Wherever You Go, Do as You See Others Do: 
Using Spanish Proverbs for Teaching 
Finance to Hispanic Students

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This paper proposes the use of Spanish proverbs for teaching finance to Hispanic students. Spanish proverbs facilitate teaching by appealing to Hispanic students’ cultural background, by introducing ideas in a succinct and unique way, and by creating a friendlier classroom atmosphere. Spanish proverbs also help English-speaking instructors overcome language barriers and establish a trusting relationship with students. In addition, Spanish proverbs benefit English-speaking students by promoting cross-cultural literacy and foreign language fluency. This paper presents thirty-one financial concepts accompanied by their related Spanish proverbs. Strategies for the effective use of Spanish proverbs in the classroom are suggested as well.

A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience. 
– Miguel De Cervantes (1547 - 1616)

INTRODUCTION

Finance courses can be notoriously difficult to teach. Given the quantitative and sometimes abstract nature of finance, many students struggle to grasp the intuition behind financial concepts. As a result, students regard finance courses not only as challenging [Balachandran and Skully, 2004], but also as the most difficult in their program [Krishnan, Bathala, Bhattacharya, and Ritchey, 1999].

The globalization of business education and changing student demographics impose additional challenges for finance instructors who frequently have to teach students with different cultural backgrounds and whose first language is not English. Among different minorities, Hispanic students represent the fastest growing group on U.S. campuses. Currently more than 1.7 million Hispanic students are enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States [Ryu, 2008]. As a reflection of this growth, more than 200 institutions are classified as Hispanic-serving institutions.

The rapid increase in the number of Hispanic students will likely continue in the foreseeable future due to increases in the college enrollment rate, as well as tremendous