

During my Maternity Nursing Care Clinical, in the summer of 2009, my instructor, Christie Koren, asked me to assist in the labor and delivery of a Mexican patient who only spoke Spanish. Being Mexican myself, and fluent in the language, I understood the importance of having someone from the same cultural background present during such a monumental experience. After speaking with the patient for a few minutes, I came to the conclusion she was from a small village of southern Mexico and of Indian descent. Her voice sang poetically as she spoke, something only typical of the different indigenous populations of Mexico. My beliefs were confirmed as we got to know each other and finished completing the necessary paperwork.

As a nursing student, this was my first delivery and I became extremely excited and filled with emotion during the entire process. Given that the birth was approaching, the room became extremely chaotic while everyone continued to speak in English. The husband stood in a corner of the room so as not to be in anyone's way. I saw a need for him to be incorporated into the birthing process and knew this was the perfect opportunity for him to bond with his young wife. Because of my insight into the cultural sensitive situation, I knew it would be inappropriate for him to stand at the foot of the bed, so I said to him in Spanish, "If you would like, you can stand on the side of the bed, next to your wife."

Because of my fluency in Spanish, I was able to coach the mother to push and when not to, as the physician and nurses guided me. "Empuje, empuje, el médico dice que empuje," I said. Amongst the chaos, I translated word for word so she and her husband were aware of the entire process. In my own excitement, I continued to coach the patient, also including what I was witnessing. With elation I said, "Oh my, I see its head crowning! Now I see the babies beautiful black hair! And now I see its head is out! Your doing a super job!" I had never felt so overjoyed from the birth of a child as I was on this day.

After the birth, I was concerned that perhaps I was too elated and overjoyed. This immediately changed when the physician and clinical instructor congratulated me on my efforts saying, "Veronica, you were like a seasoned nurse." I was delighted, not only for myself but for this couple who gave birth to their child. They were able to completely comprehend the birthing process due to my ability to break the language barrier. This has been my most memorable experience in nursing thus far. I know my nursing care and extensive bilingual speaking skills helped make a difference in the lives of this family because not only do they have a visual story to tell, but an oral story too.