Spring 2018

The Type Of Homework Assignment And Its Potential To Influence Student Motivation And Language Learning In A High School Spanish Language Classroom

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THE TYPE OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT AND ITS POTENTIAL TO

INFLUENCE STUDENT MOTIVATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A HIGH

SCHOOL SPANISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 2018

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Introduction

Homework is a topic that continually receives a lot of attention in the media and is discussed in schools across the country. I reflect to when I was a high school student and homework was assigned every day. I attended a school with a four block class schedule and there were high expectations from teachers and administrators on academic performance. I remember nights staying awake until three o'clock in the morning studying for my classes, as well as participating in academic extracurricular activities and playing high school level sports outside of my school responsibilities. While I truly enjoyed my classes, teachers and the high school I attended, I experienced high levels of stress and anxiety about my grades and extracurricular activities. I can say with confidence that my high school prepared me for college and I received a well-rounded education. Despite my academic success in high school and college, I have never forgotten that feeling of extreme anxiety about grades, assignments and high expectations. With my own personal experience in mind and my role as a high school Spanish teacher, homework is a topic that has continuously been in my life, either as the role of a student, or as the role of a teacher who assigns homework assignments. The purpose of this paper is to explore how homework and academic expectations set by high schools across the country impact the young learners of today. The primary focus is to discover how the type of homework assignment given may influence motivation and confidence in language use for high school students, specifically in the Spanish language classroom. I aim to gather information for this topic through research and data collection by answering the research question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence*

student motivation and student use of the Spanish language in the classroom?

Current research shows that high school students continually experience stress, anxiety and depression (Kralovec, 2000). Thinking back to my own experience, I completely understand the challenges that a young person may face about getting into the right college, being successful, passing standardized testing, lettering in sports or extracurricular activities and working at after school jobs, etc. (Kohn, 2006). Because of the high expectations schools place upon children, the mental health and wellbeing of students is a topic that is extremely important in relationship to homework. Students are stressed out, disconnecting from learning, failing or performing poorly at school because of the stress of school and more importantly, the stress of homework (Kralovec, 2000). Despite my own personal feelings of homework based upon my experiences when I was a high school student, my role as a high school teacher has drastically changed my attitude towards homework. I remember my experiences as a student, yet as a teacher my responsibilities include preparing high school students for college and the world beyond the public education system. Because of this responsibility in my profession, it has been my practice as a teacher to assign daily homework as a tool to improve second language learning, based on the knowledge that homework can be a valuable tool for me to formatively assess student growth and engagement of Spanish language acquisition (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011).

As a teacher, I want to prepare my students for their futures and teach Spanish in a way that is engaging, fun and also in a way that promotes a level of academic performance that is necessary when learning a language. Any teacher knows the difficult balancing act of teaching, which includes teaching many students with multiple learning

needs, following curriculum guidelines that follow the national standards, promoting a creative and positive learning environment and preparing students for college readiness. Homework has been a tool that is intended to help students learn and practice material outside of the classroom and teach important learning skills such as time management and responsibility of completing assignments (Cooper, 2007). However, I continually ask myself, is the type of homework I am assigning the best practice for my students? When I reflect on my own experiences in high school, the academic rigor and expectations from my own high school certainly helped me to be a successful student for college and to excel, yet I cannot help but wonder was it the actual homework assignments that helped me learn better? I often come back to this question as a teacher and wonder if the homework I am assigning students each night directly links to student achievement in my own classroom. My personal struggle as a teacher on the topic of homework and the questions I ask myself have led me to identify the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?*

The Homework Debate

Through my own personal experiences of both the positive and negative effects of homework, I have taken an interest in the "homework debate" that is trending in academics and the media which also includes social media platforms (Chan, 2016). In today's society, the expectations of a student are becoming more and more demanding and many scholars, teachers and parents are questioning what role homework plays in a child's learning and academic development (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). The idea of assigning homework just for the sake that a child must take home homework every day is

being questioned by many stakeholders in this discussion, such as school administrators, teachers and parents. Many school districts are implementing a "no homework" policy and many teachers are initiating their own policies in their classrooms about homework that contradicts the traditional view that students need homework in order to learn outside of the classroom (Chan, 2016). For example, in August 2016, a Facebook post went viral about a second grade teacher who sent a letter home to parents explaining that students will not have homework for the upcoming school year (Chan, 2016). The post stated,

> "Research has been unable to prove that homework improves student performance. Rather, I ask that you spend your evenings with things that correlate with student success. Eat dinner as a family, read together, play outside, and get your child to bed early" (Chan, 2016).

The post went viral and many parents applauded the teacher's efforts in establishing a no homework policy in her classroom. Even though this example is specific to second grade learners, when I read this post online, I immediately thought of my own homework policy. While this post gained national attention and praise, the assumption that no homework is automatically a good thing, overlooks many families and students who may not fall into the "traditional" family this second grade teacher had in mind. I read the post and realized that while this teacher may have had good intentions, this philosophy overlooks and does not include diverse families. For example, there are single families with one parent working multiple jobs to make ends meet, some students spend their time in multiple homes, some students may be homeless or worried about their next meal, so the assumption that every family is able to sit down at a dinner table and spend their nights reading overlooks the economic hardships many families face and fails to

recognize family situations that do not fit the "traditional" model this teacher had in mind. This philosophy can single out students who have personal, emotional and financial situations that impact their ability to complete homework. It continues to create a divide in the public education system and is not necessarily an answer to the homework debate. With the many platforms available for both educators and parents, the discussion of homework is reaching many stakeholders and allowing continuous discussion of the multiple viewpoints of the topic.

Even though the homework debate has gained attention nationwide, my objective as a Spanish teacher is to understand how different types of homework have the potential to influence student motivation to learn and practice the Spanish language within the classroom. While anyone can have an opinion on the topic of homework, I decided that it was important for me to evaluate the assignments I assign in my classroom and use research to evaluate how different types of homework assignments may motivate students differently and potentially influence their in-class participation and language learning. In my opinion, the homework debate fails to address the issue of quality versus quantity in terms of homework assignments. Rather than assuming homework assignments are either "bad" or "good" for learning, the discussion needs to also include the types of homework assignments that are being used. Are teachers assigning homework based on the assumption that quantity is better, or are teachers assigning homework based on the idea that a quality homework assignment will positively impact learning? The homework debate fails to address the purpose of homework which is to provide learning opportunities that are an extension of what is being taught in the classroom. There are many opinions about whether homework should be given or not, however it is more

important for teachers and schools to evaluate the type of homework that is being given and question if homework is assigned based on quantity or quality to better understand its purpose in student learning.

My Homework Policy

As a high school Spanish teacher, I have always assigned daily homework for my students. The majority of the high school students in the district have had very limited exposure or no formal learning in a language other than English by the time they enter the high school. With this in mind, I assign homework from the mindset that learning a language requires practice and the more exposure one has to a language is the best way to learn a language. I strive to create a classroom culture that is engaging, demonstrate how Spanish is relevant and important for students to know, foster a level of respect about cultures from around the world and follow curriculum guidelines that the Spanish department at the high school has in place. One of those curriculum guidelines is the policy on daily homework. The department policy states that students will be assigned homework each night and should also spend about 10 to 15 minutes every day studying vocabulary (see Appendix A). The policy also states that homework assignments need to be completed on the due date, otherwise credit is not given for the assignment (see Appendix A). A typical homework assignment consists of one to two pages from a packet that students receive which includes worksheets focusing on vocabulary and grammar. Students are also required to study vocabulary from the current unit in preparation for vocabulary quizzes. Students are expected to complete homework outside of class time and arrive to class with it completed. I typically begin my class period by having students work on a "warm up" activity while I check their homework for completion. They

receive homework points if their pages are complete and if they attempted the assignment. This policy is consistent with the other three Spanish teachers in my department and is a policy that was in place before I was hired as a teacher.

Through the course of the four years I have taught at the high school, I have not changed the policy and have implemented the policy in the same manner every year. Despite the fact I have been implementing homework in the same manner each year, I have begun to question the relevance and effectiveness of my current homework policy. I teach six classes of Spanish in a seven-period school day and through my experience teaching, I have identified that only a fraction of the students actually take time to do the homework in the way that it is intended. Through my informal observations over the years, I have found students scribbling in answers at the beginning of class on their homework assignments, writing random Spanish words that are not relevant to the material, not even attempting to do the homework, or sharing packets with other students and showing me someone else's work which is considered cheating. My interventions over the years have included having conversations with students and parents about a student's lack of homework completion, not giving credit to those students who don't complete the work or who are completing the work during class time, having discussions with my classes about the relevance and importance of taking the time to complete the work outside of class and eliminating extremely challenging activities from homework pages in the hopes to make it more manageable for students. Even though a good portion of students complete the homework assignments in the way they are intended, I have questioned the importance of these assignments due to the constant battle of making the homework assignments meaningful for students and the large amount of attention

required from me to check the homework assignments during class time.

As a teacher, I feel that I am spending more time and energy trying to convince students *why* they need to complete the homework, rather than helping students learn through the homework assignments. As a department, we expect students to understand and identify the importance of these homework assignments, however it is obvious there is a disconnect between the majority of students' completion of homework assignments and the expectation of homework in my classroom.

Another important factor to consider with the relationship of homework and learning in my classroom is the new 1:1 ratio of Chromebooks provided to each student in the district. At the beginning of this school year, each student was issued his or her own Chromebook. This is an exciting initiative for both students and teachers. In my own reflection of my homework policy, I made it a personal goal for myself to include more assignments through Google platforms, Schoology and other resources to facilitate learning. I want to take advantage of the educational learning opportunities the Chromebooks provide, engage students through technology and use that in a way to address my dilemma with homework assignments. I want to provide homework assignments that are meaningful and also require responsibility and student ownership of their own work. This Chromebook initiative can help me address some of the problems I have been experiencing and also breathe life into some homework assignments to make it more meaningful for students. I will utilize the Chromebooks to help me determine an answer to my research question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and student use of the Spanish language in the classroom?*

Research Question

I intend to explore the dilemma I am facing in my classroom by the following research question: *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and student use of the Spanish language in the classroom?* Through my research, I will first begin to explore the methods and research behind how a student best learns a language. In the next chapter, the Literature Review, I include research that explains the history of homework in the United States, and the research that explains the importance of identifying how homework can both positively influence student learning and also negatively influence learning, thus identifying the research that proves how the type of homework a teacher assigns addresses this information. The Literature Review also explains research on a high school learner's motivation in today's public school system and research relevant to how a child best understands second language learning, particularly in Spanish language acquisition. Through the research presented in Chapter Two, I aim to answer my question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?*

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The debate on homework has many important arguments, and there are many

factors to consider how homework has impacted the field of education. The purpose of

this chapter is to explain the literature and research on not only the topic of homework,

but also examine homework itself by identifying research that explains how the types of

homework assignments given impact learning. This chapter will also explore if the type

of homework assigned motivates student learning and engagement in the high school

Spanish language classroom. All the literature presented in the chapter is used to answer

the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation*

and Spanish language learning in the classroom?

The first part of the literature review explains the history of homework in the

United States and the way schools across the country, and high performing countries

around the world, are differentiating learning through the platform of homework. The

section examines research behind the stance of how homework negatively impacts

students. The literature review identifies research that states both the negative and

positive effects of homework and concludes with research that supports the correlation

between learning and the type of homework assignment assigned.

The third part of this section explains through literature review the differentiated

styles of learning of a high school student and demonstrates a high school student's

motivation behind learning. Motivation and differentiated styles of learning are also

examined through the lens of homework, including how homework assignments impact

learning and motivation.

The fourth and final part of this section reviews literature that demonstrates the theories to second language learning, specifically the Spanish language. This section focuses particularly in the multiple modalities and theories to how one best learns Spanish, especially for high school students. The section identifies how one best learns a language and how homework may contribute or hinder a student's learning through relevant research of today.

The literature presented in this chapter is on the role homework has in the public educational system in the United States, the motivation and learning of the high school student in today's society and the methodology of Spanish language acquisition, further explores the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?*

History and Culture of Homework in the United States

The view on the value of homework in the educational system has changed many times throughout the history of the United States (Cooper, 2007). In order to better understand the relationship between homework and the educational system in the United States, one must look at the definition of homework and how it is classified. "Homework can be defined as tasks assigned to students by school teachers that are intended to be carried out during non-school hours" (Cooper, 2007, p. 3). Homework assignments are also classified by the following "a) amount, b) purpose, c) skill area d) choice for the student e) completion deadline f) degree or individualization g) social context" (Cooper, 2007, p. 3). The various classifications usually have common goals of reinforcing the learning material in the classroom (Cooper, 2007).

Public opinion on the value of homework has changed many times throughout the history of the United States. In the early 20th century, public opinion about homework began to shift and many questioned its role and effectiveness once the main form of homework, which was memorization, was called into question (Vatterott, 2009). At the time, memorization was viewed as "good mental exercise" (Cooper, 2007, p.), yet with the growth of pediatrics as a specialty, more doctors and those in the health profession put more emphasis on the overall health of children and as a result, homework was questioned on its effectiveness (Vatterott, 2009). Up until the 1940s, less homework was given. However in the 1950s this particular trend began to change (Cooper, 2007). In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik and as a result, America became concerned about the educational system and questioned how children could be successful in a future with technology on the rise (Vatterott, 2009). Because of this concern, homework became an answer of how to encourage student learning (Cooper, 2007). This attitude continued until the 1960s when learning theories began to emerge that questioned the role homework played on a child's well-being and specifically mental health (Cooper, 2007). In the 1980s the attitude began to switch once again and homework was viewed in a more favorable light mainly due to a report by A Nation at Risk that encouraged the use of homework as a way to combat the issues the American Public School system was facing (National Commission on Excellence in Education & United States Department of Education, 1983). Homework's favorability was continued into the 1990s, encouraged by educators and parents, in order to prepare students for high academic emerging standards (Vatterott, 2009). However, in the late 1990's and into the early 2000's America began to question homework once again. Parents and those in the American educational system

identified that children were experiencing too much stress (Cooper, 2007). In 2002 No

Child Left Behind also became a driving force for rigorous standards in the American

public school system, because of this; pressure emerged to meet the standards and

resulted in a significant increase of homework, especially at the elementary school level

(Vatterott, 2009). This attitude has continued to gain momentum in today's current

society and many Americans are yet again questioning the methods of homework and

how students best learn in the educational system of today. A 2004 national survey on

more than 2,900 children conducted by the University of Michigan found that the time

children spent doing homework has increased by 51% since 1981 (Bennett & Kalish,

2006). Furthermore, the National Education Association identified that the hours kids

spend on homework far exceed what is recommended based on research (Bennett &

Kalish, 2006). Harris Cooper, a top researcher on the subject of homework, suggested

that schools should follow a "ten minutes per grade per school night rule" (Cooper,

2007), which means according to this theory, that by the time a student is in high school,

he or she should be receiving about two hours of homework per night. However, we as a

society know that even children in elementary school are completing up to two hours of

homework per night. It is obvious that the recommendations by those who are prominent

stakeholders in the discussion of homework are being ignored. Homework is not just

assigned on weekdays; it is extending into the weekend, holidays etc. (Bennett & Kalish,

2006). Psychologists and therapists state that they are seeing many kids with homework

related anxiety and homework is taking a lot of their energy not just academically, but

socially and emotionally with the hours upon hours of homework assigned (Bennett &

Kalish, 2006). Clearly, homework is a topic that transcends all age groups, from

kindergarten to twelfth graders. It is also important to recognize the students who have

learning disabilities are often times expected to complete certain tasks without any

differentiation that recognizes their learning needs (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Homework

is an ideal that has grown to become a fundamental aspect of the American education

system and the research in review, demonstrates the impact homework has over the

course of many years.

 Throughout the history of this country, Americans have continuously celebrated

the ideal of working hard; it has proven time and time again that our values are often

based on the ideal that hard work will help one achieve his or her goals (Kralovec &

Buell, 2000). Homework is a topic that is shaped by this ideal. Students are constantly

being told, instructed, or given subtle messages that homework should take precedence

over all other aspects of their lives (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Schools, parents, and

expectations by society, all contribute to the belief that homework is a way for students to

learn, be responsible and prepared for their futures. "Beliefs about the inherent goodness

of homework are so entrenched, so unshakable for many parents and educators, they

seem almost cultlike" (Vatterott, 2009, p. 9). This statement demonstrates the deeply

rooted belief system that has been evident through many decades by parents and

educators about the value of homework. Vatterott (2009) stated that in order to

understand if homework is the best policy for student learning, one must understand the

culture of homework in the United States. Too often the belief systems parents and

teachers share about homework are rooted in not just fact, but on tradition or moral

judgements (Vatterott, 2009). Five common belief systems on homework make up the

culture and attitude of homework in the United States. These belief systems include the

following:

> Belief #1: The role of the school is to extend learning beyond the classroom,
>
> Belief #2: Intellectual activity is intrinsically more valuable than non-intellectual
>
> activity, Belief #3: Homework teaches responsibility, Belief #4: Lots of
>
> homework is a sign of rigorous curriculum, Belief #5: Good teachers give
>
> homework; good students do their homework. (Vatterott, 2009, pp. 10-13)

Understanding the history of homework and how public opinion has shifted throughout different points of history, may also explain the five common inherent beliefs the majority of the public share about homework and its value on learning. It is important to recognize that while in the United States, homework is a dividing concept in terms of ideas and beliefs, many countries who are front runners in the field of education take a different approach to homework than what is currently being addressed here in the United States. For example, Finland's students' success is hard to ignore with the philosophy of less hours of instruction than other countries and also assigning less homework and encouraged to learn through creative play (Coughlan, 2016). Finland's educational system takes the approach of "quantity vs. quality" (Coughlan, 2016), for example Finnish students are assigned on average 3 hours of homework a week and continuously score high on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test (Barshay, 2015). However, in comparison countries like Singapore and China are top achieving countries on the PISA test and assign lots of homework. Students in Shanghai, China lead the world in scores on the PISA test and are assigned on average 14 hours of homework a week (Barshay, 2015). Since 2012, most countries around the world have been reducing the amount of homework assigned per week, yet the United States on average has not

been reducing homework (Barshay, 2015). Yet it is important to recognize that unlike countries such as Singapore and China, where more homework assigned each week is associated with higher PISA test scores, the United States continues to score lower and is not recognized as a top country on this benchmark (Barshay, 2015). These two drastic approaches to homework are important to recognize, such as Finland's approach to less homework and Singapore and China's approach to a lot of homework, yet both countries are high achievers in the world of education. Despite the United States implementation of a lot of homework, it is obvious that this approach is not producing results like in other countries.

One can see that homework is a topic that is continuously debated not only in the United States but around the world. However, the use of media and technology has given homework a new platform to be debated upon and is broadening the topic to all members of society (Vatterott, 2009). Parents are able to research and identify "pro-homework" and "anti-homework" stances on various websites, blogs and communicate via online platforms with other parents around the country that share their same views and outlook (Vatterott, 2009). Vatterott (2009) described that media and technology have helped accelerate the anti-homework movement and more people are looking closer at their local public school's practices on homework and may be questioning the validity of homework. Because of the readily available information on homework, many are joining in on the discussion of the role homework should play in a child's learning. The next three sections will explore through literature, the stances on homework evident in the United States.

The Negative Effects of Homework

This section explores the ideas and arguments to why many believe homework should not be a mandated part of the American public education curriculum. This section explains the negative effects of homework on a child's development and also includes research that states homework has no direct correlation to student achievement.

Brain research has shown the importance of rest time for children which optimizes learning (Vatterott, 2009). Concern about homework and its effects on student learning and behavior is continuously growing. A high proportion of student anxiety and stress originates from stress due to school and school-related activities (Kouzma & Kennedy, 2002). There is no denying that stress is a significant factor to many issues teens are experiencing today, especially stress, anxiety and depression (Kouzma & Kennedy, 2002). Along with the negative effects that stress has on an adolescent's development, homework also negatively affects students in the following ways: loss of interest in academic material, physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, pressure to complete and perform tasks, and finally an increase of differences between high and low achievers (Cooper, 2007). A study conducted in 2002 identified a direct correlation between how much time a high school student spends on homework assignments and his or her level of anxiety, depression, anger, and other mood disturbances (Kohn, 2006). Some students are able to handle the stress of homework better than others, however even if a student is able to manage that stress in a healthy manner, homework "overwhelms struggling kids and removes joy for high achievers" (Kohn, 2006, p.11). Homework's emotional effects on students can be a direct influence to a student's loss of interest in learning and intellectual curiosity (Kohn, 2006).

Another important factor to a child's well-being is identifying how lack of sleep contributes to a child's anxiety. High schoolers spend 8 hours a day at school; many are involved in after school sports or activities, many have after school jobs and responsibilities, yet are given hours of homework each night to complete (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). The reason many students state as to why their homework is not done is that they did not have enough time (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Adolescent psychologists argue that a priority for adolescent development should be the social self (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Kralovec and Buell (2000) stated,

> Denying the reality of new and competing goals and emotions by chaining the self to the idealized and even intensified standards of the adult workplace not only fails to contribute to maturation, but is a sure route to rebellion or extreme distress- if not immediately, then often later in life. (p. 56)

The toll homework has on a child's mental health cannot be overlooked or undervalued. The ever growing list of responsibilities for a teen often results in lack of sleep. Research states that a teen needs at least 9.25 hours of sleep per night (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). The National Sleep Foundation 2004 Sleep in America Poll, found that 80% of teens do not get the recommended amount of sleep and at least 28% of students fall asleep in school (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Students who go to school tired, exhausted and overworked are not receiving the education that is intended by schools and teachers. The research that demonstrates the negative effects of homework on a child's mental, physical and emotional health are alarming and schools and educators need to take a closer look at how an adolescent's well-being is being impacted by the assignments given.

Homework also continues to perpetuate social class inequality in the American

public education system (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Teachers who continue to assign

homework assume that all students have a quiet place to study and work and have

parental support each night, failing to recognize many parents who work, or those who

are single parents and do not have the luxury of the time that schools assume all families

are able to provide (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). This divide continues to create a gap in the

American public school system. Research up until this point has only identified the

relationship between homework and academic achievement, thus the arguments that

homework provides nonacademic benefits are unsupported (Kohn, 2006). Because of the

lack of data that identifies nonacademic benefits of homework, Kralovec stated that

homework "teaches kids to cheat, to do the least amount of work, or to get by" (Kralovec

& Buell, 2000, p. 13). The role parents play in ensuring their child get his or her

homework done also discredits the argument that homework teaches responsibility

(Bennett & Kalish, 2006).

     In summary, the reasons why homework assignments do not impact student

learning and are detrimental to student growth and development make it glaringly

obvious that homework assignments need to have a purpose if and when they are

assigned. The assumption that homework always needs to be assigned demonstrates a

lack of understanding about homework. Homework needs to have a purpose, include

student choice and focus on the development of a skill area in extension of information

taught in the classroom (Cooper, 2007). The research stated in this section demonstrates

the negative impacts homework has to student learning and growth thus creating an

increasingly critical need for schools to evaluate the homework they are giving students

on a daily basis.

The Positive Effects of Homework

Many who support homework believe that homework can serve multiple purposes to a child's academic and emotional development (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Research demonstrates that positive effects of homework include academic benefits such as increased understanding and immediate achievement, curriculum enrichment, improved informational processing and study skills and better study habits (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Nonacademic benefits include self-discipline and time management skills including organizational skills (Cooper, 2007).

It is important to recognize that those in favor of homework are also in favor of the improvement of the value of homework and ensuring that homework is a beneficial factor for a child's learning outside of school. A student's ownership in one's own learning is fundamental to academic growth, research states that learning styles and identifying how a child best learns is crucial to consider when a teacher is assigning homework (Vatterott, 2009)."Numerous studies have found that student achievement increases when teaching methods match students' learning styles" (Vatterott, 2009, p. 81). Teachers who provide student choice and accommodations to learning styles in homework assignments see an increase in motivation and the effectiveness of the homework assignment (Vatterott, 2009). Students who complete their homework experience feelings of pride and competence about their own learning, which results in motivation of learning (Vatterott, 2009). Students with positive self-efficacy will feel accomplished when completing homework assignments (Vatterott, 2009). Research also shows that student characteristics such as "age, grade level, ability, motivation and study habits" (Cooper, 2007) influence the effectiveness of a homework assignment. One must

also identify the resources a child has at home and a child's home circumstances in order for homework to be effective (Cooper, 2007). Atkinson, (2017) wrote how homework can be a quality learning opportunity outside of the classroom. Homework can bring children and parents together and provide family learning opportunities; homework can also be modified to a child's learning and understanding (Atkinson, 2017). Additionally, homework can be fun and full of discovery if implemented in the proper way (Atkinson, 2017).

The Type of Homework Assignment

Whether one opposes the idea of homework or is in support of homework, it is essential to identify the type of homework assignment that is being given in the classroom. From the research stated early in the chapter about the history of homework in the United States, it is clear that despite the ever changing opinions of homework, homework has been an element that is always present in the American public educational system. It is likely to continue to play a role in student learning, making it essential that school districts take the time to revise homework and critically evaluate the homework policy of each classroom thus creating and promoting more effective homework assignments (Kralovec & Buell, 2000). Many school districts have taken the approach of setting specific time restrictions, implementing homework-free weekends and deemphasizing traditional homework (Kuperinsky, 2017). With the multiple initiatives of how to address homework, many are recognizing that the function of school has changed (Kuperinsky, 2017). Students are able to access information at any time and school districts are teaching children to "think, to posit questions, to conduct research, to solve problems" (Kuperinsky, 2017). It is critical to recognize that many times those who

support the teachers' and schools' decisions to implement homework also support

homework assignments that are effective and beneficial for all students. It is the

responsibility of schools and teachers to recognize if the homework assigned each night

meets those expectations. It leads to the question, what type of homework assignment is

being given? Is the assignment effective? Too often the homework that is assigned by a

teacher is based upon individual teacher beliefs of homework rather than research of

homework itself (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Furthermore, many times the main focus for

students as well as parents when the topic of homework arises is if the student got the

homework assignment done rather than focusing on the understanding, learning and

objective of the actual homework assignment (Kuperinsky, 2017).

   Another component to consider is the stress placed upon teachers in terms of

standardized testing scores and state mandated curriculum, which means that with the

continued pressure from state mandated testing, teachers find ways to assign more

homework to ensure the standards are met (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). As high school

students prepare for college, homework often times is viewed as a tool for college

readiness, however the amount of homework does not always equate to college

preparation (Kuperinsky, 2017). At the high school level especially, many teachers do not

have the time to individually check every single assignment, and because of this, many

students do not see the value of homework assignments (Kralovec & Buell, 2000).

Research suggests that homework assignments that do not provide feedback do not help

students, rather it continues to allow students to practice skills incorrectly until he or she

completes a test or project and gets a bad grade (Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Fear of bad

grades does not build intrinsic motivation and results in homework anxiety and stress

(Bennett & Kalish, 2006). Fear of failure, rising stress and anxiety, and a lack of a clear objective about many homework assignments, support those who are questioning the role homework should play in a child's learning. Evaluating the relationship between students and their homework assignments, Vatterott (2009) stated, "We often tend to look for the quick fix- expressing concern more about 'How can we make them do their homework?' instead of looking more deeply at 'Why don't they do their homework?'" (p. 87). Research shows that the frontal cortex of a child's brain, which is the part of the brain that controls organization and multitasking, does not fully develop until the late teens or early twenties (Bennett & Kalish, 2006), yet the expectations often set upon kids are those expectations of an adult. Bennett and Kalish (2006) explained that, "even asking high schoolers to assume that adult level of planning and organization is placing a very great demand on them" (p. 115). Often students who do not complete their homework or fail to meet the expectations teachers have are labeled as "lazy" or experience a level of failing in their academics due to the inability to meet such demands and standards. If students are not yet able to complete what is asked of them due to their development, why do teachers and schools continue to carry out giving large amounts of homework? Kohn (2006) identified that homework shows an association with academic achievement, not causal relationship. Often times researchers evaluate standardized test scores in conjunction with homework. Families who are more affluent and in communities where higher standardized test scores are achieved, may view that homework is a contributing cause to academic achievement, yet research demonstrates that is not the case (Kohn, 2006). It is not accurate to assume test scores equate to student learning (Kohn, 2006), thus the measure of homework to student achievement often times is not accurate.

However, it is important to identify what type of homework assignment is being

evaluated in relationship to student achievement. Homework itself is a broad topic, and

assignments vary depending on grade level as well as the academic subject area. In order

to better understand homework and its role on a high school learner, it is imperative to

understand a high school student's motivation when it comes to learning. The next

section of this literature review demonstrates a learner's motivation and how it is

fundamental to learning the Spanish language.

The High School Learner and Motivation

Motivation is an essential factor that contributes to a student's learning, especially

in regards to homework. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, motivation is

defined as, "the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something"

(Merriam Webster, 2017). Motivation is a critical element in a child's learning. Often

times, a student's success in school is dependent upon his or her motivation of learning

and the understanding or importance of assignments and tasks given by a teacher.

Bempechat (2004) stated that "achievement motivation is now best understood as a

collection of beliefs, attitudes and emotions that influence students' performance in

school" (p. 190). Motivation and effort of a high schooler is a complex concept and

research suggests that a teenager's emotional development and mental health plays a

critical role in their ability to engage in learning in the classroom (National Research

Council, 2004). According to the National Research Council, to determine a student's

engagement, one must,

　　　consider mental or cognitive behaviors (attention, problem solving, using

　　　metacognitive strategies) as well as observable behaviors (active participation in

class, completing work, seeking assistance when having difficulty, taking

challenging classes) because relying only on observable behaviors as evidence of

engagement can be deceiving. (National Research Council, 2004, p. 31)

A student's experience of low expectations and academic failure directly result in low-self-esteem and academic disengagement (National Research Council, 2004). Classes that provide manageable yet challenging instructional tasks, with achievable academic standards, promote and encourage a student's self-confidence, esteem and levels of engagement (National Research Council, 2004). A learner's emotions such as embarrassment, incompetence and shame, may also determine a learner's future success (Bempechat, 2004). Research suggests that a child's beliefs about mistakes and learning directly impact motivation and engagement (Bempechat, 2004), for example Bempechat (2004) stated, "children who are susceptible to learned helplessness- the tendency to fall apart in the face of difficulty or challenge- tend to believe that mistakes are a sign of low ability, a stable quality of the self over which they have no control" (Bempechat, 2004, p. 190). There is a strong relationship between motivation and self-esteem, and the ability that a child has to overcome learning difficulties will result in control over motivation and self-esteem (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011).

Self-efficacy is a term that is used when explaining the relationship between motivation and self-esteem. Kidd and Czerniawski (2011) defined self-efficacy as "how 'capable' learners feel in achieving and succeeding at their learning" (p. 137). Self-efficacy also directly impacts a child's effort in learning (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Kidd and Czerniawski (2011) emphasized the need for learners to take risks yet also identified that the need for success is important in self-efficacy and motivation. A learner

who fails will experience a severe lack of motivation which directly impacts the learner's academic experience (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Bempechat (2004) stated, "for many students, mistakes, confusion and academic struggle become a common aspect of learning" (p. 195). A student's self-efficacy is impacted by one's mistakes, failures and negative experiences in a learning environment. A student's perception of one's ability to successfully accomplish learning tasks and assignments has a higher chance to put in more effort in learning. Kissau, Kolano, and Wang (2010) stated that, "self-efficacy is closely linked with anxiety, another important factor influencing one's motivation to learn a language" (p. 706). A child's emotions about learning are directly related to self-efficacy which in turn determines motivation in learning, especially considering motivation in learning the Spanish language.

Since self-efficacy and emotions are determining factors of motivation, teachers have a responsibility to promote motivation and learning within the classroom. Moreover, a child is continuously developing skills such as, responsibility, persistence; goal setting and planning (Bempechat, 2004) which allows him or her to gain appropriate skills in the school environment and also encourages maturity beyond high school. Kidd and Czerniawski (2011) advocated that learners need to be encouraged to take learning risks and teachers will need to allow room for students to explore such learning experiences. Additionally, learners should have a voice in their own learning, which benefits a learner's motivation (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Another recommendation to promote learning motivation and engagement is the importance of differentiated instruction in formative assessments (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Differentiated strategies through formative assessments inform a student of future progress, and evidence from research

demonstrates that formative assessments that incorporate feedback to the learner, impact the learner's motivation (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Homework is a type of formative assessment that cannot be overlooked. Bempechat (2004) argued that homework has an important role in a student's education; it can provide a long-term role in the development of achievement motivation. It is also stated, that homework assignments provide "study habits that are helpful for learning, including the value of effort and the ability to cope with mistakes and difficulty" (Bempechat, 2004, p. 189).

In order to identify how homework can positively affect motivation in a student, it is important to identify the variables that directly influence a student's success in learning. These variables include: time management, homework engagement, and homework anxiety (Regueiro et al., 2016). Regueiro et al. conducted a study of 714 students aged 12 to 16 years old in northern Spain and identified three crucial variables; time management, homework engagement, and homework anxiety, and studied the relationship these variables have to motivation of learning, including motivation of learning and homework assignments. The study found that "students motivated to learn, are likely to do more homework, spend more time on homework, manage that time better and as a consequence, achieve higher" (Regueiro et al., 2016, p. 7). A student's reason for doing homework is an influential factor to his or her ability to participate in the homework assignment. Kidd and Czerniawski (2011) described homework as a tool, when used intentionally, can "instill passion, motivation and enthusiasm for the subject" (p. 122). When a learner understands the homework's intention and homework is given in moderate amounts, homework can increase achievement and encourage motivation and self-confidence (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). As demonstrated above, homework can be

a key motivational piece to student motivation; however it is important to recognize the negative impact homework has on a student's life, for example, homework can be a source for anxiety and creating a negative impact in a student's family life (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). If a child does not have teachers and parents to encourage him or her in his or her ability to overcome mistakes and failures, the child's self-efficacy and effort will result in a direct lack in motivation and ultimately lead to a negative learning experience (Bempechat, 2004). Homework can be a valuable tool for teachers; it can provide data on learner engagement (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011). Homework can also be a determinant in learner motivation by increasing a student's anxiety which directly impacts his or her self-efficacy and motivation in learning (National Research Council, 2004).

While homework impacts student motivation and learning, it is also important to consider if homework directly impacts Spanish language acquisition. The research reviewed in this section demonstrated how homework can positively and negatively affect student motivation, however it is crucial to consider if homework is a key component to second language learning. The next section will continue to explore the role homework has in a high school learner's motivation by demonstrating how a high school learner best learns the Spanish language. The literature presented in the next section establishes key elements to Spanish language learning that one must consider when identifying the role homework has in a Spanish language classroom.

Spanish Language Learning Methods and Computer Assisted Language Learning

Every language teacher asks the question, how do students learn a language and what can be done to help them succeed? In today's society, students are expected to

demonstrate their understanding of language through four practices; listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Al-Kasey & Weston, 1992). There are a variety of factors that contribute to a non-native speaker's language acquisition; however, it is important to note that a teacher has direct control over his or her implementation of types of teaching methods of instruction (Hokanson, 2000). While there is a substantial amount of methods of instruction available to teachers, this particular literature review examines a few of the common instructional methods in the Spanish language classroom, especially considering which methods may be applicable to the relationship between instruction and homework.

Research suggests that it is ideal that language methodologies allow the majority of class time be used for practicing the Spanish language (Al-Kasey & Weston, 1992). Many educators question, with the implementation of certain homework assignments, if enough class time is being used to support communicative classroom activities in the target language (Garrett, 2009). The following methods emphasize the variety of ways a student learns a language through classroom instruction and identifies student learning methods. The Humanistic Approach is a communicative approach that focuses on the whole learner and emphasizes individual work, group work, and includes learning through music, art and physical activity (Chavez, 2010). The Direct Approach is a method that uses only the target language and English is highly discouraged, questions are asked and answered in the target language, and the study of the use of grammar is encouraged and viewed as important to second language acquisition (Chavez, 2010). In the Reading Approach, very little attention is paid to grammar structure; rather this strategy emphasizes the skill of reading in the target language (Chavez, 2010). Educators view this strategy as valuable because of the full immersion in the target language and the

elimination of reading in one's native language (Chavez, 2010) The Audio-Lingual

Method is a combination of the Direct Approach and the Reading Approach and is rooted

in behavior psychology (Chavez, 2010). In the Audio-Lingual Approach, "The new

material presented to the class or to the student is presented in a form of a dialogue. The

student is expected to mimic and memorize set phrases and expected to repeat exactly

what the teacher is saying" (Chavez, 2010, p. 55). In this approach, grammar is not

viewed as important to learning, since students learn phrases directly from the teacher

and by repetition (Chavez, 2010). In this method, teachers use pictures and visual aids to

communicate vocabulary words and also emphasize how words are spelled (Chavez,

2010). The Audio-Lingual method encourages all students to use Spanish and

discourages English in the classroom which in turn eventually encourages appreciation of

the Spanish language once students are able to identify their progress by using Spanish

(Chavez, 2010). The final language method in this particular literature review is the Total

Physical Response method. Total Physical Response is a communicative method through

the use of kinesthetic sensory movement (Chavez, 2010) that engages learners in

authentic and valid activities which does not focus on grammar explanations (Hokanson,

2000). Research states that learners "will have a high degree of motivation" (Chavez,

2010, p. 65) through Total Physical Response because a students is encouraged to speak

the language when he or she is confident and comfortable to join in conversations, and

associate meaning of words through direct action (Chavez, 2010).

There are many methods that are effective in language learning and it is important

to recognize there is not one specific method that results in success, it depends on what

the teacher feels comfortable using and most importantly, what is best for student

learning (Chavez, 2010). At the initial stages of language acquisition, identifying the

methodology that matches best with a student's cognitive style results in a student's

ability to better learn and understand the language (Hokanson, 2000). Despite the ample

research on language learner methods, there is an extreme disconnect with the various

methodologies and what is practiced in the classroom today. Al-Kasey and Weston

(1992) stated,

> Students may fail to learn the target constructions for three reasons: first, the
>
> students do not know the meta-language; second, the meta-language of
>
> Traditional Grammar does not accurately capture what a speaker of a language
>
> knows and this knowledge of grammar does not necessarily translate in practical
>
> terms, from one language to another (p. 751).

According to Al-Kasey and Weston (1992), students do not understand the meta-

language which is defined as "any set of terminology and abstract concepts used to talk

about language" (p. 751). Many textbooks and Spanish language curriculum assume that

a student understands the meta-language which most students rarely do, and even if a

student does understand the meta-language, curriculum based solely on traditional

grammar does not contribute to one's understanding of the language (Al-Kasey &

Weston, 1992). Another component that is critical in understanding Spanish language

acquisition for a high school student is the student's willingness to communicate in the

target language (Chavez, 2010). Second Language Anxiety is a factor that affects a

student's ability to communicate in Spanish and also impacts his or her ability to listen,

read, and write in the target language (Chavez, 2010). Students who experience Second

Language Anxiety may learn less and not demonstrate the knowledge they do know

which in most cases is viewed as failure in the classroom through lack of participation (Chavez, 2010). High school learners who experience Second Language Anxiety tend to experience communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Chavez, 2010) In order to combat Second Language Anxiety, Chavez (2010) suggested that teachers have a responsibility to create a comfortable and risk free classroom atmosphere where students are encouraged to make mistakes and learn in a communicative approach (Chavez, 2010). One suggestion that addresses this responsibility is encouraging students to communicate in a risk free zone by utilizing technology, "because online environments allow students to make mistakes without being embarrassed" (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008, p. 210). Sagarra and Zapata (2008) also suggested that assigning homework and other tasks using an online platform allowed students unlimited time to complete the assignments and review more challenging topics at their own pace which allowed students to have ownership in their own learning. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) supports the development of autonomy outside of the language classroom for second language learners (Chapelle & Chapelle, 2010). Research studies have demonstrated that most students showed a positive attitude toward the use of technology in second language learning, and learning through platforms of technology lowers anxiety and creates a beneficial and effective interaction when learning a second language (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011). In consideration of how students are motivated through learning, it is important to recognize the style of learning that supports each student and also promotes classroom instruction through engagement. Another important factor is the method in which homework is presented for students. Second Language Anxiety plays a role in a student's learning of a second language such

as Spanish. Teachers have a responsibility for creating a risk-free environment and research suggests using online platforms to increase motivation and provide a learning environment that encourages students to make mistakes in order to help progress their learning (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008). Homework can either be a tool used to promote a risk-free zone or it can encourage Second Language Anxiety through fear, anxiety and disengagement. Many teachers use technology to assist the use of homework in the language classroom, which may create more class time for communication activities and activities that support language learning (Garrett, 2009). Online homework presents itself in many types of assignments, which can include video use, recordings of audio by both native speakers and the students, habit formation activities which still prove necessary for language learners and also the ability for self-pacing and differentiated activities based on learning styles (Garrett, 2009). Through the platform of technology, homework has the ability to focus on the individual learner and integration of the language through practices outside of the language classroom (Garrett, 2009). To further support this information, Sagarra and Zapata (2008) conducted a study in which student's perceptions of language learning with online homework was gathered. In the research study, they found that 70% of the participants believed that online activities promoted learning, especially activities that gave immediate feedback (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008). Immediate feedback and allowing multiple attempts facilitated opportunities for improvement and decreased language learning anxiety through the platform of online learning (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008). Interactive Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) activities that incorporate interactive methods of learning through texts, videos, audio and speaking assessments which help facilitate comprehension of the target language, have been

beneficial to learning and providing feedback for students (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011).

Summary

In summary, the literature explored in this section demonstrates the value of identifying the ways in which a student best learns the Spanish language, the importance of a high school learner's motivation, and the controversial topic of homework. The literature in Chapter Two identifies the need that the research question *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* has in the Spanish language classroom. Through the literature, it is clear that parents and educators agree that motivation of learning and multiple learning styles is an important aspect to recognize in a child's learning. Furthermore, ample research shows the role technology has in motivation of learning a language. Spanish language acquisition is an ever-evolving area of study and in today's society, the need to speak multiple languages is evident. However, the topic of homework is widely debatable. How does the type of homework benefit a student's ability to learn a language? Does traditional paper and pencil homework or online homework impact learning and a learner's motivation? In today's society, what practices are best for high school students when learning a language? The next chapter explores these questions along with the research question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* through an explanation of the intended research study that will be conducted in a high school Spanish language classroom.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The literature examined in Chapter Two identified the continually evolving debate on homework within the American public school educational system. As a high school Spanish teacher, the topic of homework has been an area in my teaching practice that I tend to question each year. I question how the homework practices in my classroom best promote student motivation to learn Spanish and a student's motivation to take the risk of participating during class by using the target language. This chapter identifies the ways I aim to answer the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* The information presented in this chapter identifies the participants involved in the study, including the demographics of the high school the study took place at, the methodology and the tools that were used to analyze the data, and manner in which the data was collected in the study. I intend to use the results to help me become a better teacher and provide better learning opportunities for my students in the future.

Research Paradigm and Method

The study that was conducted was an action research project. Action research is defined as "any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn" (Mills, 2014, p. 8). Mills (2014) also stated that "action research is done *by* teachers *for* themselves" (p. 8). Action research is a methodology that focuses on

professional development and the encouragement of continually bettering one's teaching practice (Mills, 2014). The action research data that was completed in this particular study was used to answer the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?*

Setting and Participants

The study took place at a suburban high school located outside of the Twin Cities Metro area. The high school had 1,172 students enrolled for the 2017-2018 academic school year. The demographics of the high school included half the student body population as male and half of the student body population as female. The Minnesota Department of Education reported that the student population identifies themselves as follows; 7.3 % of the students at the school are Hispanic/Latino, 1.2 % of the students are Asian, 2.4 % of the students are Black or African American, .3 % of the students are Native Hawaiian, .1% students are Native American and 87% of the students are White. The data also reports that 23.8 % of students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch and 1.2 % of students are enrolled as English Language Learners.

The participants in my study were aged from 16 to 17 years old and included 7 students from one designated Spanish level 2 class. I decided to select my Spanish level 2 class because I believe that by implementing different types of homework assignments at this level I could gain a better understanding of student Spanish language use and motivation due to the complexity of the vocabulary and grammar used at this level. I aimed to identify if the types of homework influenced student motivation and participation, especially as content and vocabulary is continually more challenging as the school year progresses. It is also important to consider that because Spanish is an elective

and not a required class, the students who chose to enroll in the Spanish language classes needed to meet a requirement of receiving a C- or better in a previous Spanish language class. Therefore, the students who participated in this study have met these requirements and were already motivated to pursue their language studies by electing to take a Spanish language class. Before data was collected, I gave parents and guardians of the students a permission slip (see Appendix B) to ensure that their approval of participation in the study was allowed and I also gave students the same permission slip (see Appendix B) to get their consent to be in the study. In order for student data to be included in my study, I required both parents and students to give consent.

Data Collection

The data collection of this study occurred over 20 consecutive school days. In these 20 school days, students learned content from Unit 6 of the Spanish 2 level curriculum. The unit was divided in two parts, Lesson 1 and Lesson 2. Each lesson took place over the course of 10 days. Over the course of the 20 days, I implemented four parts of data collection. In part one; data was collected through an initial survey to determine student beliefs' about motivation before the study was conducted (see Appendix C). The survey was implemented at the beginning of the study to compare initial beliefs about motivation in the classroom and at home. The questions posed on the survey allowed me to identify the reasons as to why students are motivated in the classroom and what motivates them when learning a language.

The second part of the study was the implementation of the traditional homework packet and 3 new different types of homework assignments (see Appendixes D-F). In lesson one, I implemented the current World Language department homework policy

which states that homework is assigned daily from a packet and students are responsible for completing 1 to 2 pages per night which reviews vocabulary and grammar concepts. Students were assigned 1 to 2 pages per night and the assignments were due the following school day. In lesson two, I implemented three new types of homework assignments with a Google Doc, an Online Graded Homework assignment and an Audio/Visual homework assignment. These homework assignments were implemented based on the theories of the Audio-Lingual Method (Chavez, 2010), Computer Assisted Language Learning (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011) and the theory of immediate feedback (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008). Students had 2 school nights to complete each assignment, making the time to work on the assignment longer than in lesson 1. The new types of homework consisted of an online graded activity, a google doc with grammar & vocabulary concepts and an audio/visual assignment where students watched and listened to a dialogue in the target language and responded to comprehension questions.

The third part of the study was data collection of student work and in class participation. I collected formative data from each homework assignment and scored it based on accuracy. I recorded the scores of each assignment. I also assessed student work through a summative assessment of each lesson, which consisted of a unit test that assessed student comprehension of listening, writing, and reading of the learning targets in each lesson. These scores were also recorded. The final component to the third part of the study was an informal observation conducted by me on in class Spanish language use in each unit. I tallied how often students used Spanish in the various class periods.

The fourth and final part of the study was conducted through a follow up survey (see Appendix G) at the end of the 20 day period to identify students' general thoughts

and feelings about the types of homework assignments and their individual language learning for each particular unit.

Data Collection Tools and their Implementation

Survey

Two surveys (see Appendix C and Appendix G) were administered to student participants to survey student beliefs about the relationship and correlation between homework; learning and motivation for Spanish language acquisition. The first survey (see Appendix C) was administered before the study was conducted and the second survey (see Appendix G) was administered after the 20-day period was over.

Homework Assignments

There were 3 types of homework assignments implemented in the Spanish level 2 class throughout the course of a unit of study which was Unit 6 of their curriculum and the unit consisted of 20 school days. The unit was divided into two parts, lesson 1 which consisted of 10 consecutive school days and lesson 2 which also consisted of 10 school days. Each homework assignment had a due date and students were required to submit their assignment on that particular day.

Since the Unit 6 curriculum was divided in two parts, I planned on implementing two different approaches with assigning homework. In lesson 1, I assigned traditional paper packet worksheets that students were used to for the homework assignments. Students had one night to work on the assignment and it had to be completed by the following school day. In this lesson, nothing was different for students in terms of how the homework was administered and the type of homework assignment compared to earlier in the school year.

In lesson 2, I implemented the three new types of homework assignments. Lesson 2 had three differentiated homework assignments and students had 2 nights to work on the assignment rather than 1 night. In summary, this unit had multiple types of assignments, more time for students to complete them by the due date and incorporated learning differentiation. Essentially, students were assigned less homework assignments than previously and had more time to complete the assignment. This ensured that the majority of class time was used for practicing language which research identifies as best practice for language use in the classroom (Al-Kasey & Weston, 1992). This reasoning is based upon the idea that large amounts of homework contribute to feelings of academic failure or anxiety and homework that continually allows students to practice skills correctly and provide self-efficacy and feeling so success at their learning may provide a positive approach to efforts in learning (Chavez, 2010).

The homework assignments have been crafted based on research from the Literature Review section especially focusing on how particular types of assignments may increase student motivation, participation within the classroom and improve language learning. The types of homework assignments were selected based on three variables relating to motivation and participation; time management, homework engagement and homework anxiety. The types of homework assignments were also selected upon Spanish instruction methods that eliminate second language learning anxiety and supported a comfortable, risk free classroom where students participated by using the Spanish language along with incorporating assignments that highlighted multiple learning styles and included differentiated learning methods. The following homework methods were also designed to utilize technology from students'

Chromebooks through their Schoology accounts and follow the school district's technology initiative which was intended to encourage more in-class time to be used for practicing language use and eliminate class time previously used checking homework assignments.

Google Document Worksheet

Rather than assigning 9 worksheets on vocabulary and grammar, which was the homework assignment in the past, this homework assignment was condensed to 2 pages on a Google Doc, which highlighted and related to important vocabulary and key grammar that were present in the unit of study. This assignment was based upon in-text practice of vocabulary and grammar; however, it eliminated redundancy and condensed the assignment which in turn was intended to make the assignment more manageable for students reducing Second Language Learning Anxiety (Chavez, 2010) and also provided opportunities for self-efficacy and ownership in language learning (Bempechat, 2004). This assignment was selected upon the research behind habit formation activities such as worksheets yet allowed a direct approach to learning through the target language (Garrett, 2009).

Schoology Online Graded Assignment

This online homework assignment through Schoology consisted of a graded assignment. Students completed a practice quiz on grammar and once the assignment was submitted, students were able to immediately view their score. Furthermore, for this assignment, students were able to retake the homework assignment as many times as needed before the due date to improve their score and understanding of the material. The reason for this type of homework is based on Computer Assisted Language Learning

(Chapelle & Chapelle, 2010). This homework assignment allowed students to make mistakes without being embarrassed in a risk free environment through technology (Garrett, 2009), reviewed topics at one's own pace (Garrett, 2009), allowed ownership of learning with graded practice (Chavez, 2010) and received immediate feedback (Sagarra & Zapata, 2008).

Audio Listening and/or Visual Video Assignment

This assignment consisted of either an audio passage in Spanish or a video in the target language which incorporated vocabulary and grammar that students were studying in the current unit or lesson and presented in a form of dialogue. Students were required to answer 5 comprehension questions about the audio/video passage and also write out 5 complete Spanish sentences of their own based on the listening segment/video's content to check for comprehension and understanding, which are important components to one's own use of a language use (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011). The video/ listening passage was also intended to provide examples to students of dialogue in the target language in hopes that it could provide a foundation and understanding of the language. This homework assignment also aimed to build a foundation of knowledge and demonstrated to students how they could apply the learning objectives to their own use in the classroom (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011).

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three parts to determine if the question *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* was answered.

First, data that was collected through an initial survey to determine student

beliefs' about motivation before the study was conducted. The survey was implemented at the beginning of the study to compare initial beliefs about motivation and Spanish language use in the classroom. The questions posed on the survey allowed me to identify the reasons as to why students are motivated in the classroom and what motivates them when learning a language.

The second part of the study was the implementation and recording scores of homework assignments, recording of test scores and informal recording of in class participation. Lesson 1 consisted of paper packet assignments and Lesson 2 consisted of three new types of homework assignments for students. For this particular part of the study it is important to note that the correlation of my data collection was dependent upon if each student completed the homework assignment by the appropriate due date.

The third part of the study was through a follow up survey at the end of the unit to identify students' thoughts about the relationship between the paper packet homework, the three new types of homework assignments and finally their perception of language learning and use in the Spanish classroom. The questions posed on the survey allowed me to identify the reasons as to why students were motivated in the classroom and what motivates them when learning a language. I intend to use this data to further my understanding about student motivation and implement my research in my classroom in the future.

Hamline Human Subject Review

In order to conduct my research, it was essential that I presented my research proposal to Hamline University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and my high school administrators to gain approval and permission to go forward with my research. Once I

received permission from the school district and Hamline University to begin my research, I sent a permission slip (see Appendix B) to both students and their parents/guardians to explain the intent of my action research study and also explained that participation in the study was optional and in no way would participation impact student grades in the classroom on tests, quizzes or semester grades. In order to include a student's participation in my research, I required both student and parent permission before I moved forward with their inclusion of the study. Once permission was approved by all parties, I sent the initial survey to students (see Appendix C) via Google forms before my informal data collection began and implementation of my action research study.

Summary

In conclusion, this chapter identified the methodology in which the action research study was conducted. The following chapter, Chapter Four, demonstrates the results collected from the surveys, homework assignments, test scores and informal observations in the classroom. In the next chapter, the results that were collected from the action research study outlined in this chapter explain how the results were aimed to answer the research question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?*

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

The objective of this study was to aim to answer to the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* The study took place in my Spanish level 2 classroom and included 7 participants. Out of the 7 participants, 3 of the students were boys and 4 of the students were girls. All students were White and 6 out of the 7 students were earning A's at the time of the study and one student earning a D+. The study took place from March 5th to April 6th over the course of 20 school days. This chapter explains the four parts of the study which include the Initial Motivation Survey, Unit 1 Data, Unit 2 Data and the final Homework Survey. The data presented in the next four sections will examine the results collected from the students through the action research period.

Initial Motivation Survey Data Collection

A survey (see Appendix C) was sent out to the seven participants to gather student perceptions on motivation. The survey consisted of 10 questions on a Likert scale pertaining to motivation and was sent out via email. The survey was created through Survey Monkey. Six out of seven students responded to the survey questions.

Motivation Survey Results

There is a strong correlation between a student's motivation and one's self esteem (Kidd & Czerniawski, 2011) and the relationship between motivation and self-esteem contribute to a child's self-efficacy (Bempechat, 2004). A student's self-efficacy is rooted in a student's perception of one's own ability to accomplish assignments which if

positive, results in a higher chance to put more effort in one's own learning (Bempechat, 2004). In the motivation survey, questions 1, 2, 4 and 8 were directly related to motivation and self-efficacy. The majority of students answered that they strongly agree and agree with the four questions and in question 1, only one person answered neither agree nor disagree and in question 4, only one person answered neither agree nor disagree. The results in the graph demonstrate that the majority of the students work hard, want to improve their skills in class and stay focused on their goals in class, which consists of learning as much as they can.
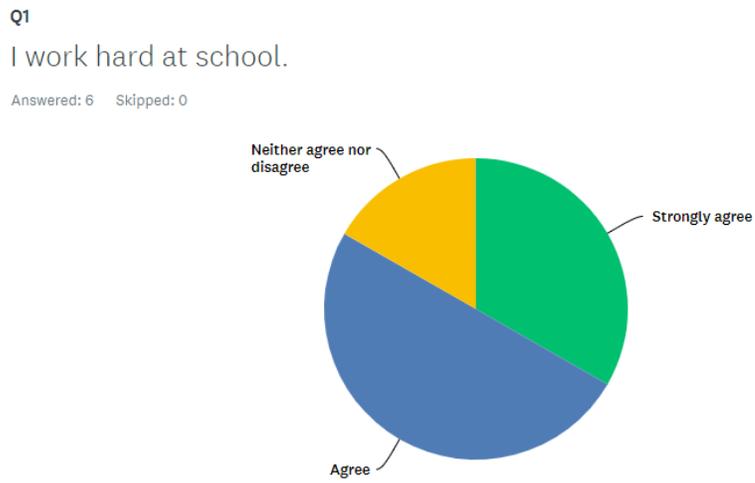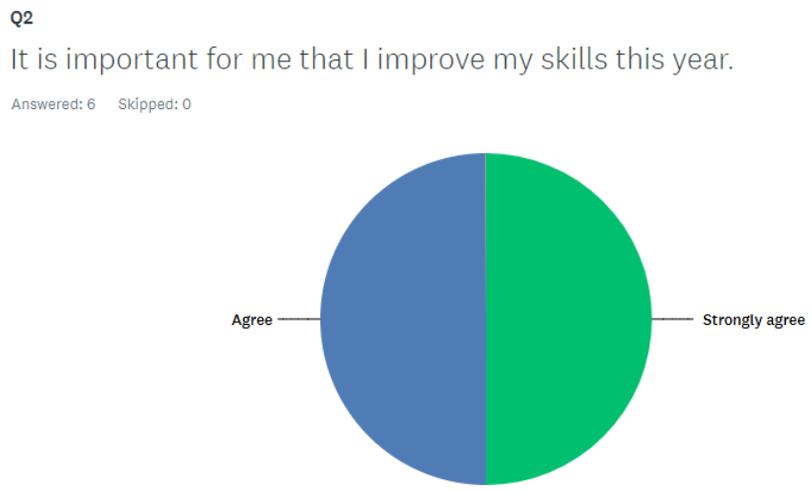
Figure 4.1

Q1

I work hard at school.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.2

Q2

It is important for me that I improve my skills this year.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.3

Q4

I am good at staying focused on my goals.
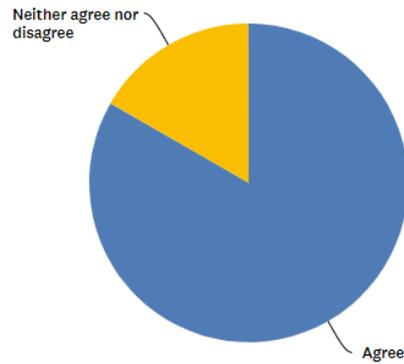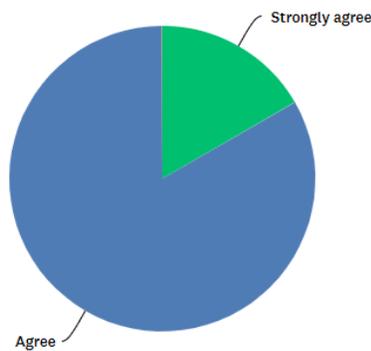
Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.4

Q8

One of my goals in class is to learn as much as I can.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

The survey also represents student beliefs about mistakes, learning and taking risks in the classroom. Questions 3, 5, 6 and 9 represent students' opinions about mistakes and time management. Research suggests that, mistakes and learning impact a student's motivation in the classroom and engagement in school activities (Bempechat,

2004). A student's ability to finish an assignment and identify time management impacts student engagement (Reguerio et al., 2016). The results below demonstrate that with all the questions answered, the majority of students answered strongly agree and agree. In question 3, 1 student was neutral and answered neither agree nor disagree. In question 5, one student answered neither agree nor disagree. The results from all four questions suggest that overall; students agree that completing school work, fishing tasks, not giving up and trying things even if that means failure, are areas that they associate with.

Figure 4.5

Q3
I complete my school work regularly.
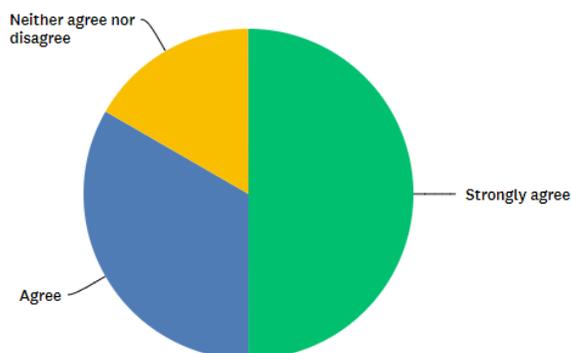
Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.6

Q5
I finish whatever I begin.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0
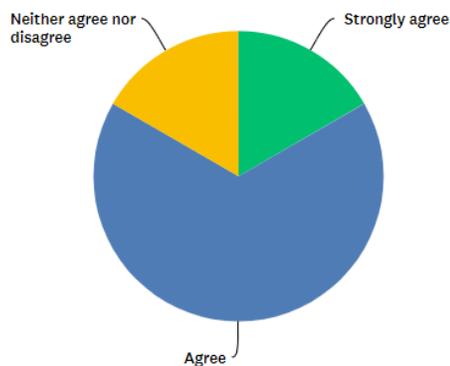
Figure 4.7

Q6

I can do almost all of the work in class if I don't give up.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.8

Q9

I try things even if I might fail.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

There were two questions in the survey that related to the concept of student understanding of the intention of homework assignments and how it may influence motivation and study habits for students in the long term (Bempechat, 2004). Student understanding of the intention of a homework assignment can increase achievement, self-

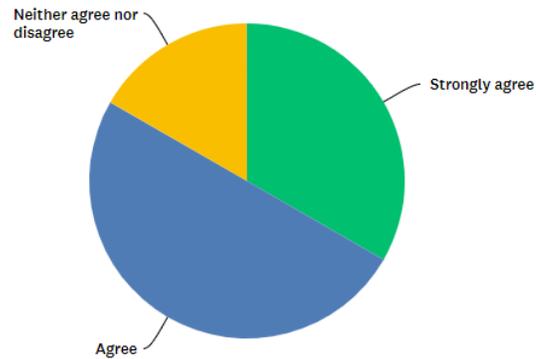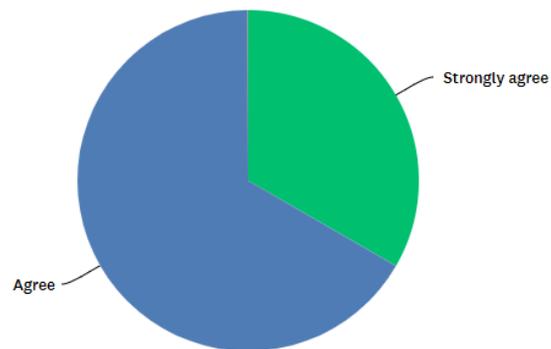confidence and motivation in students (Kidd & Czeriawski, 2011). In the survey results, 50% of students agreed that what they did in school will help them succeed in life. The other 50% answered that the neither agree nor disagreed with the question. The last question resulted in the majority of students selecting strongly agree and agree that homework was an essential component for them to learn Spanish while one student disagreed with the question. The results are shown in the figures below.

Figure 4.9

Q7

What we do in school will help me succeed in life.
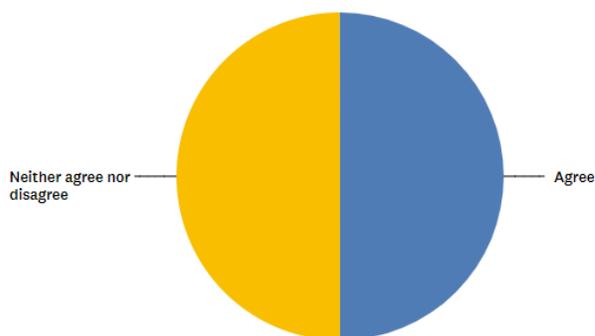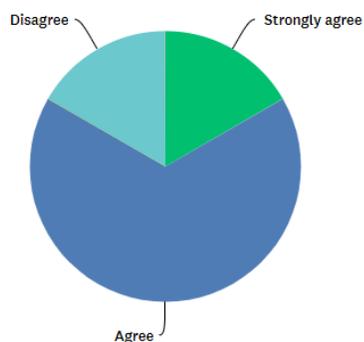
Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

Figure 4.10

Q10

Homework is important for me to understand and learn Spanish.

Answered: 6   Skipped: 0

In-class Participation Data Collection in Unit 1 and Unit 2

After the initial survey on motivation was administered, the data collection process in the classroom began. A student's participation in class is directly linked to motivation (National Research Council, 2004). Participation and in-class Spanish language use was recorded by a tally system, one tally represented when a student either spoke in the target language through partner discussions, volunteering answers or self-directed Spanish language use with their peers. Student participation data was informally collected by me; I had a clipboard with each student's name and put a tally mark next to their name each time the target language was spoken.

Unit 1 Homework Data Collection

The next part of the study included the score of each student's homework which was graded on accuracy. The percentage score of each homework assignment is listed in each table. In Unit 1, students were assigned traditional worksheets from a packet as their homework assignment. The worksheets were collected on the due date and graded upon accuracy.

Unit 1 Exam Data Collection

At the end of the unit, students took a test to demonstrate their knowledge of the assigned vocabulary and grammar. The test included a listening portion, vocabulary section, grammar section and a reading section. The test was graded on accuracy and recorded as a percentage score.

Unit 1 Data Results

Table 1

Student	In-class Spanish language tally	Homework Accuracy Percentage	Exam score percentage
Student 1	7	91%	92.98%
Student 2	6	94%	91.22%
Student 3	6	83%	60.52%
Student 4	11	42%	71.00%
Student 5	5	100%	85.08%
Student 6	10	100%	94.3%
Student 7	3	66%	70.17%

The data that was collected through Unit 1 was slightly surprising because the data suggests that a student's motivation and confidence to participate in class does not necessarily contribute to a student's homework accuracy and exam percentage. For example, student 4 participated the most out of the entire unit yet had the lowest score on homework and one of the 2 lowest scores on the exam. Another important component to consider is a student's accuracy on the homework did not always relate to a high exam percentage, for example, student 3 scored 83% on the homework, yet a 60.52% on the exam. The data collected in this chapter highlights the importance of recognizing that there are different learners who individually have different strengths and different needs.

Unit 2 Homework Data Collection

In Unit 2, new homework assignments were implemented in the classroom and

each homework assignment was graded upon accuracy by the completion date. The first

homework assignment that was implemented was a Google Doc (see Appendix D).

Rather than multiple worksheets, the activities were condensed on a Google Doc

assignment and students completed the first assignment by uploading it to Schoology

when they were finished. The second homework assignment was an online graded

activity on Schoology (see Appendix E). This assignment required students to answer

multiple choice questions and fill in the blank questions about vocabulary and grammar

content. Students submitted their answers when finished and their answers were scored

automatically. Students were able to receive immediate feedback by being able to see

which answers were correct and which answers were incorrect. With this particular

assignment, students were also able to retake the assignment to get a better score and fix

their mistakes. The third and final assignment consisted of a video which contained

dialogue in Spanish between two characters (see Appendix F). Students were required to

watch and listen to the video and answer comprehension questions about the video. The

questions were also graded on accuracy.

Unit 2 Exam Data Collection

At the end of unit 2 students took the unit exam to demonstrate their knowledge

of the content which included a listening portion, vocabulary section, grammar section

and reading section of the test.

Unit 2 Data Results

Student	In-class Spanish language tally	Google Doc Homework Accuracy Percentage	Online Graded Activity Homework accuracy Percentage	Audio/ Visual Homework Accuracy percentage	Exam score percentage
Student 1	6	82.60%	100%	62.5%	97.91%
Student 2	1	100%	89.30%	87.5%	97.91%
Student 3	7	0%	0%	0%	66.66%
Student 4	9	95.67%	88.60%	87.5%	75.00%
Student 5	5	78.26%	92.90%	87.5%	100%
Student 6	8	95.65%	96.40%	87.5%	100%
Student 7	7	0%	92.90%	75%	96.87%

The data collected in unit 2 was more extensive than the data collected in unit 1 because of the various homework assignments that were implemented. Overall, student in-class participation was lower in this unit than in unit 1. In unit 2 a few students did not complete some homework assignments and received a 0%, compared to unit 1 where all students completed the homework assignments. Overall, homework score accuracy in each type of homework was generally better than in unit 1 and test scores were overall better than in unit 1 as well, yet it is difficult to determine if there is a cause for the increase of accuracy in both homework and exam scores. Individual student increase of exam accuracy is evident in comparison to unit 1 and unit 2. Each student improved their test score either by a slight percentage or in some cases; students improved their exam grades drastically such as students 5, 6 and 7.

Final Homework Survey

After unit 2 students were administered a survey on homework and Spanish language learning (see Appendix G). The survey consisted of 10 questions on a Likert scale. The survey was sent out via email and created on Survey Monkey. Students were asked questions relating to different types of homework assignments, motivation and Spanish language learning.

Homework Survey Results

After unit 2 was complete, students were sent a survey of 10 questions about the homework assignments implemented and about motivation and homework. All seven students answered the questions and the results are represented in the pie charts below.

Figure 4.11
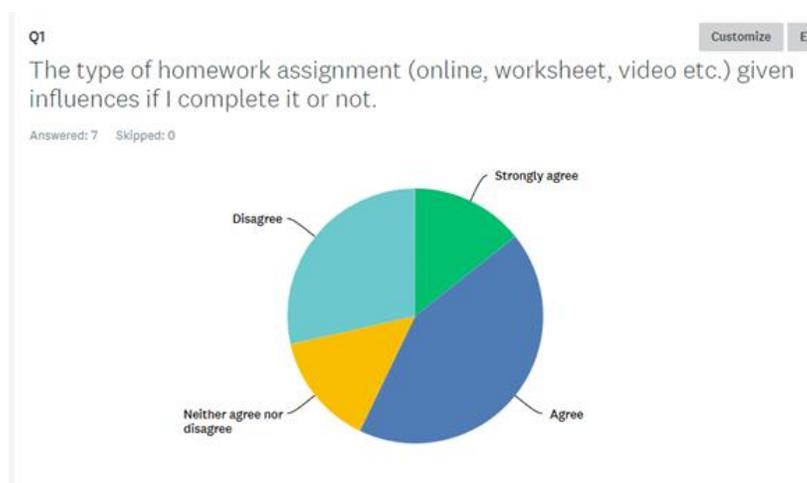
The data provided from question 1 suggests that students have differing opinions of whether the type of homework assignment influences their motivation to complete it or not. 3 students agreed and 1 strongly agreed that the type of homework influences if they complete the activity, while 1 chose neither agree nor disagree and 2 students disagreed

with the statement. This information demonstrates that for the majority of students, the type of homework may influence if a student completes the homework assignment.

Figure 4.12

Q2

I learn best with on-line homework assignments.

Answered: 7   Skipped: 0
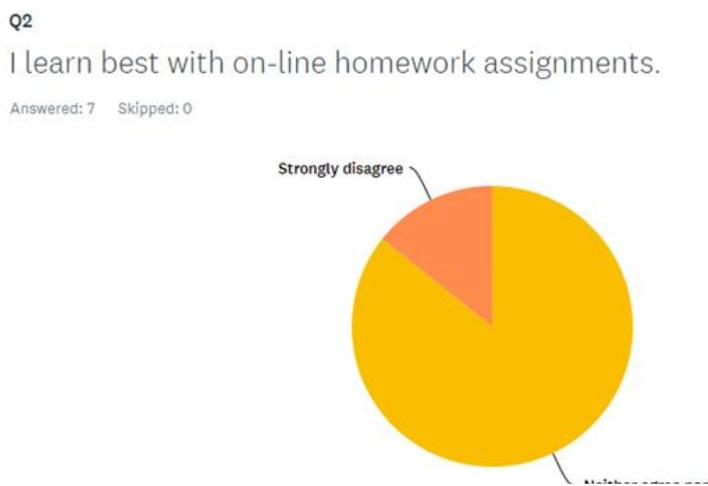
Strongly disagree

This data suggests that students were neutral about online homework assignments except one student who strongly disagreed that online homework assignments contribute to his or her learning. This data was interesting especially in comparison to the literature review that stated research found that students believed online activities promote learning (Sagarra and Zapata, 2008). The students surveyed did not agree with this statement rather they were neutral or strongly disagreed.

Figure 4.13

Q3

Customize

I am more motivated to do online graded Schoology assginments.

Answered: 7   Skipped: 0

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor
disagree
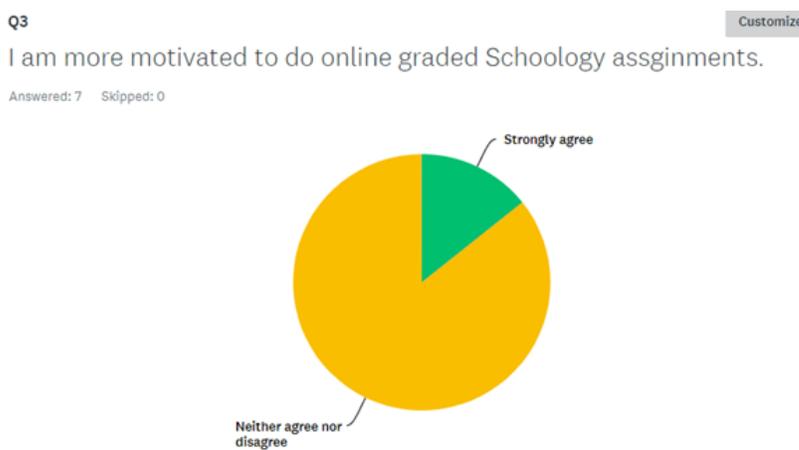
Overwhelmingly students were neutral with selecting neither agree nor disagree about online graded Schoology assignments. One student identified that they strongly agreed that motivation was correlated with online graded Schoology assignments. It is important to consider that the online graded Schoology assignment provided immediate, graded feedback for students. Research states that homework that provides immediate feedback helps students with their learning and contributes to student views of seeing the value of homework (Bennet & Kalish, 2006). According to the data from the students, it is unclear if they are more motivated with assignments that provide immediate feedback since the majority chose that they neither agree nor disagree with motivation and online graded assignments.

Figure 4.14
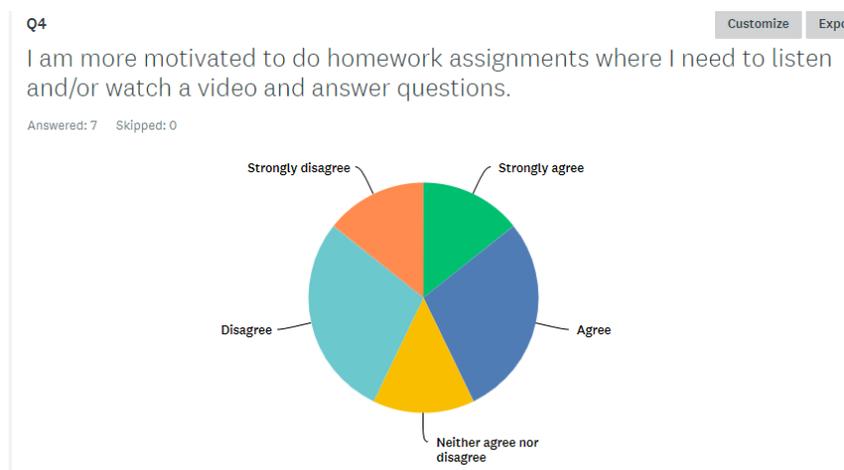
The data collected from this question was very interesting because this question contained the most varied responses from students from both surveys. 1 student strongly agreed and 2 students agreed that they are more motivated to complete an audio/visual homework assignment. 1 student chose neither agree nor disagree with the question while

2 students disagreed and 1 student strongly disagreed that they are motivated to complete an audio/visual homework assignment. This data was surprising to me because videos and audio are used to facilitate comprehension of the Spanish language and have proven through research to be beneficial to learning (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011). I speculate that the reason why this question produced varying opinions could be due to the fact that listening in the target language tends to be a very difficult and challenging concept for students of all grade levels who are learning Spanish at our school. This could produce mixed responses because of the level of difficulty of listening in the target language.

Figure 4.15
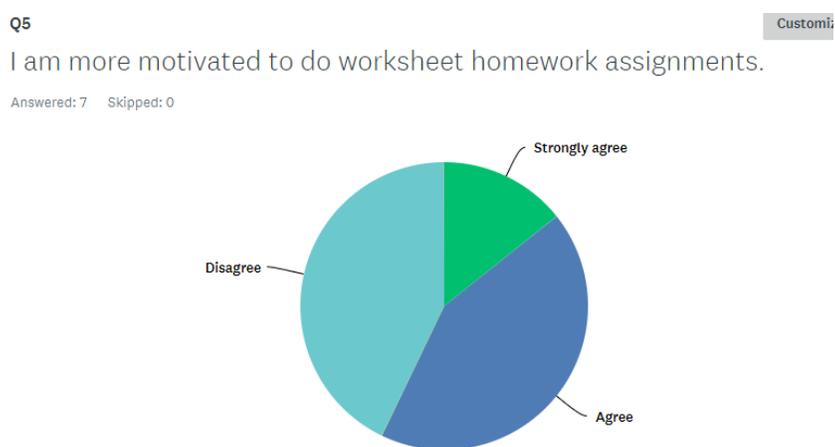
The results of this question were mostly divided. 1 student strongly agreed that he or she was more motivated to complete a worksheet homework assignment and 3 students selected that they agreed with this statement. On the other hand, 3 students disagreed that they were more motivated to do worksheet homework assignments. A student's reason for doing a homework assignment is influential to his or her ability to complete a homework assignment (Regueiro et al., 2016). It is also important to consider

that student responses could be influenced because worksheets is the way homework has been administered for most of their time learning Spanish and students are familiar with this model of homework. A reason for a student's motivation for a worksheet for homework assignments could contribute to familiarity or a student may feel more motivated to complete a worksheet assignment because it aligns with his or her learning style.

Figure 4.16
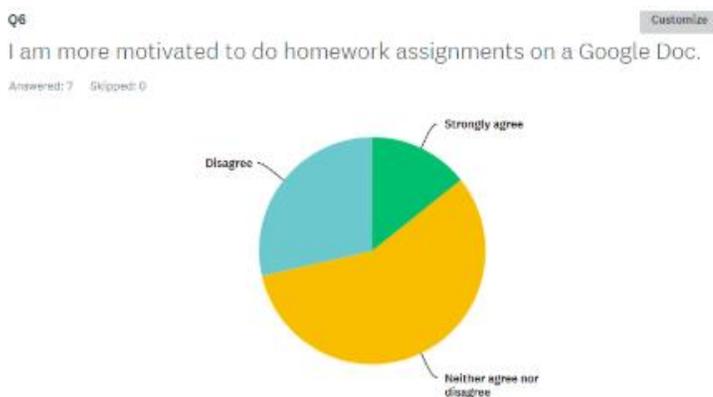
The results from this question suggests that the majority of students answered that they neither agree nor disagree about motivation and Google Docs, one student identified that he or she strongly agrees about motivation and Google Docs while 2 students disagreed. This data was particularly interesting because in question 5 students were divided in their thoughts of being motivated to complete worksheet assignments and in this question, it demonstrates that there are conflicting responses as well to a worksheet style homework assignment but delivered in an online format.

Figure 4.17

Q7
I learn best with worksheets.
Answered: 7   Skipped: 0
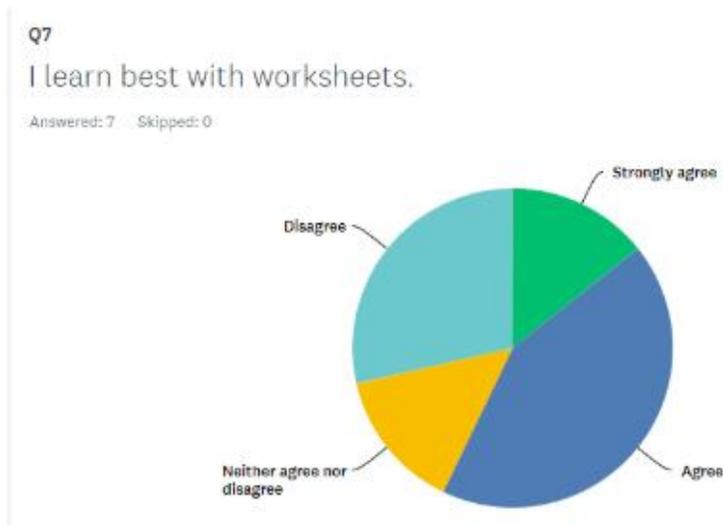
The data from students on survey question 7 was divided. 1 student strongly agreed that they learn better with worksheets, 3 agreed they learn better with worksheets, 1 chose neither agree nor disagree and 2 students disagreed that they learn best with worksheets. Student responses from this survey demonstrated that students have varying opinions if worksheets help them learn the material the best, which wasn't as surprising to me because students are familiar with this type of homework format and the type of homework based on repetition, may help some students learn best, while some students may not identify with that type of learning style.

Figure 4.18

Q8
I think that different types of homework assignments (listening, graded, online assignments etc.) help me prepare for a test.
Answered: 7   Skipped: 0
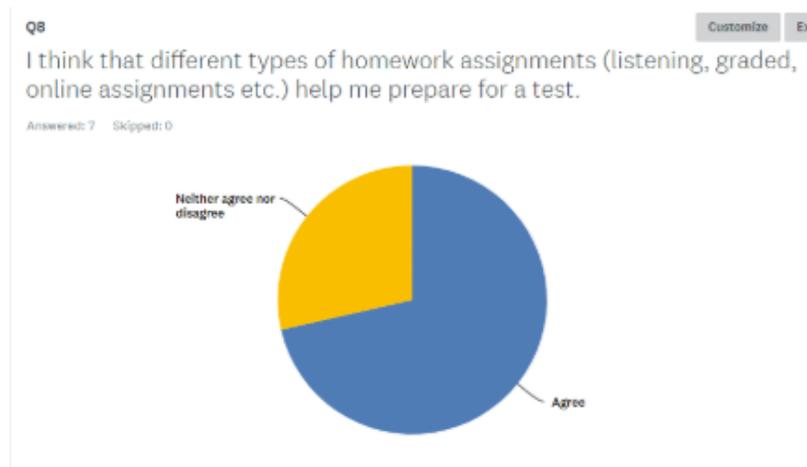
The majority of students, 5 students, agreed that different types of homework assignments help them prepare best for a test and 2 students neither agree nor disagree with the statement. This data suggests that for the majority of the students in this survey, homework assignments with differentiating learning styles helps students prepare for a test.

Figure 4.19

2 students strongly agreed and 4 students agreed that when they complete their homework assignments they feel more confident to speak up in class and ultimately participate in using the Spanish language. This data suggests that there is a relationship to completing homework assignments and a student's confidence to speaking in class.

Figure 4.20
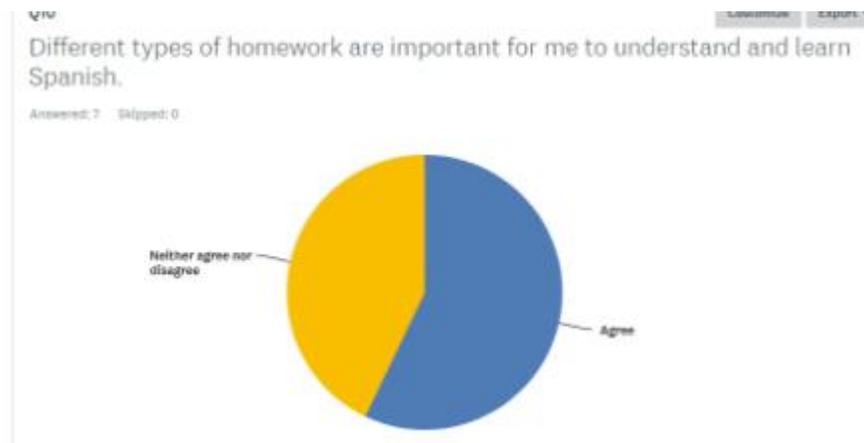
The final question suggests that 4 students agreed with the statement that different types of homework assignments are important to understand and learn Spanish and 3 students were neutral with their choice of neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement.

Summary

The data collected in this chapter was used to answer the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom*? The next chapter will further examine the implications of the data collected to my professional teaching practice, classroom application and identifying how the data collected aims to answer the research question presented in this study. The next chapter will also include a reflection on the action research study process and how to move forward with the findings of this study in the future.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Introduction

The goal of my data collection in Chapter Four was aimed to answer the question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and student use of the Spanish language in the classroom?* This chapter will explain my finding through my data collection and also identify how the data can be used to answer my research question. This chapter will also identify the limitations of this study. Finally the chapter will identify future use and practice of these findings in my classroom and my teaching practice.

Reflections on Capstone Process

The process of this Capstone thesis has been very challenging yet eye opening to me as a researcher, writer and learner. I have always had a strong passion for teaching Spanish, yet through my research I feel like I have gained more insight into what makes a good teacher and what kind of classroom environment promotes and encourages language learning. Taking the time to research about student motivation and homework practices has encouraged me to reflect on my own teaching practices and what I can improve on to make student engagement and motivation a priority on a daily basis. As a teacher, my learning of better practices and what motivates students never stops and this thesis has encouraged me to continue to learn more in the future about this area of study.

Limitations of Study

It is important to recognize the limitations of my study and take them into consideration when considering the findings of my action research study. The study was

conducted over a 20-day period spanning two units of study. This timeframe is a limitation because if the study was able to be conducted over a larger period of time, I could have collected more data from students in terms of in class participation, homework scores and test scores. I implemented my study over the course of 2 units, however if the study was implemented in other units I believe it would have been able to provide me more insight to my students' work. Certain units are more challenging than others, so this could have been a contributing factor to my students' data scores. Student participation in class could have also been influenced by the difficulty of the unit content, social anxiety, second language learning anxiety, generally being shyer in class and not willing to speak up and participate.

Also, 7 students, along with their parents, agreed to participate in the study by turning in their permission slip. The majority of the students who participated were receiving an A in the class and I believe with more students included, I could have gotten a more diverse sample of opinions, test and homework scores. While I believe my study was a good starting point and foundation, if more students participated I could have collected more responses about motivation and homework which would have given me a more expansive and diverse look at student opinions. Finally, the study may be limited by student responses because students may have been influenced by what they believed they "should" answer to the questions, despite the fact that surveys were anonymous and in no way aligned with a grade. It is important to recognize how these limitations may have contributed to some of my data collection throughout the study.

Data Summary

The Literature Review in Chapter 2 focused on background knowledge of

homework, different types of homework and student motivation. The two areas that proved to be the most important for my Capstone data included the information on student motivation and the information on different types of homework assignments, specifically relating to teaching Spanish in the classroom. The data collected consisted of student perception of motivation, student participation in the classroom, student data of homework scores and exam scores and student perception of three different types of homework assignments.

Importance of Data Findings

The data I collected in my classroom demonstrated the importance of my research question, *how does the type of homework assignment influence student motivation and Spanish language learning in the classroom?* Through the data I collected, I was able to evaluate the practices in my classroom and how types of homework play a role in student learning. One of the main components of my research question is the role motivation plays into student language use and learning in the classroom. In the literature review, research demonstrated that a student's engagement isn't shown solely through observable behaviors such as active participation and completing work, it also is dependent upon cognitive behaviors (National Research Council, 2004). My tally marks only collected data on active participation and the homework scores I collected did evaluate a student's ability to complete the work, however motivation is more complex than these two concepts.

The data does show that if these students complete their homework, they are more likely to speak up in class and participate; Second-Language Anxiety does not seem to be as strong when a student has his or her work done. All students completed their

homework in unit 1 and participation was overall higher for each student compared to unit 2 where not every student completed the homework assignments and overall participation was lower. There are many factors that can influence a student's participation in class. However it is interesting to note that not as many homework assignments were completed in unit 2 and participation was lower in unit 2 as well which does not necessarily mean that learning did not happen, it just shows that not as many assignments were completed and not as many used the target language in the classroom (Kuperinsky, 2017).

The second component of my research was the role homework played into student learning in the classroom. According to my research in the literature review section specifically on CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), students show positive attitudes toward the use of technology in Second Language Learning and technology creates a risk-free environment that has the ability to lower anxiety in the classroom specifically when learning a language (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011). Online homework focuses on the integration of language learning and the individual learning (Garrett, 2009). The survey responses from students showed that not all students were in favor of online homework assignments, the answers were actually divided. The divided responses could be contributed to student maturity and their motivation of why they are taking Spanish. At the Spanish 2 level, there are many students who intend to pursue Spanish language learning all four years of their high school education, while some are there just to take two years for college applications. This could contribute to their answers on the survey questions and also contribute to the fact that worksheets at this point are routine and comfortable, so many students may be more inclined to choose assignments that are

in their comfort zone.

Overall students did agree that a variety of assignments do help them feel more prepared for a test. Through the use of Google Docs, Online Graded Homework accuracy and Audio/Visual Homework scores implemented in unit 2, it suggests that when a variety of assignments are implemented, students did agree to feeling more prepared for an exam. According to the data collected from unit 1 and unit 2, test scores increased for every single student who participated in the study from unit 1 and unit 2. The results collected in unit 2 align with the research presented in the literature specifically on the role homework plays in student learning. Interactive CALL activities, which incorporate interactive learning methods facilitate comprehension of the target language, have proven to be beneficial to learning and providing feedback for students (Mohsen & Balakumar, 2011). Students did increase their test scores from unit 1 to unit 2 however, research explains that when considering the concept of learning, an improved test scores does not necessarily equate to student learning (Kohn, 2006). Student learning cannot be solely based on test scores (Kohn, 2006) however, it is an important factor to consider in individual student improvement.

In summary, the data does not always support the findings of the literature view. Student responses show a mixed result of motivation and different types of homework assignments; however it was insightful because I was able to better understand my students' perspectives on the homework assignments and their motivation at school. Overall, students are motivated to learn the Spanish language and are divided on their opinion as to how the type of homework assignment impacts their motivation and learning.

Future Research and Practice

The small sample size for this study prohibits me from generalizing to the broad scope of language learning; however, the insights that emerged from my data with my own students informed my teaching practices in the moment. The research processes from this study can be used with future students- in my class and others- as the Spanish department continues its pursuit of better language learning opportunities for our students. Because of our school district's initiative of implementing technology through student use of Chromebooks, I know that this will be an area of my own teaching practice that I will continue to pursue, and further my own research and individual exploration within my classroom. Furthermore, I believe this study will help my department as we move forward with our curriculum review and based on my discussions with my capstone committee, it will provide a foundational piece for our department in the future. I also plan to continue to gather student perspectives in the future and create more ownership opportunities in their own learning. I believe that experimenting in intentional ways in the classroom, facilitates opportunities to be able to understand what types of homework assignments and classroom practices inspire motivation and understanding from students, which will ultimately help student learning, my own teaching practice and my Spanish department's goals in the future.

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Appendix A

World Language Homework Policy

You will a daily homework assignment each night. I do give class time to work on homework, so if you use your time wisely you will have plenty of time to get a good start on the task. To receive credit, assignments must be handed in on time and complete by at the start of class. Any late work receives a zero. Learning a language is a challenging task. Plan 10 – 15 minutes EACH NIGHT to practice vocabulary and grammar.

Appendix B

Student & Parent Permission Slip

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am your child's Spanish teacher and I am also in the process of completing my Masters of Arts in Education degree at Hamline University. As part of my work, I am researching how different types of homework assignments influence student motivation and use of the Spanish language in the classroom. My goal is to improve my ability to help your child (or the students in my class) to be able to understand how homework assignments motivate student learning and language use here at Monticello High School.

I would like to invite your child to participate in my action research study. I will implement 4 types of homework assignments and gather data about student language learning. My purpose of this study is to see if certain homework assignments influence motivation and learning the Spanish language in the classroom.

In order to gather data for my study, this will involve that I keep track of how many times students use Spanish in the classroom. I will keep track of student data including homework and test scores. Student scores will be recorded anonymously; a student's name will never be associated with a score. Also, I will administer surveys to students about motivation and language learning in the classroom to gather data about their own thoughts and opinions.

I will protect your child's privacy by never revealing student names or that the study is taking place at Monticello High School. Throughout the entire study your child's identity will remain anonymous. The data I collect will be for my research only, and shared in my thesis through my observations and data collected in the classroom.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child is free to refuse to be interviewed, surveyed, and observed. Your child may change his/her mind about participation in this activity at any time. *Your child's standing and grades in Spanish class will **not be** influenced by agreeing or refusing to participate in any portion of this project.* If you have any questions about my plans, please contact me by e-mail at sarah.spilde@monticello.k12.mn.us or by phone at 763-272-3132. You are also welcome to contact Principal Mike Carr at mike.carr@monticello.k12.mn.us with any questions you might have.

If you agree that your child is able to take part in my project, please return a signed copy of this form to me as soon as possible. You may keep the other copy for future reference. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and I hope your child finds the assignments implemented in class beneficial to his/her learning!

I give my permission for my child [name] to participate in the [name of project].

[name]_ _ _ _ _ _ to participate in the [name of project].

Date:_ _

Parent/Guardian Signature:_ _

Please print your name on this line:_ _

Questions or concerns about your rights in this research project can be directed to [contact information]

Appendix C

Initial Student Motivation Survey

All questions were answered on a Likert scale with the choices of strongly agree/ agree/

neither agree or disagree/ disagree/ strongly agree.

1. I work hard at school.

2. It is important for me that I improve my Spanish language skills this year.

3. I complete my school work regularly.

4. I am good at staying focused on my goals.

5. I finish whatever I begin.

6. I can do almost all of the work in class if I don't give up.

7. What we do in school will help me succeed in life.

8. One of my goals in class is to learn as much as I can.

9. I try things even if I might fail.

10. Homework is important for me to understand and learn Spanish.

Appendix D

Google Document Homework Assignment

Unidad 5.1 Tarea #2 - Usted & Ustedes Commands

Actividad A: Marcos has a restaurant. He tells the waiters the things they have to do. Underline or highlight the formal command form.

1. Raúl, (ayude / ayuda) a este camarero.
2. Raúl y Saúl (lleven / llevan) la cuenta.
3. Manuela, (dé / da) un poco de sal a este señor.
4. Manuela y Roberta, (empiezan / empiecen) a servir las mesas.
5. Manuela y Saúl, (van / vayan) a buscar a otro plato.
6. Raúl y Manuela, no (están / estén) nerviosos; todo va a salir bien.

Actividad B: Sr. Gómez has to tell the waiters what to do. Write out a complete sentence using the command form.

1. Manfredo / batir los huevos.
2. Alana y José / probar la sopa.
3. Manfredo y Alana / añadir más sal.
4. Clara / no mezclar los ingredientes.
5. Mauro / ser más activo.
6. Adriana / saber / que cerramos tarde.

Actividad C: Miriam is reading her mom a recipe. Use the command forms.

1. Primero _____las patatas. (cortar)
2. Ahora, _____bien los huevos. (batir)
3. _____más sal. (no añadir)
4. Luego, _____ las patatas. (hervir)
5. _____la tortilla. (probar)
6. Y _____ caliente la comida. (servir)

Actividad D: A chef is telling your mom how to prepare a sandwich. Use the command form in the paragraph below and choose the verb from the word bank that would make sense in each question. Make sure to conjugate the verb!

Poner   cortar   servir   buscar   lavar

Primero 1. _____ el pan. Después, 2. _____ la mayonesa y el jamón. 3. _____ la lechuga y el tomate. Ahora, 4. _____sal a las verduras. Por fin, 5. ¡_____ este sándwich delicioso!

Appendix E

Online Graded Schoology Assignment

Question 1 (1 point)

Marca si es cierto o falso.

We use affirmative commands to tell someone to do something and negative commands to tell them not to do something.

cierto

falso

Question 2 (1 point)

Marca si es cierto o falso.

You can use tú commands to talk to peers, family members, adults, and strangers.

cierto

falso

Question 3 (6 points)

Llena el espacio con el verbo.

1. Por favor, no   (lavar) los platos.

2. Por favor,   (poner) la mesa.

3. Por favor, no   (hacer) la tarea.

4. Por favor,   (escuchar) esta canción.

5. Por favor, no   (escribir) una carta a mí.

6. Por favor,   (decir) la verdad.

Question 4 (1 point)

¿Cuál cumple la frase?

Pepita, por favor, _____ con los quehaceres.

a   ayudes

b   ayude

c   ayudas

d   ayuda

Question 5 (1 point)

¿Cuál cumple la frase?

Cristóbal, no ____ a la fiesta.

a   vayas

b   ve

c   vas

d   ir

Question 6 (1 point)

¿Cuál cumple la frase?
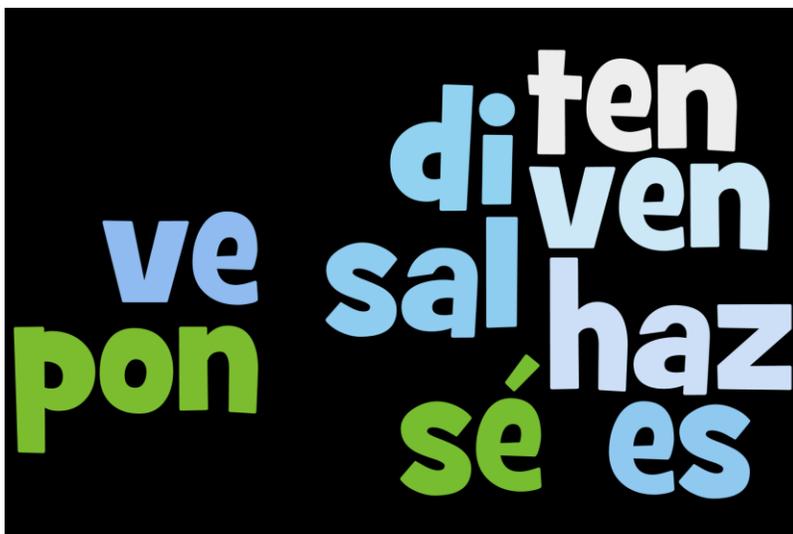
Eduardo, por favor, ____ la clase para mí.
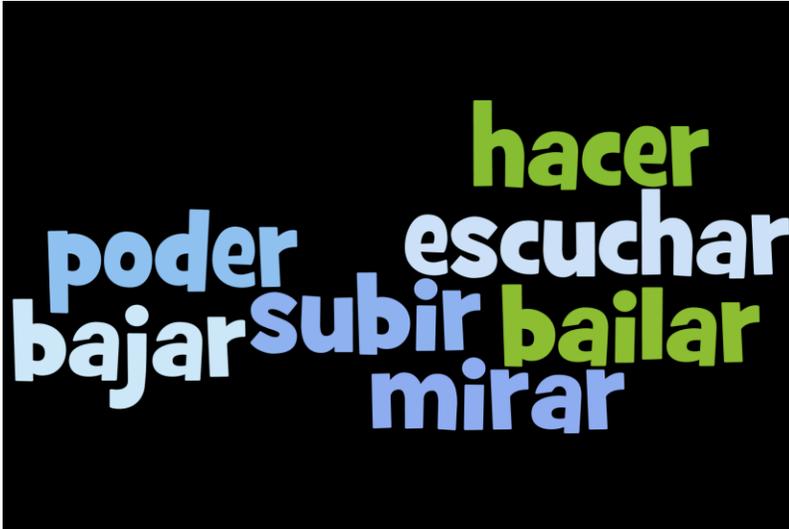
a   enseñas

b   enseñe

c   enseñar

d   enseña

Question 7 (1 point)

Which of the above is not one of the irregular affirmative tú commands?

Question 8 (1 point)

Which verb above would not use the él/ella form, but rather, one of the irregular commands?

Blank 1:

Question 9 (10 points)

Marca la frase que corresponde.

Column A	Column B
1. No me hables.	a.Look at me.
2. Háblame.	b.Don't talk to me.
3. Haz la cama.	c.Make the bed.
4. No hagas la tarea.	d.Talk to me.
	e.Don't look at me.

5.	No salgas todavía.	f.Don't leave yet.
		g.Be organized.
6.	Sal ahora.	
		h.Don't do the homework.
7.	Mírame.	
		i.Eat the vegetables.
8.	No me mires.	j.Leave now.
9.	Come las verduras.	
10.	Sé organizado.	

Question 10 (2 points)

Use the word bank to put this sentence in order.

Word Bank:

corta favor,el Por césped.

Question 11 (2 points)

Use the word bank to put this sentence in order.

Word Bank:

los bebas no refrescos Moisés,ahora.

Question 12 (2 points)

Use the word bank to put this sentence in order.

Word Bank:

los limpia favor,Por baños

Question 13 (5 points)

Fill in the command form of each verb.

1. Por favor,   (venir) a la fiesta conmigo.

2. Por favor, no   (mirar) la televisión esta noche.

3. Por favor,   (correr) una milla.

4. Por favor, no   (leer) la novela este verano.

5. Por favor,   (salir) de la piscina.

Appendix F

Audio and/or Visual Assignment on Schoology

Listen to the following audio and watch the video use it to respond to the five comprehension questions below.

(Audio credit: Heather Whiteley, 2017)

1. What is going on? Why is this person giving commands?

2. What is Samuel told to do in the morning?

3. What is Samuel told not to wear?

4. What warning comes with doing the fun activities?

5. What communication/contact is he told to have?

B. Now it's your turn. Imagine that you are leaving for summer and won't have Internet access for a month. Write a note to your best friend with at least 5 tú commands before you go.

(Write both your answers to the comprehension questions and your 5 sentences in your own document and submit it here.)

Appendix G

Student Homework Survey

All questions were answered on a Likert scale with the choices of strongly agree/ agree/ neither agree or disagree/ disagree/ strongly agree.

1. The type of homework assignment given (online, worksheet, video etc.) given influences if I complete it or not.

2. I learn best with online homework assignments.

3. I am more motivated to do online graded Schoology assignments.

4. I am more motivated to do homework assignments where I need to listen and or watch a video and answer questions.

5. I am more motivated to do worksheet homework assignments.

6. I am more motivated to do homework assignments on a Google Doc.

7. I learn best with worksheets.

8. I think different types of homework help me prepare for a test.

9. I feel more confident to speak up in class when I complete my homework.

10. Different types of homework are important for me to understand and learn Spanish.