

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Dígame is an 8-week long Spanish language intensive for medical students between their first and second year. Objectives include 1) cultivating an understanding of how Spanish is used in clinical contexts; 2) improving participants' speaking, comprehension, and writing skills; 3) situating language use in broader sociocultural dynamics; and 4) engaging in critical, intersectional dialogue on issues of equity and justice.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Students were sorted into one of three Spanish proficiency levels—beginner intermediate, or advanced.

Monday through Thursday, the advanced class met from 9 to 10 a.m. EDT, the intermediate class from 10 to 11 a.m. EDT, and the advanced class from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. EDT.

The curricula consisted of 1) grammar lessons, 2) vocabulary, and 3) clinical scenarios that were taught through one-on-ones, small groups, interactive games, fill-in-the-blank paragraphs, and role plays. There was also time built in at the end of each session for unstructured conversation.

The advanced class also received the opportunity to take an interpreter certification exam.

RESULTS

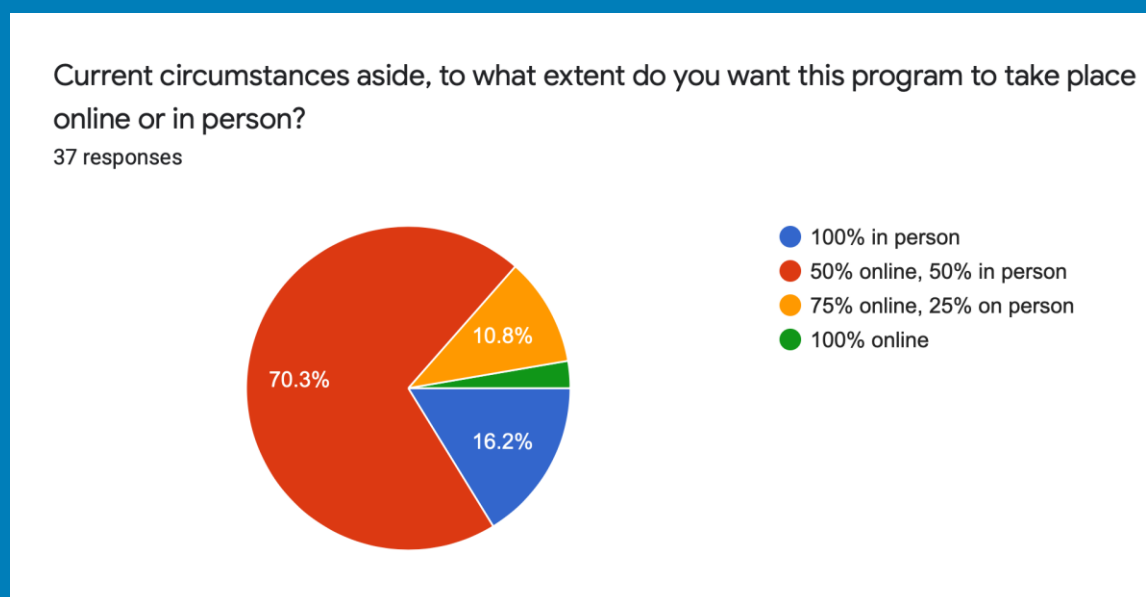


Fig. 2
For a more granular breakdown, between 86 and 97% of respondents said their Spanish speaking, listening, and writing abilities had either gotten better or much better.

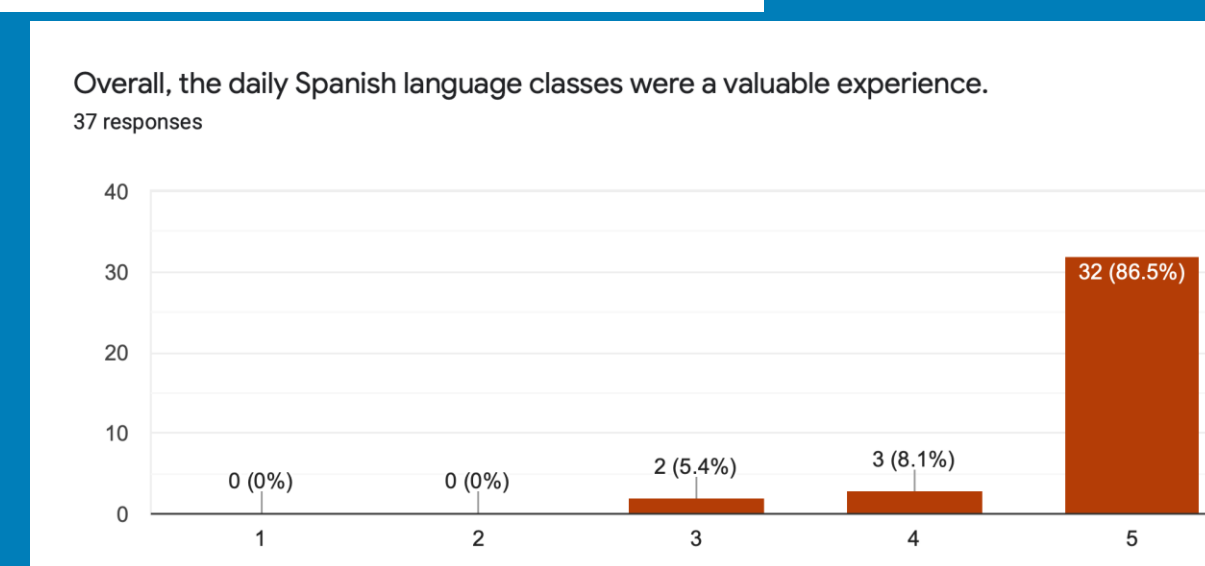


Fig. 1
In addition, 33/36 respondents said that they would participate in this kind of program online if they were abroad or in NYC but had a busy schedule. Despite the limitations of Zoom, participants seemed to appreciate its flexibility.

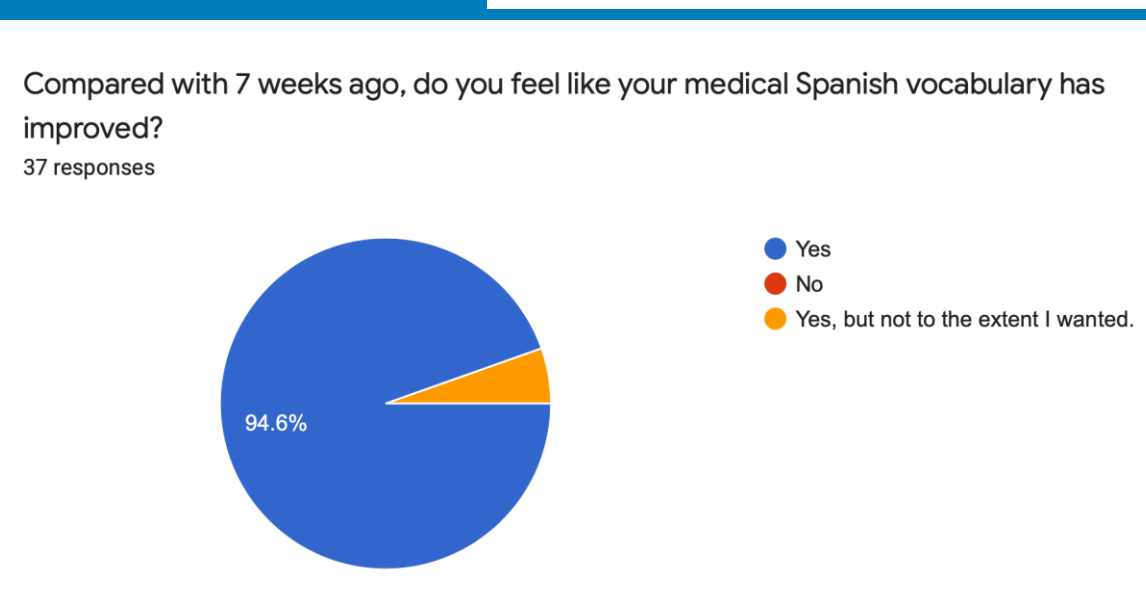


Fig. 4
Unfortunately, we forgot to ask respondents if they attended the Friday sessions; thus, any conclusions drawn from the data on this question need qualification. Nevertheless the written feedback indicated that the sessions were well-received.

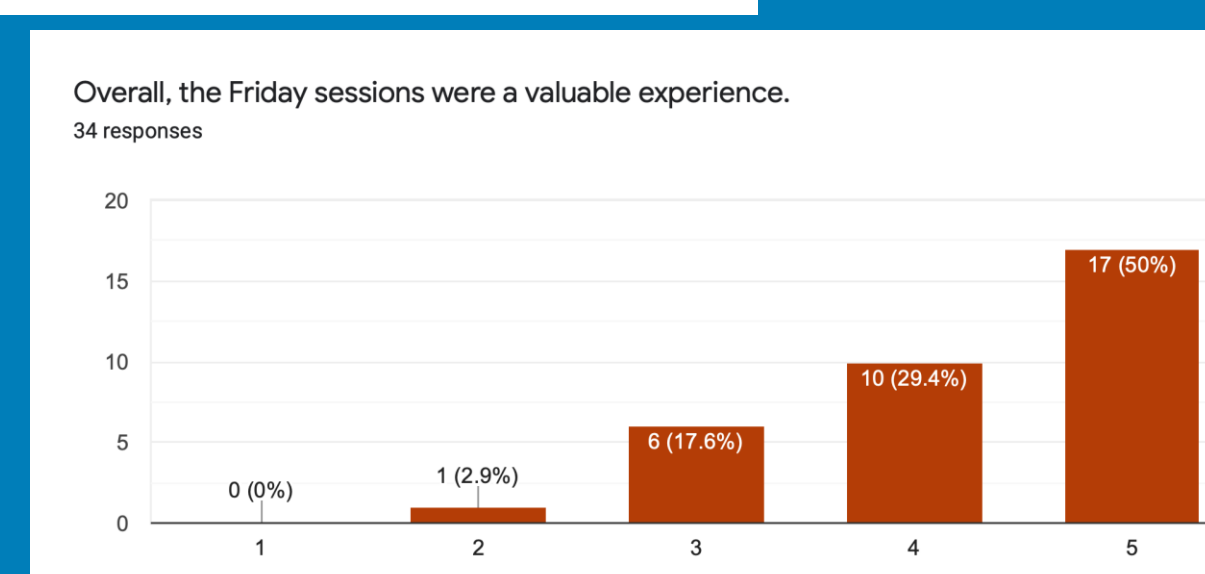


Fig. 3
In the free-text responses to the question "What went well?" respondents frequently listed vocab-centric activities like flashcards, Kahoot, and the supplemental materials on CourseWorks.

STUDENT ROLE(S)

I was responsible for creating and coordinating the Friday political education series, which covered the following topics: critical pedagogy and the teachings of Paulo Freire, history of the Dominican Republic, Western imperialism in Latin and South America, the Cuban health care system, language justice, labor movements, data disaggregation, and environmental racism.

PARTICIPANT REFLECTION

"I thought Dr. Esteban and Jess did a great job of organizing this online. I thought the online format actually worked well and I learned a lot of Spanish and made connections with classmates. It was really fun!"

DISCUSSION

Of the 50 program participants (myself included), 37 responded to the survey, and 1 did not consent to participate. Overall, people reported that they either maintained or improved their Spanish and that the medical Spanish classes were a valuable experience. Over 90% of respondents found the content presented in each class and the materials, resources, and links shared on CourseWorks useful. Over 80% of respondents indicated that having a native speaker in the class was helpful, and almost 90% said that the daily Spanish language classes were a valuable experience. Overwhelmingly, respondents wrote that they intend to continue developing their Spanish in preparation for the clinic and research projects.

CHALLENGES/LESSONS LEARNED

1. Difficulty engaging participants in the Friday political education series—attendance usually hovered around 10 people.
2. Desire for more opportunities to apply knowledge.
3. Difficulty balancing desires for less screen time and different kinds of programming.
4. Intragroup variation in comfort with and proficiency in Spanish.
5. More small groups!
6. Moving from adequacy to mastery.