

STUDENTS INTERVIEW THE STUDENT TEACHER

Yesterday the students in my 7th hour Spanish I class asked if they could interview the student teacher. This was compelling stuff for them. The energy and interest were there and the questions kept coming, so the interview continued for the entire class period. I was very proud of them for speaking in Spanish for about 95% of the time and for keeping the conversation with her going the entire hour. Those doggone kids ruined my beautiful lesson plan by voluntarily speaking spontaneous Spanish with a very fluent speaker for almost an hour!

About half of the students in class asked her questions, and many of the questions they asked were good ones—often with logical follow-up questions and commentary. Some questions were simpler than others, but all students were trying to connect with her. It was a joy to see them use the language and they stayed in Spanish almost the entire time.

Profe Roger also did an admirable job of staying “in bounds” with her language (using mainly vocabulary students recognize) so that everyone would understand her. She used high frequency vocabulary and focused on the structures that kids were familiar with. She also worked numbers into the conversation on several occasions, which is immensely helpful to students. I just listened and recorded their questions and her answers.

Students were able to do this because we have spent a lot of time on personal interviews in the first six weeks of school. Almost all of these questions were ones that have been asked to students before. We have interviewed 14-15 students in each class so far and the discussions are growing as students acquire more language. Some of the questions were posted on the walls of the classroom, and that helped to give them ideas.

*Notice how the verb “to have” appears prominently in many of their questions. They seem to be getting that one down well enough to produce it in different forms and contexts. Words that some students did not know are underlined in the transcription below. Those words were handled with a quick translation in English so that meaning could be established and we could continue the conversation. An **English translation** appears after the transcription of the Spanish interview.*

What I like about this situation is seeing the confidence it gives to students; they are getting that they can actually communicate in Spanish. And the ability to ask questions allows novice speakers the chance to get more input, as displayed below. The questions were at one level and the answers were at a slightly higher level. Students said that they understood almost everything. That’s a win-win.

SPANISH TRANSCRIPTION

Questions by Students

Answers by Profesora Roger

¿Prefieres otro nombre? Me llamo Profesora Roger, pero prefiero “Profe.” Profe viene de la palabra *profesor*. Así se dice en México. Los estudiantes dicen *profe* a los profesores.

¿De dónde eres? Soy de Arkansas, originalmente.

¿Dónde vives? Ahora vivo en Loveland.

¿Te gusta Roosevelt? Sí, me gusta mucho. Me gustan los estudiantes.

¿Tienes una familia? Sí, tengo un bebé. Es una niña.

¿Cuántos años tiene su bebé? Mi hija tiene ocho meses, casi tiene nueve meses.

¿Cómo se llama su bebé? Se llama Starlynn. Mi esposo inventó el nombre. Él es haitiano. En Haití les dan nombres muy diferentes a los bebés. Starlynn es una combinación de Star y mi nombre. Me llamo Cammi Lynn.

¿Tienes un trabajo? No realmente, pero asisto a la universidad y tengo una bebé, esto es suficiente. No tengo tiempo para un trabajo ahora. Pero soy pobre. No tengo mucho dinero. Tengo solamente diez dólares conmigo ahora.

¿Tienes vacas? Cuando yo vivía en Arkansas, sí, mi familia tenía vacas. Pero mi familia no tiene vacas ahora.

¿Tienes un perro? Sí, tengo un perro.

¿Qué tipo de perro es? Mi perro es un *Rhodesian Ridgeback*, pero no es un *Rhodesian Ridgeback* normal. No es grande. Es pequeño. Normalmente los perros *Rhodesian Ridgeback* son grandes. Vienen de África. Son grandes porque son perros especiales con un trabajo especial: ¡Cazan los leones! ¡Sí! Son perros que cazan los leones. ¡Qué loco! ¿No?

¿Cómo se llama su perro? Se llama Daisy.

¿Cuántos años tiene su perro? Tiene ocho años.

¿Tienes un gato? No, no tengo un gato.

¿Vas a la escuela? Sí, asisto a UNC, en Greeley.

¿Qué te gusta hacer? A mí me gusta correr. También me gusta pintar. Me gusta bailar, también. No puedo bailar muy bien cuando bailo sola, pero si el hombre baila bien, yo puedo bailar.

¿Qué música te gusta cuando vas al club? Me gusta bailar bachata. Bachata es un tipo de música y baile de la República Dominicana y de todo El Caribe.

¿Cuántos años tienes? Adivinen. Veinte. Más. Veinte y uno. Más. Veinte y nueve. Menos. Veinte y dos. Más. Veinte y cinco. Correcto. Tengo veinte y cinco años.

¿Tienes un talento interesante? Sí, más o menos. Puedo doblar mis dedos para atrás. (¡Qué asco! Hay dos otros estudiantes en la clase que pueden doblar sus dedos para atrás también.)

¿Tienes tu licencia? Sí, es obvio.

¿Tienes una troca? No, no tengo una troca o, como se dice en México, camioneta.

¿Tienes un carro? Sí, es obvio que necesito tener un carro. Voy a Greeley todos los días, y vengo aquí a Johnstown dos días a la semana. ¡Necesito tener un carro! Necesito manejar mucho.

¿Qué tipo de carro es? Es un Kia.

¿De qué año? No sé de qué año es. No me importa mucho. Posiblemente es de dos mil tres, o posiblemente de dos mil cinco, o de dos mil siete. No sé, realmente.

¿Qué quieres hacer que no puedes hacer ahora? Quiero vivir en la playa, pero no puedo vivir allí ahora porque no hay tiempo ni dinero.

¿Qué tienes que hacer que no te gusta mucho? Tengo que trabajar en la computadora, pero no me gusta. En México se dice el lap. Así que, tengo que trabajar en mi lap mucho. Puedo escribir muy rápido en el lap, y tengo que escribir mucho todos los días para mis clases en la universidad, pero no me gusta.

¿Qué quisieras hacer en el futuro? Me gustaría visitar México. México es muy bonito. Me gusta la gente allí.

¿Dónde quisieras vivir? Me gustaría vivir en la playa. No me importa dónde. Me gustaría vivir en cualquier playa.

¿Qué tipo de música te gusta? Me gusta bachata y toda la música en español.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Do you prefer another name? I call myself Profesora Roger, but I prefer Profe. Profe comes from the word profesor. That's how it is said in Mexico. The students say profe to the teachers.

Where are you from? I am from Arkansas, originally.

Where do you live? I live in Loveland now.

Do you like Roosevelt? Yes, I like it a lot. I like the students.

Do you have a family? Yes, I have a baby. It is a girl.

How many years old is your baby? My daughter is eight months old; she is almost nine months old.

What is your baby's name? Her name is Starlynn. My husband made up the name. He is Haitian. In Haiti they give very different names to babies. Starlynn is a combination of Star and my name. My name is Cammi Lynn.

Do you have a job? Not really, but I attend the university and I have a baby, and that is enough. I do not have time for a job now. But I am poor. I do not have much money. I only have ten dollars with me right now.

Do you have any cows? When I lived in Arkansas, yes, my family had cows, but my family does not have cows now.

Do you have a dog? Yes, I have a dog.

What kind of dog is it? My dog is a Rhodesian Ridgeback, but it is not a normal Rhodesian Ridgeback. It is not big. It is little. Normally, Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs are big. They come from Africa. They are big because they are special dogs with a special job: They hunt lions! Yes! They are dogs that hunt lions. How crazy! No?

What is your dog's name? Her name is Daisy.

How old is your dog? She is eight years old.

Do you have a cat? No, I do not have a cat.

Do you go to school? Yes, I attend UNC, in Greeley.

What do you like to do? I like to run. I also like to paint. I like to dance too. I can't dance very well when I dance alone, but if the man dances well, I can dance.

What kind of music do you like when you go to the club? I like to dance bachata. Bachata is a type of music and dance from the Dominican Republic and from all of the Caribbean.

How old are you? Guess. "20" More. "21" More. "29" Less. "22" More. "25" Correct! I am 25 years old.

Do you have an interesting talent? Yes, more or less. I can bend back my fingers. (How gross! There are two other students in the class that can bend their fingers back too.)

Do you have your license? Yes, it's obvious.

Do you have a truck? No, I do not have a truck, or as they say in Mexico, a camioneta.

Do you have a car? Yes, it is obvious that I need to have a car. I go to Greeley every day, and I come here to Johnstown two days a week. I need to have a car!

What kind of car is it? It is a Kia.

What year? I don't know what year it is from. It doesn't matter to me. Possibly it is from 2003, or possibly 2005, or from 2007. I don't really know.

What do you want to do that you can't do right now? I want to live on the beach, but I can't live there right now because there is not time or money.

What do you have to do that you don't like to do much? I have to work on the computer, but I don't like it. In Mexico, they say the lap. So, I have to work on my lap a lot. I can write very fast on the lap, and I have to write a lot every day for my classes at the university, but I don't like it.

What would you like to do in the future? I would like to visit Mexico. Mexico is very pretty. I like the people there.

Where would you like to live? I would like to live on the beach. It doesn't matter to me what beach. I would like to live on any beach.

What type of music do you like? I like bachata, and all music in Spanish.

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