

MARIA JOSÉ PALACIOS FIGUEROA

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EDUCATION

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Bellingham, WA June 2018
B.A. Spanish Language and Literature, Linguistics; Minor - Latin American Studies
Overall GPA: 3.63/4.00

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

- Linguistics 411: Phonological Transfer in Second Language Acquisition | Dr. Jordan Sandoval
- Linguistics 402: The Structure of Spanish | Spring 2018 | Dr. Rodolfo Mata
- Spanish 300: Pronunciation & Curriculum | Winter 2018 | Independent Study supervised by Dr. Paqui Paredes
- Spanish 300: Pronunciation & Curriculum II | Spring 2018 | Independent Study supervised by Dr. Paqui Paredes

AWARDS AND HONORS

President's Civic Leadership Award, Washington Campus Compact May 2018
Recognized amongst 15k+ university students for exceptional leadership and commitment to addressing critical issues on campus. Received this award for conceptualizing Spanish exposure events targeted toward Spanish learners. ([link](#))

Presidential Scholar, Western Washington University June 2018
Selected amongst 3k graduating Humanities majors in recognition of exceptional scholarship and service to the university and community. Received this award for demonstrating success in furthering multicultural programs and activities. ([link](#))

Outstanding Graduating Senior – Spanish, Western Washington University June 2018
Awarded to graduates based on grades, research and writing, service to the campus and community, and promise for the future. Selected amongst 50+ graduating seniors by the department faculty and dean of academics. ([link](#))

PRESENTATIONS

Dodrill, J., Palacios Figueroa, M. (2018, May 14-18). *Flipping Student-Teacher Paradigms in Western's Employee Language Program*. [Poster session]. Western Washington University 2018 Scholars Week, Bellingham, WA, United States.

Drickey, K., Sandoval, J., Palacios Figueroa, M. (2018, November 9 -11). *Sí se puede: Moving Toward Accuracy and Confidence through Early Phonology Intervention in Spanish Language Classrooms*. [Conference presentation]. 116th Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Annual Conference, Bellingham, WA, United States.

Didier, E., Palacios Figueroa, M., Ramesh, G. (2019, June 17) *Can u read this? Innovation in digital expression*. [Workshop]. 2019 English Culture and Diversity Day, Uberlândia, Brazil.

Palacios Figueroa, M., (2019, July 15 -19). *Time to cancel "cancel culture"? Strategies for creating meaningful interaction through calling in and calling out*. [Workshop]. 2019 Fulbright Brazil ETA Mid-Year Enhancement Seminar, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

ACADEMIC PROJECT

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Bellingham, WA

Pronunciation Curriculum Development Project

Jan 2018 - Present

- Worked under Dr. Jordan Sandoval in Linguistics Department and Professor Kirsten Drickey in Spanish Department to develop explicit pronunciation training curriculum for 200-level Spanish courses
- Read existing literature on Second Language Acquisition, Spanish phonology, and pedagogy on teaching pronunciation in order to incorporate research and best practices into curriculum design
- Crafted online modules on Canvas and WordPress ([Talleres Guacamayo](#)) to describe phonological features of English and Spanish, highlight transfer errors, test perception and prompt self-analysis of productions
- Led online workshops for 200 - level Spanish courses twice a quarter for groups of 30 students
- Analyzed student productions on Praat to evaluate the impact of explicit phonological instruction by assessing production changes in vowels and voice onset time measurements across an academic term

IDEA INSTITUTE, WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Bellingham, WA

Sept 2017 – June 2018

Changemaker Fellow

- Developed blueprint for mentorship program between university students and local elementary and middle schools aiming to improve Spanish proficiency and increase pride and confidence in linguistic and ethnic identities for Heritage Spanish speakers in Bellingham, Washington ([video link](#))

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Bellingham, WA

April 2018 - June 2018

CHSS Mission, Vision, and Goals/Objectives Ad Hoc Writing Committee

Revised the College of Humanities and Social Sciences' mission and objectives alongside department chairs, faculty, and staff to align with the university's strategic plan and reflect the unique strengths and character of the college

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Private Spanish Instructor

March 2020 – Present

- Taught virtually 60 - 90 min weekly personalized conversation based classes to 5+ students across the globe
- Worked on conversational fluidity with focus on improving pronunciation accuracy to increase confidence
- Developed standardized curriculum, from scratch, targeted towards students of various proficiency levels

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE : COMISSÃO FULBRIGHT BRASIL, Uberlândia, Brasil

Feb 2019 – Nov 2019

Cultural ambassadorship to Universidade Federal de Uberlândia with focus on advocating for international collaboration

Fulbright English Teaching Assistant

- Forged partnerships with 5 "Letras" professors and two co-ETAs (English Teaching Assistants) by improving and executing "English Conversation Time" program for university students interested in cultural exposure
- Facilitated dialogues on issues like racism, inequality, politics, and education by leading educational workshops for 25+ students on topics such as "Latinidad in the U.S", and "History of LGBTQ+ in the United States"
- Fostered relationships with English conversation group students throughout the academic year leading to student retention and awarding over 40 certificates for 60+ hours of attendance by end of year
- Honed intercultural communication skills through collaboration with local Idiomas Sem Fronteiras teachers by co-developing lesson plans and guest teaching Spanish and English courses
- Hosted 150+ attendee 2-day "English Culture and Diversity Day" conference on "The World of Tomorrow: Innovation that Moves Us Forward" to promote the discussion of big ideas through the practice of English
- Moderated "Innovation Around the World" panel of 6 international students for an audience of 150+ attendees

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, Bellingham, WA

March 2016 - June 2018

Spanish Language Tutor

- Assisted 20+ lower level Spanish students to understand grammatical concepts via drop-in tutoring center
- Guided "Modern and Classical Languages" students to alternative language learning opportunities by introducing them to the Spanish conversation club, La Mesa, and informing them about department events

WESTERN'S EMPLOYEE LANGUAGE PROGRAM, Bellingham, WA

March 2015 – June 2018

The Employee Language Program is an initiative where upper-division language students support Western faculty and staff by offering free language workshops and events to promote the growth of multicultural awareness.

Spanish Workshop Facilitator

- Co-taught beginner to intermediate level Spanish biweekly quarterly workshops consisting of 3-5 participants
- Challenged participant's preconceptions of Spanish speaking communities and encouraged multicultural awareness through exposure to texts, music, and videos from marginalized voices in the US and Latin America
- Developed new workshops, events, and tailored existing offerings to best address program participants' needs such as interest in special topics and individual conversation practice
- Managed the Employee Language Program facebook page (2017). Grew number of followers from 20 to 65

"Escuchando Entendemos" Lead Coordinator & Founder

Sept 2017 - Feb 2018

- Co-founded "Escuchando Entendemos", a speaker series to bridge the need of students to actively engage with the Spanish speakers outside classes, and dismantle stereotypes about Spanish speakers in the US
- Responsible for recruiting speakers to present balanced selection of topics and varieties of Spanish
- Coordinated event volunteers and scheduled logistics like room booking and catering

World Languages Trivia Night Committee Chair

Sept 2017 - Dec 2017

- Pitched event to Chair of Modern and Classical Languages department to secure support and funding
- Chaired 6-student committee to develop trivia structure, write trivia questions, and host event
- Designed publicity material and executed marketing campaign drawing 50 language and linguistics students

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

- Proficient at audio manipulation and analysis using Praat and Audacity
- Experienced at content development using H5P, Canva, and WordPress and course management using Canvas
- Enthusiastic social dancer. Familiar with bachata, salsa, forró and have tried 7+ styles from around the world
- Avid traveler. I've visited 4 continents and embarked on international solo trips in North and South America
- Volunteer and mentor with Girl Scouts of Western Washington. Participated in and led troop, camp, travel and cookie sale activities over 15 years in the organization
- Core team planning member for Sammamish Girl Scout Day Camp serving over 300 campers (2016-2020)
- Served on Board of Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx de Aztlan de WWU (2015 - 2016)