

[Music]

My goal for my students is to connect with the language, connect with the language, with the culture, with everything that is Spanish in hopes that they will become life-long learners. We try to equip them for that. Teaching them the skills to continue to build their proficiency in listening, in speaking, in reading and in writing. And hopefully, they'll find down the road that their professions will take advantage of the Spanish and the cultural knowledge that they have.

I would love for the students in my classes to be able to actually speak a language. There is nothing sadder to me than when students come to class, and they say, "I took for four years in high school, and I can't speak a word."

I hope they walk away with the ability to speak Spanish and get their point across.

So I hope that my students walk away with an understanding of the language and then ability to speak it because I know that's a lot of the goal that they have. But even more than that, I hope that they have an understanding of the culture and that Spanish is not just English with Spanish words. Through this language class, it may be the only chance that these students have to learn about, potentially interact with another culture. And so for me, that's one of the most important things that I can give them a window to another culture and let them realize that the world is much bigger than they are.

One of the things that I think are really important to take away from second-language learning even if a student does not go beyond the basic level. I had a student leave a comment on her final exam, a few years ago, and she said, "You know, I want to go into politics, and I have been a proponent of English-only. But after taking your course, I see how difficult and challenging it is to learn a second language, and I have changed my attitude and now embrace the fact that national federal documents should be in the languages of the people who are living in that state and citizens." So that really impressed me as having high impact for what I do for a living. So I think that cultural understanding is key to learning the language.

[music fades]