



**LANGUAGE**  
WE ARE ALL  
LANGUAGE PEOPLE



**BRAINBREAKS**  
WHAT ARE THEY AND  
WHY DO WE DO THEM?



**LOS CHIQUITITOS**  
SPANISH FOR YOUR  
LITTLE ONES...



**LA CLASE DE AKELA**  
OUR FEATURE CLASS  
OF THE MONTH

# MI CLASE ES TU CLASE

## Lower School Spanish Newsletter



## Language is AWESOME!

So often when I speak to adults they tell me that they took a language in high school or college, but “can’t speak a word”. That is VERY normal. Universal in fact. Next they proceed to tell me that they are just not good at language. That is impossible. If you can learn one language you can learn them all. It is all about how you are taught. I failed Spanish all through school. I struggled and worked SO hard because I desperately wanted to be “good” and communicate. The problem was that I wasn’t being taught to communicate. I was being taught ABOUT Spanish. I was learning the grammar and conjugations, and all of the rules. I wasn’t acquiring the language for communication. My failure in Spanish is the reason I teach the way I do. EVERYONE can learn language.

I hate hearing people say, ‘oh, I am just not good at learning languages’ that is crazy. If you speak one language then you are an excellent language learner! It is all about how you are taught. PERIOD.

## Brain breaks

Listening to me speak in Spanish 90% of the class is HARD work. Our brains need breaks from the Spanish to make sure we can stay focused and continue acquiring the language. I use brain breaks every 10-20 minutes in my class for just this.

They are usually quick, minute-long movement games, dancing, tongue twisters, yoga, zumba, or ball tossing. They help refocus our brains and centre us for more language acquisition.

## Los chiquititos

St. Martin's really values language education. I am so grateful to work here. Several years ago I gave up on my dream of finding an elementary school Spanish position because I refused to work anywhere which only offered Spanish once every few weeks for 45 minutes at a time. Children can't acquire anything with that little time. I get to see my older classes 3 times per week here! While I don't get to see Pre-K through 1st as often, once per week is still wonderful! I call these babies my chiquititos (little ones). I use many elements of TCI (Teaching with Comprehensible Input) which I described in my first newsletter. Since I have limited time with them my goal is just to expose them to language and get them excited about speaking Spanish. We play lots of games and are moving for 80% of the class. We sing songs and learn dances, and we try to color every week, too. I want to keep their interest and enthusiasm high, so that when they are older, they are eager to acquire the language.

## La clase de AKELA

Akela class is the featured class for this month. Akela's students are HUNGRY for language. They come ready to learn every day and take every class very seriously. It took a while for them to loosen up and realize that the class is supposed to be fun and silly sometimes too! Ever since they did, it's been a blast! In the middle of this month, we created a story together that had me crying I was laughing so hard. We were even able to reenact the story the next class, and retell the whole thing in the past tense. It was 100% comprehensible to the kids. Part of teaching using comprehensible input is that language acquisition should be natural. That means that if we are talking about a story we performed or read previously in class we should talk about it in the past tense, and not in the present. I don't wait until Spanish 3 to teach your kids different tenses, we speak in the past when it is needed. We use real language every day!

*Don't forget to  
find me on  
instagram!*

@lamaestraloca



I try to post a couple of photos from class every week on our class instagram account. I # the class name. My hope is that we can look back at the end of the year on all of our class photos and kids can find their own class that way. It will be fun to watch them grow and develop language this way, and it will be awesome for them to see how far they've come.