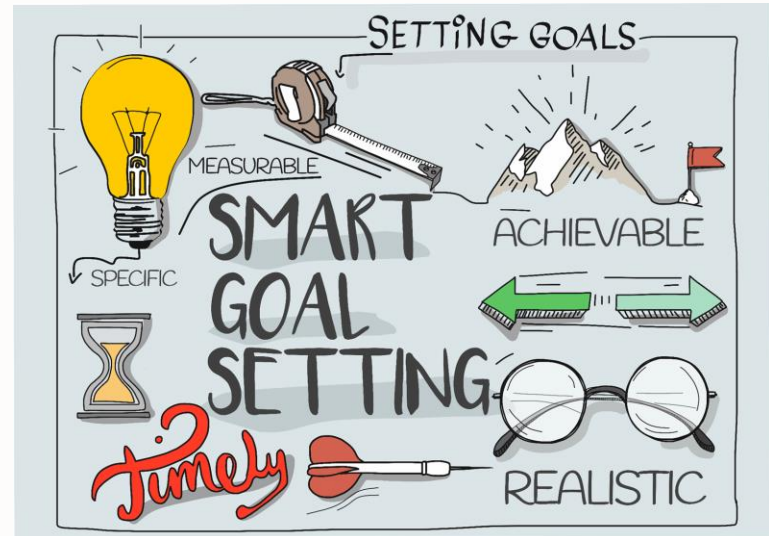# Effects of SMART Goal Setting on Participation in a University Spanish Course

Gabby Congemi and Kelsey Miller

Introduction

- Participation is shown to increase second language (L2) learning

- Goal setting activates student learning

- Importance of student's noticing participation

Review of Literature

- Goal setting is valuable to student learning in all capacities (Crisco & Porterfield, 2023)

- Increased opportunities for interactive language learning collaboration is valuable (Santiago-Garabieta, Zubiri-Esnaola, García-Carrión, Gairal-Casadó, 2023)

Review of Literature

- Factors that impact willingness to communicate are group size, self-confidence, and familiarity (Cao, 2006)

- When goal setting interventions occur, motivation increases (Eniola & Adebiyi, 2007)

- Students who set individual goals and self assess have increased proficiency in their L2 (de Saint Leger, 2009)

Rationale and Research Questions

- Because participation is crucial to L2 development and goal setting can activate student learning, it is important to examine if SMART goal setting in an L2 learning environment affects student participation.

- How does SMART goal setting in a college level language course impact students' participation?

Methods

- 14 participants

- Ages between 18 and 22

- Enrolled in Teacher A's three-hundred level Spanish course at a University

- Developed a Google Survey that was taken by students at the beginning and end of class

Background Questionnaire & SMART Goal Setting

- How often do you typically participate in your Spanish Course?
  - Very often, Often, Sometimes, Not Often, Never
- Do you typically set any sort of goal for yourself in your classes? If yes, please elaborate on your experiences?
- Please set a personal SMART goal relating to your participation in today's Spanish class session.
- Asked students to check boxes to confirm their goal was SMART

SMART Goal Setting Post Survey

- Did I accomplish my goal?

- Did this goal increase my in class participation?

- Do you think your participation in class increased your willingness to interact in Spanish?

- If you did not achieve your goal, what prevented you from doing so?

Methods

- Collected biodata about students learning language history, previous motivation and and participation prior to this survey
- Analyzed their reflections to see how goal setting impacted their L2 learning motivation throughout the 85 minute class period
- Compared responses from beginning of class to end of class to see if and why their participation increased after setting SMART goals
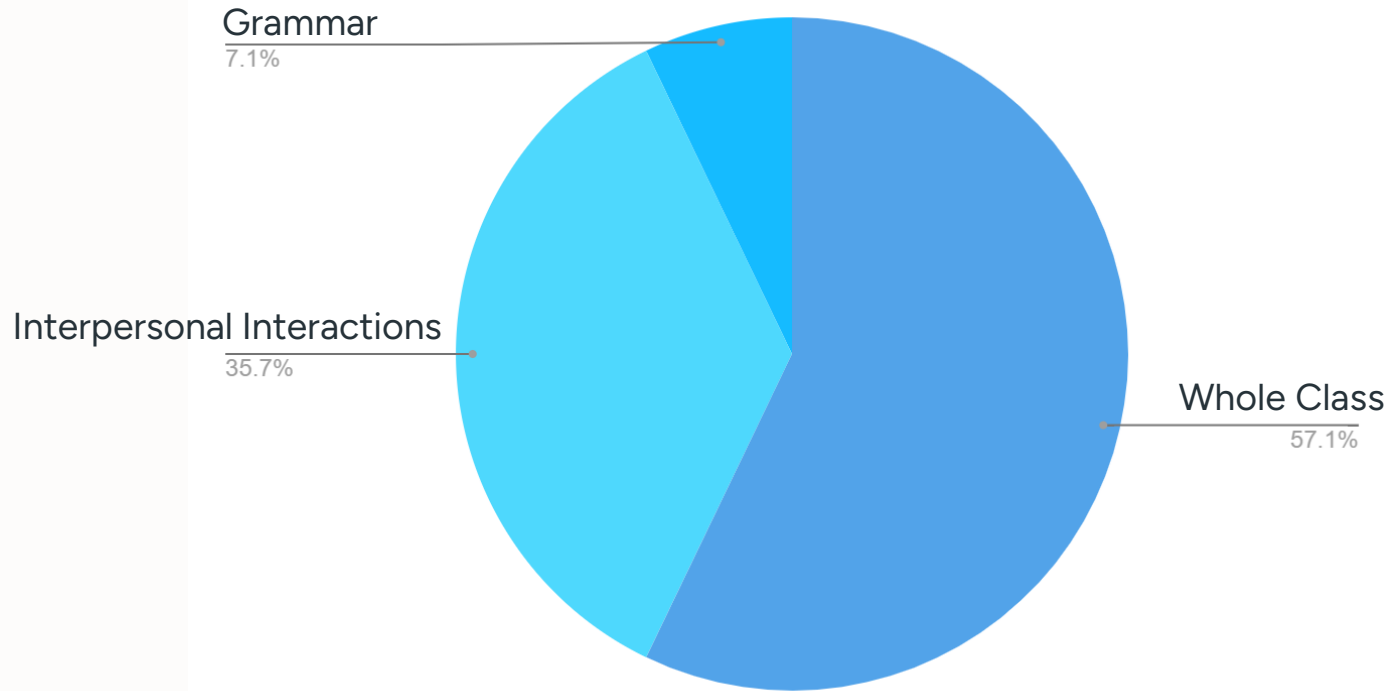
Results

- 64% of students reported they typically participate often or very often in-class.

- 93% stated they do not typically set goals for in-class participation.

100% of students increased their participation after setting a SMART goal

Results

Grammar
7.1%

Interpersonal Interactions
35.7%

Whole Class
57.1%

Did your goal increase in-class participation?

"It motivated me to volunteer to speak more."

"I was intentional."

"I was actively looking for opportunities to speak more."

Do you think your participation in-class increased your willingness to interact in Spanish?

"I wanted to complete my goal which required me to participate in class, which mean more Spanish"

"When I participate, I am forced to speak Spanish more."

"[Setting a goal] made me more focused on the subject."

Discussion

- SMART goal setting in a college level language course does impact students' participation

- When goals are set, students will put forth more effort (Vahidnia, 2015).

Discussion

- Participants explained:

  - Goal setting allowed students to "actively [look] for opportunities to participate," and "motivated [them] to volunteer"

  - "It is important to participate in discussions and try answering questions in the L2, even if you are incorrect, because that is how you learn"

Conclusions

- 100% of participants agreed that their in class participation increased their willingness to interact in Spanish
- Goal setting is known to increase engagement (Eniola & Adebiyi, 2007)
- Participation advances use of L2
    - Hesitancy to speaking in L2 prior to goal setting

Contributions

- Language educators should consider having students set a SMART goal relating to participation
- L2 learners most often define participation as it relates to whole group setting
- Goal setting in a L2 learning environment may help students develop goal setting habits that can help them be more successful in the future even outside language classrooms

References

Cao, Y. (2006). Interactional context and willingness to communicate: A comparison of behavior in whole class, group and dyadic interaction. System., 34(4), 480–493.

Crisco, V., & Porterfield, A. (2023). Embedding learning goals into secondary literacy curriculum: Assessing and implementing teachers' feedback. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy : a Journal from the International Reading Association., 66(4), 229–238. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1271

de Saint Leger, D. (2009). Self-Assessment of Speaking Skills and Participation in a Foreign Language Class. Foreign Language Annals, 42(1), 158–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2009.01013.x

Eniola, M. S., & Adebiyi, K. (2007). Emotional intelligence and goal setting — an investigation into interventions to increase motivation to work among visually impaired students in Nigeria. The British Journal of Visual Impairment, 25(3), 249–253. https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619607079805

Santiago-Garabieta, M., Zubiri-Esnaola, H., García-Carrión, R., & Gairal-Casadó, R. (2023). Inclusivity, friendship and language learning: boosting collaboration in interactive groups. Educational Research, 65(2), 189–203. https://doi-org.libweb.uwlax.edu/10.1080/00131881.2023.2189433

Vahidnia, F., & Fatemi, A. H. (2015). The advantage of power of goal-setting theory coupled with the power of choice in Iranian EFL learners' writing. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 6(4), 818+. https://link-gale-com.libweb.uwlax.edu/apps/doc/A461852245/AONE?u=lacrosse&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=c311d0de