

***A Survival Guide for
First-Year Spanish Teachers***

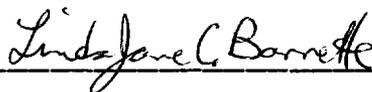
An Honors Project

by

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Purpose of Project

The main purpose of this project is two-fold. First, it is a source of advice and suggestions for first year teachers and second, it provides resources for these teachers to consult. It is written in a conversational, not theoretical, manner that will draw readers in and be thoroughly understandable and practical for them.

My project has three major components. First, I have edited and compiled comments and suggestions I received from Spanish teachers who have been through their first year. Second, a calendar of Hispanic holidays and some classroom activity suggestions are included and third, there is a list of resources for Spanish teachers. None of these categories is exhaustive; however, each one will serve as a beginning to help first-year Spanish teachers find sources and spark ideas as they embark upon their teaching career.

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Survival Guide for First Year Spanish Teachers

I. Brief explanation

As I thought of what project I should undertake for my senior Honors thesis at Ball State University, I wanted to do something practical that would benefit both me and others and that would be interesting at the same time. What I decided upon is this survival guide for first year Spanish teachers, because when I graduate and begin teaching, I need all the help I can get, and that perhaps you do, too.

For the primary part of my project, I thought that it would be most practical to ask teachers who have already been through their first year of teaching, and survived, for their advice. Those teachers gave many excellent pointers that have already been useful to me in my student teaching experience. I would like to thank the following teachers for their input and advice:

Thomas Alsop, Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, IN
Constance Bleigh, Brown County High School, Nashville, IN
Michael Buck, Triton Central High School, Fairland, IN
Nancy Doedens, Pike High School, Indianapolis, IN
Alan Landes, Kouts Jr-Sr High School, Kouts, IN
Paula Perry, Greenfield-Central High School, Greenfield, IN
Mindy Retter, Connersville High School, Connersville, IN
Linda Kehoe Robbins, Decatur Central High School,
Indianapolis, IN

Stephanie Schulenburg, Lawrence North High School,
Indianapolis, IN

I would also like to thank Dr. Linda Jane Barnette for her patience, support and invaluable input of ideas and suggestions that she has contributed to this project. I appreciate her very much!

In the second part of the survival guide, I have included a calendar with holidays celebrated in the Hispanic world and specific suggestions for classroom activities. Of course, these ideas are only a few of many, many excellent ideas, but I hope they will help you to make your own classroom more student-centered and prompt you to create your own ideas, which I am sure you already have!

As the last part of the guide, I have given you some sources that you can write or call to help you build your network of ideas. As with the activities, these are only a few of the many sources that you could consult; however, as you begin to consult a few of them, you will almost certainly receive more information about other similar publications.

I feel that I have already received the greatest reward from this project just from having gotten the input from teaching "pros" and from compiling the different activities and resources. However, it will be even more rewarding for me if you are able to reap valuable information from my survival guide that will help you have a successful Spanish classroom.

Enjoy!

II. Tips from Teachers

As I considered the suggestions shared by high school Spanish teachers, I saw three categories: A. organization, B. discipline and C. student motivation and classroom climate. Each of these major categories is organized into smaller sub-categories.

A. Organization

*The suggestions that I received under this category seemed to fall under three basic sub-categories: **planning**, **procedures** (in-class and other) ,and **outside class activities**. The majority of them fell under **planning**, a fact that demonstrates the importance of being prepared. Here they are:*

1. Have a broad semester plan, a general 6-9 week plan, and a specific daily plan. This helps continuity and makes the daily routine run more smoothly.
2. Have a syllabus. Determine what you want to cover, how long everything will take, and how you will present the material. Of course you will not follow it completely, but even a loose syllabus will help keep you organized.
3. Decide as soon as possible how closely you will follow the text, and locate your external sources.
4. Pay attention to proficiency guides and decide which items will be most important for your students to learn.
5. Plan lessons and assignments for class as far in advance as possible.
6. If you have the chance to adopt a text, choose one that is above level, then supplement. If a text is below students' level, it will not

be challenging and students may easily become lazy and complacent.

7. Use a computer. Keep all your worksheets, tests, quizzes, etc. on disk or make clear copies. These will be invaluable in the future.

8. On your first teaching assignment, get an old yearbook. It is easier to memorize the names of your fellow teachers if you have a name to go with the face.

*One teacher gave the suggestion to spend time thinking about individual needs and where your students are coming from as this will help you not to be angry with them or to give up on them. This should be part of planning, but it also is part of your in-class procedures of observing and evaluating students. Here are the other suggestions for **procedures**:*

1. Use a spreadsheet program to record students' grades so that you can keep grades updated easily and keep students informed of their progress. You may want to list students by their student number and pass around the spreadsheet on a weekly basis. Also, figure grades on a weekly basis to avoid end-of-term crunch.

2. Use an overhead projector for notes and quizzes. This material can be prepared in advance and will not only keep you organized, but will also reduce paper waste.

3. Have a "tablón de anuncios" for gradesheets, daily announcements, bell schedule, grade span chart, etc. Otherwise you will be constantly interrupted with questions about these items.

4. Arrive at school early and leave late.

5. Save countless trips to the nurse's office and restroom by having band-aids and tissues available.

6. Have seating charts. This will help you to learn names and substitute teachers will appreciate it.
7. Be prepared to do a lot of grading. Especially if daily work is assigned, work must be returned the NEXT day.
8. Assess your program on a regular basis to determine: Are my students learning? Do I have pride in my program? Do my students have pride in my program? When completed, will my students be well-prepared? etc.

While there were not many suggestions for activities outside the classroom, many of the teachers were in agreement on these points:

1. Get involved in professional organizations, attend workshops, read journals and serve on committees.
2. Take beneficial classes.
3. Sign up for trips to Mexico, Spain, etc.
4. Use your summers for enrichment and planning.
5. Start or maintain a Spanish Club and a Spanish Honor Society. Have a nice induction ceremony and invite the parents. This is a good way to maintain a high profile for your program.
6. Have your students take the National Spanish Exam.
7. Plan a trip to a Spanish-speaking country with students.

B. Discipline

Through the teachers' suggestions, it became clear to me that even the most creative, energetic and motivating teachers need to have a clear discipline plan that they can effectively implement.

I have divided the suggestions into two sub-categories:

1) your attitude and philosophy of discipline and 2) the way in which you implement your philosophy of discipline. The following are suggestions about attitude:

1. Especially if you have that "youthful look," you will need to establish the fact that you are not a student. Dress well, and address the students in a professional manner. They will know who is in charge just by the way you move and speak.
2. While you should be pleasant and nice, your role is teacher, not friend. You should be a role model, an advisor and a friendly adult. Students want and need the stabilizing force of teachers who have more foresight and wisdom gained from the experience they have. It is necessary to maintain a professional relationship with students.
3. Be aware of your own weaknesses and do not let students take advantage of you in those areas, because they are good at finding those weaknesses!
4. Always be fair and don't humiliate students when using discipline.

Here are suggestions for implementing discipline:

1. Establish a rather serious atmosphere in the beginning, which leaves room to ease up later to create a more relaxed environment.
2. Be as strict as you possibly can, making it clear what your expectations are. Make sure that rules are clear and easy to understand.
3. Be firm from day one; do not tolerate any behavior on the first day that you will not tolerate all year, because the problem will only magnify as the year goes on.

4. Do not argue in the classroom. Invite the student outside or delay the discussion until after class.
5. Follow through on what you say. Idle threats cause the students to lose respect for the teacher.
6. Don't lose your temper. Yelling does not work, unless used on rare occasions. Being firm, fair and consistent does work.
7. Discipline students for being tardy or for not doing homework.
8. Look for positive ways to reinforce appropriate behavior.
9. Use humor whenever possible, instead of getting angry.
10. Keeping students occupied will usually keep them out of trouble. Don't give more than 5 minutes of free time.
11. Simple techniques can prevent problems (stand near student to get his/her attention, use eye contact, say student's name in middle of sentence as you are teaching, etc.) Other techniques include moving student to a new seat, moving the student out into the hall, asking the student to stay after class, assigning a detention, or calling the student's parents.

C. Student Motivation and Classroom climate

*This is a sort of "potpourri" category since it deals with that difficult-to-define area of creating a positive environment and fostering receptivity in your classroom. I found three sub-categories: 1) **your general policies** 2) **classroom activities** and 3) **motivation**.*

*Your **general policies** are the ways in which you deal with your students, your attitudes, etc. Here they are:*

1. Don't play favorites by letting some students have special

privileges.

2. Be reasonable in the amount of homework you give, remembering that students are busy with jobs, athletics, family, etc. Some practice outside of class is necessary, but it need not be excessive.
3. Be interested in your students as people.
4. Do not judge students based solely on your own set of values and learning styles.
5. Do not give up on an individual, or on education when things seem impossible. Persist, persist, persist!
6. Be comfortable saying, "I don't know, but I'll look it up."
7. Do not fail to greet a student in the hall because they are failing your course. They are a "person" too, even if they can not pass Spanish.
8. Do not expect everyone to be as excited about language as you are--or for them to find it as easy as you do.
9. Be courteous to your students and expect the same from them.
10. "Memorize" is not a dirty word and sometimes it needs to be said to those who expect to do all their learning in class and never take the book home.
11. Constantly try new ideas out to see if there is a better way to teach a particular concept.
12. Be available and approachable for help after school and at other times.
13. Believe in yourself. Everyone questions the rookie and you establish your reputation ("pushover", "grouch", etc.) the first year. It is so hard to change it after that.

14. Don't assume anything. Check student academic records first if you have a problem or question concerning a student. Look for a reason. Some students are misplaced, through no fault of their own!
15. Have high but practical expectations of students.
16. Always keep open communications with parents. Encourage parent involvement.
17. Don't give extra credit for students' work on something that does not relate to the lesson. The student's grade should reflect what is taught and what they have learned.

*Under this second sub-category of **classroom activities**, you will find suggestions for keeping the class and the material interesting:*

1. If you show a video, provide a worksheet of some kind to keep students involved.
2. Review with classes before tests. Giving review sheets is also helpful.
3. Be sure you know how a game or project is going to work before you try it. The students expect you to know how it will work. Explain rules carefully and know what you will do if someone cheats.
4. Vary your teaching methods. Each student learns best in a different way. Some students need to write, some are visually-oriented, etc.
5. Speak as much Spanish as possible from day one, even in the lower levels.
6. Don't be afraid to get away from the book and try new things.
7. Allow a lot of time for pair and group work. Also, be sure to

explain your expectations ahead of time and provide models to avoid chaos when they are split into groups or pairs.

8. Don't stand in one place--move around the room.

*This third sub-category gives advice on ways to **motivate students:***

1. Verbally praise students for correct answers in class. Soon the students will be praising each other.

2. Make note of students' progress on their quizzes and tests. Use stickers, smiley faces, etc. It may seem insignificant, but students are motivated by such things.

3. Provide students with the opportunity to be creative in class.

4. Have a wide variety of activities during each class period. Move around the room and keep students active.

5. Put good projects and papers on the wall or in the window.

Students take pride in this.

6. Attend extra-curricular events such as musicals, sporting events, concerts, etc. Show school spirit and interest in the students' activities.

7. Be enthusiastic about your subject. Tell your students that you enjoy Spanish and then try to demonstrate that is really true.

8. Remember to play occasionally; have games, songs, etc.

9. Know that while you cannot motivate or reach some students, you can make a difference to many.

10. Have a file of pictures on hand to stimulate discussions.

11. Flashcards help in practicing vocabulary. If the students make their own, they remember them better.

12. Practical lessons such as restaurant scenes, visits to a shop (using clothing, money vocabulary), games and songs raise interest and get kids actively involved in their learning
13. Any cultural knowledge you have and can bring to the classroom students will soak up like sponges.
14. Give first-year students Spanish names that are similar to their own if possible and the student agrees. It is much easier to remember John as Juan, rather than something like Jesús Gustavo.
15. All environment should be in Spanish. Label things: chalkboard, pencil sharpener, window, clock, etc.
16. Speak Spanish outside the classroom, too. Students like to impress their peers in the lunchline.
17. Do not use sarcasm.
18. Do not allow students to make negative comments about each other.

III. Practical suggestions from other sources

A. Calendar

This calendar was taken from a wonderful conversation book based on culture, Modos de ser. modos de ver:

Brown, James W. Modos de ser. modos de ver. New York:

John Wiley & Sons, 1985. 65-66.

You can use these dates to include cultural information in the classroom.

ENERO:	1	Año Nuevo
	1	Día de Liberación (Cuba)
	6	Epifanía o Día de los Reyes Magos

- FEBRERO:** 27 Día de Independencia (Rep. Dominicana)
- MARZO:** En días variados según el calendario,
- ABRIL:** *Carnaval* son los tres días antes del *Miércoles de Ceniza*, que cae 40 días (y seis domingos) antes del *Domingo de Resurrección*, que es siempre un domingo entre el 21 de marzo y el 26 de abril. Después del *Miércoles de Ceniza* está la época de *Cuaresma*, que termina en *Semana Santa* que comienza el *Domingo de los Ramos* y termina el *Domingo de Resurrección* o *Pascua Florida*. Conviene consultar un calendario cada año.
- MAYO:**
- 1 Día del Obrero (varios países)
 - 5 Cinco de Mayo (México)
 - 20 Día de Independencia (Cuba)
 - 24 Batalla de Pichincha (Ecuador)
 - 25 Fiesta Patria (Argentina)
- JUNIO:**
- 24 Día de San Juan. Baños rituales, esp. in Puerto Rico. Día del Ejército (Venezuela).
 - 25 Día de San Pedro (Chile)
- JULIO:**
- 5 Día de Independencia (Venezuela)
 - 9 Día de Independencia (Argentina)

- 20 Día de Independencia (Colombia)
- 24 Cumpleaños de Simón Bolívar
(Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela)
- 26 Fiesta Nacional Revolucionaria
(Cuba)
- 28 Fiesta Patria (Perú)
- AGOSTO:**
- 6 Día de Independencia (Bolivia)
- 10 Día de Independencia (Ecuador)
- 15 Día de la Inmaculada Concepción o
Día de las Madres
- 25 Día de Independencia (Uruguay)
- 30 Fiesta de Santa Rosa de Lima
(Perú)
- SEPTIEMBRE:**
- 7 Día de Independencia (Brasil)
- 15 Día de Independencia (Costa Rica,
El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras,
Nicaragua)
- 16 Día de Independencia (México)
- 18 Día de Independencia (Chile)
- OCTUBRE:**
- 12 Día de la Raza (Descubrimiento de
América por Colón)
- NOVIEMBRE:**
- 1 Día de Todos los Santos
- 2 Día de los Difuntos
- 3 Día de Independencia (Panamá)
- DICIEMBRE:**
- 7 Día de Luto Nacional (Cuba)
- 12 Fiesta de la Virgen de Guadalupe

(principalmente en México)

16-24	Posadas de Navidad (México)
24	Nochebuena
25	Navidad
28	Día de los Santos Inocentes (día de bromas y chistes)
31	Nochevieja

B. Activities

The activities listed under this category are named according to the grammatical or lexical point that they reinforce, to facilitate their usefulness. While they are titled as such, the goal is to make these sometimes “dry” areas more interesting and stimulating. These ideas came from my own files, and the suggestions of other teachers.

1) Prepositions: For the practice of prepositions such as enfrente de, detrás de, etc., use yourself and students as the object lessons. For example, if the preposition is enfrente de, place yourself or a student in front of a desk. If it is encima de, climb up onto the seat, etc.

2) Vocabulary (general):

a. The SWAT game will keep students interested through action and competition. Before class, write some of your vocabulary words in Spanish on a couple of overheads. Then, divide the class into two teams, and have a representative from each team stand by the screen with a flyswatter. When you call out the vocabulary word

in English, the first student to swat the correct Spanish equivalent earns a point for his/her team.

b. Play “charades” or “pictionary” with vocabulary.

c. If the vocabulary list is rather difficult, play bingo using the vocabulary.

d. Use a picture file! This is good especially for vocabulary like descriptions, food, rooms of the house, etc. where it is highly visual. Find pictures from magazines (have students help you, if you wish), glue them to posterboard or construction paper, and then use them as conversation promoters in class. The ways to use them are unlimited. One of the most common ways is to hand out the pictures and ask questions. i.e. “¿Quién está en el dormitorio?” Since Jeff is holding “el dormitorio” the answer would be “Jeff está en el dormitorio.”

e. Play Around the World. Have vocabulary words with Spanish on one side, English on the other. Start on the right side of the room and have the first person stand up next to the person behind them. Show them one of the cards and the first person to get the correct meaning wins, meaning that they get to move on to the person behind them. They keep moving until someone beats them and when this happens, they sit down in that other person’s chair. Go around the room 3 times and to determine the winner, count how many chairs individuals moved from their original seat. Have a small prize for the winner.

f. Play “Same-letter vocabulary”. Put students in groups, or have them work individually. Tell them a letter (a, b, c, ch, d, etc.)

and see how many words beginning with that letter they can come up with.

3) Vocabulary (body parts):

- a. Play Simon says (Simón dice)
- b. Get a life size poster of a famous person (i.e. Michael Jordan) and label it (or have students label it) with the different body parts vocab.

4) Vocabulary (weather): Explain a weather scene and have students draw it.

5) Vocabulary (family): Draw a pretend family on a large piece of paper, complete with names and funny faces, and tape it somewhere in the front of the room where all of the students can see it. Then, say to the class, "Soy Emilia. ¿Quién es mi tía?" Have a student come up and point out the correct family member. This drawing can be used in many other ways for vocabulary practice.

6) Reflexive verbs: Bring in actual items that represent a reflexive verb. For example, for ducharse you could bring in a bar of soap. For secarse el pelo, bring a blowdryer, etc. Then, in class hand out the items to different people and use the items to promote both memory of the meaning of the word and its conjugation. For example, ask the class "¿Quién se ducha?" Since Sara has the soap, the class will respond, "Sara se ducha."

7) Telling time: Give each student a clock to work with in class. They can be made out of paper plates, and a hook-piece to hold the arms onto the plate.

8) Verb conjugation: Play "Jeopardy" There are many different ways to use "Jeopardy" for verbs and vocabulary. Here is one way: Split the class into two teams. Have 4 or 5 verb categories such as -er , -ir, -ar, and irregular verbs. Have one person from each team come to the board and let Team A (and Team B, alternately) choose a category. Then, you tell them a verb and they will have 30 seconds to conjugate it entirely. For example, the student chooses the -ar category so you give them the verb hablar. The correct answer is: hablo, hablas, habla, hablamos, habláis, hablan. This is worth 6 points and if the person who chose the category can tell that hablar means "to speak" , they earn 2 extra points. If the first person cannot name the meaning, the other team gets the chance to do so. If you can tape the real Jeopardy music from the TV show, students really enjoy it.

IV. List of Resources

*I divided the resources into two categories: **books and workbooks**, and **catalogs and magazines**. This is by no means a comprehensive list!*

A. BOOKS AND WORKBOOKS

- 1) Boyle, Peggy. Gateway to Proficiency: Teaching Activities to Inspire Students and Teachers. Oklahoma, Educational Media, 1989.

Educational Media, Inc.

3712 E. 2nd Street

Edmond, OK 73034

(800) 654-8428

In this book, Peggy Boyle has done an excellent job of compiling activities that provide active and fun interaction in the Spanish classroom. There are a lot of games and worksheets that could be copied and used with the students.

- 2) Freeman, G. Ronald. Intercambios: An Activities Manual. New York: Random House, 1980.

While I do not condone all of the activities in this book because of personal preferences, the majority of its 30 activities and games in Spanish are effective for interaction at different levels of proficiency. It also has a Spanish-English vocabulary.

- 3) Kendris, Christopher. Write It In Spanish. New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1990.

Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
250 Wireless Boulevard
Hauppauge, NY 11788

This book would be especially useful in upper levels of Spanish where there is more composition and writing. Write It in Spanish has workbook exercises with pictures and activities to promote better and more interesting writing. It also has review tests to help gauge progress, and various vocabulary lists (i.e. antonyms and synonyms). The one problem with this is that you cannot legally copy pages out of it. You would either have to buy copies for each student or simply use the workbook as a springboard for your own ideas.

- 4) McWilliams, Skip & Corrine Yanosy. 101 Terrific Tips for Language Teachers. Troy, Mich.: Teacher's Discovery, 1992.

Teacher's Discovery, A Division of American Eagle Co.,Inc.
1100 Owendale, Suite H
P.O. Box 7048
Troy, MI 48007-7048 (800) 521-3897

This is a book that I would recommend to any language teacher. There are yearly editions of it and the 1992 edition that I looked at was full of good ideas for class activities and motivators, and it had

lots of pictures to copy, money to copy, recipes, addresses of different companies and consulates, etc.

5) Moskowitz, Gertrude. Caring and Sharing in the Foreign Language Class: A Sourcebook on Humanistic Techniques. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury, 1978.

This book is useful for all languages. It includes activities and positive words and expressions to be used in the different languages.

6) Richard-Amato, Patricia A. Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom. From Theory to Practice. New York & London: Longman, 1988.

Longman
95 Church Street
White Plains, NY 10601

Nearly 400 pages long, this book deals with theoretical and methodological issues as well as practical issues. It also gives many sources to consult.

7) Seely, Contee. ¡Español con Impacto! Total Physical Response Spanish. 6th ed. Berkely, CA: Command Performance Language Institute, 1992.

Command Performance Language Institute
1755 Hopkins Street
Berkeley, CA 94707 (510)524-1191

¡Español con Impacto! explains the TPR (Total Physical Response) method briefly and gives different activities for the students. This is a good resource for you if you use the TPR method or if you need some active ideas to supplement your method.

B. CATALOGS AND MAGAZINES:

1) Audio-Forum: The Language Source

(800) 243-1234

Audio-Forum: The Language Source

96 Broad Street

Guilford, Connecticut 06437

This catalog has the world's largest collection of foreign language courses and resource materials. It has cassette tapes, videos, and culture capsules that would be good to use as supplementary activities.

2) Carlex Spanish & French teaching aids

(800) 526-3768

P.O. Box 081786

Rochester, MI 48308-1786

Carlex has many interesting and helpful products at competitive prices.

3) Da que hablar

Oficina de Educación

150 Fifth Ave. Suite 918

New York, NY 10011

This publication is from the education consulate and is distributed free of charge to Spanish instructors. It is full of interesting activities and materials, all of which can be photocopied.

4) Devonsworth Films. Inc.

(615) 986-4248

P.O. Box 1034

Lenoir City, TN 37771

This does not have a lot of materials, but it is worth having a copy of their catalog to see if any of their films/videos interests you.

5) EMC Publishing

(800) 328-1452

EMC Publishing

300 York Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101

EMC Publishing puts out a catalog with many textbooks, readers and other resources.

6) Foreign Language Grades 6-12

(800) 341-6094

J. Weston Walch, Publisher

321 Valley Street P.O. Box 658

Portland, Maine 04104-0658

This is a catalog for Spanish, French and Latin. The categories under each language are: teacher resources, vocabulary & grammar, reading & understanding, manipulatives and culture & authentic activities.

7) Gessler

Gessler Publishing Company, Inc.

Gessler Educational Software

55 West 13th Street

New York, NY 10011

This is a very good resource complete with maps, emergency lesson plans, software, games, videos, etc.

8) Más

P.O. Box 1928

Marion, OH 43305-1928

This is another "freebie." Más is an interesting magazine in Spanish with human interest stories, recipes, health information, etc. Your

students will enjoy reading it, and having it in your classroom will not cost you anything!

9) Materiales

Consejería de Educación

Embajada de España

1350 Connecticut Ave., NW Suite 1050

Washington, D.C. 20036

Yet another free resource! This publication is distributed by Spain's embassy and has many interesting cultural activities, centered around Spain, of course.

10) Teacher's Discovery

(800) TEACHER

A Division of American Eagle, Co.

1100 Owendale, Suite H

P.O. Box 7048

Troy, MI 48007-7048

Teacher's Discovery is full of neat things to buy: posters, videos, stickers, books, newspapers, games, prizes, etc. This really is an excellent resource because it has quality products for reasonable prices.

11) World Press

(212) 695-8787

135 West 29 Street

New York, NY 10001

This is more of a discount catalog, but it has many interesting items such as buttons, stickers, posters, videos, cartoons, etc.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, it has been my pleasure to produce this survival guide, because as I stated previously, it has already been for me a truly valuable resource. I hope that it will be the same for you and that you will be able to share this information with others, and begin to build your own network of information, ideas and resources.

¡Que tengas gran éxito y felicidad en tu carrera de profesor de español! ¡Buena suerte!