

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.



Conversifi

The Virtual Language Lab

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Overview

Please use the raise your hand button to share questions – The moderator will unmute you and give you the floor

- 1. Our Program**
- 2. Our Problems (and maybe yours too)**
- 3. Our Solution**
- 4. Our Pitch (not everyone was onboard)**
- 5. Our Pedagogical Heritage**

SLU Student Profile



Undergraduate Spanish Students

- Primarily **non-majors** taking language for core requirements (3-9 credits)
- Most **have taken 1-3 years** of HS Spanish (false-beginners)
- Some plan to **study abroad** at our campus in Madrid, Spain
- **Ambitious students** who are busy with:
 - 15-18 credit hours per semester
 - 10-20 work and/or volunteer hours per week
 - 2-3 extracurricular activities/responsibilities per week

Student Goals

- **Complete requirement** credits
- Learn **conversational Spanish** for general use in: travel, work in the community, and overall education
- Get the assignments **done as quickly as possible** and move on to next task
- Most value learning Spanish for their career and life, [but **do not know what it takes** to become linguistically competent]

Beginning Spanish Program Model

- ✓ 3 semester sequence – placement test into course
- ✓ 3 credit courses – taught primarily by adjuncts/GTAs
- ✓ 3 classes a week (MWF) – 50 minutes sessions
Approx. 38 hours/semester

The Problem: How we got into a pickle ...

- **+1 lab session per week** (T/Th) – for no credit (for students or instructors)
- **Difficult to schedule** for many students with other labs, classes and work
- Taught by an adjunct who is **not necessarily the same instructor** as class sessions
- Lab sections are with **students from all class sections** (5-8 sections per semester)
- **Topics loosely connected to classes/curriculum** but not always clear to students
- Historically focused on **grammar, writing and test preparation**



The Clincher:

Today students all have their own technology, so **why do they need to meet with us in a “computer lab”?**

...Another Problem

1. **SPEAKING** in an L2 is often the **LAST SKILL** to develop in a second language for adult learners, and therefore **NEEDS THE MOST** practice.
2. In order to improve, you need to be involved in **MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION** and exchanges, which are hard to (re)create in the classroom.
3. While **IMMERSION** might seem ideal, it **TAKES TIME**, and is **EXPENSIVE**.
4. Beginning students often have **HIGHER ANXIETY** and are **NERVOUS** to speak in the L2 because they do not have many opportunities, and therefore do not make quick improvements.
5. Basically...**IT'S HARD!**



Lab Transformation

We needed the lab to work for us –
both students and teachers!



**Traditional
Lab**

Speaking Lab:
Using realia as
prompts for lab
conversations

Speaking Lab:
Participation in
authentic L2
communication

Our Solution: Conversifi

Language Immersion:
On-demand

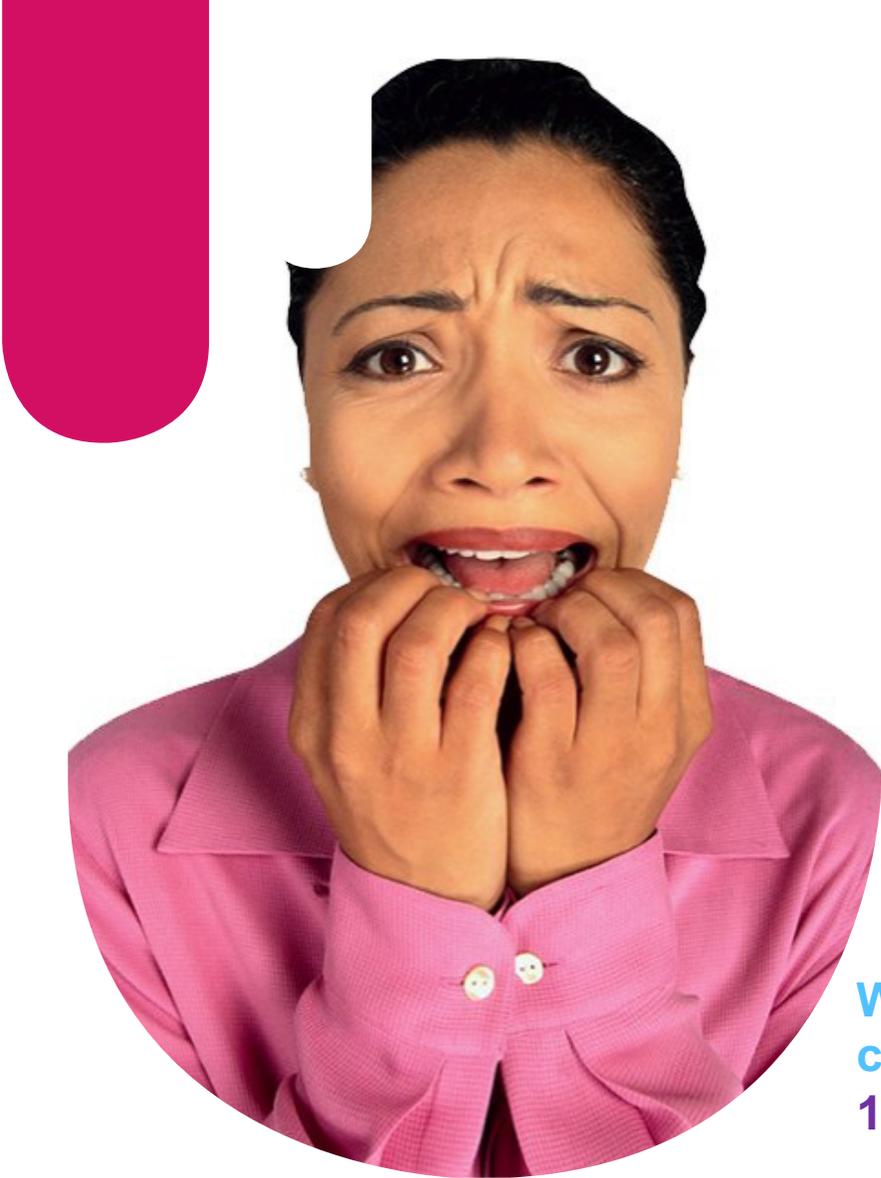
Spring 2020



Our Pitch to Students

...and instructors and administrators





Are you afraid of Speaking Spanish?

There are so many reasons that can prevent people from speaking, some of the common fears include:

- Not knowing what to say
- Not understanding what the other person says
- Scared that I don't know how to say something
- That it's going to be so embarrassing when I mess up – Will they laugh at me?
- Will they even speak back to me?

When speaking a language to native speakers, it is common to suffer anxiety from:

1. **Communication apprehension** – where you are worried about speaking or listening to individuals.
2. **Negative evaluation** – where you worry that people may negatively view your language ability.

The Answer...

Conversifi connects foreign language learners with native speakers for on-demand language practice and cross-cultural exchange over video chat.

Includes six (6) - 15 minute conversations in Spanish with native speakers around the world on topics related to your course.





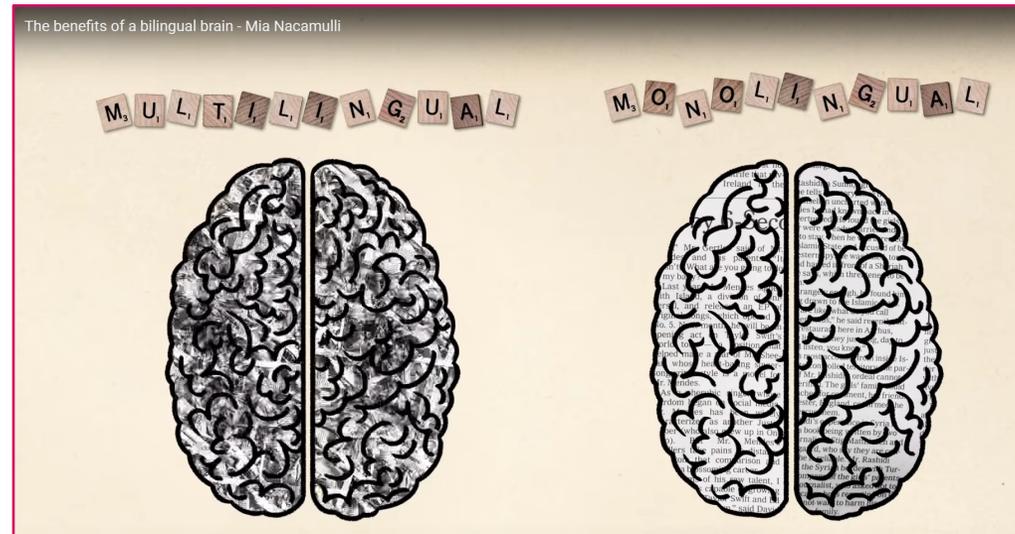
What??

**You mean you want
me to TALK to
someone in
SPANISH for 15
minutes!!**



That right!

And here is why...



[Benefits of the Bilingual Brain \(5:03\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMmOLN5zBLY>

One Stop Learning:

Integration into the LMS was key to communicating with the students

MyLab Spanish



SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY
EST. 1818

- My Courses
- Manage Course >
- View All Course Materials**
- Today's View >
- Calendar >
- Grades >
- Communication Tools >
- Accessible Resources
- Etext
- Today's View
- Assign Course Materials >

View All Course Materials

Legend v

Note: View All Course Materials provides you with access to all of the content that your instructor has made available to you, not just those activities that are assigned. To navigate this content, click on a chapter folder. In it, you will see all of the materials for that chapter, organized into appropriate folders. The Student User Guide and training videos along with other helpful materials are located on the User Guide tab on the toolbar at the top right of the screen.

My Course

| My Course | | | | | | | | Hide Progress |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------|--------------------|----------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Name | Submissions | Score | Total Time (hh:mm) | Attempts | Last Attempt | Status | |
| | Conversifi Lab Materials | | | | | | | |
| | Core Spanish Google Site | | | | | | Viewed | |
| | Important Documents for Spanish 2010 | | | | | | | |
| | Capitulo Preliminar: Bienvenidos | | | | | | | |
| | Capitulo 01: ¿Qué estudias? | | | | | | | |

Wait, you said it costs how much?

3 CHOICES PARTICIPATE:

1. TAKE 6 CLASSES + COACH 6 CLASSES
COST NEUTRAL
2. Purchase a subscription (\$7/token x 6 sessions)
\$42 for the semester
3. Request financial assistance from the Language Resource Center; speak with your instructor for details.



\$7 to start
PAID
DIRECTLY
with lab fees

Alternative
assignment
available if
requested.

Conversifi

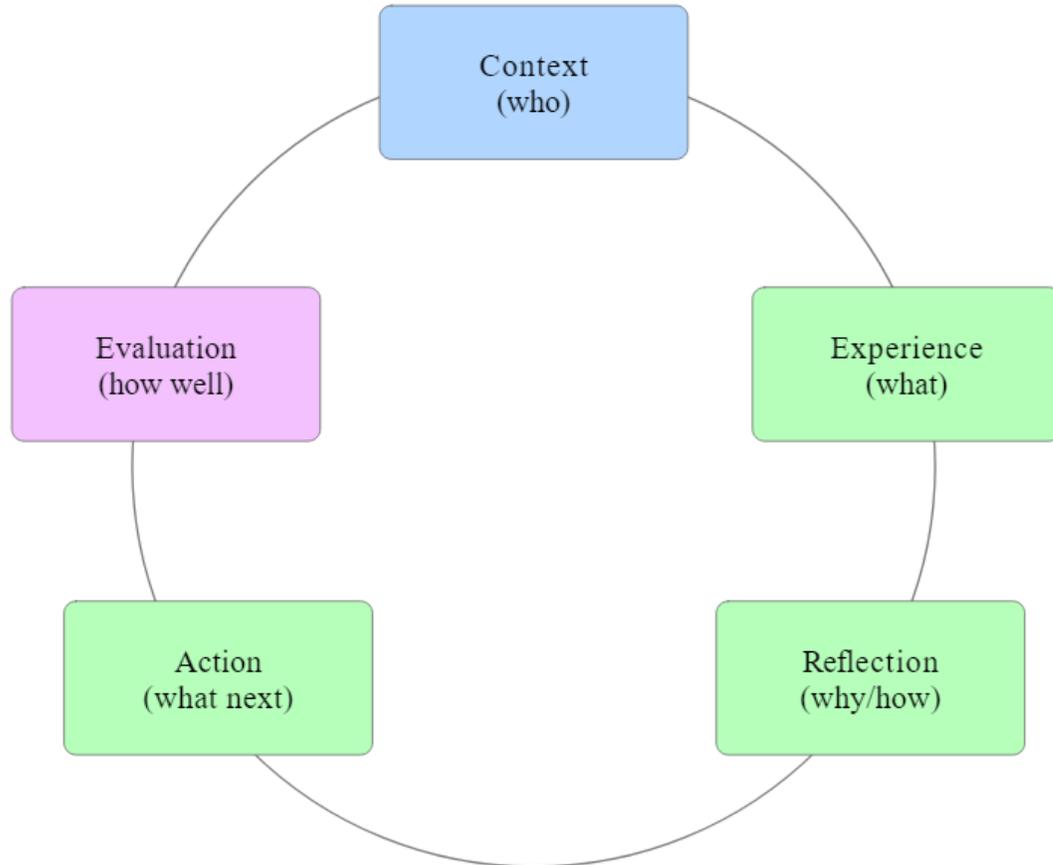
3 STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. PREPARACIÓN (en lab)
2. CONVERSACIÓN (en casa)
3. REFLEXIÓN (en línea)

| # | LAB DATE | TOPICS | CONVERSIFI SUPPORT DATES |
|---|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Feb 20 | Sports/weather | Feb 22-23, 26-27 |
| 2 | Feb 27 | Traditions/holidays 1 | Feb 29-Mar 1, 4-5 |
| 3 | Mar 19 | Interview simulation | Mar 21-22, 25-26 |
| 4 | Mar 26 | Traditions/holidays 2 | Mar 28-29, Apr 1-2 |
| 5 | Apr 16 | Food/Fiestas | Apr 18-19, 22-23 |
| 6 | Apr 23 | Student's choice | Apr 25-26, 29-30 |



Reflection in Action, Action in Reflection



IGNATIAN
PEDAGOGY

Student Reflection Example

“I think **I really grew as a Spanish speaker** from this conversation I had with a coach. I am often uncomfortable to try speaking Spanish in public because **I am not confident in my ability** to do so. **I am very proud of myself** for putting myself out there and challenging myself in a way that I haven't really done before. I was really worried that I would struggle coming up with things to say or responses to give but **I surprised myself with how much vocabulary I actually knew**. There were also a couple of times that she made jokes, and it was hard for me to understand that it was supposed to be funny at first, but once she explained it I understood the joke.

The one thing I did struggle on was properly conjugating my verbs when I needed to. **It was hard to come up with what to say but also remember the correct grammar while I was doing it**. It could sometimes confuse the coach I was working with and she would often make me clarify. **Towards the end I was becoming better** at it and she had me clarify less but it was still something I was struggling with. This is something the I hope to work on during my next conversation. I will also practice forming sentences and conjugating them correctly in my own time in order to prepare for the conversation.”

–Second semester student, after the first conversation



SPANISH 1020 LAB CONVERSIFI JOURNAL (fall 2019)

<https://www.conversifi.com/>

This journal is worth 18% of your total SPAN 1020 Conversing in Spanish II grade.

Your email address (andersonsl@slu.edu) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not you? [Switch account](#)

Language Immersion: On-Demand



Name

Your answer _____

Email

Your answer _____



Gracias!



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