

Instructors' perspectives on the value of innovating L2 Spanish textbooks in USA higher education

Claudia R. Fernández

Introduction

The development of materials for language teaching and learning and the nature of how these materials are used by both instructors and learners have gained prominence as areas of interest in the past 25 years or so (Harwood, 2014; McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 1998; Tomlinson, 2012). This research has shed light on important aspects of the second language (L2) teaching profession such as best practices for materials development (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017), materials adaptation and use (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013; Matsumoto, 2019), and the quality of commercial textbooks (Tomlinson, 2018), among others, and has advanced our understanding on the nature of the relationship among instructors, materials, and students. One of the areas in this body of research is that of instructors' voices and their attitudes towards their teaching materials. Although some studies have revealed what instructors think of their materials (Masuhara, 1998; McGrath, 2006; Menkabu & Harwood, 2014) this is an area that has remained under-investigated.

The purpose of this article is to report the results of a study on instructors' perspectives on the textbook they use and the extent to which they perceive it as a valid tool to facilitate language teaching and learning. The study focuses on the instructors' perspectives on a different and innovative textbook adopted by a Spanish basic language program in a public university in the United States, and the factors that contribute to these perspectives. It is a well-known fact that in most of the USA, university-level Spanish basic language programs still use textbooks with traditional L2 teaching approaches, thus our profession is very well used to these types of textbooks (Cubillos, 2014; VanPatten, 2015). We also know that when change is introduced, it is common to find resistance from those whom the change affects (Van den Branden, 2009). Considering these situations, the present study seeks to expand our knowledge of how innovative textbooks when introduced as main teaching materials are perceived by instructors and to reveal some of the factors that contribute to form these perspectives within the context of American higher education.

Background: The Spanish Basic Language Program at UIC

The Spanish Basic Language Program (SBLP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) consists of approximately 1200 students per semester and about 30 instructors. The program has four courses from novice to intermediate-low levels taught by both teaching assistants (TAs) and lecturers. Most of the students in the program take Spanish to fulfill the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requirement which mandates four semesters of a second language to complete their major.

Three years ago, when I started directing the SBLP, we implemented a new curriculum and adopted new materials that greatly differed from the traditional approaches previously followed. The program did not have an explicit mission statement and the connection between the materials and the objectives was not clear, neither was the extent to which such materials helped achieve such objectives. Instructors had used a traditional textbook which followed a Presentation-Practice-Produce (PPP) approach for approximately ten years. The new curriculum was designed based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards (WRS) (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Before adopting new materials, all instructors of the SBLP had five 3-hour workshop sessions conducted by me to write the Mission Statement, as well as to identify the learning objectives of the four courses. We learned about the WRS as well as the current understanding of how L2s are learned, Task-Based Language Teaching, best L2 teaching practices, our students' profile, and about the nature of the 21st Century L2 classroom according to ACTFL.

I then selected a textbook that helped us best achieve the new learning objectives. My criteria were for a textbook based on tasks, activities that reflected current understanding of L2 acquisition, appropriateness for our students' profile, and cost. I selected *Aula Internacional* (2014), a global textbook published in Spain and targeted at adults in different areas of the world. Because the textbook was not going

to be enough to help us achieve our learning goals, we also adopted other materials, such as graded readers, movies, and songs, and included telecollaborative conversations, other learning activities and projects.

An innovative textbook

According to Rogers (2003), an innovation is ‘an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or another unit of adoption’ (p. 12). A quick Google search defines ‘innovative’ as (something) ‘featuring new methods; advanced and original’. As Van den Branden (2009) explains, the assumption is not of innovation as mere change; innovation should be goal directed and aim at an improvement from what has been offered before. Based on these definitions, I apply ‘innovative’ to L2 textbooks as those which offer different and better opportunities to learn the L2. That is, innovative textbooks represent an advantage for facilitating L2 learning over traditional textbooks.

Aula Internacional as is a best-selling, global textbook published in Spain and widely used in Europe, Asia and Latin America by adults learning L2 Spanish (not necessarily USA college students), that can be considered as innovative. What makes this textbook innovative for the US market is its lesson design, which is shorter and starts by identifying its main goal or ‘target task’ for students to accomplish at the end. The activities then are directly related to the main goal. Linguistic items are previously identified; however, they are treated as resources to achieve the task and not as topics on their own, as is typically the case with traditional textbooks in the USA. The target task contains all the characteristics that a task should have according to the Task-Based Language Teaching framework (Van den Branden, 2006), and the activities resemble the pedagogical tasks as defined by Long (2015).

To be sure, the textbook does not sell itself as innovative or as following a task-based framework, and it still reflects some traditional aspects of L2 teaching and learning, so a more radical approach to innovation may perceive the book still as traditional. However, the fact that there is a concrete, identified task at the end of the lesson and that activities are designed to promote language use authentically and purposefully as they prepare students to accomplish a goal, is already a great step farther from grammar-driven textbooks, and a step ahead towards innovation. Indeed, the textbook represented a substantial change for the instructors of the SBLP at UIC who were used to PPP frameworks in their materials and a grammar-driven curriculum, and who were not familiarized with an approach based on tasks.

The importance of instructors’ perspectives on the value of teaching materials

One of the important aspects to advance our understanding of L2 learning in the classroom is to investigate the nature of the relationship between instructors and teaching materials (Remillard & Bryans, 2004; Van den Branden, 2009). The importance lies in the assumption that teachers play a crucial role in transforming the curriculum and its materials into real classroom events (Masuhara, 1998; Remillard, Herbel-Eisenmann & Lloyd, 2012). However, because of the complexity of the teachers’ role in facilitating learning, integrating innovation into teachers’ materials and practices has proven to be not an easy task. Lord (2014) states that ‘the nature of innovation implies movement away from the norm, and that generally entails controversy because some may fear it, not understand it, or be generally resistant to all change’ (p. 157).

Investigating the instructors’ perceptions on the value of the innovative materials is a first step to better understand the extent to which they find them valid tools to help them create the learning opportunities that traditional textbooks may not provide. If the instructors are satisfied with the textbook and feel comfortable with the innovations, they will be better able and willing to translate the written content into an enacted form resulting in a positive effect for students’ learning.

Research Questions

The present study is based on the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Spanish instructors in higher education on the value of innovative textbooks?
2. What factors contribute to instructors’ perceptions of their textbook?

Method

The initial pool of participants were approximately 40 Spanish instructors (18 lecturers and 25 TAs) currently teaching in the SBLP at UIC or who had taught in the program when the new textbook was introduced in the spring of 2018. Participants differed in experience teaching L2 Spanish in higher education as well as in teaching with the textbook *Aula Internacional*.

The materials consisted of a questionnaire of 38 questions divided in three sections, each addressing a different variable. The section pertaining to the present study was Section I and it had ten questions; seven

questions were of the Likert scale type and three were open questions (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire also asked respondents to participate in a follow-up, semi-structured interview which consisted of a set of three questions (see Appendix 2).

The overarching construct measured by the ten questions was perceived value. This construct was interpreted as incorporated four qualities: innovation (whether the textbook was perceived as innovative and if so, in what ways); effectiveness (whether the textbook was perceived to be aligned with the program objectives, the nature of the 'Communication' strand of the WRS according to ACTFL, and to our students' profile); helpfulness (whether the textbook aids instructors in accomplishing their lesson/course goals, and in facilitating the conditions for language learning to occur), and advantage (whether instructors perceived the textbook and its pedagogical framework to be better than that of the other textbook, and the extent of their satisfaction with it). The questions were written to reflect and tap into different facets of the construct.

Two instructors (one from the SBLP who was not participating in the study and other one from a different institution) revised the first draft of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was transferred to Qualtrics¹ and then piloted.

Following the pilot, I emailed the online, anonymous, and self-report questionnaire to the 40 instructors in June 2020. The survey's introduction explained the main purpose of the study and provided an informed consent form as established by the UIC IRB ethics office. Those who agreed to have a 30-minute follow-up interview were contacted via email, and the first five who answered were interviewed via Zoom. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purposes of later data collection.

Participants' answers to the questionnaire were recorded in Qualtrics, and data were analyzed with its Report tool to obtain descriptive statistics for quantitative questions and topic identification for the open questions. For the follow-up interviews, the researcher watched and transcribed relevant parts of the recorded interviews to clarify answers and ensure accuracy.

Findings

Of the 40 Spanish instructors contacted, 25 responses were received (i.e., 62.5% response rate). Twelve of them were lecturers and eleven were TAs (two respondents did not identify their title). About half of the respondents had been teaching with the textbook for a year or less, and half had been teaching for 3-4 semesters. When asked to identify the program learning goals, the answers were 91.3% accurate.

The great majority of the participants (i.e. 84%) viewed the textbook as innovative to a good or to a great extent. The characteristics most mentioned as to what made the textbook innovative was its focus on tasks and in the presentation of grammar as a linguistic resource rather than the main topic of the lesson. These are some of the most representative characteristics perceived:

'Its adherence to a task-based approach; the activities within a unit all share a common goal and serve the higher purpose of the final task. They are not disjointed as in most other language textbooks. It is also innovative in the authentic or near-authentic written and spoken input it provides students, as well as the opportunities for discussion of relevant, real world issues such as sustainability and access to education.'

'This textbook focuses on developing communications around real-life situations that are current and relevant, rather than inventing situations in order to practice a grammatical structure.'

'The book uses the grammar as needed, not as a main goal.'

Regarding perceived effectiveness, the majority (about 90%) thought that the textbook emphasizes the communicative goals articulated by ACTFL to a good or great extent. About 75% of instructors perceived that the textbook aligns with students' proficiency and linguistic needs to a great or moderate extent. However, the majority thought the textbook aligns only to a moderate, some or small extent to students' backgrounds (84%) and experiences (70%). Half of the instructors thought that the textbook aligns to a moderate or some extent to students' interests, but only 40% thought it does so to a great extent. Therefore, while instructors seem to value the innovative teaching approach of the textbook, they also perceive not quite an alignment with some of the students' lives and realities.

In terms of the teaching framework adopted in the program, about 90% of instructors reported that a task-based approach is more effective than a grammar-oriented approach to help students learn the language for real-world purposes.

Regarding how well the textbook helps instructors to accomplish the course goals, 76% reported it does so to a great or to a good extent. However, almost a quarter (24%) reported that it helped them to a moderate extent. The great majority (95.8%) responded that the textbook facilitated the conditions for students to learn how to use the Spanish to communicate.

The main limitations of the textbook seemed to lie in the extent to which the textbook was perceived as a good

1. Qualtrics is an online survey tool that creates and distributes surveys, and analyses the responses.

fit for its audience. Thirteen participants expressed the opinion that the main limitation was its focus on the dialectical varieties of Spain, rather than those of Latin America which would be more appropriate for the student learning Spanish in the USA. One instructor stated:

'Most listening activities use Spanish from Spain and the speakers either drop their voice or talk at an accelerated pace (trying to imitate natural language, but rather off-putting to learners). A more diverse listening experience would most likely help students relate these activities to Spanish they hear around them, mostly from Latin American regions.'

A second observation was that the activities and themes were most likely for older more motivated learners, not typical university students in the USA. This is a comment from one instructor:

'I would say its limitations are the kinds of experiences it asks students to draw on. Not only the range of experiences, since the book seems to be written for professionals ages 25-35 or older, but the kinds.'

A third limitation referred to the task-based approach exploited in the book which may not seem to fit with some students' expectations or previous experiences learning Spanish. An instructor stated:

'Students do not usually like being taught with a task-based approach. They would rather have a list of vocabulary and grammar topics.'

Overall, 83% of the respondents were satisfied with the textbook. The main advantages of the textbook in comparison with other textbooks used in the past, was for the units to have a clear, final goal, which also coincides with the aspect that most instructors perceived makes the textbook innovative. One instructor commented that:

'The main advantage is the authenticity of the sources, the students can relate and identify how the Spanish is used in different contexts. Another big advantage is the final task. The student has a clear goal for the use of Spanish, it's not just to pass a quiz, but to present a friend or talk about their hobbies; it becomes a more personal experience for the student.'

A second advantage reported was the 'real' communication that the target task and the pedagogical tasks promoted among students. Participants reported that the activities promoted 'everyday conversations', language use in 'real-life contexts', and the use of language for 'real-world' tasks.

'If the instructor understands that the point is for students to be able to communicate needs in a real-world context and not solely in

exams/written format, this textbook definitely facilitates that much more than other textbooks.'

One instructor summarized most of the advantages as:

'The book is structured thinking about how language acquisition takes place. There is an appropriate amount of input before students are expected to produce language. The activities are meaningful to students and most of them have a purpose (and if they do not, it is relatively easy to create a purpose!). The activities also require students to be active listeners and in groups students learn a lot about each other. I see them forming long-lasting friendships as a result of the group work that goes on. The tareas finales [final tasks] are varied, fun and require student creativity.'

Factors that contribute to instructors' perceptions

Of the five instructors who participated in the follow-up interview, three were lecturers and two were TAs. They were asked three sets of questions related to the value of the textbook and the factors that contribute to their current perspective of the textbook (see Appendix 2). The level of satisfaction with the book varied among these instructors, but overall, it was satisfactory (see Table 1).

Instructor	Q11: I am satisfied with the book
1	Strongly agree
2	Agree
3	Agree
4	Somewhat agree
5	Agree

Table 1: Satisfaction level of interviewed participants (n = 5).

Regarding the factors that have contributed to their perspective on the value of the textbook, instructors mentioned several: observed results in students, instructors' guide, their own positive perspective about a task-based approach, having selected the textbook based on identified goals, and the training given by the program. Here are some representative samples of the answers:

Observed results

'The main thing that contributed is seeing the results... my students compared to what we did before with a more traditional textbook, a more grammar focused, definitely seeing the results of the students... the other factor is because we had a good orientation to how to use it...and to

the backwards design, and to the principles of ACTFL, and to the immersion experience which I wasn't totally convinced with it because of course, I learned in a different way...and I didn't know how it would work in the time frame that we had for classes because we are very limited for time, but it does... in my opinion, I see much better results.' [Instructor 1]

Instructor's guide

'So, I think you know, looking a year ago when I first saw the book, I used the teacher's edition, it was like the Bible, right? Because for me the first time doing, using a task-based book it was really important to make sure you know I was guiding the students towards the tarea final...so the teacher's edition is really important.' [Instructor 2]

Perspectives on task-based language teaching

'Well, for me, because I have taught before... we've always looked for materials that are task-based but we have never really found textbooks that really fit the purpose, and when I saw this book it was like oh my God this is the first book that I really think follows the approach, so that for me was amazing.' [Instructor 3]

'I was nervous at first because we've never done it before, but I don't know the theory so I was only going off of my own experience teaching and in my teaching I always tried to do tasks even though I did not know that that was what I was doing, I always tried to do tasks and tried to move away so they were not thinking about grammar or were thinking about vocabulary, just you're using it...like we talked about at the beginning that was what Aula was doing, so that made obviously easier.' [Instructor 4]

Pre-identified goals

'The textbook was chosen knowing it fit with the goals of the course.' [Instructor 5]

Program training

'The first time I opened it I thought, oh my God, this is all about Spain, here is the País Vasco, Madrid... so that was my first impression without knowing anything about the approach that we were going to work with. Once we started with the orientation training and you explained to us the approach and I read from A to Z all the introduction, the book, it's very well explained at the beginning what are the objectives, of each sections, and once I read that and started using it, it seemed to me that is a thousand times better than [the previous book].' [Instructor 4]

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that most of the instructors perceived the textbook to be innovative and a valuable tool to help them reach their course goals. Most of the instructors reported being satisfied with the textbook, although several limitations were identified, especially its focus on Peninsular Spanish dialects and cultures and the extent to which the textbook aligned to the students' lives.

The general positive attitudes of instructors towards a new and a different text selected by someone else and which drastically differed from what some of them were used to is not what has been generally reported in the literature. What has been reported is a common dissatisfaction with textbooks as well as a normal resistance to adopt new materials (Menkabu & Harwood, 2014; Zhang, 2007). What factors can we identified that may explain our results?

One factor is that instructors value having one clear goal or purpose to direct the teaching/learning towards (i.e., a task). Another one is that they agree with the idea to treat linguistic aspects as resources to reach the goal and not as goals themselves, as is the case in a PPP framework. A third aspect they value is the authenticity of the language and the real communication opportunities the activities promote. It seems that the textbook promotes students to feel freer to use the language because they know that grammar accuracy is not expected or the activities are not there to practise a structure. Why is it that instructors hold these values when some of them come from the previous traditional curriculum, other traditional programs, have experienced traditional language learning themselves or have never taught with a truly communicative curriculum based on tasks?

The information provided in the follow-up interviews may cast some light on the possible reasons. One is that instructors may have already been familiarized and agreed with the tenets of an approach based on tasks. These may be those instructors that may have experienced dissatisfaction with the previous traditional textbook, for example. A second factor is that although skeptical at the beginning, once they gave the textbook a try, they found out that not only is the textbook 'easy to use' and had a useful instructor's guide, but also that the activities actually help learners to use the language to communicate something meaningful and 'real' which was not observed with the previous textbook. A main third observation was the training given by the program where the approach and text were introduced and explained along with the fact that the textbook was selected based on the already-identified goals of the program.

It seems then that instructors are likely to accept different, innovative materials if the program has clear

and concrete objectives and provides support through training. Indeed, McGrath (2016) explains that decisions about materials are not the first step in the planning process of a course design, rather the first step is to establish the aims of the course. Instructors must know what the objectives of the program are, and the way(s) in which the textbook can help fulfill such objectives should be explained. In that way, instructors are more likely to perceive textbooks as valuable tools for teaching because they know the areas that are helpful and those that need supplementation. Instructors should also be given the rationale behind these objectives (although they may not necessarily agree on them) and have opportunities for professional development. In our program, we identified the course objectives and the value of the task-based approach in five workshops before the textbooks was adopted, and give regular trainings, especially to new TAs and lecturers.

Equally important is how students' learning is evaluated. Weir (1990) states that student evaluation in a program can have a strong and positive impact on the teachers and be a powerful instrument for effecting change. In our program, we decided to highlight the task at the end of the textbook units as the event by which to evaluate students' performance. Because the textbook activities facilitate the completion of such tasks, it may be easier for instructors to see the value in the material, because they facilitate preparing the students for the evaluation.

While instructors value the goal-oriented and truly communicative aspects of the textbook, they also identified some limitations. Instructors seem to put strong value on materials that have a wider representation of the different Spanish varieties of the Hispanic world, not only to give students a more inclusive and diverse experience exposing them to all Spanish varieties, but also because many of these are the varieties students will most likely hear beyond the classroom.

Another limitation was that some activities and tasks do not always quite align with students' realities. This is important because when students relate the content to their lives, topics are more meaningful and language exposure becomes more comprehensible, which directly affects acquisition and willingness to communicate. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate whether and how instructors adapt the textbook to compensate for these limitations, but certainly something worth investigating.

These limitations are typical of global textbooks, as reported in the literature. As McGrath (2016) and Tomlinson & Masuhara (2010) have observed before, global textbooks can never meet local needs. That is the case of *Aula Internacional*, which targets a wide range audience, but may fail to meet specific needs of particular ones. Nevertheless, the perceptions of instructors in this study reflect those of previous studies in that they reveal a sort of dissatisfaction when

a textbook does not address the particular needs of its students and contexts, even when instructors value its innovative approach to L2 teaching and learning.

Conclusion

It seems to be possible for L2 instructors to satisfactorily adopt and value textbooks that differ from the norm and offer different ways to teach and learn. One of the factors that facilitate positive attitudes towards the new textbook was having selected it to achieve pre-identified course objectives, and support instructors through training in identifying the extent to which the textbook helped them to reach said objectives. We also observed that even when there is a high level of satisfaction with the textbook, instructors will perceive as an important limitation if the innovative text would not help them fulfill the local needs of their classrooms.

References

- Corpas, J., Garmendia, A., & Soriano, C. (2014). *Aula internacional nueva edición*. Barcelona, Spain: Difusión.
- Cubillos, J. H. (2014). Spanish textbooks in the US: Enduring traditions and emerging trends. *Hispania*, 1(2), 205-225. doi: 10.1080/23247797.2014.970363
- Guerrettaz, A. M., & Johnston, B. (2013). Materials in the classroom ecology. *The Modern Language Journal (Boulder, Colo.)*, 97(3), 779-796. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2013.12027.x
- Harwood, N. (Ed.) (2014). *English language teaching textbooks: Content, consumption, production*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Long, M. H. (2015). *Second language acquisition and task-based language teaching*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lord, G. (2014). *Language program direction: Theory and practice*. Boston: Pearson.
- Masuhara, H. (1998). What do teachers really want from textbooks? In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (1st ed., pp. 239-260). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matsumoto, Y. (2019). Material moments: Teacher and student use of materials in multilingual writing classroom interactions. *The Modern Language Journal*, 103(1), 179-204. doi:10.1111/modl.12547
- McGrath, I. (2006). Teachers' and learners' images for course-books. *ELT Journal*, 60(2), 171-180. doi:10.1093/elt/cci104
- McGrath, I. (2016). *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Menkabu, A., & Harwood, N. (2014). Teachers' conceptualization and use of the textbook on a medical english course. In N. Harwood (Ed.), *English language teaching textbooks: Content, consumption, production* (pp.145-77). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Remillard, J., Herbel-Eisenmann, B. A., & Lloyd, G. M. (2012). *Mathematics teachers at work: Connecting curriculum materi-*

als and classroom instruction. New York ; London: Routledge.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations* (5th ed.). New York: Free Press.

The National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages* (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA.

Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (1998). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tomlinson, B. (2012). Materials development for language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching*, 45(2), 143-179. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000528

Tomlinson, B. (2018). Making typical coursebook activities more beneficial for the learner. In D. Bao (Ed.), *Creativity and innovations in ELT materials development* (pp. 21-34). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2010). *Research for materials development in language learning: Evidence for best practice*. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2017). *The complete guide to the theory and practice of materials development for language learning*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.

Van den Branden, K. (2006). Introduction: Task-based language teaching in a nutshell. In K. Van den Branden (Ed.), *Task-based language teaching education: From theory to practice* (pp. 1-15). Cambridge: Cambridge Applied Linguistics.

Van den Branden, K. (2009). *Diffusion and implementation of innovations* doi:10.1002/9781444315783.ch35

VanPatten, B. (2015). Where are the experts? *Hispania*, 98, 2-13. doi:10.1353/hpn.2015.0011

Weir, C. J. (1990). *Communicative language testing*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Zhang, E. Y. (2007). TBLT-innovation in primary school English language teaching in mainland china. In K. Van den Branden, K. Van Gorp, & M. Verhelst (Eds). *Tasks in action: Task-based language from a classroom-based perspective* (pp. 68-91). Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars.

Claudia Fernández is Clinical Assistant Professor of Spanish and Director of the Spanish Basic Language Program at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Her research interests are the acquisition of grammar, materials development and use, and task-based language teaching. Her work has been published in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Hispania*, *The Language Educator*, and in several book chapters. She wrote *Input enhancement and the acquisition of grammar*, and is the co-author of the textbook *Aula abierta for beginning Spanish*. She, along with Adon Berwick, is currently co-editing the MATSDA 2019 conference proceedings in a volume titled *Using language learning materials: Theory and practice*.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Innovative

Q3. One definition of "innovative" is "featuring new methods; advanced and original." To what extent is the textbook innovative for the US Spanish teaching context in higher education?

Q4. Off the top of your head write the major characteristic(s) that you think make this textbook innovative. (Write n/a in the space if you do not think the textbook is innovative.)

Effective

Q5. To what extent does the textbook align with your particular learners' needs, backgrounds, experiences, and interests?

Q7. With the goal of learning Spanish for real-world purposes, my view is that a task-based approach is _____ a traditional grammar-oriented approach.

Q8. To what extent does the textbook emphasize the communicative goals articulated by ACTFL's World Readiness Standards (i.e., learning to use the language to interpret, interact, and express a message)?

Helpful

Q2. To what extent does the textbook help you accomplish your course goals?

Q6. The textbook helps me facilitate the conditions for students to learn how to use Spanish to communicate.

Advantages over other textbooks

Q9. What do you see as the main limitation(s) of the textbook in comparison with the previous textbook you used? If you have not used other textbooks, briefly identify any limitation(s) of the textbook.

Q10. What do you see as the main advantage(s) of the textbook in comparison with the previous textbook you used? If you have not used other textbooks, briefly identify any advantage(s) of the textbook.

Overall satisfaction

Q11. I am satisfied with the textbook.

Background questions

1. Are you a... (answer is optional)
 - a. TA
 - b. Lecturer

2. How long have you taught Spanish as a second language in higher education? (answer is optional)
3. The Spanish Basic Language Program adopted *Aula Internacional* in the Spring 2018. How many semesters (including summer terms) have you taught/did you teach with this textbook? (answer is optional)
4. Please mark the two learning goals that are not curricular goals of the Spanish Basic Language Program at UIC.
 - a. Develop cultural awareness
 - b. Explain linguistic concepts
 - c. Communicate in Spanish
 - d. Develop linguistic accuracy in Spanish
 - e. Complete tasks successfully in Spanish
5. If you are interested in taking part in a 20-30-minute follow-up interview, please leave your name and email below.

Appendix 2

Semi-structured interview questions

1. What factors do you think contributed to your current perception of this textbook? What has helped you (or not) into adopting this new book as a tool to teach Spanish? Have your perception changed from when you first had to use the textbook to now?
2. How do you feel about the textbook's approach to teaching as compared with that of traditional textbooks? Do you think it is an advantage or disadvantage in what the textbook offers? In what ways?
3. In one of your answers you reported that the textbook helps you accomplish your course goals to [a great/good/moderate...extent] can you elaborate on this answer?

Language Learner Literature Writers' Group

Hi, This is Rob Waring. Please consider joining the all new *Language Learner Literature Writers Group*. We'll discuss issues related to the writing of graded readers and other Language Learner Literature.

This is a place to ask questions about the writing of graded readers, ask if a title has already been published, suggest ideas for readers, ask about markets, availability, simplification issues, gradings etc. Note this is a group independent of any particular publisher.

If you have written or wish to write graded readers or other LLL, please consider joining.

At the moment (till the spammers find us) we'll be an open group.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LLL_writers

Tell all and sundry please.

Rob

www.matsda.org/folio.html