

Primary School Spanish Theatre Production as a strategy for building confidence in student teachers

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Background

2008

- Spanish compulsory for Primary Specialisation in B.Ed. Degree at UTT
- Programme adapted to reality of schools and prospective teachers (our target group)
- Classes delivered to model best practices

Background

Evaluation considers the various learning styles:

poems

stories

theatre

dialogues

journals

research projects

educational games

written exams

History of Theatre in Programme

Theatre started as assignment in 2009.

The rationale was to:

- Explore cross-curricular integration
- Build oral competence -pronunciation
- Explore various forms of evaluation
- Explore and expose students to different ways of using language (Multiple Intelligences)

By 2010

original pieces were emerging full of
creative content





**With well integrated, child appropriate
Spanish structures**

Sound cross-curricular content



Science

La Oruga: The life cycle of a butterfly



A group of people are standing in a room, likely a classroom. In the center, two young women are wearing white short-sleeved shirts and dark skirts, typical of school uniforms. To their right, a man is wearing a bright orange safety vest over a dark shirt. Further right, a woman is holding a large blue and white bag with a Mercedes-Benz logo. On the far left, another person in a green shirt is partially visible. The background features a whiteboard with some faint markings and a poster. The overall scene suggests a presentation or a group activity related to road safety.

Social Studies

Cruzar la calle-Road safety

Process insight

- Plays selected in March
- Language and Stage direction reviewed
- Rehearsal, costuming and set design organised during the months of April and May
- Performance done in June and July at schools

UTT Spanish Theatre 2010- beyond

2010

- invited to UWI Inter-campus Foreign Language Theatre Festival
- Invitation for on site performances
primary school performances
- Genesis of idea to become an on-going,
fixed part of the department's
activities.

UTT Spanish Theatre 2010- beyond

- In 2010 presented 2 plays at 2 primary schools in the St. Augustine area.
- By 2012 presented 6 plays at schools both in Trinidad and Tobago with a focus on rural areas
- Since the inception performed for more than 16 schools and
- a total of 33 student teachers participated -all showing positive tendencies of growth in their language skills and confidence

Questions arising

This led us to several questions:

- Does this theatre impact on student teacher confidence in Spanish?
- If so, in which skills?
- Does this theatre impact on their teaching confidence?

Methodology

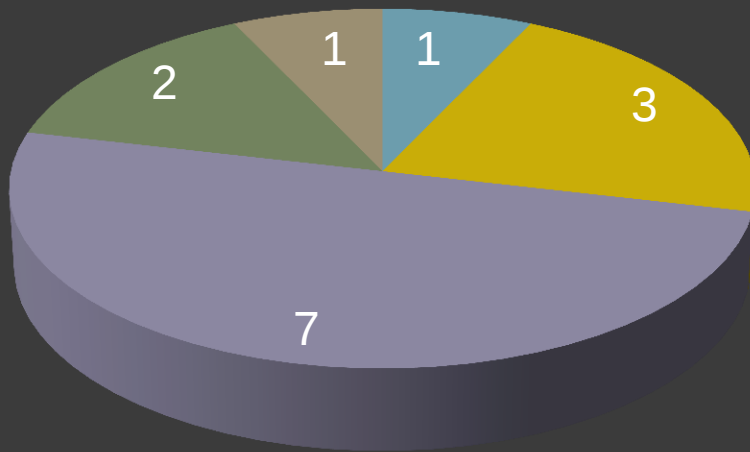
- In 2012 we decided to research this issue using that year's performing group of 14 students.
- Their plays covered a range of themes
- A questionnaire was structured to reflect the research questions. Majority of question were rated on a scale of
- 1-5, with one open ended question.
- This was given to them after all the performances of the plays

Salient findings

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

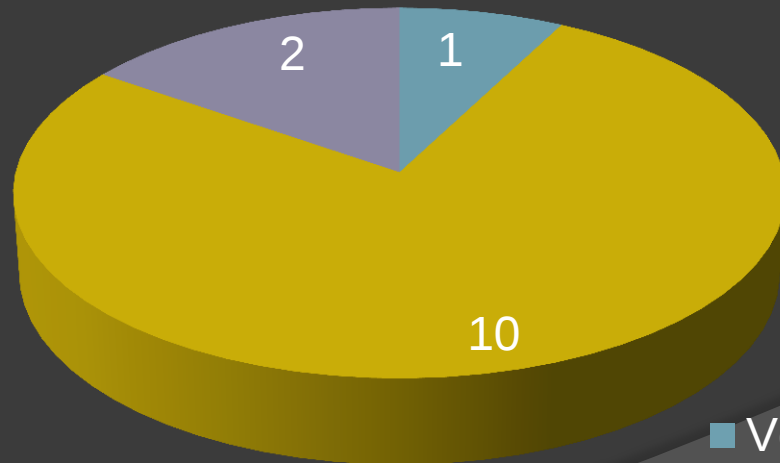
Speaking/ Pronunciation

Before



■ Very High
■ High
■ Average
■ Low
■ Very Low

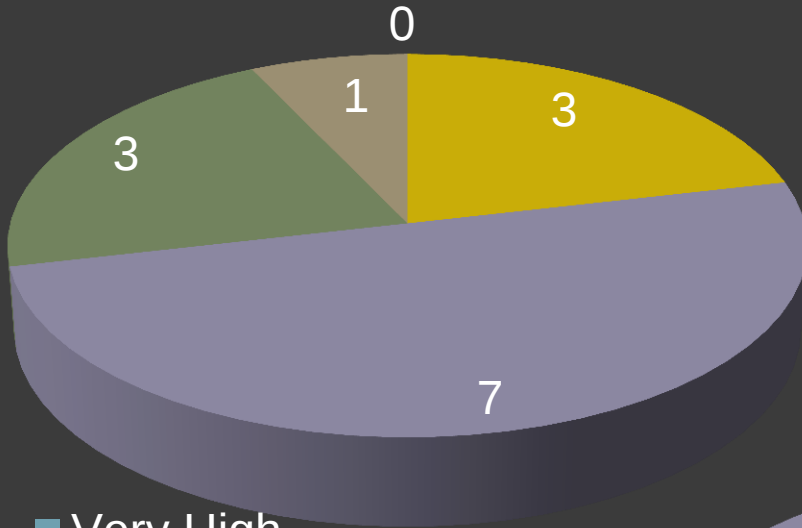
After



■ Very High
■ High
■ Average

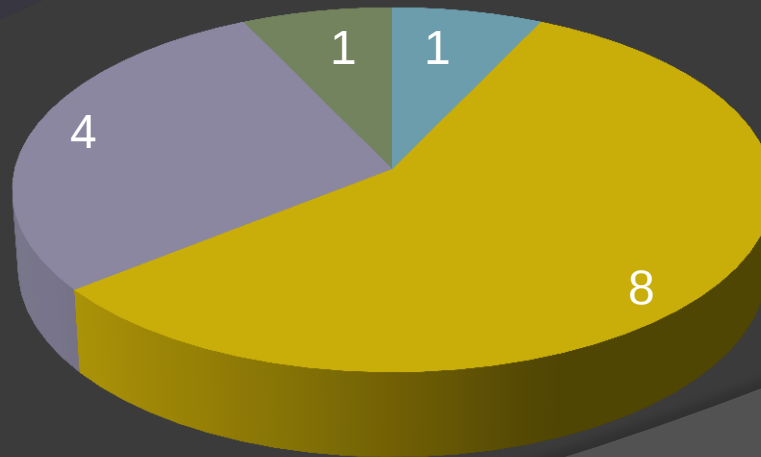
Listening

Before



■ Very High
■ High
■ Average
■ Low
■ Very Low

After



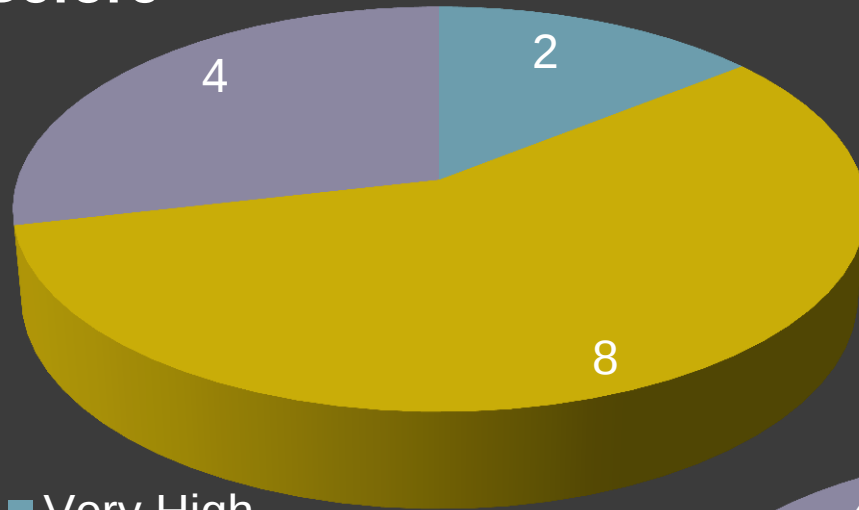
■ Veryt High
■ High
■ Average
■ Low

Discussions- Speaking/Listening

- Dramatic increase in confidence in oral and listening skills
- Attributed to the oral/aural nature of theatre with high level of speaking practice done (pronunciation, intonation, stress)
- Listening for cues in play
- Listening to other plays which are new material

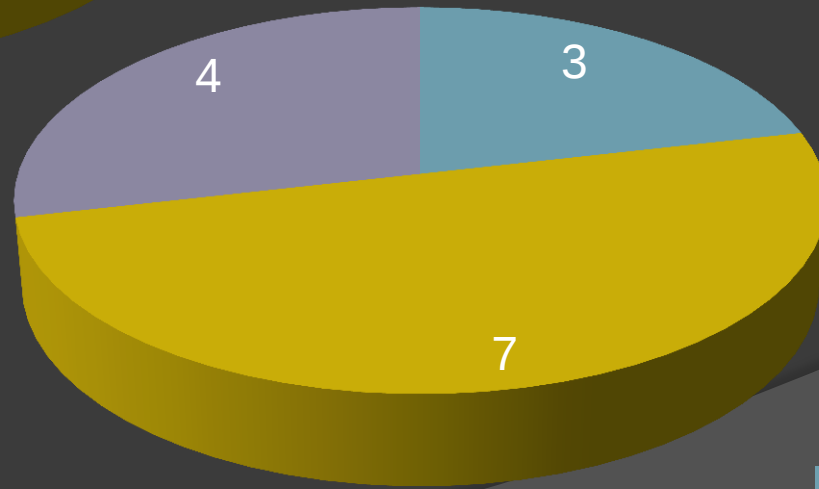
Reading

Before



■ Very High
■ High
■ Average

After



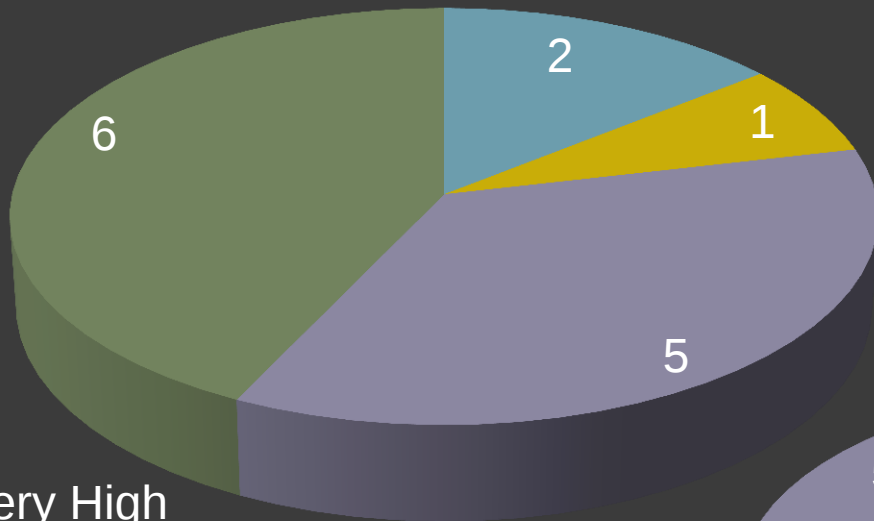
■ Very High
■ High
■ Average

Discussion in reading

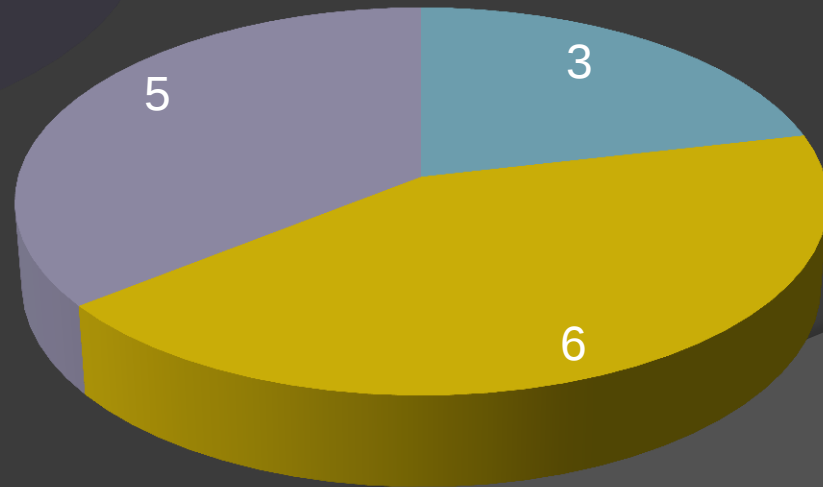
- Minimal increase in reading skills
- Due to lack of clear understanding of what reading is: Reading comprehension vs. Reading aloud
- Once they read and learnt lines, no need to exercise this skill, no new challenge.
- Great time lapse -Reading done earlier in semester during preparation
- Reading not an explicit part of theatre performance

Writing

Before



After



Very High
High
Average
Low

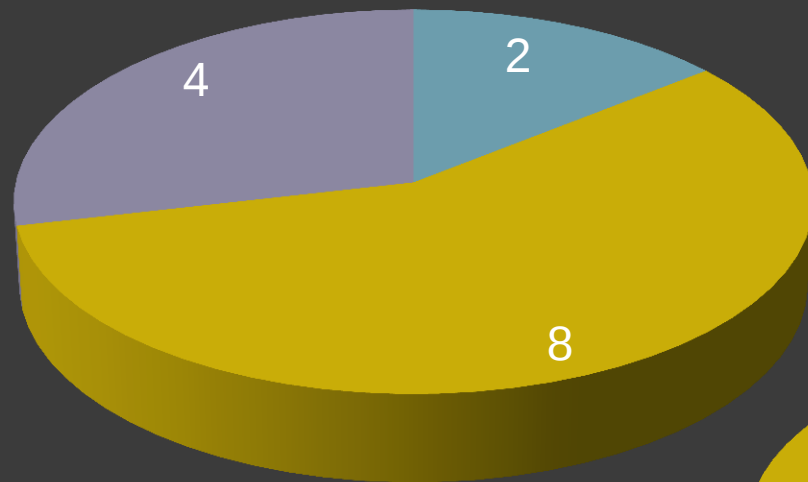
Very High
High
Average

Discussion writing

- Increased confidence in writing
- Linked theatre process starting in January and going through many iterations before end result
- Plays were chosen - may have given them confidence in the quality of their work

How would you rate your confidence in Spanish before/after the theatre experience?

Before

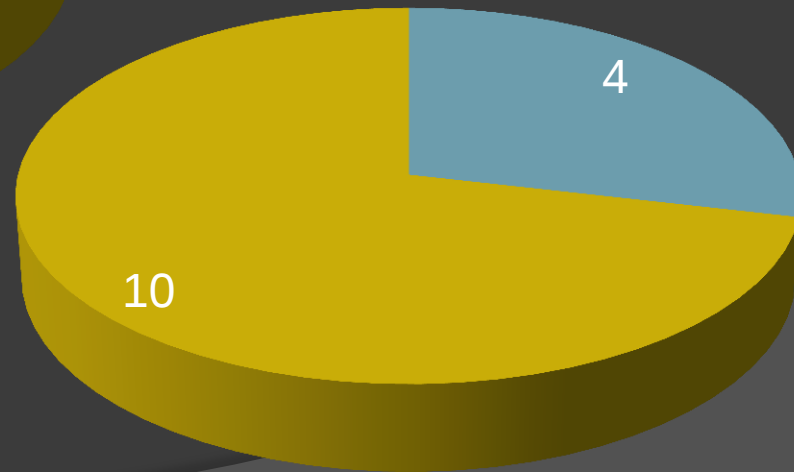


■ Very High

■ High

■ Average

After



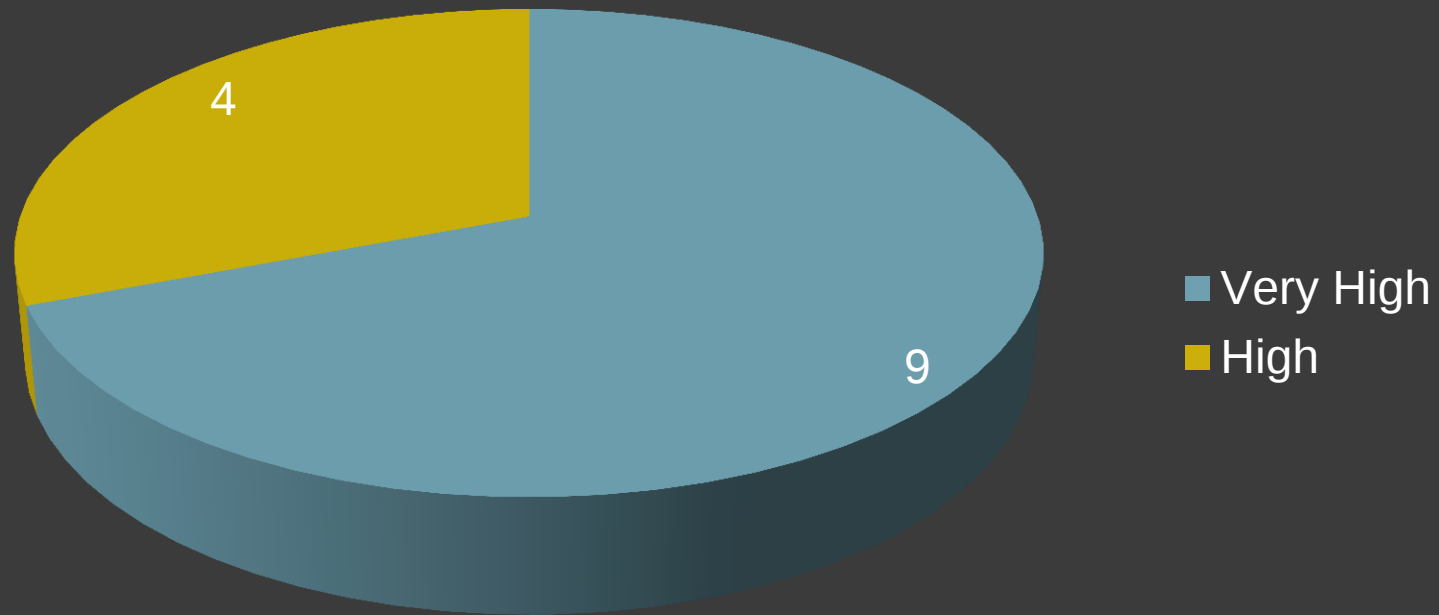
■ Very High

■ High

Overall confidence discussion

- Overall increase which validates use of theatre
- Literature says that increased oral competence influences confidence in other skills e.g. listening, reading and writing

Confidence to deliver a Spanish lesson



Discussion

- Confidence was rated and participants had to explain their rating. Their increased confidence to deliver a lesson in Spanish was described in different terms:
- No longer introverted.
- Theatre techniques can be applied to teaching in general
- Application to other subject areas since the theatre itself integrates other subject areas

Recommendations

- ◎ Theatre should be an integral part of teacher education programmes.
- Integrate different aspects of their learning.
- Increase confidence and collaboration.
- Integrate cross curricular content.
- Think about their work critically, test their work in front of children.
- Prepare them for the new curriculum

Recommendations cont'd

- A greater increase in confidence in reading and writing can be gained by polishing and reformulating the plays
- Further study in linguistic gains - reading, writing etc
- Further study comparing linguistic gains with confidence levels
- Further study to explore the linguistic impact on children as well as their attitude on learning a foreign language

Quotes

- *“...[B]efore my confidence was lacking especially in the area of pronunciation. With the assistance of the lecturers my confidence improved and as a result, I feel strong in my conviction to deliver a Spanish lesson.”*
- *“The theatre experience has helped me gain my confidence and enthusiasm for teaching Spanish. I enjoyed teaching my lessons...”*
- *“I feel confident...I have learnt techniques which I can use effectively to help my students communicate in the language in meaningful ways.”*

MUCHAS GRACIAS