

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT YEARS 7 & 8

## The TPDL programme : One teacher's story

Starting the journey of Professional Development

Leanne Green (Viscount School, Auckland)

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Leanne Green and her students at Viscount School have been learning Spanish for one and a half years.

Becoming a Spanish teacher to Year 6/7 students has been a great highlight for me. Having been teaching for 7 years, I had started to lose some motivation. There are always plenty of challenges in teaching, but I needed something new, something to motivate me again. Learning and teaching Spanish since the start of 2007 has done that and more.

I was lucky to be accepted into the TPDL (Teacher Professional Development in Languages) programme. This was a fantastic programme as it was very well rounded, consisting of three main components. Firstly you must learn the language at a tertiary institution. Secondly you complete a pedagogy paper through the University of Auckland. Lastly, you have in-class observations to monitor your teaching of the language and your students' learning of the language.

I had many laughs learning the language, and found the pedagogy paper valuable in informing good teaching strategies. Furthermore, I found the in-class observations to be extremely beneficial. They gave me the chance to experiment and try out new teaching strategies and resources, while getting immediate feedback on their success. This regular feedback has made me a stronger Spanish teacher.

I teach in a Decile 1, multicultural school in South Auckland. In a class of 28, most of my students are of Samoan and Tongan ethnicity and predominantly speak their own mother tongue in their homes so learning Spanish, for most, has been learning a third language. They are extremely enthusiastic, love the challenge and they are experiencing success.

On my last observation visit for the TPDL programme, my In-School Facilitator noted that I used Spanish for most of my talk with student. I structured the lesson so that: teacher voice did not dominate. Because I am still learning Spanish myself I provide input in many ways, for example: flashcards, video, CD, simple Spanish readers, games, word lists, reference books, formulaic phrase sheets, song charts. I usually start my Spanish lessons with the students on the mat and allow them plenty of opportunities to speak, read aloud and sing as a way of revising learning and at the end of the lesson to reflect and comment on their new learning – in Spanish. I often like to use group learning stations. On an observation visit, my Facilitator noted a significant increase in spontaneous use of formulaic expressions by students (seven in Visit 3; over 20 in Visit 4), that students were having meaningful conversations around the tasks at the learning stations and with the teacher during the mat sessions; and that students used Spanish much more than English during the lesson.

The benefit of teaching an Intermediate class is that I have the same class for the whole day. So, although I only teach one formal Spanish lesson per week, we have two small 15 minute follow-up slots and I have the opportunity to use formulaic expressions all day long. We take the register in Spanish, give praise, and behaviour rewards and instructions and even talk about the food we're eating all in Spanish, so the children have lots of opportunity to use the language.

My class was so successful last year and had come so far in their language learning that we needed to celebrate! At the end of the year we took a trip into town, the heart of Auckland city, to take a Salsa class in a dance studio and to eat traditional food in a Spanish café. For many this was a highlight of the year, as few had ventured into the big smoke and never tasted the delights of Spanish food (... and no, they didn't sample sangria!).

Having had a great year, learning and teaching the Spanish language, I was once again motivated and stimulated and I took the opportunity to apply for a Ministry of Education Language Immersion Award. I have been awarded a three month scholarship. I look forward to this experience and the opportunity to improve my own knowledge and fluency of the culture and language to better facilitate my teaching of the Spanish language.



## 2009 Teacher Professional Development in Languages Years 7 to 10 (TPDL)



### Professional Development available nationally:

TPDL assists teachers of languages to improve their language fluency and supports them in applying pedagogy that has a real and positive impact on student learning.

This year-long programme gives teachers the opportunity to gain an internationally recognised qualification in Chinese (CPT, HSK), French (DELF, DALF), German (SD, ZD, KDS), Japanese (JLPT) or Spanish (DELE) and receive accreditation in language teaching (a University of Auckland graduate level paper).

This Ministry of Education-funded programme is delivered regionally according to demand. The Ministry will fund 58 places nationally for 2009.

Apply now to the Project Director, Wendy Thomson.

Email: [w.thomson@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:w.thomson@auckland.ac.nz)

Phone: 09 623 8899 ext 46310

Read about TPDL and download its comprehensive brochure from

<http://www.tki.org.nz/r/language/09TPDLbrochure.pdf>

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