Statement

As a Spanish teacher, I believe the key element in the foreign language classroom is keeping the students motivated and engaged. When teaching I bring enthusiasm, cultural elements, and technology into the classroom to increase the level of motivation. I draw upon my own culture and experience as a foreign language learner to help me connect with the students and to help them in their learning process. I keep in mind that everyone learns in different ways and at different rates. My goal is to motivate my students to a level of independence where they develop a desire to learn and think for themselves. In order to attain this goal, my lesson plans and curriculum include differentiation and a variety of activities that include comprehensible input (CI), total physical response (TPR), music, skits, arts and crafts, videos, and games. I believe the multimodal approach to teaching and learning will help the students in the development of the language in their own learning style.

Another way I love to share my culture with my students is by sharing foods and teaching them how to cook different dishes. It always amazes me how these kids, though young in age, are very excited about trying new foods and learning to make hispanic foods. Through the years, I have taught them to make kid-friendly sangria, churros, chocolate caliente, sopapillas, empanadas, and pastelitos, and as they get older they come back to me asking for the recipe for sangria or pastelitos, or any of their favorite dishes that they have learned to cook with me. Any time I plan a cooking day, the students love it and ask to have more days like it.

Biography

Sonia Puerta-Quinn was born and raised in Colombia, in the beautiful regions of Medellin, Antioquia and Valledupar, Cesar. She grew up in a large family surrounded by many cousins, aunts and uncles, and nieces and nephews with lots of family traditions. She came to the United States at the age of 19 to learn English as a Second Language and then to attend college. career on hold. After moving around the country a couple of times and having her own children, Sonia still desired to finish her studies towards a Bachelor degree. Once her children started attending elementary school, Sonia started to volunteer in their school and her teacher skills started to develop, her desire to go back to school grew stronger. By then, a dear friend of hers, Dr. Jana Sandarg of Augusta University, suggested that Sonia become a Spanish teacher.
Dr. Sandarg would say, “Sonia, we need Spanish teachers and you will be a natural for it.” Sonia listened to her friend’s advice and went back to school to pursue a degree in Spanish with a minor in Education. In 2006 Sonia obtained her Bachelor’s of Arts in Spanish Education, fulfilling this way one of her childhood goals “yo seré una profesional, me graduare de la universidad y luego seguiré con la Maestría.” (I will go to college to get a Bachelor’s Degree and then a Master’s Degree”).

Well, at the young age of 56, Sonia decided to pursue her Master’s Degree by enrolling at the University of Salamanca program and has attended for the past two summers to complete the required course load and now she is in the process of writing her Trabajo de Fin de Máster (TFM) in order to obtain the title of Máster en Lengua y Cultura Españolas. Sonia also believes that as a teacher she should stay current and aware of new technology and methodologies influencing the profession. She believes professional development and involvement with our professional associations play an important role in the teaching styles and in being able to provide the students a chance to succeed. “The more we learn the more we are able to share with our students.” She stays current with the Foreign Language teaching field by attending professional conferences offered by organizations such as AATSP, FLAG, SCOLT, ACTFL, NNELL, and FLAIR.

Sonia has been very active in FLAIR as a member of the Steering Committee for several years. She is also a member of the Board for AATSP-Georgia Chapter where she volunteers as the K-8 Member-at-Large Sociedad Hispánica de Amistad since 2016. Sonia enjoys sharing her culture and knowledge with her colleagues by presenting cooking workshops at the AATSP-GA chapter Fall conferences and Student Immersion Camp. She also enjoys volunteering with the different Hispanic Community Non-profit organizations in the Augusta area. She has been a board member of ALAS (Asociación Latino Americana de Servicios), ACHA (Asociación Cultural Hispano Americana), and the Catholic Hispanic Community in the Augusta Deanery.