

ASSESSMENT OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION AT
A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL IN RINCÓN, PUERTO RICO

by

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Abstract

This study examines the teaching and development of the oral communication skill in a high school of Rincón, Puerto Rico. It examines whether English and Spanish teachers follow the documents provided by the Department of Education, *Curricular Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*, to develop this skill. It also examines how a group of high school students feel towards speaking English inside and outside of the classroom. The subjects were 32 students and 6 teachers. The research questions that guided this study were: How do English and Spanish teachers develop the oral communication standard in the classroom? How do English and Spanish teachers follow the latest *Curricular Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*? Are the ways they use these documents similar/different? and How do students feel towards listening to and speaking English in the classroom? Three instruments were used in this study: student questionnaires, teacher interview/questionnaires, and classroom observations. The results show: 1) teachers do not develop the oral communication skill effectively in the English classroom, 2) teachers do not always follow the documents provided by the Department of Education to reach class goals and objectives. The ways they use these documents vary, but most agree that sometimes they need to adjust the document to the students' needs and materials available, and 3) students do not feel comfortable or confident speaking English in class or outside .

Resumen

Este estudio examinó la enseñanza y desarrollo de la destreza de comunicación oral en una escuela superior de Rincón, Puerto Rico. También examinó si los maestros de español e inglés utilizan los documentos provistos por el Departamento de Educación, *Marco Curricular y Los Estándares de Contenido y Expectativas de Grado*, para desarrollar esta destreza. Además se examinó como un grupo de estudiantes de escuela superior se sienten al hablar y comunicarse en inglés. Los sujetos fueron 32 estudiantes y 6 maestros. Las preguntas que guiaron este estudio fueron: ¿Cómo los maestros de español e inglés desarrollan el estándar de comunicación oral en su salón de clases? ¿Cómo los maestros siguen el *Marco Curricular y Los Estándares de Contenido y Expectativas de Grado*? ¿Las maneras en que las utilizan, son iguales o diferentes? ¿Cómo se sienten los estudiantes al comunicarse en inglés en el salón de clases? Los tres instrumentos utilizados para este estudio fueron: 1) cuestionarios a estudiantes, 2) cuestionarios/ entrevistas a maestros, y 3) observaciones en el salón de clases. Los resultados reflejaron: 1) los maestros generalmente no desarrollan la destreza de comunicación oral efectivamente en el salón de clases de inglés, 2) los maestros no siempre siguen los documentos provistos por el Departamento de Educación, y 3) los estudiantes no se sienten cómodos ni confiados al hablar en inglés dentro y fuera del salón de clases.

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Dedication

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Yo no sé inglés” (I do not know English) and “Ni lo hablo, ni lo entiendo” (I do not speak it, nor understand it) are only some of the comments heard from our Puerto Rican students when referring to their English class. Although English is taught for over twelve years in the public education system of Puerto Rico, the resistance to the imposition of English continues to occur (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987).

This imposition of the English language on the island began in 1898 when Puerto Rico (PR) became a territory of the United States (US). This connection brought to the island many changes in terms of politics and, most importantly, education. Ferrer (2007) states:

After 1898, through Puerto Rico’s association to the United States, English became an important and influential language. Both languages, Spanish and English, have been the main languages in Puerto Rico for over a century; however, Spanish is the language used by the majority of speakers in all social contexts (p. 1).

Although English is taught in schools as a second language, Spanish continues to be the language the people use. According to Algren de Gutiérrez (1987) there have been seven language policies in PR from 1898 to 1949 which were created according to each Secretary of Education. These seven policies are: Eaton-Clark (1898-1900), Brumbaugh (1900-1903), Faulkner-Dexter (1903-1917), Miller-Huyke (1917-1934), Padin (1934-1937), Gallardo (1937-1945) and Villaronga (1949-present) (see Appendix A for summary of each policy). The current policy is the Villaronga policy. This policy

establishes that Spanish is the medium of instruction at all levels of the public school system of PR with English taught as a preferred subject (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987, pp. 9-10). Nowadays, English is taught using a guide that is provided by the Department of Education: the *Curricular Framework* (2003).

ESL Today

The *Curricular Framework* (2003) is the document created by the Department of Education of PR (DEPR). Its main purpose is to give direction to the English teacher by connecting different skills and standards grade by grade, in other words, to bridge the skills between grades throughout the entire twelve years of English instruction in the public system. The *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations* (2007) state:

Our vision is one of students who communicate in the English language in a creative, reflexive, and critical manner. Each student should feel committed to the vernacular language, Spanish, and to his/her Hispanic culture, while simultaneously developing a high sense of solidarity, respect, and appreciation to other people and other cultures (p.14).

As we can see, the DEPR's English program vision is for students to "communicate in the English language" but always feeling "committed to the vernacular language, Spanish". Furthermore, the English Program's mission also mentions the importance of having students master the vernacular language; "Therefore, collaboration between the English and Spanish programs is crucial and necessary" (p.14). It also states that in terms of listening/speaking, the students will finish their school years being able to use the language "to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and to express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social,

and academic contexts” (p. 15). In other words, the purpose of teaching English is to develop the skill of communicating in the target language (TL). Although this is what is stated in this official document, no studies exist to find out if students are communicating effectively. Carroll (2005) found that:

Many of the teachers are not using the *Curricular Framework* to its maximum potential, thus limiting the teachers’ effectiveness and student learning. Based on my conversations with English teachers while attending conferences, as well as in formal interviews I have conducted in past research, I have found that many classes are poorly conducted and they have little or no relation to the goals and expectations for English acquisition by students at the corresponding levels. (p. 1).

Carroll’s study focused on how teachers use this document and if, in reality, they prepare their classes using this document as the base of the classes taught on a daily basis. One of the purposes of my study is going deeper into this issue about the *Curriculum Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* by focusing on certain teachers in a high school in Rincón. In her study, Morales (1992) found that although these guides exist, teachers still lack direction. She states:

The lack of guidance and direction revealed by this study is what the administration should have foreseen. It is easy for the administration to impose a curriculum and the materials but the teachers are the ones who put all this into practice. There should be a referendum where teachers could present their ideas on what to use in the ESL classroom and things that should be changed to

improve the system. After all, they are the ones who know what should be done in the ESL classroom (p. 54).

This feeling of “lack of guidance and direction” or “misuse” of these documents may be the reason why students are not learning the language effectively and still today, after more than 110 years of English education on the island, students are not yet bilingual.

At the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez (UPRM) many students get placed either in pre-basic English (INGL 0066) or basic English (INGL 3101) their first year of study because they do not score high enough (570 or more) on the College Board Exam (CEEB). During the fall semester 2010-2011, 38% of the UPRM students were registered in either Pre-Basic or Basic English (Carroll, 2011). This indicates that although students take English for more than 12 years in school, many are not acquiring the basic language skills. Because these students have very low competence in English, the university courses must focus on intensive training in basic language for students requiring work in English.

Various studies have been conducted in order to try to explain or come to understand the inefficiency of learning English in Puerto Rico. Common views on this issue are that the language is not taught effectively in the schools; however, the social context also plays an important role in learning a second language. Irizarry (2005) states, “Despite the fact that Puerto Ricans are constantly exposed to the English language through media, music, and magazines, English is not the most widely spoken language on the island” (p. 2). Irizarry’s argument is that although English is in the social context, it is still not widely spoken. Furthermore, Acevedo (2008) believes that “most Puerto Ricans are not bilingual because they have not had enough exposure to English” (p. 11). As Irizarry,

Acevedo believes that Puerto Ricans have exposure to the language, but states that that exposure may not be enough to develop fluency in both languages. Regardless of this exposure, there is usually no need to speak English because they all share the same L1. This could also be one of the many factors why students do not speak the language proficiently.

In terms of using English in spoken language, the 2000 Census brief on language use and English speaking ability (Shin & Bruno, 2003) shows that 71.9% of the population reported that they spoke English “less than very well” (p.5). The data shows that there is no doubt that something is wrong with the teaching of English in Puerto Rico, especially with speaking. These results do not measure up to the Department of Education’s English *Curricular Framework* (2003) which states, “The English program is committed to promoting and facilitating the development of critical and creative thinkers capable of communicating effectively to deal with high expectations and demands of a society which is immersed in a global interchange and collaboration” (pp.12-13). If the percentage of Puerto Ricans who reported that they speak English less than very well is over 70%, clearly, students are graduating from high school without being able to communicate effectively in the TL.

Oral communication is the first content standard in the curriculum. It is one of the most important standards because we are living in a society that, as stated by the *Curricular Framework* (2003), “is immersed in a global interchange and collaboration” (p. 13). Students’ academic and professional growth is based partly on the speaking of English. Tatum (as cited in Nakamura and Valens, 2001) states:

Communication skills are a highly desired aspect in today's job market and the increasingly rapid changes in the workplace make management aware of the importance of competent communicators. It therefore follows that as business grows on an increasingly global level, students are in need of English oral communication skills...if they are to be competitive in the job market (p.43).

A goal of the DEPR is that, "students listen to and use language effectively to interact verbally in different academic and social environments using different learning strategies and critical thinking skills" (*Curricular Framework*, p. 24). Although this is what is stated in the official document, Rosas (2009) states, "Because there is greater attention to grammatical structures and written expressions in most educational contexts in Puerto Rico, students are more comfortable and accustomed to writing, rather than speaking in English" (p. 73). Apparently this quote highlights the fact that writing is being more developed and practiced in schools, but speaking is being forgotten and, in a way, ignored. As a student from the public system in Puerto Rico, I can say this is true.

The purpose of this research is to study whether teachers are really developing oral communication skills in the classroom. If they are developing them, how are they addressing the standard and are they keeping in mind the *Content Standards* and the *Curriculum*? What language do they speak while teaching English, the students' first language (L1) or the second language (L2)? Therefore the research questions for this study are:

1. How do English and Spanish teachers develop the oral communication standard in the classroom?

2. How do English and Spanish teachers follow the latest *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*? Are the ways they use these documents similar/different?
3. How do students feel towards listening and speaking English in the classroom?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Puerto Rico's unique language situation has been studied for decades, especially when it comes to the teaching of English; in part because of the lack of success and inefficiency of English instruction in the public school system. After taking English classes for 12 years, the majority of Puerto Rican students graduate from high school unable to communicate efficiently in the target language. This chapter will provide a snapshot of the history of English education on the island and findings from various studies that have attempted to clarify and further explain the possible causes for this language situation.

English in Puerto Rico

History and Language Policies

These unique language issues began in 1898 when the island became a commonwealth of the US. It was then that English became part of the daily lives of the Puerto Rican children through schools, books, and educational material. Of course, this injection of English was not a simple process; there have been seven language policies as described by Algren de Gutiérrez (1987). This struggle focused primarily on Puerto Ricans fighting to keep their vernacular language, Spanish, and not have English, the “Americanizing language”, as the medium of instruction in Puerto Rican schools. This movement against teaching English in Puerto Rico “served the intent of promoting a Puerto Rican sense of nationhood, and exhortations of pride in Spanish culture were juxtaposed against exhortations of opposition to Americanization in an effect to provoke anger towards the United States” (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987, p. 129). Therefore, the

current policy, Villaronga, establishes that Spanish is the medium of instruction at all levels of the public school system with English taught as a preferred subject (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987, pp. 9-10). The fact that English is the only class taught in English, coupled with the fact that in the social environment English is not widely spoken (Vélez, 1999, p. 1), raises the question of whether this language is a second or a foreign language in Puerto Rico.

English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL)

Although English is an official language in Puerto Rico, it is still considered a second language (SL). SL, also known as the target language (TL), “refers to any language that is the aim or goal of learning” (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 2). Although English is widely referred to as the island’s SL, many refer to it as a foreign language (FL) because of its lack of use in our social context (Vélez, 1999, p. 1). A FL is a language that “is not widely used in the learners’ immediate social context which might be used for future travel or other cross cultural communication situations, or studied as a curricular requirement or elective in school, but with no immediate or necessary practical application” (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 4). This seems to be how the DEPR views the language, as a FL, because the *Curricular Framework* (2003) states, “The teaching and learning environment of English does not fall within the traditional ESL teaching paradigm. Generally, the target language is not spoken and used for communication outside the classroom” (p.8). Although this is what this document states, this issue—whether English is a FL or a SL in PR—is very divisive. For instance, in Rincón’s situation (town used for this study), English is not a FL because it is evidently present in the immediate social context, hence, it is a SL. Therefore, Puerto Rico’s situation of lack

of use outside of the classroom labels the language as foreign, not as second although this document also states (as cited by Vélez, 2002), “The official status of English [as a second language] should be recognized” (p.8) because of its political, financial and economic ties to the United States. As can be seen, labeling English in PR as a SL or FL can be a controversial issue.

To label English as a FL in PR could be debatable because in Puerto Rico English is everywhere. Having English present in all places, of course, does not necessarily mean that the people use the language orally to communicate with others, but they are exposed to it in the immediate social context (e.g. media, television, billboards, etc). This FL or SL issue plays an important role in the effectiveness of English learning, because the amount of exposure and use students have for the language may determine if the language will be learned or not. Although this may be true, it is hard to prove because, as Algren de Gutiérrez (1987) stated:

A confusion exists in the literature, however, between English as a foreign language and English as second language. The difference between a foreign and a second language depends upon the degree of reinforcement provided for the language within the immediate environment of the learner. This difference also reflects upon the need for learning a language and helps determine which aspects of a language will be learned (p. 14).

In addition, in an effort to classify Puerto Rico as an English-Using Society, Blau and Dayton (1997) concluded that:

With respect to informal domains of use, the language of higher proficiency, and the degree of informal learning [informal referring to use outside of the English

classroom], Puerto Rico bears a resemblance to an EFL society. With respect to degree of official recognition, the percentage of the population using English, the influence of the English-using groups, formal domains of use, societal bilingualism, and an internal reference group for the target variety of English, Puerto Rico also bears a resemblance to an ESL society (p. 144).

Learning a SL in an environment where the TL is not used commonly in the social context can be very difficult. Algren de Gutiérrez (1987), Blau and Dayton (1997) and Vélez (1999) all agree that it is not crystal clear whether Puerto Rico is an ESL or EFL society, but the fact that they have attempted to classify Puerto Rico in any of these two categories shows that it is important to at least understand that exposure does play a role in learning English.

The teaching of the SL should focus on how much students are actually exposed to the language and how often they use the language in context. If students do not have the opportunities outside of the classroom to speak the language (which seems to be the case), the teacher should engage students in listening or speaking the language in class. Blau and Dayton (1997) stated that there are English language radio stations; the majority of the videos for rental are in English, and the majority of the magazines in PR are in English (p.139). Today, more than 13 years later, we can add cable television, video games and internet to this list. Teachers can use these opportunities and instruments to develop assignments in which students have to listen to the radio, watch movies or television series in English, or read these magazines. In other words, resources to expose students to English *do* exist. As a Puerto Rican student who studied in public schools throughout middle and high school, I can honestly and confidently say that teachers do

not take advantage of these opportunities—it was after I graduated from high school that I learned that there even were English language radio stations in Puerto Rico. If English teachers would have used these opportunities by using these tools in class or providing assignments for students to do outside of the classroom, students could probably develop the more complex productive language skills such as writing or speaking more effectively.

In terms of speaking the language outside of the classroom Algren de Gutiérrez (1987) believes that “Puerto Ricans who should be a bilingual people are not” (p. 141). An important factor in learning a language is being exposed to it and this is what may determine, in many cases, if the language is going to be learned or not. In the case of Puerto Rico, we should be bilingual since the US made us a commonwealth in 1898. Jesus Rivera (as cited in Hay, 2004), a teacher with twenty seven years of experience teaching English in PR, states, “Fifty minutes of English in a classroom is not enough for a student to learn a second language. When they go home, parents don't talk English, so they are not able to continue practicing” (n.p). It is for this reason that speaking and exposing the TL to the students is so important in those fifty minutes of class, because for some of them, it is the only exposure they may have of the language. Puerto Rican students may not choose to speak the language in their immediate social context, but they are exposed to it; they just do not choose to use it because they can speak to most of the people they know in their vernacular language: Spanish. Therefore, the importance of speaking the language in the classroom is especially crucial to provide the exposure they need to learn the language. Furthermore, Teresa Troyer (as cited in Wynn, 2004), an ESL teacher, believes that “ESL is based on the idea of teaching English using English.

We aren't there to translate everything... but to make the English as comprehensible as possible” (n.p.). In terms of speaking/listening in the classroom, having teachers serve as a speaking model is not the only important factor in the development of oral communication, but having students speak the language is also crucial. In an attempt to understand ESL teachers, methods and materials, Morales (1992) found that:

The predominant type of evaluation was traditional, that is, grading tests, homework, reports, oral talks and projects. Evaluation based on essay writing or oral tests was minimal, perhaps because of the item factor putting pressure on the teacher....Although acquiring habits of correctness in usage, grammar and pronunciation are essential in acquiring a second language, the degree of necessary correctness is an unanswered question (p. 47).

If teachers do not provide evaluation techniques that involve speaking, students are probably losing the only opportunity they have to speak the language in the classroom thus affecting their second language acquisition. Furthermore, the Mayor of Rincón stated in an interview that:

Enseñan mucha gramática en inglés, muchas repeticiones de práctica de inglés, pero yo creo que deben enseñar *más*; que usen mejores métodos que una persona pueda aprender a hablar. Si le dan énfasis a la gramática pero no le dan énfasis a que la persona pueda hablar inglés con fluidez y que pierdan el miedo porque nosotros los puertorriqueños tenemos mucha inseguridad y no nos dan seguridad porque si una persona dice algo mal lo demás lo critican [They [teachers] teach much grammar in English, lots of repetition and practicing English, but I believe that they should teach *more*; they should use better methods for a person to learn

how to speak. Yes, they emphasize the grammar, but they do not emphasize speaking English with fluency and losing fear because we, Puerto Ricans, have many insecurities and teachers do not give us security because if a person says something incorrectly, others will criticize] (López).

López further is in agreement with Morales' (1992) findings; English oral communication is not developed effectively in our Puerto Rican schools; therefore, second language acquisition is not occurring.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 2). It has been proven that learning a second language after puberty can be very difficult due to the loss of plasticity of the brain. Plasticity is the capacity of the brain to assume new functions (Saville-Troike, 2006, p.192). Thomas Scovel (as cited in Brown, 2000), suggested that:

The plasticity of the brain prior to puberty enables children to acquire not only their first language but also a second language, and that possibly...makes it difficult for people to be able ever again to easily acquire fluent control of a second language, or at least to acquire it with what Alexander Guiora et al. (1972a) called “authentic (nativelike) pronunciation (p. 55).

Even though children in Puerto Rico receive ESL instruction since early childhood in school, they may not have acquired much and by the time they are in high school, they have already lost that plasticity of the brain. Thus, older students may have

difficulty in learning a second language; therefore, they struggle when having to use the TL to communicate orally.

One of the main aims of communicative language teaching is to provide opportunities for learners to participate in interaction where the primary goal is to exchange meaning rather than to learn the rules and structures of the L2 (Ellis, 1999, p. 193). Providing students with the opportunity to use the language other than only having them learn rules and structures can help our students be more communicatively competent in the second language and, eventually, become bilingual.

Bilingual or not?

The term *bilingualism* has different meanings (Rosenberg, 1996). Looking at this term within the context of Puerto Rico, Vélez (1999) believes that:

In Puerto Rico bilingualism means, first and foremost, speaking Spanish as a vernacular and learning English as a required foreign language through the school system. Increasingly, however, many Puerto Ricans have learned English in a second language context by having lived in the United States prior to establishing permanent residency on the island (p. 1).

Pousada (2007), on the other hand, believes that the island has developed a “Puerto Rican English” due to the fact that for more than a century, Puerto Ricans have been involved with the US in terms of economics and cultural domination. Moreover, she differs from Vélez because she recognizes that English is everywhere, “on street and commercial signs, in product names, in instructions from taking medications and using electrical appliances, on cable TV, in newspapers, magazines and Hollywood movies, within the Federal Courts, and in all activities and domains related to tourism” (p. 3). For

Vélez, English is nothing more than a foreign language that is used in school more than in social interaction. Pousada, in contrast, notices that it is more than that because it is everywhere and that Puerto Ricans are exposed to the language.

Differences such as these, in terms of different views of bilingualism on the island, lead us to analyze how the English and Spanish languages are being taught in order to improve and increase the opportunities in which students can actually use both languages effectively in social context.

In their article, which focused on developmental bilingual education (DBE) for ESL learners in the United States, Thomas and Collier (1999) state that teaching English and Spanish collaboratively, in other words, teaching more or less the same skills and themes at the same time, has proven to be beneficial for students and “when well implemented...[these] programs accelerate all students’ growth through a meaningful, bicultural, grade-level curriculum that connects to students’ lives inside and outside school” (p. 47). Furthermore, Wallestad (2009) states, “frequently, both in the U.S. and in other countries, ESL teachers are required to work with multiple teachers who collaborate to improve their ELL students’ proficiency” (p. 17).

Having teachers work together to improve students language skills can make a difference in teaching more effectively because currently the facts we have in terms of students’ English language proficiency are not positive. Pousada (1999) states, “In 1990, the College Board reported that Puerto Rican high school students attained a median score of 390 (out of 800) on the English test, evidence of significant problems in managing the language” (p. 49). Though this test does not focus on oral communication, it shows that the skills in general are not being achieved by Puerto Rican high school

students. Although there are strong guidelines for teaching the language effectively, such as the *Curricular Framework* (2003) and *The Content Standard and Grade-Level Expectations* (2007), facts show that learning the language is not occurring, especially in speaking the language. This had led universities to provide more basic and pre-basic English courses in order to meet the needs of students with the low language skills they bring from school. This lack of knowledge makes it difficult for students to gain confidence in using the TL, especially speaking it.

The DEPR provides teachers with various techniques and strategies to foster oral communication in the English class. The *Curricular Framework* recommends the use of *peer assessment* where:

They [students] can rate the oral and written work of their peers, identifying areas that can be improved as well as areas that are presented effectively. By assessing others' work, students often see alternative linguistic patterns and develop an appreciation of diverse ways of manipulating language for communication (p.65).

Another recommendation this document provides to develop the oral communication skill is the *portfolio assessment*. The document even provides *Tips for Preparing a Portfolio*. One of the tips is to “tape (audio or video) student’s explanation or oral presentations” (p.71). They also recommend oral presentations which are included in the grade level 10-12 Scope and Sequence (Appendix Q). As we can see, the *Curricular Framework* does provide teachers with recommendations and suggestions to develop this skill.

The *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* also provides an entire section called *Listening and Speaking Strategies*. The suggestions or recommendations provided are: visual aids, realia, manipulative materials, repetition and oral routines,

small-group discussions and role playing (see Appendix R). A rubric is also provided for teachers to use to assess this skill (Appendix S).

As can be seen, the DEPR does provide teachers with ideas to develop these skills whether or not teachers actually use them. Although these ideas are presented in the DEPR documents, teachers still feel “lack of guidance and direction” as stated by Morales (1992). This may be one of the reasons why students are not learning the language effectively and still today, after more than 110 years of English education on the island, students are not yet bilingual, and most still cannot speak the TL.

Student and Teacher Attitudes towards English in Puerto Rico

In a study conducted by Lladó-Torres (1984), 184 seventeen year old high school students from public schools all over the island answered a Language Attitude Questionnaire. The results of this study suggest that students may react negatively or have negative attitudes towards certain books and materials, teachers and teaching methods, on the one hand, but not toward the English language itself. In fact, the study found that Puerto Rican students, in general, have positive attitudes toward English.

On the other hand, in a study conducted by Irizarry (2005), she had the opportunity to work with 77 ninth grade students to view how they felt towards their English class and the English language. She found that “62% of the students agreed that they hated the English language, but only 23% agreed that they hated the English class” (p.50).

These are two different views of what students feel towards the English language and the English class. Llado-Torres (1984) showed that, overall, students had positive attitudes towards the English language, but negative attitudes when it came to the English

class. In contrast, Irizarry (2005) found that students have negative attitudes toward the English language, not toward the English class. These negative views and attitudes, regardless of their focus, may affect how students acquire the language skills, thus affecting their academic and professional development.

Many students reach college with some knowledge and abilities in terms of reading and writing and are willing to improve these skills. When it comes to speaking, students are sometimes hesitant and apprehensive because of their insecurities, but they realize its importance in the working field. Students are aware of the importance of English and the role it plays in their personal and professional development. Based on Llado-Torres' and Irizarry's studies we see students' general attitudes towards the English language, yet the teachers' perspectives are not mentioned. López Laguerre (1989) investigated attitudes towards bilingualism among 477 San Juan high school teachers of all subjects. The results showed that:

The teachers solidly supported the presence of English in Puerto Rican schools, even though there was no unanimity regarding its status within the curriculum. The sample was divided among those who preferred English as a required course (38.9%), as an elective course (34.3%), and as part of a bilingual program where it would alternate with Spanish as a medium of instruction (20.2%). Only 19 individuals out of the 477 (3.9%) preferred to exclude English entirely. This indicates that English has an assured place within the schools of Puerto Rico, at least among these teachers (as cited in Pousada, 1999, n.p.).

Laguerre's study showed that, overall, teachers are in favor of teaching English.

Moreover, Resnick (1993) believes that:

When we read the early reports and publications of numerous Puerto Rican and mainland educators who worked in the island's school system, we discover a surprisingly high level of linguistic and pedagogical sophistication, with insights that are now important principles of language planning, contrastive analysis, error analysis, and communicative methodology. In recent years, the Puerto Rican Department of Education has begun to introduce task-based, problem-solving activities in ESL classes in an effort to better integrate English into the curriculum. The very active Puerto Rico TESOL chapter promotes cooperation with education officials and high standards for teacher training and certification (p. 265).

This clearly portrays that English teachers on the island are certified, prepared, and capable of teaching the TL in an effective way, and suggests that Puerto Rican teachers have the same level of “linguistic and pedagogical sophistication” as mainland English teachers. The proper tools and preparation are available to teach the language effectively; whether these instruments are taken advantage of in a productive way is the question at hand.

Overall, students have diverse feelings towards the English language and the English class (Irizarry, 2005; Llado-Torres, 1984), while teachers generally have positive attitudes towards the English language (López-Laguerre, 1989; Resnick, 1993). When dealing with feelings and attitudes, motivation arises as an important factor in language learning.

Motivation

Every educator knows that when students are motivated, it is easier for students to learn any task. When talking about motivation in a SL classroom it becomes even more important because it may determine how and if the students are going to learn the TL. Brown (2000) states that:

Motivation is probably the most frequent used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task. It is easy to assume that success in any task is due simply to the fact that someone is “motivated.” It is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation. Such claims are of course not erroneous, for countless studies and experiments in human learning have shown that motivation is a key to learning (p. 160).

Research shows that motivation *does*, in fact, play an important role in the learning virtually any complex task, including the learning of a SL.

Motivation has been divided into two different categories: instrumental and integrative. Brown (2000) provides a brief and concise definition for both of these types of motivation:

The instrumental side of the dichotomy referred to acquiring a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, and so forth. The integrative side described learners who wished to integrate themselves into the culture of the second language group and become involved in social interchange in that group (p.162).

Although students may have either type or a mix of instrumental and integrative motivation, their outcome in actually learning the language can be the same. What changes is their purpose. In other words, each motivation is a more personal way to understand why learning the language is important and what benefit they will gain from it. This is specifically what Pousada (2006) means when she states, “the objective would be to develop a love of language among our students, no matter their ages, by responding to real language issues in their lives. When language becomes compelling in this way, they will want to learn more about it” (p. 22). Therefore, this learning can take place regardless of the type of motivation.

Instrumental and integrative motivation is divided even further to make learners’ purpose in learning the language even more specific. These subgroups are: intrinsic and extrinsic. Brown (2000) states, “those who learn for their own self-perceived needs and goals are intrinsically motivated, and those who pursue a goal only to receive an external reward from someone else are extrinsically motivated” (p.162). He provides a table which shows examples of the motivational dichotomies of both integrative and instrumental motivations:

Motivational Dichotomies (p. 166)

Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Integrative-L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g., for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g., Japanese parents send kids to Japanese-language School)
Instrumental-L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e.g., for a career)	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2 (e.g., corporation sends Japanese businessman to U.S. for language training)

What changes between these categories are the specific reasons for which the learner wants to learn the language, in other words, what benefit the learner will receive

by learning the language. Although there are all these divisions and subdivisions of motivation, Brown further states that in SL learning there is no exclusive type of motivation involved; it is usually a mixture (p. 163). Each learner is different, but if teachers stress the importance English has for students' lives and the benefits they will gain from knowing how to use the language effectively, it may be possible to develop these motivations within our students. Although many students realize the importance of the English language and the benefit they will get if they can use the language effectively, students sometimes resist learning the language.

Resistance

Pousada (1999) clearly states that the resistance to the imposition of English continues to occur in PR, and is one of the reasons why the teaching of English in Puerto Rico has been a failure. There are many reasons why this resistance occurs. Algren de Gutiérrez (1987) provides some of these reasons:

- The Spanish language was seen as a symbol of national identity (p. 137).
- Leaders of the movement against teaching English in PR believed that “Americans considered Puerto Ricans unfit to govern themselves because of Spanish” (p. 137).
- The English language was seen as a tool for Americanization, which “became a devil term (p.139).

Although this resistance existed in 1987, it still exists today (Pousada, 1999).

Furthermore, Mazak (2007) states, “This very imposition of English, designed explicitly to Americanize, actually succeeded in strengthening Puerto Rican identity and rallying Puerto Ricans behind Spanish as an act of defiance against the colonizer” (p. 4).

Language and politics are so deeply intertwined that the teaching-learning of English is greatly affected.

As can be seen, language is very tied to identity and, even more, to politics. The fact that PR does not have a clearly defined status (the island is a commonwealth of the US—that is, PR is not a state, but it is not independent either) keeps the language issue from being resolved. This is why Algren de Gutiérrez (1987) concludes by saying, “As long as Puerto Rico’s political status is not clearly defined...the movement against teaching in English will continue” (Algren de Gutiérrez, p. 143).

Resnick (1993) also believes that political status and identity are very tied to the language issue in Puerto Rico; therefore, he concludes:

The ability of Puerto Rican culture to withstand the spread of English has been stronger than the ability of language planners to bring about the planned spread. The language conflict of Puerto Rico is not one of functions or domains. It is not a conflict of politics or education, although these are the battlegrounds of the conflict. It is the conflict of a people—a nation—that defends its existence against the real and perceived political and economic pressures that would force all U.S. citizens to learn English (p. 271).

Based on this assumption, we can see that Resnick differs from Algren because he believes that although politics is the base of the issue, it is no longer the true reason why English has failed in Puerto Rico.

On the other hand, Torres González (as cited in Sosa, 2009) believes that other than resistance due to political and national identity issues, Puerto Ricans also oppose

learning the language because it is difficult or because they do not feel comfortable using the language.

In summary, some studies show that political status is the real reason for this problem (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987); some consider that it has to do with students' insecurities when using the language (Resnick, 1993; Torres González (as cited in Sosa, 2009). Politics, identity, and students' insecurities all play a role when analyzing why English education has not been successful. It is for this and many other reasons that English teachers on the island have to do their best to teach the language effectively, although they are aware of all these political and identity issues. The teaching techniques and strategies they employ in the English classroom should reach the students in a way that they can engage in using the language and overcome the resistance, insecurities, political, and identity issues.

ESL Teaching Strategies & Techniques

Educators often talk about the use of various strategies and techniques in order to effectively achieve their teaching goals. Although these terms are commonly used, it is important to clearly understand their meaning and the difference between them. Strategies can be defined as “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information” (Brown, 2000, p. 113). Techniques, on the other hand, are “any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or devices used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives” (Brown, 2000, p. 171). Basically, a strategy is a method or way in which a teacher is going to approach a task and the technique can be

the actual task or activity. For teachers to use strategies and techniques effectively, the DEPR provides guides to follow in order to achieve specific goals.

In Puerto Rico, as mentioned previously, the DEPR provides two documents with the purpose of guiding the teacher through the standards: *Curricular Framework* (2003) and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2007). The *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2007), which provides grade by grade guidance for teachers, states that:

The underlying theory and instructional model of teaching within the English Program is Balanced Literacy. This approach provides for essential skills and strategy instruction within the context of meaningful, relevant, authentic reading, writing, and oral language activities and routines. As a program, we know that it is important to prepare our students for the real world and global community. In order to ensure students are ready, functional literacy instruction will also be provided within the curriculum (p. 13).

Both documents (*Content Standards* and *Curriculum*) are supposed to be used hand in hand in order for the standards to be accomplished. Something very important here is that the *Content Standards* document states, “underlying theory and instructional model of teaching...is Balanced Literacy”. Balanced Literacy is “an approach to reading that incorporates both whole language and phonics instruction” (Content Standards, 2007, p. 63). In other words, this document is saying that in the Puerto Rican English classroom students are going to develop all of the language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) primarily through reading. This term, though, may be misleading because it implies all the skills not only reading and writing, which is what

most people think of when they see the word *literacy*. The high school speaking/listening standard, which is the focus of this study, states the same overall objective, “The student uses the English language to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts” (pp. 49, 53, 57). When comparing the specific standards and objectives for each individual grade, one can see that what changes for each grade is very little (see Appendices M, N and O for summary of 10th, 11th, and 12th grade standards and objectives).

The *Curricular Framework* (2003), which has a purpose of guiding the teacher throughout the twelve years of English instruction states:

... [it] is designed so that teachers can use the framework in their instructional design without being prescriptive...it establishes public policy regarding the goals of education in the Island and the development of the curriculum required to accomplish these goals.... At the same time, it facilitates the implementation of a curriculum based on Content Standards (p. 4).

Both documents should be used together in order to meet their goals more effectively. Furthermore, the approach used in the DEPR is the constructivist approach. The constructivist approach, as cited in this document, indicates that “constructivists emphasize that learning involves active construction and testing of one’s own representation of the world and accommodation of it to one’s personal conceptual framework” (Curricular Framework, 2003, p. 11). It goes on to say that this approach “translates into an anxiety free classroom atmosphere where the target language, English,

is used to communicate among a group of L2 learners and the teacher as a facilitator for genuine communication” (p. 11).

The purpose of this document is not only to serve as guide for the teacher, but also to let teachers know that the approach they must use in their classroom is a constructive one, that is, the teacher serves as a facilitator while students construct their own knowledge based on old and new acquired knowledge while students communicate with each other in the TL. The *Curricular Framework* (2003) also states something that is very important to understand, the goal or purpose of the English Program: the mission. One of the mission statements of the DEPR in teaching English is to:

...develop communicatively competent students in the English language.

Notwithstanding, it recognizes that successful Spanish literacy will be the foundation for developing proficiency in a second language. Collaboration between the Spanish and English programs is therefore necessary and crucial (p. 12).

Therefore, there is something new here: the importance of collaboration between the Spanish and English teacher. For the DEPR, this collaboration is necessary and crucial because successful Spanish literacy will serve as a base to develop proficiency in the TL, English. Pousada (1999) also considers this collaboration very important; this is clearly portrayed when she, “What is needed is greater collaboration between English and Spanish programs at all levels of the educational system to develop generic competencies in written and oral communication” (n.p).

This collaboration, though, must also be present amongst all the teachers, not only the English and Spanish ones. The *Curricular Framework* (2003) states, “cooperation

and collaboration among teachers of different subjects is emphasized in order to put this integrative approach to teaching and learning into practice” (p. 18). So the importance of collaboration of teachers of all subjects should be involved in order to learn the language more effectively (Thomas and Collier, 1999; Wallestad, 2009).

In terms of the approach, as also stated in the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2007), specifically at the high school level, is the Balanced Literacy Approach. As cited in *Curricular Framework* (2003):

It includes the development of skills such as literary analysis, oral communication, written composition and investigation. There is an integration of the four language arts with emphasis in the conversational phase when using Balanced Literacy. To enrich and motivate independent reading the students use supplementary classic readings for the purpose of developing individual projects in oral and written form (p. 22).

Therefore, the main priority of high school English classes is to develop all four language arts (or skills) with an emphasis given to oral communication mainly because of the importance this skill has for the students’ professional development. The DEPR is aware that English oral communication is of extreme importance for students to be prepared when facing the working environment (Figuerola, 2009; Osborn, Osborn and Osborn, 2011; Tatum (as cited in Nakamura and Valens, 2001).

Importance of Oral Communication

Oral communication is one of the most important skills when trying to find a job even in and certainly out of Puerto Rico. Nakamura and Valens (2001) state, “students are in need of English oral communication skills...if they are to be competitive in the job market” (p. 43). Furthermore, Osborn, Osborn & Osborn (2011) believe that:

The ability to communicate well in public settings will help establish your credentials as a competent, well-educated person. Learning to present yourself and your ideas effectively can help prepare you for some of the more important moments in your life: times when you need to speak to protect your interests, when your values are threatened by the action or inaction of others, or when you need approval to undertake some vital project (pp. 4-5).

There is no doubt that speaking is an extremely important skill for students, especially those who graduate from college and strive to find jobs as successful professionals. However, these serious insecurities and gaps with regard to speaking make it more difficult for them to achieve that success. Unfortunately, “there are not many language studies that specifically address the assessment of oral proficiency. This is particularly true for the ESL context in PR. Currently, no studies exist regarding oral proficiency for the Puerto Rican ESL population” (Figueroa, 2009, p. 19). The purpose of Figueroa’s study was to collect socio demographic data and create an oral proficiency profile for Pre-Basic students, contrasting the skills of males and females. She found that “most students believed English was important for instrumental purposes [in order to achieve specific goals]” and that students’ speaking proficiency was not there (p.ii).

In terms of Puerto Rican students' involvement with living and working in the US, Vargas (2005) stated that:

The 1990 Census was more clear in reporting that there are some 55,000 monolingual speakers of English on the island, among them military personnel and their families, North Americans who are life-long residents, Puerto Rican returned migrants raised and educated in the States, immigrants from the British West Indies, and foreigners who use English as a lingua franca. However, only about 50% of the total island population of nearly 3 million claims to speak any English, and less than 20% feel they can communicate effectively (p. 14).

As shown in the 2000 Census brief on language use and English speaking ability (Shin & Bruno, 2003) 71.9% of the population [in PR] reported that they spoke English less than "very well" (p.5). Both the Census of 1990 and 2000 show that although part of the Puerto Rican population has been raised and educated in the US, the vast majority of the population still struggles with communicating effectively in the TL (Cuadrado, 1993; Figueroa, 2009; Flores, 2010; Morales, 1992; Rosas, 2009).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Cuadrado Rodríguez in 1993 (as cited by Pousada 1999) found that in terms of speaking English on the island "the majority of respondents felt that their oral English was poor. Only 30% considered their oral abilities to be excellent or good" (n.p.) In an interview, the Mayor of Rincón stated, "the important thing is that the better we can produce both languages, the more opportunities we will have. Knowing English equals more opportunities" [Lo importante es que mientras más produzcamos sobre los idiomas, más oportunidades vamos a tener. Saber inglés, es tener mas oportunidades]. He also believes that "it is a good idea to learn that

language and to practice it because they [teachers] teach English, but very few people learn how to *speak* English” [Es buena idea donde uno aprenda el idioma y puedan practicarlo porque enseñan inglés pero si uno viene a ver muy poca gente aprende a *hablar* en inglés] (López). His perspective as a political figure is that English is of extreme importance because it not only means that speaking both languages is positive and enriching for a person, but it also allows for more opportunities in the job market. In terms of oral communication, Flores (2010) found that “students believed their strongest areas in English were reading and listening, with writing not far behind; the weakest area was in speaking” (p.84). There is a gap that does not allow students to use the language and, as López stated, teachers “teach English but...very few people learn how to *speak* English.” This clearly shows that although Puerto Ricans are aware of the importance of English, they are not learning it effectively during their academic education on the island, especially in terms of oral communication. Figueroa (2009) states that:

Students who want to be academically and professionally competitive have to aim towards achieving effective and efficient oral communication skills and possess communication competency. This is particularly true for Puerto Rican students who intend to continue graduate school or begin their professional careers in many companies in Puerto Rico (PR) and in the United States (US) after the completion of their degrees (p. 2).

Sadly, achieving effective and efficient oral communication skills is not occurring in Puerto Rico (Cuadrado, 1993; Figueroa, 2009; Flores, 2010; Morales, 1992; Rosas, 2009). This “failure”, as Resnick (1993) stated, may have to do with various circumstances. This failure may be due to the misuse of the documents provided by the

DEPR, maybe the documents are not clear enough for teachers, and it may also have to do with how teachers are being trained to use those documents in the ESL classroom.

English Teacher Training in Puerto Rico

Many universities of Puerto Rico prepare teachers of English to work in the DEPR. How are teachers being prepared to deal with teaching ESL and using these important documents in the process? Pousada (2007) believes that teachers do not create Language Awareness in their students. She defines Language Awareness as the “explicit knowledge about and sensitivity to language issues” (n.p.). She further adds that teachers “must themselves pass through the process of consciousness-raising so they can impart Language Awareness in a sensitive and meaningful manner. In other words, Language Awareness preparation must be incorporated into pre-service and in-service training” (n.p.). Pousada recommends that teachers have training in transmitting Language Awareness for the student to feel more attached to the English language, thus learning it more effectively.

Moreover, Resnick (1993) states that many studies have attempted to understand the inefficiency of English teaching in PR. He states that the inefficiencies:

...have all come to the same general conclusion: deficiencies in textbooks, methods, and teacher preparation. In reality, however, the textbooks, methods, and teacher preparation have not been so different from what has been available in the US and in other countries; they have been, at least, the best available for their time (p. 265).

Although various studies have mentioned the lack of teacher preparation, textbooks, and methods, Carroll (2005) believes that the issue goes a little further. He

states, “no comprehensive study has been done to analyze the latest curriculum and what teachers think about it” (p.2), which is why he decided to do his study on that specific topic. He found that “many classes...have little or no relation to the goals and expectations for English acquisition by students at the corresponding levels” (p. 1). While the *Curricular Framework* is a guide for teachers, it also provides the teachers the opportunity to make their own curriculum; therefore the *Curricular Framework* is “responsible for this inequality because it allows teachers to teach whatever they deem necessary as long as it fits within the parameters of the document” (Carroll, 2005, p. 98). Giving teachers the open window to use the documents however they want, may be the reason why the objectives and standards are not achieved.

Many issues arise when trying to understand how and if teachers are using this document correctly in order to achieve the standards and goals stipulated by the DEPR. The problems may not lie in teacher preparation; maybe it has to do with the document itself. In Puerto Rico, teachers have the *Curricular Framework* (2003) and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2007). It is not certain what the issue or problem is on the island, but the guides do exist; therefore, teachers should attempt to use them so that there is some type of consistency between grades and grade levels. Possibly, positive changes in the teaching-learning of English in Puerto Rico may occur. The changes in policies, the issues with bilingualism, and the implementation of the documents teachers are provided with in the English classroom are all issues which must be analyzed in order to understand and improve the teaching of both languages: English and Spanish. When facing facts and statistics that show that more than 70% of the Puerto

Rican population considers they do not speak the TL, it is clear that the language issue is affecting the professional and personal development of our students.

In an attempt to provide further explanation or possible solutions to this problem, this research will focus on how the speaking/listening skill is being developed in a high school in Rincón, Puerto Rico, how and if teachers take into account the documents provided by the DEPR and how students feel towards speaking the language inside and outside of the English classroom.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research examined the implementation of the *Curricular Framework* (2003) and the achievement of the *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations* (2007) in a high school in Rincón, Puerto Rico in an effort to understand the complexity of teaching and developing English oral communication skills in students. My main purpose was to analyze the teaching and assessment of oral communication and verify if in reality this standard is taught. This was done, not only by taking into consideration the English class, but also the Spanish class in order to see if both subjects were taught in unity for the benefit of learning and polishing both languages as stated in the *Curriculum Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations*.

Research Site

Rincón

The school that was used, West Side High School (pseudonym), is a public school in Rincón, Puerto Rico. This town is located on the west side of the island; the population is approximately 12,311 (Batutis & October, n.p.). Ever since the 1968 World Surfing Championship, which took place in Rincón, this town is quite different from other towns in Puerto Rico. According to the Tourism Association of Rincón (TAR), Americans and tourists from all over the world have made Rincón their permanent home. “Even though surfing made Rincón famous - it has become a major resort destination year-round” (TAR, n.p.). The mayor of Rincón stated, in a personal interview, that he believes that “pudiera haber como mil que viven aquí, que transitan durante la época con mucho miles y este año ha sido uno de lo mas yo creo que han venido muchísimos, muchísimos” [there

could be approximately one thousand American residents that live here [Rincón], but throughout the years many thousands more visit us and this year has been, I believe, a year where many, many have come to visit us] (López).

West Side High School

West Side High School was inaugurated on January 22, 1999. Out of 449 students that attend the school, 337 of them are below the level of poverty (78% of the entire population). The population per grade is as follows: 170 are tenth graders, 150 eleventh graders and 129 are twelfth graders. The school has 37 teachers, 34 of whom have a bachelor's degree, two have a master's degree, and one has a doctorate degree. The school has been part of the improvement plan for more than two years in a row, which means that the school failed the "Pruebas Puertorriqueñas de Aprovechamiento Académico," (PPAA), tests "diseñadas con el propósito de evaluar el aprovechamiento académico de los estudiantes en las materias de inglés como segundo idioma, matemáticas, español y ciencias. Estas pruebas están alineadas a los estándares de excelencia de contenido establecidos en el año 2000 por el Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico" [designed with the purpose of evaluating students' academic success in ESL, mathematics, Spanish and Science classes. This test is aligned with the *Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2000) established by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico] (Pruebas Puertorriqueñas, n.p.). In other words, this test demonstrates how well students have achieved certain skills in the different basic subjects taught at school. To be placed on an improvement plan means that students failed this test. In an article recently published by the DEPR, it is stated, "El Progreso Anual Adecuado corresponde al nivel mínimo de aprovechamiento que los distritos y las escuelas deberán lograr cada año para satisfacer las metas a nivel federal y estatal de aprovechamiento estudiantil" [The Adequate Annual Progress corresponds to the minimum

level of progress that the districts and the schools should accomplish every year to satisfy the federal and state goals of student progress] (Aprovechamiento Académico, n.p.), therefore, the percent varies by year depending on the progress of the districts. These are numbers provided by federal and state governances. Consequently, the school's goal is to improve students' knowledge in all basic courses. In order to respond to students' needs, talents and interests, the school is focused on developing all the levels of thinking focusing on self esteem while reaching the grade level expectations. The school strongly believes that the curriculum should be innovative, pertinent, and integrated in order for students to reach the goals of the dynamic society we live in, in other words, preparing them to become workers and professionals in the near future.

Other than the regular program, the school works with students who have special needs in the Special Education resource classroom. Some students are also helped throughout the Independent Life Program where students receive individualized assistance through the strategy of *Tutoring and Team Teaching* in the basic subjects: Spanish, English, and Math. The school also has a computer laboratory where students can be helped in any of the subjects. The students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, cooperative groups and art during the regular and extended schedule. Some classrooms have computers, televisions, multimedia, electronic boards, projectors, and other technological resources (personal communication, October 19, 2010).

Participants

A total of 32 students (nine 10th graders, nine 11th graders and fourteen 12th graders) completed a questionnaire that was distributed to one group of each grade (see Appendix G for Student Questionnaire).

Three English and three Spanish teachers were also participants in this study. They were either interviewed or given a questionnaire with four questions in which they talked about the methods and techniques they employed to develop communication skills, the interactions the English and Spanish teachers had while preparing their classes, the assessment and evaluation techniques they chose to quantify the oral communication, and the use they gave to the *Curricular Framework* and the *Grade Level Expectations*.

The Mayor of Rincón was also a participant in this research. He was interviewed in order to see, from his political perspective, how English is present in all the social contexts of this town. He also gave his point of view of English education and how important it is to develop oral communication skills for the development of the town.

Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative methods such as observations, questionnaires, and interviews were used to collect the necessary data. There were English classroom observations (see Appendix J for checklist), interviews with English and Spanish teachers (see Appendix C and E for interviews), questionnaires administered to students (see Appendix H and I for student questionnaires) and an interview with the Mayor of Rincón (see Appendix K for mayor's interview).

Thus the data consisted of: (a) teacher interviews/questionnaires; (b) student questionnaires; (c) observations; and (d) the interview with the mayor of Rincón.

Teacher Interviews/Questionnaires

Interviews were conducted with three English and three Spanish teachers (one per grade, per class). Some of the teachers preferred to answer the questions in written form and not as oral interviews. The interviews were transcribed with the purpose of not changing or altering the answers. The main purpose of the interviews was to see how teachers actually

taught oral communication in their classrooms. The answers helped with research question # 1: How do language teachers develop the oral communication standard in the classroom? and research question # 2: How do English and Spanish teachers follow the latest *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*? Are the ways they use these documents similar/different?

Student Questionnaires

Students responded anonymously to the questionnaire. The instrument took into consideration their socio-demographic information (items 1-4), their English use and ability (items 5-8) and their opinion of English (items 9-16). This instrument helped answer research question # 3: How do students feel towards listening and speaking English in the classroom?

Observations

Thirty class periods were observed during the Fall 2010 semester. All observations were done in approximately one month (October-November), and they were all conducted in English classes in order to contextualize the actual teaching with the data gathered from the interviews and the questionnaires. Narratives were written in each class observed with the purpose of specifically going back to what happened in terms of themes covered, skill developed, students' comments, language students used, language teachers used, and teaching techniques used in the English classroom. These also focused on the student-teacher involvement in developing the oral communication standard and its relevancy to the *Curriculum Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*.

The narratives served as a mirror to see what topics, themes, techniques, and predominant skills were developed in the 10th, 11th and 12th grade English classes. This

also allowed me to compare what was focused on in class with what is stated in the *Curricular Framework* (2003) and the *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations* (2007). This was done giving special attention to how/if the speaking/listening standard was developed.

Mayor's Interview

The interview was conducted in order to get the Mayor's perspective on the English language teaching and use in Rincón, Puerto Rico. The interview consisted of seven questions and it was conducted on February 8, 2011. This interview had two purposes: 1) to determine his political view on the importance of developing efficient English oral communication skills and the benefit they have for the growth and prosperity of the town; 2) to see if he, as a resident of Rincón, believes that English oral communication was developed in the local schools of the town.

Data Analysis

The student questionnaire's purpose was to see where students came from, their view or attitudes towards English, how they felt when speaking English and their overall experiences with the English class. The data collected was organized into tables and charts in order to have a clearer view of all these aspects. These findings were then compared to teachers' interviews in order to see if, in fact, students felt teachers were developing the areas they said they were.

Three English and three Spanish teachers were either interviewed or given a questionnaire with four questions in which they talked or responded in writing about the methods and techniques they employed to develop communication skills, the interactions the English and Spanish teachers had while preparing their classes, the assessment and

evaluation techniques they chose to quantify the oral communication and the use they gave to the *Curricular Framework* and the *Grade Level Expectations*. Their answers to these questions were compared with students' answers to see if there was overlap in the supposedly developed skills.

The interview with the Mayor of Rincón served as an outside view of the teaching of English in the town. His answers were compared with teacher and student answers to see if there was overlap between their opinions and views of the language and how it has been taught and developed in schools.

The next chapter concerns the results and discussion of the instruments I employed in order to study how the English oral communication skill was being developed in the English class.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of this chapter presents the answers to student questionnaires. These questionnaires have two sections: 1) students' English use and ability, and 2) students' feelings towards English. The second part of the chapter presents the Spanish and English teachers' answers to the interview/questionnaire. This part presents a comparison and contrast between their answers. The third part of the chapter presents the answers to each research question. Each question will be answered individually with its pertinent tables, illustrations, and explanations based on the observations, questionnaires, and interviews in order to understand the data more comprehensibly. Finally, the last section of the chapter presents a summary of the results.

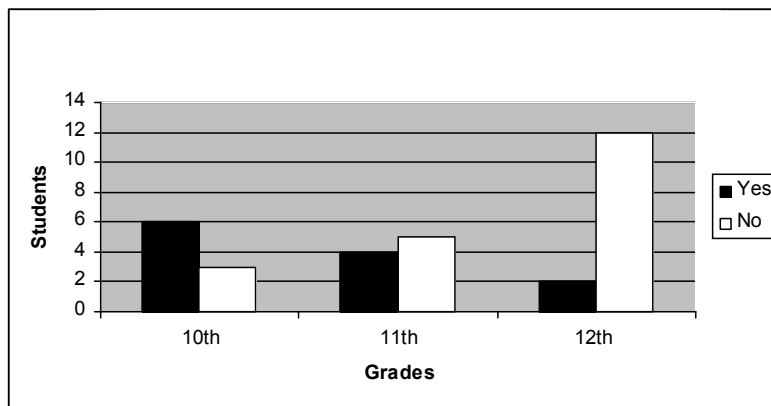
Student Questionnaires:

Students' Use of and Feelings Towards English

Other than the student socio-demographic information provided in Chapter 3, the questionnaire also asked students if they had lived in the US. The results of this question are portrayed in Table 1 by grade level.

Table 1

Students Who Have Lived in US



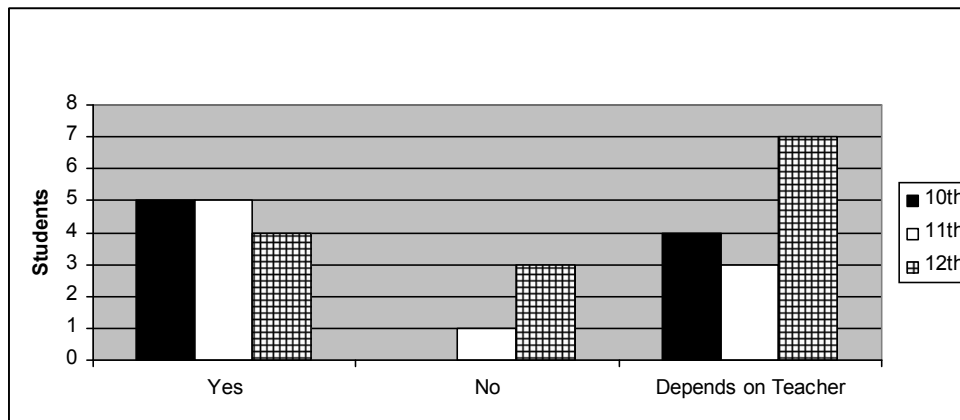
Twelve of the thirty two students (38%) in this research had lived in the US for some period of time. The other twenty (62%) have never lived in the US. This shows that few students have actually lived in a place where English is spoken in their immediate environment. The results also show that the majority of the 12th graders have not lived in the United States, yet most of the 10th graders have. This shows that most 12th graders have not had direct exposure of English; therefore, they may have more difficulty when dealing with the language.

English Use and Ability

The first question was to determine whether students liked or disliked the English class. Table 2 portrays students' opinion towards the English class.

Table 2

Students' Opinion of English Class



Fourteen of the thirty two students (44%) said they liked the English class; three students (12%) said they did not like the English class, and fourteen students (44%) said it depended on the teacher. This shows the importance of the teacher and the teaching techniques employed in class in order to develop interest for English. Llado-Torres (1984) suggested that students may react negatively or have negative attitudes towards certain books and materials, teachers and teaching methods, but not toward the English

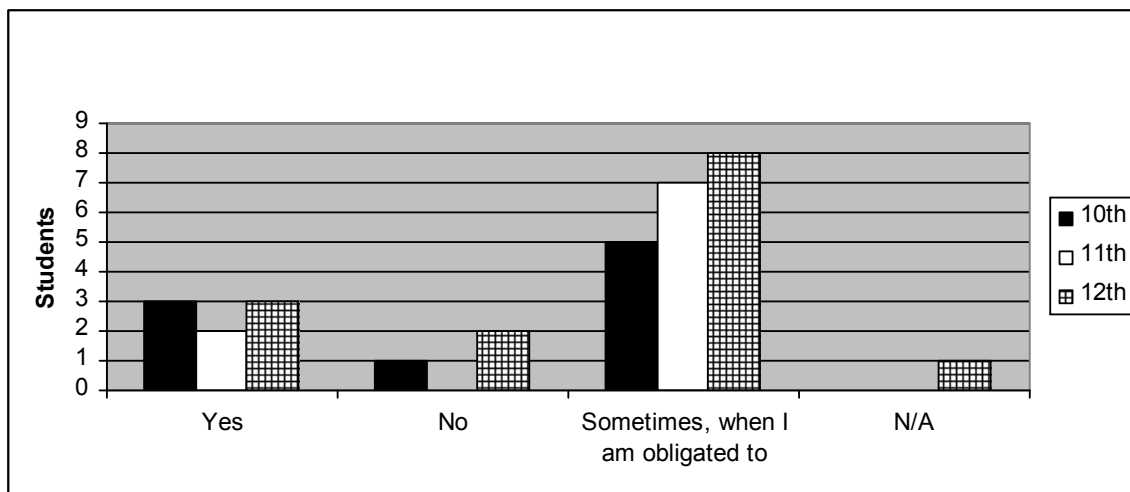
language itself, which supports the fact that most students chose “Depends on the teacher.”

Irizarry (2005), in contrast, stated, “Since 62% of the students agreed that they hated the English language, but only 23% agreed that they hated the English class, it seems reasonable to conclude that the negative attitudes that the students have toward English are negative attitudes toward the English language not toward the English class.” (p. 50). This differs from Llado-Torres’ findings and, furthermore, with my own findings in this study since most students claim that they *do* like the class.

The second question’s purpose was to see if students considered that they knew how to speak English. Table 3 shows the results of this question.

Table 3

Students Who Speak English



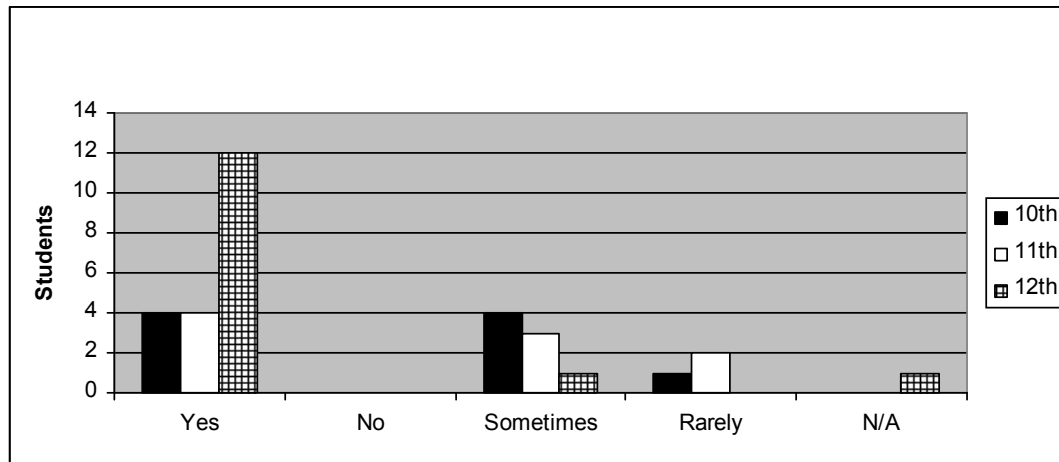
Results show that eight students (25%) considered they do speak English; three of the students (9%) consider that they cannot speak English; and twenty students (63%) said they only speak English when they are obligated. One student (3%) did not answer this question. Interestingly, all of the 11th grade participants consider they *do* speak English, but most of them do so only when they are obligated. The majority believed

they use the language to some extent. This shows that the vast majority of the students realize that they do not normally speak English; they only do so when they have to—especially the seniors. This may be due to the fact that they are soon to graduate and they realize that they lack this important skill; therefore, they feel insecure as to when/if they have to speak the language. Another factor can be their teacher and types of activities he/she has done with the students with the purpose of developing the oral communication skill. Maybe the skill has not even been developed at all. This is pertinent to what the mayor of Rincón stated, that teachers “enseñan inglés pero si uno viene a ver muy poca gente aprende a *hablar* en inglés” [teach English but...very few people learn how to *speak* English] (López) or at least feel comfortable doing so. Cuadrado Rodríguez’s study (as cited in Pousada, 1999) also shows that in terms of speaking English on the island “the majority of respondents felt that their oral English was poor. Only 30% considered their oral abilities to be excellent or good” (n.p.). This clearly portrays that this important skill is not being developed in ways that help students feel secure using the language in their social context. Although the language is taught, the predominant language which students use and, of course, feel more comfortable using is Spanish, their native tongue (Acevedo, 2008; Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987; Ferrer, 2007; Irizarry, 2005; Resnick, 1993).

The third question asked if students considered that English was spoken in their hometown, Rincón. Table 4 shows the results of this question.

Table 4

English Use in Rincón



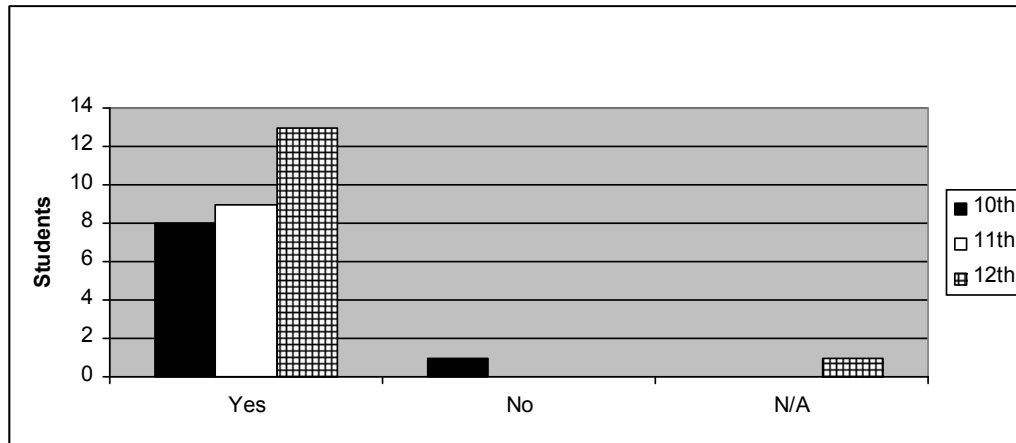
Twenty students (63%) believed that English was used in Rincón, PR; eight students (25%) believed that English was used sometimes; and three students (9%) said English was rarely used in Rincón, PR. One student (3%) did not answer this question. These findings show, at least to some extent, that all of the students knew that English was part of the social context of this town. Interestingly, the vast majority of the seniors are aware that English is spoken very much in Rincón, Puerto Rico. The fact that many seniors have their license and are socially more active compared to 10th and 11th graders may be the reason why they are aware of the language use in their social context. Many of them are also preparing to enter college and the entire process obligates them to deal with documents and sources that are in English (scholarships, books, college applications, etc). Some may already be in the process of finding jobs. This process may teach them that English is important for academic purposes as well as for economic and social purposes. The mayor of Rincón supports this idea, especially when he stated, “Es bien importante hablar el inglés para hacer negocios, trabajar en un negocio, para trabajar en cualquier lugar público debes saber inglés. Rincón es un pueblo que es un destino

turístico por naturaleza y que se necesita para uno poder servirle mejor a esas personas que viene a visitarnos.” [It is very important to speak English to do business, work in any local business, or to work in any public place. Rincón is a town that is a tourism spot by nature which is why we need to serve everyone that visits us] (López). In this town, it is evident that English is everywhere, just as Pousada (2007) stated, “on street and commercial signs, in product names, in instructions from taking medications and using electrical appliances, on cable TV, in newspapers, magazines and Hollywood movies, within the Federal Courts, and in all activities and domains related to tourism” (p. 3). This town, as stated by the mayor, “es un destino turístico” [it is a tourism spot], which is why it fits so perfectly with Pousada’s all-activities-and-domains-related-to-tourism statement. Although most of these are *read* advertisements, spoken English is also an important presence in this town. Everywhere you go there is a “gringo” (the common term Puerto Ricans use to refer to the Americans or native English speakers)—in the bakery, at the park, at the beach, at the local restaurants, everywhere. Therefore, it is reasonable to see how most students are aware that English is used commonly in their Rincón social context.

The fourth question asked if students’ believed that English and Spanish classes complemented each other, in other words, if they taught similar skills at the same time. Table 5 shows these results.

Table 5

Complementation between the English and Spanish Class



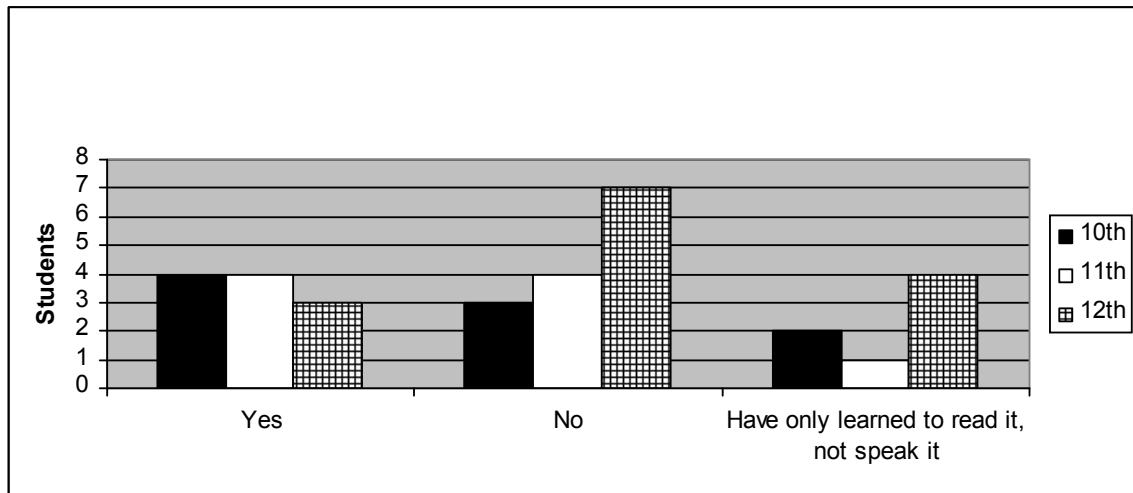
The majority of the students (94%) considered that English and Spanish complemented each other, while one student (3%) considered that English and Spanish did not complement each other. One student (3%) did not answer this question. The vast majority of the student participants believed that English and Spanish teachers taught similar skills in their classrooms. The *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations* (2007) state, “collaboration between the English and Spanish programs is crucial and necessary” (p.14). It seems, at least when looking at these results, that this collaboration between English and Spanish was occurring.

Feeling Towards English

The first question in this section of the questionnaire asked if students felt that their oral communication skills were good enough to enter the world of commerce and labor outside of Puerto Rico. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Students' Confidence in Speaking English in a Working Environment



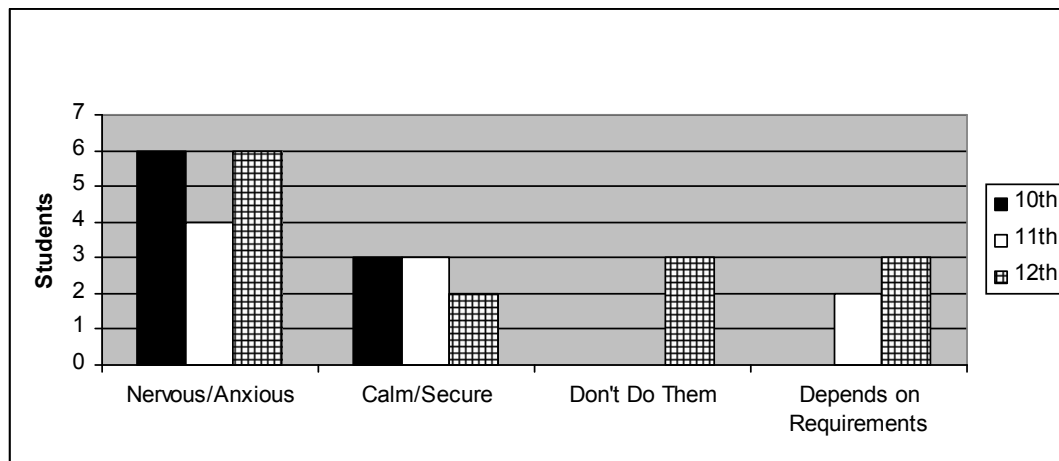
Eleven students (34%) felt confident using English in a working environment; fourteen students (44%) did not feel confident using English in a working environment; and seven students (22%) felt that they had only learned how to read it, not to speak it. This shows that twenty one of the student participants (66%) either did not feel confident speaking English or they felt that they had only learned how to read it, but not to speak it. When analyzing the previous table, it is clear most of the students who struggle most with confidence in using the English language were the seniors. Eleven of the fourteen senior participants either answered “No” or “Have only learned to read it, not speak it”—that is 79% of the senior participants. It is interesting to see that the students who were closest to graduating and joining the working environment felt this way towards the use of English, showing, once again, that after graduating from high school students still lack the speaking skills they need to use the language in the social context. This was expected because, as shown in the 2000 Census brief on language use and English speaking ability (Shin & Bruno, 2003) 71.9% of the population [in PR] reported that they spoke English

“less than very well” (p.5). The data showed that there is no doubt that something is wrong with the teaching of English in Puerto Rico, especially with speaking. The results from the 2000 Census and students’ answers to this question, especially the seniors’, do not parallel the Department of Education’s English *Curricular Framework* (2003) which states, “The English program is committed to promoting and facilitating the development of critical and creative thinkers capable of communicating effectively to deal with high expectations and demands of a society which is immersed in a global interchange and collaboration” (pp.12-13). Therefore, one can infer that for this skill the goal is not being met. This may be a result of the teacher not using this document and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* to plan and develop lessons to achieve this skill effectively. Furthermore, seniors’ lack of confidence when using the English language, although they were close to finishing their twelve years of English education, also serves as evidence that this skill is *not* effectively taught in schools.

The second question asked about the use of English in the context of the English classroom. The question asked how students felt when they had to do an English oral presentation in their class. Table 7 shows how these students felt when having to present in English.

Table 7

Students' Feelings Towards English Oral Presentations



Sixteen of the students (50%) said they felt nervous/anxious when delivering oral presentations in English; eight of the students (25%) felt calm/secure when delivering oral presentations in English; three of the students (9%) did not do their oral presentations in English; and five students (16%) claimed the way they felt when doing their oral presentations in English depended on the requirements. This clearly shows that most students did not feel comfortable delivering oral presentations in English. One quarter of the students (25%) felt secure while speaking English, while the other three quarters (75%) either felt nervous/anxious, did not do them, or the way they felt depended on the requirements. The majority of the seniors felt insecure towards English oral presentations. Interestingly, this supports the findings illustrated in Table 6 which also shows their lack of confidence in speaking English. Perhaps this is because these students were the ones closest to facing the “real world”; they struggle with speaking the language and were lacking the English oral skills needed to be more competent and prepared to be part of a working environment. This falls short of the DEPR goal that “students listen to and use language effectively to interact verbally in different academic

and social environments using different learning strategies and critical thinking skills” (*Curricular Framework*, p. 24). In the thirty observation hours, I realized that only one class period was dedicated to the English oral communication standard. During this class period, students had to do a Show and Tell oral presentation. Although this activity was designed to allow students to orally communicate, this did not happen—the standard was not developed at all. What all the students did, except one, was read their mini presentation (I call it mini presentation because they were 1-2 minutes each) out loud. Even more surprisingly, most of the students did their “oral presentations” sitting next to the teacher, that is, not in front of class. I wondered if those that did not present in front of class would lose points, but I realized that there was not an assessment rubric for this oral presentation, neither did the teacher mention during the class period how they would be evaluated. Maybe students already knew how they would be graded, but I never saw a rubric or a scale which would be used to assess students’ oral proficiency. When connecting these oral presentations with what is stated in the *Curricular Framework*, students were not using the “language effectively to interact verbally”. We can infer that although this is stated in the official document, “there is greater attention to grammatical structures and written expressions, in most educational contexts in Puerto Rico, students are more comfortable and accustomed to writing, rather than speaking in English” (Rosas, 2009, p. 73). This is the reason why students felt less comfortable when speaking than when writing in the TL.

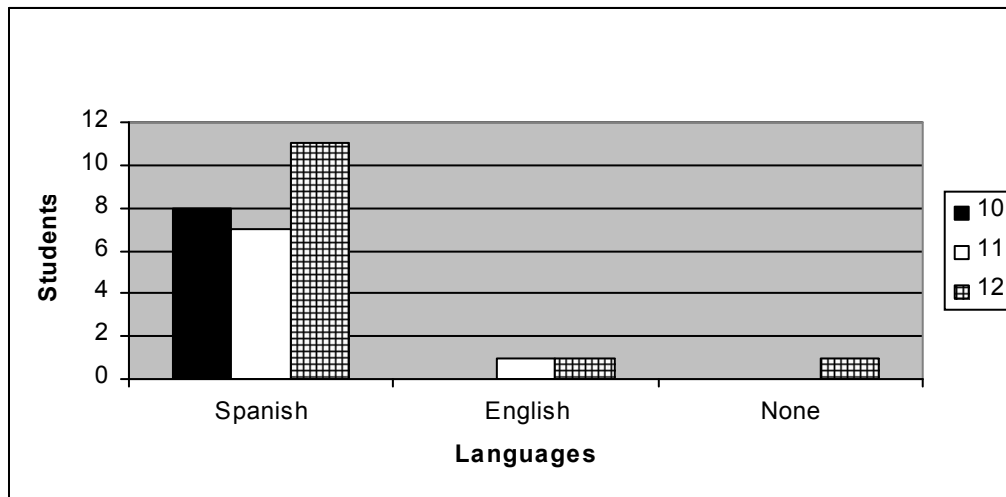
Furthermore, this goes against the approach that the *Content Standards* recommends teachers use, which is *Balanced Literacy*. This approach is based on the fact that all the language skills will be developed based on reading (*Content Standards*, p.

62) and, for this oral presentation students did a show and tell, which was in no way connected with the topics discussed in previous classes.

The third question asked students what class they felt was given more importance in their school: English or Spanish. Table 8 shows their point of view on this matter.

Table 8

Importance Given to Spanish and English in School



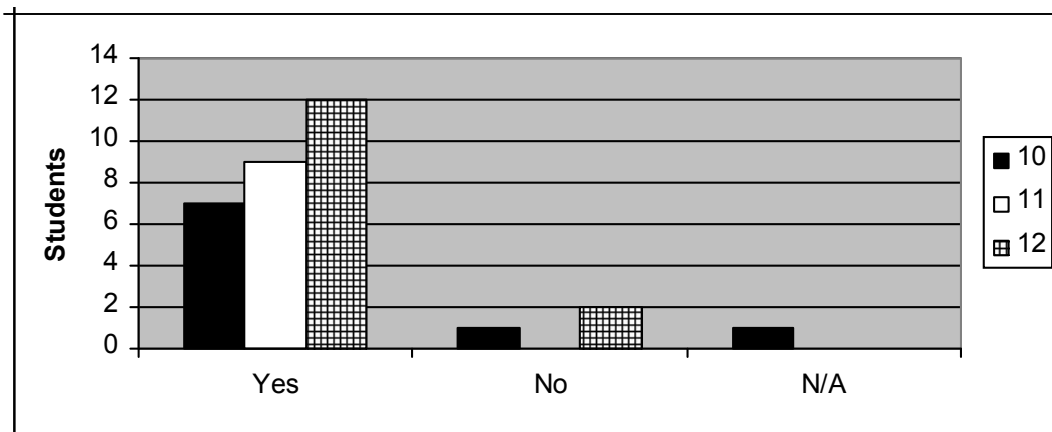
Twenty six students (81%) felt that more importance was given to Spanish; two students (6%) believed that more importance was given to English; one student (3%) did not answer the question. The vast majority of the students believed that Spanish was the language given most importance; this was expected because it is the first language spoken in all of their classes, their school, and Puerto Rico. Acevedo (2008), Ferrer (2007), and Irizarry (2005) agree that although there is exposure to the English language, Spanish continues being the language used by the majority of Puerto Ricans; thus the majority of students considered more importance was given to Spanish. These findings also fit in with the fact that Puerto Ricans feel a patriotic and identity attachment to their vernacular language: Spanish (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987; Resnick, 1993). In this

question, the majority of the seniors chose Spanish to be the language given more importance in their school. When comparing the last three questions and the answers given by all three grades, it is evident that seniors are the ones who: 1) feel less confident speaking English in a working environment; 2) struggle the most with anxiety and nerves when doing oral presentations and; 3) feel that more importance is given to Spanish than to English.

The fourth question asked if students believed that English oral communication was a very important skill they must use before graduating high school. Table 9 illustrates their overall answers to this question.

Table 9

Importance of English Oral Communication After High School



Twenty eight of the thirty two students (88%) believed that speaking English was a very important skill to be successful after high school; three students (9%) believed that English oral communication was not important; and one student (3%) did not answer this question. The majority of the students were aware that speaking English is an important skill for after they graduate high school. This means students were aware that English oral communication skills are of extreme importance in the working environment

(Figuerola (2009); López; Osborn et al. (2011); Tatum (as cited in Nakamura and Valens, 2001). Speaking is an essential skill in almost all the working places because, as mentioned by the mayor of Rincón, there are many tourists and Americans that not only visit, but also move to Puerto Rico. All this is part of the globalization process and the world of commerce. An example of this is Flores (2010), who found that when having nurses evaluate themselves in their efficiency of the four language skills, “the lowest rated was speaking, showing the area in which nurses are weak in English. When they were asked how they handle a patient that does not speak Spanish, the vast majority indicated that they look for another professional that knows the English language” (p. 86). This example shows how professionals in the nursing field struggle with speaking English and when confronted with patients that only speak the TL, they have to find someone to deal with them because they do not feel confident enough to use the language. People have many insecurities and problems with regard to how effectively they fulfill their work duties and responsibilities. If this skill were fully developed throughout the 12 years of English study, maybe these insecurities would be less serious.

The next two questions in this section go together; they focused on students who work and the use of English in their workplace. Tables 10 and 11 show the number of students who work and, of those who work, how many use English in their work place.

Table 10

Students who Work

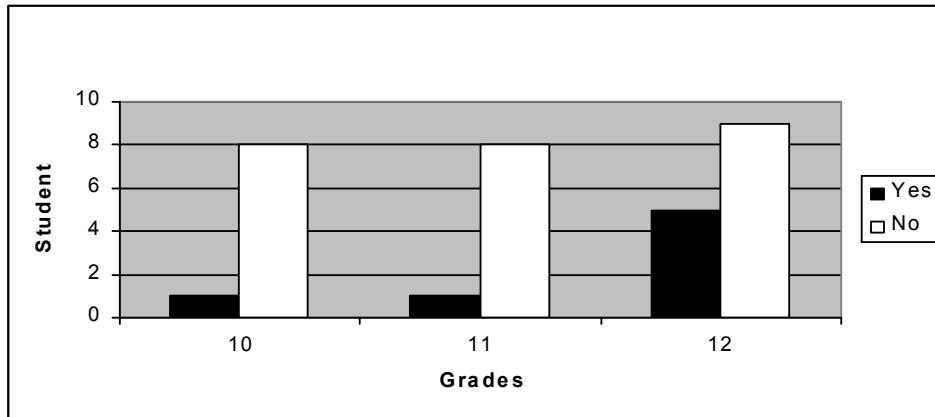
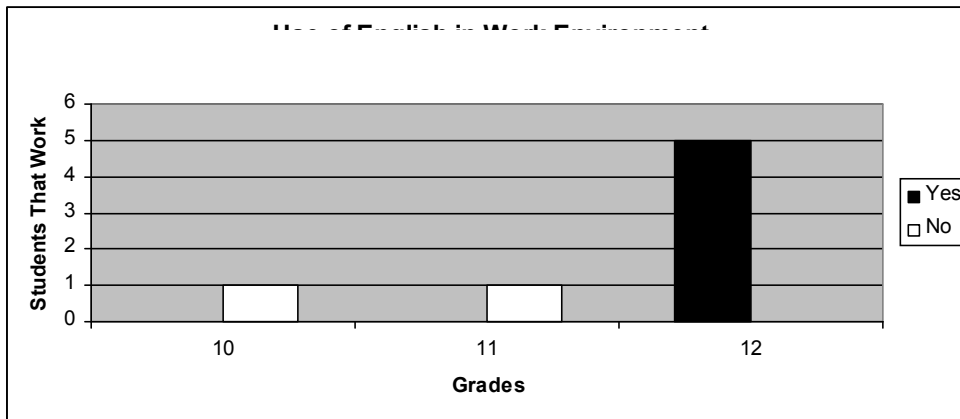


Table 11

Students Using English at Work Place



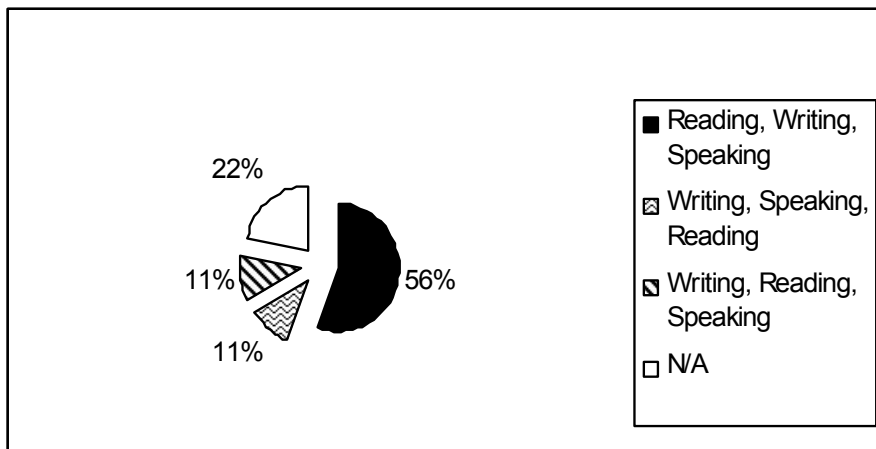
Seven students, out of the thirty two, worked (22%). Of these seven, five used or had used English in their work environment (71%). This relates to what the mayor of Rincón said, “[En Rincón] Es bien importante hablar el inglés para hacer negocios, trabajar en un negocio, para trabajar en cualquier lugar público debes saber inglés” [In Rincón] is very important to speak English to do business, work in any local business, or to work in any public place] (López). In this case, most of the students who answered “yes” to this question were seniors. Only one student from 10th and one from 11th grade

said they worked, while in 12th grade, five students worked and, interestingly, it was the seniors who had to use English in their work place at one point or another. Probably the younger students were not working directly with the customers or they have jobs which can be dealt with in the native language, while seniors seem to be dealing with the customers at jobs which demand the use of English.

The seventh question in this section dealt with the skills students' believed were most developed and least developed within the English class. They had to number from one to three the skills they thought had been developed most during their years of taking English in school: one being the skill least developed and three being the skill most developed. Tables 12, 13 and 14 show the order students from each grade felt the skills were developed.

Table 12

Order of Skills Developed in English Class in 10th Grade

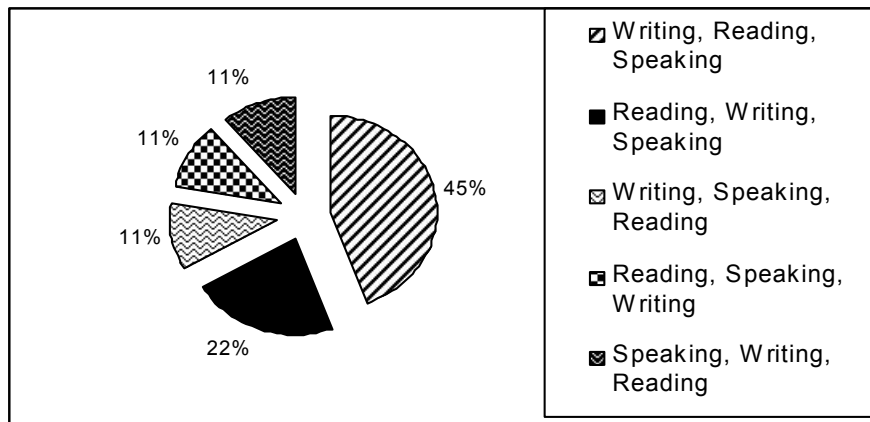


Five of the nine students (56%) considered that the order of skills developed was Reading, Writing, Speaking; one student (11%) considered the order was Writing, Speaking, Reading; another student (11%) believed the order was Writing, Reading, Speaking. Two students' answers were not clear so they could not be taken into account

for the results (22%). Overall, we see that six of the nine tenth grade students (67%) believed that Speaking was the skill least developed in their English class.

Table 13

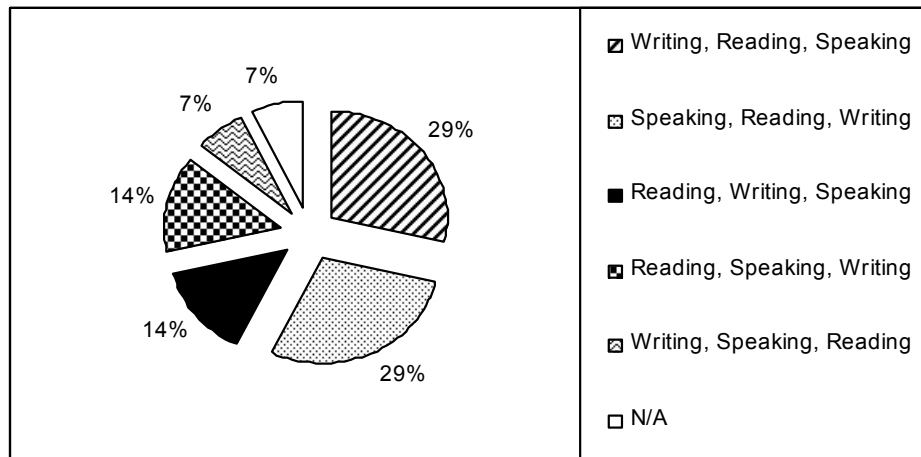
Order of Skills Developed in English Class in 11th Grade



Four of the nine students (45%) considered that the order of skills developed was Writing, Reading, Speaking; two students (22%) considered that the order was Reading, Writing, Speaking; one student (11%) believed the order was Writing, Speaking, Reading; one student (11%) believed the order was Reading, Speaking, Writing; another student (11%) considered the order was Speaking, Writing, Reading. Overall, six of the nine 11th grade students (67%) considered that Speaking was the skill least developed in their English class.

Table 14

Order of Skills Developed in English Class in 12th Grade



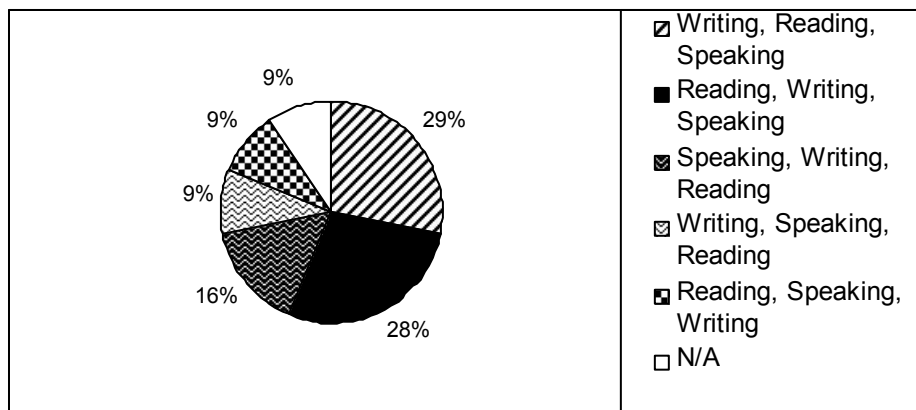
Four of the fourteen students (29%) considered that the order of skills developed was Writing, Reading, Speaking; four students (29%) believed that the order was Speaking, Reading, Writing; two students (14%) considered that the order was Reading, Writing, Speaking; two students (14%) believed that the order was Reading, Speaking, Writing; one student (7%) considered the order was Writing, Speaking, Reading; one student (7%) did not answer this question. Overall, six of the fourteen twelfth grade students (43%) considered that Speaking was the skill least developed. Consequently, we see findings such as Flores (2010) where nursing students and nurses considered that their weakest area in English was speaking. In the present study, 29% of the students believed that the skill least developed was Speaking, while another 29% considered the skill least developed was Writing; this specific group considered that Speaking was the most developed. This differs from 10th and 11th grade students since more than half of the students in both grade levels believed that the skill least developed was Speaking. In further analyzing this finding, we can infer that 12th grade teachers are probably giving more emphasis to speaking than the 10th and 11th grade English teachers because they

realize the importance of the English oral communication skill has for students after graduating from high school and, of course, these students are the ones closer to graduating. If so, there are still problematic areas because the majority of students still graduate with low speaking proficiency. It may be that the 12th grade English teachers are not providing enough oral communication activities, or maybe at this point it is just too late to develop this skill if previous teachers have not focused on teaching and developing it also.

The following table, Table 15, shows the findings for the three grades combined.

Table 15

Order of Skills Developed in English-10th, 11th, 12th Grade



Nine students (29%) believed that the order of skills developed is Writing, Reading, Speaking; nine students (28%) considered that the order of skills developed is Reading, Writing, Speaking; five students (16%) answered that the order of skills developed is Speaking, Writing, Reading; three students (9%) believed that the order of skills developed is Writing, Speaking, Reading; three students (9%) considered that the order of skills developed is Reading, Speaking, Writing; three students (9%) did not answer. Overall, only five students (16%) believed speaking was the skill most

developed, while eighteen students (57%) believed that speaking is the skill least developed. This may be the reason why the mayor of Rincón said in our interview, “they [teachers] teach English, but very few people learn how to *speak* English” [[maestros] enseñan inglés pero si uno viene a ver muy poca gente aprende a *hablar* en inglés] (López). Furthermore, Flores (2010), Irizarry (2005), and Morales (1992) also found that oral communication is one of the least developed skills in the ESL classroom. It seems as if the teachers need to come up with fresher and more effective ideas in order to develop this important skill. Giving an oral presentation that is not even integrated with the class topics every two months is clearly not going to give the students the tools and confidence they need to develop this skill. Providing students with the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with their peers and teachers is probably going to change the way students feel towards the skills developed in class. Blau and Dayton (1997) stated that there are three English language radio stations; the majority of the videos for rental are in English (although nowadays people can watch English movies with Spanish subtitles; which means that maybe the person does not understand by listening to the movie, but does understand by reading the subtitles); and the majority of the magazines in PR are in English, and today we even have cable TV, internet, and video games. Also, taking into account Rincón’s unique social environment—in which Americans and Puerto Ricans could have opportunities for communication—can increase students’ exposure and communication opportunities in the TL. Teachers should take advantage of these opportunities to incorporate and develop this skill more inside and outside of the classroom.

In the eighth and last question of the student questionnaire, students wrote a short narrative about their experiences with the English class and any positive experiences with a past English class. The purpose was for students to talk about what made that class different from the other English classes they had taken. Their comments were divided into six categories: positive comments, negative comments, positive comments about their Jr. High teachers, negative comments about teachers, positive comments about teachers and comments regarding oral communication (see Appendix P for summary).

There was an array of answers to this question. Students' comments portrayed how they felt towards the English class, their experiences with English teachers and their points of view towards English oral communication. In terms of how they felt towards the English class, some students wrote, "I don't understand", therefore, they do not like the English class. In addition, the comments "Not all the teachers speak English in the classroom" and "they [teachers] didn't pronounce English very well" show the importance of teachers serving as a model when speaking English in the classroom. Hay (2004) presents Jesus Rivera, an English teacher with twenty seven years of experience in PR, who stated, "Fifty minutes of English in a classroom is not enough for a student to learn a second language. When they go home, parents don't talk English, so they are not able to continue practicing" (n.p). Wynn (2004) presents an ESL teacher stating, ESL is based on the idea of teaching English using English. We aren't there to translate everything...but to make the English as comprehensible as possible" (n.p). The fact that some students do not comprehend the English class plays a very important role in how and if the students use the language in class and out of the class. Here we not only appreciate the importance of teachers using English in the classroom, but also making sure that students

comprehend what the teacher is saying in the English class. The issue of comprehension may play a role in this avoidance of speaking the language. This goes back to the student questionnaire where sixteen of the thirty two students (50%) said they feel nervous/anxious when delivering oral presentations in English. If they do not understand the English class or the language itself, how are they going to feel secure using the English language? This question remains unanswered, but what is clear is that the statements presented in the official documents, *Curricular Framework* (2003) and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* (2007), are not happening in reality. The *Curriculum* states that the students will finish their school years being able to use the language “to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and to express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts” (p. 15). Furthermore, the *Content Standards* state, “There is an integration of the four language arts with emphasis in the conversational phase when using Balanced Literacy” (p. 22). Based on students’ answers to this question, it is safe to say that these goals are not being met.

There are, though, five comments regarding their Jr. High teacher and how this specific teacher (whose name they never mentioned) helped them with their English skills. They mention that he/she allowed them to express themselves; he/she got students’ interest and gave various oral presentations emphasizing the use of English. They mentioned that this specific teacher also helped the students who did not understand. One negative comment was “I haven’t learned much because there is not much interaction with us.” Other comments were “some teachers don’t know how to explain well”; “there have been teachers that have not helped me at all, but others have”;

“the teacher doesn’t help at all”; “I have never liked the English class...No teacher has made me change my opinion” and “the only thing he/she does is fight.” All these comments show that many students evaluate their English classes based on the teacher and his/her techniques used in the class. It also shows that the more involved the students feel, the more they learn and appreciate the class. Llado-Torres (1984) showed that overall, students had positive attitudes towards the English language, but negative attitudes when it came to the English class; therefore, the teacher and the teaching techniques used in the classroom are very important within the English classroom.

In terms of English oral communication, one student wrote, “I feel secure speaking English” but adds that it is “because my mom has always spoken it in my house.” A different student wrote, “I like to speak it because sometimes I speak it unclearly but I try my best to communicate” while others wrote, “I would like to learn much more to communicate orally” and “I rarely do the oral presentations because I don’t know how to pronounce in English and I get too nervous.” Here we can see that the only student who said he/she feels secure speaking the language does so because he/she speaks English with his/her mother. In this specific case, the student has more exposure to the language outside of the classroom and, of course, that is why he/she felt secure using the language. The other three comments regarding English oral communication demonstrate that students want to develop this skill, but have not been successful in doing so. This, furthermore, connects with question seven in the student questionnaire which shows that 57% of the student participants in this research believe that speaking is the skill least developed in the English class.

The DEPR provides teachers with various techniques and strategies to foster oral

communication in English classes. The *Curricular Framework* provides suggestions such as *peer assessment*, *portfolio assessment*, and it even provides *Tips for Preparing a Portfolio* in addition to the grade level 10-12 Scope and Sequence (see Appendix Q for Scope and Sequence). Furthermore, the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* provides an entire section called *Listening and Speaking Strategies*. The strategies provided are: visual aids, realia, manipulative materials, repetition and oral routines, small-group discussions and role playing (see Appendix R for summary of each strategy). It even provides a rubric teachers can use to assess this skill (Appendix S).

As stated, the DEPR does provide teachers with tools and strategies to develop these skills, teachers are not obligated to use them because they are suggested activities—but they are there. Sadly, in my thirty observation hours, not once did a teacher use any of these strategies to develop speaking skills. The fact that “evaluation based on...oral tests was minimal” as stated by Morales (1992), may be the reason why students are not learning the language effectively and still today, after more than 110 years of English education on the island, students are not yet bilingual, nor do they finish with the necessary skills to speak the TL.

Teacher Interviews/Questionnaires

The teacher interviews focused on four main areas: teaching techniques, English and Spanish collaboration, evaluation and assessment techniques, and the use of the *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*. All these areas focused on the oral communication standard. The questions will be compared and contrasted individually.

Question One: *What techniques do you use to develop oral communication skills in your classroom?*

The 10th grade English teacher said, “My favorite is using controversial subjects to get them talking. Example: ‘On my way to work today I was ‘cut off’ by a woman driver.’ That’s so typical of them, right.” While the 10th grade Spanish teacher stated, “Es integrado con lecturas y basado en esas lecturas sacamos un tema para luego hacer un torbellino de ideas para luego aprenderlo y presentarlo oralmente. Los temas en general son sacados de lecturas y del diario vivir” [It is integrated with readings and based on readings we get a topic and from there we get ideas (brainstorm) to write and then learn it orally. Topics generally arise from readings and everyday life].

The 11th grade English teacher answered that he/she develops the oral communication standard with “Effective use of equipment, set of rules and regulations, integration”. The 11th grade Spanish teacher stated, “el desarrollo de comunicación oral se trabaja a través de preguntas abiertas que provoquen el argumentar críticamente, reflexiones, el uso del periódico y presentaciones orales sobre temas específicos” [The development of oral communication is dealt with through open questions which provoke the development of argumentative critiques, reflections, use of the newspaper and oral presentations about specific topics].

The 12th grade English teacher answered that he/she “uses various techniques such as: reading comprehension, vocabulary in context, oral communication.” The 12th grade Spanish teacher stated, “se usa el diccionario y oraciones en contexto, la escritura y la lectura. También uso mucho las preguntas de comprensión y reflexión. Usualmente busco casos de nuestra realidad social y ellos dialogan y opinan sobre las situaciones. De

ahí se hace la corrección” [We use the dictionary with sentences in context, reading, and writing. I also use many comprehension and reflection questions. Usually I use something from our social realities and they talk and provide their opinion about the situations. From there corrections are made].

More than half of the teachers answered that they use current issues and daily situations to develop conversations with their students. The Spanish teachers also focused their oral conversations with students based on the readings and they eventually used those topics that arose from those readings to do their oral presentations. Newspapers were also used by some teachers to develop conversations and oral presentations in the Spanish class.

Overall, teachers mentioned the use of oral presentations, and discussions based on readings and newspaper articles. The DEPR provides additional techniques, yet teachers do not seem to employ those techniques in their classroom. For example, the *Curricular Framework* recommends the use of *peer assessment* where students rate each others’ oral and written work (p. 65), *portfolio assessment* where students can have the opportunity to record themselves (audio or video) to view others’ explanations or oral presentations and also their own (p. 71), and the most common techniques used by the interviewed teachers: oral presentations. Out the three techniques recommended by this document, the teachers only used one.

The other document provided by the DEPR, the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*, also recommends other techniques such as the use of: visual aids, realia, manipulative materials, repetition and oral routines, small-group discussions and role playing (see Appendix R for summary of each strategy). It even provides a rubric

teachers can use to assess this skill (Appendix S). No teacher mentioned using any of these techniques provided in this document to develop the oral communication standard.

Using only a few techniques is also limiting the opportunities for students to effectively develop the oral communication skill. Referring to the findings from the student questionnaire, overall students do not feel comfortable doing their oral presentation, but maybe if teachers used other techniques they would get used to speaking in the classroom and lose that insecurity they feel when speaking in the TL.

Question Two: *Do you plan your classes independently from the Spanish class, or do you work together to teach the same skills in both languages?*

The 10th grade English teacher said, “It helps to know what the Spanish teacher is doing so students can relate and compare and contrast”. Here this teacher does not clearly state if he does plan classes independently or not. While the 10th grade Spanish teacher stated, “No las planificamos juntos, pero las destrezas a veces son las mismas (sinónimos, partes del cuento, etc.)” [We do not plan them together, but sometimes they are the same (ex. synonyms, parts of a story, etc.)].

The 11th grade English teacher answered, “Yes, but you can integrate the culture with your language.” The 11th grade Spanish teacher stated, “No. Aunque trabajemos destrezas en común no las planificamos. Los textos no son comunes y se nos dificulta la duplicación. No obstante hemos coincidido en algunas y cuando el estudiante compara le es favorable” [No. Although we work skills in common we do not plan them. The texts are not common and it is hard for us to get copies. Notwithstanding we have overlapped in some and when the students compare it helps them].

The 12th grade English teacher answered, “There may be times that when I’m teaching a skill, the Spanish teacher is also teaching the same, but that is just coincidence.” The 12th grade Spanish teacher stated, “generalmente me comunico con la maestra para ir a la par en relación a las destrezas gramaticales, y de escritura de ensayos” [Generally, I communicate with the teacher to teach the same grammatical and essay writing skills].

Only one of the teachers interviewed stated the importance of planning collaboratively which is why he does it. All the other teachers stated that although there may coincidentally overlap between the English and Spanish class topics being discussed, they do not plan collaboratively. This is not aligned with the English Program’s mission which states: “Therefore, collaboration between the English and Spanish programs is crucial and necessary” (*Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectations*, 2007, p.14).

Furthermore, Thomas and Collier’s (1999) study, referring to teaching bilingual education, states that teaching English and Spanish collaboratively, in other words, teaching more or less the same skills and themes at the same time, has proven to be beneficial for students and “when well implemented...[these] programs accelerate all students’ growth through a meaningful, bicultural, grade-level curriculum that connects to students’ lives inside and outside school” (p. 47). Moreover, Wallestad (2009) states, “frequently, both in the U.S. and in other countries, ESL teachers are required to work with multiple teachers who collaborate to improve their ELL students’ proficiency” (p. 17). Morales (1992) found that “peer communication between teachers scored low. It seems that teachers do not communicate among themselves...this matter should be looked into, in order for progress to occur for the teachers and the system” (p. 47).

Studies have shown that when teachers work together to improve language skills among students, it can make a difference in teaching more effectively. Based on the six teacher participants' answers, I found that this collaboration may not be occurring in the public school system. Interestingly, one could have inferred that teachers *did* plan collaboratively because question four in the student questionnaire revealed that the majority of the students (94%) considered that English and Spanish complemented each other, but the teachers' comments do not match the students' responses; teachers do not plan collaboratively.

Question 3: *What evaluation and assessment methods do you use to quantify the oral development skills of your students?*

The 10th grade English teacher said, "I use a 20 point rubric that covers content, delivery, organization, and creativity. I use a point scale of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1." While the 10th grade Spanish teacher stated, "Técnicas de assessment, presentaciones orales, exámenes escritos, etc." [Assessment techniques, oral presentations, written exams, etc.].

The 11th grade English teacher answered, "Ideas, facts, technology, cultural diversity, environment." This answer is not clear, which makes me wonder if the teacher understood the question or not (since in this case, it was a questionnaire, not an interview). The 11th grade Spanish teacher stated, "Generalmente se elabora una rúbrica específica con todos los informes y se le da a conocer a los estudiantes con anticipación" [Generally, I elaborate a specific rubric with all the presentations and I let students know beforehand].

The 12th grade English teacher answered that he/she used "Oral presentations and written presentations." What this teacher means by "written presentations" is a written

work that the students just have to read in front of class. The 12th grade Spanish teacher stated, “por lo general les ofrezco informes orales como resultado de lecturas o preguntas sobre informes de noticias. Los evalúo usando escalas del 1-5 especificando los criterios que vaya a evaluar” [Generally, I offer oral presentations from readings or questions about newspaper articles. I evaluate them using a scale from 1 to 5 specifying the evaluation criteria].

Interestingly, only three of the six mentioned they use rubrics to assess and quantify students’ oral proficiency. Those that *did* use rubrics are aligned with the *Curricular Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* because both mention the importance of using rubrics. Sample rubrics are provided in these documents and there are even guidelines to help teachers prepare them according to the standards and objectives (Appendix S). Preferably, all teachers should use rubrics, but only half mentioned they actually use them to assess oral communication. So the underlying question is other than using the rubric provided, what do teachers use to assess students oral communication? Although many teachers said they used rubrics and oral presentations, it is still what Morales (1992) called traditional evaluation; this meant “grading tests, homework, reports, oral talks and projects” (p. 47). She also found that evaluation on “oral tests was minimal” (p. 47), which is still the case.

If teachers do not provide evaluation techniques that involve speaking, students are probably losing the only opportunity they have to speak the language in the classroom thus affecting their second language acquisition. Furthermore, the mayor of Rincón stated that teachers need to use “mejores métodos que una persona pueda aprender a hablar” [better methods for a person to learn how to speak] (López). When talking about

“better methods”, he is referring to evaluation strategies. López supports Morales’ (1992) findings: English oral communication is not being developed or assessed effectively in our Puerto Rican schools; therefore, the oral communication standard is not developed efficiently.

In looking deeper at the teachers’ answers to this question, one notices that not all the interviewed teachers actually answered the question. For example, the 10th grade Spanish teacher just mentioned techniques she used, but she did not mention how she actually evaluated those techniques. Also, the 11th grade English teacher’s answer does not answer the question at all. It seems this teacher answered what is taken in consideration when developing this skill, but it is not clear. Furthermore, the 12th grade English teacher also mentioned techniques, not evaluation methods, thus, not answering the question either. One can assume that these three teachers did not understand the question; they may even be confused between the terms, techniques, and evaluation methods. Therefore, their answers are not helpful for the analysis of this question. Carroll (2005) states, “Questionnaires are distant and impersonal in the sense that the researcher does not get to ask follow up questions and thus cannot fully understand exactly why the participants answered the way they did” (p. 21).

Question Four: *Do you follow the Curricular Framework and the Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations to plan and develop the language skills, especially the oral development skill?*

The 10th grade English teacher answered, “There is no negotiation there. We must or our ‘supervisors’ have a field day with us. But I decide what’s appropriate for my students. So I analyze the Standards and apply my lessons according to the students’

needs.” While the 10th grade Spanish teacher stated, “Muchas veces los estándares no están alineados con materiales, temas, etc. Trato de utilizarlos, pero a veces hay que irse por encima de ellos” [Many times the standards are not aligned with the materials, topics, etc. I try to use them, but sometimes you must do more than what is required there].

The 11th grade English teacher answered, “Yes, so you can give an effective class.” The 11th grade Spanish teacher stated, “aunque se trabaja con todos los documentos se dificulta el pareo entre ellos algunas veces (organización de ideas con secuencia lógica, argumentación oral, exposición) sostener crítica valorativa” [Although we work with all the documents it is sometimes difficult to match them (organization of ideas with logical sequence, oral argumentations, exposition) sustaining a valuable critique)].

The 12th grade English teacher answered, “I use the English Curricular Framework as a guide for planning my courses and develop skills.” The 12th grade Spanish teacher stated, “Si, utilizo el Marco Curricular y los estándares y expectativas dentro de mi planificación diaria. Es la mejor forma de sistemáticamente cubrir destrezas básicas y comprobar el avance en la oralidad de mis alumnos” [Yes, I use the Curricular Framework and the Standards and Expectations within my daily planning. It is the best way to systematically cover the basic skills and assess my students’ oral communication].

All of the teachers stated that they prepare and plan their classes in accordance with both documents. Although they were aware of the importance of these documents, they also believed that at times they must “go over them,” “analyze them” and choose what is “appropriate for students” in order to meet class objectives. One even pointed out that sometimes it is “difficult to match them” and another believed that sometimes “the

standards are not aligned with class materials.” When analyzing teachers’ answers to the first question of this interview/questionnaire, one may assume that this is perhaps why teachers do not use or employ all of the teaching techniques these documents provide to develop oral communication in their classroom. This may be one of the reasons why Carroll (2005) found that “many classes...have little or no relation to the goals and expectations for English acquisition by students at the corresponding levels” (p. 1).

Furthermore, one teacher mentioned that if teachers do not use these documents “‘supervisors’ will have a field day.” This shows that sometimes teachers use these documents only because they feel obligated to rather than seeing it as a source or guide to help them organize their classes and better reach daily objectives and standards stipulated by the DEPR. This may be why, at times, they may or may not use the document as it should be used to develop their daily classes. I agree with Morales (1992) when she stated, “This does not mean that teachers are not doing their job but rather that there is no consensus on what should be done in class” (p. 53).

Although the *Curricular Framework* is a guide for teachers, it also provides the teachers the opportunity to make their own curriculum (p. 3); therefore, the *Curricular Framework* itself “allows teachers to teach whatever they deem necessary as long as it fits within the parameters of the document” (Carroll, 2005, p. 98). Giving teachers the open window to use the documents however they want to may be the reason why the objectives and standards are not achieved. These documents were created to satisfy an administration, not the teacher in the classroom. They seem to follow the top-down paradigm; thus, the DEPR is not taking into account either the materials available or the situations that occur in the classroom while trying to develop these skills (Morales, 1992,

p. 54). Although these situations persist and are clearly affecting the usefulness of these documents, teachers should try to follow them and strive to accomplish the grade level expectations and standards. There needs to be a balance—teachers should not be denied freedom to teach, but there has to be a set of information to follow so there is continuity throughout the years. This continuity will establish organization and coordination between the teachers and what is being taught in the English classroom. Therefore, more skills will be developed and the students will graduate from high school better equipped with not only better oral communication skills, but with all the necessary language skills to face their academic, personal and professional lives.

Research Question Results

Research Question One

Research question one asked: How do English and Spanish teachers develop the oral communication standard in the classroom? This research question is answered based on the thirty hours of observation in the English classroom and through the examination of the responses to the teacher questionnaire/interview for questions one and three: 1) What techniques do you use to develop English oral communication skills in your classroom?, 3) What evaluation and assessment methods do you use to quantify the oral development skills of your students?

In question one, four of the six teachers mentioned using everyday life experiences and current issues to get students talking and discussing orally. Therefore, English and Spanish teachers believe that using social realities and controversial topics in the classroom enhance student participation. Answers for question three show that five of the six teachers indicate that they use oral presentations.

When relating this data to the thirty observation hours in the English classroom, one can infer that although English teachers mention they *do* develop the oral communication standard, it is not the standard developed on a daily or even weekly basis. During those observations, which were done over a period of 5 weeks, only one class period was dedicated to “developing” this skill and even when “developing” the listening/speaking skill, the students were not really getting the benefit or learning to listen or speak, just to read. The only day in which one teacher developed this skill was the day students had to do an oral presentation. Out of the nineteen students present in class that day, only eleven did the oral presentation. Out of those eleven *only* two students did an actual English oral presentation in which they not only spoke about a topic in front of class, but they also answered various questions the teacher was asking; meaningful conversation was occurring during these two presentations—these two students in particular were not ESL learners, they were native speakers of English. The other nine students just read their “oral presentation” and out of those nine students who read their presentation, *none* of them did it in front of the class. Most students read their “oral presentations” to the teacher. This activity was really focused on reading aloud, and it did not develop oral communication. If this is how this skill is being developed in school, it is not reaching the goal of the DEPR which is that “students listen to and use language effectively to interact verbally in different academic and social environments using different learning strategies and critical thinking skills” (*Curricular Framework*, p. 24).

Based on activities like this, students are not going to be prepared to communicate effectively in the TL. Tatum (as cited in Nakamura and Valens, 2001) states, “Students

are in need of English oral communication skills...if they are to be competitive in the job market” (p.43). This is not going to be easy to achieve if students are not engaged in meaningful conversations in their English classroom. This is also what Rosas (2009) and Morales (1992) found, that speaking is not thoroughly developed in schools. This was also portrayed in the findings of the student questionnaire, where we saw that eighteen student participants (57%) believe that speaking is the skill least developed in the English class.

Students who are about to graduate from high school finish their twelve years of English instruction with various gaps that lead them to have difficulty in the job market and in college. This may be one of the reasons why this past year (2010-2011) many students who entered the UPRM were registered in either pre-basic or basic English (Carroll), the lowest levels of English that the UPRM offers. One of these courses, the pre-basic, is a non-credit course; it is a remedial course which has as a purpose to teach students vocabulary and the most basic skills in order to bring them up to a level where they can be successful in the basic course.

Although English teachers all stated that they *did* develop this skill, it is evident that they did not—at least not as expected based on the guidelines provided by the DEPR. Not once in my observations did a teacher have a meaningful conversation with any student in which he/she served as both speaker and listener. Teachers may have asked questions about a given topic (which they did), but students answered in Spanish, not in English. This shows, once again, that students did not “listen to and use language effectively to interact verbally” (*Curricular Framework*, p. 24).

Research Question Two

Research question two asked: How do English and Spanish teachers follow the latest *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*? How are they similar/different? This question was answered through the examination of the results of the teacher questionnaire/interview data, question 4: Do you follow the *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* to plan and develop the language skills, especially the oral development skill?

All of the teachers stated that they prepared and planned their classes in accordance with both documents. Although they were aware of the importance of the purpose of these documents, some also believed that at times they had to “go over them,” “analyze them,” and choose what was “appropriate for students” in order to meet class objectives. One even pointed out that sometimes it is “difficult the leveling between them” and another believes that sometimes “the standards are not aligned with class materials.” It can be inferred that the developers of these documents, who are mostly professors, supervisors and a limited number of DEPR teachers, did not take into consideration the schools’ realities, students’ true knowledge, and the available resources the teachers actually have in order to achieve all of the standards and objectives stated in the DEPR’s documents, *Curricular Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*. Given the common situations amongst the teachers in this study and many other teachers that have also mentioned similar situations in other studies (Carroll, 2005; Morales, 1992), one can assume that it is not only because of the teachers that the objectives are not met, but it is also the creators’ error for not taking into greater consideration teachers’ voices when developing these documents.

This may be one of the reasons why Carroll (2005) found that “many classes...have little or no relation to the goals and expectations for English acquisition by students at the corresponding levels” (p. 1). Furthermore, Morales (1992) showed that although these documents exist, there still is “lack of guidance and direction” and that teachers should have a say in the development of these documents because “After all, they are the ones who know what should be done in the ESL classroom” (p.54).

Research Question Three

Research question three asked: How do students feel towards listening and speaking English in the classroom? This question was answered based on the thirty hours of observation in the English classroom and through the examination of the results of the student questionnaire data, questions 9, 10, and 12. These questions were: 9) Do you feel that your oral communication skills are good enough to enter the world of commerce and labor outside of the US? 10) How do you feel when you give English oral presentations in front of you class? 12) Do you feel that English oral communication is a very important skill you must employ when graduating from high school?

Twenty one of the student participants (66%) answered they either do not feel confident speaking English or they feel that they have only learned how to read it, but not to speak it. One quarter of the students (25%) feel secure while speaking English, while the other three quarters (75%) either feel nervous/anxious, they do not do them or they do them depending on the requirements. Twenty eight of the thirty two students (88%) were aware that speaking English is a very important skill for success after high school.

During the observations, it was evident that students did not use the language, not even during the English class. When talking to each other and even to the teacher, they would do so in Spanish, not in English. The only time students said words in English was

when they were discussing questions or exercises when the answer of these was only one word or phrase, but based on the skill that was being developed (e.g. “fact”, “opinion”, “true”, “false”, “declarative”, “interrogative”, etc.). In my opinion, orally saying words or phrases mentioned previously in the class does not constitute a meaningful conversation in English. When having a meaningful conversation about the class or any other topic, the students spoke in Spanish. This seems to show the lack of capacity and security students have when speaking in English, again portraying that this skill was the least developed in the English classroom.

The standards addressed during my thirty observation hours were as follows:

- Reading-16 class periods
- Reading and Writing-7 class periods
- Writing-6 class periods
- Oral-1 class period

Sixteen class periods (53%) addressed the Reading Standard; seven class periods (23%) addressed both the Reading and Writing Standard; six class periods (20%) addressed the Writing Standard; while only one class period (3%) addressed the Oral Communication Standard. It seems that students do not feel comfortable speaking the TL because, from what can be inferred from these class observations, this skill was hardly being dealt with in the English class. Grammar, syntax, and pronunciation—which are skills students must employ in order to communicate effectively—were not assessed or dealt with at all during these thirty observation hours.

To have a better idea of what exactly was being taught in all three grades, below are all the skills that were taught in the English classes during my observation hours:

- Vocabulary Development-3 class periods
 - Finding definitions from story and using words in context.
- Types of Sentences-1 class period
 - Identifying and making different types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory)
- Fact and Opinion-3 class periods
 - Identifying sentences as fact or opinion
- Reading Comprehension-1 class period
 - Answering questions about a story
- Fact and opinion, Vocabulary and Types of Sentences-2 class periods
 - Identifying each of these in a story
- Homophones, Antonyms, Synonyms and Homonyms-4 class periods
 - Identifying pairs of word
- Telling students their grade-1 class period
 - No direct skill developed
- Elements of Drama-1 class period
 - Students copied definition of each from board
- Reading play out loud and answering questions about it-5 class periods
- “Oral Presentation”-1 class period
 - Students mostly read their “oral presentations”
- Cause and Effect-5 class periods
 - Identifying sentences
- Reading and Vocabulary Development-1 class period

- Reading a story and finding vocabulary words in text
- Reading Comprehension-2 class periods
 - Reading a story and answering questions about it

As you can see, each class was devoted only to one skill per class period. These observations clearly show that teachers spoke mostly English in the classroom, but when students had difficulty understanding the rules or instructions, teachers translated to Spanish. Therefore, there was no negotiation of meaning, the teachers just translated to Spanish in order for students to fully understand the rules or instructions. Teresa Troyer, an ESL teacher, believes that “ESL is based on the idea of teaching English using English. We aren't there to translate everything...but to make the English as comprehensible as possible” (as cited in Wynn, 2004, n.p.). In terms of speaking/listening in the classroom, having teachers serve as a speaking model is not the only important factor in the development of oral communication, but having students speak the language is also of crucial importance. In these cases, although the teachers spoke and explained in English, they quickly translated the instructions and rules to Spanish in order to get students working on the task at hand. This may not be useful for students because if English teachers do not make an effort to speak only English in the classroom, students may not make sufficient effort in speaking or even completely understanding what the teacher has said in the TL. Students will know that eventually the teacher will translate to Spanish, allowing them to believe that there is no need to work hard in order to understand English.

Through the findings of this study, one can see that students are aware of the importance of speaking English in their future. Sadly, students are also aware of the fact

that they have not acquired the skills in order to feel secure speaking the language in public contexts. This suggests that the oral communication skill is not developed efficiently (Acevedo, 2008; Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987; Hay, 2004; Irizarry, 2005; Morales, 1992; Resnick, 1993; Rosas, 2009; Velez, 1999).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined how the Spanish and English oral communication skill was developed in a high school of Rincón, Puerto Rico. It examined how the teachers developed this skill following the DEPR documents, *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* and the *Curricular Framework*, and how they dealt with these documents. Another purpose of this study was to see how students viewed English oral communication and to discover how they felt when speaking in English both in class and outside of the ESL classroom.

The main findings from this study were the following:

- Of all the techniques provided by the DEPR to assess the oral communication standard, teachers only use oral presentations.
- Although teachers say they *do* use these documents, they adapt them to the needs and circumstances of their situations. That is, they may change, adjust and alter these guides in order to fit the materials at hand and the students' prior knowledge.
- English and Spanish teachers do not plan collaboratively. When teaching the same skills, it occurs coincidentally, not intentionally.
- In terms of students' view of English, results show that students are aware of the importance of the English language, but are also aware that they lack the skills to use the language effectively inside and outside of the English classroom, especially the oral communication skill.

- Due to students' lack of oral communication skills, they feel anxious/nervous when speaking the language.

The remainder of this chapter addresses pedagogical implications of these findings, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Pedagogical Implications

Puerto Rico is becoming more and more involved with Americans and tourists from around the world as part of the globalization we are going through, but we still hear many Puerto Rican students saying, “Yo no sé inglés” (I do not know English) and “Ni lo hablo, ni lo entiendo” (I do not speak it, nor understand it). Therefore, it is the job of English teachers to help our Puerto Rican students by teaching them how to use this language in our social context. The results of this study provide an image for the English teachers of what the situation looks like from the students' perspective, and it shows that teachers should evaluate and change the ways they develop the oral communication standard to benefit their students. By following the documents designed by the DEPR, using various teaching techniques and evaluation methods, working collaboratively with the other teachers (especially Spanish teachers), and providing students with opportunities to speak the language in class will greatly improve students' abilities to speak the TL.

In addition to more attention to providing more opportunities for speaking English, another pedagogical implication is that teachers should take into consideration how students feel about speaking and expressing themselves in English. When teachers prepare and design their classes knowing how students feel, they can create activities in

order to make students feel more comfortable using the language thus giving students more confidence.

Also, integrating media, radio, television, movies, cable TV, Internet and even video games can be of great use within the English classroom. Most of these materials are in English and bringing them to class will not only get students involved and motivated, but will also provide the exposure they need of the language in a way that is different and less traditional. Teachers should take advantage of these opportunities and materials to incorporate and develop speaking/listening inside of the classroom.

Two of the three English teachers who served as participants in this study are retiring in the next two to three years. Therefore, providing this study to the director will show what this research has found and it can help new English teachers who are going to teach at this specific school, thus improving the secondary level ESL teaching in Rincón's only high school. Some overall suggestions for new English teachers are:

- Use various techniques and strategies in order to reach more students.
- Provide students with more tasks where meaningful conversations take place in class.
- Provide more writing tasks. Writing is a great way to work with grammar and syntax—both much needed when speaking the language.
- Try to work with other teachers, especially the Spanish teachers. Collaboration between teachers will definitely help students connect skills and develop them more thoroughly.
- Take advantage of the unique language situation we have in Rincón; give students tasks where they have to speak English with a non-Spanish speaker—

there are many in this town. If this turns out to be difficult for you, bring non-Spanish speakers to class (with the proper permissions and the director's consent, of course). There may be some that are willing to help you in developing your students' oral communication skills.

- In the beginning of the school year, do activities in which students have to write down their interests, hobbies and future plans. By doing this, you can plan your English classes according to students' needs and interests; therefore, you can make the English class more relevant to their lives.

This study also shows whether the DEPR documents are actually helping the English teachers or not. The *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* are documents that were created by many supervisors, college professors, and a limited number of teachers. Therefore, students' prior knowledge and teachers' ability to use such materials are not taken into account when developing these documents. Consequently, there are various reasons that impede the use of these documents as the DEPR intended:

- Not all of the objectives and standards are always aligned with the materials available in the classroom.
- Teachers are not trained in how to use these documents effectively in the classroom.
- The purpose in actually using these documents is not clear.
- Maybe the documents are not specific enough in what and how everything should be done in the classroom in order to achieve the objectives.

Limitations of the Study

The teacher interviews were initially intended to be oral and, if teachers allowed, those interviews were going to be recorded. Many of the teachers preferred to respond to the interview as a questionnaire and not as an interview as was intended by the researcher. By having these teachers answer the questionnaire in written format, some of the questions were answered superficially rather than in depth. The reason many teachers preferred to treat the interview as a questionnaire was that they lacked time. The period chosen to do these interviews was during the grading period, teacher/parent meetings, etc.; therefore, many teachers were not available to be interviewed by me.

Another limitation to this study was the fact that not all the students from each group participated in the study. There were approximately 20-25 students per group and, in the end, less than half of the students participated in this study, giving me a smaller sample of students. This was due to many factors such as: some students were absent on the day the teacher gave me permission to administer the questionnaire, students would not give parents the consent forms, parents may not have agreed to sign the consent form, or students simply may not have wanted to participate.

Although this high school is the only one in Rincón, the fact that only one school on the island was taken into account is also a limitation because it is just a very small sample of teachers and students; therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. Perhaps having used more than one high school in the West side of the island would have provided more information of what is happening in the ESL classroom with regard to teaching or developing the oral communication skill.

Although the observations served as a snapshot of what was going on in the English classroom, they were not enough to say exactly what skills and standards were being developed throughout the entire school year. Perhaps some skills that were not developed during the periods I observed were in fact developed before or after my observations.

Direction for Future Research

The teaching of oral communication is very complex and should be examined in greater depth in order to come up with more efficient ways to develop the skill in our Puerto Rican schools. Conducting similar studies throughout the island and providing teachers suggestions and recommendations on how to develop the oral communication skill and providing unique strategies and techniques to them will not only delve further into this issue, but it will also offer possible solutions to this problem. As a teacher who helps adults with their English oral communication skills in a private academy, the first and most important suggestion is to always promote respect in your classroom. We must never accept nor tolerate mockery in our language classroom if someone does not pronounce a word correctly or has a strong accent. Secondly, do not only teach rules, grammar, syntax, verbs, subject/verb agreement, etc, but place everything into practice every single day, even when the major objective is not speaking/listening. When putting this in practice on a daily basis and serving as a model all the time—that is, teachers should always speak English—students will get used to having to speak/listen in English and they will not feel as threatened or nervous as they usually do because they will slowly get used to it. Respect and consistency are key if educators are consistent and

they keep the goals and objectives in mind, I have not doubt that there will be positive change in our educational system, especially in the teaching-learning ESL.

Analyzing and comparing the teaching skills and techniques used to develop the oral communication standard in public schools and in private schools could also benefit this area of study. Students who graduate from private schools are usually more communicatively competent than those who graduate from public schools. Is this always the case? If so, why? Are the materials and resources teachers use very different? How? What are private schools doing right? Can public schools learn from them? It would be interesting to see what is done differently in both types of schools.

By understanding why and how teachers use the official documents provided by the DEPR, *Curricular Framework* and *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations*, maybe we can see whether or not, in reality, these documents are helping the development of these skills in the ESL classroom. Conducting a study only focusing on ESL teachers and how they use these documents can also provide a clearer view of the use and assessment of these documents.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of PR Language Policies

Source: Algrén de Gutiérrez, J. (1987). *The movement against teaching English in schools of Puerto Rico*.

The following presents a summarized list of the seven language policies in PR from 1898 through 1949 (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987, p. 9-10):

1. **Eaton-Clark (1898-1900)** – This policy intended to teach no Spanish at all. Classes were taught with English as the medium of instruction in all grades.
2. **Brumbaugh (1900-1903)** – Spanish was the medium of instruction in the elementary grades and English was a subject; in high school this pattern was inverted.
3. **Faulkner-Dexter (1903–1917)** - Policy reverts back to the Eaton-Clark policy where English was a medium of instruction in all grades, except that Spanish was taught as a subject.
4. **Miller-Huyke (1917-1934)** – This policy alternated Spanish and English as a subject and medium of instruction in schools. The first four grades used Spanish as the medium of instruction while grade five was a transitional one, with half of the core subjects taught in Spanish and the other half in English. Grade six through twelve used English exclusively as the medium of instruction.
5. **Padín (1934-1937)** – Policy reverts back to the Brumbaugh where Spanish was used in the elementary grades and English was taught in high school.
6. **Gallardo (1937-1945)** - This policy changed through various programs: Spanish was used in grades one and two with English as a subject. Grades three to eight, alternated with Spanish and English as the language of instruction in different subjects, along with the progressive increase in the time allotted to English as a subject. Three different approaches were followed for teaching of English in grades seven and eight. In high school English became the medium of instruction with Spanish taught as a subject. In 1942, the policy reverted back to the Padín policy.
7. **Villaronga (1945-Present)** – Spanish is the medium of instruction at all the levels of the public school system and English is taught as a preferred subject.

Appendix B

Teachers' Consent Form

Consent Form – Interview/Questionnaire

I, _____, give permission to Giselle M. Muñoz, Graduate student at UPR Mayagüez, to use information provided by me to be used in her MA thesis.

This research may be published in local, regional, national and international channels, including professional conferences and symposia as well as in professional journals, newsletters, books and other print and electronic forms. I understand that this study is comprehensive in nature and relies on quantitative and qualitative methods.

I also understand that my participation is strictly voluntary and that I will not receive any compensation for my contribution to any proceedings or results. I am aware that nothing bad or incorrect will occur if I decide to terminate my participation in this study at any time.

I understand that by signing and dating this form I give my consent to Giselle M. Muñoz to use the information I provide through interviews and audio taped sessions and/or questionnaire, as a part of a research project that will likely result in publication.

I understand that I will be given a pseudonym to protect my identity and maintain the confidentiality of the research. All of the tapes and/or written notes that are collected will be placed in a secure area under code until they are eventually destroyed after a year.

Signature

Date

Name Printed

Giselle M. Muñoz

Provided by Kevin Carroll (2005)

Appendix C

Interviews English Teachers

1. What techniques do you use to develop English oral communication skills in your classroom?

2. Do you plan your classes independently from the Spanish class, or do you work together to teach the same skills in both languages? Please explain.

3. What evaluation and assessment methods do you use to quantify the oral development skills of your students?

4. Do you follow the *Curricular Framework* and the *Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations* to plan and develop the language skills, especially the Skill of oral development? Please explain.

Appendix D

Teachers' Consent Form (Spanish)

Hoja de Consentimiento-Entrevista/Cuestionario

Yo, _____, le doy permiso a Giselle M. Muñoz, estudiante graduada de la UPR Mayagüez, para utilizar la información provista por mi para el uso de su tesis de maestría.

Esta investigación podría ser publicada en canales locales, regionales, nacionales e internacionales, incluyendo conferencias y simposios al igual que en revistas profesionales, libros y otros recursos impresos y electrónicos. Entiendo que este estudio es comprensivo y que se basa en métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos.

También entiendo que mi participación es estrictamente voluntaria y no recibiré ninguna compensación por mi contribución en el mismo. Entiendo que nada malo e incorrecto sucederá si decido terminar con mi participación en este estudio en cualquier tiempo.

Comprendo que al firmar este documento doy mi consentimiento para que Giselle M. Muñoz utilice la información que yo provea a través de entrevistas y grabaciones y/o cuestionarios, como parte del proyecto investigativo que probablemente sean publicados.

Yo entiendo que se me dará un seudónimo para proteger mi identidad y mantener la confidencialidad de la investigación. Todas las grabaciones y notas que serán recopiladas estarán guardadas en un lugar seguro hasta que eventualmente serán destruidas después de un año.

Firma

Fecha

Nombre Letra Molde

Giselle M. Muñoz

Appendix E

Interviews Spanish Teachers

1. ¿Qué técnicas utiliza para desarrollar la expresión oral del idioma español en su salón de clases?

2. ¿Usted planifica sus clases independientemente de la clase de inglés, o trabajan juntos para dar las mismas destrezas en ambos idiomas? Favor explique.

3. ¿Qué métodos de evaluación y avalúo utiliza para cuantificar las destrezas de desarrollo oral de sus estudiantes?

4. Usted sigue el *Marco Curricular* y los *Estándares de Contenido y Expectativas de Grado* para planificar y desarrollar las destrezas del idioma, especialmente la destreza de la comunicación oral? Favor explique.

Appendix F

Parents' Consent Form for Student Questionnaires

Consent Form – Questionnaire

I, _____, give permission to Giselle M. Muñoz, Graduate student at UPR Mayagüez, to use information provided by my son/daughter to be used in her MA thesis.

This research may be published in local, regional, national and international channels, including professional conferences and symposia as well as in professional journals, newsletters, books and other print and electronic forms. I understand that this study is comprehensive in nature and relies on quantitative and qualitative methods.

I also understand that my participation is strictly voluntary and that I will not receive any compensation for my contribution to any proceedings or results. I am aware that nothing bad or incorrect will occur if I decide to terminate my participation in this study at any time.

I understand that by signing and dating this form I give my consent to Giselle M. Muñoz to use the information my child provides through a questionnaire, as a part of a research project that will likely result in publication.

I understand that I my child will be given a pseudonym to protect the identity and maintain the confidentiality of the research. All of the questionnaires that are collected will be placed in a secure area under code until they are eventually destroyed after a year.

My Signature

Date

My Name Printed

Giselle M. Muñoz

Provided by Kevin Carroll (2005)

Appendix G
Student Questionnaire

I. Socio Demographic

1. Grade: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Parents' Income:
 - a. 50, 000 or more a year
 - b. 30, 000-49,999 a year
 - c. 10, 000-29,999 a year
 - d. 9,999 or less a year
4. Have you lived in the United States?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.

Please explain:

II. English Ability and Use

5. Do you like the English class?
 - a. Yes. I like to learn English.
 - b. No. I never understand English spoken language.
 - c. It depends on the teacher who is teaching the subject.

Please explain:

6. Do you know how to speak English?

- a. Yes. I speak English inside and outside of the English classroom.
- b. No. I don't speak English under any circumstance.
- c. Sometimes. When I am obligated to use the language.

Please explain:

7. As a citizen of Rincon, Puerto Rico. Do you think that English is spoken in social context here in your hometown?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Sometimes.
- d. Rarely.

Please explain:

8. Have you ever taken Spanish and English classes that compliment each other?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

Please explain:

III. Feeling Towards English

9. You have taken the English class since kindergarten; do you feel that your oral communication skills are good enough to enter the world of commerce and labor outside of the US?

- a. Yes. I feel that I can use the English language confidently in any company.
- b. No. I hardly speak English and speaking it makes me very nervous.
- c. I feel that I have not learned how to speak English, only read it.

Explain:

10. How do you feel when you give English oral presentations in front of you class?

- a. Nervous and anxious.
- b. Calm and secure.
- c. I don't present orally in my English class.
- d. It depends on the requirements of the presentation.

Explain:

11. What language do you feel is given most importance to in your school?

- a. Spanish
- b. English
- c. Neither (briefly explain if you answer neither)

Explain:

12. Do you feel that English oral communication is a very important skill you must employ when graduating high school?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

Explain:

13. Select which of these English skills have been most developed in your school years so far. (Place in order of 1, 2, 3—most 3, least 1)

- a. Oral Communication (Listening/Speaking) _____
- b. Reading Comprehension _____
- c. Written Communication _____

Explain:

14. Write a short narrative of how your English classes have been so far (Spanish or English, however you like). If there was a teacher that you really liked, mention why you liked his/her class (without mentioning the name of the teacher).

Appendix H

Parents' Consent Form For Student Questionnaires (Spanish)

Hoja de Consentimiento-Cuestionarios

Yo, _____, le doy permiso a Giselle M. Muñoz, estudiante graduada de la UPR Mayagüez, para utilizar la información provista por mi hijo/a para el uso de su tesis de maestría.

Esta investigación podría ser publicada en canales locales, regionales, nacionales e internacionales, incluyendo conferencias y simposios al igual que en revistas profesionales, libros y otros recursos impresos y electrónicos. Entiendo que este estudio es comprensivo y que se basa en métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos.

También entiendo que participación de mi hijo/a es estrictamente voluntaria y no recibirá ninguna compensación por su contribución en el mismo. Entiendo que nada malo e incorrecto sucederá si decido terminar con la participación de mi hijo/a en este estudio en cualquier tiempo.

Comprendo que al firmar este documento doy mi consentimiento para que Giselle M. Muñoz utilice la información que provea mi hijo/a a través un cuestionario, como parte del proyecto investigativo que probablemente sea publicado.

Yo entiendo que se le dará un seudónimo a mi hijo/a para proteger su identidad y mantener la confidencialidad de la investigación. Todos los cuestionarios que serán recopiladas estarán guardados en un lugar seguro hasta que eventualmente serán destruidas después de un año.

Firma

Fecha

Nombre Letra Molde

Giselle M. Muñoz

Appendix I

Student Questionnaire Spanish

I. Información Socio Demográfica

5. Grado: _____

6. Edad: _____

7. Sueldo Padres:

a. 50, 000 o más al año

b. 30, 000-49,999 al año

c. 10, 000-29,999 al año

d. 9,999 o menos al año

8. Has vividos en los Estados Unidos?

a. Si.

b. No.

Favor explique:

II. Uso y Habilidad de Inglés

5. Te gusta la clase de inglés?

a. Si. Me gusta aprender inglés.

d. No. Nunca entiendo cuando me hablan en inglés.

e. Depende en el maestro quien da la clase.

Favor explique:

6. Sabe como hablar bien en inglés?

- a. Si. Hablo inglés dentro y fuera de la clase de inglés.
- b. No. No hablo inglés bajo ninguna circunstancia.
- c. A veces. Cuando estoy obligado/a a utilizar el idioma.

Favor explique:

7. Como ciudadano de Rincón, Puerto Rico, cree que el inglés se utiliza en el contexto social aquí en este pueblo?

- a. Si.
- b. No.
- c. A veces.
- d. Rara vez.

Favor explique:

10. Ha cogido clases de inglés y español en el cual ambas clases se complementen?

- a. Si.
- b. No.

Favor explique:

III. Opinión sobre el Inglés

9. Usted ha cogido la clase de inglés desde kindergarten; considera que su habilidad de comunicarse oralmente son lo suficientemente buenas como para enfrentarse al mundo laboral y comercial fuera de Puerto Rico?
- a. Si. Siento que puede utilizar el idioma del inglés con seguridad en cualquier compañía.
 - b. No. Casi no lo puedo hablar y cuando estoy obligado a utilizarlo me pongo muy nervioso/a.
 - c. Siento que no he aprendido a como hablar bien el inglés, solo he aprendido a leerlo.

Favor explique:

10. Como se siente cuando tiene que hacer una presentación oral en la clase de inglés frente a sus compañeros de clases?
- a. Nervioso/a y ansioso/a.
 - b. Calmado/a y seguro/a.
 - c. Yo no hago mis presentaciones orales en la clase de inglés.
 - d. Depende en los requisitos de la presentación.

Favor explique:

11. A qué idioma tu sientes que se le da más importancia en la escuela?

- a. Español
- b. Inglés
- c. Ninguno (brevemente explique si contesta ninguno)

Favor explique:

12. Considera que la comunicación oral en inglés es una destreza muy importante que debe utilizar luego de graduarse de la escuela superior?

- a. Si.
- b. No.

Favor explique:

13. Seleccione cual de estas destrezas en inglés han sido mas desarrollados en sus años de estudios. (Ponga en orden utilizando 1, 2, 3—más desarrollada 3, menos desarrollada 1)

- a. Comunicación Oral (Hablar/Escuchar) _____
- b. Comprensión de Lectura _____
- c. Comunicación Escrita _____

Favor explique:

14. Escriba un corto narrativo sobre como sus clases de inglés han sido hasta ahora (puede contestar en inglés o en español). Si ha tenido un maestro de inglés que le ha ayudado mucho, mencione las razones porque considera que este maestro hizo una diferencia en su educación (no mencione el nombre del maestro).

Appendix J

Guide for Observations Daily Checklist of Objectives & Techniques

Class Observed:

Spanish _____

English _____

Content Standard Addressed

Listening/Speaking _____

Reading Comprehension _____

Writing Communication _____

Techniques Used

_____ Read Alouds

_____ Role Playing

_____ Discussions

_____ Field Trips

_____ Phonics and Phonemic Awareness Activities

_____ Fluency Development-Reader's Theater, Echo Reading, Oral Cloze,

Choral Reading

_____ Teacher Modeling, Think Alouds, Direct Instruction

_____ Vocabulary Exploration

_____ Listening to Fluent Speakers

_____ Answers questions, follows and completes commands and directions

_____ Shared, Guided, Paired, Independent Reading

_____ Videos

- _____ Guest Readers and Speakers
- _____ Performances, Poetry Readings
- _____ Literary Panels and Debates
- _____ Research, use of latest technology, and visits to library
- _____ Author and student models
- _____ Peer Edits
- _____ The Writing Process
- _____ Comprehension Activities

(These techniques are provided in the *Content Standards and Grade-Level Expectation*, p. 67)

Comments/Notes:

Appendix K

Mayor's Consent Form

Hoja de Consentimiento-Entrevista

Yo, Carlos D. López Bonilla, Honorable Alcalde de Rincón, Puerto Rico, le doy permiso a Giselle M. Muñoz, estudiante graduada de la UPR Mayagüez, para utilizar la información provista por mí para el uso de su tesis de maestría.

Esta investigación podría ser publicada en canales locales, regionales, nacionales e internacionales, incluyendo conferencias y simposios al igual que en revistas profesionales, libros y otros recursos impresos y electrónicos. Entiendo que este estudio es comprensivo y que se basa en métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos.

También entiendo que mi participación es estrictamente voluntaria y no recibiré ninguna compensación por mi contribución en el mismo. Entiendo que nada malo e incorrecto sucederá si decido terminar con mi participación en este estudio en cualquier tiempo.

Comprendo que al firmar este documento doy mi consentimiento para que Giselle M. Muñoz utilice la información que yo provea a través de entrevistas y grabaciones como parte del proyecto investigativo que probablemente sean publicados.

Yo entiendo que se me dará un seudónimo para proteger mi identidad y mantener la confidencialidad de la investigación. Todas las grabaciones y notas que serán recopiladas estarán guardadas en un lugar seguro hasta que eventualmente serán destruidas después de un año.

Firma

Fecha

Nombre Letra Molde

Giselle M. Muñoz

Appendix L

Mayor Interview

1. ¿Qué usted opina sobre el uso del idioma inglés en este pueblo de Rincón, PR?

2. ¿Me podría dar un estimado de cuántos norteamericanos residen en el pueblo de Rincón, PR?

3. Como residente de Rincón, ¿considera que el idioma se utiliza mucho en nuestro contexto social?

4. ¿Considera que los estudiantes de Rincón se gradúan de 4to año con la habilidad de comunicarse efectivamente en ambos idiomas?

5. ¿Usted estudió en escuela pública? Si contestó *si*, que destrezas usted recuerda que utilizaban los maestros para desarrollar las destrezas de comunicación oral en inglés?

6. ¿Cree usted que tener la habilidad de comunicarse en inglés es importante para el desarrollo personal y profesional de nuestros estudiantes rincoeños? Explique.

7. ¿Como podría el municipio propiciar actividades donde se le provea al estudiante oportunidades para desarrollar el dominio de comunicarse en inglés?

Appendix M

English Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations, p. 49

TENTH GRADE

LISTENING/SPEAKING:

The student uses the English language to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts.

The student:

L/S.10.1 Listens and responds during a read aloud, presentation, or performance from a variety of literature, periods, genres, and styles to analyze character development, setting, tone, voice, and mood; makes connections to the text.

L/S.10.2 Listens and responds to analyze, organize, explain, describe, support, and discuss information; answers and formulates closed and open ended questions.

L/S.10.3 Uses appropriate language structure to state opinions in discussions and presentations, to problem solve, and to explain a process integrating comparison and contrast statements.

L/S.10.4 Expresses thoughts and opinions to discuss current events, concepts, themes, characters, plot, and conflict and resolution; makes predictions and inferences, as well as draws conclusions from listening to a variety of texts, performances, and multimedia sources.

L/S.10.5 Explains the main idea or topic and important details from learned concepts or readings, and summarizes, analyzes, and compares and contrasts a topic from a variety of text using appropriate language structure.

Appendix N

English Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations, p. 53

ELEVENTH GRADE

LISTENING/SPEAKING:

The student uses the English language to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts.

The student:

L/S.11.1 Listens and responds during a read aloud, presentation, or performance from a variety of literature, periods, genres, and styles to analyze character development and setting, and to distinguish the characteristics of tone, voice, and mood; makes connections to text.

L/S.11.2 Listens and responds to synthesize, explain, describe, support, and discuss information; answers and formulates closed and open-ended questions.

L/S.11.3 Uses appropriate language structure to analyze and state opinions in discussions and presentations, to problem solve, and to explain a process integrating comparison and contrast statements.

L/S.11.4 Expresses thoughts and opinions to discuss current events, concepts, themes, characters, plot, and conflict resolution; makes predictions and inferences, as well as draws conclusions from listening to a variety of texts, performances, and multimedia sources; listens to sort and prioritize information.

L/S.11.5 Analyzes the main idea or topic and important details from learned concepts or readings from a variety of persuasive texts; summarizes, explains, clarifies, and discusses effectiveness of text, performance, speech, or literature.

Appendix O

English Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations, p. 57

TWELFTH GRADE

LISTENING/SPEAKING:

The student uses the English language to interpret oral input, construct meaning, interact with confidence both verbally and nonverbally, and express ideas effectively in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts.

The student:

L/S.12.1 Listens carefully during a read aloud, presentation, or performance from a variety of literature, periods, genres, and styles to interpret and analyze character development, dialogue, and setting; makes connections to text; evaluates tone, voice, and mood.

L/S.12.2 Listens and responds to synthesize, explain, describe, analyze, justify, and debate information; answers and formulates closed and open-ended questions.

L/S.12.3 Uses appropriate language structure to analyze and evaluate issues, to problem solve, to explain a process, and to express opinions integrating comparison and contrast statements.

L/S.12.4 Expresses thoughts and opinions to evaluate text, debate current events, concepts, and literary elements; makes predictions and inferences, as well as draws conclusions from listening to a variety of texts, performances, and multimedia sources; listens to sort and prioritize information.

L/S.12.5 Analyzes and explains the main idea or topic and important details from learned concepts or readings from a variety of persuasive texts; summarizes, evaluates, and judges effectiveness of the text, performance, speech, or literature.

Appendix P

Students' Comments Regarding English class

Answers Question 16 Student Questionnaires

<p>Positive Comments</p> <p>N=10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It has been good for me -I like it because I understand when teacher explains -I have liked them a lot -My experience has been very good -My English classes have gone well -My English classes have been good -I like English -In the English class I have done well -I have done well -The English classes have been good
<p>Negative Comments</p> <p>N=8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -We hardly did anything and all that time I lost -I have never liked the English class. I have passed the class because I listen to the teacher. No teacher has made me change my opinion. - the English class is not too good because I don't understand anything -My classes have been bad because I rarely understand the material -I began the 12th grade I have noticed that my English is not good -I haven't learned much because there is not much interaction with us -I don't like the English class because I don't understand what they talk and I feel lost. -I don't like the English class much because I don't understand what they speak.
<p>Positive Comments about Jr. High Teachers</p> <p>N=5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -My eighth grade teacher helped me a lot -I liked the 9th grade one would give you a binder and everything was writing and expressing yourself. -The eighth and ninth grade teachers were the only ones that have actually put interest in the students -I think my Jr. High teacher was the best that prepared me because she gave various oral presentations and she did emphasize on English and she helped the student that did not understand. -I have learned a lot thanks to the Jr. High teacher and my mother and, like all other students, my favorite teacher because of how he/she teaches and how he/she helps the students.
<p>Negative Comments about teachers</p> <p>N=8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teacher doesn't help at all - Not all the teachers speak English in the classroom -Not very good because they didn't pronounce English very well -Some teacher don't know how to explain well. -The only thing he/she does is fight and give paper every single day. -Well in the previous years the teacher helped us a lot not like the teacher that we have now

Positive Comments about teachers N=3	-There are teacher which I enjoy taking class with because they help you and you learn more. -There have been teachers that have not helped me at all, but others have. -Well the teacher has helped me to dominate the English language
Comments regarding Oral Communication N=4	-I feel secure speaking English because my mom has always spoken it in my house -I like to speak it because sometimes I speak it unclearly but I try my best to communicate -I would like to learn much more to communicate orally. -I rarely do the oral presentations because I don't know how to pronounce in English and I get too nervous.

Appendix Q

10th-12th Grade Scope and Sequence

Curricular Framework, p. 36

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCOPE and SEQUENCE

Grade Level 10-12

Content Standard #1	Concepts	Skills	Attitudes and Values	Assessment
Oral Communication				
- The student listens to and uses language effectively to interact verbally/non-verbally in different academic and social environments, using different learning strategies and critical thinking skills.	- communication - ideas - thought - thinking process - oral language - expression - non-verbal cues - writing - feelings - planning - details - sequence of events - main idea - questions - topic - talk freely	<p>Tenth Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listens to a short selection and identifies details, main idea or sequence - Selects a topic and talks freely about it <p>Eleventh Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listens to a short selection and identifies details, main idea or sequence <p>Twelfth Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listens to a short selection and identifies details, main idea or sequence - Selects a topic and talks freely about it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of verbal and nonverbal communication - Willingness to share experiences and ideas - Willingness to talk in front of others - Willingness to risk errors - Confidence in one's ability to communicate in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observation (rubric or checklist) - Recording of conversations and discussions (rubric or checklist) - Student-teacher interview (rubric) - Self assessment (checklist) - Peer assessment (checklist) - Oral presentations (rubrics, checklist) - Anecdotal records

Appendix R

Listening and Speaking Strategies

English Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations, p. 73

Visual Aids

Visual aids such as photographs, drawings, posters, and videos provide an opportunity for students to explore known images as well as develop new mental images to discuss in the context of previewing text and setting the purpose for learning.

Realia

Realia is using real objects and materials to explicitly demonstrate a concept that are abstract. Students can then relate the instruction to real life experiences and prior knowledge.

Manipulative Materials

Hands-on activities and materials build background and context. Manipulatives may include gestures, body language, and supportive speech patterns.

Repetition and Oral Routines

Repetition helps build vocabulary as students are provided ample time to hear correct pronunciation and time to practice words.

Small-Group Discussions

Discussing learned concepts provides time for students to have adequate practice speaking the language in a controlled, safe environment.

Role Playing

Role playing is a simulation technique that enables the student to practice language and behavioral skills in a safe-environment that is motivating and relevant to the age of the learner.

Appendix S Rubric

English Content Standards and Grade Level Expectations, p. 83

SAMPLE ORAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

Criteria	1- Unacceptable	2- Minimally Acceptable	3- Proficient	4- Advanced	Score
Content	Central idea/purpose is not stated; content is erroneous or irrelevant; support for assertions is largely absent.	Central idea/purpose is stated; content is accurate but not always relevant; support is offered but inadequate for some assertions.	Central idea/purpose is clearly stated; content is accurate and relevant; credible support is provided for each assertion.	Central idea/purpose is vividly stated; content is accurate, thorough, and directly on point; strong support is provided for each assertion.	
Organization	Little or no structure present. Presentation is confusing to the audience; no logical sequence of ideas; frequently off topic.	Identifiable structure is present but not consistently executed; may contain several statements out of place and occasionally deviate from topic.	Identifiable structure is present and consistently executed with few statements out of place.	Identifiable structure is presented in a purposeful interesting, effective sequence and remains focused.	
Language	Grammar, pronunciation, and/or word choice are severely deficient.	Isolated errors in grammar, pronunciation, and/or word choice reduce clarity and credibility.	Presentation is free of serious errors in grammar, pronunciation, and/or word usage.	Presentation is free of errors in grammar and pronunciation; word choice aids clarity and vividness.	
Adaptation to Audience and Context	Content and/or style are occasionally inappropriate to the audience and/or context. Presentation falls well outside set time parameters.	Content and/or style are occasionally inappropriate to the audience and/or context. Presentation falls slightly outside set time parameters.	Content and/or style are consistently appropriate to the audience, and/or context. Presentation meets set time parameters.	Content and/or style are consistently appropriate and targeted to audience and context. Presentation makes full, effective use of time and stays within parameters.	
Vocal Delivery	Vocal delivery is too soft to hear, too fast to understand and/or long, unintended silences and speech disruptions (repetitions; filled pauses, e.g., "um") frequently distract audience.	Vocal delivery is audible. Rate, volume, or speech disruptions only occasionally distract from audience comprehension.	Vocal delivery is clear and distinct. Rate, volume, and tone facilitate audience comprehension.	Vocal delivery is varied and dynamic. Speech rate, volume, and tone enhance listener interest and understanding.	
Nonverbal Delivery	Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement, and/or facial expressions are inappropriate and significantly distracting.	Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement, and facial expressions neither enhance nor hinder effectiveness significantly.	Some but not all of the following apply: Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement or facial expressions enhance presentation.	Most or all of the following apply: Eye contact, posture, attire, gestures, movement or facial expressions enhance the presentation.	

Adapted from educators.about.com/cs/rubrics