

Dear Parents:

I am eager to teach your students Spanish this year! My goal is to teach ALL students to communicate in Spanish. In order to accomplish this, I will be implementing a variety of **proven** strategies for FL instruction, some of which are 'traditional' and some that are more 'contemporary' in nature. In order to help you support your child's learning, I would like to share some important information about how one becomes proficient in another language\*:

- The only essential ingredient necessary for language acquisition to occur is Comprehensible Input.
- Input = reading & listening to the language in a comprehensible form.
- Comprehensible Input = UNDERSTANDING what you hear and read.
- If input is also compelling and in context, acquisition will occur more quickly and more enjoyably.
- Being forced to speak and/or repeat words and phrases does not lead to acquisition or learning.
- Conjugation does not lead to communication or proficiency.
- Learners need to hear and/or read words/phrases many, many times (50 to 150) in a compelling, contextualized and comprehensible way in order to internalize them to a point where they are actually able to USE them.
- Although production (speaking & writing) is NOT necessary for language acquisition to occur, INTERACTION in the language (listening and responding) will greatly enhance the acquisition/learning process.
- Reading will greatly enhance acquisition and increase the rate of acquisition!
- Our brains are not wired to focus on grammatical rules and language simultaneously. In other words, knowing grammar rules will not help you become fluent. In fact, in many cases, it will actually deter it!

**\* For more information about how we learn/acquire language, please see bibliography on back.**

In my effort to help your child develop real, usable communication skills in Spanish, I will be implementing a number of policies, which may be different from previous classroom experiences.

- **Grades** will be based on the following 4 components: 1) Reading comprehension 20% 2) Listening comprehension 20% 3) Writing Proficiency 20% 4) Participation 20% 5) Speaking Proficiency 20%

- **Class Participation:** Since interaction plays a key role in the language acquisition process, students must participate and interact in class discussions and story creations. If your child participates fully, then s/he will do well on tests and quizzes.

- **Tess & Quizzes:** *Cramming* for tests/quizzes creates a false sense of accomplishment and results in NON-learning (Read *How the Brain Learns*, bibliography attached.) Therefore, I do not announce tests or quizzes. There are two activities that will prepare students for a test or quiz:

- 1) Participation/interaction in class activities; 2) Completing homework assignments.

Should you have any questions about instruction or the coming year, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is [dustin.williamson@rsu52.us](mailto:dustin.williamson@rsu52.us)

Yours in education,

Dustin Williamson

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