Find out what it really takes to learn Spanish well.

Hidden Truths to Learning SPANISH

THE



Ricardo González

SpeakSpanish.com

The 12 Hidden Truths To Learning SPANISH

Ricardo González

©2010 by Ricardo González

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other – except for brief quotations in critical reviews, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by Bold Colors Press. Miami, Florida.

Additional copies of this book may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please e-mail info@bilingualamerica.com

Printed in the United States of America

To my grandfather, Don Pablo González Sr., who taught me the importance of the Spanish language in my own life on a rainy afternoon while standing on his balcony in Aibonito, Puerto Rico back in 1981.

Rave Reviews For The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

"Ricardo is a language training genius. My senior leadership team has learned Spanish well through his teaching methods. This book is a must read for anyone interested in learning Spanish."

– Newt Gingrich, Former Speaker of the House, United States of America

"This book clearly explains what works and what doesn't in adult Spanish training. A very informative and entertaining read!"

– Dr. Jonathan Brown, President, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities

"I have personally experienced the power of Ricardo's training methods. I can honestly tell you they work."

- Beverly Davidman, Former United States Teacher of the Year in Mathematics

"Ricardo's principles taught me that I didn't need to move to another country for an extended period of time to learn Spanish well. I just needed to follow the right learning process. This book will teach you exactly what you need to do to learn Spanish well and has the potential to revolutionize adult Spanish learning."

– Dennis Kelly, Director of Treasury, Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc. Huntington Beach, CA

"As a professional educator I am amazed at the results I have achieved by applying the principles in this book. Read it if you really want to learn Spanish." *– Anne Harvey, MSW, Professor, Antioch University, Seattle, WA*

"Ricardo's Spanish training methods have allowed me to achieve my long-time goal of learning Spanish well. I can now speak at a very high level both professionally and personally. It's amazing, when you do what he says, you will learn better and faster than you ever thought possible."

– Albert Stricker, Senior Civil Engineer, City of Rancho Cordova, CA

"I had tried a few different Spanish programs but I just wasn't learning the language well. Hidden Truth # 4 on leveraging the power of patterns is absolutely genius and completely opened up my ability to use Spanish verbs. These truths have given me the focus and guidance I needed. Trust the process Ricardo lays out here and it will work for you!"

– Stacy Meyer, Sr. Escrow Officer, Tucson, Arizona

Rave Reviews For The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

Ricardo's teaching methods make so much sense. There is no fluff or hype here, just honest insight and wisdom gleaned from years of studying adult Spanish learning processes. The hope he provides in his teaching has encouraged me to refine my own Spanish so I can better reach out to the Latino populace with my own healing mission.

– Dr. Ernesto Fernández, DOM, LMHT, Sarasota, FL

"I have personally experienced the amazing results that these twelve hidden truths produce. Ricardo's Spanish training processes are better than any others I have ever experienced. I encourage you to read this book and apply these truths to your own Spanish learning pursuit."

– Keegan Federal, Senior Partner, Federal & Hasson, LLP, Atlanta, GA

I have been teaching Spanish applying these truths for the past 4 years and can tell you that without a doubt they work. When students consistently apply them to their learning process they get great results. A wonderful book that all Spanish learners should read and apply.

– Dina Estrada, Certified Spanish Instructor, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

"This book will change how people think about learning Spanish. It is practical, engaging and most important makes perfect sense. I have personally been applying Ricardo's 12 Hidden Truths in my own Spanish learning process and can honestly say they work. Any person wanting to learn Spanish should read this book -- and take its teachings to heart -- before doing anything else." – Steve Alden, General Manager, The Citrus Club, a ClubCorp Private Business Club, Orlando, FL

"Some books inform, others transform. This one does both in a clear, yet entertaining, way. This book will redefine how adult professionals should learn Spanish. ¡Excelente y Bravo!"

– Steve Savage, Bilingual International Business Consultant, Author of "Guerrilla Business Secrets", Atlanta, GA

"Things have really clicked for me after applying your Hidden Secrets to Learning Spanish. I am finally achieving my goal of communicating well in Spanish. I will recommend this book to all my friends who are interested in learning Spanish."

– Melissa Gutiérrez, Hospice Care Provider, Fairview, PA

Table of Contents

	Why learn Spanish?
	Introduction10
1.	The Hidden Truth about Learning Ability13
2.	The Hidden Truth about Methods19
3.	The Hidden Truth about the Fruit and the Root27
4.	The Hidden Truth about the Power of Patterns
5.	The Hidden Truth about Learning Like an Adult43
6.	The Hidden Truth about Long-term Memory55
7.	The Hidden Truth about Group Classes67
8.	The Hidden Truth about Course Materials75
9.	The Hidden Truth about Tutoring85
10.	The Hidden Truth about Telephone Tutoring91
11.	The Hidden Truth about Development97
12.	The Hidden Truth about Practice107
Bonus:	The Hidden Truth about Potholes115
	A Few Closing Thoughts
	About the Author
	FREE Spanish GPS Offer

Why Learn Spanish?

Simply put, learning Spanish well will open your world. You will make more money, help more people and have more friends. One of the greatest thrills in life is to be a completely bilingual person. It is a rush like no other and I have had thousands of students from all walks of life attest to this fact!

Although we could easily give many, many reasons for learning Spanish, we have chosen to highlight the Top Three reasons. Here they are:

1. To increase your income potential.

Yes, it is true, educated bilingual people almost always make more money. One fast-food chain even pays its counter help one dollar more per hour for being bilingual. That's an extra \$2,080.00 a year if they work 40 hours weekly as a fast food counter worker! It is a fact that most bilingual doctors, nurses, police officers and attorneys make more money because they are bilingual.

The BIG earnings, however, are enjoyed by top salespeople and entrepreneurs. This is because they effectively open the enormous Hispanic marketplace to themselves both in the United States and throughout Latin America and Spain. The fact is that the Hispanic purchasing power in the United States is over \$1 trillion and it is far and away the most rapidly growing demographic in the country.

Also, many vocational opportunities now require people to be bilingual in English and Spanish. The amount of money people LOSE due to lost job opportunities is enormous. Just put yourself in the place of an employer. If you could hire an educated bilingual person or an educated monolingual person, all else being equal, which person would you hire? The answer is obvious – the bilingual person.

2. To help more people.

Most of us sincerely do want to help other people and being truly bilingual in English and Spanish will allow you to help, serve, and minister to the largest minority demographic in the United States. There are presently nearly 50,000,000 million Latinos in the United States and that number is predicted to almost triple by 2050. The United States is the second largest Spanish-speaking population in the world as of this writing! Many people find great joy and satisfaction in being able to help their neighbors, students, patients, clients, and more. There is no joy like that of knowing you made the life of a fellow human being richer for having been in your presence. In so many ways, the misson and mercy field has come to us.

3. To make more friends.

We all need friends and Latinos by and large are some of the friendliest, most fun-loving people on the planet. Latinos are also normally very loyal in their friendships, which is just an added benefit. This means that once you make friends with a Latino you typically make friends for life.

The Latino culture is vibrant and alive. People laugh a lot, talk a lot, and generally speaking, are very positive about life. You probably have hundreds of new friends just waiting for you once you become truly bilingual in English and Spanish.

There are many other benefits to learning Spanish, but these three should get you thinking in the right direction. By the way, this isn't about Spanish replacing English in the United States. That's silly and makes no sense. Spanish will never replace English in this country nor is any Latino I know advocating for that. Many, if not most, Latinos do eventually learn English if they stay here long enough, but that's not the point. The point is for YOU to be able to benefit from and enjoy the amazing opportunities afforded to bilingual people in this modern world. There is a heart language that people have in their own native tongue and if you truly want to sell to, serve, and enjoy meaningful friendships with Latinos, you **need** to learn Spanish.

Now, if you really do want to learn Spanish, then begin reading this book beginning with the introduction on the next page.

Introduction

Many people are frustrated and confused about how to learn Spanish. Many people have tried to learn Spanish only to struggle to reach a high level of proficiency. The level of frustration for some people is just so much to bear that they just quit trying!

Quitting, however, isn't a good option. This is especially true when you consider that the United States is the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. For many, being bilingual isn't just about getting ahead, it's about personal and business viability.

There are 12 hidden truths to Spanish learning success. If you ignore them you will continually struggle to reach your goal of communicating well in Spanish within any reasonable period of time. Of course, if you embrace them and apply them, you will enjoy a high level of success.

In this book I will reveal these 12 hidden Spanish learning truths to you with such clarity and depth that you will easily be able to cut through the marketing hype that is so frequently associated with Spanish training courses. Most importantly, you will be able to engage in a truly successful and life-changing Spanish learning process. As in all things, the truth will set you free!

The book that most impacted my teaching was John Milton Gregory's classic, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*. Since then I have consistently searched for the truths of Spanish teaching and learning success. This book is the result of years of study and experiment to find them. I now happily share them with you with the hope that you will apply them for both your personal benefit and that of those Latinos whose lives you will impact.

This book is the result of many years of serious and extensive involvement in the Spanish training industry as a teacher, course developer, and founder of a nationally respected Spanish training institute. I have personally interviewed hundreds of students and teachers as well as have observed thousands of students go through Spanish learning processes. Since all truth is simple, the truths here are easy to understand. I promise you an engaging, sometimes entertaining, and always truthful read.

The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish are:

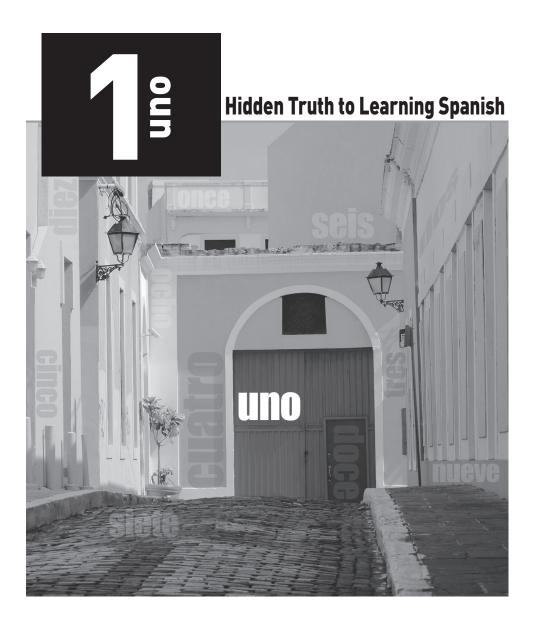
- 1. The Truth about Learning Ability
- 2. The Truth about Methods
- 3. The Truth about the Fruit and the Root
- 4. The Truth about the Power of Patterns
- 5. The Truth about Learning Like an Adult
- 6. The Truth about Long-term Memory
- 7. The Truth about Group Classes
- 8. The Truth about Course Materials
- 9. The Truth about Tutoring
- 10. The Truth about Telephone Tutoring
- 11. The Truth about Development
- 12. The Truth about Practice

At the beginning of each section I will succintly state the truth at hand and then go into detail about it so you have a very clear understanding of how to implement it into your Spanish learning quest. These are universal truths that, if followed, will create a highly effective learning environment for you.

I am also including a bonus hidden truth specifically for people who have some significant background in Spanish. That truth is called *The Truth about Potholes* and will clearly guide those with any significant background in Spanish as to how to go about reaching the next level.

Whether you are starting at zero or have some existing Spanish skills and want to get to the next level, you will be enlightened – and sometimes surprised. Get ready to learn and uncover the real truth!

Let's learn together! ¡Aprendamos juntos!



The Truth about Learning Ability

Every adult learner of Spanish has a different level of ability to learn and should take a professional aptitude assessment before beginning a Spanish learning program.

You have already learned at least one language so it stands to reason you can learn another one. Normally, it is easier for people to learn something a second time than the first time. The same is true with language.

You should, however, assess your Spanish learning abilities **before** you begin or even consider a Spanish learning program.

Many people maintain beliefs about their learning abilities that simply are not true. You really need to understand what it is going to take for you to learn well before you start a Spanish learning program.

A professionally designed Aptitude Assessment will allow both you and the training institute to know your learning and logistical needs well enough to design a successful program.

I have had people tell me they are great language learners when, in fact, they are not. Others are too humble and say, I am terrible at learning languages. The fact is some of these humble people are actually great language learners!

You simply should get an accurate and professional assessment of your ability to learn Spanish. This is the first and foremost hidden truth since so few schools or programs actually do this.

Adults learnI am absolutely convinced that a motivatedSpanish fasterand reasonably intelligent adult can learnthan children!Spanish much better and faster than a child.

Years ago, I designed an aptitude assessment for adults that is extremely accurate in determining Spanish language learning ability.

I would like to make this available to you free of charge via the Internet. It will take you from 10 to 15 minutes to complete. An accurate assessment doesn't need to take a long time. It simply needs to gather the correct information and accurately value that data. Also, in order for you to receive accurate feedback on your language learning ability, you must be 100 percent honest with your answers.

Go to the following web page and you can take the Aptitude Assessment at no charge: **SpeakSpanish.com/aptitude-assessment**/

There is no way for a teacher or Program Director to know how to meet your learning needs if he or she does not know specifically what type of language learner you really are. **This is a critical step to your Spanish learning success so please take action on this.**

No one should purchase a Spanish course or enroll in a Spanish training school before taking an objective Aptitude Assessment. Schools and students do this all the time and it just makes zero sense to me. Of course, companies who sell only courses don't care. They just want to sell as many courses as possible. Schools, however, should care about the success of their students as this is also their success. Again, here is the link where you can take your free assessment: **SpeakSpanish.com/aptitude-assessment**

If you already speak some Spanish, you should take an Aptitude Assessment **and** get a professional evaluation of your existing skills so you are properly placed into a Spanish learning program. This should be done before you enroll in a course as you have the right to fully understand any assessment of your present skills before you commit to a program.

An Aptitude Assessment is not an assessment of your present Spanish abilities; it is an assessment of your ability to learn Spanish.

There are six things that should be assessed regarding your ability to learn before you begin a Spanish learning program. They are:

- 1. Learning Personality
- 2. Learning History
- 3. Communication Skills
- 4. Non-Verbal Skills
- 5. Memory Ability
- 6. Logistical Considerations

As long as you answer all questions honestly, a language-training expert can then take this data and assure you, **before you start**, that you will achieve certain results as long as you follow the prescribed program.

I have gotten to a point with this that I can tell someone almost to the hour how long it will take them to reach a particular level of proficiency.

Be very wary (yes, I know, a tongue twister!) of starting a program in a language school or on a computer-based program where you are not given tangible and measurable expected results **before** you start.

Expected proficiency results should be clearly explained before you start a program. This expectation should be based primarily on a clear understanding of your language learning abilities and how they match up to the design of a learning program.

Please do not buy into the, "You'll speak Spanish Fluently" or "Be Conversational in No Time with Minimal Effort" or "The Fastest Way to Learn Spanish" marketing hype. No one can guarantee this because two things remain undefined.

1. The first thing that is undefined is what they mean by, "Fluent," "Conversational," or "Learn a language."

I certainly do not hear or see these companies or schools giving you a specific level of proficiency or a placement on either of the nationally recognized proficiency scales. Make the school or company be specific as it relates to an expected level of proficiency upon completion and if they can't, or refuse to do so, or in some way put the responsibility on you, move on.

2. The second thing that is undefined, and the subject of this chapter, is your ability to learn the Spanish language.

How can someone promise you something when they don't have any idea as to your ability to learn Spanish? This doesn't make sense and one of the purposes of this book is to help you see through the marketing nonsense. By the way, fastest rarely means better. If you want something done right

the first time you don't usually opt for fastest, as the quality of the result is normally not what you would desire. I don't want my home built as fast as possible because I don't want to be dealing with crumbling foundations down the road. Be very careful about that "fastest

The "fastest" way to learn is not always the best way.

way to learn" hype. Your language infrastructure will be limited and it will be on a very weak foundation.

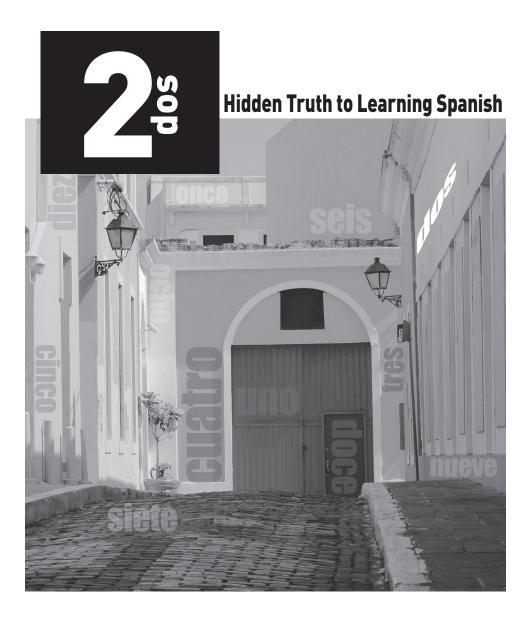
The truth is that learning is all about methods and the specific results they produce. Many consumers don't want to hear this. Many people actually want to believe the hype. It is easier to believe the hype than it is to do the work to investigate things correctly.

You, however, are different. The fact that you are reading this book is evidence that you are a person who wants to understand the truth. You are a person who actually does investigate and think things through on the front-end. For that I respect you.

Put a little time in before you commit to something to clearly understand what it takes to learn Spanish. If you do so, you'll save all kinds of time and frustration on the back-end.

By the way, a small percentage of people do have an incredible Godgiven talent for languages. These are the people who assess 9.0 or above on the aforementioned Aptitude Assessment. If you end up being one of these people, please let me know. I would love to meet you since people who assess this high are so rare. I've only had four people assess over 9.0 since I started doing Aptitude Assessments in 1992.

If you have existing Spanish language skills, make sure you read the Bonus Hidden Truth right after Hidden Truth #12. It is especially for you.



The Truth about Methods

Learning Spanish is about methods and nothing but the methods. The training methods will dictate your results.

The methods used in a training process, whatever they are, will dictate how well you learn Spanish. This is reality. The importance of methods in learning Spanish cannot be overstated. Methods do, in fact, dictate results. *¿Comprende?*

Methods are to Spanish learning like oil is to an automobile. Without great learning methods or techniques, the process will burn out and grind to a halt. There simply is no motor to drive the learning process. I have interviewed many very strong language learners who were not learning simply due to the fact that they were in a program with poor training methods.

You need to understand how you are going to learn before you start learning. If you don't, you run a great risk of spending a lot of time – and money – doing things that do not work well.

You can learn some things with any method. The point is not to learn some things or to pick up some Spanish. The point is to learn Spanish very well in a reasonable period of time. The point is to have a comprehensive and professional Spanish language skill set. The point is to be able to sit down and comfortably talk with someone in Spanish for a couple of hours,or do a professional presentation, if that is what you want to do.

With this in mind, allow me to introduce you to the two main reasons why methods of learning are so important.

1. You will only learn Spanish as fast as the learning method will allow.

2. You will only learn to the level of proficiency that the learning method is designed to reach.

A program you pick up in a bookstore or airport in and of itself is not a method. The method of learning is within that program.

Taking a class with other people, in and of itself is not a method. The teacher of that class, whether he or she recognizes it or not, is implementing a particular training method or process.

Taking one-on-one tutoring is not a method. The tutor determines the method or is following a pre-designed method.

Going to a primarily Spanish-speaking country is not a method. The school or teacher in that country implements the method.

If you purchase a Spanish Course that has dialogues of Gabriel and Andrea in a burrito shop that is exactly what you will learn. You will be able to order burritos, but you will not be able to manage an extended conversation,

You will learn to the degree the method allows.

much less negotiate a business deal in Latin America, or hire Hispanic employees in Spanish for your business.

Unfortunately, many people make the mistake of choosing a school or course based on pricing, marketing hype, location, or social environment. This is a huge mistake.

In fact, the first question many people ask when considering a language school is, How much does it cost? Sorry, amigo, wrong question!

The truth is that most Spanish learning programs are priced competitively. The market itself drives that. As for all the free courses out there, unless associated with a compelling social initiative, aren't worth the time you invest in them. You may learn some things but there is no free course out there anywhere that is capable of getting you to any reasonable level of proficiency. It simply doesn't exist.

The great distinguisher among Spanish programs has never been and will never be price. The great distinguisher always has and always will be the method or methods implemented in the program.

A school or program (whether in person, by internet, or on the computer) should be chosen based primarily on methods because the method will determine the result. When all else is stripped away, the only thing that truly matters is the result. Your job is to find the best way to achieve the result you truly want.

Learning is about what you do in the learning process, not where you are or how technologically slick the program appears to be.

Most Spanish teachers, for example, are great people. The problem is that being great people does not necessarily make for great results; great learning systems and processes make for great results.

A teacher is only as effective as the learning method he or she implements. This is true whether or not you are talking about a teacher in a school, a free-lance instructor, a Spanish-speaking friend, or a family member who says they can teach you Spanish.

So, just to be very clear, because it is the premise of everything I am going to say in this book, the method will determine how well and how quickly you learn the Spanish language, and the teacher is only as good as the method he or she is implementing.

Also, no method gives the reins to the student. In other words, a real learning method is a process and the student doesn't decide what he feels like doing when he feels like doing it. You don't get all kinds of options in a real learning process.

The reason for this is that in a real method, information layers on top of itself to eventually form a cohesive language infrastructure.

Programs that allow you to choose among different "activities" and "games" are dead-end streets. They are silly and childish. Again, you can learn some things but you won't end up with the comprehensive and complete language infrastructure you need to communicate well in the language.

There are only two types of methods implemented by schools, teachers and programs. They are:

1. Learning Methods

2. Logistical Methods

Learning methods include things like:

How are memory systems developed and implemented?

How and when should pronunciation skills be taught?

How do you develop speech flow?

How is grammar and structure most easily learned?

How are comprehension skills developed?

How soon, and at what intervals, are you introduced to native rate of speed?

Do you learn in a dialogue-based, immersion method or through a bilingual approach?

Do you learn grammar and structure or do you learn only through a 'conversational' teaching approach?

Do you learn to read and write?

Logistical methods include things like:

Will you take a group class, engage in one-on-one tutoring or do an independent learning program?

Will you learn everything with your teacher or will you also leverage course materials?

Will you learn via the Internet, computer or some other program based process?

Will you take one-on-one tutoring?

How frequently do you work with a tutor or instructor?

How much time do you need to invest in course materials in preparation for tutoring or classroom instruction?

Can you leverage the use of course materials when traveling?

Do you take tutoring face-to-face, by telephone, or in an on-line format?

Do you go through courseware processes on-line or off-line?

Schools can mimic another school's logistical methods, they cannot, however, easily mimic and implement proprietary learning methods.

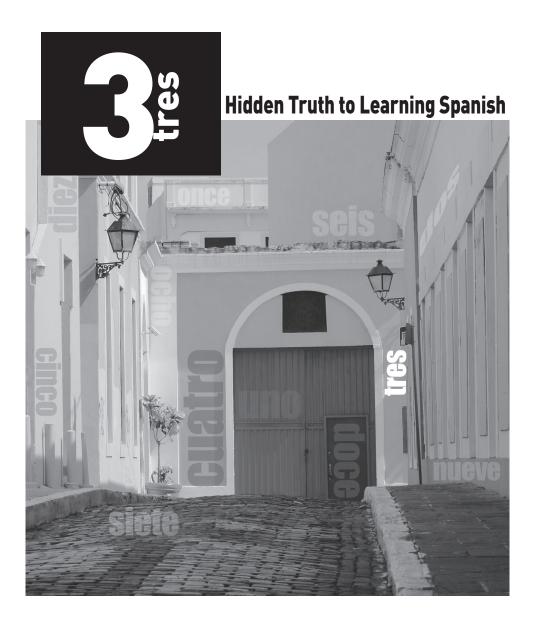
Any school can offer one-on-one tutoring or classes, however, only a school that has developed proprietary course and training processes can offer that particular learning process.

So, which Spanish learning program should you choose? The answer is simple — the one with the best methods!

You should choose your Spanish provider or program based on the methods implemented in the learning process. This includes both learning and logistical methods. Methods will determine the success of your learning process. Throughout the remainder of this book we will be discussing the various learning methods you should seek in a Spanish learning process.

Developing a clear undestanding about what works and what doesn't before you start a Spanish learning program will pay off handsomely in both time and money saved.

In this book, I will show you exactly which methods work and which ones don't with adults – and why. By the way, these truths also apply to motivated junior high and high school students who have a desire to learn Spanish at a high level of proficiency.



The Truth about The Fruit and the Root

You must focus on the proper development of the language root system, not picking fruit, in order to learn Spanish well within a reasonable period of time.

As a child, I lived in the mountains of Puerto Rico for a period of time. It was *maravilloso*!

My father has 27 brothers and sisters (not a misprint!), so you can imagine how many cousins I had roaming around the countryside. Now that was true immersion!

My father is Puerto Rican and my mother was from Kentucky. I jokingly tell people that I am a Puerto Rican Hillbilly! I grew up in a bilingual environment. One grandmother would say, "Now Ricky, don't do that Ricky." The other would say, "*Mira Ricardito, no hagas eso Ricardito.*" Confusing. *Confuso.*

One of my favorite things to do behind my grandmother's house was to pick fresh oranges right off the trees. The fruit was always sweet – like my *abuela*.

I learned something when I was young that has had a profound impact on my philosophy of teaching the Spanish language.

The life of the tree is in the root, not the fruit. This is very important to understand. **The life of the tree is in the root, not the fruit.** Most people pick fruit when they attempt to learn Spanish. They do not develop the root system in a proper manner.

Let me explain.

Where is the life of a tree? The answer was already given, but I want you to think about it for a moment. If you pick all the fruit off a tree, does the tree die? No. What happens if you sever the tree's root system? Of course, the tree will die! It will die because the life of the tree is in the root, not the fruit.

What is the fruit you want to produce as it relates to learning Spanish? What is your ultimate goal?

For most people it will be something like converse well or communicate well. This is, precisely, where most people go wrong. They focus on the fruit, not the root.

They implement methods that emphasize the fruit: dialogues of Pablo and Luisa eating in a restaurant, Gabriel and Andrea getting a taxi at the airport, Marí and Maribel playing in the park, etc. To top it off they listen to the radio in Spanish, watch Spanish language television, or worse yet, they spend a lot of money and time to travel to a Latin American country for a fruit laden total immersion course!

Amigo, if you try to grow fruit from the fruit, you will be in a peck of *muchos problemas*!

The real question is not, **"How do you produce the fruit?"** The real question is, **"What is in the root system?"**

There are two essential components in a language root system. If you master, and I do mean master, these two components, you will become bilingual. If you do not, you will not. It is that simple.

Now, that statement was very important so I would like to state it again.

There are two essential components in a language root system. If you master – and I do mean master – these two components, you will become bilingual. If you do not, you will not. It is that simple.

The first component in your language root system is words. That's right, you need to learn enough words. Not only do you need to learn enough words, you need to learn enough of the right words! You also need to get these words into true long-term memory so they are like second nature to you.

The best way to get good answers is to ask good questions. Let's begin to ask and answer some very good questions about *words*.

Question: How many words do average native speakers know in their native language?

Answer: It is commonly agreed to be around 15,000 to 20,000. The complete works of Shakespere contain 31,534 words and he was way beyond average!¹

Question: How many words does the average person use in normal speech processes?

Answer: Around a tenth of the vocabulary they know, or around 1500 to 2000. (This is one reason why most people get boring pretty quickly. They are just repeating the same words over and over!)

Question: How many words do you need to learn in order to communicate well?

Answer: 1500 to 2000. You need to build a vocabulary of at least 1500 to 2000 words in order to communicate well.

Question: How do you learn and retain 2000 words in long-term memory in a reasonable period of time?

Answer: I'll tell you in Hidden Truth #6. For now, let's pose and answer a few more questions about words.

Question: What kind of words should you learn?

Answer: My studies show that the average person speaks about 80 percent of the time in five general areas of life.

Let's call this general speech flow. These five areas of speech are:

- 1. Family
- 2. Business
- 3. Personal Care
- 4. Travel and Transportation
- 5. Food and Dining

32 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

If you want to learn to communicate well, you should learn around 400 words in each of these five areas. This makes sense because you do need to develop a balanced vocabulary.

What good would it do you to learn 1500 to 2000 words in one specific subject area like aerodynamics or any other specific field? Not much.

Let's say you are a doctor. If you learn 1500 to 2000 words of medical terminology you would not be able to communicate well with the average person, not even with your patients, because your patients will talk most of the time in the above five areas. You might be able to save someone's life in an emergency situation, which is certainly admirable, but you wouldn't be able to speak with that person or their family.

Not too long ago a life-guard told me that he wanted to learn Spanish because he had saved a young lady's life. Unfortunately, he could not speak with her or her family when she was revived. This compelled him to take action and start learning Spanish in a quality learning process.

What I am saying is you need to be balanced in your vocabulary unless you are just looking to only get by in your vocational area.

If you want to learn words that specifically apply to your vocation, the best time to learn them is after you learn to communicate well in the most important general areas. You should learn them in harmony with a true Spanish learning process in which you learn a balanced vocabulary as you also master the elements of reading, writing, speaking and comprehension.

By the way, it normally only takes about 300 to 500 words in most vocational areas to be vocationally proficient in that area.

You should also learn about 60 percent nouns, 30 percent verbs, and 10 percent other words like conjunctions, prepositions, and adjectives. Most people speak in this balance and it just makes sense to learn words in this balance. So, learn Words must be learned in balance or you won't speak well.

Hidden Truth 3 : The Truth about The Fruit and the Root 33

enough words in the right areas and learn enough words in the right structural balance.

One of the reasons some people struggle to communicate well in Spanish is that they don't learn enough verbs. This severely limits their ability to express action which is the core of all communication.

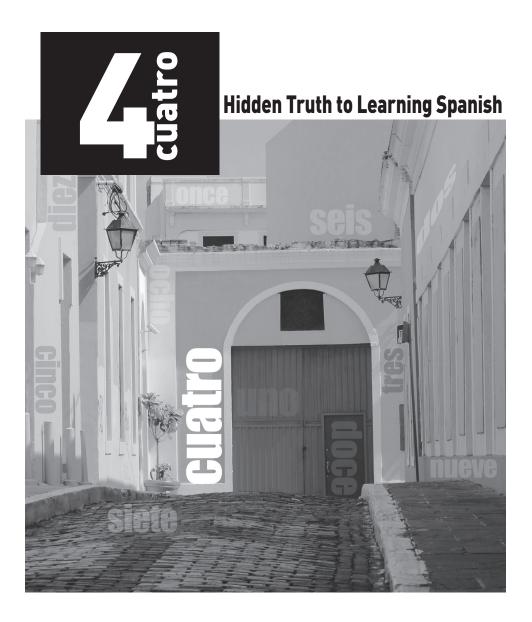
Let's get back to our question and answer session!

Question: What do you do with words?

Answer: You put them into patterns.

Question: What is a pattern?

Answer: In the next Hidden Truth, you will find out how learning The Power of Patterns will revolutionize your approach to learning a language.



The Truth about The Power of Patterns

You must develop the ability to plug words into patterns, rather than conjugate individual verbs. You should never conjugate individual verbs again in your lifetime.

Picture this scenario.

Mrs. Santos, fictitious and saintly Spanish teacher, stands up and says, "Today, we're going to learn the Imperfect Past Tense and after we cover that we'll discover the wonderful world of the Periphrastic Future Tense".

Your eyes widen, your mouth quivers, your knees buckle, and your heart sinks. Why? Because the very thought of all this grammatical nomenclature runs against your very nature.

Think about it, how many of us today opened our mouths to speak and after uttering some words of great significance, thought, "Wow, I am a genius, I just used a periphrastic future," Or, "that was cool, I just created a past unreal condition with a special touch of the subjunctive mood."

Let's face it, the only thing this will do for you as a learner is confuse and frustrate you. You don't think like this when you process English so why learn Spanish this way? It makes no sense.

Maybe you have already experienced this and you know exactly what I am talking about.

The grammerbased approach does not work. Many people would call this a grammar-based approach to learning Spanish. This is one extreme – yes, extreme – in Spanish language training.

You must forget about tense and conjugation!

Language is not about tense. The very word "tense" should tell you that it will make you tense!

Language is all about the expression of time. This is where *The Power of Patterns* comes into play.

Every sentence in Spanish (or English for that matter) is made using a group of words and placing those words into a structural *pattern*.

There are 15 different main patterns in both Spanish and English. In other words, there are primarily 15 different ways to use the same words, thus allowing you to express 15 different elements of time.

In fact, you can create equivalents and line these patterns up side by side in English and Spanish. It is kind of an x = y scenario.

This, by the way, is a very helpful thing to do for new learners or people who have not yet mastered structure. You just have to know how the patterns exactly match up and in what order to learn them.

I can hear you thinking, "Well, then I would be translating." No, No, No! You properly program your Spanish so whatever you think in English **immediately** takes you to the same thing in Spanish.

This is true whether we are talking about words or verb structures. This is a programming issue very much like how a hyperlink on a webpage takes you to another place on the Internet.

Here is how patterns work.

Let's use the words to "drive," "to," and "the restaurant" as examples.

I can use these same words to express 15 different things. I can say, I drive to the restaurant, I am driving to the restaurant, I am going to drive to the restaurant, I have been driving to the restaurant, I was driving to the restaurant, I was going to drive to the restaurant, I have driven to the restaurant, and so on.

Now, if we change the words to "to buy" "the food" and "the store" we can make 15 more sentences using those words. The patterns don't change, the words do. **The patterns are plug and play**.

For example, I buy the food at the store, I am buying the food at the store, I am going to buy the food at the store, I have been buying the food at the store, I was going to buy the food at the store, I was going to buy the food at the store, I have bought the food at the store, and so on.

There are 15 different ways to express time.

Avoid the urge to name these patterns with grammatical nomenclature. It will only slow down the processing in your mind. It will produce a negative feel that most of us developed in Junior High School English classes as it relates to tense and conjugation.

If you think tense and conjugation, you won't think plug and play. You are thinking in a box. The concept of patterns in a plug and play environment makes it easy!

In both English and Spanish, there are three ways to talk about things in the future, two ways to talk about things in the present, and 10 ways to talk about the past.

Interestingly, there are far more ways to express things that happen in the past than any other time zone. This may be due to the unfortunate fact that people tend to talk more about their past than their present or future.

Let's go back to the concept of putting words in patterns.

When you can take words and put them into any of the 15 major patterns, you can make sentences — lots and lots of sentences!

When you make sentences, you can string some together and make paragraphs.

If you know how to pronounce the words in patterns, you can make verbal paragraphs, which means you can have conversations with people. And, of course, when you are listening to native people speak they are only doing the same thing – putting words into patterns.

This is very powerful so please pay close attention!

Let's say you have 2000 words you can interchange in any way you want into 15 different patterns. How many sentences could you make?

Take 2000 to the POWER of 15. This is 2000 times 2000, then that number times 2000, then that number times 2000, etc.

This is TRILLIONS and TRILLIONS (actually beyond trillions!) of sentences, *amigo*. This is a number so big that our human minds cannot fathom this number. This is the power of patterns! This is the power of combination!

Leverage the amazing Power of Patterns!

Learn to use words lucidly within the 15 major patterns and you will be able to quickly and effectively make more sentences than you can even conceive in your mind.

Think, for a moment, how many different colors are made from the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow. When these colors are combined in different ways, they allow us to enjoy thousands and thousands of different colors. This is the power of combination.

The power of combination is absolutely mind-boggling, and if you master 2000 words (and I mean store them in instant recall in your long-term memory bank) and the ability to plug them into 15 patterns you will be painting some very impressive scenes in your Spanish communications!

The idea is that you learn to paint for yourself, not simply make a copy or do some sort of dot to dot type of communication.

You should never take a Spanish course that teaches you pre-written or pre-recorded conversations or dialogues. Also, you should never be doing matching exercises or fill in the blank type exercises. These activities are counterproductive. None of these things will help you develop the ability to put the language together for yourself. It may be fun to match a picture to a word but it is not effective adult Spanish learning.

You should always – and I do mean always – be focused on expanding your vocabulary and your ability to lucidly and quickly plug that vocabulary into patterns.

Being able to put sentences together for yourself is so much better than being limited to parroting memorized dialogues as many people do in Spanish courses and classes.

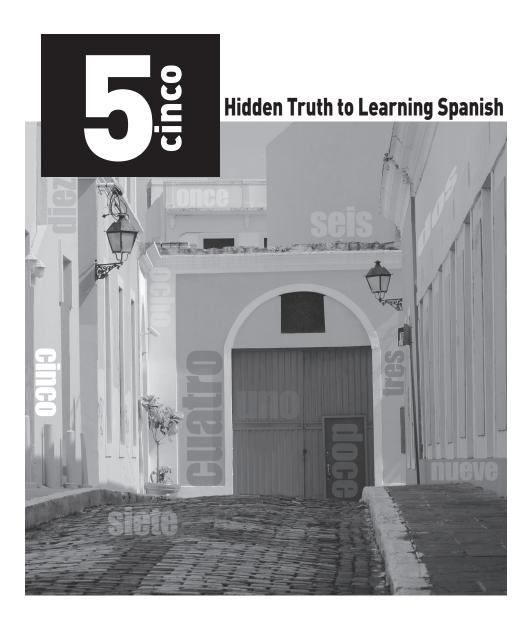
Memorizing dialogues is a dead-end street.

Memorizing a dialogue about María and Lupe getting a taxi at the airport will not fly in real life! Theme and dialogue based learning is a deadend street.

Let's pretend you just bought a brand new house with a walk-in closet in your bedroom. It is just an empty room with nothing in it. Will you move in and throw your clothes on the floor or will you consider installing a hanging system so you can hang them in an orderly fashion? That is all we are doing with patterns. They are the hanging system.

Before you learn a lot of words and have no place to put them, you need to have a place to put them - a hanging system. This only makes good, logical sense.

To help you master the major patterns I have a gift for you! Just for purchasing this book, I want to give you free access to a great tool called The SpanishGPS[™]. Go to http://SpeakSpanish.com/GPSoffer to get yours free and start mastering these patterns.



The Truth about Learning Like an Adult

You, as an adult Spanish learner, must be taught using methods and processes designed for adults, not children. Adults do not learn Spanish like children learn Spanish.

You, *mi amigo (or mi amiga)*, are not a child growing up in a Spanishspeaking environment and will not learn like one. Why then do so many people buy into this method called immersion, which basically says, "learn like a child?"

Let's find out what immersion is and why it is not the best language teaching methodology for adults. By the way, don't confuse the immersion method with an intensive learning program.

This will sound like a phrase from the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* but here goes. The word, "baptizo" in Greek literally means "to immerse."

To be in an immersion program means to be baptized into the language. For most adults, unfortunately, it is a baptism by fire!

You have probably heard things like:

The best way to learn is like a child.

You should learn like the natives.

Try to think in Spanish.

Ask yourself a few important questions.

Are you a child?

Are you a native?

Do you think in Spanish?

If your answers to these questions are yes, yes, yes, you should go to a school that teaches using the immersion methodology.

If they were no, no, no, keep reading.

Immersion training is the other extreme in Spanish language training. You will remember that in the previous Hidden Truth I mentioned that a strict grammar-based approach is the other extreme. You now have the two extremes, and thus the points to avoid, in Spanish language training.

Sometimes people refer to *immersion* and they really mean *intensive*. Intensive has nothing to do with the actual method. It is a logistical consideration about how much time you are going to put into a learning program within a given period of time.

Here we are talking about immersion as a Spanish teaching methodology, not an intensive language learning program.

I frequently ask people to consider how long it takes a native or a child to learn his or her native language.

They say, two to three years to **begin** to develop conversationally. Of course, no adult business professional is looking to speak Spanish at the level of a two to three year old after two to three years of Spanish learning.

If you think about it, children learn in total immersion — you know, living there completely immersed in the environment. Think about how long it will take if you just go to an immersion method class for four to six hours a week in the United States and keep using your English when you are not in class!

Let's dig deep here and analyze this scenario! This is so important because so many people have bought into this erroneous idea.

How old are you? Take your age and subtract two years.

That is the number of years you have been thinking in English if you are a native English speaker.

For the sake of argument, let's say Jane is 35 years old. For the first two years of her life her thought process was very image based. If she saw a pen she picked it up, stuck it in her mouth or played with it, and tried to discover its purpose in the world.

At about two or right around there, Jane began learning to call these images by name. Pretty soon she became more and more word-based. In other words, Jane would see a pen, and simply say the word pen and that was it. She didn't stick it in her mouth anymore, in fact, if someone dropped a pen on a table she didn't even think, "Why did that person drop **that thing** to write with on the table? No, she thought, "Why did that person drop **that pen** on the table? "

	Adults are primarily word-based, not
Adults think	image-based. When we talk about traffic
in words, not	we do not visualize little BMW's, Fords, or
pictures.	Hondas flashing through our heads.

The reason for this is that it is easier to manage large bodies of information concretely rather than abstractly. Some people say they are visual-based learners and mistakenly conclude that they should learn language by associating pictures with words. This is not true.

You can be a visual-based learner and that does not mean your mind is continually processing graphics for your thoughts. No, your mind is almost always processing words, not pictures. For example, you can visually see a word in English along with its Spanish equivalent on the same memory card. This is visual without showing a picture.

Being a visual learner doesn't necessarily mean being a picture-based learner. They are, in fact, two different concepts and should not be confused. All adults are visual learners. God gave us eyes for a reason! This, however, does not mean that adults think language in pictures. They do not in normal conversational mode.

Which is faster to download on your computer, a graphics file or a text file? Text is always faster to process than graphics! Graphics always require more memory. The same is true for the human brain.

48 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

Ok, let's get back to Jane. For 33 years now, minus two years for when she was a baby, she has been thinking in English words. Every thought she has ever had has taken her directly to what type of words? Of course, words in English. She has 33 years of established thought process in English so this makes total sense.

Is it possible for Jane to superimpose over thirty-three years of thought process in English so that in three months, six months or even a year she will be thinking in Spanish? Of course not!

Most people I have interviewed about this have taken anywhere from three to five years living in a Spanish-speaking environment to truly think in the target language with no need or compulsion to link to their native language. And this typically only happens if the person already has a pretty good mastery of the language at the beginning.

I am speaking about really thinking in Spanish. I do not mean knee-jerk reaction phrases like *Buenos Días, ¿Cómo está? "Dónde está el baño*", etc. I do not mean "thinking" some simple sentences. I mean fully thinking in the language.

Many teachers will point at objects in a room or on paper, thereby creating the mental imagery and then giving you the word in Spanish. One well-known language program teaches words through pictures and to top it off, incorporates matching words to images in multiple-choice exercises. Although this might have its place in early childhood language education, it has no place in adult language training.

When was the last time you put together a sentence going through multiple-choice exercises in your brain? Never. When was the last time you engaged in a complete conversation while trying to match words to pictures in your head? Never.

The problem with learning in ways that do not mimic the actual way your adult brain processes language is that when you get in a real conversation your speech will not flow properly for you. Am I saying that you will not learn anything in these types of programs? No, I am not saying that at all. I am saying, however, that you will not learn to speak or communicate well in Spanish in these types of programs – at least not within any reasonable period of time. As you now know, adults are not image-based in their thinking and this is not effective adult teaching.

You need the English equivalent and then a great memory system so both vocabulary and patterns are completely cemented in your mental processes. This way, you can quickly and lucidly use your Spanish.

Learning is very much about proper input and programming of information. Some people say, "Well, that's translating and I don't want to translate." At the beginning it feels that way but as you go through long-term retention processes correctly it becomes second nature for you.

There is nothing inherently wrong with translating by the way. Translation is not a dirty word. If you have to translate to communicate and that's what you have to do then at least you communicated. That's certainly better than having to call someone else to help you out or pointing at something or drawing a picture.

Translating is not necessarily "bad."

The point here, however, is that if you do this correctly, you will not be translating, you will have developed immediate triggers and if you need to move from English to Spanish in a more complex area you will be able to do so.

You will not be lost in a foreign language because you will always have the compass of your English and how it exactly relates to your Spanish.

The immersion approach presupposes you will think in Spanish. Everything you learn is taught to you in Spanish. The teachers assume you will somehow be able to go directly from your very engrained English thoughts to Spanish thoughts. Most adults drown in the immersion method. This simply does not happen and is very frustrating to most adult learners. People get lost because they do not have equivalents. I have talked with countless adult students who have tried the immersion route and they have told me over and over that it is a very frustrating and slow learning experience.

They do learn words and phrases but struggle greatly with lucidly structuring sentences and paragraphs on their own once they get out of very easy verb structures.

Sometimes people will say, *the only way to learn is to go down and live with native speakers for a while*. That is like saying I will become a great mechanic by hanging out at my local mechanics for a couple of weeks or months.

I would no doubt pick up some things, but I would not become a competent mechanic unless I just have a God-given talent for auto mechanics. In fact, insurance companies consider a person viewing the mechanic's work as a risk and won't even allow the owners of their own cars to enter the bays!

By the way, and think about this, I drive a car but I am not a mechanic. In the same way, just because someone speaks Spanish well doesn't mean they know how to teach Spanish. It just means they speak the language well. If you have taken an immersion program this specifically refers to your host family. Amazingly, I have had several people tell me they learned more Spanish with their host family than at the school they went to. Now that should tell you something very important about the school's methodology!

If you truly want an immersion experience, you don't have to leave the United States. The United States is the second-largest Spanishspeaking country in the world! There is no reason to leave unless you just want to travel. For most people, traveling is a non-sustainable activity. Getting involved as a mentor, for example, to local Hispanic teenagers is sustainable and can also have an real impact on your local community.

The other day I was talking with one of our students who had finished our Bilingual America SpanishPower[™] course and he told me he was thinking about doing an immersion program to practice his Spanish "in the real world." I asked him where he lived and he said, "Houston, Texas." Was he kidding? He wanted to go out of the country to practice his Spanish! This guy could spend every day of his life speaking Spanish in Houston, Texas and function just fine without speaking English! At the same time, he could make a real impact in his community.

Now, if you really do want to travel to Latin America an in-country immersion program is a great thing to do **after** you learn the language well, not before. It would put the finishing touches on an already developed language infrastructure.

The fastest way to learn anything is to work from your strength, not your weakness. It is very difficult to learn in a vacuum. Your strength is your English, not your Spanish. Learning everything entirely in Spanish is learning in a vacuum. In other words, you are trying to learn something you do not know from the same thing you do not know.

In his classic book, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*, John Milton Gregory asserts that the unknown must be learned from the known.²

This is accepted in all valid forms of training. It is time we accept this in language training. It is faster, it is easier, and it works if the method is set up correctly. You do not, nor should you, learn in a vacuum. You learn best based on tangible, understood principles.

By saying this, I am not saying I advocate a grammar-based approach like those used in most high schools, colleges and universities. That is on the other extreme of the immersion method in language training methods as already mentioned. The traditional grammar-based approach is a dry and unfruitful approach. The immersion method is, well, too wet and too fruity! One well-known program touts its method as "Dynamic Immersion" which is just fancy marketing spin to say "no English in the program." I am a proponent of the Dynamic Power of Patterns process which I spoke of in Hidden Truth #4. I am a proponent of Dynamic Leveraging of Existing Language Skills. To me, dynamic is when you can actually put this language together for yourself, not mimic some theme-based dialogue or match some words to pictures.

People who learn in immersion methods are frustrated because when they do get into a conversation, their mind is not programmed to move seamlessly from what they think in English to Spanish. They feel like they are in a mental gymnastics meet trying to find the right equivalents but the language is simply not programmed correctly.

They get frustrated because they feel like they are trying to translate. Of course they are trying to translate. The mind is trying to find the English equivalent since that is what it has been thinking for so many years. This is natural, not wrong. Translation is not a dirty word! In fact, a lot of people make a lot of money translating language. If you have spoken English as your native language for many years, this is your natural point of reference.

Again, the problem isn't that the mind is trying to translate, or transpose. The problem is that the mind hasn't been programmed correctly to quickly link from one language to the other.

The solution is simple! You need to program your Spanish correctly so you can move quickly and easily from your English thought processes to what you want to say in Spanish.

In the chapter on developing long-term retention, I'll explain exactly how to do this programming. Unfortunately, a lot of people pay for language instruction and are really only paying for somebody (or a computer program) to talk with them in Spanish. You must make sure you are investing in a true learning process. If you want to talk with someone, go down to a local Hispanic market on a Saturday afternoon. It is free! Personally, I would not pay for someone to talk with. As they say, "talk is cheap."

I would only pay for a cohesive, results-driven process with measurable and objective goals.

In essence, many immersion teachers become human dictionaries. A lot of time is spent simply answering the questions, *¿Cómo se dice?* and *¿Qué significa?* That means, How do you say? and What does that mean?

When this happens, it automatically tells you that you are being taught outside of your knowledge base. Dictionaries are inexpensive. An excellent instructor in real time is not typically so inexpensive. You do not want to convert a live instructor into a human dictionary as this becomes a very expensive dictionary or vocabulary learning system.

Conversation	
practice should	
be within your	
knowledge base.	

Your tutor or instructor should only implement conversation based on your existing knowledge base so you get comfortable with the application of that knowledge. Also, immersion trips down to a language school somewhere in Latin America are not inexpensive by any stretch of the imagination.

Some immersion schools in Latin America are downright cheap but remember you always get what you pay for – even in Latin America.

A respected language school in Latin America in a developed country like Costa Rica, Argentina, Panama, or Chile will cost you about 70 to 80 percent of what a respected school in the United States would cost.

That doesn't include the airfare, hospitality, the inevitable tourism expenses, phone calls back home, social inconveniences, and time lost from your job or organization back home. None of these things are inexpensive. The cost can easily run into the thousands when all things are honestly considered.

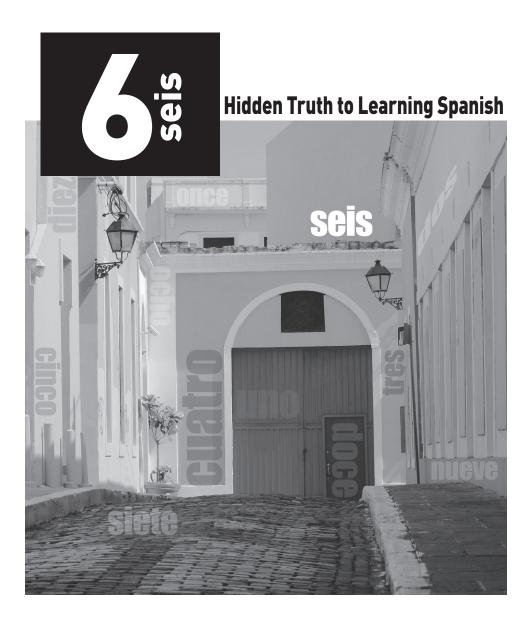
54 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

The truth is that almost all "immersion trips" end up costing more time and money than if you had taken a comparable learning program in the United States. When you also consider that the result of the immersion method is limited, typically an "in-country immersion program" is not a good investment unless you already have a strong Spanish language infrastructure, really want to travel, and experience the culture. In that case, enjoy!

I can't tell you how many times someone has told me that they learned more with their "host family" than in the school itself. So, why go to the school? Why not just go and live with a host family? Actually, my advice is that you take a high quality Spanish learning course in the United States and then find a family to live with in Latin America for a month or two. At that point you don't need to go to a school, you simply need to get the additional practice in the culture. That is unless you can find a program that truly builds on and refines your existing Spanish skills.

As I alluded to earlier, a great way to get additional practice without leaving the country is to get involved as a big brother or big sister to a Latino/Latina young person. You could offer your time as a mentor to a junior high or high school student who needs a positive role model. This will not only give you a great opportunity to practice your Spanish, it will have a positive impact on another human being, and by extension, the greater society.

So much about the immersion method doesn't make sense when you peel back the layers.



The Truth about Long-Term Retention

In order to communicate well in Spanish you must develop true long-term retention of all material learned. Long-term retention is maximized by implementing four specific strategies.

There are four long-term retention secrets that will turbo charge your long-term memory. Let's face it, learning the Spanish language involves a significant amount of memory work. The more you can optimize your long-term memory processes the better.

A great side benefit for you is that these holistic principles also apply to other learning practices. I have had many students tell me that not only did they learn Spanish with us, they learned how to learn. I sincerely hope you will have the same experience.

Secret #1: Relax

The number one factor to turbo charging your memory and achieving true long-term retention is relaxation.

In other words, chill out. Tranquilo, as we say in Spanish.

People who are relaxed remember information well – unless their state of relaxation came via alcohol or drugs! We're talking about a relaxed mental approach to learning the language.

Think about this — to get serious results in learning you cannot take learning too seriously. If you do, you will have serious learning problems. In other words, being a perfectionist in language learning is a huge detriment to the learning process.

Do you have mental block? Before we move on here, take a few controlled, deep breaths... Have you ever seen pictures of a dysfunctional brain under stress? The distortion of the brain cells affects proper neuronic activity. The term mental block can be a physical reality.³

If I push you, you will want to push me back. Pressure produces resistance. If you push your mind too hard, or in the wrong ways, your mind will rebel, and you will have trouble remembering things for any length of time. I cannot overstress (pun intended!) the importance of a relaxed mind and environment if you want to learn well. This has many practical applications and we will work through several of them.

Here are some great ways to relax your mind.

1. Be positive about your ability to learn.

Many people convince themselves (or have been convinced by others) of things like, "I am too old to learn," "I do not have a very good memory," "I never was any good at learning language," "I am really forgetful," etc.

You may have heard the saying, "As a man thinks in his heart so is he." There is ample documentation regarding the power of positive thinking and the destructiveness of negative self-talk. Make it a practice to tell yourself that you do have a good memory and that you can learn Spanish well. Eventually, reality will catch up with your internal belief system. In other words, fake it until you make it.

My two favorite books on this subject are *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale and *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle. Of course, the Master Teacher and Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, consistently taught how to maintain a peaceful state of mind. All modern teaching on the subject stems from his teachings on the subject. If you have not read his teachings specifically regarding peace and relaxation I would recommend you do so. Peace be with you!

The subconscience mind is extremely powerful and our thoughts about ourselves are normally self-fulfilling prophecies. Imagine the mental stress involved in trying to do something you have already told yourself you cannot do, or will be hard, or worse yet, near impossible.

Stop lying to yourself about memory!

If you do not think you will learn, most likely you will not. In that case, why even start a learning program? You are already doomed to failure. The primary reason is because you are setting up so much mental stress

that it becomes impossible. If you combine a great attitude with a great learning method, you will get great results.

If you tend to have a negative view of your learning abilities, the first step is to start viewing yourself in a more positive light. Give yourself a break, smile and move forward.

2. Breathe Deeply.

Most people in the Western Hemisphere do not breathe correctly.

The human body is designed to eliminate up to 70% of its toxins through breathing. Breathing deeply helps eliminate poisons from the cells. 4

Here is a great breathing technique I learned several years ago that will help you.

It is done in a **4** - **6** - **8** sequence.

Breathe air into your stomach area for four seconds. Make sure you put your hand on your abdomen and that you actually fill it with air.

Hold the breath for six seconds. During this time you should let your mind go blank and let go of any concerns and thoughts you have.

Exhale slowly for eight seconds. You should feel like a tire going flat or like a balloon that is slowly releasing air. When I do this I can feel my shoulders tingle as I release the stress. Repeat this at least three times each sequence.

Repeat this sequence at least three times daily – in the morning, at noon and again in the evening after work. Do these before you sit down for any extended period of Spanish learning.

Deep breathing combined with consistent stretching of the muscles is one of the best ways there is to relax your mind and body. They are tied together after all.

3. Exercise at least three times weekly.

A lot has been written about the benefits of exercise in relation to relaxation and a positive mindset. When we exercise, the chemical phenylethylamine, or PEA, is released to our brains. By the way, this chemical is also found in chocolate! Now you know why your body craves that decadent truffle. Your body just wants to feel good and relax.

Studies show that people who are depressed have low levels of PEA in their bodies and people who are positive about life have higher levels of PEA.⁵ Much has been made about the release of endorphins after exercise but studies are now showing that the chemical PEA penetrates the brain more easily than endorphins, thus being the true stimulus to what many call runner's high.

The good news is you don't need to run, just get moderate cardiovascular exercise at least three times weekly and you will probably speak Spanish much better, much more quickly.

Exercise regularly and you will learn Spanish faster!

As an aid in developing great retention skills, exercise regularly. By the way, as part of a good health program, you really should be taking Omega 3 for proper brain function. There are many articles that document the benefits of Omega 3 and I encourage you to learn more about its benefits.

4. Visualize yourself at peace.

If you asked 100 people what they really want in life, many (if not most) would say, peace. If you want to be at peace, you need to train yourself to be at peace. Visualize yourself in peaceful surroundings and settings.

My all time favorite peaceful place is up on the top of a mountain in Puerto Rico looking over the Caribbean Sea. In fact, in one office I had a mural painted of this exact scene in one of the rooms so I could go there and "get away" from it all. Find yourself such a place, even if it is only in your mind.

5. Give yourself enough time to learn Spanish well.

I define learning Spanish well as a minimum of advanced plus to superior rating as defined by the ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

You can learn more about these proficiency levels on the ACTFL website at the following link: <u>http://bit.ly/2ijtZTc</u>

Learning Spanish well doesn't happen overnight for most people. Rushing yourself is just going to create additional stress and pressure.

It takes the average adult Spanish learner around 260 to 280 hours total to learn Spanish well if they do the right things in the right ways at the right time. Now, to be clear here, this is a person who stays consistent and follows a specific learning process designed to get that result in that time period.

This means if you give 5 to 6 hours a week to the process you can realistically become 80 to 85 percent of native within a year. This is fast, yet realistic – if you do the right things at the right times. In other words, apply the right methods as we discussed in Hidden Truth #2.

Most people who work normal jobs are able to consistently commit around five to six hours weekly to the learning process. This doesn't necessarily mean five to six hours of sit-down, focused study. You can, for example, effectively leverage the use of retention card memory systems throughout the day in short increments of time. You can also use audio tracks while on-the-go on your phone.

Busy adults nead to leverage time properly You must be able to leverage your time correctly in order to succeed in your Spanish learning endeavor. This is especially true for busy adult professionals. If you can invest more time than this weekly, great!

62 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

Be aware that most people are only able to truly assimilate 10 to 15 hours of Spanish learning on a weekly basis even if they do have more time. My experience, however, has been that most adult professionals can realistically commit anywhere from four to six hours weekly to the process as long as they learn to leverage their learning processes correctly.

A properly administered Aptitude Assessment, as discussed earlier, will go a long way in helping you and the training institute to define how much you can actually assimilate.

Whatever the case, relax about it! Balance your desire with the reality of your learning abilities and your time availability.

Being a positive minded realist is a great stress reliever!

Do not try to cram in information too quickly. If you are in a results-driven learning process, the language will gel very nicely within a reasonable period of time. As mentioned earlier, "fast" learning is not necessarly the best way to learn to get true long-term retention.

6. Get enough sleep.

This is rather basic but sometimes our problems are actually quite simple. Some people simply cannot relax because they are too tired to do so! To top it off, some people artificially stimulate their minds via caffeine or energy drinks and only make matters worse for themselves.

A relaxed mind is a fertile mind. You must have a relaxed mind if you are going to easily achieve long-term retention of a large body of material. A relaxed mind is a fertile mind.

Secret #2: Be Ridiculous

Simply put — have fun! Things need to be a bit humorous, a little ridiculous. Laughter produces a relaxed mind, and a relaxed mind is critical to great learning, as you know.

Allow me to give you a good example of what I mean by learning in a ridiculous way. While learning Spanish you will need to learn a lot of new words.

Let's say you come across the word "the rock." In Spanish this is *la piedra*. It is pronounced like *lah pye-drah*.

You have a choice; either learn "the stone" = "*la piedra*" by looking at a book or by using a memory retention card. As you learn you can mumble the information to yourself — or you can imagine a HUGE stone or boulder falling right on top of you and you start screaming *LA PIEDRA*, *LA PIEDRA*.

If you imagine the stone falling from a cliff coming right at you and start shaking your body as you are screaming, *LA PIEDRA*, *LA PI*

You will always remember what you do with passion and emotion! This is a basic law of memory and long-term retention.

Lifeless, emotionless learning is not only boring, it does not produce results. If you want things to stick then you must have fun when you are learning. Be dramatic and do crazy things to remember information.

Actors and actresses remember their lines because they put words within an emotional context. You can and should do the same — if you want to remember what you learn.

If you are writing and practicing putting sentences together, pretend you are actually telling these things to another person. The people who struggle with this are typically analytical thinkers. People who are very fact-oriented and have difficulty with out-of-the-box thinking need to loosen up and have some fun!

All I can say is whatever your learning tendencies, it is worth the extra effort to learn with lots of ridiculous passion and emotion. Not only will you learn more quickly, you will have more fun in the process!

Secret #3: Repeat, Repeat, Repeat

It has been said that repetition is the mother of all learning.

Do something enough times and eventually you will get it no matter how analytical and emotionless you are!

The way to reduce the number of times you have to do something is to apply the first two secrets I gave you: relax and be ridiculous.

If, however, you do not want to relax and be ridiculous, you can actually get long-term memory by just doing the same thing enough times in enough different ways.

The average person needs at least 15 repetitions of the same thing to begin to store it into long-term memory. This means that every new word you learn should be cycled through your brain at least 15 times if you want to really remember it.

This is critical in Spanish language learning because you may use one word in a conversation, and not use it again for two to three weeks! If the word is not truly stored in long-term memory, you will have trouble recalling it again after two weeks. This, of course, is very frustrating.

One reason why so many Spanish language courses are unsuccessful is because they do not contain an effective long-term memory system. In other words, they give you the information, but they do not set up the correct number of repetitions you need to actually achieve longterm memory.

Make sure your Spanish course has great memory systems.

For this reason (among others), many people go through Spanish language courses, get wonderful grades, or feel like they understand things, but still cannot recall words and structures in a real conversation.

Secret #4: Retroactivity

Repetition is how many times you repeat something in a given time period; retroactivity is how long you use and apply it from when you initially learned it.

```
Repetitions
should be
spread out.
```

You can do 20 repetitions of something over ten minutes or you can do 20 repetitions over five days. If you do it over five days (retroactivity) it will store more easily into long-term memory

than if you do it the same number of times (repetition) in ten minutes.

Information is stored into long-term retention most easily in manageable bits and pieces. You do not want to attempt to cram things into long-term retention. It will not go there, it will go into short-term memory.

Here is some good news! The issue here is not memory. The issue is retention and recall. Unless you have a physiological memory issue or are under great amounts of stress (which, of course, can be reduced) you do not have a memory problem. I will prove this to you.

Have you ever driven down a road and seen something that jogs your memory about something that happened 10, 20, 30, even 40 years ago? All of us have had this type of experience.

If your memory were affected physiologically, as with Alzheimer's disease, you could not recall this information. The fact is that you are able to recall information that has been stored in your memory bank for many, many years. Most likely you can recall events in your life when you were four to five years of age.

I had an uncle from Puerto Rico who swore he could remember when he was born! No kidding. Of course, he was one of those 27 from my father's side so possibly he had some "super genes" from *mamá y papá*.

The key here is not your memory, it is learning in a way that will allow you to have instant recall of what is in your memory bank.

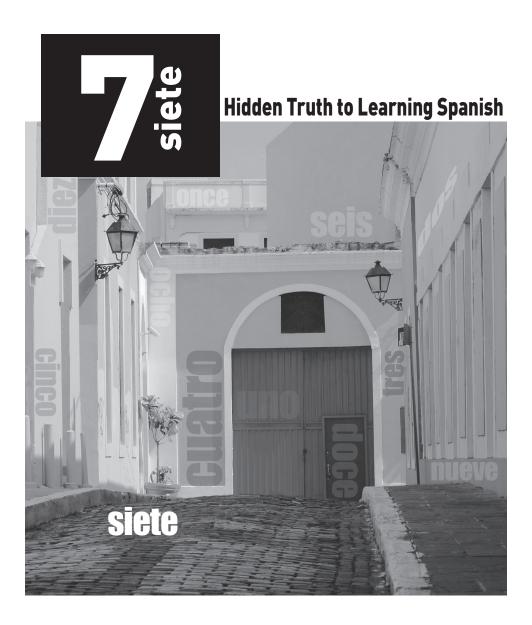
66 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

Research by some Canadian neuroscientists shows that people who are bilingual from youth actually offset memory-related diseases by as much as four years.⁶ Who knows,

Learning Spanish is like brain food!

learning a second language may even give you the capacity to save your brain in old age!

There are many reasons to believe that learning a second language works the mental motor skills of adults more than any other mental activity. The adult mind is forced out of habitual, engrained thought and language processes. This increased use of cerebral skill can only be good for you so relax – the benefit is long-term as well.



The Truth about Group Classes

Group classes are the slowest and poorest way to learn a language. In order to learn Spanish well you must be able to learn at your own pace and practice in a way that will develop true skill and confidence.

Classroom training in language training does not work well when compared to other available options. Yes, there are other options even for large public school systems. We really could be producing much higher numbers of bilingual students than we presently do.

School systems could and should produce truly bilingual graduates.

It is unacceptable that the vast majority of students who graduate from our schools with two to three years of foreign language cannot effectively communicate in the target

The system is broken.

language. The system is broken and needs to be changed. It does not need to be fixed, it needs to be changed. The present system, I believe, simply cannot be salvaged and is incapable of producing the type of results students (and parents!) should expect.

If you have eight people in a class for one hour, the most time any one student could get in "total" individual attention would be 7.5 minutes. That is not enough attention even on a daily basis to learn to speak well! If you are in a class with 20 students it drops down to 3.25 minutes per person per class!

There are three main reasons why learning Spanish in a traditional group class is not effective.

1. You learn at the speed of the other students in the class.

A class can only move as fast as the slowest learner who consistently asks questions. Some students just sit there and do not ask questions so they don't slow down the class. They are not the problem to the faster students. The slow **verbose** learner is the one who is holding the class back.

Many times a student will miss a class or more and then, upon return, will take up a large portion of the class time to catch up. This is especially true if the student is verbose. This isn't fair to the other students who did not miss classes. Many times there are students in the class who simply cannot learn quickly. This is frustrating for both the highly capable learner and for the slow learner. The slow learner wants everything to slow down and the fast learner wants things to go more quickly. They both want to learn *Español*. They simply are not on the same pace.

2. You practice with other people who do not speak Spanish well.

In a classroom environment you are constantly hearing, or talking with, people who speak Spanish poorly. This does not help the new learner because it only reinforces poor pronunciation and speech flow habits. The blind simply cannot lead the blind.

	The bottom line is that if you are serious
Don't practice	about learning Spanish well in any reasonable
with people who	period of time you cannot spend your time
don't speak well.	practicing with people who are just hacking
·	away at the language.

By the way, this also goes for "conversation" groups that are popular around the country. The best case scenario is to work with a professional tutor who knows how to properly lead you through the developmental process. More on that later.

After you have a fully developed language infrastructure then you should practice only with native speakers. Of course, you could also help others learn who are going through the process but that will not necessarily be good for your Spanish.

3. You learn in a unilateral discourse rather than in an interactive process.

Your goal is to learn the language and to learn the language you must interact directly and extensively with the language, not the teacher.

This point is often overlooked for reasons that I do not completely understand. Before you can interact effectively with other people in the language, you must, in fact, learn the language itself! A great deal of time is spent in a traditional class environment listening to an instructor talk.

This is simply not the best use of your time if you are serious about mastering the Spanish language. It gets even worse when you factor in the time wasted when the teacher talks about his or her latest experiences with Latinos or current events. That's all well and good but does you no good as it relates to you actually learning Spanish.

I would contend that cultural training has its proper place but it should not be mixed with a serious Spanish learning process. One is a social discipline and the other is a linguistic discipline. That's like mixing science class with gym class.

You need to invest your time either directly interacting with the language (mastering vocabulary and structure) through interactive learning processes or practicing with someone who knows how to build your confidence properly.

There are other reasons why a classroom language learning experience is typically ineffective but these three are sufficient to make the point.

To understand the negative aspects of this process one needs only to think of how many people are walking around with two or three years of high school and college Spanish who cannot maintain a decent conversation. Most people can't speak Spanish well after two to three years of Spanish classes.

Many people choose a classroom learning option because they believe it is the most inexpensive way to learn. This is not the case at all.

Although the per hour rate for a group class is normally less expensive than one-on-one tutoring keep in mind that the actual "real" attention you get in a group class is minimal.

If you can get more attention in one hour than in six, why pay for six?

If you paid \$10 an hour for a group class you would come out even financially if you paid sixty dollars an hour for private lessons. What you really lose is the time. Why pay virtually the same amount of money to spend much more time and get a lesser result? That makes no sense. Let's say you decide to take a group class to learn the Spanish language. At best, you would need three years of classes. This is a fact!

Now, let's "lowball" the price and say that each class down at the local community college or at the local private language school costs you \$199 for 10 weeks of class twice a week for an hour each class.

You say, "OK, I can afford that, I am signing up." So you have twenty hours of class for \$199. Let's say you do that four times a year. How much did you spend that year on Spanish classes? That's right, \$796.

How many years of classes will you need to speak proficiently? At least three, and most people are likely to need more. What is three times \$796? That's right, \$2,388. Now, that wasn't as inexpensive as you thought, was it?

When you factor in your lost time driving back and forth to the school, gas, oil, and possible lost income from not being able to speak well more quickly, it really adds up to much more than 2,388!

Now, let's add to the scenario. Let's say that Harry is 30 years old and has a job as a medical assistant. His annual salary is \$40,000. A position becomes available for \$50,000. The only problem is that the position requires that he be able to communicate well in Spanish.

Harry goes and signs up for the local group class to learn Spanish. Harry takes three years to learn to communicate well. How much money did that Spanish class cost Harry? That's right, \$30,000 in lost revenue because he could not get the job plus the \$2,388 from the first scenario to pay for all the classes that he would need to get up to speed.

All of this makes perfect sense. Why then, do schools teach group classes knowing full well that the success rate of students learning to communicate well is very low?

Schools make more money teaching group classes. Public schools don't do it because of a lack of commitment to bilingualism. The United States simply does not put a high value on graduating truly **bilingual students**. Community colleges and Spanish schools don't do it because, well frankly, they make more money on group classes.

Take an honest look at the numbers. Let's say each student is paying \$10 an hour for that class. Tack on at least another \$20 to \$25 for a book or two.

Not too long ago I saw a book fee for classes at a well-known Latino association for \$200! When Latino social agencies became experts at teaching Spanish I haven't quite figured out yet. It also irks me that many of these organizations use language training as a way to raise additional funds when this is in no way a core competency of theirs.

By the way, the same goes for churches. Many say they do language training as "outreach ministry" but the real truth is that they use language training as a hook to interest people in becoming involved in the greater ministry. Social agencies and churches should stick with their core missions. When they start teaching language classes they are venturing into an area in which they have little or no expertise. Consequently, their programs typically fail, only creating doubt about the quality of their larger mission.

The ability to communicate well in another language is too important a skill to use as a hook to involvement or fund raising. Associations and churches should be referring people to quality learning programs, not trying to run their own when they are not equipped to do so.

74 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

I write this as a person who has been very active in ministry and actually am a trained theologian. My first degree was in Religious Education and I also had five years of Greek studies. In addition, I have a deep social conscience as it relates to the Latino community as a whole.

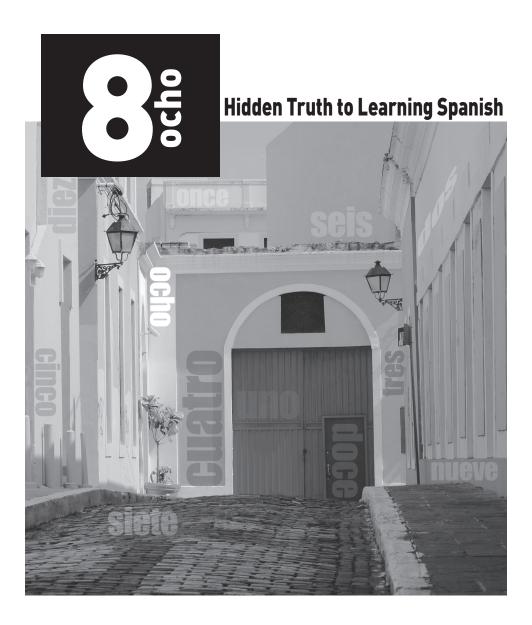
I do not say this lightly or out of any disrespect to churches or social organizations. I understand what they are trying to accomplish, they simply do not have the expertise (either from a programming or instructional standpoint) to do language training with any sustainable level of success. People trust these organizations, but unfortunately, waste significant time trying to learn Spanish in them.

Some organizations have actually found that instead of gaining trust they actually lose it. People, rightly so, will reason, "well, that didn't work so it's doubtful that anything else they offer will either."

Let's go back to the general discussion on classroom language training. Let's say that there are 15 students in the class. How much is the school taking in per hour? That's right, \$150 an hour and probably around a 50% profit on the books.

How much could they charge you if you were taking private instruction? Not \$150 an hour, that's for sure! In both cases, they are using one instructor.

This is why schools teach group classes. If I owned a language school, and I do, I would not offer group classes, and I don't. They don't work for real results. I would love to offer them from a financial standpoint but my conscience simply does not allow me to do so.



The Truth about Course Materials

Course materials are the basis of your learning process. You must purchase a course that implements adult training methods and is designed to get you to the level of proficiency you truly want to achieve.

I cannot tell you how many countless hours I have spent reviewing Spanish courses. I am not going to specifically name any courses in this chapter but I am going to give you the framework by which you should judge these Spanish courses.

I am a huge proponent of people leveraging great course materials. In fact, I think it is a necessity unless you can afford a very, very expensive learning program in which a private tutor basically spoon feeds information to you.

Before we begin this discussion regarding course materials there is one major overriding question you **MUST** answer before you begin or purchase any course. Ready?

Here is the question you must ask yourself: "What Level of Proficiency in Spanish do I want to achieve and can this course get me to that level of proficiency?"

If you say, "I want to get to 30 percent of a native" then purchase one course that can get you to that point. If you say, "I want to get to 90 percent of a native" then purchase one course that can take you to 90 percent of a native. Do not try to mix and match courses or learning tools. They are not designed to fit together and you will not get a consistent overall result.

If you were putting together a 3000 piece jigsaw puzzle would you do so using pieces from 10 different boxes that are not designed to fit together? Of course not. You would use pieces from one box that are designed to fit together. This just makes good sense. In the same way, find one Spanish course that is designed to fit together and to get you to the level of proficiency you truly want to achieve.

Define the picture (result) you want before you buy a course and ask the question I posed above. If you don't do this you will be frustrated and end up doing all kinds of different things trying to learn Spanish.

One frustrating thing I have noticed is that very few Spanish courses actually give you a level of proficiency you can expect to achieve upon completion.

What level of proficiency do you want to achieve? Marketing firms will use relative terms like, "conversational" "speak the language," "fluent," etc. but they rarely give you a level of proficiency as described by ACTFL (Association of Teachers of Foreign Languages) or the ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable).

These are the two nationally accepted language proficiency scales in the United States. Even if you ask what level of proficiency to expect upon completion, you might hear something like, "well, that depends on you." No, it depends on the course and the school. What depends on you is consistently following instructions.

Ok, now let's move on to our discussion regarding course materials. This is the place to develop the language infrastructure.

Look at it like this. If you were baking a cake, the course materials are like getting all the ingredients out of the cupboard and mixing them up in a bowl. It is tasty, but unbaked, batter.

When people go through a Spanish program only, with no tutoring or proper live integration, they have raw, untested batter.

They may, in fact, know everything they need to know but they have not had that knowledge tested in a live environment. The cake isn't baked and you certainly can't add any frosting to it!

I see tutoring processes like putting the cake in the oven. It is temperature controlled so the cake bakes equally and correctly. A tutor is able to integrate course materials in such a way that

Tutoring is like baking a cake.

the language "bakes" correctly. Real-life conversations with people on the street are analogous to eating your cake!

Now, back to course materials.

The question is how do you determine the best course materials to develop your infrastructure?

There are several things you should consider when you are purchasing Spanish-learning course materials. This is true whether you are purchasing an Internet based course, a course in a bookstore, a course through an airline catalog, or from wherever.

1. Great course materials will allow you to leverage materials off-line or off-computer.

I love technology! However, make sure if you take an Internet or computerbased course that you can download any necessary printed materials or memory card systems so you can learn off-line.

Also, make sure that if you want to purchase the audios that are on-line that you can do so, even if there is an additional fee.

You need to be able to leverage your time and being on the computer is not always feasible or practical.

Expect to pay more for hard-copy, off-line materials. The ability to leverage your time is very important, especially when you are in a serious learning course that will take time. The bottom line is the course should be identical whether you are taking it on-line or off-line and you should be able to leverage audios and lesson materials while not on the computer.

2. Great course materials will include full support from a legitimate training institute.

At some point, no matter which Spanish course you purchase, you will need some learning support.

Notice I didn't say customer support, but rather, learning support. At that point, you are a student, not a customer. There is a difference.

Most courses you purchase in a bookstore, out of a magazine, or from a television ad do not offer any kind of institutional support. In other words, you are on your own once you buy it.

Here's the real truth.

Very few people can learn Spanish well, within a reasonable period of time, without guidance from a trained instructor.

Make sure you have the support you need. You will have questions and you will need help from time to time. Even if you do not take oneon-one tutoring (which I highly recommend if you can afford it) you should make sure you buy at least a course that offers e-mail support and on-line forum support from the institution.

Some courses might offer an online forum for student discussion but that is not the same as having online student support from the training institution itself.

In fact, an online student forum may be detrimental to your overall progress if it is not properly monitored and administrated. Many times, other learners, although well-intentioned, offer advice that is actually counter-productive. The developers of the course know the course and how it is designed, not the students.

Most common-market programs do not offer support. In other words, if you have a question or doubt about something, there is no place to call for help. There are no real teachers who can guide you or help you.

Very few of the "name brands" you would recognize offer support, much less real teachers who will work with you. You should avoid such courseware for obvious reasons.

3. Great course materials will contain great memory systems.

Memory Systems are built around the twin towers of repetition and retroactivity as we already discussed in a previous chapter.

Of course, really great memory systems also incorporate elements of relaxation and the ridiculous approach as also mentioned earlier.

Any excellent course will contain a built-in vocabulary and structural memory system that will virtually guarantee that everything you learn will be retained in long-term memory.

There are very few courses that contain great memory systems. Make sure the one you purchase does.

Trust me, if it does, it will be explained in the marketing materials. Marketing will not just be marketing hype, it will contain substance as to what the actual processes are and what levels of proficiency you should expect to achieve.

A true memory system will clearly explain to you how many times you need to process information in order to store information into longterm memory. These memory systems will function for both vocabulary learning and verb structural mastery.

4. Great course materials are ordered and systematic.

Well-structured course materials are not "self-study" nor "self-guided." You don't get to choose when and what you learn. They are ordered and systematic. There should be a proven process.

They lay out clear and objective steps you should complete within certain time limits. They tell you what to do, when, how, and how many times to do something.

Professionally developed course processes do not give you multiple options to do things whenever you choose. When this happens it only tells you that there is no real learning system in place.

5. Great course materials will produce a balanced result.

In other words, you should learn to read, write, speak, and understand Spanish.

Some people say they only want to speak and understand and do not care about reading and writing.

First of all, writing is a critical tool to the development of understanding and long-term retention and should be used in any quality Spanish learning program.

Secondly, once you learn the language there is no question you will want to be able to read and write well. Think emails, text messages, and social media internet sites.

You simply cannot say that you "communicate well in Spanish" if you cannot read, write, speak, and understand.

No professional level course materials can be totally a "learn in your car" or "on the go" process. Professional level course materials will teach you to read, write, speak and understand.

6. Great course materials teach you how to put the language together for yourself.

With excellent course materials, you will learn to put sentences together for yourself rather than memorizing pre-written conversations and dialogues.

As mentioned earlier in this book, you need to learn to paint your own pictures, not make a cheap copy. When you complete a quality course, you will be able to effectively form BILLIONS of sentences for yourself through the power of combining words with patterns. You must learn to put the language together for yourself!

7. Great course materials teach you to develop "speech flow" and "comprehension" in a graduated fashion.

Very, very few adult learners can handle native rate of speed at the beginning of a Spanish learning program. Speech flow can be developed through a technique I have called "Paced Reading" for years and is akin to the neurological impress technique used to teach literacy.

Beginners should be at around 50 percent of native speed rate, intermediate students at around 75 percent, advanced around 90 percent, and expert level students at 100 percent speed rate.

Make sure your course graduates speed rates so that you can grow with the flow.

8. Great course materials are developed and taught by an expert teacher.

I always purchase courses that are developed, taught, and supported by an expert.

This way I know I am hearing it directly from the subject matter expert. I typically don't buy courses of any nature that were developed by an unnamed group of people.

Be taught by a real expert.

I want to hear and get it straight from the expert. Make sure whichever course materials you purchase, that it is taught by a true subject matter expert, not just a person with a good voice and access to someone else's teaching materials.

That person will not have the same passion or teaching abilities as a subject matter expert.

84 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

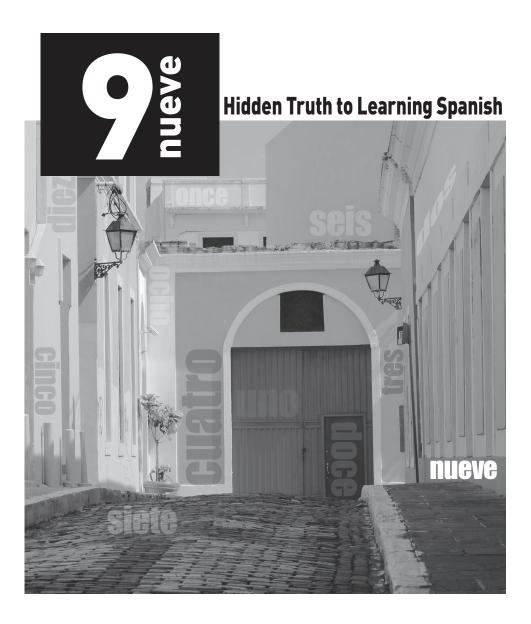
Oh, by the way, just because a person developed a good course to teach French or Italian doesn't mean that person knows how to teach Spanish and vice versa. I have personally been asked many times to take the principles from my Spanish training course and apply them to teaching other languages, but I always refuse.

From a language standpoint, I am an expert in teaching Spanish to English-speaking people. I don't know Mandarin Chinese or French or Arabic. I wouldn't even try to teach Spanish to a Chinese speaker unless that person had a mastery of English.

The same processes that work to teach one language to one group of people don't necessarily work as well for teaching another. I developed an English training course for Latinos some years back and that course employs some different processes than my Spanish course. I use a lot of the same principles but the sequence is different.

For this reason, I have never understood how a company can claim their program can teach 10, 20, 30, or more different languages equally well using the exact same learning processes. This makes zero sense and borders on insulting the intelligence of even the average person. I sincerely hope you embrace this concept as it will save you some fruitless learning experiences.

If you want a high-quality, professional-grade course, go to SpeakSpanish.com and request the SpanishPower[™] Basic to Expert Level course through The Speak Spanish Initiative. It follows the principles in this book and as long as you want to use your Spanish to create mutually beneficial relationships with Spanishspeaking people, we'll gift it to you. In the interest of transparency, I am the principal developer of the course and also own SpeakSpanish.com. I do this because, frankly, too many people who need and want to speak Spanish well are struggling to learn in inferior courses, thus losing precious opportunities to bring mutual benefit to one another.



The Truth about Tutoring

Most adults do need a skilled private tutor to develop a high level of proficiency. Practicing with people who do not know how to teach or who are just learning is not good practice.

It would be great if most people could learn to communicate well by just going through a Spanish course they purchase.

The truth is, however, that very few people have this ability. Most people need one-on-one tutoring to develop true vocational proficiency within a reasonable period of time. **This is reality.**

This is the "oven" we talked about a few chapters back. The tutoring process, with a skilled and trained instructor who correctly integrates what you have learned in courseware, will "bake" your Spanish correctly.

This controlled environment offers the optimal way to solidify your language skills without the frustration and pressure of trying to use your Spanish "on the street", before you are ready to do so.

There are three main things that a skilled tutor will accomplish with you.

1. A skilled tutor will develop your confidence in live conversation.

You will build confidence in communicating much more quickly than in a group class, practicing with a Spanish-speaking friend, or by practicing "on the street."

We have already established the flaws of group class training, but what about practicing your Spanish with people you meet in day-to-day activity?

Bad practice will destroy your confidence. Many well-meaning Spanish speakers are more than happy to practice with a person learning Spanish. The problem is that this person does not necessarily know how to teach or guide you in the language learning process. They will talk with you using structures and vocabulary you don't know. They also tend to speak much too rapidly for new learners. Both of these things can destroy confidence very quickly. They also consistently detour the learning process by introducing words and structure that you have not yet learned.

Practicing Spanish with people on the street is like opening a Pandora's box of problems. We'll discuss this in Chapter 12, "The Truth About Practice."

The main purpose of having a tutor is not to spoon-feed the language infrastructure to you. This should be done through properly developed course materials as already discussed.

For example, you do not need a tutor looking over your shoulder while you are learning vocabulary. You need an outstanding vocabulary memory system. A skilled tutor will develop your confidence by intelligently working within your existing knowledge base and frame of reference.

2. A skilled tutor will troubleshoot problem areas.

You may be working in great course materials and master 85 percent of a lesson, yet you still don't grasp 15 percent of the material. It is the tutor's job to find that weak 15 percent and then work with you to strengthen it.

A skilled tutor can quickly find these areas of weakness and can then offer pin-point solutions and exercises to strengthen them.

3. A skilled tutor will hold you accountable to your goals and help keep you motivated.

Skilled tutors know how to keep you motivated and on the right track in your learning process. I have seldom met a student (and we've had thousands) who hasn't at some point in the learning process lost objectivity about his or her true progress. This is normal.

It is at these times when a skilled tutor can step in and encourage and motivate. The tutor knows the real truth about a student. Students do not have objectivity about where they really are in the learning process. Many times their feelings are not in line with reality. This is when a skilled instructor can play a major factor in keeping this person moving forward. Some people benefit greatly from a teacher honestly telling them, "Relax, we're right on track, I know you can't see it right now but I can. You are right where we need you to be in the process." Some people are hard on themselves and they really need this perspective from a person they can trust.

Also, some people need to know they are going to be held accountable to someone they respect.

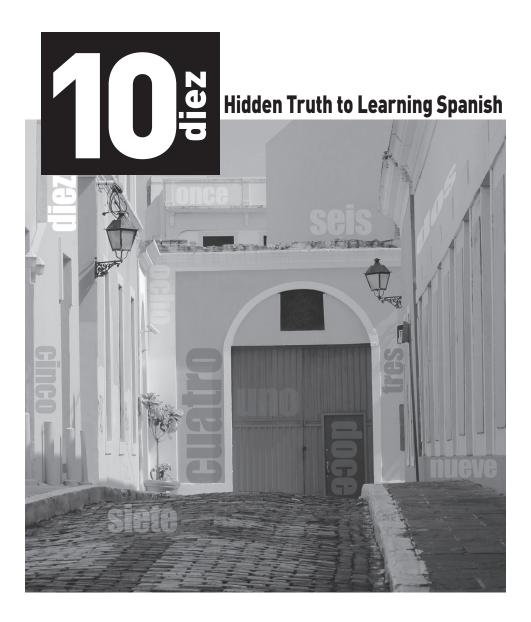
Remember always that a tutor is only as good as the method that he or she is implementing. You can love your teacher but if he or she is using poor methods you will not learn well.

In the same way a serious golfer needs a coach, serious Spanish learners need a professional tutor. A skilled tutor will keep you from being an amateur Spanish hacker.

Here's one last word regarding instructors. If you purchased a specific Spanish course, make sure that your instructor is trained and certified to teach that specific process.

Do not buy Spanish course materials and then hire a Spanish-speaking friend, family member, or independent teacher to teach it to you. They simply are not trained to do so effectively. Don't try to make your friend or family member a Spanish tutor.

Frankly, if you cannot afford a skilled tutor, you are better off doing it on your own if you have really good course materials. If you do this you should take advantage of the student support services every quality institute sponsored course should offer.



The Truth about Telephone Tutoring

The results of tutoring by telephone are around 30 percent better than they are in face-to-face tutoring processes.

This may surprise you, since it is a bit non-traditional, but **the result in tutoring is better when done via telephone rather than in person**. In fact, our internal studies show that the result is **around 30 percent better by telephone than in person**.

Remember, as we discussed in the last chapter, tutoring is where we bake the cake. In this chapter we will discuss the merits of doing one-on-one tutoring by telephone. In the next chapter we will discuss what you should specifically expect from a great one-on-one instructor.

There are eight reasons why telephone tutoring is better than face-to-face tutoring.

1. You develop better comprehension.

When you are tutored by telephone you learn to hear voice. When you are taught face to face, a significant portion of what you think you hear are the non-verbals. In other words, when you are looking at a person while they are talking you are reading their body language. Many experts estimate that we actually interpret around 30 percent of what we hear through what we see.

When you are in person you watch gestures, read lips, read facial expressions, and more. You are hearing much more than what goes through your ears.

Tutoring by phone is the best way. Learners who are taught in person will finish a course of study, try to talk with someone on the phone, and sometimes freeze because they lost roughly 30 percent of their communications!

Learners who are taught on the telephone will do well on the telephone. They will also do great in person, because they get an additional 30 percent or so in the non-verbal gestures that they were not even accustomed to in the normal tutoring process!

2. You develop better pronunciation.

People typically talk about 10 to 15 percent more loudly on the phone than in person. To speak more loudly you need to open your mouth more widely. When you open your mouth more widely, you will develop better enunciation and pronunciation.

3. You are more prepared for the real business world.

Since you learn to deal with voice only on the phone, you will be better prepared for the real business world where much of what we do is by telephone.

Also, if someone happens to be out of your line of vision in an office, warehouse, or wherever, you will be able to understand even if you cannot see the person.

As I have already mentioned, if you are trained in person, you will have more difficulty when you get on the telephone. When you are trained by telephone, you do not become dependent on non-verbals like lip-reading, gestures, visual objects, etc.

4. Training is more consistent.

You can have tutoring more consistently for the same amount of money than you could by going to a school.

Telephone tutoring sessions should last half an hour and sessions at most schools are at least one hour in length because they have to justify having an instructor come in and you have to justify your own trip there.

A half-hour on the telephone twice a week is more consistent, and better, than having a one-hour session once a week. Of course, four half-hour sessions weekly are better than two one-hour sessions.

We all know that consistency is critical to the development of a new skill or habit. You'll feel like you have more attention for the same amount of time — and money!

5. You leverage your time more effectively.

Instead of spending your precious time driving to a school or to someone's home to take a Spanish class, you can use that time to learn through the use of properly developed interactive course materials

6. You miss fewer sessions.

If you do any traveling, you can stay consistent in your tutoring by simply picking up a telephone. It does not matter if you are in Iowa, New Jersey, Utah, California, Great Britain, Australia, or Colombia.

If you have a schedule that is variable, you can schedule tutoring on an "as you go" basis. You do not need to lock into the same times every week. You can schedule as you go.

If a school cannot offer scheduling flexibility it either does not have enough teachers or is far too rigid in its approach with busy professional adults.

Only choose a tutor with a legitimate school that can completely accommodate your scheduling needs.

Be very careful about employing a freelance tutor who is not associated with or certified by a legitimate school or institute. I have had many people come to us at Bilingual America who had been left high and dry by a freelance teacher who either left the area, got a job, or simply dropped out of sight.

An established and reputable school can offer you stability and consistency in the tutoring process and is well worth any additional expense.

7. Telephone tutoring is more relaxing.

You can go home from work, get relaxed, and enjoy your tutoring from your favorite room and chair. It is a lot more fun taking tutoring in casual clothes sitting on your balcony, or wherever you choose, than being in an office environment or in a school.

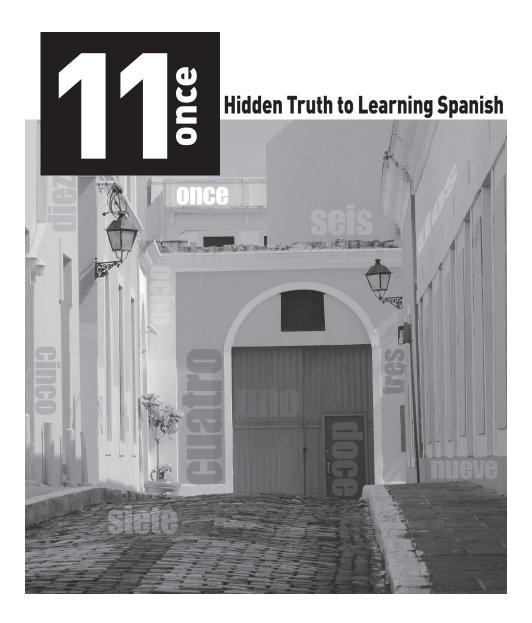
By the way, if you are going to use a cell phone make sure you have both a good signal and a hands-free device. You will need your hands free in order to get to the proper places in your course materials or for other activities a tutor may want you to do.

In all cases, use a headset so your hands are free to easily access course materials or to do instructor led role-plays that involve movement.

8. Completion rates are higher.

Our internal studies conclusively show that students who take tutoring by telephone more frequently complete our Spanish course. This is due to the fact that they learn better and that they learn in an environment that fully meets their logistical needs.

Get a good headset for telephone tutoring.



The Truth about Development

Pronunciation, speech flow and comprehension skills develop in a particular order and from time to time most adult learners do get frustrated with the learning process.

You should expect to get frustrated with Spanish once in a while as you go through the learning process. This is normal. Most learners go through times when they really enjoy the process and then, at times, feel frustrated. It really can be like a love-hate relationship. It is never boring, however!

Learning Spanish well is like any long-term relationship or commitment. As we explained earlier, you are not a native and thus will not speak or understand like one immediately. The honest truth is that it does take time to develop a high level of Spanish language proficiency.

We live in an immediate world. We can get our food quickly, access information quickly and more. However, learning the Spanish language is a process that, when done correctly, does take time and you must be willing to go through the developmental process if you truly want to achieve a high level of proficiency.

There is no	
magic pill to	
learn Spanish	
without work.	

Unfortunately, there is no magic pill or magic wand to give you this skill instantly. As you know by now, there are some excellent techniques that you can leverage to your advantage but they must be implemented and that takes both time and energy.

Let's address the triple needs of pronunciation, speech flow and comprehension development. Each area develops in a different way in adult Spanish learning and it is important for you to understand the best techniques and methods relating to their development.

It is also very important that you have a clear and realistic understanding of how these three important areas develop in an adult Spanish learner.

Development of Pronunciation

It takes the average person four to six repetitions to properly hear and pronounce a **word** in a new language correctly.

Of course, this should be reflected in the development of excellent course materials.

100 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

Pronunciation practice should consist of hearing a sound or word correctly and then saying that sound or word correctly. The words should initially be pronounced very clearly and slowly so the student can capture the correct pronunciation.

You cannot pronounce full sentences correctly unless you learn to pronounce individual words correctly. Obviously, you cannot pronounce words correctly unless you can pronounce individual sounds correctly. The parts make the whole.

Here is some good news. There are no sounds in the Spanish language that cannot be produced by **any** English speaker. In fact, Spanish, in most cases, is easier to pronounce than English.

Here's my philosophy regarding the development of pronunciation:

1. Learn to pronounce new Spanish words before learning the meaning of those words.

In other words, you should concentrate only on the pronunciation in Spanish without any consideration to what the word means. It does not matter what the word means at that point. It only matters that you can pronounce the word correctly.

Once you learn to pronounce the word correctly, you can then learn what it means through the memory systems in your course materials.

2. In order to pronounce well you must speak loudly and clearly when you first learn a new word.

In other words, no mumbling. Never. Nunca.

I know there are some situations when it is difficult to speak up, like if you are flying in an airplane. Honestly, it would be better not to practice your Spanish pronunciation at all in that environment. You simply do not want to get into any type of a pattern of mumbling or softly pronouncing words. If you mumble words when you first learn to pronounce them, you will solidify a poor pronunciation. It is much more difficult to break poor pronunciation once entrenched than to learn it correctly the first time.

3. You must open your mouth widely when you are first learning to pronounce new words.

This forces you to enunciate the words Speak loudly. Speak with passion.

Outstanding course processes (whether online or offline) will contain audios that allow you to work individually with each new word you are learning to pronounce.

They will also pre-program the number of times you need to repeat a word in order to achieve solid pronunciation. Words should not be placed within the full context of sentences and paragraphs until you have already learned to pronounce the words correctly.

Also, both your course materials and tutor should pace the speed of pronunciation when you are a beginner. This way you are sure to hear the sounds correctly. With time, speed can be increased as you are ready for it and can adjust to it.

When you are also working with a skilled instructor, he or she will work with you on a consistent basis to help you develop confidence in your "sound."

Matching your voice waves with a native speaker is silly. I am not a proponent of so called "voice recognition software." I do not want a student to be that analytical about his or her pronunciation skills. For someone to analyze sound waves of one voice form with another actually takes a great deal of skill and understanding. It is also a very analytical process which very much bogs down flow and movement in pronunciation. I have studied voice forms for many years and can tell you that two native speakers can say the same sentence correctly and depending on the pitch and tone of their voice, the wave forms will look different.

Wave forms cannot tell you if you are pronouncing something correctly. Look at it like this; just because you can compare your voice wave forms with those of Whitney Houston or Michael Bublé (and you can with the right software) doesn't mean you can mimic those voices. It's just silly, really. (Yes, another tongue-twister. This is a book about language, after all.)

I much prefer techniques like *neurological impress* or what I call Paced Reading. I will describe this for you in just a few moments. I also believe that the power of mimic in proper amounts of repetition is extremely powerful in the development of clear pronunciation skills.

Also, a skilled tutor will be your best asset as it relates to your pronunciation as he or she will be able to correct patterns of mistakes in pronunciation. You will be interested to know that most second-language learners sound so "non-Latino" because they have developed very specific patterns of consistent mistakes that a skilled tutor can clean up relatively quickly.

Many people needlessly concern themselves with wanting to know if they will sound Colombian, Puerto Rican, Mexican, or whatever. Your goal should be to sound like yourself with a clear and understandable Spanish language pronunciation.

If you were learning English, I would want you to sound like you had Midwestern English. In other words, I wouldn't want anyone to easily guess where exactly you are from.

Learn a neutral pronunciation.

Again, concern yourself with a clear Spanish pronunciation and don't worry about the rest. That's all noise in the background. Those things really don't affect the learning process. Perhaps, if you eventually live in a particular country, or frequently socialize or work with a certain group of Latinos, you will pick up some of their intonations. I'll guarantee you that you won't pick up native intonation by comparing your own voice wave forms with those of other Latinos.

Learners who feel good about how they sound learn Spanish faster than those who do not. The reason for this is because their level of confidence and psychological "feel" for the process is positive and up-beat. Based on this fact, it is very important for you to develop solid pronunciation from the very beginning of your learning process.

Development of Speech Flow

Several years ago I tested different adaptations of a drama technique I had learned in college and applied it to learning Spanish. I called it *Paced Reading* as that really described the process in lay terms.

This technique is also used to teach literacy and is called, *Neurological Impress*. Basically, it impresses intonation, flow, and proper pronunciation within your brain's neuronic activity.

The benefits of *Paced Reading* or *Neurological Impress* are multiple but the primary three benefits are:

- 1. Develops proper pronunciation and intonation.
- 2. Develops proper flow and movement of speech.
- 3. Impresses words into the learner's memory.

When you follow behind a skilled teacher about one to two syllables you are close enough to hear any differences in the way the native teacher speaks and the way you would naturally say something.

You are also close enough to make an adjustment so that you do say it correctly. This is a technique that requires focus but if done properly, it is extremely effective for the development of both accent and speech flow. Another great thing about *Paced Reading* is that the rate of speed can be gradually increased.

As mentioned earlier in this book, a student in a beginner program should be paced at about 50 percent of a native. An intermediate student should be paced at about 75 percent of a native, an advanced student at 90 percent, and an expert level student at 100 percent.

Sometimes, with highly proficient students, we'll go even faster just to "push them to their outer limits." Once they regress to regular native speed, conversations seem much easier. The key here is to allow the student to become acclimated to speed.

Paced Reading or *Neurological Impress* should be a serious part of any adult Spanish learning program.

Development of Comprehension Skills

Have you ever thought the following about Spanish-speaking people?

"Wow, those people sure speak fast."

Spanish is a pretty rapid-fire language when it is at "full tilt."

There are several reasons why the language sounds so fast.

1. The way gender agreement works in Spanish allows for consecutive words to all end with the same letters. For example: Los carros bonitos. (The pretty cars.) Each word ends in the same two letters: "os."

That agreement in endings can produce rapidly spoken words, especially when those "pretty cars" are all revved up!

2. Most native Spanish speakers tend to be animated people. Many native Spanish speakers tend to get excited easily and this makes for some fast-talking. It's part of the very fabric of the Latino culture. Of course, this is only generally true as there are also many soft-spoken, non-animated Latinos.

3. The way the mouth is positioned and moved in Spanish is normally in a side-to-side movement. You never really get down into the throat to pronounce a word like you do in English. In other words, it is not a gutteral language.

Romance languages flow. They are smooth. This is due to the positioning of the mouth to produce the sounds. There are very, very few harsh sounds in Spanish.

True comprehension is the last skill to develop in the adult language learning process.

Many people end up developing better comprehension skills before other skills and this is simply an indication that their skills have not developed in the proper order. Typically this happens to people on either extreme of the immersion / grammar-based approaches.

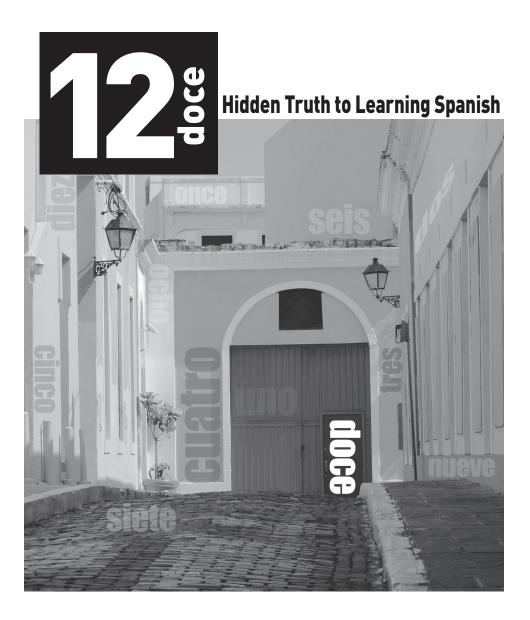
Some people get frustrated because they cannot understand the Spanish Telenovelas (Soap Operas) or a Spanish language variety show. Some of these people have not even finished a beginner level course and they are frustrated over this.

Time out. Tiempo.

If you do not know enough words and you do not have a mastery of structure, how do you expect to understand those two things put together at native rate of speed?

This simply does not make sense so don't allow this to frustrate you. You are expecting too much from yourself against all reality and that is just disappointment looking for a place to happen.

Comprehension skills come when you have a strong language infrastructure and are able to handle the language well yourself. At that point, others are simply doing what you know to do, and then it is easy!



The Truth about Practice

You should develop your Spanish skills to at least a mid to late Intermediate skills **before** you begin watching Spanish language television, listening to Spanish language radio or talking with people on the street in Spanish.

I know this hidden truth flies right in the face of what most Spanish teachers so commonly say about practice. They will tell you to talk with as many people as you can, to watch television, to listen to radio, and more. In their view, the more the better. They are wrong. This is bad advice and there is a better and wiser way.

	Would you open a store with no products on
Would you	the shelf? Of course not.
open a store	
without any	Would you open a business without a business
products?	plan? Not if you are smart.

Would you try to speak in Spanish with a native Spanish speaker without being able to speak decently? Not if you do not want to be frustrated, confused and defeated.

Would you watch Spanish language television before you are prepared to understand it? Not unless you just want to think or say, "Wow, those people sure speak fast, I'll never be able to understand them!"

Many people who are just learning the language make three really big mistakes in this area. This may surprise you!

1. They tell everyone they know they are learning Spanish.

2. They start trying to talk with native Spanish speakers before they are able to carry a decent conversation.

3. They listen to Spanish radio stations and watch Spanish television programs as much as they can.

The main reason you should avoid Spanish language overexposure is to avoid setting yourself up for feelings of frustration and inadequacy by comparing yourself to native speakers at native speed.

110 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

You simply do not have the knowledge base to handle these activities well. You are much better off learning the language well, with the proper kinds of adult learning systems, than somehow trying to "pick it up by osmosis." It does not normally happen that way!

If you tell everyone you know you are learning Spanish, these same people can become your worst enemies in the learning process. It is not that they want to do this, it just happens many times.

If they are English speakers, they may chide you and say things like, "Well, **you** are taking Spanish lessons, **you** take the phone call from Colombia." That is pressure, *amigo o amiga*!

Let's say you succumb to the pressure and try to talk on the phone. You get past *hola*, start to talk with the person on the other end of the phone (who now thinks you speak Spanish), get two sentences in, and you are completely embarrassed. I have personally spoken with several ambitious students who had this very experience so I know this can happen.

So, in one fell swoop you potentially embarrassed yourself and your organization in the eyes of the person on the other end of the line! And just for good measure, all your "friends" are having a good laugh at your expense.

 $_{i}Ay$, ay, ay! I know this may be a bit of an exaggeration, but you get the point.

Put your products on the shelf!

Think about it like this. An NFL quarterback first has to learn the playbook, then in practice will wear a red shirt to identify him as a "safe zone" so he doesn't get hurt during practice. In other words, he practices the plays in a safe environment (tutoring) and then plays the game (real-life conversations). Learning the playbook, by the way, is akin to learning the Spanish language infrastructure in your course materials.

Many teachers make the mistake of telling their students to "talk with everyone you can," and "watch as much television in Spanish as possible." I am telling you that this is really poor advice for the developing Spanish learner.

These teachers have good intentions but the fact remains that for the great majority of people this is simply not sound advice.

Psychologically, this is defeating to most adult and young adult learners.

You will start watching a Spanish television program, get frustrated, and tell yourself something like, "Wow, these people talk so fast, I don't think I'll ever understand them." The problem is that you simply are not ready for native speed!

As soon as you start creating a negative mindset about the process, things will get more and more difficult for you. Negativity creates a negative result – always.

The other thing that happens is that natural curiosity takes over. You hear words and structures you do not understand and the normal response is to get out a dictionary or some sort of reference book. You are now completely out of your learning process.

My personal opinion is that you are much better off waiting to talk with people or watch TV until you at least develop a decent level of proficiency in a "safe" environment.

Why do babies stay nine months (in an ideal scenario) in their mother's wombs? Why do baby chicks stay inside an egg until they grow more mature? Why do people go to college before entering the professional workforce?

One word and one word only - PREPARATION.

Think about the powerful elements of the following situation.

Let's say that Marty owns a construction company and he wants to be able to talk with his Spanish-speaking employees.

Instead of announcing; "I am learning Spanish," he does not say a word. When he has properly learned structure and vocabulary, and is able to communicate relatively well, he should start talking with them in Spanish.

Imagine their shock!

First, they are afraid because they wonder how much he understood when they were talking behind his back. They say, *"Caramba, no sabiamos que usted hablaba español. ¡Habla muy bien!"* That means, "Wow, we didn't know that you spoke Spanish. You speak really well!" Now, to keep it real here, not everyone will talk behind your back, but some will.

Will Marty ever fear opening his mouth again? No way. The reason is because when he first opened his doors for business he had his products on the shelf. He was prepared, and because he was prepared he was successful.

Consider the value of "surprising" your friends, family, and co-workers. My favorite story is about a student we had in New York City whose girlfriend was a Puerto Rican lady. Following our advice, he didn't tell her that he was learning Spanish. After he had learned to speak quite well, he took her out to dinner and spoke only in Spanish with her!

In addition to her being a stunning woman – acording to him – she was absolutely stunned when she heard him.

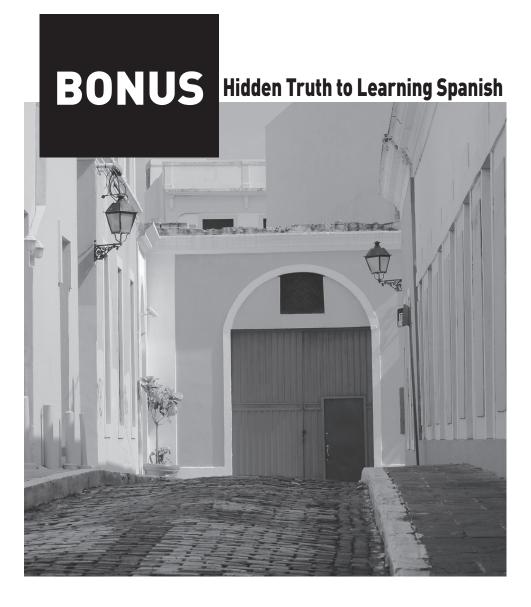
He also mentioned to me that the thought of surprising her after learning kept him extremely motivated throughout the learning process.

Perhaps you cannot keep your learning a complete secret, but try to keep it between yourself and your training institute until you have strong enough learning skills to actually create a positive impact.

It does take some discipline to follow this advice, but it is more than worth it.

Many years ago I learned a powerful two-word definition for the word "discipline." It is "delayed gratification." Discipline yourself throughout the learning process and you will experience a great deal of ongoing satisfaction on the back-end.

Again, I am well aware that what I am saying in this hidden truth goes against most people's advice. That is why it is a hidden truth. Trust me on this one. Students who follow this advice typically achieve much better results than those who don't.



The Truth about Potholes

Most non-native speakers with some background in Spanish have potholes in their Spanish and in order to create a smooth language infrastructure they should resurface the road rather than continue trying to fill in all the holes.

If you have ever been to Latin America you may have noticed many of the roads are full of potholes.

This is a major topic of discussion among Latin Americans in Latin America. The roads are passable, but they are hard on your car to be sure.

If I were going to choose a recession proof job in Latin America it would no doubt be that of an automobile mechanic.

If you know some Spanish but cannot speak well, you may have some "Spanish language potholes."

Most second language Spanish speakers have some serious "potholes" in their Spanish.

You get past "Buenos días, mi nombre es ______" and by the time you get to the second or third sentence of a conversation you start to hit these "potholes."

Does a long conversation wear you out?

By the end of the conversation you are either frustrated, or at the very least tired from all the wear and tear, not to mention the stress that a full-length conversation in Spanish puts on you. This is especially true if you are physically, emotionally, or mentally tired.

Maybe you do not have enough vocabulary to support a "real" Spanish conversation, maybe you are still struggling with verb structure or maybe you are simply having trouble with the "speed" of the language.

Maybe you are struggling with all three!

There are only two ways to fix a road full of potholes and there are only two ways to fix your Spanish if you have all kinds of potholes in your existing Spanish. 1. Find and fill in all of the potholes.

2. Resurface the road.

What does this mean in real life?

It means that for you to become a highly proficient Spanish-speaking person you have one of two choices.

1. You can contract someone who can identify every place where you are weak in your Spanish, help you do the remedial work, and then move you to an advanced or expert level. By the way, only an experienced and professional teacher can do this.

2. You can start again at the basics, resurface the entire language, and program the language in correctly this one last time.

Whether you are just starting out, or have been at this for a while, you should make the commitment to learn the Spanish language correctly this one time. If you do it correctly once, you'll never have to do it again. Never! *¡Nunca!*

I can tell you – and this is based on a lot of experience – that most intermediate level speakers should definitely resurface the road rather than trying to fill in the holes — that is, go with option two.

There are several reasons for choosing to resurface your existing languages skills over filling in each individual area of weakness.

1. When you resurface the road everything is smooth and you don't run the risk of missing any holes or gaps in the language.

2. When you resurface the road you get a total reprogramming of the entire language. Done correctly, this exercise is much more than a review – it is a reprogramming of the language into your brain.

3. When you resurface the road correctly you can make sure you truly have long-term memory of everything in the language and can generate the language quickly and correctly for yourself.

Recently I asked a new student to go though vocabulary lists for Basic and Intermediate levels of instruction. I had this person check off words that she could not immediately put into Spanish by looking at the English word first.

This person considered herself a late intermediate level Spanish speaker. This person missed, or could not immediately say, about 40 percent of all the words in our basic and intermediate levels of instruction.

No wonder she was struggling to put together sentences at any decent rate of speed! This was not a job to fill in a few potholes, this person needed – and is now doing – a complete resurfacing of her Spanish.

Many people deceive themselves into thinking they really know the language well because they recognize things when they hear or see them.

The truth is that there is a **HUGE** difference between recognitive and generative skills.

Recognizing something when you hear or see it and being able to lucidly and correctly generate it for yourself on the fly in a real-life situation are two totally different things. Be aware of the difference between recognitive and generative skills.

Many people with significant background in Spanish make a critical mistake relating to this. They are going through "resurfacing" processes, see or hear something, and immediately think, "I can skip over this since I already know it." What they don't truly know is if they are simply recognizing it, or if they could truly generate it lucidly, correctly, and quickly without any outside cues.

You must develop the ability to generate the language lucidly and correctly to consider yourself highly proficient in the Spanish language.

4. When you resurface the road you do not waste time and energy trying to find out what you cannot do well.

You invest your time into making sure that you can do everything well. I have heard many people say, "Well, I do not want to start with a beginner level program."

The problem is that most people who describe themselves as intermediate level speakers still have serious structural weaknesses in things that a quality course will have in beginner level material.

If you can show through an objective evaluation that you really do not need to go back and reprogram the language, then wonderful for you.

I simply would not recommend you starting in a higher level when you still have any significant resurfacing needs (or potholes) in the lower levels of a quality Spanish course.

I had a student one time that had a Master's Degree in Spanish and she did not perform well in our late Intermediate Level Course Materials! We started with a complete, albeit quick, overview of our Basic Level. We then were able to move her at a normal pace through to true Expert Level proficiency.

When she completed the process she was very, very happy with the result. And this is, after all, the whole point – to get a strong result and be happy with your new ability.

Again, the view I would encourage you to take is to do this correctly one time. If you do this, you'll never have to take another Spanish learning course in your life unless you want to study syntactical analysis or become a professional translator or interpreter. Here are the steps to take if you want to communicate well in "native level" conversations:

1. Take an objective evaluation of your present level Spanish skills.

Before this evaluation do not study or review **any** Spanish for at least one to two weeks. You need to let your existing skills settle into reality. If you study before an evaluation, you will not get a true indicator of your real existing Spanish skills.

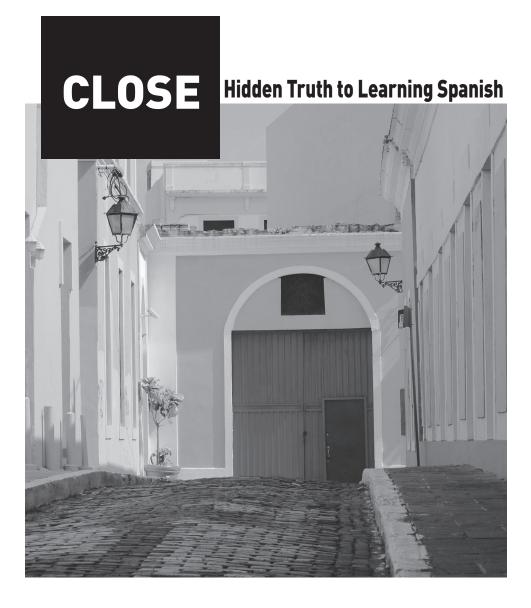
2. Have a program designed for you that will meet your specific learning needs. The program should be paced correctly so that you move quickly enough through lower level material. This will allow you to achieve the necessary reprogramming of the language while avoiding boredom. Obviously, only a qualified and skilled program director can design this properly for you.

3. Capture your motivation and take advantage of the many opportunities available to people who can communicate well in both Spanish and English.

You are already half-way down the road. All you need to do is get over the hump and past the bumps.

Resurfacing the road will give you the smoothest ride.

Resurface the road so you are riding on a smooth language infrastructure. You are so close to being able to take advantage of the incredible opportunities afforded to truly bilingual people.



A Few Closing Thoughts

Learning Spanish should be a joyful journey with a very clear destination point. You should know when you can unpack your suitcases and start enjoying your new language.

The key for you is to find the right process that is designed to get you to the level of proficiency you ultimately want to achieve.

Don't waste time doing things that do not get you to your final destination. If you are in Chicago and you want to go to New York, by all means, don't go through Denver if you can avoid the long and burdensome detour. In other words, take the shortest and most direct route to your chosen destination.

Don't waste time getting to your desired level of proficiency. When you waste time, you also waste energy – and money! After all, time is money.

By all means avoid trying to put together this 3000 piece jigsaw puzzle of a language using pieces from many different boxes that are not designed to fit together. Put down all the peripheral stuff and focus on doing the one thing that will allow you to achieve true Spanish learning success. Find one Spanish learning process that will most effectively take you to the level of proficiency you truly want to reach.

I've never had a student regret learning Spanish. I have had many students express their excitement over having learned the Spanish language well. I have never had one person regret having done so. On the other hand, I have had many people over the years tell me they regretted not learning earlier in life. It is not too late for you.

If you have an interest in learning more about the Spanish course that I personally designed and that follows the principles laid out in this book, I invite you to visit us at SpeakSpanish.com.

126 The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning Spanish

With nearly 50,000,000 Latinos in the United States presently, and with the U.S. Census Bureau projecting up to 130,000,000 by 2050, it is well worth your time and financial investment to learn the Spanish language well. I have no doubt that this skill is every bit as valuable for most people as developing computer skills. The vocational, social and service opportunities that await you are absolutely enormous.

For your benefit and that of the Latinos whom you will impact, I sincerely hope you apply the truths contained within this book. In this way, within a reasonable period of time, you can enjoy the enormous benefits of being truly bilingual in our ever-changing world.

Sincerely, *Ricardo González*

Footnotes:

- 1 The Statiscal Reasoning for Everyday Life, Bennett, Briggs, Triola, Second Edition, Addison, Wesley Longman, 2002. http://www-math. cudenver.edu/~wbriggs/qr/shakespeare.html
- 2 The Seven Laws of Teaching, John Milton Gregory. Law Number Four. Fq Publishing, 2007. ISBN: 1599867559
- 3 Scans taken from Dr. Daniel Amen at www.amenclinics.com. Direct link to brain spect with high levels of anxiety is on the following page: http://www.amenclinics.com/brain-science/spect-image-gallery/ spect-atlas/images-of-anxiety/
- 4 Gay Hendricks, PhD., Conscious Breathing, pg. 17 Random House Publishing, 1995. ISBN: 0553374435
- 5 The Environmental Illness Resource, Howmonal Treatment of Depression with Phenylethylamine (PEA) http://www.ei-resource.org/ articles/mental-and-emotional-problem-articles/hormonal-treatmentof-depression-with-phenylethylamine-(pea)/
- 6 Neuropsychologia (Vol. 45, No. 2). Rotman Research Institute at the Baycrest Research Center for Aging and the Brain. Dr. Ellen Bialystok, Dr. Fergus Craik and Dr. Morris Freedman. Study funded by Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Rave Reviews for The 12 Hidden Truths to Learning SPANISH!

"This book clearly explains what works and what doesn't in adult Spanish training. A very informative and entertaining read!"

– Dr. Jonathan Brown, President, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities

"Ricardo is a language training genius. My senior leadership team has learned Spanish well through his teaching methods. This book is a must read for anyone interested in learning Spanish."

- Newt Gingrich, Former Speaker of the House, United States of America

"I have personally experienced the power of Ricardo's training methods. I can honestly tell you they work."

- Beverly Davidman, Former United States Teacher of the Year in Mathematics

"Ricardo's principles taught me that I didn't need to move to another country for an extended period of time to learn Spanish well. I just needed to follow the right learning process. This book will teach you exactly what you need to do to learn Spanish well and has the potential to revolutionize adult Spanish learning."

- Dennis Kelly, Director of Treasury, Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc.

"As a professional educator I am amazed at the results I have achieved by applying the principles in this book. Read it if you really want to learn Spanish."

- Anne Harvey, MSW, Professor, Anitoch University



About the Author

Ricardo González is the Founder and Executive Director of Bilingual America, an internationally respected Spanish language and cultural management training institute founded in 1992.

Ricardo is the developer of multiple language and cultural management training courses and is a popular conference speaker. He is considered by many one of the foremost experts on adult Spanish language acquisition in the world.



Bold Colors Press miami, fl

©2010 Ricardo González. \$16.95