¿ESTO FUNCIONA?

STUDYING THE INFLUENCES OF PEER TUTORING ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE-LEARNING PROCESS

By

Alisha P. Castañeda

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Foreign language pedagogy is currently pushing for a more communicative approach to teaching learners practical language skills (Jones, Squires, and Hicks, 2008). Students want to develop language skills they can use in their careers and everyday lives; consequently, professors are integrating learning methods that make the language classroom more practical and applicable to students’ needs. One potentially invaluable tool in the language-learning process is requiring students to complete a specific number of target-language peer tutoring hours. This study examines the correlations among three variables: the number of tutoring hours students complete, their numerical final course grades, and their scores on the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) instrument (AAPPL, n.d.a). The Pearson’s $r$ tested the correlations between the number of tutoring hours completed and students’ final course grades, as well as number of tutoring hours and students’ performance on the AAPPL. Additionally, the Spearman $r$ analyzed the correlations among the number of tutoring hours and students’ scores on the AAPPL. The results of the study showed a significant correlation between tutoring hours and final course grades; however, there was no statistically significant relationship between tutoring hours and students’ performance on the AAPPL assessment.

**Keywords:** Foreign Language Learning, Second Language Acquisition, Foreign Language Tutoring, Spanish Tutoring, Required Tutoring, and Tutoring Effectiveness
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my sons, Elijah and Abdiel. Discover the passions God has given you, and work hard toward accomplishing your goals, boys. While you may never fully comprehend this concept, know that you can do ALL things through the Lord’s strength (Philippians 4:13). Rest in and rely upon Him—He is always with you. I love you more than you will ever know.
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Beyond my husband and children, I would like to acknowledge and thank the two people who have cultivated in me a love of learning and education since I was a little girl. Mom and Dad, thank you for teaching me what it is to be an effective, caring, and compassionate teacher who motivates students to do their very best. Your passion for education and sacrifice has taught me what a beautiful privilege it is to be a teacher. Also, to my siblings, Louie, Kim, and John, I am so grateful to have you in my life. Thank you for always encouraging me.

A mi familia colombiana y a la familia Nogueras Negrón, yo les aprecio más de lo que ustedes se imaginan. Muchas gracias por todo su apoyo a través de los años. No hubiera sido posible sin sus oraciones, palabras de ánimo, y ayuda. Que nuestro Señor les sigue guardando en Su perfecta paz. Muchas bendiciones a cada uno de ustedes.

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List of Abbreviations

ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

English Language Learning (ELL)

First Language (L1)

Foreign Language Lab (FLL)

Language Testing International (LTI)

Mean (M)

Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)

Pearson’s r (r)

Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS)

Sample Population (n)

Second Language (L2)

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Spanish 102 (SPAN 102)

Spearman r (rs)

Standard Deviation (SD)

Standards-based Measurements and Proficiency (STAMP 4S)

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

Study Population (N)

Target Language (TL)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Learning multiple languages is a challenging task that requires dedication and the incorporation of multifaceted language-learning approaches, and it is essential for language educators to address the varied needs of their students in ways that fully engage them in the language-learning process. Yet teachers’ abilities to do so in classrooms filled with students at differing levels of language proficiency are, oftentimes, limited. In response to this need, foreign language tutoring is a learning method with the potential to help students advance their language proficiency; however, additional research into its efficacy is necessary. The following information will provide a detailed introduction to the research topic of this dissertation.

Background

The academic study of foreign language learning (FLL) has existed since the late 19th Century (Blanton, 2015) and is defined as “[t]he learning of a nonnative language in the environment of one’s native language” (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 5). Learning a foreign language in one’s native-language environment can be quite challenging because of the immediacy of the first language; however, the benefits of learning more than one language are far stretching. Doing so expands cognitive development and “increases critical thinking skills, creativity, and flexibility of mind…” (Abbott, Caccavale, & Stewart, 2007). Furthermore, students who learn foreign languages perform better on standardized tests in the verbal and mathematical categories (Abbott et al., 2007) and attain greater vocational marketability in the workforce (Auburn University, 2016). Yet in order to fully attain these benefits, users must achieve proficiency in using the target language (TL). Nonetheless, while some researchers such as Derrick (2015) argue in favor of peer tutoring’s ability to increase student motivation and,
therefore, increase their confidence and use of the language, empirical research surrounding the use of peer tutoring, particularly required peer tutoring, in the foreign-language-learning process is lacking.

The relevance of required peer tutoring in the field of FLL is a growing topic of interest in need of additional research. Peer tutoring has been studied for more than four decades, and according to Bowman-Perrott, Davis, Vannest, Williams, Greenwood, and Parker (2013), it is an “evidence-based practice” that shows positive results in student achievement (p. 39). Its purpose is to allow students and tutors to collaborate in ways that empower students (Worley & Naresh, 2014) and help them learn the content material in a safe environment (García, Morales, & Rivera, 2014) through repetition (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013). This safe environment allows the students to feel comfortable, relaxed, and less anxious during the learning process, and the tutors and tutees can interact in positive, non-threatening ways (García, et al., 2014). As a result, students achieve “deeper learning of concepts” (García et al., 2014, p. 62) and higher performing outcomes when they work with peer tutors (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013). While the evidence-based effectiveness of peer tutoring has been investigated throughout numerous decades, additional research concerning required peer tutoring practices’ effectiveness in helping students learn foreign languages is necessary.

As students develop their TL skills, one of the primary issues that rises to the forefront is proficiency. There are a number of ways proficiency can be measured, such as Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS) rubrics (Dunn, 2012) and the Standards-Based Measurements and Proficiency (STAMP 4S) test (Blanton, 2015), standards which were developed based upon those of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (Blanton, 2015)—the foremost leader in “innovation, quality, and reliability in meeting
the changing needs of language educators and their students” (ACTFL, n.d.). However, researchers and teachers are able to best help foreign language learners (FLLs) gain proficiency by providing real-life speaking situations that call for practical use of their listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills in the TL (Pufahl & Rhodes as cited in Blanton, 2015; Blanton, 2015; Dunn, 2012). Peer tutoring for Spanish language students gives them authentic interactions with proficient users of the language and requires them to use the language in practical contexts (Donato as cited in Guichon, 2009). By giving them personal attention and individualized assistance, tutors help students achieve a deeper understanding of the subject material (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014).

While there are numerous theoretical frameworks applicable to the study of foreign languages and the effectiveness of peer tutoring, two particularly relevant theories include social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and Information-processing Theory. Social learning theory developed out of the behaviorism movement of the early nineteen-hundreds and has many different offshoots, founding theorists, and definitions. However, three aspects of social learning theory are particularly applicable to FLL and peer tutoring: observation and modeling, reinforcement, and reciprocal determinism. Students learn important information related to the TL by observing and modeling the behavior of their tutors, particularly their vocabulary usage, pronunciation, enunciation, and body language (especially gestures and facial expressions). Students look to tutors for social cues, proper usage, cultural context, and appropriate behavior, and by interacting with peer tutors, students are able to engage in “social practices that shape, construct, and influence learning within interactional and instructional contexts” (Donato as cited in Guichon, 2009, p. 169). They observe and model tutor behavior, and (in doing so) they enhance their skills in using the TL.
Beyond observation and modeling, reinforcement and reciprocal determinism play a key role in the peer language tutoring processes. Throughout the tutoring session, tutors reinforce not only correct use of the language but also improvement in TL usage. Matthews (2010) suggested that tutors can reinforce students’ use of the TL through problem solving, direct instruction, and questioning, which can help tutors flesh out ideas and troubleshoot problem areas in the students’ use of the language, as well as reinforce areas of needed development in the four aspects of language—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Yet through observation, modeling, and reinforcement, tutors and students engage in a relationship stimulated by reciprocal determinism. This tutoring relationship couched in collaborative reciprocal determinism results in a significantly larger effect size of student success (Katz & Albacete, 2013).

In addition to social learning theory, Information-processing Theory is essential to the peer and language tutoring. Information-processing Theory focuses primarily on studying “the flow of information through the cognitive system” (Miller, 1983, pp. 248-49). This flow of information begins with input and ends with output; however, the means and process by which the information is stored in the memory centers around meaningful frameworks. Students’ interactions and relationships with peer tutors help them create multiple meaningful frameworks formulated through abstraction, specification, and scaffolding. Abstraction is a process which helps the tutor and student work with information shared in the tutoring session to make connections to broader ideas that go beyond their time together (Katz & Albacete, 2013), which will create a greater conceptual map of information for students to follow in the future. Specification also helps learners create meaningful frameworks by relating larger concepts to specific problem or issue (Katz & Albacete, 2013). Whereas abstraction moves from a specific
point to a broader concept, specification narrows the learner’s focus from a broad concept to a particular concept. Additionally, the sensory registers emphasized in information processing theory can create short-term memory that draws upon the stores of semantic, long-term memory to solve problems and create meaningful connections between concepts (Miller, 1983, p. 222). Because of their impact on brain function and memory, activating sensory registers during tutoring sessions helps students create cognitive frameworks of information that tie concepts together, which increases the likelihood of that information being stored in long-term memory and retained for a longer period of time. Furthermore, scaffolding’s emphasis on coordination and cooperative execution increases student processing, retention, and output of information, including their TL skills (Chi, Siler, Jeon, Yamauchi, and Hausmann, 2001; Guichon, 2009; Katz & Albacete, 2013).

Peer tutoring is an effective way to help students learn (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014); however, additional research concerning the effectiveness of requiring peer tutoring for lower-level, Spanish-language students studying at the college level is necessary. As students work toward proficiency in the TL, the FLL process is oftentimes challenging and anxiety ridden (Awan et al., 2010; Krashen, 1982; Wu, 2010). Peer tutoring can address students’ personal academic needs (García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014) and lower anxiety levels (Matthews, 2008), yet in order to fully understand the dynamics of the FLL and peer tutoring relationship, a clear understanding of the Social Learning and Information-processing theories’ influence on effective learning methods is essential.

**Problem Statement**

Even though there is significant research regarding the effectiveness of peer tutoring, research concerning peer tutoring, particularly when it is required, in the language-learning
process is lacking. Currently, there are two trending foci related to peer tutoring in language learning: technology and English language learning (ELL). An in-depth search for relevant, academic studies revealed numerous articles pertaining to the use of technology in peer tutoring. Researchers such as Lin et al. (2012), Nye (2015), and Schmoelz et al. (2014) investigated the possibilities technology and artificial intelligence offer the field of tutoring. This important trend in current peer tutoring practices is intriguing but additional research in the effectiveness of FLL peer tutoring in a face-to-face setting is a more pressing need. Even though technology is a more popular topic of study right now, research in the practices of peer tutoring in the ELL process is also somewhat common. Scholars, such as Bowman-Perrott et al. (2016), researched the language learning process for students learning the English language in the United States, which contributed to the body of knowledge surrounding peer tutoring and language learning; however, the context of environment does not reflect FLL. While ELLs in the United States are learning their second language (L2) in the TL environment, Spanish language students are learning within an FLL context, where the TL is not the predominant language. The problem is the dearth of research on peer tutoring in FLL and required peer tutoring for FLLs studying the Spanish language at the college level.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between introductory-level Spanish language students’ final course grades, their scores on a language proficiency test measuring their speaking proficiency in the TL, and the number of required tutoring hours they completed for course credit. A quantitative design is the most appropriate choice because it assumes an objective reality, examines observable behavior, and is concerned with the generalizability of the results (Gall et al., 2015). The study is quasi-experimental because
randomization is not possible (Gall et al., 2015), and the sample population \((n)\) of 82 students taking lower level Spanish courses taught by two experienced Spanish professors at a private university in rural Virginia is a small portion of the population \((N)\) of all students taking lower-level Spanish courses at the university.

**Significance of the Study**

Additional research into the effectiveness of peer tutoring in FLL is necessary. Learning a foreign language is a difficult process, and any additional resources or methods teachers can use in an effort to help students lower their anxiety (Krashen, 1982), become motivated to learn (Matthews, 2008), and fully engage in the learning process are of great value. However, it is important that thorough research into the effectiveness of these practices be conducted before they are incorporated into the learning process (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2015). Change for the sake of change is not effective and can even be damaging (Gall et al., 2015) to the language learner’s development. Effective research on this topic area will not only contribute to the bodies of knowledge concerning FLL, peer tutoring, and FLL pedagogy but also benefit countless higher (and secondary) education institutions with similar student populations.

Peer tutoring helps students achieve greater academic success (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014) and should be further researched as a potential resource for enhancing student proficiency in foreign languages. García et al. (2014) found that the success rate of students taking placement exams increased 26% when they sought the help of peer tutors, and, in other studies, peer tutoring had “moderate to large academic benefits” in helping students increase their understanding of the course content (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39). These benefits of peer tutoring and the continued importance of learning foreign languages (Abbott et al., 2007; Auburn University, 2016) raise inquiries concerning the
effectiveness of required peer tutoring in helping students become more proficient Spanish language users. Yet because of the lack of research surrounding this particular aspect of peer tutoring, additional empirical research into its effectiveness is necessary.

**Research Questions**

**RQ1**: Is there a relationship between the number of hours students spend in peer tutoring sessions and their academic success in introductory foreign language classes?

**RQ2**: In the foreign-language-learning process, does peer tutoring have an impact on students’ oral proficiency in the target language?

**Definitions**

1. *Peer Tutoring* – A collaborative learning process in which individuals within a similar population work together (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; Derrick, 2015).

2. *Foreign Language Learning (FLL)* – Learning a foreign language while living in an environment where the individual’s native language is predominantly spoken (Gass & Selinker, 2001).


4. *Second Language (L2)* – A non-native language which the learner is developing (Cebrian & Carlet, 2014).

5. *Second Language Acquisition (SLA)* – Both a complex process by which learners develop second language (L2) skills and a multidimensional network of theories related to language learning throughout several decades of research (Menezes, 2013).

6. *Target Language (TL)* – A language of study which is not the user’s native language (Chambers, 2013) and is not necessarily the learner’s L2.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Foreign language pedagogy is currently pushing for a more “communicative method of language learning, in which the learner must successfully accomplish tasks by using culturally appropriate language in authentic context” (Jones et al., 2008, pp. 375-76). Students want practical language skills they can use in their careers and everyday lives; they do not want to simply study grammar and vocabulary. As a result, professors are seeking new ways to make language curriculum more practical and applicable to students’ needs. In response to that need, this research will examine any potential correlations between face-to-face interactions with tutors who are proficient users of the TL (Spanish) and lower-level, undergraduate Spanish language students’ oral proficiency assessment scores, as well as their final course grades. This chapter, in particular, will not only use existing theories to establish a theoretical framework that addresses this research topic but also incorporate current research pertaining to the related fields and subject areas surrounding required peer tutoring in fulfillment of course curriculum in the college language classroom.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

Foreign Language Learning

Foreign language learning (FLL) has been a field of academic study since the late 1800s and has seen the development of a number of different theories and practices that have influenced its current state (Blanton, 2015). The foundation of FLL rests upon the premise that the learner is studying the language in a setting where the individual’s native language is predominantly spoken, not the TL (Gass, & Selinker, 2001). Because the learner is not continuously listening to or reading, writing, or speaking in the TL, it can be challenging to
increase language proficiency in these four areas of the language in the same manner as if he or she was learning in the TL environment. While this concentration on learning in one’s native language environment is one facet of FLL that distinguishes it from other language-learning methods, another characteristics that separates FLL from others is its focus on learning, which implies a conscious effort to gain knowledge (Littlewood, 1984). FLLs take an active role in working and studying to learn the language, and FLL teachers tend to focus more so on the grammar, structure, and rules of the language. While the teaching methods of FLL will not be the focus of this study, the emphasis of learning a foreign language in one’s native language environment is an essential element.

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) focuses on the acquisition of language through “subconscious processes” (Littlewood, 1984, p. 3) and “an unconscious system that lies outside of awareness” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 15) learners use as they interact with the world around them. As Garrett (2009) argued, over recent decades, SLA has focused more specifically on the communicative aspects of language acquisition, including “sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis” (p. 720). While students are engaging with the language, they are doing so in a different manner than FLL’s focus on learning the grammar and rules of the language. The emphasis in SLA lies in meaningful experiences (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) and using “authentic materials” that are “created by and for native speakers, in contrast to those created for pedagogical purposes” (Garrett, 2009, p. 722). This comprehensible input has a greater impact on the learners’ ability to negotiate meaning while initially comprehending and later expressing the TL (Krashen, 1982). Because of their complex and TL nature, authentic materials challenge
students to engage the language in practical ways, and they provide genuine linguistic and cultural context for the language.

Beyond the foundational premise of SLA’s emphasis on acquiring a TL by engaging the language through authentic materials, another aspect of the SLA theory essential to this study is Krashen’s (1982) research on the effects of anxiety on SLA. Anxiety has the ability to greatly inhibit or, in some cases, shut down the learning process for students. Krashen (1982) thoroughly researched SLA anxiety and its effects, and he is considered one of the leading experts on language learning and the effects of this form of anxiety. He developed five different hypotheses concerning the effects of anxiety on language learners, and one of the most prominently known and widely investigated hypotheses pertains to the influence of affective filters (Krashen, 1982). According to Krashen (1982), students raise their affective filters once they feel emotions such as embarrassment, which inhibits the learning process because they are unable to effectively engage in learning. The effect affective filters have on language-learning indicates a need to create language-learning environments in which language students feel at ease about engaging with the subject material throughout the SLA process (Krashen, 1982; Matthews, 2008).

**Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory developed out of the behaviorism movement of the early nineteen-hundreds, and it has many different offshoots, founding theorists, and definitions. However, as one source argues, in social learning theory, “[t]he ultimate goal is to combine the vitality of psychoanalysis, the rigor of the natural-science laboratory, and the facts of culture” (Dollard & Miller as cited in Miller, 1983, p. 190). Miller (1983) furthered this definition when she contended, “The guiding belief of social learning
theorists was that personality is learned” (p. 190). While these definitions leave room for a variety of research methods, this study will look specifically at the roles of social learning theory’s observation and modeling, reinforcement, and reciprocal determinism in the peer tutoring dynamic within the context of foreign language study.

**Observation and modeling.** Students learn important information related to the TL by observing and modeling the behavior of their tutors. Brendel (2012) briefly addressed the importance of these behaviors in the writing tutoring context when he quoted Sharon Myers’ argument that writing tutors act as “cultural informants” that “not only teach politeness and other social conventions but also language” (p. 79). Perhaps because students oftentimes see tutors as teachers or authoritative figures in the academic environment, they look to tutors for social cues, proper usage, cultural context, and much more. Belhiah (2009) expounded upon the importance of behavior modeling and observation in his study of how speech, gaze, and body orientation affect tutoring sessions. In relation to gaze in particular, he wrote, “Gaze patterns can…indicate commitment to talk and to regulate orientation towards one another, to give speakers time to organize their contributions, to elicit or exhibit recipiency, to ensure…flow of conversation…, and to foreground the communicative intent of a gesture” (p. 829). This connection between tutor and learner helps the learner remain engaged in the learning material and present in the TL context. These aspects of connecting through the gaze also relate to the specific cultural background and linguistic context of foreign languages. By interacting with tutors who are proficient TL users, students are able to engage in “social practices that shape, construct, and influence learning within interactional and instructional contexts” (Donato as cited in Guichon, 2009, p. 169). They observe and model tutor behavior, and (in doing so) they enhance their skills in using the TL.
**Reinforcement.** Throughout the tutoring session, it is important for the tutor to not only reinforce correct use of the language but also encourage improvement in language practice. As Matthews (2010) posited, tutors can reinforce students’ use of the TL through various methods, including problem solving, direct instruction, and questioning. By incorporating these methods into the tutoring session, tutors can flesh out ideas and troubleshoot problem areas in the students’ use of the language and reinforce areas of strength and improvement.

In order for tutors to properly integrate reinforcement into their tutoring sessions, they must not only be taught about social learning theory and the role of reinforcement in the tutor-student relationship, but also they must be competent tutors. Guichon (2009) emphasized the importance of tutor competency when he discussed “actual competency” and “hypothetical competency” (p. 168). The former simply means “the capacity to successfully manage an unknown situation”, whereas the latter corresponds to “the a priori and decontextualized description of a set of skills a professional should have acquired at the end of training” (Guichon, 2009, p. 168). In order for language tutors to effectively help language learners become more proficient in the TL, they must be competent in their ability to handle unforeseen situations and provide comprehensive input in meaningful ways, which develop not only with practice but also with training. Fitzgerald (2009) argued in favor of four main areas of tutor training that are essential for attaining tutoring competency—second language acquisition, contrastive analysis, language literacy, and managing logistics. The tutoring environment is dynamic and flexible and is by no means stagnant; therefore, it is essential that tutors not only build the necessary skills and knowledge related to the language but also have the ability to respond to the task at hand and immediately react to the students’ needs as they build up areas of weakness and reinforce areas where students perform well or show even the slightest amount of improvement.
Reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism is a key element of the tutoring process that directly relates to the previously discussed areas of social learning theory—observation, modeling, and reinforcement. Through observation, modeling, and reinforcement, tutors and students engage in a relationship stimulated by reciprocal determinism. As Katz and Albacete (2013) contended, “large effect sizes of…tutoring can be attributed to its highly interactive nature—that is, the high degree to which the student and tutor respond to and build upon each other’s dialogue” (p. 1126). As tutors and students interact with one another, they teach and develop each other academically and socially. Fitzgerald (2009) performed a study on service-learning classes that provided ELL tutoring in the local community. She noted that as the college students worked with younger, high school students learning English, the reciprocal relationship among them was beneficial, even on the most rudimentary level, because students learned necessary language skills and the tutors learned multicultural awareness. This reciprocal relationship is also evident in Matthews’ (2010) emphasis on the ideas of co-construction and “‘Socratic’ tutoring” (p. 619). While he argued that the true effectiveness of these two methods is yet to be determined with future research, he pointed to the numerous scholars in favor of the co-constructive relationship in which tutors and students interact together (without one dominating the other) to create an effective tutoring dynamic. While the “Socratic” method of tutoring is also one that is arguably beneficial, empirical evidence in support of its effectiveness is needed. Nonetheless, within this technique, tutors use a question and answer method to draw information and knowledge out of the student. By doing so, tutors and students both engage their critical thinking skills and benefit from the learning process (Newton & Ender, 2010).
Information-processing theory

As part of the movement surrounding cognitive development, information-processing theory came out of the contributions of various theorists and grew in popularity and importance around the 1970s. Much like social learning theory, information-processing theory consists of various elements. As Miller (1983) stated, “Information processing is not a single theory, but rather a framework characterizing a large number of research programs. These investigators study the flow of information through the cognitive system” (pp. 248-49). This flow of information begins with input and ends with output; however, the means and processes by which the information is stored in the memory, such as meaningful frameworks, sensory registers, and narratives, are key elements of information-processing theory.

Meaningful frameworks. The dynamics of the tutor-student relationship were previously discussed in the context of the social learning theory and reciprocal determinism; however, the tutoring relationship also bears significance in the establishment of meaningful frameworks within information-processing theory. Tutor interactions and relationships with students help language learners create multiple meaningful frameworks for contextualizing the information they learn. While there are many ways to build these meaningful frameworks, abstraction, specification, and scaffolding are prime examples. Abstraction “takes place when the tutor or student relates what his or her dialogue partner said to explain a more general concept or principle” (Katz & Albacete, 2013, p. 1127). Conversely, specification “occurs when the tutor (or student) distinguishes between related concepts” (Katz & Albacete, 2013, p. 1127). Engaging students in these kinds of exercises helps make additional cognitive connections among the concepts and potentially increases the probability that the processed information will be retained for a longer time. Furthermore, scaffolding is an effective tool in increasing student
processing and retention of information. In the tutoring context, scaffolding could be something as simple as a “guided prompting” (Chi et al., 2001, p. 409) that helps students further develop their analysis or critical thinking of a given concept (Guichon, 2009). Katz and Albacete (2013) also contended that “scaffolding involves cooperative execution or coordination by the tutor and the student…in a way that allows the student to take an increasingly larger burden in performing the skill” (p. 1128). As a result, peer tutors can incorporate scaffolding methods, as well as these other methods of creating meaningful frameworks, to push students to not only work more diligently but also expand the connections between ideas, increase information retention, and further their cognitive understanding of the language.

**Sensory registers.** People use sensory registers to create semantic memory in their long-term memory; therefore, it is important for tutors to engage students’ sensory registers as much as possible during tutoring sessions. There are innumerable ways to involve sensory registers in tutoring. Garrett (2009) promoted the use of authentic materials, such as virtual second life games, videos, Facebook, and more. Because of their electronic nature, these tools predominantly engage the senses of sight, hearing, and touch, and they engage the brain by using technology in ways which are arguably most familiar to students of today. Nonetheless, peer tutors can also bring games, scented candles, playdough, artisan crafts (blankets, jewelry, paintings, etc.), and typical food and drinks from their homelands to help engage all of the students’ senses in the learning process. By engaging as many of the senses as possible, tutors help students develop their semantic memory of language through a sensory context, which creates additional cognitive connections within the memory network and stores more information in the students’ long-term memory.
Narratives. Narratives are a way of communicating historical events, moral systems, and cultural customs and beliefs through the perspective of a given community, people group, or an individual (Miller, 1983). Tutors can share narratives in their native language and ask follow-up questions of the students as a way of engaging and testing students’ input, recall, and output abilities. In their study, Polansky, Andrianoff, Bernard, Flores, Gardocki, Handerhan, and Young (2010) discussed the use of narratives as a training tool for tutors. The researchers argued in favor of the narrative method because of its reflective nature; however, they also contended that tutors’ narratives “helped set the stage for them to build ‘an interpretive sense’ and unfold the teaching and learning situations of their service-learning experiences as language tutors” (Polansky et al., 2010, p. 307). In their study, tutors were able to engage one another in the learning process by sharing their personal experiences through narratives. Similarly, language tutors can engage students in the learning process by sharing narratives that not only pique students’ interest but also test their cognitive comprehension of the language, their retention of the information, and their ability to output that information in the TL. When the tutors in the Polansky, et al. (2010) study shared personal narratives of their own language-learning experiences with their students, students showed more interest in the subject material and became more responsive and engaged in the learning process. As a result, information-processing theory’s use of narrative is an effective resource for helping language learners process input and produce output in the TL.

Adult Learning and Motivation

Adult learning theory is an essential theoretical framework for studying adult learners in higher education, who have unique learning needs. They tend to be goal oriented, and because they have careers, families, and numerous other responsibilities beyond their studies, they value
clear and practical information and assignments that will help them become better students, as well as professionals (Spalding, 2014). Adult learners want to know exactly what they need to do in order to succeed in their courses or programs and do not want to be bothered by superfluous information. Motivation is also a key factor in their academic success (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). As Knowles et al. (2015) argued, “If facilitators can tap into adults’ intrinsic motivation for learning, neuroscience tells us that the brain is more primed for learning” because of motivation’s ability to “evoke positive emotions” (p. 228). This science concerning the effectiveness of motivation in helping adult learners effectively engage in the learning process also applies to foreign language studies.

**Engagement, motivation, self-efficacy, and adult learners.** Student engagement in class can take on various forms. Yang (2011) contended that student engagement takes on three different variations: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioral engagement is evident in students’ participation in the class and their completion of the required assignments (Yang, 2011). Emotional engagement is characterized by how students share “positive and negative feelings about learning with their teachers and peers” (Yang, 2011, p. 182). And cognitive engagement “refers to the amount and type of strategies that learners use to complete a task or solve a problem, which will lead to their collaborative knowledge construction and deep learning” (Yang, 2011, p. 182). Each of these aspects of engagement in the learning process is essential to students’ overall academic success, and in order to fully engage adult learners in the language-learning process, educators need to incorporate activities and methodologies that encourage student engagement on all three levels.

Another important aspect of student engagement in language courses is student interaction in the class. In his study, Jose Ricardo-Osorio (2008) emphasized the importance of
student participation in self-assessment as a form of engaging in the course. He quoted Liskin-Gasparro (1996) as he wrote, “[T]he literature highlights self-assessments to evaluate students’ perceptions of their learning” (p. 592). Ricardo-Osorio (2008) also argued that through self-assessment, students learn to “appraise their language skills and knowledge” and “claim ownership of their learning” (p. 593). Students’ self-assessment is not only a metacognitive exercise that engages their minds in the learning process and inspires additional learning, but it also encourages them to take control of their education and gives them more confidence in their abilities. Another way to encourage student engagement in learning the TL is to give them autonomy (Arno-Macia, 2012), which is particularly important to adult learners. Educators can give their students autonomy by allowing them “to make choices and create alternative learning routes” (Arno-Macia, 2012, p. 96). Such choices could be related to the points awarded for each assignment or, indeed, even the choice of which types of assignments will be given throughout the course. The depth to which teachers allow this autonomy in the learning process is only limited by their creativity. By encouraging interaction and giving students autonomy, educators enable their students to actively engage in the language-learning process.

In addition to the need for establishing beneficial opportunities for student interaction and autonomy, motivation and self-efficacy are crucial elements of student engagement in language courses. Motivation is particularly important to adult learners (Knowles et al., 2015), and in Matthews’ (2008) article, he reported on a study of student motivation based on the motivational theory framework. Matthews (2008) cited Oxford and Shearin’s (1994) description of motivation’s influence on student engagement:

Motivation directly influences how often students use [foreign language] learning strategies, how much students interact with native speakers, how much input they receive
in the language being learned (the TL), how well they do on curriculum-related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency level becomes, and how long they persevere and maintain [foreign language] skills after language study is over....

Therefore, motivation is extremely important for [foreign language] learning, and it is crucial to understand what our students’ motivations are. (p. 612)

The impact of student motivation is far stretching, and it is essential to look for patterns of motivation for general student groups, as well as the personal points of motivation for each individual student. As Yang (2011) noted in his study of the motivations empowering online language learners, using synchronous communication with teachers and TAs and asynchronous communication through the system he and his fellow researchers developed “motivated students to actively participate in cognitive engagement to acquire knowledge in situated language learning” and motivated student revision of written work (Yang, 2011, p. 191). In this particular study of online students, the group pattern demonstrated that the students were highly motivated by collaborative and individual work while using online learning tools.

Another important concept related to adult learners’ motivation and engagement in the language classroom is self-efficacy. Matthews (2008) succinctly described self-efficacy as “perceptions of one’s ability to perform a skill at a certain level” (p. 613). However, the groundbreaking leader in self-efficacy research, Bandura (1977), argued that people refuse to engage in any activity they feel they are not equipped to handle but will “get involved in activities and behave assuredly when they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating” (p. 194). As a result, self-efficacy has a significant impact on an individual’s behavior, and in the case of lower-level Spanish learners, their self-efficacy in learning the language is tied to the perception they have of their own abilities, not necessarily
their actual proficiency level. Matthews (2008) also argued that self-efficacy impacts student performance in the classroom setting, and it can play a role in the students’ future achievements. Self-efficacy focuses on students’ “assessment of the likelihood of future success” (p. 614) and “can impact…[students’] strategy use, persistence, and achievement” (p. 613-14). Their performance in class activities and interactions with their peers is, as a result, directly impacted by those self-perceptions and their correlating levels of self-efficacy. With positive self-efficacy, students may be more motivated in the learning process and, therefore, more engaged in the course materials; however, if students’ self-efficacy judgments are low or negative, they may not be as likely to continue studying the language or be successful in its acquisition.

**Peer tutoring as a motivational tool for adult learners.** Learning a second language can be a somewhat overwhelming experience, particularly for adult learners; however, peer tutoring can be an effective motivational tool. For adult learners who are required to take foreign language courses for their degree and obligated to complete peer tutoring sessions for their classes, understanding why they need to learn a second language and how peer tutoring will help them do so is essential. As Brockett (2015) contended, those working with adults must help them “understand why they are learning and not just what they will be learning” (p. 46). Helping them understand why and how these skills and forms of assistance are helpful motivates adult learners toward success. Topping and Ehly (as cited in Derrick, 2015) highlighted this form of motivation when they argued that peer tutors can help “develop a sense of pride and responsibility” in students and that “improved motivation and attitude can lead to ‘greater commitment, improved self-esteem, self-confidence, and greater empathy with others’” (p. 12). Overall, peer tutoring has a positive impact on students’ motivation to learn, no matter the subject area, and when tutors and teachers understand and implement adult learning theory
methodologies, they have the potential to positively impact students’ overall motivation to learn a foreign language (Matthew, 2008).

**Language Acquisition and Peer Tutoring**

**Language Learning and Acquisition**

When combined, the theories of FLL and SLA offer language educators and language learners a number of beneficial implications related to learning TLs. FLL’s focus on the learner’s unique challenges as a TL learner living within his or her native language’s environment combined with the resourcefulness of SLA’s approach in teaching learners with engaging, authentic materials provides a more holistic approach to learning languages. Beyond these theoretical components of FLL and SLA previously examined, the information below will examine language learning as it relates to proficiency and anxiety.

**Proficiency.** One of the most important themes of the foreign language learning literature focuses on proficiency in listening to, reading, writing, and speaking in the TL. There are a number of ways proficiency can be measured, such as Performance Assessment for Language Students (PALS) rubrics (Dunn, 2012) and The Standards-Based Measurements and Proficiency (STAMP 4S) test (Blanton, 2015); however, these standards have been developed based upon the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards of proficiency (Blanton, 2015). Since the mid-1960s, ACTFL has become the foremost leader in “innovation, quality, and reliability in meeting the changing needs of language educators and their students” and has worked diligently to provide rigorous standards of proficiency in numerous foreign languages (ACTFL, n.d.). These standards of proficiency are demanding because one of the highest purposes of education is to prepare students for effective global
citizenship by helping them learn more than one language (Pufahl & Rhodes as cited in Blanton, 2015).

Researchers and teachers are able to best help foreign language learners gain this proficiency by providing and encouraging them to engage in real-life speaking situations that call for practical use of their listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills in the TL (Pufahl & Rhodes as cited in Blanton, 2015; Blanton, 2015; Dunn, 2012). According to Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivism theory, social environment constructs meaning; therefore, when the social environment encourages or requires foreign language learners to use the TL (such as Spanish), learners are more likely to acquire more significant meaning, establish more relationships of meaning in what they are learning, and better retain the information. This environment, as well as the pressure of peer performance in the classroom, pushes language learners to perform with greater proficiency (Dunn, 2012).

Anxiety. As FLLs work to become proficient in the TL, anxiety becomes a primary concern. Language-learning anxiety can inhibit learners’ ability to understand and produce the TL and affect their desire to continue studying the TL, consequently impeding or obstructing proficiency (Awan, Azher, Anwar, & Naz, 2010; Wu, 2010). Krashen (1982) argued that the best environment for students learning a foreign language is one with low levels of anxiety. According Blanton (2015), anxiety, among other variables, inhibits “input from reaching the part of the brain in charge of language acquisition” (p. 42). Therefore, a classroom full of students may be given the same information, but (depending upon their individual anxiety levels) each students’ processing abilities will differ (Krashen, 1982; Blanton, 2015). Maintaining a low-anxiety environment and encouraging high levels of motivation (Blanton, 2015; Krashen, 1982; Matthews, 2008) will help FLLs develop their language skills in more effective ways. The
personalized attention (García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014), relaxed setting, and “judgement-free environment” (Worley & Naresh, 2014, p. 29) of peer tutoring sessions help students feel at ease and lower their anxiety in the language-learning process.

**Peer tutoring**

As a tutoring method, peer tutoring helps students achieve greater academic success (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014; Newton & Ender, 2010; Worley & Naresh, 2014). It is defined as the “acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions” (Topping & Ehly as cited in Derrick, 2015, p. 12). And its purpose is to allow students and tutors to collaborate in ways that empower students (Newton & Ender, 2010; Worley & Naresh, 2014). In peer tutoring, students help each other learn the content material through repetition (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013) in a safe environment (García et al., 2014). This safe environment allows the students to feel comfortable, relaxed, and less anxious during the learning process, and the tutors and tutees can interact in positive, non-threatening ways (García et al., 2014).

**Personal attention and open communication.** One of the major themes from the literature concerning peer tutoring is its ability to provide personal attention and assistance to students in effective ways. In a classroom of 25 to 30 students, teachers are able to provide a limited amount of personal attention to each student and are, at times, unable to address those students’ individual needs, particularly those who are struggling to understand or keep up with the subject material. Yet with the assistance of peer tutors, educators are able to provide students with personal attention and assist them in their specific areas of need (García et al., 2014; Newton & Ender, 2010; Worley & Naresh, 2014). Tutors are able to help students strengthen their skills in the course content and experience “deeper learning of concepts” (García et al.,
2014, p. 62) by providing recurrent opportunities to interact with and respond to the tutors and receive their feedback (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013). These interactions give tutors the ability to help students in immediate and relevant ways to improve their understanding and relevant performance in using the subject material.

In addition to individualized assistance, students may feel more comfortable asking tutors questions than they do when asking their teachers (Worley & Naresh, 2014). Familiarity and lowered anxiety in a one-on-one “judgement-free environment” sets students at ease and encourages open communication (Worley & Naresh, 2014, p. 29). Tutors are not professional teachers; instead, they are students within the same “social groupings” whose main goal is to help their peers and, in return, learn more about the tutoring, learning, and developmental processes (Topping as cited in Worley & Naresh, 2014, p. 26). As a result of the personal attention they receive from their tutors, students not only achieve a deeper understanding of the subject material but also feel more comfortable in maintaining open communication throughout the learning process.

**Treatment fidelity data in peer tutoring.** The importance of recording treatment fidelity data is an evident theme throughout the literature related to peer tutoring. According to Smith, Daunic, and Taylor (2007), treatment fidelity refers to the data which records and reports the ways in which an intervention is consistently administered to each group member within the sample population. Detail in recording this information adds to the reliability and validity of a research study, as well as its replicability. Yet in many studies, only a minimal level of treatment fidelity was evident. Bowman-Perrott et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of recording detailed treatment information, noting that more than half of the 26 research studies examined in their meta-analysis of peer tutoring studies were missing treatment fidelity data. Another meta-
analysis of research on emotional behavioral disorder studies from 1975 to 2002 revealed that only 27 percent reported treatment fidelity data (Smith et al., 2007). It is essential for researchers to record detailed information related to not only the study’s procedures and data results but also the steps taken during the intervention. In relation to peer tutoring, for example, there are a number of different methods and techniques tutors use during their tutoring sessions with students; however, if data concerning their particular methods are not recorded, an evident gap in the research will result. Perhaps one tutor’s technique might be more effective than another’s, yet when studying the overall effectiveness of peer tutoring within a given sample population, these important details may not be included or accounted for.

**Benefits.** While some of the benefits of peer tutoring have been previously highlighted, it is important to emphasize the empirical evidence demonstrating its effectiveness in helping students achieve greater academic success (García et al., 2014). Peer tutoring demonstrates statistically significant (García et al., 2014) and “moderate to large academic benefits” in helping students improve their understanding and knowledge of the subject material (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39). Furthermore, peer tutoring also helps students “take ownership of their learning” (Worley & Naresh, 2014, p. 31) and encourages tutors to master the skills they are teaching (Derrick, 2015; Newton & Ender, 2010; Worley & Naresh, 2014). As they work through the cognitive aerobics of teaching their peers more about the subject material, tutors also gain a greater understanding of the content (Newton & Ender, 2010). Therefore, learners and peer tutors benefit from this symbiotic relationship as they gain greater understanding and build their “self-esteem and empathy” toward others throughout the tutoring process (Derrick, 2015, p. 12).
Peer Tutoring and Language Learning

Peer tutoring is an effective tool for helping students learn foreign languages. As peer tutors interact with students, they create a social environment conducive to language learning. This social environment is an essential element of constructing meaning throughout the language-learning process (Vygotsky, 1978), and students learning a foreign language while living in the United States face the challenge of learning a TL while having limited contact with it. Peer tutoring is a useful tool in helping students bridge this gap by providing them with what Lee and VanPatten (2003) call good language input that is both comprehensible and meaningful. As peers work together, tutors are able to help students learn and practice skills and concepts in ways that are not practical or feasible in a classroom setting.

Immediate feedback. In the classroom setting, teachers are able to provide students with only a limited amount of immediate feedback that is relevant to their personal language-learning needs. Tutors, however, are able to tailor the tutoring sessions to meet the individual needs of their students and encourage “repetition of key concepts” (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39) and further development of the skills addressed in class. Peer tutoring also provides students with “frequent opportunities to respond, increased time on task, and regular and immediate feedback” (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39). Tutors can use this immediate feedback to pinpoint the areas where students struggle and where they most succeed as they help students meet their goals. This work takes time, effort, and much energy on the tutors’ part (Newton & Ender, 2010), but the outcome is worth the effort. Despite the fact that classroom lessons and interactions are invaluable to the student’s learning process, peer tutors have the unique ability to help language students develop their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in uniquely individualized ways.
**Impact on anxiety.** Students’ levels of anxiety can greatly impact their experiences while learning a foreign language and their ability to do so effectively (Awan et al., 2010; Wu, 2010). As Krashen (1982) argued, the higher students raise their affective filters, the less information they are able to process. In order to keep their affective filters low and boost student processing, a low-anxiety environment is ideal, and peer tutoring sessions offer a safe environment in which peers can interact in positive, nonthreatening ways (García, Morales, Rivera, 2014). Students are, oftentimes, comfortable with peer tutors because they feel as if they are working with someone with whom they can relate and who has been through similar experiences (Newton & Ender, 2010). The relaxed atmosphere of peer tutoring facilitates open dialogue and positive interactions in a low-stakes environment, which lowers anxiety and motivates students (Blanton, 2015; Krashen, 1982; Matthews, 2008) to continue developing their language skills.

**Foreign Language Learning and Course Curriculum**

As foreign language educators develop the curriculum for their courses and programs, it is important they build curriculum that reflects their mission and purpose. They will be able to accomplish this by bearing in mind the five major goals that Parkay et al. (2014) described as “citizenship, equal educational opportunity, vocation, self-realization, and critical thinking” (p. 8). If broken down into groups based on overarching themes, these goals relate to “society and its values” and the “individual learner’s needs, interests, and abilities” (Parkay et al., 2014, p. 8). The curriculum, in many ways, is a reflection of the teachers’, school’s, and surrounding community’s values, and educators need to ensure that their curriculum is a positive reflection of those standards. As foreign language educators plan, their curriculum should demonstrate acknowledgement and incorporation of the students’ pursuits and academic needs throughout the
course. While there is a flowing continuum of student-centered curriculum versus subject-centered curriculum (Parkay et al., 2014), there is a need to balance that focus in such a way that the curriculum helps students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills and actively engage the course materials in ways that best suit their interests and learning strengths.

As professors of foreign languages work to develop curriculum that most effectively meets the needs and interests of their students, they must examine the “knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values students should exhibit on completion of a unit of study” (Parkay et al., 2014, p. 301). For college students studying at liberal arts institutions, the vast majority are required to take two to four language courses, no matter which field of study they are pursuing. Professors of foreign languages, therefore, need to consider which skills these students must attain in order to not only successfully complete the various forms of assessment throughout the course but also prepare them for the next level of study. As a result, course sequencing becomes an important factor in determining what should be taught and when, not only throughout the course but also among the various levels of language study. A Spanish professor, for example, could cover ten chapters from a course textbook in one semester; however, students would not be able to truly acquire and master that amount of information in only one semester. There are times, depending upon the students’ previous knowledge and experience, when professors must slow down or speed up the rate with which they move through the predetermined course sequencing; however, the curriculum should not overwhelm students with unrealistic expectations. An important element to consider is balancing the “acquisition of content” with the “mastery of process” and ensure language students are obtaining the greatest benefits possible from the course material (Parkay et al., 2014, p. 301).
Practical Needs for Effective Language Curriculum.

**Spanish in the United States.** The ethnic, racial, and cultural make-up of the United States is becoming more diverse than ever before. The US has been known as a melting pot of diversity for generations; however, that concept has never been truer than it is today. According to Parkay et al. (2014), “between 1.5 and 1.6 million immigrants arrive in the United States each year”, and “[i]n 2007, 37.9 million immigrants lived in the United States” (p. 45). Beyond these growth rates of immigrants coming to the US, the current US Hispanic population has become the largest minority group, and their growth rate increased 43% between 2000 and 2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2011). The increasing evidence of bilingualism among the Spanish and English languages is evident across the nation in numerous ways. Perhaps one of the most important evidences of the push for bilingualism for college students who will soon move out into their career fields and the national workforce is that more employers require or, at least, prefer bilingualism as they make their final hiring decisions (Auburn University, 2016). Having proficient Spanish language skills makes students more marketable as they search for jobs and seek to advance in their careers.

**Proficiency.** Students’ levels of proficiency in a foreign language such as Spanish relates to their abilities to comprehend, speak, read, and write in the TL (Pufahl & Rhodes as cited in Blanton, 2015; Blanton, 2015; Dunn, 2012). A number of people claim to be proficient users of Spanish, yet some only have a working knowledge of certain aspects of the language, such as being able to read and write in Spanish but not being able to speak Spanish in practical, conversational ways. As students move through each course’s curriculum, as well as the sequence of courses, they must be able to demonstrate certain levels of proficiency on standardized assessments. Due to different personalities and learning styles, some students will
perform better on specific assessments than others; however, the standards should be the same for all so an objective evaluation of their acquisition and performance levels may be measured.

As Spanish professors develop their curriculum, they must carefully consider which assessment tools to incorporate. The most common measures of assessments teachers implement throughout the course are tests, writing assignments, oral assessments, and more. However, they may also choose to integrate standardized, higher stakes testing methods. As previously mentioned, the ACTFL (n.d.) is a nationally and internationally recognized organization designed for teachers of foreign languages that develops internationally normed tests of proficiency in all four of the key areas of language study—comprehension, reading, writing, and speaking. As ACTFL works to provide educators with quality assessment tools, they strive to use the utmost “innovation, quality, and reliability in meeting the changing needs of language educators and their students” (ACTFL, n.d.). As professors consider the ACTFL language assessment offerings, it is important to remember that either the students or university will need to pay, at times, rather significant fees for each test. Yet other assessment tools such as the Standards-Based Measurements and Proficiency (STAMP 4S) test (Blanton, 2015) and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) instrument (AAPPL, n.d.a) may prove more cost effective. The STAMP 4S and AAPPL language proficiency tests’ lower price points are an attractive option for many Spanish professors, and because the content of both assessments is based upon the ACTFL standards of proficiency, they are effective tools for measuring students’ knowledge of and abilities in using the Spanish language.

Peer Tutoring as a Curriculum Requirement

Peer tutoring provides students the opportunity to work together throughout the learning
process that could benefit students as a required element of the course curriculum. It is an “evidence-based practice” that effectively helps students gain greater academic achievement and higher performance results (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39). More specifically, peer tutoring is “the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals or matched companions” (Topping & Ehly as cited in Derrick, 2015, p. 12). In the context of university-level studies, peer tutors are generally at the same level of academic study as the students who seek their help and services; however, there are times when either graduate level students tutor undergraduate students or undergraduate students tutor graduate students. In either case, the tutor generally has a stronger understanding and exhibits better dexterity and performance in the subject area (Cole, 2013). By including these tutoring practices as a course-curriculum requirement, teachers afford students with the opportunity to actively work with peer tutors who have the ability to help them advance their knowledge of the subject material.

Peer tutoring is a practice that, when required, provides a unique learning experience. The key element of peer tutoring that distinguishes it from other types of tutoring practices is that it is based upon the principle of “students helping each other learn content through repetition of key concepts” (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013, p. 39). In most cases, both students (tutor and tutee) learn from the tutoring process. Tutees benefit from the knowledge and experience tutors are able to provide as they gain “deeper learning of concepts” (García et al., 2014, p. 62). And tutors not only learn how to help others through effective communication practices but also strengthen their own knowledge and usage of the subject material as they help their peers (Derrick, 2015). As Spanish professors develop the curriculum for their introductory-level courses, it is important for them to reflect upon the overall benefits of peer tutoring services and consider incorporating these practices into their course curriculum.
Anxiety and curriculum. As previously discussed, anxiety can oftentimes prove quite problematic for students learning foreign languages. Students learning Spanish at the college level, for example, tend to feel anxious or nervous about the language-learning process, especially if they did not take any Spanish courses in their elementary or secondary years of education. Learning a foreign language can be quite intimidating, especially at the beginning. Students feel anxious about their ability to not only understand Spanish but also produce Spanish in its spoken and written forms, and such anxiety affects their ability to perform and progress in the language-learning process (Awan et al., 2010; Krashen, 1982; Wu, 2010).

Incorporating peer tutoring services as a requirement for course credit may be one way to help students combat language-learning anxiety. In the classroom, students with anxiety face the pressure of learning with peers and performing in front of their professors, which can prove extremely strenuous for some students. However, peer tutoring sessions provide a safe place (García et al., 2014) in which students have the advantage of working with peer tutors who are knowledgeable in the subject area. Students generally meet with tutors in one-on-one or small-group environments, which lowers the stakes of the situation and helps students feel less pressure to perform perfectly. Tutoring sessions are generally performed outside of the classroom setting in locations that are more relaxed and familiar to students’ everyday lives. As an example, some tutors will meet with their students in libraries or cafes with soft seating and decor that is much different from the oftentimes stiff and stale setting of the average university classroom. Tutors do this in order to help students feel comfortable and, therefore, more relaxed so that they can concentrate more on their interaction with the tutor, rather than the environment or their performance in using the TL. Peer tutoring has the potential to help students lower their affective filters (Krashen, 1982) and engage in the learning process in a relaxed setting, which
makes it an effective resource professors should consider as they develop their language course curriculum.

**Benefits.** Research from past years and decades demonstrates the general effectiveness of peer-tutoring practices. Students who participate in peer tutoring sessions are more likely to achieve greater academic success in the subject material (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García, et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014). García et al. (2014) found that when students received peer tutoring before taking a university mathematics placement test, the results increased from an average passing rate of 16% to 42%. Students were able to more effectively engage in the material and the learning process in a number of ways as they worked with their tutors, which was reflected in their placement test results. Repetition of key concepts (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013) and a relaxed, non-threatening learning environment (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014) are two of the ways in which tutors and tutees are able to engage in the learning process in ways that help students. Yet other benefits exist as well.

Two of, perhaps, the greatest benefits students receive from peer tutoring are immediate feedback (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013) and the ability to ask individualized questions (Worley & Naresh, 2014). As students work with tutors, they receive immediate feedback. Within the context of learning the Spanish language, Spanish tutors are able to provide students with feedback regarding their use of sentence structure, grammatical concepts, pronunciation, and much more. As they receive this feedback, students are able to adapt and adjust their knowledge and use of the language and strengthen their overall proficiency in Spanish. Furthermore, the freedom to ask questions is key for students’ success. While students can ask questions during class or even ask their professors questions after class, they may feel nervous or anxious doing so because of the potential for embarrassment (Worley & Naresh, 2014). However, during tutoring
sessions (even those with small groups of students), students feel more at ease about asking questions. They are also more open with their frustrations and concerns, which allows the tutors to better help them engage the learning material and strengthen their Spanish skills in immediately relevant ways. As students ask more questions and dig into the learning process with their tutors, they develop their language abilities in unique and effective ways.

**Drawbacks.** While peer tutoring can be an effective method of helping students gain greater academic achievement, there are some potential drawbacks to incorporating it into the course curriculum that should be considered. Peer tutors, particularly language tutors, would need to have open access to and a working understanding of the subject material. Language is organic, changes constantly, and varies geographically, and tutors who do not have access to the course materials will have a difficult time helping students with the particular version of the TL taught in those classes. It is also challenging to find peer tutors who are proficient users of the TL and have the talent and disposition to help others through the role of tutoring. For example, Spanish tutors who do not have proficient Spanish language and peer tutoring skills will not be fully effective in helping other students. Additionally, tutors or tutor supervisors must work to build strong relationships with the language faculty in order to maintain clear and open communication (Savas et al., 2015). Some professors are more open to promoting tutoring services and incorporating them into their courses than others, and it is important to maintain a good rapport.

Other drawbacks to requiring peer tutoring services are costs, training, and quality control. While it is possible to find qualified Spanish peer tutors who are willing to volunteer their time to help others, most will need some form of financial compensation for their services. In order to provide this recompense, universities must look for funding through the US
government Work Study program and the university budget. Even though some universities prefer to create Work Study positions for peer tutoring services, others are willing to fully fund these programs out of their academic support budget. Beyond the financial burden of providing peer tutoring services, training and quality control are other factors that must be considered (Savas, et al., 2015). Preferably, a staff or faculty member will be dedicated to interviewing and hiring the Spanish tutors and then ensuring the quality of the tutoring services they provide the students. Yet these tasks are often time consuming and require additional expertise in the subject area (such as Spanish), as well as peer tutoring and tutor administration. These drawbacks are, by no means, justification for not pursuing the incorporation of peer tutoring services as part of the course curriculum for introductory-level language classes; however, they are factors that need to be considered and addressed as professors contemplate integrating Spanish tutoring requirements.

Required peer tutoring. There is a plethora of research and information surrounding the effectiveness of peer tutoring; however, little empirical research on the effectiveness of requiring peer tutoring sessions in fulfillment of language course curriculum requirements at the university level exists. This is a significant gap in the literature that must be filled through purposeful, well-executed research and reporting. While many professors and universities across the nation use peer tutoring practices and understand their benefits for students, the concept of requiring language tutoring for course credit is still a somewhat emerging topic. However, a related area of peer tutoring, writing tutoring, is seeing an increase in required tutoring sessions.

Writing centers at various universities are incorporating required tutoring sessions into their lower-level writing courses. Much of the research related to writing center best practices prior to the previous two years is predominantly anecdotal; however, anecdotal evidence has
been widely accepted throughout the writing center field over various decades. For example, some writing center directors, such as Jessica Citti (2015), share their personal experiences with required tutoring appointments through blogs, informal reports, and newsletters, yet more empirical research is becoming a standard. Three foundational empirical studies pertaining to required writing tutoring argue in favor of obligatory tutoring sessions, noting changes in students’ perception of the center and overall improvement in their writing performance and grades (Gordon, 2008; Bishop, 1990; Clark, 1985). Additionally, a three-year empirical study by Wendy Pfrenger, Rachael N. Blasiman, and James Winter (n.d.) showed that developmental writing students who were required to visit the university writing center for tutoring appointments during the semester showed a more than 10% increase in their overall academic performance, and the failure rate decreased by nearly 3%. Students were also more likely to go back to the writing center for additional help after completing at least one required appointment (Pfrenger, et al., n.d.).

The research surrounding required tutoring best practices in relation to writing tutoring helps support the notion that required language tutoring would also be effective in helping students learn the content material and gain even greater academic success. However, even though these relevant peer tutoring findings help provide an overall premise for the incorporation of required peer tutoring services in the language-learning process, further research on the results and effectiveness of requiring foreign language tutoring for introductory-level Spanish courses taught at the university level is needed. Such research would contribute to the general bodies of knowledge in the fields of SLA, FLL, peer tutoring, foreign language learning, and course curriculum development.
Summary

Peer tutoring helps students achieve greater academic success (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García, Morales, & Rivera, 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014) and should be further researched as a potential resource for enhancing student proficiency in foreign languages. These benefits of peer tutoring and the continued importance of learning foreign languages (Abbott et al., 2007; Auburn University, 2016) raise inquiries concerning the effectiveness of peer tutoring in helping students become more proficient foreign language users. Peer tutoring has the potential to help language-learning students not only attain their academic goals but also learn TL skills they can use for the rest of their lives.

As university language professors work to develop their course curriculum, they must consider the potential benefits of incorporating required peer tutoring sessions as part of the curriculum. Peer tutoring helps lower student anxiety while promoting greater proficiency, and it provides students with opportunities to ask questions as they work together with tutors in comfortable and safe learning environments (Worley & Naresh, 2014). Furthermore, peer tutoring gives students the opportunity to receive immediate feedback from their tutors, which helps bolster their understanding and use of the language (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013) and boosts their confidence. Yet even though the literature pertaining to peer tutoring (in general) seems to be overwhelmingly positive with regard to its effectiveness in helping students learn the course subject material, there is a dearth of information related to the effectiveness of requiring foreign language tutoring as a part of introductory-level language course curriculum, and additional research is necessary.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The methodology of a research study should reflect its purpose and theoretical framework. In quantitative research, particularly, the methodology clearly addresses the overarching research questions of the study, demonstrating a clear awareness of the most effective methods, instruments, and procedures necessary to promote the reliability, validity, and replicability of the research study and its results. Therefore, the information throughout this chapter will include detailed descriptions of the design, research questions and hypotheses, participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis that will be utilized in the study.

Design

This study employed a correlation design using both Pearson’s $r$ ($r$) and Spearman $r$ ($r_s$) tests of association. This design was most appropriate because its primary purpose is to analyze the strength and degree of a relationship between variables (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2013), and the goal of this research study was to examine the correlations between the number of Spanish peer tutoring hours students completed throughout the semester and their final course grades, as well as their oral assessment proficiency scores. According to Gall et al. (2007), the $r$ is “the most widely used bivariate correlation technique” because of its ability to “yield continuous scores” and its small standard of error (p. 347), and when the $Y$ variable is rank or ordinal (as in the case of the students’ oral assessment scores), Spearman $r$ is the most appropriate non-parametric alternative to the Pearson’s $r$ test (Warner, 2013). The small standard of error and ability to analyze correlations between variables make the focus on using $r$ and $r_s$ coefficients the ideal research design for this study.
Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the number of hours students spend in peer tutoring sessions and their academic success in introductory foreign language classes?

RQ2: In the foreign-language-learning process, is there a relationship between the number of peer tutoring sessions and students’ performance on their oral proficiency assessment?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant correlation between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ final course grades and the number of required peer tutoring hours they completed.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ oral proficiency levels and the number of required peer tutoring hours they completed.

Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were selected from a convenience sample of students taking introductory Spanish courses during the spring semester of 2018 at a private university in a rural area of Virginia. The university is a private, conservative, non-profit university that has approximately 100,000 students; however, roughly 85,000 of those students study online (Private University, 2018). Only students from the estimated 15,000 student population taking the majority of its classes on campus had the opportunity to participate in this study. Of these students, 54% were female (Private University, 2018).

All students in the study population (N) were required to complete peer tutoring sessions with the university’s Spanish tutors for course credit. These sessions were one hour each, and students met on campus, in a face-to-face setting, with the peer tutors. Despite establishing the
sessions as a course requirement, not all students chose to complete these hours. The N included students from five different sections of the 15-week SPAN 102—Elementary Spanish—class with a limit of 25 students per section. These classes were taught by two different professors with more than 10 years of teaching experience at the college level. While the N of students meeting these requirements was 86, the sample population (n) consisted of 82 students who consented to participate. One student was under the age of 18 and was not permitted to take part in the study, and the other three students chose not to participate.

A sample size (n) of 100 is ideal for bivariate correlations (Warner, 2013). While larger n sizes are desirable for a number of other quantitative research studies, more than 100 participants for a bivariate correlation could skew the results, showing a stronger relationship than actually exists (Warner, 2013). In order to obtain a large effect size for the Pearson’s r correlation, r must be >.287 (Warner, 2013, p. 208), and with an alpha level of α = .05 and a population correlation ρ of ρ = .60, the ideal n size is 97 participants (Warner, 2013, p. 300). However, in order to achieve valid results, it is essential for the range of scores to consist of a wide variety (Warner, 2013). While students’ final grades and oral assessment scores demonstrated naturally varied results, it was essential that the number of required peer tutoring sessions be high enough to result in a varied number of actually completed sessions. In order to obtain this variety, the researcher requested a course requirement of eight one-hour tutoring sessions with the Spanish peer tutors per student throughout the semester. This request was reviewed and approved by the SPAN 102 professors and the Modern Languages department chair.
**Instrumentation**

The instrument for this study was ACTFL’s ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) Interpersonal Listening/Speaking assessment in Spanish. The AAPPL is a “performance assessment designed for educational settings” that assesses students’ proficiency in using the TL in various scenarios and contexts (Campo, 2016, para. 2). It uses interactive, pre-recorded videos to challenge students’ comprehension and production of the TL in three different areas: listening and speaking, writing, and reading and listening (AAPPL, n.d.a, para. 2). Because the primary purpose of this study was to analyze students’ oral proficiency skills, only the Interpersonal Listening/Speaking variation of the AAPPL was necessary.

The AAPPL is designed for K-12 students; however, the modes of assessment are applicable to lower-level undergraduate students taking introductory Spanish classes (such as SPAN 102), and there are two different listening and speaking AAPPLs available. The first variation is designed for students “Grades 6 and below” and the other for “Grades 7 and above” (AAPPL, n.d.b, p. 1-2). The participants in this study were given the assessment for Grades 7 and above. Additionally, the AAPPL for listening and speaking is broken down into two different forms—Form A and Form B (AAPPL, n.d.c, p. 1). The possible scores participants can attain span the following categories: Novice Low, Novice Mid, Novice High, Intermediate Low, Intermediate Mid, Intermediate High, and Advanced Low (see Appendix E for more details). Form A allows participants to score within the range of Novice Low to Intermediate Mid, and Form B is limited to Novice High through Advanced Low. Since the participants of this study in SPAN 102 are generally considered beginning learners of the TL, Form A provided the most accurate oral assessment results for the study.
Because the AAPPL was only released by ACTFL this past year (2017), information related to the reliability and validity of the assessment tool is not yet available. However, the standards incorporated in the development of the AAPPL instrument, as well as the measurements used for scoring, are based on ACTFL’s world-renowned and widely studied Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). All OPIs are rated by two different ACTFL-certified raters, which results in a high rate of reliability (Malone & Montee, 2010), and Surface and Dierdorff’s (2003) study on the interrater reliability of 5881 OPI assessments in 19 different languages found that 80% of the scores were a perfect match, and only 18% were separated by one sublevel. Thompson’s (1995) study of the OPI’s reliability also found the following Pearson’s correlation (r) coefficients of reliability for five languages: .84 for English, .87 for French, .86 for German, .90 for Russian, and .85 for Spanish (Surface & Dierdorff, 2003). In addition to the reliability of the OPI, Henning (1992) studied its validity and found statistically significant correlations (p < 0.05) among ACTFL certified raters’ scores and the scores of native users of the TLs (French and Spanish) when each group rated a random sample of OPIs. Even though research related to the AAPPL’s reliability and validity is not yet available, evidence throughout the field of SLA points toward the reliability and validity of the OPI, the foundation upon which the AAPPL was built.

**Procedures**

Upon obtaining IRB approval, the researcher met with the Spanish professors and Modern Languages department chair at the university to discuss the research study parameters and requirements. As a group, they agreed upon the number of peer tutoring hours students were required to complete as part of their final grade for the SPAN 102 course and for which they were awarded up to 120 points. The agreed upon total number was eight hours, two hours per
chapter covered throughout the course, to aid in achieving variety in student scores, a necessary component for strengthening the $r$ correlations.

During the meeting with the professors and department chair, the researcher discussed the professors’ responsibilities and role within the study. Beyond teaching the course as they normally would, professors needed to report information to the researcher. Initially, the only information needed was students’ names and university ID numbers; however, the researcher collected additional data at the end of the course. Furthermore, professors also needed to help proctor the oral assessment (AAPPL) at the end of the semester. The researcher clarified this information with the professors at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the course and addressed all questions or concerns the professors and department chair raised.

Approximately one month before the last regular class session, the researcher met with the SPAN 102 professors to discuss the oral assessment administration. The researcher showed the professors sample assessments and thoroughly demonstrated how to proctor them, as well as troubleshoot any issues or errors that could have occurred with either the test itself or the computers and other technology involved. The researcher assured the professors that she would also be in attendance to help proctor the assessments if any issues were to arise. After setting up the AAPPL Interpersonal Listening/Speaking tests on the Language Testing International (LTI) website, the researcher provided the SPAN 102 professors with the direct link for the online test and gave them access to the students’ AAPPL usernames and passwords.

More than two weeks before the assessments were scheduled to take place, the researcher scheduled classroom visits to share about the study and upcoming assessment (see Appendix I for a copy of the course announcement). During the classroom visits, she read the announcement, handed out copies of the consent form, showed students a sample of what the test
would look like, and addressed any questions and concerns they expressed at the time. After visiting each class, the researcher asked professors to send students a reminder email concerning the study (see Appendix H), as well as a copy of the study’s consent form (see Appendix A). Professors were provided with electronic copies of the email content and the consent form, which they emailed to students through their Blackboard course shells. Beyond these aspects of preparing for the AAPPL assessments, it was also at this point in the study that the researcher reserved a computer lab classroom equipped with desktop carrels for added privacy and microphone headsets for completing the assessments.

During the final two weeks of the course, the Spanish professors and researcher proctored the AAPPL oral proficiency assessment. Only 85 of the 86 students enrolled in SPAN 102 completed the assessment, and a total of 82 students consented to participate in the study. While the researcher had to wait approximately two weeks to receive the AAPPL proficiency results, the students’ completed tutoring hours were available before the last official day of the course. Students were periodically required to submit a paper log of the tutoring hours they completed throughout the 15-week semester. All students enrolled in SPAN 101, 102, and 201 at the university maintain these paper logs, so this aspect of the study was not an additional burden for the study participants.

With regard to data collection, the researcher already had access to the students’ names, ID numbers, course numbers, and professor information. Because the AAPPL results were electronically published by the LTI raters through the LTI website, the oral assessment results were directly and easily accessible within the two-week waiting period. After obtaining the AAPPL instrument scores and sending those results to the respective professor for each SPAN 102 course section, the researcher collected the students’ final numerical course grades and the
number of tutoring hours completed throughout the course. The professors were provided with the option of using a password-protected electronic document containing a table with students’ names and ID numbers, to which they were able to add students’ final course grades and the number of peer tutoring hours they completed (see Appendix J). However, both professors requested to send password-protected Excel spreadsheets containing their downloaded gradebooks for each section of the course. These documents provided the exact number of completed tutoring hours and the points awarded for each session, as well as the overall course grade. All data was kept strictly confidential in password protected files on the researcher’s password protected laptop and backup portable drive.

Upon completion of the data collection, the researcher prepared it for analysis by first removing the data results for the four students who did not participate in the study. After this information was deleted, the totals for the final course grades, number of completed tutoring hours, and the oral assessment scores were compiled into one Excel spreadsheet. The total points awarded for the tutoring hours (which was up to 15 points per session for a total of 120 possible points in the course) and the total points for the oral assessment (up to 100 possible points) were removed from the students’ numerical final grade so that they would not influence the study’s results. The maximum points possible were, therefore, 780 points, rather than the normal 1,000-point scale. Then, the students’ AAPPL oral assessment scores were converted from an ordinal scale (see Appendix E) to an interval scale by assigning a number value from least to highest, ranging from 1 to 8, with 8 being the highest possible score (see Appendix F). After these adjustments and preparations were complete, the researcher asked a staff member within her department at the university to assign pseudonyms to the data set in order to prepare it
for inclusion in the study and the data analysis tests that were calculated through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool.

**Data Analysis**

Correlation coefficients were utilized to analyze the correlations between SPAN 102 students’ numerical final course grades and the number of peer tutoring hours they completed throughout the semester, as well as the correlation between students’ oral assessment scores and the number of peer tutoring hours. Pearson’s $r$ and Spearman $r$ were appropriate data analysis methods for this study because they measure the magnitude of the relationship between variables (Gall et al., 2007; Warner, 2013). While there are a number of bivariate correlations that explore the relationships between variables, the Pearson’s $r$ coefficient is ideal because it is “the most stable technique” with the “smallest standard of error” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 348). As a result, the Pearson’s $r$ coefficient was used to measure the correlations between the number of required tutoring hours participants completed and their numerical final course grade. The Pearson’s $r$ was also used to assess the correlations between the number of tutoring hours and students’ scores on the AAPPL oral assessment; however, because participants’ results on the AAPPL were scored according to an ordinal scale (see Appendix E) and converted to an interval scale (see Appendix F), the Pearson’s $r$ assumption of related pairs was violated, and a Spearman $r$, non-parametric test was also used to assess the correlation between the participants’ scores and the number of required tutoring hours they completed.

In order to calculate all three $r$ coefficients, all data was input into the SPSS tool. Initially, the descriptive statistics were run, followed by the $r$ correlations. For the Pearson’s $r$ correlation, $r$ had to be >.287 with a statistical power of $\alpha = .05$ (Warner, 2013, p. 208), but the Spearman $r$ was held to the Cohen standards with a statistical power of $\alpha = .05$ and $\rho > .50$
large effect size (Warner, 2013). With the Spearman $r$, the $r_s$ ranges from +1 to -1. While $r_s = +1$ represents “perfect agreement” between the $X$ and $Y$ variables, $r_s = -1$ shows a “perfectly inverted” relationship (Warner, 2013, p. 232). Once the descriptive statistics and correlation results were gathered, the researcher completed a thorough round of assumption testing for both of the Pearson’s $r$ correlations. Because the Spearman $r$ is a non-parametric test, assumption testing was not necessary; however, the assumption testing for the Pearson’s $r$ tests began with normality tests that checked for the normal distributions of scores throughout the $n$; the researcher also created histograms and completed Shapiro-Wilk tests. Once the normality of the correlations was established, scatterplots were used to verify the linearity and homoscedasticity of the relationships between the variables and reveal any extreme outliers (Warner, 2013).
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Upon completion of the data collection phase of a research study, it is essential to thoroughly and accurately report all findings, no matter their implications. Perhaps the results may align with or diverge from the expected results; nonetheless, it is the researcher’s responsibility to report all findings with detailed precision. This research study involved two Pearson’s $r$ bivariate correlations, as well as a Spearman $r$ correlation, involving the three stated variables: the number of tutoring hours students completed, students’ scores on a normed oral assessment, and students’ final course grades. This chapter will overview the findings of the research study as it addresses the research questions and null hypotheses, provides an overview of the descriptive statistics, and thoroughly analyzes the overall results of the SPSS analysis of the data.

Research Questions

**RQ1**: Is there a relationship between the number of hours students spend in peer tutoring sessions and their academic success in introductory foreign language classes?

**RQ2**: In the foreign-language-learning process, is there a relationship between the number of peer tutoring sessions and students’ performance on their oral proficiency assessment?

Null Hypotheses

**H₀₁**: There is no statistically significant correlation between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ final course grades and the number of required peer tutoring hours they completed.
**Ho2:** There is no statistically significant relationship between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ oral proficiency levels and the number of required peer tutoring hours they completed.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Three bivariate correlations were performed in completion of the statistical analysis of the study’s collected data, and the results of these tests are grouped by the variables that “describe central tendency” and those that “describe variability or dispersion of scores” (Warner, 2013, p. 142). The first test was a Pearson’s $r (r)$ correlation of the number of tutoring hours students completed throughout the semester and the numeric value of their final course grades. The descriptive statistics produced by SPSS (found in Table 1) revealed that the number of tutoring hours resulted in $M = 6.73$, and the $SD$ for $n = 82$ was $1.94$. Additionally, the total course grade of the student sample population $n = 82$, including a total possible point score of 780 points, was $M = 575.72$ and $SD = 80.81$. Because of the nature of the Pearson’s $r$ correlation, median, mode, and frequency were not calculated.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Bivariate Correlation between Tutoring Hours and Course Grades*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson’s $r$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$N$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tutoring Hours</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Grades</td>
<td>$r$</td>
<td>575.72</td>
<td>80.81</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total points possible for student grades is 780.

Beyond the Pearson’s $r$ correlation of the number of tutoring hours completed and students’ overall course grades, the researcher performed two correlation rests regarding the
number of tutoring hours and students’ performance on the AAPPL oral proficiency assessment— Pearson’s $r$ and Spearman $r$. Because the Spearman $r$ ($r_s$) test does not include standard descriptive statistics, the Pearson’s $r$ are the only descriptive statistics included in this section. The descriptive statistics of the Pearson’s $r$ correlation (provided in Table 2) showed the same $M$ and $SD$ for the number of peer tutoring hours, where $M = 6.73$ and $SD = 1.94$ for $N = 82$. However, the results for students’ oral assessment scores revealed $M = 4.90$ and $SD = 1.59$ with the overall sample population of $n = 82$.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson’s $r$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tutoring Hours</td>
<td>6.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Assessment Scores</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. AAPPL oral assessment scores were converted from an ordinal to interval scale (see Appendix F).

Results

Hypotheses

A Pearson’s $r$ bivariate correlation was run through SPSS to analyze the statistical relationship between the number of tutoring hours students ($N = 86$ and $n = 82$) completed throughout the semester and their final course grades. This test specifically addressed the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant correlation between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ final course grades and the number of required peer tutoring
hours they completed. The preliminary analysis evidenced no violations of assumption regarding normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity (see Figure 1 for scatterplot and Figure 2 for histogram). The Shapiro-Wilk test revealed a *p value* of $p > .05$ ($p = .07$), which demonstrated normality (see Table 3). The Pearson’s *r* test results also revealed a strong, positive correlation of $r = .52, \alpha = .05, p < .05$ ($p = .00$) (see Table 4) between students’ course grades ($M = 575.72, SD = 80.81$) and the number of tutoring hours they completed ($M = 6.73, SD = 1.94$) with a shared variance of 27.35%. Therefore, a larger number of tutoring hours is associated with higher overall course grades. Because there was a statistically significant relationship between these two variables, there was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Figure 1

*Scatterplot for Correlation r = .52*
Figure 2

*Histogram for Total Course Grades*

Table 3

*Shapiro-Wilk Test Results for Course Grades*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Test</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Grades</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Bivariate Correlation Results for Tutoring Hours and Course Grades*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Number of Tutoring Hours</th>
<th>Course Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Tutoring Hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Grades</strong></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the second null hypothesis, two separate bivariate correlations were run—the Pearson’s r and Spearman r. The null hypothesis related to students’ tutoring hours and their performance on the normed oral proficiency assessment states: there is no statistically significant relationship between university, introductory-level Spanish language students’ oral proficiency levels and the number of required peer tutoring hours they completed. The SPSS results for the Pearson’s r test revealed violations of the assumptions regarding normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity (see Figure 3 for scatterplot and Figure 4 for histogram). The Shapiro-Wilk test also demonstrated violations of normality with a *p* value of *p* > .05 (*p* = .00) (see Table 5). The Pearson’s r results showed a small relationship of $r = .04$, $\alpha = .05$, $p > .05$ (*p* = .75) (see Table 6) between the students’ tutoring hours ($M = 6.73$, $SD = 1.94$) and their oral assessment scores ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.59$) with a shared variance of 0.12%, which is not statistically significant. Because of the violations of assumptions and the students’ oral assessment scores being converted from an ordinal to an interval scale, an additional test, the Spearman r, was done to verify the r results. While the Spearman r were slightly different ($r_s = .03$, $\alpha = .05$, $p = .77$),
the results did not change the overall outcome of the test. As a result of the statistically insignificant relationship between the variables, there was a failure to reject the null hypothesis.

Figure 3

*Scatterplot for Correlation $r = +.04$*

![Scatterplot for Correlation $r = +.04$](image)

Figure 4

*Histogram for Oral Assessment Scores*

![Histogram for Oral Assessment Scores](image)
Table 5

*Shapiro-Wilk Test Results for AAPPL Oral Assessment Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk Test</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Assessment Scores</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

*Bivariate Correlation Results for Tutoring Hours and AAPPL Oral Assessment Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson’s r</th>
<th>Number of Tutoring Hours</th>
<th>Oral Assessment Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tutoring Hours</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* AAPPL oral assessment scores were converted from an ordinal to interval scale (see Appendix F).
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

Learning another language presents a unique set of challenges for introductory-level college students. While teachers work to meet student needs as best as possible to help them progress in their acquisition of the TL, the effectiveness of additional help through peer tutoring outside the classroom is widely regarded throughout current research as effective. While the results for each research question of this study do not fully coincide with one another, they do support the overarching claim of peer tutoring’s effectiveness in helping students attain academic success in their courses. This final chapter will discuss the study’s findings and review the implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to research the correlational relationships between the number of peer tutoring hours introductory-level Spanish language students completed and their final course grades, as well as their performance on a standardized online oral proficiency assessment appropriate for their level of study. The research results demonstrated a need to reject one null hypothesis and a failure to reject the other. However, these findings, in part, support current research within the field and contribute to areas not previously researched in a similar manner. This section will discuss the findings related to each research question.

The first research question examined the correlation between students’ final course grades and the number of peer tutoring hours they completed. The statistical justification for rejecting the null hypothesis, which claimed there was no correlation, indicates that there is a statistically significant correlation between the number of peer tutoring hours students complete and their overall course grades. This finding coincides with the research within the body of
knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of peer tutoring in helping students gain greater academic achievement in their courses (Bowman-Perrott et al., 2013; García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014). Based on these and previous findings, peer tutoring supports the concepts that observation and modeling (Brendel 2012; Belhiah 2009) and reinforcement (Matthews 2010) are significant influencing factors in addressing students personal needs and helping peers become academically successful in learning another language (García et al., 2014; Worley & Naresh, 2014). Moreover, the findings related this research question also support the general body of knowledge concerning required writing tutoring appointments. Evidence regarding required writing tutoring sessions demonstrates greater student interest in returning for additional help and increased academic success on assignments and in their courses (Gordon, 2008; Bishop, 1990; Clark, 1985; Pfrenger, et al., n.d.).

While there was a rejection of the null hypothesis for the first research question, the results of the Pearson’s $r$ and Spearman $r$ correlations justified the failure to reject the second research question’s null hypothesis. This question related specifically to the correlations between the number of peer tutoring hours students completed with the university Spanish tutors throughout the semester and their proficiency scores on the Spanish AAPPL online oral assessment in listening and speaking. Within SLA, researchers and educators recognize the need for regular contact with the TL in order gain greater proficiency in speaking the language (Krashen, 1982; Pufahl & Rhodes as cited in Blanton, 2015; Blanton, 2015; Dunn, 2012); however, research regarding required peer tutoring’s effectiveness in helping TL learners gain greater oral proficiency in the TL is limited. Peer tutoring addresses students’ needs in many ways, particularly through personal feedback (García et al., 2014; Newton & Ender, 2010; Worley & Naresh, 2014) and by lowering student anxieties with a more relaxed setting and
personal interactions (García et al., 2014; Newton & Ender, 2010). However, the study’s findings indicate additional research related particularly to peer tutoring’s effectiveness in helping FLLs learn TLs in their native speaking environments is needed in order to advance the body of knowledge encompassing the fields of SLA and peer tutoring. This research study has taken a step toward addressing this gap in the literature; however, the results demonstrate a need for additional research.

**Implications**

While not wholly conclusive, the study results indicate requiring peer tutoring hours for students learning an L2 is a valid pursuit and may be worth incorporating into the course curriculum. The findings regarding the first research question were in line with the general body of knowledge surrounding the field of peer tutoring, so the results were not surprising. However, they contributed to the field in a special way because the majority of research surrounding peer tutoring as it relates to FLL and SLA focuses on ELLs, who are studying the TL within the TL speaking environment. In this case, however, the students are studying the TL in their own, native speaking environment. As a result, the findings related to this research question not only affirmed the effectiveness of peer tutoring in helping students achieve greater academic success but also enhanced the research related to a different area of peer tutoring.

The implications concerning the correlation results for the second research question are quite interesting. While the failure to reject the null hypothesis may seem like evidence of peer tutoring’s ineffectiveness in helping SLA students gain greater oral proficiency in the TL, it is simply an indicator of the need for additional research. Required peer tutoring is an area of SLA that has not yet been thoroughly developed or researched. Therefore, this study has contributed to the general conversation of the importance of TL proficiency and explored ways peer tutoring
could, potentially, be incorporated as a required element of the course curriculum in order to help students gain not only the skills they want but also the skills they need as they move out into the work force (Auburn University, 2016).

**Limitations**

Although this research study was carefully prepared and executed, some limitations could not be prevented. With regard to the oral assessment, participants’ anxiety levels when taking the online AAPPL could have had a somewhat significant impact on their scores. The participants were not accustomed to taking any sort of online assessment in the TL through an automated system, and several expressed severe anxiety either before or after taking the assessment. While the researcher provided the test information ahead of time, showed the participants and professors a video of what the oral assessment would be like, and answered all of their questions and concerns, it was impossible to avoid any test anxiety, particularly because of the high levels of anxiety involved in language learning (Awan et al., 2010; Krashen, 1982; Wu, 2010). Beyond these limitations to the study, another restriction could have been that the students within each class completed the assessment at the same time, in the same room. Participants were seated next to one another, and the noise from their classmates may have been a distraction. Some participants even expressed discomfort with their classmates’ ability to listen to them as they took the assessment. However, the classroom was equipped with desktop carrels, as well as personal headsets, to provide added privacy and limit noise disturbances in an effort to mitigate these potential influences.

Other limitations of the study include the focus of the tutoring sessions and performance of the tutors, as well as the overall participant population size and the points awarded for the tutoring hours. While the tutors were trained to focus on meeting students’ needs through a TL
conversational context during the tutoring sessions, perhaps the methods and practices of the tutors did not concentrate enough on TL oral proficiency throughout the tutoring appointments. Also, the fact that the study was restricted to one specific university population ($N$) may have been a limitation, and the sample population size ($n = 82$) was less than the ideal number of 100 participants (Warner, 2013). The number of participants may have been an influencing factor in the results of the study; however, the one-hundred points awarded for the tutoring sessions may have also been a limitation. These points could have influenced student motivation to attend and complete the tutoring hours, yet they may not have encouraged meaningful interaction during the sessions. The points awarded for the tutoring sessions may have affected the results of the study in other ways as well. Even though thorough measures were taken to mitigate these possible influences over the results of the study, these limitations could not be entirely avoided.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

1. Duplicate this study, particularly to add further research related to the correlation involving tutoring hours and oral assessment scores.
2. Duplicate the study while using a different oral assessment instrument.
3. Duplicate the study while testing students in a solitary environment with no noise at all and no distractions by other people.
4. Duplicate the study with students studying another target language.
5. Run a multivariate regression of the three variables involved in this study: tutoring hours, students’ course grades, and their oral proficiency assessment scores.
6. Analyze the different types of tutoring provided, including conversational, writing, and grammar tutoring.
7. Include anxiety measurements related to the various language learning, tutoring, and oral
assessment anxieties students face.

8. Carry out a purely experimental study with a control group that completes online language assignments and an experimental group that works with peer tutors.


Center Journal, 32(1), 78-91. Retrieved from
http://search.proquest.com/docview/1140129288?accountid=12085


Nye, B. D. (2015). Intelligent tutoring systems by and for the developing world: A review of


Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.


Appendix A: Informed Consent

CONSENT FORM
¿Esto Funciona?
Studying the Influences of Peer Tutoring on Student Performance in the Spanish Language-Learning Process
Alisha P. Castañeda
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of the correlation between the number of tutoring hours students complete in a semester, their performance on an online oral assessment, and their final course grade. You were selected as a possible participant because you are eighteen years of age or older and currently taking a SPAN 102 class that requires Spanish tutoring through the Foreign Language Lab as part of the course curriculum. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Alisha P. Castañeda, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to explore the correlations between the number peer tutoring hours students complete throughout the semester and their oral assessment scores, as well as their final course grades in a SPAN 102 class. This study will reveal greater insight into the relationship between foreign language peer-tutoring services and students’ acquisition of the target language and overall academic success in introductory-level Spanish classes.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask the following things:
1. Complete the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) oral assessment, which should take approximately 30 minutes..
   a. The SPAN 102 professors will award study participants a comparable score for their in-course final oral assessments based on the ratings attained on the AAPPL, and participants will not need to complete an additional final oral assessment for their SPAN 102 classes.
2. Allow the researcher to collect your final course grade and the total number of tutoring hours you have completed from your professor after the last day of final exams.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: The oral assessment instrument, the AAPPL, is produced by one of the world’s most widely recognized language-learning organizations—the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)—and participants’ ratings will be internationally recognized. The direct benefit participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study is a free Spanish proficiency rating through ACTFL’s AAPPL that can be used on future job, internship, and post-graduate applications. Furthermore, as a society benefit, this research may benefit the fields of
language learning pedagogy by analyzing the impact of requiring tutoring hours; second language acquisition by examining the relationship between contact with the language and oral proficiency; and peer tutoring by analyzing the influence peer tutoring may have on student performance.

Compensation: Participants will be entered into a raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- The researcher will receive the AAPPL test scores directly from the ACTFL organization and save them in a password-protected document. The researcher will receive student information such as final grades and tutoring hours directly from SPAN 102 professors and will save this data in a password-protected document. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants to protect their identities.
- The data will be stored in these password-protected documents on the researcher’s computer and a backup hard drive and may be used in future studies or presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- The researcher will not be provided with the oral assessment recordings. This data will be held and stored by ACTFL.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, the Foreign Language Lab, or the Foreign Language Lab director (the researcher). If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships or your ability to use the Foreign Language Lab services in the future.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Alisha P. Castañeda. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at 434-592-3175 and/or acastaneda@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Bill Gribbin, at wgriffin@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.
**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Participant</th>
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<th>Signature of Investigator</th>
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Appendix B: Unsigned Letter of Permission

29 November 2017

Dr. Stephanie Blankenship
Chair of Modern Languages
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24551

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Dr. Blankenship,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study within your department. I am currently enrolled in the Ed.D. program at Liberty University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled “¿Esto funciona?: Studying the influences of peer tutoring on student performance in the Spanish language-learning process.”

I hope that the Modern Languages department will allow me to recruit 100 students from the SPAN 102 classes to complete an automated oral assessment, called the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL), at the end of the semester. Your department and students will not incur any costs for this assessment, and students can take the assessment during class on a day during the last week of the semester that is most convenient for the Spanish professors.

If approval is granted, student participants will complete the assessment in the Foreign Language Lab classroom in DeMoss Hall. The oral assessment will take approximately 30 minutes, and the Spanish professors will be trained in how to administer and proctor the assessments, as well as how to troubleshoot any potential issues that may arise. The individual results of the assessment will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous, even if this study should be published.

Your approval to conduct this study would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns before consenting, please do not hesitate to contact me at either 434-592-3175 or acastaneda@liberty.edu.

If you agree to consent, kindly sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Alisha P. Castañeda

Approved by:

_____________________________________
Print Name and Title

_____________________________________
Signature

_____________________________________
Date
Appendix C: Signed Letter of Permission

29 November 2017

Dr. Stephanie Blankenship  
Chair of Modern Languages  
1971 University Blvd.  
Lynchburg, VA 24551

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear Dr. Blankenship,

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study within your department. I am currently enrolled in the Ed.D. program at Liberty University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled “¿Esto funciona?: Studying the influences of peer tutoring on student performance in the Spanish language-learning process.”

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Your approval to conduct this study would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns before consenting, please do not hesitate to contact me at either 434-592-3175 or acastaneda@liberty.edu.

If you agree to consent, kindly sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Alisha P. Castañeda

Approved by:

Stephanie L. Blankenship

____________________________________
Print Name and Title

Stephanie L. Blankenship

____________________________________
Signature

12/14/17

Date
Appendix D: IRB Application

APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

IRB APPLICATION #: 3158 (To be assigned by the IRB)

I. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Complete each section of this form, using the gray form fields (use the tab key).
2. If you have questions, hover over the blue (?), or refer to the IRB Application Instructions for additional clarification.
4. Email the completed application, with the following supporting documents (as separate word documents) to irb@liberty.edu:
   a. Consent Forms, Permission Letters, Recruitment Materials
   b. Surveys, Questionnaires, Interview Questions, Focus Group Questions
5. If you plan to use a specific Liberty University department or population for your study, you will need to obtain permission from the appropriate department chair/dean. Submit documentation of permission (email or letter) to the IRB along with this application and check the indicated box below verifying that you have done so.
6. Submit one signed copy of the signature page (available on the IRB website) to any of the following:
   a. Email: As a scanned document to irb@liberty.edu
   b. Fax: 434-522-0506
   c. Mail: IRB 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24515
   d. In Person: Green Hall, Suite 1887
7. Once received, applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
8. Preliminary review may take up to 3 weeks.
9. Most applications will require 3 sets of revisions.
10. The entire process may take between 1 and 2 months.
11. We cannot accept applications in formats other than Microsoft Word. Please do not send us One Drive files, Pdfs, Google Docs, or Html applications. Exception: Signature pages, proprietary instruments, and documentation of permission may be submitted as pdfs.

Note: Applications and supporting documents with the following problems will be returned immediately for revisions:

1. Grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors
2. Lack of professionalism
3. Lack of consistency or clarity
4. Incomplete applications

**Failure to minimize these errors will cause delays in your processing time**
II. BASIC PROTOCOL INFORMATION

1. STUDY/THESIS/DISSERTATION TITLE (2)

Title: ¿Esto funciona?: Studying the influences of peer tutoring on student performance in the Spanish language-learning process

2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR & PROTOCOL INFORMATION (2)

Principal Investigator (person conducting the research): Alisha P. Castañeda
Professional Title (Student, Professor, etc.): Doctoral Candidate
School/Department (School of Education, LUCOM, etc.): School of Education
Phone: 469-744-2076  LU Email: acastaneda@liberty.edu

Check all that apply:
- Faculty
- Online Graduate Student
- Staff
- Residential Undergraduate Student
- Residential Graduate Student
- Online Undergraduate Student

This research is for:
- Master’s Thesis
- Scholarly Project (DNP Program)
- Faculty Research
- Other:

If applicable, indicate whether you have defended and passed your dissertation proposal:
- N/A
- No (Provide your defense date):
- Yes (Proceed to Associated Personnel Information)

3. ASSOCIATED PERSONNEL INFORMATION (2)

Co-Researcher(s): N/A
School/Department: N/A
Phone: N/A  LU/Other Email: N/A

Faculty Chair/Mentor(s): Dr. Bill Gribbin
School/Department: English
Phone: 434-582-2466  LU/Other Email: wgribbin@liberty.edu

Non-Key Personnel (Reader, Assistant, etc.): Drs. Stephanie Blankenship & Tess Stockslager
School/Department: Modern Languages & CASAS
Phone: 434-592-4344 & 434-592-4913  LU/Other Email: slblankenship@liberty.edu & trstockslager@liberty.edu

Consultant(s) (required for Ed.D Candidates): Dr. Scott Watson
School/Department: School of Education
Phone: 434-582-2127  LU/Other Email: swatson@liberty.edu

4. USE OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS (2)

Do you intend to use LU students, staff, or faculty as participants OR LU students, staff, or faculty data in your study?
- No (Proceed to Funding Source)
- Yes (Complete the section below)

# of Participants/Data Sets: 100  Department: Modern Languages
**Class(es)/Year(s):** SPAN 102/Spring 2018  
**Department Chair:** Dr. Stephanie Blankenship

### Obtaining permission to utilize LU participants *(check the appropriate box below):*

**SINGLE DEPARTMENT/GROUP:** If you are including faculty, students, or staff from a single department or group, you must obtain permission from the appropriate Dean, Department Chair, or Coach and submit a signed letter or date/time stamped email to the IRB indicating approval to use students from that department or group. **You may submit your application without having obtained this permission:** however, the IRB will not approve your study until proof of permission has been received.

- [ ] I have obtained permission from the appropriate Dean/Department Chair/Coach, and attached the necessary documentation to this application.

- [ ] I have sought permission and will submit documentation to the IRB once it has been provided to me by the appropriate Dean/Department Chair/Coach.

**MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS/GROUPS:** If you are including faculty, students, or staff from multiple departments or groups (i.e., all sophomores or LU Online), **the IRB will need to seek administrative approval on your behalf.**

- [ ] I am requesting that the IRB seek administrative approval on my behalf.

### 5. FUNDING SOURCE *(?)*

**Is your research funded?**

- [x] No *(Proceed to Study Dates)*
- [ ] Yes *(Complete the section below)*

**Grant Name/Funding Source/Number:**

**Funding Period (Month & Year):**

### 6. STUDY DATES *(?)*

**When will you perform your study?** *(Approximate dates for collection/analysis):*

**Start (Month/Year):** May 2018  
**Finish (Month/Year):** April 2019

### 7. COMPLETION OF REQUIRED CITI RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING *(?)*

**List Course Name(s)** *(Social and Behavioral Researchers, etc.):*

- Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction
- Cultural Competence in Research
- Assessing Risk - SBE
- Informed Consent - SBE
- Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE

**Date(s) of Completion:** 3/6/2016, 3/6/2016, 3/5/2017, 3/5/2017, 3/5/2017

### III. OTHER STUDY MATERIALS AND CONSIDERATIONS

### 8. STUDY MATERIALS LIST *(?)*

Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following:

- Recording/photography of participants *(voice, video, or images)*?  
  - [x] Yes  
  - [ ] No

- Participant compensation *(gift cards, meals, extra credit, etc.)*?  
  - [ ] Yes  
  - [x] No

- Advertising for participants *(flyers, TV/Radio advertisements)*?  
  - [x] Yes  
  - [ ] No

- More than minimal psychological stress?  
  - [x] Yes  
  - [ ] No
Confidential data collection (participant identities known but not revealed)? □ Yes □ No
Anonymous data collection (participant identities not known)? □ Yes □ No
Extra costs to the participants (tests, hospitalization, etc.)? □ Yes □ No
The inclusion of pregnant women (for medical studies)? □ Yes □ No
More than minimal risk?* □ Yes □ No
Alcohol consumption? □ Yes □ No
Protected Health Information (from health practitioners/institutions)? □ Yes □ No
VO₂ Max Exercise? □ Yes □ No
Pilot study procedures (which will be published/included in data analysis)? □ Yes □ No

Please indicate whether your proposed study will include the use of blood:
Use of blood? □ Yes □ No
Total amount of blood:
Blood draws over time period (days):

Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following materials:
The use of rDNA or biohazardous material? □ Yes □ No
The use of human tissue or cell lines? □ Yes □ No
Fluids that could mask the presence of blood (including urine/feces)? □ Yes □ No
Use of radiation or radioisotopes? □ Yes □ No

*Note: Minimal risk is defined as “the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in everyday life or during the performance of routine physical or physiological examinations or tests. [45 CFR 46.102(i)]. If you are unsure if your study qualifies as minimal risk, contact the IRB.

9. INVESTIGATIONAL METHODS (2)
Please indicate whether your proposed study will include any of the following:
The use of an Investigational New Drug (IND) or an Approved Drug for an Unapproved Use?
□ No □ Yes (Provide the drug name, IND number, and company):
The use of an Investigational Medical Device or an Approved Medical Device for an Unapproved Use?
□ No □ Yes (Provide the device name, IDE number, and company):

IV. PURPOSE

10. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH (2)
Write an original, brief, non-technical description of the purpose of your research.
Include in your description your research hypothesis/question, a narrative that explains the major constructs of your study, and how the data will advance your research hypothesis or question. This section should be easy to read for someone not familiar with your academic discipline: The purpose of this study is to look for any correlations that may exist between the amount of required peer tutoring hours SPAN 102 students complete throughout the semester and their final course grades, as well as their Spanish oral assessment scores. The study will examine the sample population of 100 students taking lower level Spanish courses taught by two to three experienced Spanish professors at a private university in rural Virginia, which is a small portion of the population of all students taking lower-level Spanish courses at the university. Furthermore, this study will address the following research questions:
In the foreign-language-learning process, does peer tutoring have an impact on students’ oral proficiency in the target language?

Is there a relationship between the number of hours students spend in peer tutoring sessions and their academic success in introductory foreign language classes?

V. PARTICIPANT INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY POPULATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide the inclusion criteria for the participant population (gender, age range, ethnic background, health status, occupation, employer, etc.): All students enrolled in the Liberty University SPAN 102 courses for the Spring 2018 semester will have the opportunity to participate in the study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Provide a rationale for selecting the above population: The purpose of the study is to analyze introductory-level, Spanish-language students who are required to complete tutoring hours. Introductory-level courses include 101 and 102, but the SPAN 101 classes will not require tutoring hours during the Spring 2018 semester. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you related to any of your participants?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Yes (Explain):</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Indicate who will be excluded from your study population (e.g., persons under 18 years of age): Anyone who is not registered for SPAN 102 courses at Liberty University and persons under 18 years of age will be excluded from the study. |

| If applicable, provide rationale for involving any special populations (e.g., children, ethnic groups, mentally disabled, low socio-economic status, prisoners): N/A |

| Provide the maximum number of participants you plan to enroll for each participant population and justify the sample size (You will not be approved to enroll a number greater than the number listed. If at a later time it becomes apparent that you need to increase your sample size, submit a Change in Protocol Form and wait for approval to proceed): While 100 participants would be best, no more than 110 participants will be allowed to participate in the study. One-hundred is the ideal population size for a correlation design, which is the design of the proposed study. |

| ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ONLY IF YOU ARE CONDUCTING A PROTOCOL WITH NIH, FEDERAL, OR STATE FUNDING: |
Researchers sometimes believe their particular project is not appropriate for certain types of participants. These may include, for example, women, minorities, and children. If you believe your project should not include one or more of these groups, please provide your justification for their exclusion. Your justification will be reviewed according to the applicable NIH, federal, or state guidelines:

### 12. TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS

Who will be the focus of your study? (Check all that apply)

- [x] Normal Participants (Age 18-65)
- [ ] Minors (Under Age 18)
- [ ] Over Age 65
- [x] University Students
- [x] Active-Duty Military Personnel
- [ ] Discharged/Retired Military Personnel
- [ ] Inpatients
- [ ] Outpatients
- [ ] Patient Controls
- [ ] Pregnant Women
- [ ] Fetuses
- [ ] Cognitively Disabled
- [ ] Physically Disabled
- [ ] Participants Incapable of Giving Consent
- [ ] Prisoners or Institutional Individuals
- [ ] Specific Ethnic/Racial Group(s)
- [ ] Other potentially elevated risk populations
- [ ] Participant(s) related to the researcher

Note: Only check the boxes if the participants will be the focus (for example, ONLY military or ONLY students). If they just happen to be a part of the broad group you are studying, you only need to check “Normal Participants.” Some studies may require that you check multiple boxes (e.g., Korean males, aged 65+).

### VI. RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

#### 13. CONTACTING PARTICIPANTS

Describe in detail how you will contact participants regarding this study (include the method(s) used—email, phone call, social media, snowball sampling, etc.): I will contact the participants through email and in-person announcements. The emails will be sent directly to the professors who will then forward those emails to the students.

#### 14. SUBMISSION OF RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Submit a copy of all recruitment letters, scripts, emails, flyers, advertisements, or social media posts you plan to use to recruit participants for your study as separate Word documents with your application. Recruitment templates are available on the IRB website.

Check the appropriate box:

- [x] All of the necessary recruitment materials will be submitted with my application.
- [ ] My study strictly uses archival data, so recruitment materials are not required.

#### 15. LOCATION OF RECRUITMENT

Describe the location, setting, and timing of recruitment: I will visit the SPAN 102 classes to make the in-class announcement during the first two weeks of April, and I will send out the email on April 16, 2018.
16. SCREENING PROCEDURES (2)
Describe any screening procedures you will use when recruiting your participants (i.e., screening survey, database query, verbal confirmation, etc.): The only screening procedure will be a confirmation of participants' enrollment in a section of Spring 2018 SPAN 102 course offerings, which will be provided by the professors.

17. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (2)
Do you have a position of grading or professional authority over the participants (e.g., Are you the participants' teacher, principal, or supervisor?)?
☑ No (Proceed to Procedures)
☐ Yes (Explain what safeguards are in place to reduce the likelihood of compromising the integrity of the research, e.g., addressing the conflicts in the consent process and/or emphasizing the pre-existing relationship will not be impacted by participation in the research.):

Do you have any financial conflicts of interest to disclose (e.g., Do you or an immediate family member receive income or other payments, own investments in, or have a relationship with a non-profit organization that could benefit from this research?)?
☑ No (Proceed to Procedures)
☐ Yes (State the funding source/financial conflict and then explain what safeguards are in place to reduce the likelihood of compromising the integrity of the research.):

VII. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

18. PROCEDURES (2)
Write an original, non-technical, step by step, description of what your participants will be asked to do during your study and data collection process. If you have multiple participant groups, (ex: parents, teachers, and students) or control groups and experimental groups, please specify which group you are asking to complete which task(s). You do not need to list signing/reading consent as a step:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step/Task/Procedure</th>
<th>Time (Approx.)</th>
<th>Participant Group(s) (All, Group A, Group B, Control Group, Experimental Group, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Complete the Spanish online oral assessment</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. SUBMISSION OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS/MATERIALS

Submit a copy of all instruments, surveys, interviews questions, outlines, observation checklists, prompts, etc. that you plan to use to collect data for your study as separate Word documents with your application. Pdfs are ONLY acceptable for proprietary instruments.

Check the appropriate box:
- All of the necessary data collection instruments will be submitted with my application.
- My study strictly uses archival data, so data collection instruments are not required.

20. STUDY LOCATION

Please describe the location(s)/site(s) in which the study will be conducted. Be specific (include city, state, school/district, clinic, etc.): The study will take place in a quiet computer lab at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA.

Note: For School of Education research, investigators must submit documentation of permission from each research site to the IRB prior to receiving approval. If your study involves K-12 schools, district-level approval is acceptable. If your study involves colleges or universities, you may also need to seek IRB approval from those institutions. You may seek permission prior to submitting your IRB application, however, do not begin recruiting participants. If you find that you need a conditional approval letter from the IRB in order to obtain permission, one can be provided to you once all revisions have been received and are accepted.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

21. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS/DATA SETS

Estimate the number of participants to be enrolled or data sets to be collected: 100 participants

22. ANALYSIS METHODS

Describe how the data will be analyzed and what will be done with the data and the resulting analysis, including any plans for future publication or presentation: The data will be analyzed using a correlation design. The correlation between the number of required tutoring hours students complete and their final course grades (the number values) will be analyzed using the Pearson’s r test, and the correlation between the completed tutoring hours and students' scores on the online oral assessment will be tested with the Spearman method.

This data will be used in completion of my doctoral dissertation and may be used for future publication regarding the study's findings; however, specific details concerning future publication are currently unknown.

IX. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

23. PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT REQUIREMENTS

Does your study require parental/guardian consent? (If your participants are under 18, parental/guardian consent is required in most cases.)
- No (Proceed to Child Assent)
- Yes (Answer the following question)

Does your study entail greater than minimal risk without the potential for benefits to the participant?
- No
X. ASSENT FROM CHILDREN

24. CHILD ASSENT (?)

Is assent required for your study? (Assent is required unless the child is not capable due to age, psychological state, or sedation OR the research holds out the prospect of a direct benefit that is only available within the context of the research.)

☐ No (Proceed to Consent Procedures)
☐ Yes

Note: If the parental consent process (full or part) is waived (See XIII below) assent may also be required. See the IRB’s informed consent page for more information.

XI. PROCESS OF OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

25. CONSENT PROCEDURES (?)

Describe in detail how and when you will provide consent information (If applicable, include how you will obtain consent from participants and/or parents/guardians and/or child assent): When I visit the SPAN 102 classes, I will take physical copies of the consent form with me and pass them out. I will also attach the form to the email I send out on April 16, 2018, and I will have physical copies available on the day of the oral assessment.

XII. USE OF DECEPTION

26. DECEPTION (?)

Are there any aspects of the study kept secret from the participants (e.g., the full purpose of the study)?

☐ No
☐ Yes (describe the deception involved and the debriefing procedures):

Is deception used in the study procedures?

☐ No
☐ Yes (describe the deception involved and the debriefing procedures):

Note: Submit a post-experiment debriefing statement and consent form offering participants the option of having their data destroyed. A debriefing template is available on our website.

XIII. WAIVER OF INFORMED CONSENT OR MODIFICATION OF REQUIRED ELEMENTS IN THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

27. WAIVER OF INFORMED CONSENT ELEMENTS (?)

Please indicate why you are requesting a waiver of consent (If your reason does not appear as an option, please check N/A. If your reason appears in the drop-down list, complete the below questions in this section): Click to select an option.

Does the research pose no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., no more risk than that of everyday activities)?

☐ No, the study is greater than minimal risk.
☐ Yes, the study is minimal risk.

Will the waiver have no adverse effects on participant rights and welfare?

☐ No, the waiver will have adverse effects on participant rights and welfare.
☐ Yes, the waiver will not adversely affect participant rights and welfare.
Would the research be impracticable without the waiver?
- No, there are other ways of performing the research without the waiver.
- Yes, not having a waiver would make the study unrealistic. (Explain):

Will participant debriefing occur (i.e., will the true purpose and/or deceptive procedures used in the study be reported to participants at a later date)?
- No, participants will not be debriefed.
- Yes, participants will be debriefed.

Note: A waiver or modification of some or all of the required elements of informed consent is sometimes used in research involving deception, archival data, or specific minimal risk procedures.

XIV. WAIVER OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS TO SIGN THE INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

28. WAIVER OF SIGNED CONSENT (？)  ❌ N/A
Please indicate why you are requesting a waiver of signatures (If your reason does not appear as an option, please check N/A. If your reason appears in the drop-down list, complete the below questions in this section): Click to select an option.

Would a signed consent form be the only record linking the participant to the research?
- No, there are other records/study questions linking the participants to the study.
- Yes, only the signed form would link the participant to the study.

Does a breach of confidentiality constitute the principal risk to participants?
- No, there are other risks involved greater than a breach of confidentiality.
- Yes, the main risk is a breach of confidentiality.

Does the research pose no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., no more risk than that of everyday activities)?
- No, the study is greater than minimal risk.
- Yes, the study is minimal risk.

Does the research include any activities that would require signed consent in a non-research context (e.g., liability waivers)?
- No, there are not any study related activities that would normally require signed consent.
- Yes, there are study related activities that would normally require signed consent.

Will you provide the participants with a written statement about the research (i.e., an information sheet that contains all of the elements of an informed consent form but without the signature lines)?
- No, participants will not receive written information about the research.
- Yes, participants will receive written information about the research.

Note: A waiver of signed consent is sometimes used in anonymous surveys or research involving secondary data. This does not eliminate the need for a consent document, but it eliminates the need to obtain participant signatures.

XV. CHECKLIST OF INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT

29. STATEMENT (？)
Submit a copy of all informed consent/assent documents as separate Word documents with your application. Informed consent/assent templates are available on our website. Additional information regarding consent is also available on our website.

Check the appropriate box:
- All of the necessary consent/assent documents will be submitted with my application.
My study strictly uses **archival** data, so consent documents are not required.

### XVI. PARTICIPANT PRIVACY, DATA SECURITY, & MEDIA USE

#### 30. PRIVACY (?)

Describe what steps you will take to protect the privacy of your participants *(e.g., If you plan to interview participants, will you conduct your interviews in a setting where others cannot easily overhear?)*: Participants will complete the online oral assessment in a computer classroom through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) website. ACTFL will maintain the privacy and security of the participants' responses to the oral assessment prompts and questions. Once the responses have been rated by an ACTFL-certified rater, the results will be made available through the ACTFL website, which will be accessible only to the researcher through her username and password. The researcher will download and save the scores into password-protected documents and use this confidential data for the study. She will also send each professor password-protected documents containing the scores for only his or her students to be used for calculating the students' oral assessment and final grade scores.

With regard to collecting the students' final course grades, the researcher will send the SPAN 102 professors password protected spreadsheets with their students' assessment scores. The professors will then fill out the information concerning the students' final grades and number of tutoring hours completed and send it back to the researcher. Once all of the spreadsheets are collected, a third party employee of the Foreign Language Lab will assign each participant a pseudonym in the spreadsheets and create separate copies that do not include any student identifiers, such as names and student ID numbers. The lab employee will then provide the researcher with these spreadsheets to use for data analysis.

*Note: Privacy refers to persons and their interest in controlling access to their information.*

#### 31. DATA SECURITY (?)

How will you keep your data secure *(i.e., password-locked computer, locked desk, locked filing cabinet, etc.)*?: The data will be kept secure in password-protected documents.

Who will have access to the data *(i.e., the researcher and faculty mentor/chair, only the researcher, etc.)*?: After all data is collected by the researcher for purposes of the study, only the researcher (and faculty advisor, as necessary) will have access to the information.

Will you destroy the data once the three-year retention period required by federal regulations expires?

- [ ] No
- [x] Yes *(Explain how the data will be destroyed)*: After the three-year period, all data for the study will be deleted from all of the researcher's internal and external hard drives, and any printed copies of data will be shredded.

*Note: All research-related data must be stored for a minimum of three years after the end date of the study, as required by federal regulations.*

#### 32. ARCHIVAL DATA (SECONDARY DATA) (?)

Is all or part of the data archival *(i.e., previously collected for another purpose)*?

- [ ] No *(Proceed to Non-Archival Data)*
- [x] Yes *(Answer the questions below)*
Is the archival data publicly accessible?
☑️ No (Explain how you will obtain access to this data): I will obtain the oral assessment scores directly from the ACTFL organization and send that information to the professors through password protected spreadsheets. The professors will then fill out the students’ final course grades and the number of tutoring hours they have completed in the same spreadsheets.
☐ Yes (Indicate where the data is accessible from, i.e., a website, etc.):

Will you receive the raw data stripped of identifying information (e.g., names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, social security numbers, medical records, birth dates, etc.)?
☑️ No (Describe what data will remain identifiable and why this information will not be removed): I will receive the oral assessment scores with the identifying information; however, once the professors return the spreadsheets with all of the data, including the oral assessment scores, final grades, and number of completed tutoring hours for their students, I will have a third party employee at the lab assign each student (each data set) a pseudonym and strip the spreadsheets of their identifying information, including student names and ID numbers.
☐ Yes (Describe who will link and/or strip the data—this person should have regular access to the data and should be a neutral party not involved in the study):

Can the names or identities of the participants be deduced from the raw data?
☐ No (Place your initials in the box: I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in this study):
☑️ Yes (Describe): The names and identities of the students will be included in the raw data; however, those identifiers will be removed by a third party before the researcher begins the data analysis phase of the study.

Please provide the list of data fields you intend to use for your analysis and/or provide the original instruments used in the study: The students' names, ID numbers, final course grades, number of completed tutoring hours, and oral assessment scores will be collected throughout the data collection process for identification purposes; however, only their final course grades, number of completed tutoring hours, and oral assessment scores will be included in the data analysis.

Note: If the archival data is not publicly available, submit proof of permission to access the data (i.e., school district letter or email). If you will receive data stripped of identifiers, this should be stated in the proof of permission.

33. NON-ARCHIVAL DATA (PRIMARY DATA) (?)
If you are using non-archival data, will the data be anonymous to you (i.e., raw data does not contain identifying information and cannot be linked to an individual/organization by use of pseudonyms, codes, or other means)? Note: For studies involving audio/video recording or photography, select “No”
☐ N/A: I will not use non-archival data (data was previously collected, skip to Media)
☑️ No (Complete the “No” section below)
☐ Yes (Complete the “Yes” section below)

**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “NO” TO QUESTION 31**
Can participant names or identities be deduced from the raw data?

- No
- Yes (Describe): The participants' names will be included in the raw data and directly tied to their final course grades and oral assessment scores.

Will a person be able to identify a subject based on other information in the raw data (i.e., title, position, sex, etc.)?

- No
- Yes (Describe): The participants' names will be included in the data and directly linked to their final course grades and oral assessment scores.

Describe the process you will use to ensure the confidentiality of the participants during data collection and in any publication(s) (i.e., you may be able to link individuals/organizations to identifiable data; however, you will use pseudonyms or a coding system to conceal their identities): All of the data downloaded and collected throughout the study will be secured in password-protected documents. Once these spreadsheets are collected, each student will be assigned a pseudonym by a third party, an employee of the lab. Any information published in my dissertation (or any possible future publications) will be identifiable only with pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities.

Do you plan to maintain a list or codebook linking pseudonyms or codes to participant identities?

- No
- Yes (Please describe where this list/codebook will be stored and who will have access to the list/codebook. It should not be stored with the data.): Once the spreadsheets containing all of the data are collected, they will be given to a third party, an employee of the lab, to code with pseudonyms and strip of all identifiers, including student names and ID numbers. This employee will save both sets of password protected spreadsheets separately. Each will be saved in separate files on a Liberty University laptop and an office flash drive.

**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO QUESTION 31**

Describe the process you will use to collect the data to ensure that it is anonymous:

Place your initials in the box: I will not attempt to deduce the identity of the participants in this study:

Note: If you plan to use participant data (i.e., photos, recordings, videos, drawings) for presentations beyond data analysis for the research study (e.g., classroom presentations, library archive, or conference presentations) you will need to provide a materials release form to the participant.

**34. MEDIA USE**

| Will your participants be audio recorded? | ☒ No | ☐ Yes |
| Will your participants be video recorded? | ☒ No | ☐ Yes |
| Will your participants be photographed?  | ☒ No | ☐ Yes |

**COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF YOU ANSWERED “YES” TO ANY MEDIA USE**
Include information regarding how participant data will be withdrawn if he or she chooses to leave the study*: The online oral assessment administered through ACTFL includes an audio recording of the participants' responses, and ACTFL is responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of these recordings. If a participant begins the oral assessment and decides to stop and withdraw from the study while the assessment is in progress, the recordings will not be registered with ACTFL and will be immediately deleted upon exiting the assessment. If a participant withdraws after the researcher has collected data from ACTFL or SPAN 102 professors, the researcher will immediately delete that participant’s information upon withdrawal.

Will your participants be audio recorded, video recorded, or photographed without their knowledge??

☐ No
☐ Yes (Describe the deception and debriefing procedures):

*Note on Withdrawal: Add the heading “How to Withdraw from the Study” on the consent document and include a description of the procedures a participant must perform to be withdrawn.

**Note on Deception: Attach a post-experiment debriefing statement and a post-deception consent form, offering the participants the option of having their recording/photograph destroyed and removed from the study.

XVII. PARTICIPANT COMPENSATION

35. COMPENSATION (2)

Will participants be compensated (e.g., gift cards, raffle entry, reimbursement)?

☐ No (Proceed to Risks)
☒ Yes (Describe): Participants will be entered into a raffle to possibly win a $100 Amazon gift card.

Will compensation be pro-rated if the participant does not complete all aspects of the study?

☒ No
☐ Yes (Describe):

Note: Certain states outlaw the use of lotteries, raffles, or drawings as a means to compensate or recruit research participants. Research compensation exceeding $600 per participant within a one-year period is considered income and will need to be filed on the participant’s income tax returns. If your study is grant funded, Liberty University’s Business Office policies might affect how you compensate participants. Contact the IRB for additional information.

XVIII. PARTICIPANT RISKS AND BENEFITS

36. RISKS (2)
Describe the risks to participants and any steps that will be taken to minimize those risks. (Risks can be physical, psychological, economic, social, or legal. If the only potential risk is a breach in confidentiality if the data is lost or stolen, state that here): The risks involved in this study are minimal and equal to the risks they would encounter in everyday life.

Will alternative procedures or treatments that might be advantageous to the participants be made available?

☐ No
√ Yes (Describe): If, for any reason, a participant is unable to complete the oral assessment on the day designated by his or her professor, the participant will be afforded the opportunity to take the assessment at a later day and time in a similar (computer lab) setting at the university. However, the assessment must be completed no later than the last day of final exams for the Spring 2018 semester.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ONLY IF YOUR STUDY IS CONSIDERED GREATER THAN MINIMAL RISK:

Describe provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the participants (e.g., proximity of the research location to medical facilities, or your ability to provide counseling referrals in the event of emotional distress):

37. BENEFITS (?)

Describe the possible direct benefits to the participants. (If participants are not expected to receive direct benefits, please state “No direct benefits.” Completing a survey or participating in an interview will not typically result in direct benefits to the participant.): Participants will receive a normed Spanish oral proficiency score they can use on future job, internship, and post-graduate school applications. Additionally, they will not need to complete the final oral assessment administered by their professors at the end of the course.

Describe any possible benefits to society: This study will provide a greater understanding of any potential correlations between required language tutoring and student performance in oral proficiency and overall academic success in the language course.

Evaluate the risk-benefit ratio. (Explain why you believe this study is worth doing, even with any identified risks.): The study poses a minimal risk to students, no more than they would experience in their everyday lives, yet the results of the study could greatly contribute to the fields of peer tutoring, foreign language learning, and second language acquisition.
AAPPL Measurement Information

AAPPL Measure is a performance-based assessment whose tasks are linked to World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and The ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners. AAPPL Measure’s scores range from N-1 (low range of Novice) through A (the beginning end of the Advanced range).

Within the Novice level, the scores are N-1, N-2, N-3, and N-4. A score of N-1 reflects the abilities described as Novice Low in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012. Scores of N-2 and N-3 reflect Novice-Mid abilities, with N-3 being a stronger performance within the Novice-Mid range; N-4 reflects Novice-High abilities. This means that a learner who receives the score of N-4, in addition to performing all Novice level functions fully, also shows some performance at the Intermediate level, but does not do so consistently.

Within the Intermediate level, the scores are I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, and I-5. A score of I-1 reflects the abilities described as Intermediate Low in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012. Scores of I-2, I-3, and I-4 are all in the Intermediate-Mid range. Given that the Intermediate Mid represents a broad range of abilities, the delineation allows learners and teachers to determine where the performance falls within that broad range and to track progress within that range. I-5 reflects Intermediate High abilities. This means that a learner who receives the score of I-5, in addition to performing all Intermediate level functions fully, also shows some performance at the Advanced level, but does not do so consistently. Learners are presented with Advanced-level tasks on Form B so that they are given the opportunity to provide evidence of performance at that level.

A score of A reflects fully-sustained performance at Intermediate and significant performance within the Advanced range as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines</th>
<th>ACTFL Performance Scale</th>
<th>AAPPL Measure Performance Score</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Low</td>
<td>ADVANCED</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
<td>I-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid</td>
<td>I-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid</td>
<td>I-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid</td>
<td>I-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Low</td>
<td>I-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice High</td>
<td>N-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice Mid</td>
<td>N-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice Mid</td>
<td>N-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice Low</td>
<td>N-1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the next page you will find an individual score report. It is accompanied by narratives that describe the performance and provide recommendations for further development for each component of the test that was taken. For more information about AAPPL, please visit our site at http://aappl.actfl.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Your Score</th>
<th>Score Description</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Listening</td>
<td>A I-5 I-4 I-3 I-2 I-1 N-4 N-3 N-2 N-1</td>
<td>Your AAPPL Interpersonal Listening score of 1-1 means that you can have a conversation about yourself and your life. You can also use your language to express your own thoughts and get the things that you need. You tend to speak in single sentences. You can ask and answer simple questions. You can do all of this in a way that your teacher and others who are used to language learners can understand what you are saying.</td>
<td>Take advantage of every chance to participate in conversations on a variety of topics about yourself, your conversation partner, your interests, and daily routine. Do this both in class and especially outside of class. Once you've answered the specific question, add another fact, thought, or even a question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Listening</td>
<td>A I-5 I-4 I-3 I-2 I-1 N-4 N-3 N-2 N-1</td>
<td>Your AAPPL Interpretive Reading score of N-2 means that you understand words and phrases. You may need to read/hear something more than once. You need visual cues such as pictures, your own knowledge of a topic, and words that are similar to English in order to understand what you read/hear.</td>
<td>Increase your understanding by looking/listening for clues such as pictures, titles, words or parts of words that you recognize, words that are similar to words in your own language. Think about what you already know about a topic for additional clues about the topic. Get in the habit of re-reading/re-listening in order to understand more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive Listening</td>
<td>A I-5 I-4 I-3 I-2 I-1 N-4 N-3 N-2 N-1</td>
<td>Your AAPPL Interpretive Reading score of N-2 means that you understand words and phrases. You may need to read/hear something more than once. You need visual cues such as pictures, your own knowledge of a topic, and words that are similar to English in order to understand what you read/hear.</td>
<td>Increase your understanding by looking/listening for clues such as pictures, titles, words or parts of words that you recognize, words that are similar to words in your own language. Think about what you already know about a topic for additional clues about the topic. Get in the habit of re-reading/re-listening in order to understand more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentational Writing</td>
<td>A I-5 I-4 I-3 I-2 I-1 N-4 N-3 N-2 N-1</td>
<td>Your AAPPL Presentational Writing score of N-4 means that you can write about yourself and your life. Much of the time you write well enough to express your own thoughts and accomplish what you need. You write in phrases and some sentences. You can do all of this in a way that most of the time your teacher and others who are used to the writing of language learners can understand your writing.</td>
<td>Write more about more topics. Add more information; use a variety of vocabulary. Make your writing more interesting by forming sentences or questions in different ways. When you don't know a precise word, try using other words to say what you mean. Frequently review your writing for accuracy and correctness. Make sure that you are always writing in the target language from the beginning and not trying to write in English first and then translating.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix F: AAPPL Measurement Scale Conversion Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines</th>
<th>AAPPL Measure of Performance Score</th>
<th>Converted AAPPL Measure of Performance Score</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Low</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
<td>I-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid I-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid I-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Mid I-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Low I-1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice High</td>
<td>N-4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice Mid</td>
<td>N-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Novice Mid</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Novice Low</td>
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SPAN 102 Final Oral Assessment Instructions and Rubric

During the last two weeks of the course, students will complete an online oral assessment in completion of the final oral assessment requirements. The assessment, ACTFL’s Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) “Form A”, will measure students’ oral proficiency according to the following standards.

**Note:** All students are required to bring a laptop and a headset (such as a smartphone headset with headphones and a microphone) to class with them on the day of the assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines</th>
<th>ACTFL Performance Scale</th>
<th>AAPPL Measure Performance Score</th>
<th>Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
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<td>I-5</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Novice Low</td>
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<td>N-1</td>
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</table>

**Grading Scale**

- Intermediate Low (or above): 100 points (A)
- Novice High: 89 points (B)
- Novice Mid: 79 points (C)
- Novice Low: 69 points (D)
Appendix H: IRB Application—Recruitment Email

16 April 2018

Dear student:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the correlations between the number of peer tutoring hours students complete throughout the semester and their oral assessment scores, as well as their final course grades, and I would like to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are at least eighteen years old and currently enrolled in a SPAN 102 class at Liberty University, you will complete a Spanish online oral proficiency assessment, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your oral assessment scores will be included in this study, and your final course grade and the total number of tutoring hours you have completed will be collected from your professor after the last day of final exams. Your name and other identifying information will be requested, but they will be replaced with a pseudonym.

To allow your oral assessment results, final course grade, and number of tutoring hours to be included in the study, please sign a consent form and return it to the researcher, Alisha Castañeda, or your professor. The consent document contains additional information about my research. I have attached a copy to this email. You can complete one now and send it to the email address listed below, or you can complete it on the day of the assessment and give it to your professor.

In completing the oral assessment, you will receive a free internationally normed oral proficiency rating that you can use on future job, internship, and post-graduate applications. As compensation for your participation in the study, you will be entered into a raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

Thank you for your time and interest in participating in this study. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. I hope you have a wonderful day!

Sincerely,

Alisha P. Castañeda
Director, Foreign Language Labs & Spanish Writing Center
434-592-3175
acastaneda@liberty.edu
Appendix I: IRB Application—Recruitment Classroom Announcement

Classroom Announcement during the first two weeks of April 2018

Hello, everyone!

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the correlations between the number of peer tutoring hours students complete throughout the semester and their oral assessment scores, as well as their final course grades. I would like to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are currently enrolled in a SPAN 102 class at Liberty University, you will be asked to complete an online, Spanish oral proficiency assessment, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. With your permission, your oral assessment scores, final grades, and peer tutoring hours will be obtained and included in the study. Your name and other identifying information will be requested; however, your identifying information (name and student ID number) will be replaced with a pseudonym.

To participate, you will need to sign a consent form and complete the online oral assessment during your SPAN 102 class period on the date designated by your professor. The consent document contains additional information about my research. I have some of these consent forms with me today, or you can complete one on the day of the assessment and give it to your professor.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a free internationally normed oral proficiency rating that you can use on future job, internship, and post-graduate applications. As compensation for your participation, you will be entered in a raffle to win a $100 Amazon gift card.

Thank you for your time and interest in participating in this study. Please feel free to contact me at either 434-592-3175 or acastaneda@liberty.edu with any questions or concerns you may have. I hope you have a wonderful day!
 Appendix J: IRB Application—Data Collection Spreadsheet

Data Collection Spreadsheet for ¿Esto Funciona? Research Study
Note: Please complete one spreadsheet per SPAN 102 section you teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Student LU ID Number</th>
<th>Numerical Final Grade</th>
<th>Number of Tutoring Hours Completed</th>
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