

SPANISH CALL-and-RESPONSE

What we think of as “comprehensible input” may not be enough. Second language acquisition (SLA) heresy? Hold on... the idea of comprehensible input is powerful, but the term has been used so much that that it is becoming diluted.

*To many, it seems that comprehensible input must mean something like: **“They are in level 2, so they should know it. We have covered it. We have reviewed it. I am speaking loud enough and slowly enough, so it’s got to be comprehensible input, right?”** Nope. If students don’t understand, it doesn’t count. What counts is what they get; what is comprehended. It’s not what they should understand; what they actually do understand.*

Using Call-&-Response can be used to:

- *Get students to feel like members of the club of speakers of the language*
- *Establish a non-threatening environment*
- *Check for understanding*
- *Engage*
- *Redirect attention*
- *Get all students accustomed to responding to your voice*
- *Give students hands-on, immediately applicable phrases that they can use right away.*
- *Encourage individual students to use rejoinders*

When students are with you, when they understand and feel like they are part of something, they are more primed to acquire language.

You can use calls-and-responses (also known as call backs) as:

- *Attention getters*
- *Redirectors of student attention*
- *Signals for transitions to new activities*
- *Class competitions (which side of the class can say the response faster and louder?)*
- *Announcing the end of class*
- *To teach authentic culture*

Using call-and-response is interactive, fun and natural. Saying these often and in a playful way helps to establish a culture in your classroom... and culture beats rules and strategies every time. The norms you establish with light-hearted practice like call-and-response will have a deeper and longer-lasting impact than systems, technology or materials. Students are often emotionally distant from teaching, but they can be drawn in the way parents have always connected with their children... with rhymes and sayings that share the culture with them. A

practice of good-natured responsiveness in your classroom will do far more than lists of behavior rules and language learning strategies.

Ironically, despite the connectivity of technology, today's students are locked in this one tiny time and space. Authentic cultural sayings like the ones below can free them from this momentary blip of culture and this small space on the planet by taking them to places far away and long ago.

While made-up calls-and-responses (like Uno, dos tres... ¡No inglés!) are fun, you get twice the impact by using authentic cultural expressions in the target language. Why not teach the language and its culture at the same time?

Call-and-Response **with Common Children's Cultural Sayings**

<i>CALL</i>	<i>RESPONSE</i>
¿Qué te pasa, Calabaza?...	...Nada, nada, Limonada.
¡Hola, hola!¡Coca-cola!
	<i>And if you don't want to promote drinking sugar water:</i>
¡Hola, hola!¡Caracola! / ¡Caserola!
	...¡Camarón sin cola! / ¡Crayola!
	<i>or simply</i>
¡Hola!	...¡Bola!
A-E-I-O-U...	...Mi burro sabe más que tú
	<i>(Yes, the original ditty says "el burro...", but if you change it to "mi" both the call and the response have all of the vowel sounds.</i>
¿Se puede?...	...¡Sí, se puede!

Call-and-Response **with Lyrics to Traditional Songs and Chants**

Popular songs are often more sophisticated musically. They can have a range that is outside of the ability of many students to sing, they have less predictable rhythms, and higher-level vocabulary. Rhyming is extremely helpful in memorizing these phrases.

TRADITIONAL SONGS

La Cucaracha

La cucaracha, la cucaracha...
Porque no tiene, porque le falta...

...Ya no puede caminar
...Una pata para andar

Cielito Lindo

¡Ay, ay, ay, ay!...
Porque cantando se alegra, Cielito Lindo...

... ¡Canta y no llores!
... ¡Los corazones!

Los Pollitos

Los pollitos dicen...
Cuando tienen hambre...

... pío, pío, pío
... cuando tienen frío

TRADITIONAL CHANTS

Bate, bate...

... ¡Chocolate!

Sana, sana...
si no sanas hoy...

...colita de rana,
...sanarás mañana.

Te digo que la muerte...
Y si la tiene...

... no tiene ombligo
...la tiene muy escondido

¡Mira! ¡Escucha!...

...¡Estamos en la lucha!

(This is a common political protest chant in Spanish)

Ta, te, ti...

...¡Suerte para ti!

(Like eeny-meeny-miny-moe)

Call-and-Response ***with Authentic Cultural Sayings***

JUST FOR FUN

¡Estoy feliz...

... como una lombriz!

¡Chao, pescao...

...bacalao!

Otorrino...

...laringólogo

(An otorrinolaringólogo is an ear, nose and throat doctor. It's a super-long word, fun to say, and it can also be another name for the "sneeze person" classroom job.)

ASKING STUDENTS TO QUIET DOWN

Clase, en boca cerrada...	...no entran moscas
Calladito...	... te ves más bonito.
	<i>or</i>
Calladitos...	... nos vemos más bonitos
Ajo, cebolla, limón...	...déjate de inyección
Más vale escuchar...	... que hablar.

BE CAREFUL / MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Zapatero...	...a tus zapatos
Ten cuidado...	...el piso está mojado
Por la boca...	...muere el pez.
¿Por qué compras un gato...	...con tres piernas?
	<i>Why are you just making trouble for yourself?</i>
¿Por qué pones el burro...	...enfrente?
	<i>Why are you starting off on the wrong foot?</i>
No pongas el burro...	...enfrente.
	<i>Don't start off on the wrong foot.</i>

COMFORT / ENCOURAGEMENT

Nada dura...	... para siempre.
Después de la lluvia...	...sale el sol.

FOLK WISDOM

A quien madruga...	...Dios le ayuda
El que va a la villa...	...pierde su silla.
El burro hablando...	... de orejas.
	<i>Similar to the English expression, "The pot calling the kettle black."</i>
Lo prometido...	...es deuda.
	<i>Do what you said you'd do. You owe us that.</i>
A falta de amor...	... ¡Unos tacos al pastor!
	<i>In the absence of love, at least you can get some good tacos. Make the most of a bad situation.</i>

MISCELLANEOUS

Adónde va Vicente... ...va toda la gente.
¿Entiendes, Méndez?... ... Te explico, Federico.
Camarón que duerme... ...se lo lleva el corriente.
(You snooze, you lose.)

No hay moros... ... en la costa.
This historical expression is a traditional Spanish way of saying, "the coast is clear." It harkens back to La Reconquista, the prolonged struggle to regain Spain from the Moors between 718 and 1492

¡A la bim, a la bam... ..a la bim, bam, bom!
(Student name, student name)... ... ¡Ra, ra, ra!

Yo no sé... ...José.

Otra cosa... ...mariposa

Colorín, colorado... ...este cuento ha acabado

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

El vago siempre... ... trabaja doble.

Dime de qué presumes... ...y te diré que careces.
Tell me what you presume and I will tell you what you lack.

Dime con quién andas... ...y te diré quién eres.

A palabras necias... ...oídos sordos.

Ni tanto que queme al santo... ...ni tampoco que lo alumbre.
(Try to strike a happy medium. Go for moderation.)

Son uña y mugre.
(They are inseparable.)

Es pan comido.