



## Sue Griffin

Instructor, Introductory Spanish, Boston University

### Conectados Helps Sue Griffin Engage Students at Boston University

Sue Griffin has been a Spanish instructor for almost 20 years and is currently a Senior Lecturer for Spanish at Boston University. Throughout her teaching career Sue has always incorporated technology into her instruction, and decided to implement a “flipped” classroom for the Fall 2014 semester of Introductory Spanish at Boston University. She designed the course to facilitate more in-class interaction – students would read grammar outside of class and class time would be focused on conversation. “I created a series of videos to explain the grammar so we could use the class time for activities,” said Sue. For the Fall semester, Sue used a printed workbook which was not a good fit with the flipped environment she had implemented. “The students needed immediate feedback which they could not get from the workbook,” said Sue.

#### FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

Sue needed a digital learning solution that had engaging grammatical activities and exercises for students. She looked at *Conectados* with iLrn and discovered it was designed the way she had in mind. “What I liked about *Conectados* was [it] put grammatical explanations into manageable chunks, and then put a test at the end of each explanation that asks the student to explain what they’ve just learned. I find that the activities actually lend themselves to practicing more with context,” said Sue. By moving the grammar exercises outside of the classroom, Sue was able to create a more engaging in-class experience. “By working more in class in real life conversation it is much more engaging and...students are a lot more interested,” said Sue.

#### CONECTADOS REACHES A RANGE OF LEARNERS

Sue has found that *Conectados* is a great fit for beginning Spanish learners. “It is very cleverly designed for beginners. It works a lot on strategies,” said Sue. Sue believes that the conversation questions are more engaging for novices. “The conversation questions are do-able for beginners...but they don’t feel forced,” said Sue. Overall, Sue believes the activities students are completing outside of class allows them to learn at their own pace. Beginners are not rushed and more experienced students can move quickly through the exercises. “It creates a more level playing field. It is very advantageous to the newest student but not as boring for the more experienced student,” said Sue.

#### WELL-DESIGNED FOR THE FLIPPED ENVIRONMENT

Sue also found *Conectados*’s instructor tools to be helpful in closely tracking student progress outside of class, which is critical to the flipped environment. “*Conectados* updates me as to who has had difficulty with the assigned homework,” said Sue. Additionally, Sue

#### CHALLENGES

- Implementing a “flipped” classroom for Fall 2014, a new solution was needed to facilitate learning outside of the class, while in-class time would be dedicated to activities and student interaction.
- Students needed a way to receive immediate feedback, which can’t be achieved with a printed workbook.
- One learning solution needed to be appropriate and engaging to beginning as well as more advanced students.

#### SOLUTIONS

- *Conectados* with iLrn for Introductory Spanish

#### RESULTS

- Students are more engaged in the classroom, while the activities completed outside of the classroom allow for more effective self-paced study.
- Tools within iLrn allow the instructor to monitor student progress outside of class – critical for an effective “flipped” classroom.

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has found that *Conectados* is flexible enough to accommodate her thematic syllabus. “I focus on two themes, one being ‘Identity and Belonging’ and the other is ‘Well-being and Lifestyle,’ so we jump all around *Conectados*, which has not been a problem,” said Sue.

## CONCLUSION

Early results indicate that *Conectados* is helping engage Sue’s students. “My experience [with *Conectados*] has been very positive,” said Sue. She is planning on making a few tweaks to her course – like allowing students to either watch a grammar video or read grammatical explanations outside of class – and believes *Conectados* is a great fit for her Intro Spanish course going forward.

Source Code: M16010955 | ISBN: 978-1-305-72870-7



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