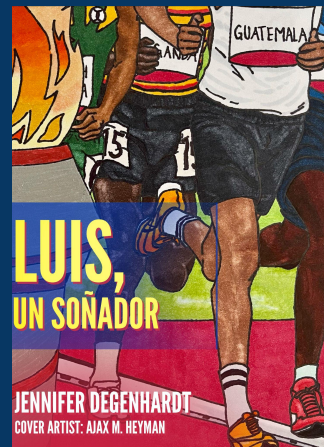
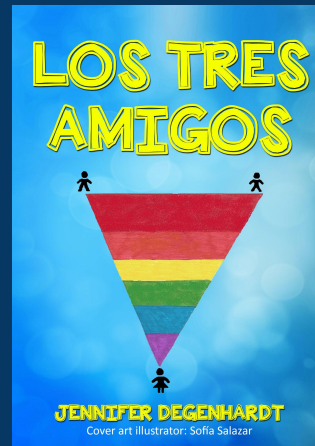
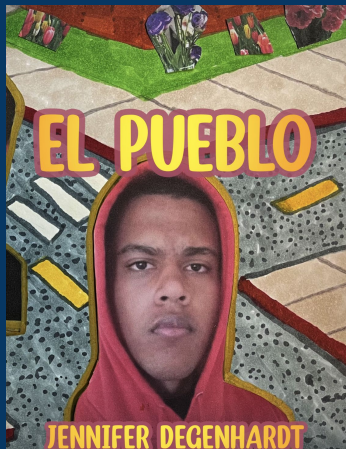


Using a Comprehensible Novel to Lessen Your Planning (Yes, really!)

Jennifer Degenhardt
Author / Spanish Instructor
UCONN Stamford



My daughter is in your Spanish class at UConn this semester, and she gave me your book *El Viaje Dificil*. I want to thank you for writing that little book as a teaching aid. I am 69 years old; I took Spanish in high school from 1968-'71. I read your book today, and I was very surprised that with the little bit of vocabulary and verbs I could remember, as well as your glossary, I could understand it.

A Case for Comprehensible Novels

Foreign languages were taught very badly in the late 60s, and I resented that all we learned was verb conjugation with a very limited amount of vocabulary. We weren't taught how to read or write a paragraph, so I couldn't apply it. It frustrated me since I worked around Spanish-speaking people, and couldn't communicate with them for many years.

If we had been taught your method, I might have been able to better apply what I had learned. I am very glad that language teaching has evolved this way. I hadn't realized that I might be able to read a book in Spanish. I thought that I struggled with learning languages, but this has given me the confidence to learn more.

Why use comprehensible readers?

1. Reading = INPUT
2. Provides a foundation - at students' pace - for higher levels of proficiency, reading comprehension, writing, grammar development
3. Fosters the habit of reading
4. Allows for continuity from class to class and/or downtime for all (FVR)
5. Can be the basis of low/no-prep lesson planning



Teachers Pre-Reading Tips :

THEMES

- READ novel to determine *THEMES*
- CREATE questions to involve students and get them thinking
- CREATE a slideshow or visuals to help get the conversation started



UNIT PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIBLE NOVEL

Title of Novel:

Days:

Unit essential vocabulary/structures/expressions:

Unit essential themes:

Unit essential culture topics:

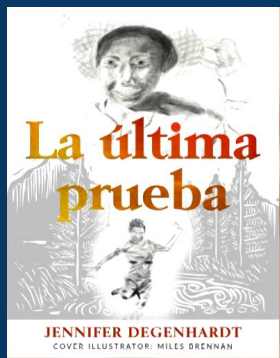
Unit essential questions/novel essential questions:

Unit resources/links/activities/assessments:



Teacher Pre -Reading Tips: *VOCAB/STRUCTURES*

- DETERMINE what *VOCABULARY* is repeated throughout the novel
- CREATE questions (at students' level) to allow them to absorb this new vocab/grammar
- USE images to reinforce this vocab/grammar



Teacher Pre-Reading Tips: *CULTURE*

- DETERMINE what *CULTURE* TOPIC(S) are present in the novel
- FIND short video/podcast resources to introduce the culture
- ENGAGE students as to why language and culture are inextricably linked



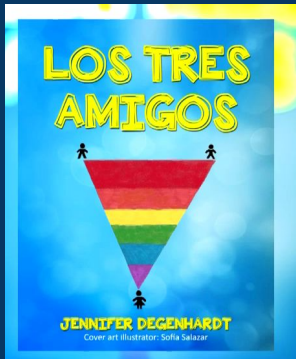
Examples of culture:

- Dialects & accents
- Pastimes, etiquette & customs
- Fashion/Dress
- Family life
- Beliefs
- History
- Traditions & Celebrations
- Vocabulary
- Foods
- Weather
- Education
- Geography
- Social media
- Music
- Film & TV
- Legends
- Economy
- Politics
- Customs

Pre-Reading Tips with Students:

BOOK COVER CHAT

- SHARE the cover of comprehensible reader with students to generate discussion
- ASK questions based on students' level: yes/no for novice learners; more complex questions for upper-level students



Objective: Get them interested first and then have them use the target language!

Pre-Reading Tips with Students :

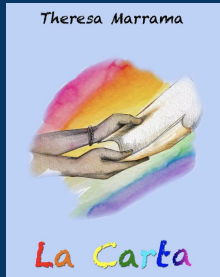
PICTURE CHAT

Like the *COVER CHAT*, but with illustrations from the book

Same strategy as before: show 'em the illustrations!

Objectives: to get students to think about the story and what they might encounter when they read.

Other strategy: provide 4-5 images from the book, have students order them and tell their own story.

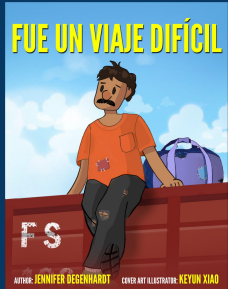


Pre -Reading Tips with Students:

CHAPTER TITLE SCRAMBLE*

**for books that have titled chapters*

- TAKE chapter titles & have students arrange them in the order THEY think the story will happen. Can be done individually or in groups



- DIRECT students to write a short story of their own telling about what they think happens in the story
- ALLOW students to draw what they think the chapter is about and use the images to tell a partner what they think the story is about

Theresa Marrama



L'accident

During-Reading Tips: *COGNATE SEARCH*



While reading the chapter (lower levels - teacher reads aloud while students read OR the students read the digital version as they listen to audio)

Students write down as many cognates as they read/hear from the chapter. Have them share and you can write the list on the board.

Amazing how many words they will already recognize!

During-Reading Tips: *COMIC STRIP*

everybody loves to draw - even college students!

DIRECT students to create a blank comic strip template by folding a piece of paper into 8 squares

- Students draw what happens in a chapter OR teacher creates 8 scenes in short, comprehensible sentences that are read to the students (students draw what they hear)
- Next day, have students pair up and retell chapter in the target language



CHAPTER 1 SENTENCES

- TO PUT IN LOGICAL ORDER (PRINT SENTENCES AND CUT INTO STRIPS)
- TO CREATE A COMIC STRIP FROM SENTENCES READ OR LISTENED TO (DRAW)
 - TO WRITE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHAPTER

José llega a casa.

Vive con su esposa y sus tres hijos, dos hijas y un hijo.

Su esposa, Esmilda, está preparando la sopa.

José entra en la cocina y habla con Esmilda.

Esmilda da la comida al José.

Esmilda le dice al José del problema con la lavadora.

Esmilda y José hablan de los problemas económicos.

José va a reparar la máquina el próximo día.

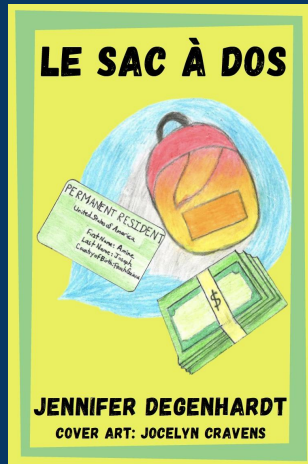


You can create (or, even better, have students create) simple sentences to summarize the chapter for use with a comic strip, reordering of sentences for chapter comprehension.

After-Reading Tips: *STORYMAP the CHAPTER or NOVEL*

Using a teacher-generated story map graphic organizer, students map out (in words) the information that reiterates the use of the super 7 verbs (the verbs most used in the language)

goes, is, has, wants, does, there is, likes





est...

aime...

a...

Il y a...

fait...

veut...

va...

During-Reading Tips:

WHO SAID IT?

- CHOOSE quotes (or have students choose quotes) from different characters
- READ chosen quotes for a *Who Said It?* Game
- Depending on students' language level, DIRECT students to create dialogue a character *might* say

After-Reading Tips: *Character Autopsy*

- **DIRECT** students draw an outline of their character (or provide one)
- **CHALLENGE** students to dress the character and provide words, phrases or sentences for specific body parts.

Example: Head= thoughts, hopes, concerns
Mouth = favorite quote from character
Leg = where the character goes
Hand = what character does



Character Autopsy

With your group, draw a large outline of your character. Dress them in clothes they would actually wear and fill it with the words/phrases/sentences described below.

La cabeza/el cerebro:

Fill your character's head/brain with at least three of their thoughts, hopes, or concerns. Each can be a word/phrase and add an emoji to clarify how they feel about each

La boca:

Around the mouth write your favorite thing the character says. It could be funny, wise, brave etc. Quote directly from the text. (*Dice "...*")

Los brazos:

On one arm think about what the character would like to hold if they could only hold one thing. What's important to him/her? (*Le importa(n)...*)

On the other arm think about who or what the character might like to CREATE or DESTROY. (*Quiere crear/destruir...*)

Las manos:

In one hand draw a phone and write a text message the character would like to receive
In the other hand draw a phone and write a text message they would NOT like to receive. These should be totally different. For example, don't put "Te amo" on one and "No te amo" on the other

El corazón:

What does the character love? (*Le encanta...*) Who does the character love? (*Ama a...*) Use complete sentences and include a reason why (*porque*).

El estómago:

In their belly write what they like to eat (*le gusta comer*) and what they do eat (*come*) throughout the book

Las piernas:

On one leg list places that the character goes in the story (*Va a...*)

On the other leg write where they are going to go now that the story has ended. Use your best guess (*Va a ir a...*)

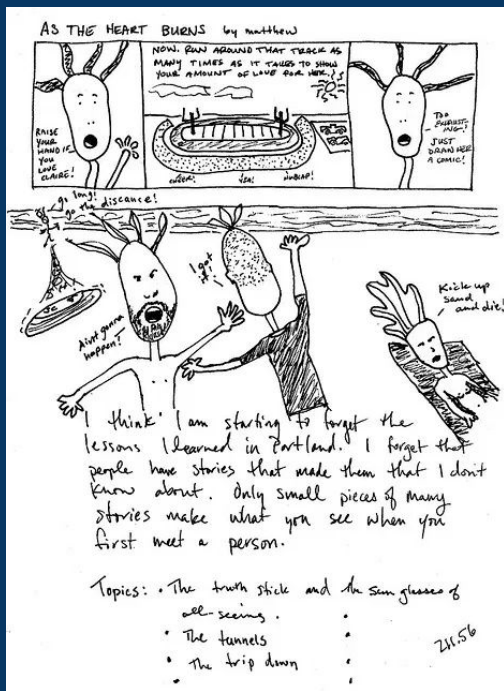
Los pies:

On their feet write two things the character either would learn (*aprendería que*) or does learn (*aprende que*) by changing perspective and stepping into someone else's shoes

@senorahaston



After -Reading Tips: *Smash Doodle*



A journal-like page that is bunch of images and words/phrases smashed together, kind of like a scrapbook page.

Summary of a chapter or an entire book.

Example - External Resources used:

Maria Maria: un cuento de un huracán

Podcast: [La Brega](#) (in English and Spanish)

Duolingo podcast: [El embajador de mofongo](#) (food)

Video: [History of the Puerto Rico](#) (brief)

Music video: [Hijos del cañaveral](#) use to compare with La borinqueña (national anthem of Puerto Rico)

Lyrics: [Hijos del cañaveral](#)

Vocab: [Hijos del cañaveral](#) (Song used for culture & history discussion while reading the story)

A non-comprehensive list of activities to use with readers

speaking	writing	reading	listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner interviews ● Speed “networking” ● Questions on PPT ● Retelling of comic strip drawn ● Word strings ● Meet & greet character “party” activity ● Airplane dictation ● Personal question asking (PQA) ● Character maps ● Picture talk ● Reader’s theater ● Turn & talk ● Think-pair-share ● Gallery walk ● Dramatic characters ● Look & discuss ● Whole class conversation ● Conversation circles ● Debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compare & contrast(Venn diagram/T-chart) ● Chapter questions ● Engaging open-ended prompts ● Texting/Tweeting activity ● Instagram activity ● Snapchat (using templates) ● Grammar using examples from book ● Alternate ending ● Cartoon: one image drawing ● Comic strip: multiple image drawing ● Discussion boards given the themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-order chapter ● Sequence activities ● Who said it (character quotes) ● Cultural reading ● Pre-reading scavenger hunt with questions ● Internet scavenger hunt ● Articles related to book for compare & contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lists of words to listen for when listening to chapter ● Who said it (character quotes) ● Comic strip activity ● Video/Audio clips related to book themes (to frontload vocab) & easy questions ● Movies related to book’s theme ● Dramatic characters



Where to learn more about how to use comprehensible readers:

1. Teacher's Discovery YouTube channel
2. Courses at Idioma Consulting (asynchronous, self-paced courses that I facilitate).



Teaching Social Justice with Novels in the Spanish Classroom
Summer I 2023 (May 23 - July 1)

Novice Level Novels to Enhance Communication in the Spanish Classroom
Spring 2023 (October 23 - December 8)

Discount code: JEND20



DIGILANGUA

Contact me via my website:
www.puenteslanguage.com

