



# FACETAS

CONVERSACIÓN  
Y REDACCIÓN

JAMES CRAPOTTA • ALICIA RAMOS



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## CONVERSACIÓN Y REDACCIÓN

*Content-driven Conversation and  
Composition in Spanish*

James Crapotta • Alicia Ramos  
*Barnard College*

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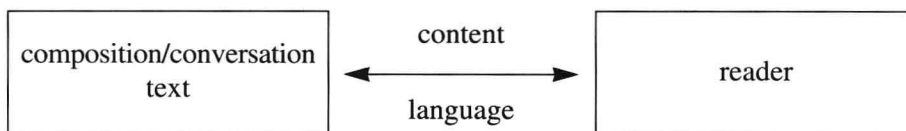
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# INTRODUCTION TO THE *BRIDGING THE GAP* SERIES

KATHERINE KULICK

The *Bridging the Gap* content-driven materials complete the “bridge” between language skill courses and content courses by focusing first on content, with language skill development in an active, but supporting role. The text and organization are clearly content-driven, yet while they are similar to most upper-division courses in their focus on particular issues and themes, they are unique in their design to provide the linguistic support needed for in-depth development of the subject matter and continued skill development.

The *Bridging the Gap* program offers two coordinated content-driven textbooks in French, German, and Spanish. The two books within each language share a focus on the same set of topics in contemporary social, political, and cultural issues throughout the French-speaking, German-speaking, and Spanish-speaking regions of the world. Both texts offer substantive readings in depth as well as in length. Multiple readings on each topic offer differing viewpoints.



The two books differ in the skills they continue to develop. One book provides an emphasis on oral and written discourse strategies while the other book focuses primarily on reading strategies. While each textbook may be used independently, when used together, the two books offer a greater in-depth exploration of current social and cultural issues within a global perspective as well as substantial skill development support.

The readings in each book are authentic texts drawn from a wide variety of sources. Rather than presenting a sample of 12–15 different topics and treating each one in a somewhat superficial manner, each text focuses on 5–8 topics in order to explore them in greater detail. The authors agree that the development of advanced-level skills requires extended exposure to, and in-depth exploration of each chosen topic. Detailed description and supporting opinions, for example, require a degree of familiarity with the subject matter that cannot be achieved in one or two class meetings. In order to explore and develop advanced-level discourse strategies, an extended period of time is essential.

In addition to their content-focus, these materials are unique in their approach to skill development. Rather than simply recycling earlier grammatical instruction, these advanced-level materials enable students to interact with authentic materials in new ways, helping them acquire skills not normally found at the intermediate level.

As students leave the intermediate and post-intermediate level courses to focus on such areas as literature and civilization, we, as instructors, recognize the need for student language skills to continue to develop even as the course focus shifts from language skills to content-oriented instruction. We would like our students to demonstrate an increasing sophistication and complexity in their language skills and in their interaction with reading and/or listening materials. The content-driven materials in the *Bridging the Gap* series are intended to enable students to reach these goals.

### CONTENT-DRIVEN SPANISH: *FACETAS*

The books at this level have six chapters, each of which focuses on content areas that offer distinctive perspectives on the Spanish-speaking world.

Chapters	Content Areas
1	Sociology: The Youth of Today
2	Gender Issues: The Roles of Men and Women
3	Psychology: The Individual in the World
4	Social Sciences: Politics and the Economy
5	Technology: Medicine, Ecology, and the Environment
6	Cultural Identity: Various Aspects of the Hispanic World

# USING THE COMPLETE *FACETAS* PROGRAM

## PLANNING AN ADVANCED-LEVEL CURRICULUM

The companion books *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* and *Facetas: Lectura* can be used either individually to develop specific language skills, or together to form a complete multiskilled program. The chapter topics of both books have been coordinated to provide complementary rather than identical themes.

Each of the two books makes an effort to address issues of conversation, composition, and reading, but whereas *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* centers principally on conversation and composition skills, *Facetas: Lectura* places its emphasis on the development of reading strategies. Depending on the principal focus of your course, you can choose the book that best meets your specific needs.

For a complete yet flexible program the use of both companion books will ensure the optimum development of all three skills. Three basic approaches are:

1. **Complete coverage.** Begin with a chapter from one of the component books and follow that up with the corresponding chapter of its companion book. For example, a week or two devoted to conversation and composition may be followed by a week or two of developing reading strategies around the related theme (or reverse the order in which you use the two books). Using the two texts in this manner has the advantage of reinforcing contextualized vocabulary and structures by activating them across skills and by offering students greater depth of coverage in specific context areas.
2. **Alternate topics and books.** During the first two weeks focus on the theme of the first chapter from the reader and during the next two weeks turn to the second chapter from the conversation/composition book. This will ensure that you cover more topics but give attention to all three skills during the academic semester or year.
3. **Mix and match.** Choose several topics from different chapters of both books, rather than opting for complete chapter coverage, for the development of all three skills.



## PREFACE

*Facetas: Conversación y redacción* is the content-driven conversation and composition text. It is designed to aid students make a smooth transition from the lower division language courses that stress practical, day-to-day language functions and the upper division courses which require more elaborate and abstract uses of language. It is intended for use by students who have already completed an intermediate Spanish course. *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* fills the need for books that enable students to produce and practice high order language and thinking skills.

The goal of *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* is to expand student speaking and writing skills by providing certain linguistic tools within the contexts of selected subject areas. The textbook's features include:

- authentic readings of various lengths and registers from different geographical areas in which Spanish is spoken
- vocabulary development
- development of language functions for speaking and writing
- thought-provoking discussion questions and creative activities that stimulate critical thinking as well as conversation and composition

The readings determine the content area of each chapter; though the book is not conceived as a reader—and therefore does not aim to develop reading strategies—, vocabulary applications, interactive oral activities, and writing projects emanate from the readings. The readings are only a point of departure, however; many conversation and composition activities do not rely on the readings although they are linked to their content area. Thus, *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* can be used for one or all of its components: conversation, composition and reading.

The transmission of cultural insight is an added benefit when using authentic readings. The topics in *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* are general interest ones from contemporary sources—newspapers, magazines, journals, literature—that sensitize students to the actual concerns of Spanish-speakers. Apart from its intrinsic cognitive value, exposure to culturally authentic items offers a hidden linguistic advantage to students on the threshold of the advanced level: it pushes them beyond the context of their immediate experience toward a more relative and even abstract use of language. To put it figuratively, if beginning language students are trained mainly in the first person to describe self, family and surroundings, intermediate students spiral up to the second person, engaging in a dialogue between self and others as they question, probe, gather information, compare, contrast and narrate in the past as well as the present. In

the next stage, that of the third person, students enter the world of the *other* as they learn to argue, hypothesize, and evaluate in language that is increasingly abstract. The readings in this book fall between the second and third persons: since many of the themes are common to North American and other Spanish-speaking cultures, they lead to self-reflection as well as to an awareness of others. More culturally-specific themes require students to ponder issues and points of view that may be alien to them. In either case, students will gain personal, cultural, and cross-cultural insight as they acquire the means of expressing themselves in terms beyond the mundane.

## A CONTENT-DRIVEN APPROACH

*Facetas: Conversación y redacción* follows a content-driven approach that presents an image of the Spanish-speaking world in its diversity. Content-driven teaching attempts to instruct students in a subject matter using the target language and to teach the language itself at the same time. While equal attention is paid to language and content, language is the means to an end, not the end itself. This is an excellent approach for teaching language at the advanced levels: exploring a subject in depth requires that the language used to describe the subject be sharpened and expanded as well. The natural subject for content-driven instruction in a foreign language teaching setting is, of course, the culture of the target language.

Readings are culled from Spain, Latin America, and the United States. The readings are often on controversial topics and there are several per chapter to allow for different points of view. Though hardly devoid of content, the readings are not chosen for their factual information nor are they intended for formal study, but rather to promote cultural sensitivity and, above all, oral and written expression.

## CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

In general, each chapter contains an introduction to the content area followed by several sections that deal with different facets of the subject matter. Each section contains conversation and composition activities centered around one or two reading selections. Specifically, chapters are broken into three main areas.

### I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

The chapter begins with an introduction to the content area of that chapter as a whole. It prepares students for the readings and activities by touching on



the issues that surface throughout the chapter. It also activates student familiarity with the topic. This introduction is followed by four sub-sections.

- **Vocabulario temático:** contextualized lists of vocabulary that students will need to discuss the topic broadly
- **Para seguir avanzando:** presentation and review of functional and stylistic features of oral and written Spanish that students will put into practice in subsequent sections
- **En torno al tema: Conversación:** conversation activities that tap students' prior knowledge of the subject and that provide a context for the oral practice of vocabulary and functions presented in the preceding two sections
- **En torno al tema: Redacción:** writing activities that stimulate students' prior knowledge of the subject and encourage the written practice of vocabulary and functions introduced earlier in the chapter

## II. VARIATIONS ON THE SUBJECT

A number of readings and their corresponding conversation and composition activities are presented, illustrating different perspectives on the general content area. Readings are taken from a variety of Spanish-speaking societies and from several genres of writing. Each reading or reading cluster is supported by the following sequence of activities.

### A. The *facetas*

- Introduction to the **faceta**. Each **faceta** is introduced by a paragraph much like the one in the general introduction, but in this case it is designed to prepare students for the reading immediately at hand.
- **Antes de leer.** This is a section of discussion questions and activities that lead into the reading. Pair and group activities are also included.
- **Vocabulario útil.** Vocabulary from the readings are presented in semantic groupings, where possible; items are chosen that are appropriate for students' active use at the advanced level in order to enhance speaking and writing skills.

### B. Presentation of the Reading

- Readings vary in length, tone, register of language (colloquial language, technical language, etc.), and difficulty. *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* provides a wealth of reading selections.

Teachers who are unable to cover them all should make their choices with an eye to student interest and reading ability. Teachers may leave out readings even if they wish to involve students in the theme, for many activities can be done independently of the reading. Vocabulary that students may have trouble with, but need not use actively, is glossed.

- **Comprobando la lectura.** This section contains reading comprehension questions that check key points in the readings. The format of this activity varies so as to sustain student interest.

### C. Conversation and Composition Activities

- **Temas para conversar.** This section of activities reflects on the reading and encourage students to expand their thoughts on the content area. Included are short-answer questions, discussion questions, pair and group activities around the theme of the reading. There are numerous exercises that cover the range of levels from intermediate to advanced so that teachers may choose what is most suitable for their classes—or so that students may decide for themselves what activities to pursue. The Fill-in-the-Chart format questions prompt relatively brief responses; “Mini-Dramas” trigger extended dialogue; Discussion Questions and Debates require the activation of critical thinking skills and the use of discursive language; and the “Imagínese” activities stimulate students’ creative faculties. All activities are communicative.
- **Temas para escribir.** These are writing activities that spring from the theme of the chapter and from the format of the readings.

### III. FINAL REMARKS

**Últimas consideraciones.** This section contains a short reading, usually of a literary nature, followed by at least one conversation activity and one writing activity that serve to summarize and integrate the diverse elements presented in the chapter.

### HOW TO USE *FACETAS: CONVERSACIÓN Y REDACCIÓN*

An instructor’s manual is available to provide guidance in the practical use of the textbook. Among other things, the instructor’s manual gives a sense of the level of the different activities, and offers suggestions on specific activities, homework assignments, time management, and syllabus design.

*Facetas: Conversación y redacción* is designed for flexibility of use but has been created with a fourteen week semester in mind. Thus, if one uses

the entire book, two weeks may be devoted to each chapter. Since each of the six chapters usually contains four sections, an instructor may assign one section for each class meeting in a course that meets twice a week for an hour or seventy-five minutes. Thus, all four sections could be covered over two weeks and **Últimas consideraciones** could be assigned for homework or as a special project. The first and the last week of a fourteen week semester would be open for the instructor to get to know students more informally, to determine the level of linguistic competence of the group, and to evaluate student progress. Other ways of using this book are suggested in the instructor's manual.

The chapters may be done in any order; they do not follow a progression nor do the readings and activities follow any order of difficulty. There are differences in the difficulty of the activities and the readings; teachers should therefore make careful choices. But because the range of linguistic levels in any advanced course is wide, each chapter and each section of *Facetas: Conversación y redacción* usually offers something for everybody. Not all sections of a chapter need be covered. Readings can be omitted while some of the ensuing activities may still be accessible to students. It can be used solely as a conversation book; it may also be used principally as a composition book. In short, this textbook gives instructors and students many possibilities and options.

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