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María Laura Mecías

Education Overview

Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics

2021-2025

University of Florida, United States.

Areas of interest: Second and heritage language acquisition and pedagogy, Spanish language education through technology, Spanish for specific purposes, and language educators' professional development.

Dissertation title: Enhancing vocabulary acquisition in content-based language courses.

M.A. in Spanish as a Second Language

2008-2010

Universidad Europea del Atlántico, Spain.

Thesis: Designing and testing digital activities to complement Spanish course textbooks for beginner levels (A1-A2, CEFR).

Professional Experience

Graduate Instructor of Spanish

University of Florida

FALL 2022 - SPRING 2025

Research/Program Assistant to the Director of Language Instruction. Assisted with literature reviews and survey creation related to 21st Century Skills and language teaching and learning with artificial intelligence. Created, revised, and organized pedagogical materials used by instructors in SPS. Aided the revision of SPN 1130: Beginning Spanish I and SPN 1131: Beginning Spanish II, including implementing a new curriculum, IPAs, lesson plans emphasizing 21st Century Skills and transitioning those courses from onsite into online offerings for residential students.

FALL 2022 - SPRING 2024

Lead Instructor for SPN 2200: Intermediate Spanish I and SPN 2201: Intermediate Spanish II. Created and assessed pedagogical materials (including but not limited to Integrated Performance Assessment [IPAs], projects, and quizzes), facilitated meetings with instructors, compiled and/or revised activities and lesson plans, aided in informal classroom observations of other instructors, managed LMS and materials platforms, and supervised completion of course tasks.

Instructor of record:

- SPN 3943/SPN 4905: Internship in Spanish (Spring 2025)
- SPN 3036: Spanish for the Health Professions. (Spring 2023 - Present)
- SPN 2200: Intermediate Spanish I. (Fall 2023)
- SPN 2201 Honors: Intermediate Spanish II. (Fall 2022 - Spring 2023)

- SPN 1131. Beginning Spanish II. (Fall 2021 - Spring 2022)

UF in Valencia (Spain) Summer 2023

- Instructor of Record for SPN 2240: Intensive Communication in Spanish (popularly called Conversation I). Planned, designed, and conducted communicative lesson plans for students at the Intermediate-Mid level.
- Assisted the coordinator and interacted with colleagues from the local university to conduct exchange experiences to foster conversational skills among students from Spain and the US. Guided students' activities through the Study Abroad Experience.

University Professor - Argentina

Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Profesora Master Español Segunda Lengua y Extranjera UCA.

2016 – 2021

- Graduate course: Methodology of Second Language Teaching. (Co-taught a Virtual exchange experience in the course in 2020 with Eastern Carolina University's Masters Program).
- Graduate course: Evaluation: Dimensions and Scope for Spanish as a World Language.
- Graduate course (online): Continuing Education for Modern Language Teachers: Designing Virtual Online Courses.
- Undergraduate Spanish Courses: Level A1 – Level C1, CEFR

Academic Coordinator: Language Immersion Programs & Study Abroad

2005 – 2021

Elebares, Buenos Aires – Ecela, Santiago de Chile - Cusco

Created the curricula, programs, and materials for all regular-level courses. Designed and customized Spanish for Specific Purposes courses for study abroad experiences, courses syllabi for study abroad programs from diverse regions and populations from the United States university system. Coordinated teams of instructors, coached and evaluated instructors' performances, developed specific training to optimize their strategies and pedagogy. Designed and conducted Summer Study Abroad Programs in three destinations in South America: Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, and Cusco as the local Director.

Created and taught LSP courses for Heritage Speakers related to health and business, creating classes' materials and evaluations while collaborating with university professors from the US, school administrators, local hospitals, companies, entrepreneurs, and personnel for health shadowing and business internships in Argentina and Chile.

DELE Examiner A1-C2

2008 – 2018

Instituto Cervantes - Buenos Aires

International Spanish examiner (A1-C2, CEFR) Interviewed candidates in the oral test according to standardized procedures. Graded the oral test by applying the grading scales of the established criteria. Prepared and examined students of different levels.

Professional Development

- [Professional Certificate in Language Program Administration](#). Carnegie Mellon University (Fall 2024). Thirty continuing education credits focusing on Curriculum Design and Review, Leadership & Teacher Supervision, Language Program Evaluation, Language Program Management, and Administration

- Medical Interpreter Training: University of Florida School of Medicine (Summer 2024) ALTA Test - Official Interpreter at Shands Hospital.
- Center of Teaching Excellence UF - Certificate of Teaching Excellence: CIRTl (Fall 2021 - Present)
 - Preparing Future Faculty Program
 - Artificial Intelligence and Assessments
 - Creative Assessment
 - 5 Strategies to Improve Ambulatory Teaching and Meet
 - IDEA Action plan and statement. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - How We Learn: Teaching Strategies that Maximize Learning
 - Creating Global Classrooms Through Virtual Exchange
 - Conversations for a Culture of Inclusion
 - Student Focused Teaching
 - Teaching Assistant Principles and Strategies
- World-Readiness Language Courses. CARLA Summer Institute (June 2022)
- UF Spanish Heritage Program Shadowing (Spring 2022) Observed classes by experienced instructors, attended weekly meetings, completed readings with mini-presentations, and actively participated in student recruitment and teaching material development. Directed and supervised by Dr. Diego Pascual y Cabo.
- Curso de especialización: La gramática cognitiva en la clase de español. Instituto Formación ELE, España. (2015)
- Difusión y comercialización de productos y servicios docentes (lenguas extranjeras). Programa de Formación de Profesores Instituto Cervantes. (2012) N° de Registro CFP285-12/21.
- Examinador Internacional D.E.L.E. Nivel A1 a C2. Certificación oficial del Instituto Cervantes de Río de Janeiro. (2011)
- Formación Metodológica: propuestas del MCER y Pautas para la evaluación en segundas lenguas: materiales y actividades para preparar la prueba del diploma de Español D.E.L.E. (2008)
- Jornada de Formación: Proceso de Administración de Pruebas y Formación de Examinadores Orales D.E.L.E. (2008) Certificado N° 242/2007

Awards

- 2023-2024 UF Graduate Student Teaching Award and Calvin A. VanderWerf Award. The UF Graduate School honors the 20-25 most industrious and innovative graduate instructors at UF, with the top 1-2 recipients receiving the Calvin A. VanderWerf Award for outstanding achievement in teaching.
- 2023 Most Valuable Teacher Award: Florida Foreign Language Association

Academic service

University of Florida – Spanish & Portuguese Studies

2021 – PRESENT

- Spanish conversation coach: Mesa de Español. (2021-2022)
- Lower Division Textbook Review Committee. (2022)
- Material Creation Committee for Beginner Level. (2022-23)
- Graduate Representative at Faculty Meetings Academic (2022-2023)
- Peer Reviewer Spanish Heritage Language Journal - UF (2023-2024)

- Undergraduate Internship Supervisor (2024-2025)
- Sigma Delta Pi Sociedad Nacional Honoraria Hispánica (2023-Present)

ACTFL - Special Interest Group (SIG) Languages for Specific Purposes **2023 – PRESENT**

As the SIG Secretary, I assist the Chair and Vice Chair of the Special Interest Group of Languages for Specific Purposes to solicit, organize, and select presentations for the Annual Convention. I aid the SIG in articulating and disseminating its issues and concerns to ACTFL, designing the newsletter, taking notes at the SIG's annual business meeting, and acting as the liaison between the SIG and ACTFL.

FFLA – Region 4 Director **2022 – PRESENT**

As a regional director, my role consists of promoting workshops of the [Florida Foreign Language Association](#), engaging teachers, and sharing proposal activities. Through my work with FFLA, I have made a special commitment to providing quality, innovative education and professional development opportunities for stakeholders in local schools, universities & business partners across the state. I coordinate actions for the association's events.

Community Involvement

2024 – PRESENT

- **Interpreter Volunteer** at UF Equal Access Clinic Network. Serve as an interpreter for 50+ patients. Maintain strict patient confidentiality by adhering to professional and employer ethical codes. Soothe distressed patients by speaking to them in their primary language. Communicate medical updates from physicians to patients and their families.
- **Workshop facilitator for World Language high school teachers** in Alachua County, Florida. ("Vocabulary learning strategies", and "Artificial Intelligence to develop language skills").

2022 – 2023

- **Volunteer at Latino Women's League:** La hora del cuento. Storytelling time for heritage language speakers. P.I.B.E.S. NGO in Gainesville.

2016 – 2017

- **Syrian Immigrant Refugee Spanish Teacher Volunteer Program.** Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina. A lifelong learning experience with a diverse culture, language, and needs. A completely different approach to language teaching.

Industry experience

SUMMER 2024

At **Lingrolearning**, I served as a proofreader for Spanish beginner and intermediate textbooks. In this role, I meticulously reviewed and proofread various written materials, ensuring they were free from grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and activity errors. I verified factual accuracy and consistency, adhering to the company's style guide standards. Collaborating closely with writers and editors, I provided constructive feedback to enhance clarity, coherence, and content quality for the activities. I maintained high accuracy under tight deadlines, tracked changes and revisions using appropriate software, and effectively communicated necessary revisions to the content team.

Scholarship

Publications

- Undergraduate Perceptions of the Value of Studying Spanish: The Role for Spanish for Specific Purposes Mary E. Risner and Maria Laura Mecias
https://gbl.digital.library.gwu.edu/articles/volume_25/10_4079_gbl_v25_4.html
- Navigating the AI Highway: A Traffic Light Approach to Language Learning, FLT MAG (2025)
<https://fltmag.com/ai-highway-traffic-light/>
- Gutman, C.K.; McFarlane, A.; Fernandez, R.; Lion, K.C.; Aronson, P.L.; Bylund, C.L.; Joseph, N.; Mecias, M.L.; and Fisher, C.L. (2024) "He was not listening to hear me": Parent experiences with communication, inclusion, and marginalization in the pediatric emergency department. Accepted at Acad Emerg Med, Dec 2024.
- **Book Review: *The Linguist List Review: The Cambridge Handbook of Third Language Acquisition*:** Cabrelli et al. (eds.) (2023) (June 4, 2024) <https://linguistlist.org/issues/35-1648/>
- **Enfoque por tareas en inmersión:** ¿Cómo y cuánto aprendo en una semana? Una propuesta didáctica para cursos cortos. Mecías, M.L. y Giménez, M.A. en *Revista Letras*, 2019, enero-junio, n° 79 – pp. 156 a 165. <https://erevistas.uca.edu.ar/index.php/LET/article/view/2674>
- Mecías, M.L. y Rodriguez, N. (2010) Diseño de Materiales Audiovisuales. *Revista MARCOELE*: https://marcoele.com/descargas/enbrape/mecias_rodriguez-diseno-materiales.pdf

Conference Presentations

- **Vocabulary enhancement in LSP courses.** ISLSP - CIBER 2024 - May, 2024 George Washington University.
- **Teaching Today's Students: Integrating 21st Century Skills in Beginning Language Classes.** Florida Foreign Language Association (FFLA) Conference, October 2023, Daytona Beach, FL with Dr. Jennifer Wooten
- **Unleashing Linguistic Confidence: Reducing Foreign Language Anxiety through Virtual Exchange and Cultural Engagement.** Bilingualism Matters 2023. Dr. Crystal Marull and Maria Laura Mecias
- **Exploring a Multigenerational and Inter-Institutional Approach to Community Heritage Language Support.** P.I.B.E.S. - Bilingualism Matters 2023. Maria Laura Mecias and Dr. Crystal Marull
- **Creating Community through Flip: students' perceptions in an in-person L2 class.** The Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO), 2023.
- **Introducing 21st Century skills in Beginning Level Courses.** American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) Annual Conference, June 2023, Salamanca, Spain. with Dr. Jennifer Wooten and Marina Cuartero Marco.
- **Insights into retaining beginner-level Spanish students through innovative course offerings and LSP.** ISLSP-CIBER 2022. University of Chicago. Research and study conducted with Dr. Mary Risner
- **Español para la Salud en Argentina: diseño de currícula y aprendizaje en servicio.** GERES – UCA Argentina - XVIII Encuentro Internacional del GERES. "El español de especialidad en Hispanoamérica: variaciones lingüísticas y diseño de materiales didácticos". 2020
- **Actividades en la clase de español según las neurociencias y el método cognitivo.** Ponencia sobre Talleres de formación docente (PROCAPI – Asociación de Centros de Idiomas Argentina). María Laura Mecías (Elebaires) & Ángela Giménez (Elebaires) 2019.
- **Taller de didáctica ELE para niños y adolescentes.** Jornada de Capacitación ELE – Princeton University - New Jersey – US Octubre, 2016.
- **La motivación en la clase de idiomas.** Talleres de formación docente (PROCAPI – Asociación de Centros de Idiomas Argentina) Mayo 2015. Buenos Aires.

- **Capacitación docente ELE: métodos y herramientas para estancias de corta duración.** V CITI: Congreso Internacional de Turismo Idiomático. Octubre 2014, Buenos Aires.
- **Capacitación docente en situación de inmersión: cursos de especialización para profesores de ELE.** VII Coloquio Portugués y Español Lenguas Segundas y Extranjeras, organizado por la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación. Montevideo, Uruguay, 2014.
- **Un marco para mi clase ELE. Abordaje y análisis del Marco Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas.** III Congreso de Español como Lengua Extranjera. Universidad del Salvador, Argentina, 2013.
- **¿Qué hacemos con los errores?** Ponencia en Todoole: Webinar online Mayo 2012
- **Taller de análisis de errores en el aprendizaje de español para brasileños. Terapias para solventarlos.** III Encuentro Práctico Comunidad Todoole, 2011.
- **Portafolio del profesor 2.0.** XIV Congreso Brasileiro de Professores de Espanhol, Universidad Federal Fluminense, Niteroi, Brasil, 2011.
- **Taller de Formación para Profesores ELE: Diseño de materiales para la preparación de los candidatos para los exámenes DELE.** Buenos Aires, 2012.
- **BlogELEando, un portafolio de actividades para el profesor 2.0. en línea.** II Congreso de Español como Segunda Lengua, Universidad del Salvador, 2011.
- **Aplicaciones de la Web 2.0** para Aula del Sur 1, Ediciones de Voces del Sur y Ed. Difusión. I Congreso Internacional de Turismo Idiomático, 2010.
- **Diseño de materiales E/LE con herramientas 2.0.** III JORNADAS y II Congreso Internacional de Español como Lengua Extranjera. Rosario, Argentina, 2010.
- **Diseño de materiales con herramientas de la web 2.0 para la clase ELE.** II Seminario de Español como Lengua Extranjera – S.E.L.E; Sao Paulo, Brasil, 2009.
- **El perfil del profesor ELE en la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires.** I Congreso de Español como Segunda Lengua, Universidad del Salvador, 2009.

Languages

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|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ● Spanish: Native Language | ● Italian: B1 / Advanced Low |
| ● English: C1 (TOEFL) / Superior | ● German: A1.2 / Novice High |

Technology Skills

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| ● Google Apps for Education: Classroom, Pearl Deck, Genially, Kahoot. | ● Video recording and editing. |
| ● Learning Management Systems | ● Virtual meeting platforms. |
| (backend management) Canva, Learn Worlds. | ● Website Development: Wordpress, Weebly. |

References

United States:

- Dr. Gillian Lord: Professor of Hispanic Linguistics, Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Florida. glord@ufl.edu
- Dr. Jennifer Wooten: Instructional Professor and Director of Language Instruction, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies, University of Florida. wooten@ufl.edu

- Dr. Mary Risner: Associate Director, Outreach and Business Programs Project Manager, Florida - Brazil Linkage Institute, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida. mriskner@latam.ufl.edu
- Dr. Pascual y Cabo: Professor of Hispanic Linguistics and Heritage Language Program Director, University of Florida: dpascual@ufl.edu

Argentina:

- Dra. María Verónica Muñoz. International Relations Department Director, Universidad Católica Argentina. mvmunoz@uca.edu.ar
- Dr. Javier González - Universidad Católica Argentina, Academia Argentina de Letras & CONICET. jrgonzalez@conicet.gov.ar