in a low-anxiety environment and when learners have the motivation and self-confidence to learn.

Similarly, Zhao (2005, p.5) lists "four essentials of an optimal language learning environment." These are high quality input, ample opportunity for practice, high quality feedback, and individualized content. In this case, the terminology is self-evident.

The second section of Chapter 5 aligns the Facebook component of the course with both these theoretical frameworks. Note that the two frameworks have considerable overlap. Krashen's "input hypothesis" is similar to Zhao's emphasis on "high quality input." There are also enough differences to merit describing the alignment to both frameworks. For example, Krashen's "monitoring" refers to self-monitoring by students. Zhao's "high quality feedback" refers to monitoring and feedback from instructors and peers.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The general methodology of the study described in this thesis was “Qualitative Case Study” as described in *Practical Research*, by Leedy and Ormrod (2005). Features of this methodology include a rather general research question and multiple sources of information. The goal is to produce an “overall portrait” of the situation studied. In the case of this study, the research question was whether students who utilize Facebook activities in their Spanish course would improve in their writing skill more than they would without these activities.

The course included an initial in-class writing assignment, fifteen weekly Facebook assignments, two hourly tests and a final examination. Students who agreed to participate in the study also completed an initial survey in the first two weeks of the semester and a final survey in the last week. For these students only, the instructor re-evaluated the initial in-class writing assignment and one of the writing components of the final exam using a standard rubric.

This chapter describes the methodology of the study. It begins by discussing the setting, how the participants were chosen, and privacy safeguards. It then describes the main components of the study, the two surveys, the Facebook component, the two writing samples, and the rubric for evaluating the two writing samples.

## THE SETTING

This study was conducted at a small, public liberal arts institution in a town of about 5000 people in the Midwest, during the spring semester of the academic year 2008-2009. The campus' student population is about 1,600 students.

Students are required to take two semesters of a foreign language to graduate. In the case of Spanish, the required courses are Beginning Spanish I and Beginning Spanish II. Students can complete this requirement at any time during their four years at the college. Not all the students take foreign language in their freshman year. A placement test is offered for those students who have taken languages in high school. The college offers Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Chinese.

## PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study were self-selected student volunteers from two sections of Intermediate Spanish II. This course is a continuation of the second-year sequence beginning with Intermediate I taught in the fall. Note that these students were not in the course to satisfy a language requirement. Intermediate Spanish II continues building the four basic skills in Spanish, with emphasis on critical reading skills and writing for communication. The class met three times a week for a period of one hour and five minutes during the fifteen weeks of the semester. The students came from the Intermediate I course taught in Fall 2008 or were placed in the course via a placement test. Typical ages of students in Spanish Intermediate II range from 18 to 20.

At the beginning of the semester, all students were invited to participate. Of the twenty-eight students in the two sections, nineteen decided to participate. One, however, did not complete either survey, and this student is considered in Appendix D only, not in the main thesis, leaving eighteen participants. Fourteen of the participating students were female: one freshman, seven sophomores, and six juniors. Four of the participating students were male: three freshmen, and one junior.

## SYLLABUS

The syllabus, included as Appendix A, followed Chapters 7-12 of the textbook *¡Avance! Intermediate Spanish* (2004). The Spanish faculty chose this text before the Facebook component was introduced. The syllabus contains a day-by-day schedule for the course. Every two chapters there was a test. For each of the three tests, the whole period of class was given. These tests were based on the material taught in class. The tests were a combination of listening parts, vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing. Most of the material on each test was not specifically related to the Facebook component. On each test, there were two writing portions, one related to the in-class material and one based on the Facebook activities.

Normally, an Intermediate Spanish II course would have two or three several-page essays as part of the assigned out-of-class work. This course did not assign formal essays, as the Facebook component was in a sense a substitute for these essays. Thus, care was taken so that the students in this course did the standard amount of work.

To explain the Facebook component in the course, this statement was included in the syllabus:

**Facebook:** The course also has a Facebook component where you will interact in Spanish with your classmates and me out of class. You will be setting up a new Facebook account for this course.

In addition, the syllabus explained how performance on the Facebook component was to be integrated into the final grade of the course:

*Facebook performance 20%.* For a good score here, the most important thing is to be actively engaged in all the activities throughout the semester. You need to be doing a lot of writing in Spanish. You need to use Facebook tools to respond to your peers, at first just in your section, but after a while in the other section too. The idea here is to get comfortable regularly using the Spanish that you know. You should be interacting naturally: you should not be using a dictionary or notes while involved in Facebook. Isolated spelling or grammar errors will definitely not count against you, but of course, you should be always working toward improving your Spanish. In determining your grade for this component, I will be looking at quantity and improvement in quality.

Note that for maximum clarity these explanations were given in English. However, almost all of the communication of the course, including the Facebook component, was in Spanish.

#### PRIVACY CONCERNS

A letter of invitation (Appendix B) briefly describing the study was given to the students on the first day of class. To avoid coercion, the letter included the statement “Whether you participate or not will in no way affect your grade.”

Since the subjects were the researcher’s own students, care was taken to avoid conflict of interest. The consent form (also in Appendix B) has similar language to the letter of invitation: “You will not receive points or grades in Spanish 2002 for your participation in this research study.”

Participating student agreed to three things. First and second, they would fill out an initial and final survey, as detailed below. Third, they allowed the researcher to refer to their individual survey responses and course work via pseudonyms. The subjects would fill out the two surveys outside of class, so that non-participating students would not feel left out. Other employees of the researcher's university administered the consent form and the surveys, as detailed below. The researcher did not know which students were participating until after final grades were submitted.

## TWO SURVEYS

The first survey (Appendix C) contained a series of questions about the student's previous experiences with the use of technologies in academics, disposition toward the use of computers, time spent in the computer working on homework before this course, and their personal use of Facebook in their daily lives. The second survey (also in Appendix C) asks information about their individual experiences with Facebook from the semester just completed. Both surveys have short questions and free response questions. The short questions, which mostly require responses on four-point scale, will be presented in average form. The free-response questions are standard for qualitative research.

Towards the end of the second day of class of the Spring 2009 semester, the researcher left the classroom. A faculty member of UMM from outside the Spanish discipline then gave two consent forms and the first survey to all students. The faculty member went over the consent form in the remainder of the class period. Students who decided that they would like to volunteer for the research study did so by returning one

signed consent form and the first survey to the Humanities Division secretary.

Participating students kept the second copy of the consent form. When the first surveys were returned, the secretary detached the consent form from the survey and stored the consent forms and the surveys separately. The first surveys did not have student names, only a code number which was also on the consent form.

The same faculty member distributed the second surveys in the last week of classes. Participating students returned these to the Humanities Division secretary. After grades were submitted, the researcher collected all these documents. Participating students were given numbers as pseudonyms for the purposes of this thesis.

#### TWO FORMALLY EVALUATED WRITING SAMPLES

In the first week of class, the instructor assigned to all students a 15-minute writing assignment in class. The assignment let the instructor have a feel for the entry level of the individual students. The instructor graded and gave written feedback on this assignment, so that the students learned the stronger and weaker aspects of their writing. This evaluative activity played an important role in the course, independent of the study. The researcher kept copies of all these initial assignments. After the semester was over, the writing samples of the non-participating students were shredded. The writing samples of the participating students were re-evaluated using the STAMP rubric described below.

The directions for the initial writing assignment were given in Spanish only, in conformity with standard pedagogical practice at the intermediate level. These directions and an English translation are as follows:

<b>Tema</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Escribe acerca de tus experiencias pasadas con el español, tus profesores, personas que conozcas que hablan español y planes para el futuro con el idioma.	Write about your past experiences with Spanish, your teachers, people that you know that speak Spanish and your future plans with the language.

The final writing sample was the last part of the final exam. It too was graded for all students as part of the course. These writing samples were re-evaluated for participating students using the STAMP rubric. The directions and an English translation are as follows:

<b>Tema</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Durante este semestre hubieron 15 actividades en las que participaste con ejercicios de escritura acerca de diferentes temas. Escribe una composición donde explicas por lo menos tres de las actividades en Facebook asignadas. Describe en detalle lo que tú escribiste e incluye lo que algunos de tus compañeros escribieron.	During this semester there were 15 activities in which you participated with writing exercises. Write an essay where you explain at least three of those activities in Facebook. Describe in detail what you wrote and include some of what your classmates wrote too.

The topics for the two writing sample are not identical. However they were chosen to be similar, to facilitate a direct comparison. Both are about their personal experience with Spanish language. The final exam was long, and students who worked on it at an even pace would spend about fifteen minutes on the last part, just as they had spent fifteen minutes on the initial writing sample.

## THE FIFTEEN FACEBOOK WRITING ACTIVITIES

The idea behind these writing activities in Facebook was to motivate the students to think, write, and use the target language outside of the classroom. Each activity was created with the personal interests of the students in the course in mind. Students were required to share their work with at least three of their classmates, creating a “written conversation” every week among them.

The assignments were linked to the material covered in the text, *¡Avance! Intermediate Spanish* (2008). There were several types of activities. All the descriptions of the tasks were written in Spanish. In the syllabus, the instructor explained that they should use Facebook in a relaxed manner and no points were going to be taken off for mistakes. It was clear that the goal was working toward improvement of writing skills.

The syllabus had the title of all the assignments (see Appendix A). The students then received a detailed explanation of the writing activity in Spanish via Facebook at the beginning of each week. Typically assignments were posted Sunday evening and then all writing activities needed to be completed by the next Sunday evening. Some of the activities in Facebook were less formal than others.

The interactive nature of Facebook allowed the instructor to be very active throughout the course. The students shared their posts with the instructor and the instructor immediately gave feedback. The instructor was clearly present from the very beginning so as not to appear as an intruder. The instructor communicated to students, as explained in the directions in the syllabus of the role of Facebook, not to be overly concerned about grammar, but instead concentrate on meaning and content. The instructor correspondingly avoided direct corrections. Often however the instructor’s

feedback implicitly indicated how a student's spelling, word use, or grammar could be improved.

The fact that the students needed to share their writings, and also read and write comments on the other posts, forced them to reread their own writings. The importance of rereading is emphasized by de la Fuente (2003, p.50). The direct connection to the material in *¡Avance!* encouraged reviewing of concepts and vocabulary prior to the writing activity. The structure was repetitive enough that students were expected to quickly catch on the weekly rhythm of the Facebook assignments.

#### THE STAMP RUBRIC

The Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) rubric (Falsgraf & Semmer, 2004) is currently copyrighted by the company AvantAssessment and was used by permission. It is summative assessment measuring writing proficiency. On the ACTFL scale, it is appropriate for students in the Novice-high to Intermediate-mid students. This is roughly the range of the students at the level of the Intermediate II course. There are other rubrics for students at lower and higher levels. As indicated by Table 3.1, three aspects of writing are evaluated simultaneously. In the last two columns, W stands for weak and S for strong.

This rubric was used to determine the writing level of the participating students as they started and finished the semester. As the rubric itself indicates, text type concerns the ability of students to use paragraph format, comprehensibility measures how easy the students writing can be read, and language control refers to the correct use of grammar, spelling and word order.

Table 3.1: The STAMP Writing Rubric

Text Type	Comprehensibility	Language Control
6-Paragraph Structure	(S+) Easily comprehended by even a non-sympathetic reader, little or no influence of L1 on L2.	(S+) Errors in grammar, spelling, word order or punctuation are rare and do not interfere with meaning.
5-Connected Sentences	(S) Easily comprehended by a sympathetic reader, occasional influence of L1 on L2.	(S) Errors in grammar, spelling, word order or punctuation, while present, do not interfere with overall meaning.
4-String of Sentences	(W) Comprehensible with some effort from a sympathetic reader, heavy influence of L1 on L2.	(W) Errors in grammar, spelling, word order or punctuation occur often and demonstrate set patterns of errors throughout the text.
3- Simple Sentences	(W-) Mostly incomprehensible even by a sympathetic reader, extreme influence of L1 on L2.	(W-) Errors in grammar, spelling, word order or punctuation are prevalent and show clear lack of control of even basic structures.
2-Phrases		
1-Words		

## SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

This study's approach to evaluating whether students improved their writing because of Facebook was multifaceted. An initial and final survey captured relevant student attitudes. Surveys of this sort are a common source of data, as for example Antenos-Conforti (2009) had a similar pair of surveys. The student Facebook posts were periodically archived. The researcher inspected them to see growth in individual students. Some samples are included both in Chapter 4 and Appendix D, just as excerpts from student work were presented in for example Blake (2000) or Antenos-Conforti

(2009). Finally, the initial writing sample and the final writing sample were scored with the same rubric to quantify improvement.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this study in three sections. The first section presents prior experiences and attitudes of the students, as measured by the first survey. The second section presents the researcher's evaluation of the initial and final writing samples of the eighteen students using the STAMP rubric discussed in Chapter 3. The second section continues by describing the assessment of three randomly selected students. Enough material is presented so that the reader of this thesis can see how individual students interacted with Facebook and to what extent their writing improved over the semester. The third section presents post-semester attitudes of the students, as measured by the results from the second survey.

### PRIOR EXPERIENCES AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS

Relevant previous experiences and incoming attitudes of participating students were assessed by Survey 1 in the first week of classes. Of the eighteen participating students, seventeen completed Survey 1. (See Survey 1 in Appendix C.)

Questions 1-3 asked students about their previous experiences with computers in general and the use of Facebook. The most important results were as follows. 100% of the seventeen students own their computers. Also 100% of these students had active Facebook accounts. Four reported using Facebook five minutes or less per day. Twelve used Facebook between 30 and 60 minutes per day, and one used it 120 minutes per day. Students had an average of 121 Facebook contacts (called "Friends" in Facebook

terminology). The three features most used in Facebook are the wall (for asynchronous communication), the chat, for synchronous communication, and photo sharing.

Question 4-5 asked more about computer habits. Students report communicating with other people by computer means other than Facebook; e-mail, MSN, IM, and MySpace were mentioned respectively by 7, 5, 4, 3 students. Most students (59%) reported spending less than an hour per day with these non-Facebook communication tools. 24% spend 1 hour per day, 6% spend 2 hours per day, and 6% spend 3 or more hours per day. The most common place for students to use computers is their dorm rooms: 12 students use this location, 4 use computer labs, 1 uses the library, and 7 mentioned also various other locations such as “anywhere my laptop is.”

Questions 6-8 asked participating students about connections between computers and college life. 82% have taken courses that involved the use of computers. WebCT and Moodle, course management systems, were named by six and five students respectively. E-Reserve, a library resource, was mentioned by two students; Wikis were mentioned by three students; Webwork, a homework system for math courses, was mentioned by three students. Students were asked whether using computers in out-of-class work would help them meet school expectations of two hours of studying for every hour of class meeting. 69% said yes, 25% were non-committal, and 6% said no. In general, 24% of students thought that computers should be used more in college courses, 76% said computers should be used about the same, and 0% said computers should be used less.

Questions 9 and 10 asked about computer-fluency and attitudes towards the use of computers. The researcher classifies verbal self-assessments of fluency as follows. 43%

self-reported a substantial level of fluency, at the level of “I am extremely fluent. I am pro-computer” or “very proficient, I love computers.” 29% self-reported lack of fluency, at the level of “I know the basics, but that’s about it.” 29% were somewhere in between, at “I can get by and I know people who can assist me with anything out of the ordinary.” With respect to “I enjoy class activities that allow me to spend time in the computer,” 12% strongly agreed, 76% agreed, 12% disagreed, and 0% strongly disagreed.

Question 11 asked students about their initial feelings about the course having a Facebook component. The researcher classifies student verbal responses as 71% positive, 18% neutral, and 12% negative. In direct quotes from students in this chapter and Appendix D, students are always identified by number. This allows the reader to get a more detailed picture of the class, without compromising anonymity. Four of the twelve comments classified as positive are:

**Student 1.** I think it is an interesting way to connect language to everyday activities.

**Student 3.** Spectacular idea—the only way to learn a language is to use it as much as possible.

**Student 4.** I was very excited! I think it’s a good idea to use something in our everyday lives to associate with Spanish.

**Student 15.** I think is a REALLY neat idea. I know the environment and I really want to improve my conversation skills just talking with people in a relaxed environment and this is exactly what this is.

A comment representing the three neutral comments is:

**Student 7.** I’m not sure because I’m not totally clear on what we’re doing, but I am hoping that it will be more fun because it’s more interactive.

A comment representing the two negative comments is:

**Student 2.** I'm not sure I like it. It's a bit inconvenient to make a new account for a class I may never use again.

## WRITING DEVELOPMENT

The central objective of this study was to measure to what extent interactions through Facebook can improve student writing skill in a foreign language. Improvement in writing skill was measured by comparing performance on an initial writing sample and a final writing sample.

The scores of the initial and final writing samples using the STAMP rubric are presented in Table 4.1. Improvement in all areas was expected since the entire course, not just the Facebook component, is designed to improve the student's skill. The issue of how much of this improvement is due to the Facebook component will be addressed in the rest of this chapter and also Chapter 5.

Table 4.1: STAMP Writing Scores on Initial and Final Writing Samples

Student	Text Type		Comprehensibility		Language Control	
	Initial	Final	Initial	Final	Initial	Final
1	5	5+	S	S	S	S
2	5	6-	S	S+	S-	S
3	5	5	S	S+	S	S+
4	5-	5	S	S+	S	S+
5	4	5-	W	S-	W	S-
6	5+	6-	S	S+	S	S+
7	5+	5+	S-	S	S-	S
8	4+	5+	S-	S	S-	S
9	5	6	S	S+	S	S+
10	5	5+	S-	S	S-	S
11	5+	6	S	S+	S	S+
12	5+	6	S	S+	S	S+
13	5-	6-	S	S+	S	S
14	6	6	S+	S+	S+	S+
15	5-	6	S	S+	S	S+
16	5	5+	S-	S	S-	S

17	5-	5	S-	S	S-	S
18	5	5+	S	S+	S	S+

The rest of this section focuses on writing samples from three randomly selected students, Students 5, 8, and 13. The first purpose is to give a clearer meaning to the scores presented in Table 4.1. The second purpose is to describe the role of Facebook in the development. For each of the three students, the first writing sample, two Facebook postings, and the final writing sample are all presented and discussed. Similar information is presented in Appendix D. However the focus there is on describing the Facebook component itself. Individual students are not tracked in Appendix D, but writing improvement for the class as a whole can also be seen.

The randomly chosen students are roughly representative of the ability levels of the students in the course, as Students 5, 8, and 13 performed below, at, and (slightly) above average. One place that this is very evident is the influence of English (L1) on their Spanish (L2) writing. Student 5 is heavily influenced, Student 8 is moderately influenced, and Student 13 only slightly.

When an error occurs within a word of a student writing, the researcher has italicized that word. Errors in this category are of many types: missing accents (“*tambien*” instead of “*también*”), spelling (“*hemana*” instead of “*hermana*”), gender agreement (“*otra*” instead of “*otro*”), verb tense (“*aprendo*” instead of “*aprendí*”), and word choice (“*por*” instead of “*para*”). The passages always contain other errors that are not within a given word, but these other errors are not indicated. Thus this italicizing convention captures only a small part of the researcher’s analysis of these passages, but it is sufficient to give the reader a first idea of the level at which these students are writing.

To protect privacy, references to specific persons and places have been changed.

**Student 5.** Student 5's initial writing sample would be hard for a non English-speaking Spanish speaker to understand. There are simply too many English words.

**Student 5's initial writing sample.** Mi primera clase en español fue en **elementary** escuela. Pero no *aprendaba* mucho. En escuela de secundaria *aprendaba* mucho más. Mi profesora favorita *fue* Mrs.[Name]. Mrs. [Name] fue la profesora para español primera. En escuela *de* secundaria fui a España. Fui en mi *tres* año de español. *Aproximate* veinte **students** *fui*mos a España. Mi professor, Mr. [Name] fue nos *tomiba*. En España fuimos a Madrid y *Sagovia para* tres días. Entonces **stay** con **families** de España. Mi familia *fueron* Blanco Nieves. Mi **host** hermana *le llama* Juana. *Es* muy divertida. *Alugas tiempo* hablamos hoy día. Juana me tomaba a *muy destinationes* en *Palencia*. Amiga de Juana *fue* Luisa. Mi amiga **stayed** con familia de Luisa. Luisa y Juana *tomabamos* todo de *Palencia*.

España fue muy bien. Algunos días me gusta ir a España. *Perro qerro* aprender mucho español. No muy bien español. Pero creo soy llego **better**.

It should also be noted that the English words here mostly have simple Spanish equivalents: “students” is “estudiantes”, “families” is “familias;” even “better” translates to the “mejor,” a word that should be well within the vocabulary of students at this level. The last sentence “Pero creo soy llego better” has no spelling mistakes, but makes no sense. There are several errors in grammar, spelling, word order, and punctuation that at times interfered with meaning. There are two instances of grammar errors. For example, when trying to use the verb “to learn” in the imperfect, the student knew the need of the imperfect tense but missed to conjugate it correctly, writing “*aprendaba*” instead of “*aprendía*.” Student 5 additionally misspelled the word “pero”, writing “*perro*” instead. Also the student failed in the correct form of the verb “to want” when trying to use the present tense, writing “*qerro*” instead of “*quiero*.”

Some of these problems were present throughout the length of the course. Here is an early Facebook sample.

**Student 5's week 2 Facebook post.** El *ano* pasado trabajé a Puma Club. *Al* Puma Club cuidamos *de* niños pequeños. Fue muy *divertiste*. Antes trabajé a Puma Club, trabajé a Walmart. No me gusta *trabajé* Walmart. En el *venero* quiero trabajar a campamento de verano. *Antes* la universidad quiero ser una profesora de primera enseñanza o profesora de historia. No *hago* todavía. *Quizá* soy hacer todavía.

Note especially here the lack of productivity. The assignment had many subquestions and was clearly calling for a longer response. Also some of the errors remain very basic:

the student uses “*Antes*” to mean “after,” but it really means “before.”

Here is a slightly later sample from Student 5's Facebook writing.

**Student 5's week 6 Facebook post.** Mi tía, [name] es ecuatoriana. Vivió en ecuador por *muy anos*. Vivió en una hacienda de azúcar. Mi tío [name] es *le* esposo. Mi tío es *por* St. Cloud, Minnesota. Fue a *ecuador* para el peace corps. En *ecuador* se encontró *me* tía. Mi madre fue visitar mi tío en ecuador y dijo es muy diferente. Cuando mi tío fue *el fin* con peace corps, *trajeo espalda* a Estados Unidos. En *el* Estados Unidos mi tío y mi *tío* se *fuleron* casar. Mi familia *acogieron* mi tía en a familia. Mi tía aprendió *ingles* y traducir. También *tiendo* conseguir la ciudadanía por *el* Estados Unidos. Hoy *es* muy bien a *las ingles*. Tiene propio *asunto* en decorar de casa. *Es muy* con éxito. Mi tía y tío *trajeron* tres niños y todos niños *pronunciamos* español. *Soy* envidioso. *Soy* muy *orgullosa* tener diversidad en mi familia.

Connectivity and comprehensibility are greater here. The two paragraphs together tell a coherent story without English. The ending even has some style: this student is envious of his or her Spanish-speaking cousins but concludes “I am proud to have diversity in my family.” However the writer's English speaking background is still very evident. There are two examples where a dictionary or online translator was used without taking in consideration the context. The first case is the use of the word “*Espalda*” in the first paragraph, last line. The student tried to find a Spanish equivalent for “back” and inappropriately used the word in Spanish that means the back of a body. The second case is located in the second paragraph, third line. The word “*asunto*” is used instead of

“negocio” to mean “business.” Even a sympathetic reader would have to think twice before understanding the meaning of these sentences.

In Student 5’s final writing, the improvement of writing skills was present in all of areas.

**Student 5’s final writing sample.** Tres de las actividades en Facebook fueron ir a otro país, una *peliquila* de violencia y actividad *crimen*. El país quiero ir a es Ecuador porque *muy* de mis primos ha ido a Ecuador. También mi tía es *para* Ecuador. Pienso *estaría* muy divertido. [Classmate] *quiera* ir a Venezuela. *Quiera* ir *de* una ciudad por una semana. Pero [student friend] es no *ir* ahora porque ha sido *crimen*. [classmate] *quiera* ir a Puerto *rico* por *un* semana. Algunas de sus amigas han ido a Puerto Rico. *Otro* actividad en Facebook fue describir *un peliquila* con mucho crimen y violencia y *dije* sobre si *el* persona de *crimen* en el *peliquila*. [Another classmate] *escribio* sobre el ‘Fast & Furious. *El peliquila* es muy violenta y tiene *crimen*. Escribí sobre Road to Perdition, también tiene mucho *crimen* y violencia. En el final muchas personas mueren. *Otro* actividad en Facebook *escribieron* sobre *crimen* en su *vivas*. Muchas personas (en la clase) no tienen crimen *el vivo*. Pero tanto [classmate] como [another classmate] han sido *terminado* por *el policia* en el coche. Es muy *terrifico* ser *terminado* por *el policia*. He sido *termonado* por *el policia* dos veces. Uno *tiempo* por mucho velocidad y *un veces* por mi luz. *Muchos otros actividad* en Facebook, como *tiempo pasado* y el fin de semestre.

The summary of the semester’s Facebook experience is accurate and comprehensible. Some of the grammatical constructions are at a fairly high level “han ido” in the first paragraph and “Pero tanto...como...” On the other hand, Student 5 is still tied too much to English: the words “*terrifico*” and “*terminado*” are English-influenced and inappropriate. Thus Student 5 grew in his or her abilities throughout the semester, although still staying toward the bottom of the class. Part of the growth can be attributed to the constant exposure through Facebook to the writing of the more advanced students. In a traditional course, students rarely see the written work of other students.

In terms of scores, Student 5 moved from a 4 to a 5- in text type, a W to an S- in comprehensibility and language control.

**Student 8.** Student 8 started at a higher level than Student 5:

**Student 8's initial writing sample.** Viajé a Nicaragua con mi escuela. Estuve allí *para diez dias*. Yo hablé en español todo *al tiempo*. Los personas *quien vinen fue* los personas en el grado *11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>*.

*Nos trabajemos* con los chicos de Managua. *Nos aprendamos* con los bailes y *bailemos para* los chicos de los **neighborhoods?** pobres.

Yo siempre *sape* que quiero *estar* una maestra pero cuando viajé a Nicaragua, *realize* que quiero *estar* una maestra de español. Ahora decido *a tener dos especialmente*: Español Educación y Educación primaria.

*Yo he encanté* español porque mi madre es *un* maestra de español. Yo he tomado español *para* 4 años en mi escuela secundaria y mi madre me enseñó.

The only English word used is “neighborhoods.” Student 5 flagged this word with a “?” to indicate that he or she did not know the appropriate Spanish word. In fact the best choices in Spanish, “vecindario” and “barrios,” are far from English. On the other hand, there are some blatant problems: using “nos” instead of “nosotros” for “we” is a very elementary mistake.

The following early Facebook posting was at a similar level.

**Student 8's week 2 Facebook post.** *Trabaje* en Cub Foods. *Estuve* un "cashier". No me *guste* este trabajo. Durante el verano pasado, *trabaje* en un oficina de "chiropracter". *Estuve* una secretaria y *assitante del oficina*.

*Qierro* ser una maestra en mi futura. No *se si qierro* ser una maestra de *espanol* o el tercero grado. *Qierro* ayudar los estudiantes y *qierro* se les gustar. El Fin!

In fact, there is even more English here. Again, some of the mistakes are basic:

“Quiero” is misspelled four times as “Qierro.” Note also the lack of productivity.

In a later entry, improvement in all areas is visible, particularly productivity:

**Student 8's week 9 Facebook post.** Uso muchas tecnologías modernas en mi vida. Uso un coche, un teléfono, una computadora, una televisión, mucho más. Pienso que *los* tecnologías *moderna son* mas importante para mí son mi celular teléfono y mi computadora. No podría vivir sin los dos.

Uso mi teléfono para llamar mi madre. Hablo con *me* madre todos los días. No sé lo que haría si yo no llamo a mi mamá. Lo uso para enviar los mensajes SMS también. Envío los mensajes SMS a mis amigos quien *atienden* la escuela secundaria de mí y *me* familia. Sin

que mi teléfono, haría difícil hablar con mis amigos y mi familia. El efecto que tiene el uso de mi teléfono es que puedo hablar con las personas quien vivir no acerca de mí. Pienso que serán usadas en los próximos *anos* pero creo que van a ser mejor y más moderna.

Necesito usar mi computadora *por* mi tarea y mi vida social. Muchas profesoras usan la red para sus clases. Si no *tengo* una computadora, no haría mi tarea de español. Uso mi computadora para hablar con mis amigos y mi familia. Por eso uso Facebook. Mi computadora tiene un efecto en mis clases y mi vida social. Creo que serán usadas en *el próximo anos* y pienso que van a ser mejor. No sé cómo van a ser *mejor* porque puedan usar la red en sus teléfonos! Cuanto mejor lo puede *es*?

The student was very responsive to this assignment. He or she made use of broad vocabulary of the lesson, including the term SMS, and the writing shows great enthusiasm.

The final writing sample was also responsive and productive:

**Student 8's final writing sample.** Escribí sobre el *crimen* en mi vida. Una mujer robó *un* tarjeta de credito de un hombre. Una mujer compró comida del mercado de donde trabajaba. El policia me preguntaba mucho pero yo no *sé* que *paso* en *esta* caso. Un hombre trató robar el padre de Julia pero su padre dijo: “No, no tengo dinero y no puedes mi *caro!*” En este momento un amigo de su padre *andó* a ellos y el *supe* los dos hombres. El padre de Julia llamó el policía y el criminal fue *encarcelar*. El padre de [name] es juez y decide en el castigo por los criminales.

Escribí sobre de donde quiero visitar. Quiero visitar el país de España. Quiero ir *aqui* porque *los* fotos *parace* muy bella y me gusta el cultura y la comida. [name] y [name] quieren visitar a Argentina. [name] quiere ir porque su amiga vive allí ahora. Pienso que [name] tiene un “crush” de su amiga. [Name] quiere ir a Argentina porque muchas razones. *Uno* de *ellos* es para aprender a bailar de la cultura. [Name] le gusta bailar y *quiero* aprender mucho tipos de esto. *Tambien*, [name] le gusta la cultura de Argentina. [Name] *quiero* ir a *Peru*. Ella quiere ver el *pais* de los Incas. Me *gustare* viajar un viaje a todos los paises hispanos.

The first paragraph is notable for its (mostly) correct use of vocabulary related to crime that had been learned in class and practiced with reference to personal experience in Facebook: “crímen”, “robó”, “policía”, “juez”, “encarcelar”, and “castigo”. Both paragraphs flow reasonably well.

Student 8's scores increased from a 4+ to a 5+ in text type, and from an S- to an S in both comprehensibility and language control.

**Student 13.** Student 13 started at a higher level than the previous two students.

**Student 13's initial writing sample:** Tengo una amiga que es de Guatemala. No hablo bien con la madre novio de mi amiga. Es importante para ella. Por eso aprendo español cuando tengo tiempo. Me gustan los profesores que *tuvo* en el pasado. Me gusta mi profesora primera *el mas*. Ella *fui* muy divertida y quiere que mi *hermana aprende* de ella *tambien* pero ella se *jubilo* el dos años *pasado*. No tengo planes para usar español *para* mi *furturo* pero no veo el *furturo* bien. No sé que tipo de trabajo deseo. Por eso tal vez *uso* español. Dos de mis amigos *aqui* estudian español *aqui* y ellos ayudan mucho.

The paragraph is entirely in Spanish, with no use of English words. The words “madre novio” should be “madre del novio” and the omission of “del” hurts comprehensibility considerably. However otherwise the paragraph is comprehensible and flows well. To indicate that the former teacher retired, the student wrote “se *jubilo*”. It should actually be “se jubiló” but even the incorrect form represents a relatively high level with respect to both vocabulary and grammar.

In the following early Facebook post, Student 13 did not make use of accents. However the student let the instructor know that it was due to not knowing how to use them while writing in Facebook.

**Student 13's week 2 Facebook post.** Hace cuatro o cinco *anos* que trabajo a ClothMed *de* los veranos. Me gusta mucho trabajar *alli*. El primer *ano* trabajo con mi *tio*. Hicimos *envio* y *mandar* todos los ChicVest a los clientes y *ayuda* con estos que *vuelta* para *reparacion*. Luego *trabaje* en *fabricacion* de los chalecos. *Tambien* tomia vacaciones en el verano con mi familia *por que* otros de ClothMed comprendia cuando mi padre y yo no fuimos a *trabaja para* una semana. Pero mi padre *hacia* horas extraordinarias a menudo y no me *gustia* esto. Conduciamos a ClothMed con un coche. No *puede* ir a casa sin *el*. Por eso *hago una poca* horas extraordinarias *tambien*. No *nesecite* ir a una entrevista *por que* la *compania* no *esta* grande y mi padre *trabajo alli* *tambien*. *Gane* un poco dinero, pero *gano mas* para cada *ano* trabajo *alli*. No *gastia* *much* del dinero que *gania*. Mis padres *se gustan* que *ingresia* el dinero. *Esta* bien. Entonces *tengo* dinero para cosas importantes luego.

Besides the explained lack of accents, there are also several grammar mistakes. For example, the student used the verb “*trabajo*” in the present tense when it needs to be in the preterite, “*trabajé.*” The student recognized the need of the imperfect tense but used it with error, “*tomia*” instead of “*tomaba.*” Common verbs like “*gustar*” were incorrectly used. Also Student 13 used the verb “*ser*” instead of “*estar,*” a common mistake in writing at this student’s level.

In a later entry, the length of the post increased and there was more control over the language in general.

**Student 13’s Week 9 Facebook post.** Casi todos los días uso mi PDA y ordenador. Uso mi ordenador para escribir notas durante mis clases. Me gusta mucho *por que* nunca los olvido. No necesito *muchas* cuadernos. Me gusta que durante clase de computadora puedo usar la red para mirar el “moodle” de la clase. También miro a mi correo electrónico entre mis dos clases de la tarde. Cuando hago mi tarea es más fácil encontrar las *notas* que vienen a *la* problema. Mi ordenador me ayuda mucho. Uso un PDA también. Tiene mi programa, muchas alarmas, tareas, una guía telefónica con mis amigos, y papeles que he escrito. También puedo mirar películas o fotos, escuchar a música, leer libros, y navegar la red. Es muy pequeña, tan grande como *un* mano. Lo uso todos los días y casi nunca olvido hacer mi tarea y los datos. Me gusta también que puedo conectar mi PDA y ordenador o computadora. Si la pila está *muerte* puedo usar mi programa, tarea, y guía telefónica en mi ordenador. Es posible que no *uso* las dos cosas, pero *puriere* difícil. Pienso que *olvidaré* mucho de mi tarea y llegar tarde por mis clases. También *estuviere* triste si no *puedo* leer mis libros en mi PDA. Me gusta mucho que no necesito llevar muchos libros individualmente cuando voy a escuela o vacaciones. Pero pienso que en el futuro *aprendemos* como combinar las dos cosas. Ya personas *empezaban* a hacerlos. ¡Después de diez años espero que *está* un PDA/ordenador fabuloso! *Tuviere* mucha memoria y *estuviere* muy rápido.

Student 13 had clearly learned how to use accents while writing in Facebook by this point. Paragraph 3 is written entirely from a speculative point of view. This requires a mix of the future and conditional tenses and the subjunctive mood in Spanish. While this student does not have full control over either, he or she is getting close (“*olvidaré*”

should be “olvidaría”; “*aprendemos*” should be “aprenderemos”). This level is certainly higher than mistakenly using the present for the past.

In the final writing sample, Student 13 had considerable trouble with verb tenses. It must be remembered that Facebook posts were written without time pressure while the initial and final writing samples had tight time pressure. Besides verb tenses, Student 6’s writing had improved. The content is insightful and interesting, and the student has no problem with productivity.

**Student 13’s final writing sample.** Durante este semestre *aprendo* mucho de español y mis compañeros de clase cuando usaba Facebook. *Leer* las cosas que mis compañeras de clase *escribía* por las actividades. Especialmente me gustan las escrituras de *tecnología*, el tiempo libre, y el fin de semestre por que *aprendo* mucho sobre mis *compañeras* de clase en *estas*.

De las notas de *tecnología* y el tiempo libre *aprendía* mucho de los pasatiempos de las personas en las dos clases de español. Muchas personas *se* gusta leer como mí y usamos la computadora a menudo. Pero hay más personas que no pueden vivir sin los *telefonos* celulares *tan* hubiera pensado cuando leí las notas. *Comprendo* mejor cuando leí cuantas personas *se* gusta llamar por *telefono* sus amigos durante el tiempo libre. No *se* llamo a mis amigos a menudo (Tal vez ese es mal y necesito empezar a llamarlos más a menudo). Entonces necesito el *telefono* celular mucho *tambien*.

*Aprendo* mucho de los cuentos de las clases. Pienso que es muy *divertida tan* muchas personas *dicieron* que no *se gusta matemáticas* pero *las* están en las clases de *matemáticas* o *esticicas*. Fue muy interesante que casi todas las personas *dicieron* que español es muy *difícil* pero ellas *tambien* *dicieron* que es *divertida*, yo *tambien*. *Fue* feliz que nadie *dicieron* “*me odio todas mis clases.*”

En el fin pienso que *aprendo* de mis *compañeras* de clase *tan* de la lengua de español durante mi tiempo en Facebook, pero no sé. ¿Como *aprendo* que cosas *aprendo* en la clase y que cosas *aprendo* después de clases? Se me olvidó las diferencias. Pienso que no es importante. Me gustan las cosas sobre mis *compañeras* de clase nada más es importante ahora.

Student 13’s scores increased from 5- to 6- in text type, from S to S+ in comprehensibility, and stayed constant at S for language control.

## POST-SEMESTER ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF STUDENTS

In order to investigate the students' perception on the influence of the use of Facebook during the semester on their writing skills, the students were given a second survey at the end of the course (see Appendix C for the second survey). The results of the second survey are very important in answering the research question of this thesis, as the students answered questions directly related to the impact of Facebook on their writing skills. Of the eighteen participating students, thirteen completed the second survey.

Questions 1 and 2 asked students about how beneficial the various components of Facebook were. The notes ranked the highest, reflecting that the notes were the most commonly used component throughout the semester. Following the notes were the wall, the chat, and photo-sharing; these last three were the same as the components mentioned on Survey one as most used in their prior experience with Facebook.

Question 3 asked how much time the students spent on the Facebook component of the course. Students estimated the hours per week they spent on the Facebook component of the course. Rounding to the nearest hour, the results were as follows:

1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours
4 students	4 students	2 students	3 students

Many of the questions on Survey 2 required responses on four-point scale. The results from these questions are presented in Table 4.2. The meaning of 1/2/3/4 depends on the question as follows, as indicated by the table. It important to note that in each case, 1 is the only negative response, and 2 is a weakly positive response. On Table 4.2, the number of each type of response is given, under the headers 1, 2, 3, 4 (in three cases, a

respondent circled two responses, and this is recorded by a 0.5 in for each response). The last column gives the average (mean) response.

Table 4.2: Summary of Numerical Responses on Survey 2

Question	Responses of the 13 students completing Survey 2				Mean
	1. No agreement	2. Somewhat agree	3. Agree	4. Strongly agree	
4. While chatting, I often read what other people wrote more than once to ensure I caught the complete meaning.	0	2	9	2	<b>3.0</b>
5. While communicating on Facebook, I felt less pressure than I do when I am speaking Spanish, because I could go at my own pace.	0	1	3	9	<b>3.6</b>
	1. Not at all	2. Some	3. Quite a bit	4. A great deal	
6. I found chatting on Facebook helpful to improving my written Spanish.	0	9	2	2	<b>2.5</b>
7. The Facebook component of the course made me more relaxed in class.	5	2	4	2	<b>2.2</b>
8. The Facebook component of the course made me more inclined to participate in class.	6	3	3	1	<b>1.9</b>
9. The Facebook component of the course helped me get to know my classmates better.	0	1.5	7.5	4	<b>3.2</b>
10. The activities that were done via Facebook were	1	2.5	6.5	3	<b>2.9</b>

more enjoyable than ordinary homework.					
11. I would feel more comfortable now with a native speaker in Spanish via Facebook than I would have at the beginning of the course.	1	4	5	3	<b>2.8</b>
	1. Not at all	2. Modestly	3. Considerably	4. Substantially	
14. The experience with the Facebook component of the course increased my <i>comfort level</i> in writing Spanish.	1	5	5	2	<b>2.6</b>
15. The experience with the Facebook component of the course increased my <i>proficiency</i> in writing Spanish.	1	5	6	1	<b>2.5</b>
	1. Never	2. Rarely	3. Sometimes	4. Often	
18. How often I will be communicating in Spanish through Facebook in the future.	2.5	5.5	5	0	<b>2.2</b>

The remaining questions on Survey 2 asked for a verbal response. The main results from these questions are as follows.

Questions 14 and 15 have particularly direct bearing on the research question of this thesis. They ask respectively about how the Facebook component of the course increased *comfort* and *proficiency* in writing Spanish. Table 4.2 shows that the average numerical score on the Not at all/Modestly/Considerably/Substantially scale are respectively 2.6 and 2.5. The free-response questions were often left blank, or simply

filled by reiterating the numerical choice. The responses which give more information than the 1/2/3/4 choice are as follows. Question 14 on increased comfort level:

**Student 1. (3: Considerably)** Increased knowledge of grammar and constant typing of Spanish has made me more confident in what I am saying (or writing).

**Student 5. (2: Modestly)** I do believe it helped me a little bit, but not considerably. I still struggle w/ grammar as well as vocabulary in my writing.

**Student 6. (1: Not at all)** I wouldn't say it made me more comfortable writing in Spanish, but it made me less pressured to rush through sentences without thinking them over to see if the grammar was right.

**Student 9. (3: Considerably)** I didn't feel as much pressure to write "perfectly" in Spanish because Facebook was something I was already familiar with. It was easier to write in Spanish on Facebook because it was less intimidating.

**Student 11. (4: Substantially).** I think, just the sheer volume of writing helped improve comfort level. Plus, we were able to read other's writing as examples. The writing prompts were also appropriate and within grasp.

**Student 13. (2: Modestly).** For informal chats/letter to friends it helped a lot (I might actually write them and I can read my friend's MySpace more easily now.) For formal stuff I'm still cautious because errors that are ignored or silly with friends look stupid or annoying in my formal context.

**Student 15. (2: Modestly)** It got me writing more than I would have and not in a critical environment where I had to worry about getting being docked points for grammar.

**Student 18. (3: Considerably)** I feel that I can write more complete sentences than before. My comfort level has definitely increased.

Question 15 on increased proficiency:

**Student 5. (2: Modestly)** I do think it is slightly easier for me to write in Spanish but not very much. I still have to look up a lot of things and know I get a lot wrong when writing.

**Student 6. (2: Modestly)** I don't think it did much to increase my proficiency of writing in Spanish, but I did incorporate some phrases from other people from on there into my writing. It increased my vocabulary slightly.

**Student 9. (3: Considerably)** Because using Facebook increased my comfort level of writing in Spanish I wrote more and now I have become more proficient. Writing in Spanish now comes a bit easier.

**Student 13. (2: Modestly)** Good for informal, but still I have to be really careful in a formal writing.

Questions 16 and 17 were free response questions, asking students about the strongest and weakest components of the Facebook component of the course. Like for questions 14 and 15, students sometimes left a blank for their answer. Also students sometimes responded on a technical level. For example, Student 6 liked the weeks that discussed future job and career, modern life, Hispanic Americans, and traveling, but didn't like the two weeks based on sharing and captioning photos. The comments which took a broad point of view were as follows. Question 16 on the strongest points:

**Student 3.** SO MUCH MORE USEFUL than regular assignments!

**Student 13.** Weekly assignments were varied and had interesting responses while remaining easy to relate to, think and write about.

**Student 16.** The immediate response of the instructor about any questions, and the chat application. Also, being able to read and comment on others writing and read other's comments on my own writing.

Question 17 on the weakest points:

**Student 3.** It should be emphasized more at the beginning of the course so that we know that it is very important.

**Student 9.** I think the weakest point was that it was difficult to get used to Facebook as homework when it used to be just a pastime.

**Student 13.** I don't like to talk about my day/week/life on line, it kinds of annoys me, even in chats I often mostly listen to friends.

The last question of Survey 2, Question 19, had three parts: students were asked if they would recommend that the Facebook component of the course be included in future offerings of Spanish 2002 and if it would be appropriate at lower and higher levels. Thus, this is the place where students gave their overall summary of the Facebook component. All thirteen students completing Survey 2 responded to this question, and their complete responses are given below. The researcher classifies the responses of Students 6, 7, and 8 as negative, and the responses of Student 13 and 15 as mixed. The responses of Students 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 18 are clearly positive.

**Student 1.** Yes, yes, and yes.

**Student 3.** It is a fantastic idea and it should be used at all levels.

**Student 5.** Yes I think it is helpful and w/ more use I think it can be a very helpful tool in learning Spanish.

**Student 6.** As a component to learn the Spanish language, it should be thrown out, but it is a good way to encourage people to try to communicate with each other and learn about each other using Spanish.

I think it could only be appropriate at lower levels if it was used for classmates to learn about each other. In the upper level courses I could only see it being beneficial for group communication. It is more a tool to communicate amongst people rather than to learn Spanish.

**Student 7.** No, I would prefer ordinary writing assignments.

What might be an interesting experiment is to use an online forum. Students could create topics about something that interests them (a current event, a video game that just came out, the abortion debate, etc.) The point is that students choose what they want to talk about and which topics they want to reply to. I hated most of the subjects that we had to write about on Facebook. If students had more freedom in what they talk about, they would communicate more. You could make sure everyone is participating by requiring 5 posts per week.

**Student 8.** I do not know. I can see where it would be helpful, but honestly, I only went on Facebook the night before my assignment was due. I never went on “for fun”.

Not appropriate @ lower level b/c the words are difficult to understand & it is hard to navigate.

**Student 9.** I think Facebook should be used again. It helped my Spanish writing and it was a good change from having to write essays and papers. I much rather use Facebook to write them. It might be a little difficult for the students at lower levels, but I don't see why they shouldn't try it. I think it would be appropriate at higher levels; it would allow you to improve even more.

**Student 10.** Absolutely at any level. Could be improved, but very effective.

**Student 11.** Yes. Of course, it would probably have to be modified for lower levels.

**Student 12.** Yes; yes; yes.

**Student 13.** Is okay. Would be better, I think, if the first week in English for those who haven't used it before. I couldn't find/didn't know many of the features existed before. Lower levels were a good place for class notes and meeting classmates. Higher levels mostly followed teachers plan and chatted randomly, perhaps students could add own assignments and activities.

**Student 15.** Yes—it helped get me more comfortable. Not lower levels though, upper would work. Possibly set up the assignments differently though.

**Student 18.** Yes, I think it is appropriate in all levels. This assignment took a familiar item and introduced it in another language. It exposed us to the language in a new way.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the exploratory study of this thesis was to investigate if the technologically-driven students of today would improve their Spanish writing skills if given repeated, meaningful, and challenging opportunities to practice in the familiar environment of Facebook. The first section of this chapter summarizes and discusses the results. The next section gives theoretical explanations of why the improvement took place: the Facebook component was aligned to best practices as described by Chen et al. (2007) and Zhao (2005). The following section addresses limitations of the study. The researcher's main suggestion for future research is to re-investigate the question on a larger scale, removing the limitations that are described. The evidence suggests that the Facebook component described in this thesis was successful, not only in improving writing, but also in increasing motivation and building community. It therefore may be appropriate as a model for others. The final section offers suggestions for further improvement on this model.

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study support the hypothesis that repeated Facebook interactions in a foreign language course do increase writing ability of students. The researcher measured substantial improvement over the semester and observed interactions on Facebook that one can reasonably expect were responsible for this improvement. The students' evaluation of the Facebook component of the course was positive.

**Preliminary finding.** 100% of the surveyed students owned their own computer. 100% of them had a previous Facebook account. These findings support Facebook-assisted modes of instruction. For implementation in other environments, it is also important to keep in mind that full participation in Facebook components of language courses does not require either a student-owned computer or previous Facebook experience.

**Writing development.** The STAMP rubric (Table 3.1) applied to the initial and final writing samples showed improvement in all three areas measured by the rubric, as summarized in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Table 5.1 shows the improvement of text type:

Table 5.1: Improvement of Scores on Text Type

Score from Final W. S.	6			1	1	2		1
	6-			1	1	1		
	5+		1		4	1		
	5			2	1			
	5-	1						
	4+							
	4							
	4	4+	5-	5	5+	6-	6	
	Score from Initial Writing Sample							

In this and the following two tables, entries on the gray diagonal correspond to no improvement. Entries below the gray diagonal, of which there are none, would refer to students whose level decreased. Most of the students are above the gray diagonal, reflecting improvement. The researcher refined STAMP scoring and added subscores in the forms of minuses (-) and pluses (+) to evaluate the students' writing samples. This extra refinement helped the researcher to record "in between" scores. The format of the

table emphasizes the progress of individual students, rather than comparing students with a class average. Thus the student who scored a 4 on the initial writing sample and a 5- on the final writing sample is clearly shown as improving, even though this student remained toward the bottom of the class.

Table 5.2 shows the increase in text comprehensibility. Again, the score of S- has been added to the STAMP rubric's list of options, to increase accuracy:

Table 5.2: Improvement of Scores on Comprehensibility

Score from Final Sample	S+			<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
	S		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	
	S-	<b>1</b>			
	W				
		W	S-	S	S+
		Score from Initial Sample			

Table 5.3: Improvement of Scores on Language Control

Score from Final Sample	S+			<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
	S		<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	
	S-	<b>1</b>			
	W				
		W	S-	S	S+
		Score from Initial Sample			

The three areas evaluated in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 are different, as explained in the STAMP Rubric in Table 3.1. However, the level of improvement was very similar in these three areas.

**The role of Facebook in writing development.** The researcher closely monitored student work on Facebook activities throughout the semester. The following paragraphs indicate why the researcher thinks that the Facebook component of the course was responsible for a significant part of the improvement in writing.

The atmosphere present in Facebook as a medium to post written activities associated with the curriculum allowed students to write productively. Appendix D clearly shows that the students interacted freely and were able to practice “everyday language” about “everyday topics” in Spanish. For example in Activity 2, a general discussion about jobs included digressions on topics like favorite fragrances.

Because of the interactive capacity of Facebook, students knew they were able to truly connect with their classmates. Facebook helped students to get to know each other better and build an active community. A strong community is very important support for effective learning in language classes. In Activity 3, the students posted pictures of their families and shared comments about the importance of family members in their families. Thus this activity made assigned writing part of the process of community building.

The technological features of Facebook allowed students to write in a rich context. In Activity 7, students needed to write about a famous Hispanic person they found interesting. Responding to the assignment, students incorporated photos, song lyrics, and videos, in their written responses.

Throughout the semester, the activities were intrinsically interesting to students. Often one could see animation and enthusiasm in the students' writing. For example, in Activity 9 the students wrote about their personal use of technology. This activity sparked a debate about computer brands and also interesting comments on how much students were attached to their cell phones. In general, the quality of the early Facebook postings improved throughout the semester, in a way consistent with the improvement on the formally evaluated writing samples.

The course had many important components besides the Facebook component. The course was designed to fit in the university's six-semester language sequence, which in turn supports the higher-level literature courses. A large part of the course was therefore dedicated to advanced and complex grammar. For example, as can be seen from the Syllabus in Appendix A, already in the second and third weeks students were given a first exposure to the past subjunctive and adverbial clauses. This aspect of the course did not transfer directly to writing production. While the students often used the vocabulary they learned from the textbook, it was uncommon for students to use the advanced grammar from the textbook. Therefore, the advanced grammar component of the course was not a major contributor to the improvement in student writing. In fact, this thesis has many excerpts of student writing. One can easily see that students are still struggling to learn more basic grammar.

The advantages of Facebook can be seen by directly comparing the Facebook component of the course with the traditional writing assignments that the Facebook component replaced. Traditional writing assignments do not allow a great deal of interaction, self-monitoring, and constant feedback from classmates and instructors. In

Facebook, students can see all the writings of all their classmates. They can profit from their peers. Students were motivated to improve their Spanish not because of criticism from an instructor, but instead because they saw peers writing at higher level. Replacing traditional writing assignments with Facebook does not imply a loss of depth. For example, in Activity 4, Beliefs and Ideologies, students shared information about their personal position on religion. There were many interactions, including a dialogue about finding common ground to talk about atheism.

**Student opinion of the impact of Facebook.** The results of questions on Survey 2 are consistent with the above findings. Students benefitted from being able to work at their own pace on Facebook. In fact, the highest numerical response on the survey was 3.6, in between agree and strongly agree, to Question 5, “I feel Facebook has lessened the pressure of fast past speech.” This strong result aligns with the results of other studies (e.g. Payne, 2003): asynchronous media communication lowers the affective filter and Facebook offers a low-anxiety environment. The second highest numerical response was 3.2, to Question 9, “The Facebook component helped me to get to know my classmates better.” The sense of community that the Facebook component of the course brought to the course was significant as shown by this numerical score.

Students were asked to assess their improvement in writing comfort level and writing proficiency due to the Facebook component of the course (Questions 14 and 15). The average responses were 2.6 and 2.5, indicating that both comfort level and proficiency increased right in between “modestly” (2) and “considerably” (3). There were related stronger results: 2.9 in agreement that Facebook is more enjoyable than

ordinary homework (Question 10) and 3.2 in agreement that Facebook helped students get to know their classmates better.

Students were given many opportunities on Survey 2 to verbally comment on the role of Facebook in their development. In the researcher's estimation, these comments were more positive than the numerical scores. For example, the comments of students who reported that writing comfort and/or writing proficiency increased "modestly" indicated a respectable level of improvement. Similarly, while three students were somewhat negative about Facebook overall, only one could be reasonably viewed as forcefully negative. Even this student seemed to be making a distinction between learning and practice: while Facebook does not help much in learning new material, "it is a good way to encourage people to try to communicate with each other and learn about each other using Spanish." Similarly, another one of the students classified as negative proposed a modified curriculum with student-initiated topics and "requiring five posts per week." In contrast, most of the seven students with an overall positive opinion about Facebook were very forcefully positive, often indicating that Facebook should be used more, and that it should also be used at both lower and higher levels.

**Privacy concerns.** The researcher's experience related to privacy issues should be recorded here. In general, privacy with respect to social-networking technologies is a concern. McBride (2009, p. 37) singles out Facebook by name as being helpful in addressing these concerns: "Facebook, for example, has fine-grained specification options about the privacy levels for the site's wide range of features." For example, students in the course could send e-mail to each other through Facebook that were not

viewable by the instructor. Damron (2009, p. 43) summarized her experience by saying “I have not come across any compromising situations over the three years I have used Facebook with students.” There were also no problems with compromising situations in this study.

#### ALIGNMENT WITH THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The last section of Chapter 2 reviewed two papers, each of which essentially gave a “checklist” for properly aligning technology with best practices in foreign language learning. That section also argued that the two checklists, while using quite different terminology, have considerable overlap. This section illustrates in tabular form how Facebook in general, and the Facebook component of the study, in particular, was responsive to these checklists.

The first two columns of Table 5.4 are taken directly from Chen et al. (2007). The last column shows how Facebook aligned to the needed features.

Table 5.4: Alignment with Krashen's Five SLA Hypothesis

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Features Needed in Media Tools</b>	<b>Features available in Facebook to accommodate SLA hypothesis</b>
Acquisition	•Synchronous methods to provide a platform for natural communications for L2 acquisition	The chat room in Facebook offered a platform for natural communication in L2, the closest to a “real conversation”.
Learning	•Asynchronous methods with rich, hypermedia materials to facilitate students’ L2 learning	The course outside of Facebook had a lot of direct instruction using multimedia tools in a PowerPoint environment that was correlated with the Facebook activities. Some of this instruction could have been done via Facebook.

Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Asynchronous methods that provide automated language editing functions to monitor students exercise and to provide suggested corrections to them</li> </ul>	The asynchronous aspects of Facebook allowed students to reflect on their writing to verify the use of rules themselves.
Natural Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Synchronous methods to provide a platform for natural communications for L2 learning.</li> </ul>	The chatroom offered a constant supply of opportunities for natural communication.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Asynchronous systems that provide a structure compatible to natural order for L2 learning</li> </ul>	The writing level on Facebook was driven by the students' current level. There was no expectation of practicing advanced forms.
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Synchronous methods to provide platforms for natural communication to facilitate L2 acquisition.</li> </ul>	The integration of Facebook provides a continuation of the input in the target language that starts in the classroom, with activities that allow students to receive second language input that is one step beyond their current stage of linguistic competence.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Asynchronous methods with automatic selection of 'i+1' questions and exercises for L2 learning</li> </ul>	
Affective Filter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Asynchronous methods to allow individuals work at their own pace.</li> </ul>	While writing in Facebook, the students did it at their own pace and benefitted from the lack of time pressure and other factors that may increase anxiety. Topics were chosen to maximize motivation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•System should focus on providing positive feedback to learners</li> </ul>	Facebook was a familiar medium where the student felt relaxed while writing their assignments and interacting. They regularly received positive feedback from peers and the instructor.

Although the course in which the Facebook study was conducted had great emphasis in grammar, the learners were instructed to write without thinking too much about grammar and instead focus more on communication. Thus, one could say that the in-class component of the course had a large “learning” component while the Facebook

component itself was almost entirely “acquisition.” The researcher instructed the students to implement the grammar that was being taught as much as they could, but students were also told that there would be no repercussions for mistakes. They received feedback from both peers and the instructor.

Table 5.5 summarizes how the Facebook component of the course aligned to Zhao’s four conditions for effective language learning.

Table 5.5: Alignment with Zhao's Four Conditions for Effective Language Learning

<b>Condition for effective language learning</b>	<b>Corresponding features of the Facebook activities</b>
High quality input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook set up in Spanish</li> <li>• Interactions at level of conversation</li> <li>• Room for negotiation of meaning</li> <li>• Input can be reread</li> </ul>
Communicative opportunities for practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical assignment required three paragraphs</li> <li>• Reading and commenting on other postings</li> <li>• Interesting topics in a natural setting</li> </ul>
High quality feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely feedback from peers</li> <li>• Timely feedback from instructor</li> <li>• No overt spelling or grammar corrections; corrections instead given by modeling correct use</li> </ul>
Individualized content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students often talking about themselves</li> <li>• Assignments had options</li> <li>• Students could work at their own pace</li> </ul>

Another component of the course was a workbook sold together with the text. In the syllabus, this workbook is titled “Cuaderno de práctica” and the day-to-day calendar shows that there was regularly assigned homework in the “C.P.” and it was collected and reviewed by the instructor at every quiz or test. How well Facebook was aligned to Zhao’s best practices is emphasized by how poorly the “Cuaderno de práctica” was aligned. One could argue that the C.P. presents high quality input. However it certainly does not give communicative opportunities for practice: students fill in blanks and are not

communicating with anyone. There is no high quality feedback: students are limited to checking their answers with the back of the C.P. Except for occasional free-response questions, there is no individualized content at all: all students fill in the same blanks, and only one answer is right.

#### LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study had several limitations. Four limitations and suggestions for how future studies could remove these limitations are as follows.

- 1.** The number of participants, eighteen (but seventeen for the first survey and thirteen for the second survey), was modest. If similar results were obtained with more students then conclusions could be stated more confidently.
- 2.** The initial and final writing samples were short. It would be preferable to have longer samples to make a better comparison. Also it would better to have the exact same time limit (say 30 minutes) for each, rather than extracting the final writing sample from the final exam.
- 3.** The rubric of this study (Table 3.1) evaluated three aspects of writing: text type, comprehensibility, and language control. It would be better to evaluate other aspects, for example depth of content and proper vocabulary use. Vocabulary use would be particularly important to add, as it could be scored very objectively.

4. The researcher was also the instructor and this could be reasonably viewed as a source of conflict. The first and final writing samples were scored by the instructor. It would be preferable to have the samples rated by an independent evaluator. Better yet, each sample could be scored by two independent evaluators.

Limitations 1-4 above could be removed while still keeping the entire study within one semester. However another important limitation, in the researcher's judgment, was the time constraint. One semester is enough to definitively measure improvement in some learning contexts. For example, one sometimes wants to measure how many facts on a topic were absorbed, or at what level a very specific skill was acquired. On the other hand, going from no knowledge to fluency in a foreign language is a multi-year---some would say lifelong---endeavor. The achievement in a single semester can only be a few steps down a long road, and it is also important to remember that each student is starting at a different spot. Thus in this context, a longer time window to measure improvement would be ideal.

In some contexts it would be easy to run a year-long study. For example, in high schools, students are typically with a single teacher with the same peers for an entire year. The Facebook study of this thesis could be replicated, with improvements 1-4 as above. Of course there would have to be some content modifications because of the change from the college to the high school setting.

Even in college settings where students sign up for courses one semester at a time, there is room to creatively run a longer study. For example, the students of this study were all fourth-semester Spanish students. Most of them had been third-semester

students in the previous semester. One possible structure for a longer study would be as follows. The second year sequence could be enlarged to have three courses: third-semester Spanish (4 credits), fourth-semester Spanish (4 credits), and an extra course, perhaps named Spanish Communication (2 credits). Students could take Spanish Communication simultaneously with either third-semester or fourth-semester Spanish. The Spanish Communication course would be Facebook-based, without advanced grammar, and with Facebook activities fully integrated into class time.

With this structure, one could have twice as many Facebook activities and so the impact on writing should be larger and thus more easily measured. Writing ability would be formally measured (by outside evaluators as above) four times: at the beginning and end of third-semester Spanish, and at the beginning and end of fourth-semester Spanish. In each semester, these tests would compare the progress of students also taking the Facebook supplement with the progress of students not taking the Facebook supplement. There would be an initial survey at the beginning of third-semester Spanish and a final survey at the end of fourth-semester Spanish. Students would have an opportunity to share their opinions on how their semester with Facebook compared with their semester without Facebook. With this year-long structure, it would be much easier to confidently isolate what improvement in writing was due to Facebook.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The researcher's recommendations for future researchers have been covered in the last section. In this final section, the researcher will concentrate on recommendations for instructors who want to implement their own Facebook component now, without waiting

for results of further studies. The researcher feels that the Facebook component here is a good model, but there is room for further ideas as follows. These ideas could be used in conjunction with the many ideas presented by McBride (2009).

The syllabus could be made yet more student-centered. For example, one could give the students the themes from the curriculum and ask them to create a weekly forum where the students would write comments or add to the discussion in the target language. One of the participants in this study in fact suggested the possible use of student-created forums. Perhaps the instructor could leave room in the syllabus for spontaneous activities appropriate to develop the language and at the same time designed by the students.

One tool available in Facebook and used minimally in this study is video. This tool could be used in two quite separate ways. First, students could videotape themselves and share the results with the instructor and classmates. Exercises such as these would help students improve their oral skills. The other way that videos could be used is by incorporation of more authentic material, material that has been designed by native speakers for native speakers. A wide exposure to authentic materials is widely agreed to be important, as without them students “see the target culture only through the instructor and select curricula” (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). These videos would work best if they were part of the required activities; students would have to respond to them and otherwise get involved. The caution of Orsitto (2005, p. 1790) is relevant here: optional material is often ignored by students and instead material should be fully incorporated into the curriculum.

In this study, students from the two sections interacted only with themselves and the instructor. However, Facebook is designed as a worldwide communication tool.

Thus another possibility is to have students communicate with their peers from elsewhere. Again this development could be at two levels: students could be communicating with both native English speakers like themselves and also native Spanish speakers. The interaction with native Spanish speakers would make the curriculum align better with Krashen's acquisition-learning hypothesis (1982), where he emphasized that acquisition works best from interactions with native speakers. The Twitter component of Atenos-Conforti's curriculum (2009) was smaller but in many ways similar to the Facebook component studied here; it did have interactions with native speakers.

Facebook will surely have Spanish spelling checkers and grammar checkers in the near future, just as it has such checkers in English now. With this feature available in the future, students will be able to monitor their writing skills. This will make Facebook align better to Krashen's monitor hypothesis (1982). The feedback the new checkers will give will be tailored to each student's individual needs.

It would be advisable to integrate Facebook activities into the classroom more than was done in this study. For example, themes originating in Facebook could be continued in classroom discussions. Payne (2003) made this type of follow-up a core feature of his curriculum. The lack of follow up in the Facebook study resulted in the least positive results on the second survey (1.9 on Question 8 and 2.2 on Question 7).

A final suggestion is to implement Facebook not just in one course, but instead across an entire curriculum. A participant in this study wrote on the first survey that it was rather inconvenient to open a Spanish Facebook account that would be used only for one course. A general course-independent Spanish Facebook account could be used as a

meeting place for students involved in Spanish courses to create community. It could be used to announce language and cultural events. This way there would be a regular place for students to communicate in Spanish in a natural way outside the classroom.

## APPENDIX A: COURSE SYLLABUS

### Spanish 2002: Intermediate Spanish II, Spring 2009

**Instructor:** Windy G. Roberts

Oficina: Camden 213

**Teléfono:** 589-6294 (trabajo) 589-4628 (casa)

**Correo electrónico:** [wroberts@xxxx.edu](mailto:wroberts@xxxx.edu)

**Página web:** [www.xxxx.edu/~wroberts](http://www.xxxx.edu/~wroberts)

Horas de consulta:

Lunes 2-3 p.m.,

Martes 10-11 a.m.,

Jueves 2-3 p.m.,

and by appointment

**Sección 1:** Lunes-Miércoles-Viernes 10:30-11:35, Humanities 205

**Sección 2:** Lunes-Miércoles-Viernes 11:45-12:50, Humanities 5

**Libro de texto:** Bretz et al., **Avance: Intermediate Spanish** 2a edición (You need to bring this to class every day.)

**Libro de trabajo:** Bretz et al., **Cuaderno de práctica**, 2a edición. (You only need to bring this to class on days of quizzes and exams.)

There is a website associated to these books: <http://www.mhhe.com/avance2>. This website contains practice quizzes and listening activities connected to the *Cuaderno*.

**Facebook:** The course also has a Facebook component where you will interact in Spanish with your classmates and me out of class. You will be setting up a new Facebook account for this course.

#### **Objetivos de la clase:**

- To continue to develop proficiency in Spanish, focusing on new grammar points and the four main areas of **listening, speaking, reading, and writing**.
- To further advance awareness of Spanish as a living language, and the diversity of cultures that make up the Spanish-speaking world.
- To practice skills in Spanish in useful and realistic contexts.
- To read higher-level texts in Spanish, in preparation for advanced-level courses at UMM.
- To gain sufficient experience to increase **confidence** in the use of Spanish.

**Expectativa importantísima:** University regulations say “one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week (over a full semester) necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. For example, a student taking a four credit course that meets for three and a half hours a week should expect to spend an additional eight and a half hours a week on coursework outside the classroom.”

Putting in time on homework and out-of-class studying is essential to doing well in this course. To start, you need to do the assigned homework every day before the next class. A typical chapter has a vocabulary day, two grammar days, a reading day, two more grammar days, and a concluding day. On the grammar days there is an assigned “Práctica” from the main text. Most days there is a listening exercise and a writing exercise from the *Cuaderno de Práctica*. The class period will involve activities that assume you have faithfully done the homework. Also you need to be actively involved in each week’s Facebook assignment.

The assigned homework is substantial. However it will take you less than eight and a half hours a week. *You should spend some more time on the following activities:*

- Doing more in the *Cuaderno de Práctica*. The two assigned exercises are really just to get you started: it would be best to do more!
- Each chapter comes with six or seven online quizzes. You can test yourself and improve!
- The *Cuaderno* has sections *Pronunciación y ortografía*, having to do with pronunciation and accents. These sections also have corresponding internet material. This material can help you out too.
- If you bought a new copy of the book, you have access to the “ActivityPak” and you can make use of this feature.
- You can find a classmate and practice speaking Spanish, perhaps doing some of the above activities together. Class time and the Facebook component of the course should get you very comfortable with working with your peers.

There are other resources that can help you out too, even though they are not closely tied to our course.

- The Hasselmo Language Teaching Center is located in the basement of the Humanities Building. It provides computers and related language materials, including videos, CD-ROMs, newspapers and magazines, and international television broadcasts via satellite. Ask the staff there for details.
- There are a growing number of internet sites useful to students of Spanish. A few that you can start with are [www.studyspanish.com](http://www.studyspanish.com), [www.parlo.com](http://www.parlo.com), and [www.estrelladigital.es](http://www.estrelladigital.es).
- The Academic Assistance Center offers tutoring for students in Spanish. They are located on the third floor of Briggs Library. If you feel you could benefit from these services, you should visit the AAC as soon as possible.

I would be very glad to talk with you about how you are organizing your out-of-class work. As you go through the course, you should be building up your **self-motivation** in Spanish. You should have a sense of satisfaction that you are learning a lot. You should set high goals for yourself in terms of learning more.

**En la clase.** Of course, it is your responsibility to get to class on time. It is your responsibility to make sure you sign the attendance sheet each day.

We will do many different things in class. I will answer general questions you may have on the previous homework. A considerable part of many days will be classroom activities (called *Intercambios* in the text) based on the previous homework. These activities may be individual, small-group, or full-class. You may present something orally to the class. There will often be other activities from outside the book that are not listed on the syllabus. Finally, some days I will briefly discuss the homework due the next day. In general, class-time is devoted to communicative activities based on the grammar and vocabulary you have learned before class, or the readings you have done before class.

You should expect to be *very active* in class. We will be communicating *in Spanish*. You must be speaking Spanish too, even when you are communicating with your classmates. The classroom is a unique opportunity for you to practice. You can expect that you and all your classmates will be making mistakes in Spanish in the classroom: this is part of the learning process, not a source of concern!

Recognize that you will not understand every individual word in Spanish that I say. One of the skills you are learning in this course is how to understand the meaning of what's being said without understanding every word!

### **Calificación final:**

*Attendance.* Attendance is required. If you happen to be late one day, please come in quietly rather than miss the entire class. As a rule, two late arrivals will count as an absence from class. Excuses for absences will be given at my discretion in accordance with University policy. When possible, you should speak with me well before the date of absence to get my approval if you need to miss a class. More than three unexcused absences will result in a lower final grade for the course.

*Three exams, 15% each, for a total of 45%.* There will be a test at the end of every two chapters (7 and 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12). Each examination will test your listening, vocabulary, grammar, writing, and reading skills. The exams are the largest percentage of your grade. You need to take every exam very seriously. The listening section of the exam will be given first, so if you come late you will miss it and you will not have an opportunity to earn the corresponding points. Your writing responses must be carefully composed, proofread, and edited with proper punctuation and spelling, including accents.

*Class performance 20%.* For a good score here, you must participate voluntarily, speak Spanish regularly during our class activities, and have a mature, courteous, and positive attitude. Speaking is an important part of this course, and not tested in the three exams. It is important that you demonstrate in class that you are doing your best to work toward improving your oral skills. You should incorporate your grammar and vocabulary knowledge into your speech and strive towards authentic Spanish pronunciation. I

recognize that speaking can be challenging and so effort as well as achievement counts towards your class participation grade.

*Facebook performance 20%.* For a good score here, the most important thing is to be actively engaged in all the activities throughout the semester. You need to be doing a lot of writing in Spanish. You need to use Facebook tools to respond to your peers, at first just in your section, but after a while in the other section too. The idea here is to get comfortable regularly using the Spanish that you know. You should be interacting naturally: you shouldn't be using a dictionary or notes while involved in Facebook. Isolated spelling or grammar errors will definitely not count against you, but of course you should be always working toward improving your Spanish. In determining your grade for this component, I will be looking at quantity and improvement in quality.

*Three quizzes, 2% each for a total of 6%.* There will be a fifteen-minute quiz after Chapters 7, 9, and 11. Each quiz will focus on the grammar you have learned in that chapter.

*Práctica de Lengua 5%.* On days where we are going over a grammar section (the first one is "26. Review of the preterite") you must write out complete answers in your notebook to the "Práctica" section in the main textbook. You need to bring your notebook to class, and I will spot-check your work throughout the semester. There is a lot to learn before and while doing these exercises. Make sure you are in "learning mode" while you are completing this part of the homework.

*El Cuaderno de Práctica 4%.* You must hand in your completed and corrected *Cuaderno* at each quiz and exam. The *Cuaderno* exercises can be very challenging. Be prepared to read the directions carefully. Be prepared to replay the audio several times and go back to the text if necessary. Plan to spend a fair amount of time on this component of the course. You shouldn't leave the *Cuaderno* until you feel comfortable with the material you just learned.

I will check your *Cuaderno* work while you are taking the quizzes and the exams. Remember that following the day-to-day syllabus closely and faithfully doing the homework will be reflected in higher exam and participation scores. Only the assigned homework will count toward the 4% of your grade. However if I start seeing that you're having trouble in the course, the first thing I will suggest is to do more exercises from the *Cuaderno*.

Grades will be calculated and then rounded to the nearest whole number. Percentages translate to final grades as follows.

	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	65-69	D	
93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	60-64	D-
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-		

If you are taking this course S/N, then the cutoff for S is 70%.

**Horas de consulta.** I am looking forward to meeting you in my office hours. I would like everyone to drop by at least once in the first two weeks so I can meet you individually. I am happy to answer questions or explain things in English in office hours. I am happy also to talk with you in Spanish to help you get more practice.

\*Cuaderno de práctica

Fecha	Facebook	Preparación para la clase (homework to be done <i>before</i> class)	C P*	En clase (habrá también otras actividades)
Miércoles 21 de enero	1. New Facebook account in Spanish	<b>(Start of Chapter 7. El mundo de los negocios.)</b> Study vocabulary on p.201	147A 157B	Introducción al curso. Describir y comentar
Viernes 23 de enero		26. Review of the preterite	149A 158A	26. Intercambios
Lunes 26 de enero	2. Your past jobs and your future career	27. Review of the uses of the subjunctive	150A 159A	27. Intercambios. In-class writing assignment
Miércoles 28 de enero		Read “Los Estados Unidos en Latinoamérica”		Discusión
Viernes 30 de enero		28. The past subjunctive: Concept; forms	151A 160B	28. Intercambios
Lunes 2 de febrero	3. Posting and sharing pictures of you and your classmates	29. Use of subjunctive and indicative and adverbial clauses	152A 163B	29. Intercambios Take photos in class
Miércoles 4 de febrero		Study ¡Ojo! on p.223-224 and repaso	154A 164A	Enlace: Ojo y repaso. <i>Mini-prueba: 26, 27, 28, 29 (Hand in Cuaderno)</i>
Viernes 6 de febrero		<b>(Start of Chapter 8. Creencias e ideologies.)</b> Study vocabulary on p. 231	171B 183B	Describir y comentar
Lunes 9 de febrero	4. Beliefs and ideologies	30. The subjunctive in adverbial clauses; Interdependence	173A 185B	30. Intercambios
Miércoles 11 de febrero		31. <b>Por</b> and <b>Para</b>	175A 186A	31. Intercambios
Viernes 13 de febrero		32. The process <b>se</b>	177A 189A	32. Intercambios
Lunes 16 de febrero	5. Quizzes about you and your classmates	33. Review of subjunctive: An overview	178A 190A	33. Intercambios
Miércoles 18 de febrero		Study ¡Ojo! on p. 259 and repaso	179A 191A	
Viernes 20 de febrero		Study for test		<b>Examen: Capítulos 7 y 8</b> <i>(Hand in Cuaderno)</i>

Lunes 23 de febrero	6. Hispanic- Americans that you	<b>(Start of Chapter 9. Los hispanos en los Estados Unidos)</b> Study vocabulary on p. 265		Describir y comentar
Miércoles 25 de febrero	know or famous	34. The passive voice	197A 206A	34. Intercambios
Viernes 27 de febrero	Hispanic- Americans	35. Resultant state or condition versus passive voice	199A 208A	35. Intercambios
Lunes 2 de marzo	7. Videos of songs in Spanish (you're allowed to sing!)	“Los mexicanosamericanos y los puertorriqueños”		Discusión
Miércoles 4 de marzo		“Los cubanoamericanos.”		Discusión
Viernes 6 de marzo		36. “No-fault” se	199A 208A	36. Intercambios
Lunes 9 de marzo	8. Chatting with classmates that you don't know well yet	37. <b>A</b> and <b>en</b> constructions	200A 209A	37. Intercambios
Miércoles 11 de marzo		Study ¡Ojo! on 299-300 and repaso	211A	<i>Mini-prueba: 34, 35, 36, 37 (Hand in Cuaderno)</i>
Viernes 13 de marzo		<b>(Start of Chapter 10. La vida moderna.)</b> Study vocabulary on 307	217A 225A	Describir y comentar
DESCANSO DE PRIMAVERA				
Lunes 23 de marzo	9. Modern life	38. Future and conditional	219A 225A	38. Intercambios
Miércoles 25 de marzo		39. <i>If</i> clauses with simple tenses	220B 230A	39. Intercambios
Viernes 27 de marzo		“Memoria electrónica” por Mario Benedetti		Discusión
Lunes 30 de marzo	10. Posting pictures from your Spring break	40. Comparisons		40. Intercambios
Miércoles 1ro de abril		Study ¡Ojo! on 331-332 and repaso	220A	
Viernes 3 de abril		Study for test		<b>Examen: Capítulos 9 y 10 (Hand in Cuaderno)</b>

Lunes 6 de abril	11. Fairness and justice	<b>(Start of Chapter 11. La ley y la libertad individual.)</b> Study vocabulary on 339	241A 251A	Describir y comentar
Miércoles 8 de abril		41. Other forms of the perfect indicative	242A 252A	41. Intercambios
Viernes 10 de abril		42. The perfect subjunctive		42. Intercambios
Lunes 13 de abril	12. Favorite films	El crimen y la violencia: La violencia política 349-353		Discusión
Miércoles 15 de abril		El crimen y la violencia: La violencia política 353-355		Discusión
Viernes 17 de abril		43. More on the sequence of tenses	243A 253A	43. Intercambios
Lunes 20 de abril	13. Where would you like to go in the Hispanic world and why?	Study ¡Ojo! on 361-363	256A	<i>Mini-prueba: 41,42,43 (Hand in Cuaderno)</i>
Miércoles 22 de abril		<b>(Start of Chapter 12. El trabajo y el ocio.)</b> Study vocabulary on 369	261B 269B	Describir y comentar
Viernes 24 de abril		44. Review of verb forms	263A 270A	44. Intercambios
Lunes 27 de abril	14. What do you like to do with your free time?	45. Progressive forms	264A 273A	45. Intercambios
Miércoles 29 de abril		“El Sur” (parte 1) por Borges		Discusión
Viernes 1ro de mayo		“El Sur” (parte 2) por Borges		Discusión
Lunes 4 de mayo	15. What did you like the best about your other classes this semester?	“El Sur” (parte 3) por Borges		Discusión
Miércoles 6 de mayo		46. Restrictions on the use of the <b>-ndo</b> forms	264C 275A	46. Intercambios
Viernes 8 de mayo		Study ¡Ojo! on 401-402 and repaso	278A	
Sección 1: Martes 12 de mayo 4:00--6:00				<b>Examen:</b> <b>Capítulos 11 y 12</b> <i>(Hand in Cuaderno)</i>
Sección 2: Miércoles 13 de mayo 4:00—6:00	Repasar el material y estudiar para el examen			<b>Examen:</b> <b>Capítulos 11 y 12</b> <i>(Hand in Cuaderno)</i>

## APPENDIX B: INVITATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

January 23, 2009

My name is Windy G. Roberts and I am a Teaching Specialist in the Division of Humanities at xxxx. My general area of research interest is integrating the use of technology in the language classroom. I am presently working on research for a Masters thesis, involving the use of *Facebook* in Spanish courses to support writing skills.

In that you are a student in Spanish 2002 this semester at xxxx, I am inviting you to participate in this research project by completing two surveys out of class during the semester. Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Whether you participate or not will in no way affect your grade.

Together with this invitation letter you're getting an informed consent document. The consent process serves to provide more detailed information regarding the study to all participants. It also serves to protect the rights of those involved in the study. Also you are getting the first survey.

If you decide to participate in this study you should sign the informed consent document, complete the first survey, and return both to ... If you have any questions about this research study or your participation in it, you may contact me in person at 213 Camden, by telephone at 320-589-6294, or by e-mail at [wroberts@xxxx.edu](mailto:wroberts@xxxx.edu).

Sincerely,

Windy G. Roberts  
Teaching Specialist of Spanish  
Division of Humanities  
XXXX

## CONSENT FORM

### *Facebook* interactions and writing skills of Spanish language students (Concordia College Protocol Number: 20091116 )

You are invited to be in a research study investigating to what extent interacting with peers in Spanish via *Facebook* improves proficiency in writing Spanish. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student enrolled in Spanish 2002 at xxxx for Spring Semester 2009.

This study is being conducted by Windy G. Roberts, Teaching Specialist, Division of Humanities, xxxx. I am enrolled in a Masters program in Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota and this study will be used in my Masters Thesis. I ask that you read this form carefully and ask me any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

**Background Information.** The benefit of curriculum that integrates computer-mediated communication is a topic of discussion among many second language acquisition researchers. *Facebook* has become a very common means of communication among college students. This study will examine to what extent interacting via *Facebook* in the context of a Spanish course improves written Spanish language proficiency.

**Procedures.** As a student in Spanish 2002, you will be completing all course requirements, including participation in the *Facebook* component of the course. You will be working with your classmates from this course through a new *Facebook* account set up just for this course.

As a participant in the research study, you would in addition

- Complete a fifteen-minute survey in English out of class at the beginning of the semester concerning your previous use of *Facebook* and other on-line communication technologies.
- Complete a thirty-minute survey in English at the end of the semester concerning your opinions about the *Facebook* component of the course.
- Agree that I can use your survey responses and your performance in the course in professional publications which present the results of this study.

Participants will sign and return one copy of this consent form and also the first survey to the Humanities Division office. Participants will pick up the second survey from the Humanities office in the last week of classes and then return it to the division office. I will not know which students are participating until after the semester is over and grades have been submitted.

**Risks and benefits of being in the study.** The study involves no risks beyond the ordinary minimal risks associated with being a student in a Spanish course. Your participation in this study may help with the instruction of future students.

**Compensation.** You will not receive payment for your participation in this research study. You will not receive points or grades in Spanish 2002 for your participation in this research study.

**Confidentiality.** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. During the semester, the consent forms and surveys will be stored securely in the division office and I will not have access to them. After grades have been submitted, control of these items will be transferred to me. If you participate in this study your code number will be \_\_\_\_\_. You will write this number on each of the surveys instead of your name.

**Voluntary nature.** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**Contacts and questions.** The researcher conducting this study is Windy G. Roberts. If you want to ask questions before deciding to participate in this survey, you may contact me in my office at XXX XXXX, by telephone at XXX-XXX-XXXX, or by e-mail at [wroberts@xxxx.edu](mailto:wroberts@xxxx.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than myself, you are encouraged to contact xxxx. You may also contact the Concordia College's Institutional Review Board at (218) 299-3001, or send a letter to Concordia College, Institutional Review Board, Office of Academic Affairs, 901 8<sup>th</sup> St. S., Moorhead, MN 56562.

You have been given two copies of this consent form. If you decide to participate you will sign and hand in one to XXXX at the Humanities Division office and keep the other copy for your records.

**Statement of Consent.** I have read the above information. Any questions that I have asked have been satisfactorily answered. I understand that my time commitment consists in completing the two surveys described above and nothing else. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: TWO SURVEYS

**First Survey, handed out January 23, 2009**  
**Windy G. Roberts**  
***Facebook Interactions and***  
**Writing Skills of Spanish Language Students**

This survey will allow me to collect information for my study. I will keep all the information you provide to me completely confidential. I will not be made aware of any of your responses until grades have been submitted. Thank you for your help.

Please do not write your name on this survey. Instead write the code number that is on your consent form here: \_\_\_\_\_. Please return your completed survey directly to XXXX at the Humanities Division office.

1. Do you own a computer?

\_\_\_No.

\_\_\_Yes.

2. Did you have a *Facebook* account before you took this class?

\_\_\_No.

\_\_\_Yes. I used it on average about \_\_\_\_\_minutes per day. I am in contact with about \_\_\_\_\_people via *Facebook*.

3A. If you use *Facebook*, describe how often you use the following features. (Circle one number on each line)

	never	rarely (less than once per week)	sometimes 1-3 times per week)	often (more than 3 times per week)
A: Wall	1	2	3	4
B: Chat	1	2	3	4
C: Video	1	2	3	4
D: Groups	1	2	3	4
E: Notes	1	2	3	4
F: Pokes	1	2	3	4
G: Gifts	1	2	3	4
H: Photos	1	2	3	4

4a. What other ways do you connect with people via computer (*MySpace*, *MSN*, etc.)?

4b. About how many hours do you spend per day in these activities?  
(Circle one)

Less than 1 hour      1 hour      2 hours      3 hours or more

5. Where do you spend time connecting to people via computer? (Check all that apply)

In my dorm room

In computer labs

In the library

Other. Explain:

6. Have you taken other courses in which out-of-classroom work sometimes involved computers?

No.

Yes. Please list courses and describe how the out-of-classroom work involved computers (*Moodle*, *Wimba*, wikis, textbook website, blogs, online homework, etc.). Also please describe your thoughts about these experiences.

7. University expectations are that students taking a four-credit course should work eight hours out of class per week on the course. Do you think involving computers in out-of-classroom work can help you meet this expectation?

8. In your opinion, how much should college courses use computers in general.

\_\_\_ More than now.

\_\_\_ About the same as now.

\_\_\_ Less than now.

9. Describe your general level of computer fluency and your attitude towards using computers and the Internet.

10. I enjoy class activities that allow me to spend time in the computer. (Circle one)

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. What are your initial feelings about this course having a *Facebook* component?

**Second Survey, available for pick-up, Monday, May 4, 2009**  
**Windy G. Roberts**  
**Facebook Interactions and**  
**Writing Skills of Spanish Language Students**

This survey will allow me to collect information for my study. I will keep all the information you provide to me completely confidential. I will not be made aware of any of your responses until grades have been submitted. Thank you for your help.

Please do not write your name on this survey. Instead write the code number which I gave you here: \_\_\_\_\_. Please return your completed survey to XXXX in the Humanities Division office.

Describe how beneficial the following features of *Facebook* were to improving your writing skills in Spanish. (Circle one number on each line)

	not beneficial	somewhat beneficial	beneficial	very beneficial
A: Wall	1	2	3	4
B: Chat	1	2	3	4
C: Video	1	2	3	4
D: Groups	1	2	3	4
E: Notes	1	2	3	4
F: Pokes	1	2	3	4
G: Gifts	1	2	3	4
H: Photos	1	2	3	4

Which of the features listed in question one was the most beneficial? Please explain why.

About how many hours did you spend per week on the *Facebook* component of the course?

Please indicate agreement with statements 4-11 on the given four-point scale by circling one answer.

4. While chatting, I often read what other people wrote more than once to ensure I caught the complete meaning.

1. No agreement    2. Somewhat agree    3. Agree    4. Strongly agree

5. While communicating on *Facebook*, I felt less pressure than I do when I am speaking Spanish, because I could go at my own pace.

1. No agreement    2. Somewhat agree    3. Agree    4. Strongly agree

6. I found chatting on *Facebook* helpful to improving my written Spanish.

1. Not at all    2. Some    3. Quite a bit    4. A great deal

7. The *Facebook* component of the course made me more relaxed in class.

1. Not at all    2. Some    3. Quite a bit    4. A great deal

8. The *Facebook* component of the course made me more inclined to participate in class.

1. Not at all      2. Some      3. Quite a bit      4. A great deal

9. The *Facebook* component of the course helped me get to know my classmates better.

1. Not at all      2. Some      3. Quite a bit      4. A great deal

10. The activities for the class that were done via *Facebook* were more enjoyable than ordinary homework.

1. Not at all      2. Some      3. Quite a bit      4. A great deal

11. I would feel more comfortable communicating now with a native speaker in Spanish via *Facebook* than I would have at the beginning of the course.

1. Not at all      2. Some      3. Quite a bit      4. A great deal

12. Here is a list of Spanish words and/or expressions that I learned via *Facebook*:

13. Here is a list of Spanish words and/or expressions that I knew before, but now use more often because of Facebook:

14. Please circle one of the four responses, and then describe in your own words how your experience with the *Facebook* component of this course increased your *comfort level* in writing Spanish.

Not at all      Modestly      Considerably      Substantially

15. Please circle one of the four responses, and then describe in your own words how your experience with the *Facebook* component of this course increased your *proficiency* in writing Spanish.

Not at all      Modestly      Considerably      Substantially

16. In your opinion, what were the strongest points of the *Facebook* component of the course?

17. In your opinion, what were the weakest points of the *Facebook* component of the course?

18. How often do you expect you will be communicating in Spanish through *Facebook* in the future? (Circle one)

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

19. Would you recommend that the *Facebook* component of the course be included in future offerings of Spanish 2002? Would it be appropriate at lower levels? Would it be appropriate at higher levels?

## APPENDIX D: THE FIFTEEN FACEBOOK ASSIGNMENTS

This appendix describes the Facebook component of the course and gives examples of student work. The focus of this appendix is on the Facebook component itself, not on its effect on improvement of student writing. Each assignment is given, both in the original Spanish and in English translation. Sample student work is given, both direct responses to the assignments and some student-to-student interchanges. The researcher added to the documents from the course some commentary explaining how the week's assignment fit into the course. As was described in Chapter 3, one of the goals of a qualitative case study is to present an "overall portrait" of the situation. This appendix forms an important part of the overall portrait.

As stated in Chapter 3, only eighteen of the twenty-eight students participated in the study. Some of the interchanges below have been correspondingly edited to remove non-participating students. Similarly, there have been some very minor edits to preserve anonymity.

### ACTIVITY 1: SETTING UP A NEW FACEBOOK ACCOUNT

The instructor sent the assignment for the first week via e-mail. The directions were written in English for this week only. The purpose of using English was to ease the process of opening their Spanish account in Facebook.

	<b>Setting up a new Facebook account</b>
	Set up a new Facebook account. It will be necessary to start a brand new Facebook

	<p>account for this class.</p> <p>If you already use Facebook with your UMM mail address, use or sign up for another e-mail address through Gmail, Yahoo, or hotmail.</p> <p>Set up the account in Spanish. If you scroll to the bottom of the page you'll find a place to select Spanish as the language for the framework. Not all the words are in Spanish but almost all. It is fun to see the words translated into Spanish.</p> <p>Next, invite me and by poking (Dar me un toque) me at <a href="mailto:windyroberts@gmail.com">windyroberts@gmail.com</a>. That is your first encounter with the Facebook component of this course.</p> <p>Through the week be sure to poke and allow members of this class to become your friends. Do not accept anyone from out of your section or out of Intermediate Spanish II for the first two weeks. <b>Never accept anyone who is not taking this class.</b></p>
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To keep the interaction happening only among the students in the two Intermediate Spanish sections, the instructor asked the students to set up their accounts with the private configuration. More explanation about how their new Facebook account

was to be handled was also given via e-mails, for example, “Be sure to fill up your profile with the information in Spanish. Updated: What are you doing section two? Try to chat with some of your classmates, perhaps the ones you know least.”

According to the first survey, 100% of the students had used Facebook before. This was important as the students with previous experience could match the equivalent of each feature in Facebook and move on with the activity in Spanish. The students were supposed to post a profile picture so the rest of the class could identify them and they could start to know each other. Creating their profiles and sharing them by inviting the rest of the class had a secondary motivation, which was to accelerate the building of community in the classroom.

All the students were able to open their Spanish Facebooks accounts and started to do several of the activities that normally take place in Facebook as a social network. Some adventured and shared pictures labeling them in Spanish. In return, other students commented on the pictures and by the end of the week before the second activity was assigned, almost all the students had posted pictures of themselves and important people in their lives.

As a result of the posting of these pictures, there were several opportunities to start conversations that were meaningful to the students. It created a forum that was not scripted and encouraged the students to talk about subjects they cared about. This enabled the students to start forming a community.

ACTIVITY 2: YOUR PAST JOBS AND YOUR FUTURE CAREER

<b>Tus empleos en el pasado y tu carrera en el futuro</b>	<b>Your past jobs and your future career</b>
<p>La segunda actividad en la que van a trabajar en Facebook tiene que ver con un empleo que tuvieron durante las vacaciones o en el verano.</p> <p>Después de obtener la dirección electrónica de por lo menos tres compañeros de clase, escriban una nota y compártanla (by tagging them.) Cuando escriban, por favor usen el vocabulario del capítulo 7: “El mundo de los negocios” para explicar algunos aspectos de su trabajo. Por ejemplo, ¿Tuviste una entrevista para obtener el empleo? ¿Solicitaste el empleo con una solicitud? ¿Trabajaste en ventas? ¿De cajero? ¿Cómo se llama la empresa? ¿Tienes una cuenta corriente? ¿Cuánto dinero cobraste / te pagaron por el trabajo?, etc. Una alternativa para esta actividad es describir el trabajo que te gustaría en el futuro. Debes usar el vocabulario del capítulo 7.</p> <p>Cuando reciban la información acerca de las experiencias de trabajo deben comentar a cada una de las personas que les escriba.</p>	<p>The second activity in Facebook has to do with a job you did during vacation or the summer.</p> <p>After obtaining the e-mail address of at least three of your classmates, write a “note” about your experience on a job, and share it with three of your classmates and me. You’ll need to use the vocabulary from Chapter 7 in order to answer the following questions:</p> <p>Did you have an interview to obtain the job? Did you fill out an application? Do you have a bank account? How much money did you get paid?</p> <p>One alternative for this activity is to describe a job that you would like in the future, again using the vocabulary from chapter 7.</p> <p>When you receive information about the job experiences of your classmates, you should comment to each one of the people who sent you the information.</p>

In this activity, it was easy to observe that the students had some problem relating to the freedom of writing. It was clear that some of the students had more to write than others had. Only a few relied on translators or dictionaries. There was a lot of hesitation concerning the use of accents. There was also evidence that they needed to brush up on their grammar.

To make room for the students that perhaps never had a job, it was clear in the explanation for this activity that they could write about their “dream job” in the future instead. The exchange of comments was encouraging. Here is a typical posting:

**Student 2.** Cuando estaba una nina, queria hacer una cantadora. Siempre ha queria esta sueno, entonces empeze' a encontrar actividades que fueron musical. Para actual trabajo, ho trabaje' en Cub Club hasta tenia diez y seis anos. Tambien, limpiaba para un verano, y fue PCA el pasado ano. Pienso que quiero a ayudar personas, con music o medico. No se' ahora.

In Facebook users can give thumbs up to indicate they like their post. This student got several thumbs up and quite positive comments:

**Student 13.** Music o medico. Estas valiente. Los estan muy deficil y importante a muchas personas.

**Instructor.** [Student 13], tienes razón esas son dos carreras difíciles.

**Student 17.** Sí, de verdad que eres valiente.

**Student 17.** Donde te limpiar en el verano? En sus padres casas? Yo limpiar en mi abuela y tios casa en el verano. Despues limpio yo nadar y tomar el sol cuando tiempo es Facebook.

**Student 13.** Music está Facebook y exacto y matemático a la mismo tiempo. Medico tiene MUCHAS cosas para aprender. Tús metas son impresionantes.

**Instructor.** Cuando yo era niña también quería ser una cantante. Yo cantaba con mis hermanas enfrente de mis tío y abuelos.

As the instructor wrote comments, corrections were embedded in the writing.

There were no corrections made or points taken for not following the directions completely. Part of the assignment was to include the vocabulary from the chapter that was aligned with this activity. It was almost necessary to use it.

Here is another is example where a student included vocabulary from the text that allowed her to better convey her experience in her first job.

**Student 12.** Mi primer trabajo fur en Perfumes and Creams en el centro comercial en Maple Grove. Solicité cuando tenía diez y ocho años, al principio de mi año último de escuela secundaria. Todavía trabajo allí cuando estoy en casa durante La Navidad y en el verano. ¡La entrevista fue muy larga y espantosa! Pero cuando me contrata fue muy divertido. Las son muy simpáticas y cómicas. Usualmente fui una cajera. La problema sola es que ahora yo sé cuando todas las ventas son... y luego gasto mucho de mis ganancias allí. ¡Uy! ☺

No tenía un trabajo hasta tenía diez y ocho años porque tengo un empresa de joyas también, y recibo mucho dinero de ésa. Pero cuando compré mi coche y teléfono, necesitaba más dinero para gasolina y cuentas. Hace siete años que hago joyas: collares, pulseras, pendientes y más. Mi tia me enseñé cuando tenía trece años. Estoy en mucho exposiciones de arte en otoño, y tengo más jornadas de puertas abiertas. También, recibo ordenes costumbres. Hice todas las joyas para tres bodas ahora, y mucho más ordenes costumbres.

Ahora trabajo a Willie's también, en la... [como se dice "deli?"]. Empecé en agosto. Me gusta el tabajo pero hay mucho limpiar. ¡Mucho! Me gusta hacer las ensaladas, pero no me gusta lavar los platos o barrer o fregar el suelo. Si me visitas, puedo darte un muestra. ☺ Pero lo siento, no puedo dar mi opinión de ensaladas con carne. ¡Soy vegetariana! Quiero estar la gerente de un tienda de arte el futuro. Me encanta hacer joyas, tejer, hacer álbumes de recortes, y más. Todas de mis aficiones son de arte, y siempre estoy a Crafts Diect, Michael's Crafts, y otras tiendas de arte puedo encontrar.

Student 12 noticed she had a typo in her posting and fixed it, changing "fur" to "fue".

**Student 12.** Mi primer tabajo \*fue\* Oops ☺

**Instructor.** ¡Qué interesante saber cual es el proceso para obtener un empleo en una empresa como "Perfumes and Creams". Me imagino que muchas personas quieren trabajar en esa tienda.

Qué chévere que tu tía te enseñó lo que sabes acerca de hacer prendas de joyería. Yo vi el collar y la pulsera que le hiciste al Professor [Name]. A él le gustó mucho. Me dijo que era un regalo para su sobrina.

Espero que en el futuro recibas más encargos (orders) de clientes.

¿Cuánto ganabas por hora en la tienda Perfumes and Creams?

Qué bueno que quieras ser una gerente de una tienda de arte. Deli es una palabra abreviada que quiere decir Charcutería.  
Muy bien

**Student 12.** \$7.18 por hora. No es mucho, pero me gusta el trabajo. A un exposicion de arte o un jornada de puerta abierta usualmente gano \$200-\$400 =]

**Student 18.** ¡Me gusta “Perfumes and Creams” en St. Cloud! La tienda es mi favorita.

**Student 12.** ¿Cual es tu aroma favorito? Me encanta “black raspberry vanilla”

**Student 18.** Mi aroma favorita es “Country Apple,” pero no tengo mi loción de “Country Apple” aquí. Es a mi casa ☺

**Student 12.** Mmm ☺ Country Apple es mi favorita de las aromas descontinuas (discontinued?) Es solo en la tienda durante las ventas semianuales en junio y enero

**Instructor.** Descontinuados, los aromas.

Notice that the instructor gave direct feedback on spelling when asked. This student not only wrote about her past job experience but also about a current and future one! This was the beginning of a longstanding interaction between Student 12 and Student 18 throughout the semester.

### ACTIVITY 3: PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOU AND YOUR CLASSMATES

The assignment was to take pictures in the classroom of their classmates and then post them in Facebook. At this point, the students did not know their classmates very well and the instructor thought that this way the students were going to start familiarizing themselves with their classmates in a less formal way. Once the pictures are posted, people can tag, label, and write comments about the photos. Again, the instructor suggested that the students should make use of the “chat area” on Facebook to get to know more about their classmates.

<b>Fotografías: Sube las fotos tomadas en clase de tus compañeros y las tuyas</b>	<b>Photographs: Upload pictures taken in class of your classmates and yours</b>
<p>Esta semana van a sacar fotos de sus amigos en la clase. Luego colóquenlas (súbanlas) en nuestro “Facebook”. Escriban alguna información que sepan acerca de ellos. Etiquétenlas y compártanlas. Traten de escribir usando los acentos en español. Usen el subjuntivo cuando sea posible. Traten de hablar a través del mensajero instantáneo.</p>	<p>This week you’ll be taking pictures of your classmates. Then post them in our Facebook. Be sure to say something that you know about your friends in class and that you learned from their postings. Tag them and learn more about your classmates. Please use the accents in Spanish. Use the subjunctive when possible. Try to catch some of your classmates in the chat room.</p>

The students took advantage of this activity to show their sense of humor in Spanish.

#### ACTIVITY 4: BELIEFS AND IDEOLOGIES

The activity about students’ values was poignant and revealing. At this point, there were some “alliances” in the classroom and the instructor had to suggest that the students share their posts with someone new in the classroom. The students did a good job using the vocabulary in the chapter to write about personal issues, like religious preferences and important things for them and their families. The topic produced writing that was personal and intense.

Here there was a noticeable improvement in the writing and the instructor observed that the students were being careful with their written statements, as they did

not want to be misunderstood about what their values were. New friendships were formed due to the information now exchanged.

<b>Creencias e Ideologías</b>	<b>Beliefs and Ideologies</b>
<p>Escriban por los menos dos párrafos acerca de algunas de sus ideologías y creencias.</p> <p>También respondan a estas preguntas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ¿Cuáles son algunos de los valores importantes para ti?</li> <li>2. ¿Cuáles son los más importantes y por qué?</li> <li>3. ¿Cómo prodrías describir las palabras: Creencia e ideología.</li> </ol> <p>Deben enviar sus párrafos a por lo menos tres personas en la clase y por supuesto, a mí.</p> <p>Lo importante es la calidad y no la cantidad de la escritura. Por favor usen los acentos en español.</p>	<p>Write at least two paragraphs about some of your ideologies and beliefs.</p> <p>Also respond to these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are some of the important values to you?</li> <li>2. Which ones are the most important and why?</li> <li>3. How would you describe the words: Beliefs and ideology?</li> </ol> <p>Please share your notes with three of your classmates and of course with me. The importance here is the quality and not the quantity when you write. Please use Spanish accents.</p>

Here two posts reveal that these two students found out relevant information about each other while communicating via Facebook.

**Student 11.** Las creencias y las ideologías son muy importante para todos. Cuando se hice elecciones, se considera sus creencias y sus ideologías. Muchas personas seguimos las creencias de sus padres y la cultura desempeña un papel mayor. Hay muchas creencias en el mundo. Mis padres me enseñaron mucho de lo que creo. Como la mayoría de los padres, mis padres quieren que yo sea una ciudadana educada y culta. De niña, enseñaban las valores de el respeto por sus antepasados, la familia, la verdad, los derechos de la humanidad, el valor de el dolar, y la responsabilidad para la socialización. También, yo aprendaba que es importante que se haga metas y comprometa a sus valores pero tenga una mentalidad abierta. Por ejemplo, mi padre estuvo criando como el budista.

Cuando él fue un niño, visitaba el templo y los monjes con frecuencia. Sin embargo, madre es una ateo. Mis hermanos y yo son ateos también. Entonces, nunca van a la iglesia. Pero, mis padres subreya que nosotras aceptemos las creencias y las fes de otras. En el caso de las creencias politicas, mis padres no son los derechistas o los izquierdistas. En general, son conservadores fiscals pero crean que todas las personas deban tener libertades a menos que sus elecciones afecten otras personas en la comunidad. Además, a fin de que haga elecciones buenas, mis padres crean que se deba recibir una educación y usar su educación para hacer el bien.

**Student 15.** me gusta el ultima cosa “usar su educación para hacer el bien”

**Student 7.** [Student 11], vivo en un pueblo pequeño, y no tengo duda que mi padre y yo son los únicos ateos. Ahora conozco muchos de escuela, ¡cómo tú!

#### ACTIVITY 5: SURVEY ON VACATION PREFERENCES

The instructor designed this activity to make things more informal and casual for the week. Part of the culture of Facebook is the constant “personal quizzes” that the Facebook users take often to find out more about themselves and then share with their friends. Wanting to capture the informality of Facebook and focusing back on its interactive fun part, the instructor set up a quiz about vacations. The students responded quite well, sharing their findings, and writing their vacation plans.

<b>Cuestionario: Contesta preguntas acerca de tus preferencias durante las vacaciones</b>	<b>Survey: Answer questions about your preferences during vacations</b>
<p>Por fin están llegando las vacaciones.            ¡Cuántas cosas podrás hacer! ¿Serán unas vacaciones de descanso o llenas de acción?            ¡Contesta y descubrirás qué tipo de vacaciones te esperan!</p>	<p>Finally the break is coming. How many things you’ll be able to do! Will it be lazy vacations or full of action?            Answer and you’ll discover what kind of vacation is awaiting for you!</p>

1. Te gustaría tener unas vacaciones: a. relajantes b. originales c. de aventura	1. Would you like vacations that are: a. relaxing b. original c. adventurous
2. Tu sueño serían unas vacaciones: a. en una isla griega b. en el Gran Cañon c. en una selva tropical	2. Your dream vacation will be at: a. a Greek island b. the Grand Canyon c. a tropical forest
3. ¿Te embarcarías en un crucero? a. ¡Sin ninguna duda! b. Bueno, por probar... c. ¡Ni hablar! ¡Qué aburrimiento!	3. Would you take a cruise? a. Without a doubt! b. Well, to try c. Forget it! How boring!
4. ¿En grupo o en solitario? a. En solitario: ¡sin dar cuentas a nadie! b. Depende del tipo de vacaciones c. En grupo: es mucho más divertido	In a group or alone? a. Alone: without having to explain it to anyone! b. Depends on the type of vacation c. In a group: it is much more fun
5. ¿Qué sueles hacer en vacaciones? a. Voy de compras y tomo el sol b. Visito museos, monumentos, iglesias... c. Intento trabar amistad con las gentes del lugar	5. What do you normally do on vacations? a. Go shopping and tan b. Visit museums, monuments, and churches c. I try to makes friends with the people from the place I am visiting

After they took the survey, the students could (supposedly!) find out what type of person they were from their answers:

Mayoría A	Mostly A
Eres una persona muy perezosa; ¡para ti, las vacaciones son sinónimo de descanso!	You are a very lazy person, for you, vacations are synonymous with rest! You

Te encantan las vacaciones cómodas, que no te obligan a renunciar a tus costumbres y comodidades. Una urbanización turística es el lugar ideal para ti.	love comfortable vacations that do not force you to give up your routine and convenience. A touristic resort is the ideal place for you.
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Mayoría B	Mostly B
En tu opinión, las vacaciones sirven para hacer cosas distintas para salir de la rutina. Siempre estás buscando algo nuevo y original que hacer.	In your opinion, vacations help you to do different things to get out of the daily routine. You are always looking for something new and original to do.

Mayoría C	Mostly C
Durante las vacaciones quieres divertirte, conocer gente nueva y explorar el ambiente. Te enfrentas con gran entusiasmo a cualquier experiencia que te presente, con tal de que no sea aburrida. Eres un espíritu libre, siempre en movimiento.	During vacation you want have fun, meet new people and explore the surroundings. You enter with great enthusiasm into any experience as long as it is not boring. You are a free spirit, always on the move.
Comparte los resultados y escríbele por lo menos a dos compañeros tus “posibles” planes de vacaciones de primavera. ¡Diviértanse!	Share your results and write your plans for your possible spring vacation to two of your classmates. Have fun!

Here is an example of the results of a student quiz:

Student 13.

1. Te gustaría tener unas vacaciones:
  - a. relajantes
  
2. Tu sueño sería unas vacaciones:
  - a. en una isla griega
3. ¿Te embarcarías en un crucero?
  - b. Bueno, por probar...

4. ¿En grupo o en solitario?  
 b. Depende del tipo de vacaciones
5. ¿Qué sueles hacer en vacaciones?  
 b. Visito museos, monumentos, iglesias...

Mayoría B. Ya he planeado mis vacaciones de la primavera de este año. Voy a viajar a la Carolina del Sur para visitar mis amigos en la Universidad allí. ¡No puedo esperar! Pero algún día para vacaciones de la primavera me gustaría viajar a un lugar interesante con museos, monumentos, y muchos oportunidades para relajarme (como los resultados dice). Inglaterra, España, o Francia, ¿tal vez?

Another student didn't communicate the results of the quiz, but wrote extensively about planning his vacations:

**Student 7.** Durante mis vacaciones de primavera de este año, mi familia y yo probablemente vaya a la ciudad de Hidden Valley, Michigan a visitar a mis primos y mi tío. No he visto en unos cuatro años por lo que su alrededor que fuimos a verlos. Mi primo que se llama Rudy tenido una niña hace unos años y me pregunto que tan grande que ha llegado desde la última vez que la vi. Durante nuestra visita, probablemente, pasar tiempo con mi tío y ver cómo su negocio de contratación y la pintura ha estado sucediendo. Él estaba trabajando en el establecimiento de una cubierta cuando estuve allí la última vez, y aunque de lo que había hecho era excelente. Mi hermano y yo podría hacer algunas compras y capturado una película con mi tío, mientras que mis padres hacen algunos compras Mi familia y yo podríamos hacer otras actividades divertidas mientras estamos ahí abajo, pero esas son algunas de las cosas que sé que vamos a hacer definitivamente.

There are some grammar and spelling mistakes in Student 7's paragraph, but is important to remark on the amount of writing that this student was willing to produce when it was not a requirement.

ACTIVITY 6: A HISPANIC PERSON THAT YOU KNOW

<b>Los Hispanos</b>	<b>Hispanics</b>
En esta actividad vas a escribir acerca de una persona hispana que conozcas o hayas	In this activity you are going to write about a Hispanic person that you know or have

<p>conocido. En caso de que nunca hayas tenido la oportunidad de conocer a alguien hispano, puedes investigar y escribir acerca de un hispano famoso que te interese. Escribe por lo menos dos párrafos sobre esta persona. Es importante que incorpores el vocabulario del capítulo 9.</p> <p>Algunas ideas para completar los párrafos son: ¿Cuándo inmigró a los Estados Unidos? ¿Dónde vive actualmente? ¿Es una persona influyente? ¿Cuál es su profesión? ¿Conoces algunas detalles relevantes del país de origen de esta persona? Etc.</p> <p>Recuerda que después de escribir tu nota debes compartirla con tres compañeros de clase (diferentes esta vez) y comentar en las notas que recibas.</p>	<p>known. In case you have never had the opportunity to meet a Hispanic person, you could research and write about a famous Hispanic that interests you. Write at least two paragraphs about the person. It is important to incorporate Chapter 9 vocabulary.</p> <p>Some ideas to complete your paragraphs are: When did this person immigrate to United States? Where does he or she live now? Is he or she influential? What is his or her profession? Do you know any relevant details about the country of origin of this person? Etc.</p> <p>Remember to share your writings with three different people from your classroom and to comment on the ones you receive.</p>
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Activity 6 was very student-centered and gave the students the opportunity to share what they knew about a Hispanic person or somebody Hispanic that they were interested in. In this activity the students were asked to use vocabulary learned in the chapter from their book and answer questions about their Hispanic person. Not only did they answer the questions correctly but they went on about the importance and impact of these people on their lives. Here is an excerpt from one of their writings on this activity:

**Student 13.** Hace diez años que conocí mi amiga se llama Rosa. Su familia es de México y ellos inmigraron aquí unos pocos años antes de ella nació. Ella tiene tres hermanas y un medio hermano. Mi amiga está la mayor, como mi. Sus padres no hablan inglés bien,

pero comprenden mucho cuando otros hablan. Todos los hijos están bilingüe. Me gusta mucho la familia de Rosa. No está perfecta, pero sus hermanas y madre están acogedoras. No veo mucho su padre o hermano. Su padre trabaja mucho y su hermano no vive en la misma casa de Rosa. Él vive con su madre. Su familia no parece que mucho diferente que la familia de mis otros amigos. Los dos lenguas que hablan está diferente, pero no parece que está importante después de unas pocas horas. Un tiempo que la cultura de su familia está diferente es los cumpleaños. Voy al cumpleaños de sus hermanas gemelas y comí la tarta de cumpleaños. O no comí la tarta. ¡Estuve muy diferente! Sus hermanas y madre se rieron de mí. La tarta de cumpleaños mexicana está mucha más húmeda de la tarta de cumpleaños norteamericana. Ahora Rosa tiene una hija se llama Emily y ella trabaja en un almacén grande. Ellas viven en Colorado. Rosa y yo nos llamamos por teléfono una o dos veces de cada mes.

In this case the student had a very personal experience with a Hispanic person.

The information given here is clear and with purpose. The student produces language and context to express him or herself. The student specifically answered the questions asked in this activity.

#### ACTIVITY 7: FAMOUS HISPANICS

This activity was a follow-up on the previous one. The focus was on Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico because the students had just completed readings on these groups.

<b>Famosos hispanos de origen mexicano, cubano o puertorriqueños</b>	<b>Famous Hispanics with Mexican, Cuban or Puerto Rican roots</b>
En esta actividad van a buscar información de algún actor, actriz, o cantante exclusivamente mexicano, puertorriqueño, o cubano. Puede ser estadounidense con raíces en cualquiera de los países mencionados. Contesten las siguientes preguntas acerca de esas personas: ¿Por	In this activity you are going to look for information about actresses, actors, singers, artist, writer, etc. exclusively Mexican, Puertorrican, or Cuban. They could also be Americans with roots in these countries. Answer the following questions about these people: Why are they famous? For which

<p>qué es famosa/o? ¿En cuál area del mundo artístico se ha destacado? Si es un cantante, actor/actriz o artista, coloquen un video, la letra de una de sus canciones o la foto de una de sus obras junto con la nota.</p>	<p>area of the arts are they famous? If they are a singer, upload a video or some lyrics with your note.</p>
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The students not only wrote about interesting Hispanics but also explained the reasons they were interested in the person.

**Student 9.** Juan Esteban Aristizábal Vásquez, o Juanes, es cantante. Él nació en el nueve de Agosto, 1972. Él es Colombiano. Él vive en Colombia. ¡Él ha ganado diez y siete Grammy Latinos! También, él ha vendido más de diez millones de sus álbumes. Él canta las canciones populares como A Dios Le Pido, La Camisa Negra, y mi favorita Fotografía.

Juanes ha aportado mucho a su país. Él hice una fundación ayudar las víctimas a nivel mundial. La fundación se llama la Fundación Mi Sangre. Él tiene orgullo en su país y ha hecho un aporte grande a su país. En 2005, la revista Time dije que Juanes fue unos de los personas que tiene mucho influencia en el mundo. ¡Juanes es mi cantante hispano favorito!

**Student 6.** Es muy admirable que Juan hizo una fundación para ayudar las víctimas a nivel mundial. ¡Es impresionante que él es tu cantante favorito y una persona que tiene mucho influencia en el mundo también!

**Student 19.** Benicio Del Toro nació en Santurce, Puerto Rico, cerca de San Juan, en el 19 de febrero, 1967. Sus padres fueron abogados. Cuando Benico tuvo nueve años, su madre murió porque de hepatitis. Cuando tuvo trece años, su padre mudó Benicio y su hermano a Mercersburg, Pensilvania. El se especializó en los negocios al Universidad de California, San Diego, pero dejó el universidad cuando él tuvo mucho éxito en una carrera electiva de drama. Entonces, Del Toro asistió “La Escuela del Drama del Círculo en el Cuadrado”

Cuando él empezó su carrera de actor, tuvo muchas papeles como un pandillero, para programas de televisión como “Miami Vice”. Su primero actuación famosa fue en la película “The Usual Suspects”. El papel mas alabado de Del Toro, sin embargo, fue en “Traffic”. El interpretó un policía fronterizo, tratando limitar el comercio de las drogas. Por este parte, Benicio ganó un Oscar para “Best Supporting Actor”. Recientemente, Del Toro terminó su película “Che”, lo cual recibió mucho de controversia.

Although the student was writing about a person that is a strange for him or her, there is enough information written to provoke interesting comments from one other student in the class.

**Student 6.** Me parece que Benico Del Toro es un agente muy experto y adquiere algunos papeles muy difíciles. Su vida durante niñez debe haber sido resistente.

**Student 19.** Si tienes razón. No tengo mucho información sobre su niñez. Lo siento.

#### ACTIVITY 8: CHATTING IN FACEBOOK

In this activity, the students used Facebook in a way similar to how they use Facebook in their personal lives. From observations, the researcher was able to witness plenty of activity in the chat room. The researcher also chatted with the students for feedback and just for conversation purposes.

<b>Chateo en Facebook</b>	<b>Chatting in Facebook</b>
<p>Chatear a través de Facebook con dos personas en la clase que no conozcan bien.</p> <p>Durante esta semana hagan planes para conversar en Facebook por lo menos tres veces esta semana.</p> <p>1) Escojan a dos personas en la clase que no conozcan bien.</p> <p>2) Decidan con mensajes a qué hora van a encontrarse en Facebook.</p> <p>3) Discutan por lo menos tres temas que les interesen y que los informe acerca de estas personas.</p> <p>4) Al final de la semana escribanme un reporte de lo que aprendieron acerca de</p>	<p>This week you'll chat through Facebook with two people from your class that you don't know well. First make plans using messages or the wall in Facebook.</p> <p>1) Choose your classmates.</p> <p>2) Decide with messages at what time you are going to meet in Facebook.</p> <p>3) Discuss at least three themes that you are interested in and will inform you about each other.</p> <p>4) At the end of the week you need to</p>

esas personas.	write in a note what you learned about those two people.
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This activity was a revealing one. The students had been together in the course for eight weeks and they were still finding out basic information about each other. One of the students turned out to be an accomplished artist and many of her classmates were very impressed.

In this assignment, the students were also “forced” to interact with classmates that they had not interacted much with previously. Some students expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn more about their classmates.

#### ACTIVITY 9: PERSONAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

One of the chapters in the book was about technology. This theme was presented from several angles. To make the topic more personal, the instructor created an activity where the students needed to talk about their relationship with the different technologies available to them.

<b>Uso personal de la tecnología</b>	<b>Personal use of technology</b>
En esta actividad van a escribir por lo menos tres párrafos acerca de dos tecnologías moderna que usan en sus vidas diarias.	In this activity, you’ll write at least three paragraphs about two modern technologies you use daily.
Contesten: ¿Cómo las usan?	Answer: How do you use it? What effect does the use of these

<p>¿Qué efecto tienen el uso de esas tecnologías en sus vidas personales?</p> <p>¿Podrían vivir sin ellas?</p> <p>¿Serán usadas en los próximos 10 años?</p> <p>Compartan los párrafos con un compañero de su sección o de la otra sección y comparen sus respuestas. Escriban las semejanzas y diferencias de los usos de tecnología de cada uno.</p>	<p>technologies have in your personal lives?</p> <p>Could you live without them?</p> <p>Will they be used in the next 10 years?</p> <p>Share the written paragraphs with a person from the other section and compare your answers. Write the similarities and differences on each one's uses of technology.</p>
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This activity revealed how attached students are to technology. Students expressed the reality about the constant use of their cell phones and computers. Being in touch with friends and family was very important. The majority of the students wrote about the expectations from their professors to use computers to do homework. They also emphasized that many work or fun activities are done via their computers. Here is some of the writing on this activity.

**Student 14.** Mi vida diaria no sería completa sin mi ordenador Mac. Lo uso todos los días para hacer mi tarea. Mucha tarea necesita una computadora para terminar. Lo uso para hablar con mi familia por correo electrónico. También uso mi ordenador para divertirme. Me gusta leer blogs y Facebook por mi ordenador y navegar por la red. Ir de compras por mi ordenador es divertido también. Me gusta mucho mi ordenador porque es portátil. Puedo traerlo conmigo dondequiera que voy. Ordenadores serán usados en los próximos 10 años porque personas necesitarán computadoras portátiles como nosotros. Pero serán diferentes. Se inventa tecnología nueva constantemente, y ordenadores del futuro tendrán funciones y capacidades nuevas. Mi amiga [Student 15] usa su propio ordenador en su vida diaria. Ella lo usa en una manera similar de mí; ella lo usa para hacer tarea, divertirse, y comunicar.

**Student 7 to Student 14.** Es verdad, que las nuevas tecnologías se inventa constantemente. Computadoras cada vez son más pequeñas, mientras que llegar más

rápido. Los teléfonos son DEMASIADO pequeños, incluso. ¿Alguna vez has intentado escribir en una Blackberry? ¡Esos botones son tan pequeñas! ¿Hasta dónde van a ir?

**Student 7.** Yo uso mi computadora todos los días. Es mi vida! Yo siempre estoy conversando con los amigos y leyendo "blogs". También, utilizo la red para aprender cosas nuevas. Si un día quiero aprender la idioma ket, sólo es necesario escribir la palabra en Google y tengo muchos recursos a mi alcance. Hago la mayoría de mis compras en línea. Yo no puedo vivir sin los computadores y la red.

Mi teléfono celular es muy importante para mí, también. En los tiempos modernos, teléfonos de casa no son necesarios. Es mejor tener un teléfono celular porque usted puede ser contactado en cualquier momento, dondequiera que esté. No sé cómo yo vivo antes de que todos tenían un teléfono celular. Mi amigo [student 6] usa su teléfono celular para hablar de su familia.

Mi especialidad no sería posible sin la tecnología--yo estudio informáticas. Voy a usar las computadoras hasta el día que muero; va a ser mi trabajo.

**Student 15.** que color es tu ordenador? y tienes un "mac" o "apple"?

#### ACTIVITY 10: PHOTOS FROM SPRING BREAK

This activity was designed to regroup the students after the spring break. It was also a way to reconnect although, as planned, many continued communicating during the spring break via Spanish Facebook. Again, this assignment created a flurry of activity in Facebook in the target language.

<b>Fotografías del descanso de primavera</b>	<b>Photos from spring break</b>
<p>En esta actividad ustedes van a subir fotos que tomaron durante la vacación de primavera.</p> <p>Compártanlas y escriban comentarios en las fotos de sus compañeros</p> <p>Si no tienen fotos de las actividades que hicieron durante este descanso, suban fotos recientes y escriban comentarios acerca de las personas en las fotos, dónde fueron sacadas, etc.</p>	<p>In this activity, you are going to upload photos that you took during the spring break.</p> <p>Share them and write comments about the pictures of your friends in class.</p> <p>If you do not have pictures from the spring break, upload recent photos and add comments about the people in them, where they were taken, who is in the picture, etc.</p>

ACTIVITY 11: CRIME AND YOU

Once more, this topic in this activity was tied closely to the curriculum of the text.

Again the goals here were to engage the learners the vocabulary they are expected to learn for this chapter and at the same time have them to tell in the form of a story an episode about this complicated theme.

<b>El crimen y tú</b>	<b>Crime and you</b>
<p>En esta actividad van a escribir acerca de alguna experiencia personal en relación al crimen. Puede ser algo que te pasó a ti o a alguien que conozcas. Puede ser algo en relación al sistema judicial en los EEUU.</p> <p>¿Has sido víctima de un crimen? ¿Te han robado algo alguna vez? ¿Atraparon al ladrón?</p> <p>¿Sabes de alguien que haya estado preso?</p> <p>¿Crees que hay justicia en este país? ¿Has recibido una multa? ¿Cuál es tu opinión acerca de la policía? ¿Te sientes seguro cuando caminas por las calles de xxxx?</p> <p>¿De tu ciudad?</p>	<p>Describe a personal experience with crime. It could be something that happened to you or someone you know. It could be something related the judiciary system in the United States.</p> <p>Have you been a victim of a crime? Have you been robbed? Was the thief caught? Do you know anybody who has been jailed?</p> <p>Have you gotten a fine or a ticket? What is your opinion about justice in this country?</p> <p>Do feel safe when walking in this city's streets? Your city's streets?</p>

**Student 1:** No he estado una víctima de una crima, porque soy de una ciudad muy seguro. No porque la policía es muy bueno, pero porque las personas son buenas y simpáticas. No muchas experiencia con la ley. Un tiempo recibí una multa de aparcamiento por diez dolares aquí en xxxx. Fue horrible.

Cuando vivía a mi casa a cerca de Donnelly, un policía me paró porque estuve manejando más rápido que era la limita de velocidad. Fue en una cuesta, siempre dizo. Pero la verdad es yo fuí en la cima. Es bueno suerte que solo recibí un aviso y no multa. Me siento muy seguro en xxxx, como muchos de ciudades pequeños. Creo que era una bien lugar vivir.

**Student 13.** Me gusta los cuidades pequenas tambien. Tan a menudo vas al cuidades grandes? Pienso que muchos crimas hace a estos lugares?

**Instructor.** Me alegra que no hayas sido victima de ningún crimen. Los casos más comunes de experiencias con la policía y la ley son las multas por exceso de velocidad o por estacionar el auto en un lugar prohibido. ¡Qué suerte que sólo recibiste una advertencia y no una multa!

**Student 1.** Morris es un buen lugar para vivir, estoy de acuerdo.

**Student 16.** No, no voy a ciudades grandes a menudo, pero me gusta ciudades grandes. Son muy interesantes y concurridos. Algun cosa esta pasando todos los tiempos.

**Student 5.** Si, mi tambien. Cero que xxxx es muy seguro.

These written conversations continued in the classroom. The students were comfortable exchanging information about each other’s encounters with the judicial system and the fact that they felt secure living in a small town.

**ACTIVITY 12: RECOMMEND A FAVORITE MOVIE INVOLVING CRIME**

This activity continued the focus on crime, but now from a different point of view.

<b>Recomendar película favorita que tenga que ver con el crimen</b>	<b>Recommend a favorite movie involving crime</b>
<p>En esta actividad van a describir y recomendar una película que tiene que ver con un crimen. Quizás dónde la justicia prevaleció o fracasó. Puede ser tu película favorita o una película que en tu opinion todos deben ver.</p> <p>Si es una película que tiene que ver con un caso donde la justicia fue bien usada, explica ¿por qué? Si no, explica cómo el</p>	<p>Describe and recommend a movie that has to do with some crime. Perhaps one where justice prevailed or failed. It could be your favorite movie or a movie that in your opinion everybody should watch.</p> <p>Does the movie deal with a case where justice was well used? If so, explain why. If not, explain how the justice system could</p>

sistema judicial hubiera podido ser mejor utilizado.	have been better used?
Por favor, compartan su películas y comentarios conmigo y con otras tres personas con las que nunca han compartido lo que han escrito.	Post and share the information with classmates that you have never shared with before.

Many of the movies the students discussed among themselves were interesting. Hollywood came out as the villain sometimes and justice was seen from an interesting angle by the students. Once again, the students rose to the occasion and performed in writing very well. Some students embedded photos or clips from the movie with their postings.

Here is the movie review from one of the students:

**Student 19.** Una película intersante es “Man on Fire” Transcurre en Ciudad de México, y comenta la gran problema de los secuestros en esta ciudad. Denzel Washington interpra el papel de John Creasy, un calcinado antiguo agente del CIA. El es contrado por una familia rica, proteger su hija de los criminales. Creasy y la hija, Pita, establecen un vínculo especial. Pero un día, Pita es secuestrado por un grupo del crimales (con la ayuda del policía). Creasy se here en la lucha, pero jurar conseguir justicia. Mientras Creasy es en la hospital, los padres de Pita traten pagar el recate, pero la policía roben el dinero. Los criminales dicen que ellos han matado a Pita. Creasy va arrasando con todo, y mata doces de polis corruptos y granjuas. Finalmente, él llega al hermano del jefe criminal, y forza los criminales devolver Pita (quién este viva). Creasy se dispara un otra vez, y sucumbe a sus hiras. El jefe criminal es matado por una brigada especial de policía, así, justicia se serve por el fin.

Es una película complicado y dramático, yo rogar todos verlo.

#### ACTIVITY 13: A HISPANIC COUNTRY

<b>Un país hispano</b>	<b>A Hispanic country</b>
Escribe acerca de un país hispano que te	Write about a Hispanic country that you

<p>gustaría visitar. Contesta: ¿Cuál país y por qué? ¿Que harías mientras visitas ese país? ¿Con quién te gustaría viajar? ¿Cuánto tiempo te gustaría quedarte? Etc.</p> <p>¿Conoces a alguien que haya visitado un país hispano? Si no conoces a nadie, envía un correo electrónico o escribe en la pared de Facebook y pregúntales a tus compañeros de tu sección o de la otra sección de Español Intermedio II si han viajado a algún país hispano, ¿Con quién viajaron? ¿Cuánto tiempo pasaron en ese país? ¿Les gustaría volver? Etc.</p> <p>Escribe por lo menos tres párrafos y compártelos con tres personas en tu sección o la otra sección.</p>	<p>would like to visit. Answer: Which country and why? What would you do while visiting that country? With whom would like to travel? How long would you like to stay there?</p> <p>Do you know anybody that has visited a Hispanic country? If you don't know anyone, send an e-mail or ask your classmates if any of them have traveled abroad to a Hispanic country. Ask them, With whom they traveled? How long were they there for? Would they like to go back?</p> <p>Write at least three paragraphs and share them with three people in your section or the other section.</p>
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Each activity was designed to lead the students down a different path. In this activity, the students wrote about their ideas for future traveling, or past experiences.

One student explained where the inspiration about traveling came from:

**Student 9.** Me gustaría visitar el país de España. Aprendí sobre España en la clase de español en la escuela secundaria. Mi maestra me inspiró ir a España. España es un país muy bonita y me gusta viajar a lugares diferente. Yo nunca he ido a un continente diferente. Voy a especializarme en educación. Espero que vaya a España hacer mi pasantía.

Mientras visito España veré las playas, museos, y los edificios famosos. ¡Yo quiero ver todas las cosas! Me gustaría quedarme mucho tiempo en ese país. Posiblemente más de dos meses.

**Student 13.** ¿Porqué España? ¿Porqué no quieres visitar un otro país? (No estoy diciendo que es mal, pero estoy curiosa por que piensas que España es la mejor lugar.) ¿Qué te gusta más allí?

**Student 9.** Mi papa fue a España. Él me dijo muchos cuentos sobre sus viajes. Él viajó con el Navy. Mi papa le gusta comer la comida de España mucho. Mi papa me dijo que los personas en España beber vino con su comida. Él vió muchas cosas durante su viaje.

ACTIVITY 14: LEISURE TIME

El Ocio	Leisure time
<p>Algunas personas hacen actividades para entretenerse con sus amigos o por cuenta propia. Después de consultar este enlace: “Guía del Ocio” <a href="http://www.guiadelocio.com/">http://www.guiadelocio.com/</a> contesta las siguientes preguntas:</p> <p>¿Qué te gusta hacer cuando tienes tiempo libre? ¿Te gusta salir con tus amigos? Normalmente, ¿Te diviertes más haciendo actividades con tu familia o con tus amigos?</p> <p>¿Tienes algún talento especial? ¿Tocas algún instrumento? ¿Practicar algún deporte en tu tiempo libre? ¿Sabes pintar o hacer artesanías? ¿Qué haces? ¿Adónde vas? De acuerdo con el enlace, ¿Cómo las diversiones de los españoles se comparan con las tuyas?</p> <p>Escribe acerca de cuáles de estas actividades te gusta hacer. Por qué te gusta hacer este tipo de actividades y con quién. Puedes hablar del pasado y del futuro. Escribe por lo menos tres párrafos y</p>	<p>Some people do activities to entertain themselves and their friends. After looking into this link: “Guía del Ocio” <a href="http://www.guiadelocio.com/">http://www.guiadelocio.com/</a> answer the following questions:</p> <p>What do you like to do in your free time? Do you like to go out with your friends? Normally, do you have fun doing activities with your family or friends? Do you have a special talent? Do you play a musical instrument? Do you practice any sports in your free time? Do you know how to paint or do arts and crafts? What do you do? Where do you go? How do you compare what the Spaniards do for fun with your activities?</p> <p>Write about which one of these activities you like to do. Why do you like to do these types of activities and with whom you do them. You could talk about past activities and future ones. Write at least three</p>

compártelos con personas con las que no hayas compartido antes.	paragraphs and share them with new classmates.
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Travelling to the website gave the students experience with some more authentic material. The students shared many aspects of their leisure activities. The students were impressed by the talents of their classmates. The comparison of the students' leisure activities with those of the Spaniards offered them a different view and enlightening one.

**Student 1:** En mi tiempo libre, me gusta leer libros de todos tipos. También, me gusta pintar mucho cuando tengo los materiales. (En mi dormitorio, no tengo pintas) Prefiero pintar con oleos, pero son caros. Así de muchos de los tiempos yo usaba acrílicos. Mi padre es un artista, y de una niña, me enseñaba como pintar y dibujar. Cuando estoy con mis amigos, me gusta ir al cine y ver películas (como 'X-Men Orígenes: Lobezno' con Hugh Jackman). No veo películas de terror, porque tenía miedo. No me gusta tener miedo. A veces, vamos al teatro y vemos obras de teatros. No toco un instrumento, pero cuando tenía once años, tocaba la trompeta. Pero no me gusta tocar instrumentos. Prefiero escuchar el músico por personas más talentos que yo. En mi tiempo libre, escucho música de todos tipos. Es la cosa misma con deportes. No soy una jugadora de deportes buena. Prefiero verlos.

#### ACTIVITY 15: END OF SEMESTER WRAP-UP

The final activity was intended to wrap up the semester.

<b>Fin del semestre</b>	<b>End of the semester</b>
El fin del semestre ha llegado. En tus propias palabras y basado en tus experiencias contesta estas preguntas y compártelas con tus compañeros: ¿Cuáles fueron tus clases más difíciles y por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron tus clases favoritas y por qué? ¿Hiciste muchos amigos este semestre? ¿Tuviste mucho tiempo libre?	The end of the semester has arrived. In your own words and based on your experiences answer these questions and share them with your classmates: Which were your most difficult classes and why? Which were your favorite classes and why? Did you make many friends this semester? Did you have much free time? Which were

<p>¿Cuáles fueron los elementos de cada clase que disfrutaste más y cuáles no te gustaron? ¿Qué tipo de actividades académicas te gustaría que los profesores usaran más a menudo? ¿Cuáles son algunas de las características de personalidad y metodología de enseñanza de tus profesores este semestre que te gustaría ver otra vez en el futuro?</p>	<p>the elements of each class that you enjoyed the most and which ones you did not like? What type of academic activities would you like our professors to use more often? What are some of the characteristics of personality and methodology of teaching from your professor that you'd like to see again in the future?</p>
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**Student 1:** El semestre ha pasado muy rápido. Estoy muy contento con mis clases. No son muy difíciles, porque me gusta las clases. Pero geología fue difícil para mí, porque no me gustan clases de ciencias. No fui muy bien con ciencia, también. Fue divertida, todavía. Me gustaba la clase de la historia de teatro con Ray Schultz como el profesor. El leer para la clase era muy interesante.

La clase de español mejoraba mi capacidad hablar español muchas. Algunos veces estaba difícil, pero solo necesitaba practicar y hacer la cuaderna de trabaja y leer. Y hablarlo...por supuesto.

Tuve un poco tiempo libre, pero muchos del tiempo paso hacer tarea, o trabajo, o ir a clases, o comer...Hice un poco amigos nuevos este semestre porque los conocí a mi trabaja, o en mi clases. La universidad es un lugar bueno para conocer personas nuevas. Creo que todos los años aquí conoceré amigos nuevos.

**Student 3.** Estoy de acuerdo. La clase de español estaba muy difícil, pero he aprendido mucho.

**Student 13.** ¿Qué hiciste en la clase de historia de teatro? Dices que es muy interesante pero no sé nada sobre la historia de teatro. ¿Porqué es interesante?

**Student 1.** La clase era interesante porque aprendía mucho sobre la historia de teatro, y los razones por escritor obras de teatro. Leía muchos obras de teatro que muy controversial y son sobre problemas de los sexos, políticas, y sociales, como Miss Julie por Strindberg, M. Butterfly por Hwang, y Blood Wedding por Federico Garcia Lorca. Todas son obras de teatros buenas.

**Student 11.** Estoy de acuerdo. Este semestre ha pasado muy rápido verdaderamente pero he aprendido mucho también! Cuando tengo tiempo libre...

**Student 19.** Mis clases mas difíciles fueron “Introducción a Literatura” durante el primer semestre y español (durante ambos semestres). Sin embargo, ambos son mis favoritos. Mi profesor por Introducción a Literatura, [Name], tiene un estilo de enseñanza que es muy

divertido y simpática. El bromearía muchas veces, y tenía el acento estereotipado de un profesor. También, él es famoso por sus “plot charts”, aparecen como los triángulos con muchos garabatos cerca de los. Sin embargo, se necesita un exceso de lectura. Había muchas ocasiones cuando yo no he terminado la lectura, yo tenía que falsificar la respuesta.

Español estuvo complicado, también. En el primer semestre, nosotros estudiamos formas nuevas de gramática, y en el segundo semestre, hablamos muchísimo, más que en la escuela secundaria. Sin embargo, una de mis metas es hablar más frecuentemente y sin contratiempos. Me gusta hablar, aunque yo cometería errores. Así, el clase es frustrante, pero a lo mismo tiempo, enriquecedor.

**Student 5.** Ese semestre tenía muy bien. Fui no asustado de la universidad ese semestre. Tenía algunos amigos y hacía más amigos. Hacía muchos amigos al STLF. Había muy personas maravilloso. También en mis clases había muy personas maravilloso. Los amigos que tenía invierno fractura, soy amigos más con. Ese semestre español fue la clase mucho difícil. Soy no bien al español. I piensa tenía tocar el clase pero no hacer. MI favorita clase fue Foundations y Issues. Fue una clase de educación. Fue muy interesante. También clase Sociology. Es muy interesante aprender sobre los problemas en sociedad. No mucho tiempo libre. Es cinco clases y trabaja. Fui muy ocupado. Me gusta el leer y Facebook. Fueron muy interesante y divertiste. Me gusta aprender sobre la cultura de país de español más. Fue a muy bien semestre. Soy alegre que es fin, pero soy entusiasmado por año pasado.

**Student 15.** si- me gustan las personas de STLF también!

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