

# ¡A CONVERSAR!

4

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



## Tara Bradley Williams

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## **¡A CONVERSAR! 4: INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Lección 1</b> .....	<b>11</b>
• Studies/Degrees Vocabulary	
• Job Titles Vocabulary	
• Music & Dance Styles	
<b>Lección 2</b> .....	<b>15</b>
• Past Tenses: Preterite & Imperfect	
• Animal Vocabulary	
<b>Lección 3</b> .....	<b>21</b>
• Computer & Technology Vocabulary	
• Introduction to Debates & Expressing Opinions	
• Money Vocabulary	
<b>Lección 4</b> .....	<b>25</b>
• Household Vocabulary	
• Giving detailed descriptions	
• Asking for Advice, Expressing Opinions & Prioritizing	
<b>Lección 5</b> .....	<b>27</b>
• Asking for Clarification	
• Slang & Regional Expressions	
• “Love” Vocabulary	
<b>Lección 6</b> .....	<b>33</b>
• Reflexive Verbs	
• Health Vocabulary	
• Basic Medical Techniques	
<b>Lección 7</b> .....	<b>37</b>
• Law & Political Vocabulary	
• Questioning Skills	
• World Issues	
• Religion Vocabulary	
<b>Lección 8</b> .....	<b>41</b>
• Presentations	
• Debate: Multinationals	
• Review	
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>45</b>
• Review Ideas	

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Spanish Immersion curriculums of Pronto Spanish Services, LLC. We are very proud of our materials and have helped hundreds of students get a jump-start on Spanish in a fun, interactive environment.

If you are reading this now, you probably went through a similar process as we did of looking for an appropriate curriculum for your Spanish class. We found that there were several wonderful books and texts out there, but we could not find one that met all our needs. We therefore created our own curriculum that includes conversational activities and games with little grammar explanations that could be taught in relatively short periods of time.

Please be advised that we do not claim that our students become immediately fluent through our courses. An advanced level of Spanish obviously takes years of studying, grammar classes, and very possibly, living overseas for an extended period of time. We do, however, claim that our students WILL learn basic conversational Spanish through fun, interactive exercises and games. They will feel more comfortable listening to Spanish and responding in the appropriate way to get their ideas across. For many adult learners, this is what they want—to accomplish simple communication.

What follows is the Instructor's Guide for our Levels 4 course, designed for approximately 14-18 hours of Spanish instruction. This course does not need to be taught in Weekend Immersion format, as it was originally intended. It is absolutely flexible as a course taught over several weeks. We therefore further divided our Levels into approximately 2-hour "Lecciones" to assist with your planning. See our Teacher Resource Page on our website for sample syllabi to our courses in a variety of formats, including a Spanish Immersion Weekend, non-credit classes, and for-credit, accelerated learning courses.

**Please also note that this level was designed to follow Levels 1-3 conversational courses, which covered little grammar. This was intentional, so as to allow students to feel fairly comfortable with the language first, and then learn more of its structure later. This course is much more grammar intensive, trying to bring it all together. However, we recognize this may pose a small problem if students are entering Level 4 without taking the previous Pronto Spanish courses. Most likely, Level 4 students are already familiar with many basic grammar points. If this is the case, simply do a quick review and move on "pronto" to activities more at their level.**

We hope that you find as much value in the Instructor's Guide and corresponding workbook as we do. Please contact us at any time if you have questions, suggestions, or just want to run an idea by us. We look forward to hearing from you!

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## Teaching Method

The curriculum does not follow one strict methodology. Rather, it is a combination of several methods, combined with games and activities that will help promote adult learning. In addition to the general “communicative” approach, two methods that are used throughout the course in with which instructors may not be familiar are called “**Total Physical Response**” (TPR) and “**Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling**” (TPRS). As the names imply, they are related.

**TPR** was first introduced in 1963 by Dr. James J. Asher, a professor at San Jose State University. While this method was slow to have been adopted, many middle schools, high schools, and post-secondary institutions now offer some form of TPR in their foreign language curriculum.

The premise behind TPR is that it is easier to learn a foreign language in the same way we learned our native language. Just as babies do not learn the endings for verb conjugation first, neither do they learn the difference between an indefinite and definite article at the beginning of their exposure to their first language. Rather, babies learn by listening. Furthermore, it is only after this time of listening to how the language is put together that they begin to form spontaneous words and phrases themselves.

In the TPR methodology, instructors ask students to perform certain commands through body actions. For example, the instructor will say “levántate” (stand up), and the students will do just that. The instructor will then follow with “siéntate” (sit down) and the students follow the command performing the action of sitting down. There is no need to repeat the word, write it down, nor respond verbally. After a few times, students recognize these words without a problem. They will understand the action communicated without needing to translate the verb into English. Research has shown that students will soon spontaneously begin to “blurt out” responses without the pressure to speak it themselves.

Notice the similarity between how babies learn and how students can learn?

The amazing aspect of this methodology is that students WILL learn grammar along the way. They will begin to recognize that “un” or “una” means “a” in English. They may or may not automatically pick up past subjunctive using this method, but the primary goal of this method is for students to feel comfortable speaking.

**“Total Physical Response Storytelling” (TPRS)** was developed by Blaine Ray in 1988. He found that TPR, with its emphasis on the imperative or command form, could only go so far. TPRS adds the narrative and descriptive aspects of a language and assists the student to begin producing language on his/her own. Most importantly, TPRS provides students with long-term retention of the language. Recently, “TPRS” has changed its name to **“Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling.”** Not only is this name clearer, but it also puts greater emphasis on reading to help develop foreign language proficiency. All of the TPRS stories, therefore, have been placed in the Student Workbook Appendix to assist in the language process.

While we will outline the basic steps of TPR and TPRS, it is recommended that you read about these topics. Please see the following Reference page for suggested books, websites, and seminars.

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## References

Asher, James J. (2000). *Learning Another Language Through Actions*. Sky Oaks Productions, Inc. Los Gatos, CA.

Ray, Blaine & Contee Seely. (June, 2002). *Fluency through TPR Storytelling*. Command Performance Language Institute, Berkeley, CA and Blaine Ray Workshops, Bakersfield, CA.

I would also suggest taking a seminar in your area on TPRS to fully understand the process. You can find upcoming seminars at:

[www.tpr-world.com](http://www.tpr-world.com)  
[www.blaineraytprs.com](http://www.blaineraytprs.com)  
[www.tprstorytelling.com](http://www.tprstorytelling.com)

Finally, for the utmost support in your new endeavors, consider joining the TPRS listserv. Information can be found at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/moretprs/>

## The 7 Steps of TPRS

**B**efore you begin, have your story ready and if you prefer, write out all of the new vocabulary words for the students to see.

1. **Teach 3 - 4 new vocabulary words at a time.** These are taught through gestures (TPR). Have the students practice the gestures. This should be limited to 2 minutes. You start out by “modeling” the action for the students, “delay modeling” for a few seconds to see if they can get the action on their own, and then once you feel they comprehend the new vocabulary, stop modeling.
2. **Assess.** One good way of knowing when the students feel comfortable with the words and gestures is to assess with a closed-eyes comprehension test. When the students know the words, move on to the next step. You can also add “chain commands” to check their comprehension and add more challenges. For example, say “levántate, siéntate, camina” all together and the students will do those 3 actions one right after another. Switch up the order of the words so the students really have to listen. You can also add words, such as “camina despacio”, “camina rápido”, or “novel phrases”, such as “camina como un elefante” and “canta como Elvis”. This adds interest on the part of the student and makes the class more enjoyable.
3. **Assign students to act out the story** while you are telling it. Use the new vocabulary words in personalized questions and answer through a “mini-situation.” At this point, ask lots of *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *how*, *how many*, *how much*, *which ones*, and *how long* questions. The mini-situation will be bizarre (eliminate the expected) and have elements from the students’ lives, as well as and exaggeration. Exaggerate the size and numbers to create interest and to aid in long-term memory.
4. **Teacher retells** the same story two more times while continuing to ask a lot of detail questions. This gives the students more input and an opportunity to provide new minor details. It also gives them a great deal of repetition of the new words.
5. **Students retell the story.** Students retell in pairs, groups and/or to the class, contributing to their memory of the vocabulary and story. This should be kept to a limit of 5 minutes.
6. **New Perspective:** Teacher teaches students how to retell from another perspective. For example, if the story was in third person before, teach the story in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person. You can also change tenses from present to past or future or whatever grammar you are trying to emphasize. Note that all changes must be made in the story so it is grammatically correct from the point of view of the narrator.
7. **Students retell** from the “new” perspective.

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## **Additional Notes & Ideas**

- Have students “draw” (basic stick figures are fine) the story to help them retell it. (Space is provided in the appendix for students to write out their stories.)
- Do not expect the students to retell the story word for word. You want the students to “get the idea,” not repeat it verbatim. This will give them more confidence in their speaking ability. Praise their progress in Spanish: “excelente”, “muy bien”, or “bien hecho”.
- Use steps 6 & 7 only for the more advanced students and classes.
- Note that the TPRS method and steps are constantly evolving with experienced practitioners in the field. For the “latest and greatest,” see the websites and resources on the previous Reference page for more details on this very effective language teaching method.

## Teaching Tips

- During the class introduction, tell adult students that they will be playing several child-like games, along with coloring, acting, etc. Ask them to relax and not worry about being very “sophisticated”, but rather to just enjoy themselves. They will appreciate this comment later on as they are doing “crazy things” and they will be able to laugh and have fun rather than feel “silly”.
- At the end of the first few class sessions (or the day if you are teaching a weekend immersion), do an informal evaluation and ask the students about how the class is going so far, what they would like to see done differently the next time, etc. Also talk about what to expect, such as “using” the vocabulary they have already learned in several future exercises, learning more conversational phrases, and learning additional basic vocabulary.
- Read up on TPR and TPRS. If possible, attend a seminar in your area!
- Keep in mind that TPRS consists of very “silly” stories and should not be taken seriously, but having them “outrageous” makes them memorable to the students and therefore easier to remember vocabulary. Once students realize these are crazy stories and that they are only being used to reinforce vocabulary, they will be more receptive to them.
- While a few stories have been written for you along with gestures, it is advisable to write your own using the students in your class, upcoming holidays and events, and anything that is relevant or memorable for the students. For example, if you have a student who is about to have twins and is due on Halloween, what a great story to keep the class interested! Any story that can be “personalized” to the class is better than any generic story ever invented.

### **Specific Tips For Teachers NOT Using The Weekend Format**

- Remember to REVIEW at the beginning of each day.
- Consider using a short TPRS to start each session. Try to keep recycling the same words over and over again so that the students continue to hear the vocabulary. The structure of the basic story can read:

There is a boy. He needs \_\_\_\_\_. He goes to X to look for what he needs. He doesn't find it. He goes to Y to look for what he needs. He finds it. He is happy.

There is a girl. She has a problem. She needs \_\_\_\_\_. She can't get it. She goes to Y. She gets it. She is happy.

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## Review of Levels 1-3

What follows is a list of topics that were covered in Levels 1 & 2. Before starting any new material in Level 3, assess whether the students in your class are familiar with these topics

### Level 1

- Greetings and introductions
- Colors
- Numbers
- Basic food ingredients & cooking actions
- Parts of the body
- Spanish pronunciation
- Likes/dislikes
- Family
- Time
- Small talk
- Prices
- Simple conversational language

### Level 2

- Seasons
- Months
- Days of the week
- Date
- Clothing
- Weather
- Directions
- Descriptions of people
- Restaurant
- Making telephone calls
- And conversational phrases

### Level 3

- School
- Adjectives
- Comparisons
- Transportation
- Community buildings & places
- Feelings
- Giving suggestions & expressing opinions
- Time expressions
- Hobbies & sports
- and an introduction to several Latino holidays

**MATERIALS:**  
CDs of Latino music

## Lección 1

- Studies/Degrees Vocabulary
- Job Titles Vocabulary
- Music & Dance Styles

### TRABAJO (90 minutes - 2 hour)

1. **Ice-Breaker:** Students are looking for a new employee. Have students list the job title and the characteristics that they are seeking. Now circulate the room and do mini-interviews with the other students.

Trabajo:

Características:

Calificaciones:

Preguntas para entrevistar:

¿Quién es su empleado nuevo?

2. **Job Titles:** TPR the more difficult occupations or bring in pictures. (See above suggestions)

- contador
- ingeniero
- periodista
- abogado
- enfermero
- cantante
- asistente social
- maestro
- camarero
- vendedor

3. **20 Questions:** Have students select a mystery occupation. The other students will ask up to 20 questions trying to guess what the mystery occupation is. Person can only answer “Sí” o “No”.

Brainstorm possible questions beforehand, such as:

¿Trabaja en una oficina?

¿Cuida a otras personas?

4. In small groups, have students **discuss their current profession** (using present tense) as well as a “dream profession” (encourage them to talk as if they “will” have it in the future—using the Future Tense.)

Pretend you are starting your dream job tomorrow. What skills will you need? What will the pay be? What will the hours be? (*Practice the “future tense” here.*)

5. **Famous People:** Say the names of several famous people. Have students shout out the first word that comes to them (occupation, description, etc.). If you were to guess, what do you think they would have studied in college?

Examples:

President Kennedy  
Da Vinci  
Bill Gates  
Noam Chomsky  
Aristotle  
Christopher Columbus  
Hillary Clinton  
Nicole Kidman  
More...

6. **Variation on Famous People:** Tape the name of a famous person on the back of each student. Students then go around the room asking “yes/no” questions to find out who they are.

7. **Work & Stress:** Which jobs are most stressful? Look at the following 10 occupations. In small groups, talk about the 3 most stressful jobs and 2 least stressful jobs on the list. List any others and discuss.

Trabajo	Número
Vendedor	
Abogado	
Médico	
Secretario	
Madre	
Maestro	
Policía	
Bombero	
Camamero	
Estudiante	

7. Have students **read the jokes** in the workbook first as individuals. As a class, see if you can translate their meanings.

## CULTURE-DANCE STYLES (15+ minutes)

\* *Music and dance styles are introduced in order to expose students to Latino culture.*

1. **Choose 3-4 music styles** with which you are familiar. Play “snippets” of the music so that the students can become familiar with the sounds.
2. If you are not familiar with dance steps, **invite somebody to your class who can teach a few basic dance steps** to your students (most likely “Salsa” and “Merengue”).

## Música y baile

### **Salsa**

A generic term used to describe the mixing of a number of different styles of Latin music (such as son, cha, cha, cha, songo, timba, merengue, and rumba).

*Examples: Grupo Niche, Marc Anthony*

### **Son** (Cuba)

Predates salsa—possibly the most influential style of all Latin music. Combination of African & Spanish musical elements.

*Examples: Buena Vista Social Club, Arsenio Rodríguez, Trio Matamoros, Son 14*

### **Cha cha cha** (Cuba)

Cha cha cha was invented by the Cuban bandleader, Enrique Jorrin, in the 50's. Legend has it was invented because many Americans were having trouble dancing to the syncopated rhythms of traditional Cuban music.

*Examples: 'Kinkamanche' by Eddie Palmieri, 'Cha Cuba' by Orquesta Aragon and 'Habana Del Este' by Afro Cuban Allstars.*

### **Merengue** (Dominican Republic)

Latin music in 2/4 time. Traditionally performed with voice, accordions, a two-headed drum called a tambora & a hand-held metal guiro.

*Examples: Juan Luis Guerra, Francisco Ulloa, La Makina, Fulanito, La Banda Gorda and Elvis Crespo*

### **Rumba** (Cuba)

The most African of styles in Cuban music. Traditionally associated with Afro-Cuban religion where a community came together to perform sacred music and dance.

*Examples: Munequitos de Matanza, Los Papines and Los Munequitos de Matanzas*

### **Bachata** (Dominican Republic)

Slow romantic music originally played with guitars & small percussion instruments.

*Examples: Juan Luis Guerra*

### **Cumbia** (Colombia)

Cumbia is in 2/4 time and may feature instruments such as accordions, keyboards, saxophones, trumpets, trombones & a percussion section.

*Examples: Lizandro Meza, Grupo Fantasma, Lucho Bermúdez*

**Samba** (Brazil)

Another broad term like Salsa which actually refers to a number of different styles. Samba is a mixture of African, European and Native American musical elements.

*Examples: Martinho Da Vila, Beth Carvalho, Paulinho da Viola, Clara Nunes*

**Tango** (Argentina)

Romantic nostalgic music-often described as the music of 'frustrated love'. Definite Spanish & European roots as well as African, Creole and Native American influences.

*Examples: Carlos Gardel, Astor Piazzolla*

**Vallenato** (Colombia)

Uses accordions, bass & percussion. Recently, has been fused with elements of rock.

*Example: Carlos Vives*

**Tex-Mex/Ranchera** (Mexico)

Best-known Mexican genre by far is ranchera, interpreted by a band called mariachi. Includes norteño and banda styles. All use the accordion as its primary instrument.

*Examples: Flaco Jiménez, Selena, Tigres de Norte*

**Marimba** (Mexico)

Southern Mexican folk music that remains popular in Chiapas and Oaxaca.

*Example: Baja Marimba Band*

**Flamenco** (Spain)

Gypsy music popular in the southern region of Andalusia. The most familiar flamenco instrument is the guitar played at a feverish and passionate pace with melodies that reflect the influence of Arabic music

*Examples: Paco de Lucia, Gypsy Kings*