

Las Noticias de Español

18 de Diciembre, 2009

“Leap and the net will appear.”

-Zen saying



When reflecting upon Spanish classes for the first half of the year it seems easy to get excited over some of the more demonstrative successes of the program. For example, it is simply awesome to hear Spanish being practiced all around campus, or to have kids run up to me at recess and practice a new word they've learned or ask about a new word. The learning of Spanish is so evident and certainly gratifying. But when I dig a little deeper in my reflection, it becomes clear that what is *truly* outstanding is to bear witness to our children leaping and, sure enough, the net appearing in the form of their peers.

Learning a new language can bring all kinds of feelings to the surface. The experience can be frustrating, humbling; it can evoke feelings of vulnerability, even produce physical reactions of stress. These experiences are certainly not unique to Spanish learners at SRV, but what *is* unique and most profound in the learning that is taking place here, is the level of support the children have learned to give each other. Also the “permission” they have given themselves to truly dig in to the learning is remarkable. It is when this “safety net” is present that deep and meaningful learning occurs.

A glimpse into the classes:

Maureen and Jessica's group:

Five day preschoolers have been continuing to roll right along! We enjoy singing songs and the kids really get a kick out of singing the "Adios" song before the "Buenos Dias" song when feeling especially silly! "Cabeza, hombros, rodillas, y pies!" (head, shoulders, knees, and toes) remains a favorite. Getting more and more comfortable taking risks, almost all the children have tried leading some of our chants and games. Their accents and ability to recall words are incredible.



Kindergarten:

All of the sudden the words are sticking! No longer do I need to prompt the helper of the day on how to tell the group to clean up and come to the meeting area because they all know how! If you are ever in the woods on a Tuesday afternoon you will hear the Kindergartners at the back of our hiking line, yelling "Para!" ("Stop!") to the front. They are really beginning to understand what speaking another language means. Kindergartners have also been practicing their colors, differentiating between left and right, and following simple commands by playing Twister. They love to jump to "círculos con colores diferentes" and are becoming more and more able to understand what I am saying in Spanish. It is really exciting!

Primary Circle, Middle Circle, and Oldest Group :

Tying in the all school Geography theme really put a neat twist on Spanish. Students made original maps of either somewhere real or fantasy. They then labeled their maps in Spanish. Middle Circle and The Oldest Group used Spanish/English dictionaries while the Primary

Circles used me as a reference in addition to our accumulated vocabulary lists. After the maps were finished, each student practiced putting sentences together and describing what they had decided to put on their maps. Their conversational skills are really improving and their vocabularies are just growing by leaps and bounds!



There are so many examples of how exciting Spanish class is, but the real success story of Spanish at SRV this term is that our program is reaching the core of the mission of our beloved school.

¡Feliz vacaciones y feliz año Nuevo también!