ABSTRACT

This teacher action research study investigated the experiences of conducting class primarily through the target language in a middle school Spanish I classroom. Sixteen eighth grade non-native Spanish speaking students participated in the study conducted in a rural K-8 elementary school containing approximately 300 students in northwestern New Jersey. Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, anecdotal notes, student surveys, formal and informal assessments, and collection of student work. Methods of analysis included analytic memos, reflective memos, coding of field log, construction of theme statements, and review of student work and assessments. Both the teacher and the students were required to conduct all classroom interactions in the target language. Findings suggest that conducting class through the medium of the target language increases students’ target language proficiency and communicative competence, as well as their motivation toward learning a second language. Furthermore, conducting class in the target language is likely to decrease students’ overall target language anxiety.