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# Communicative Language Teaching

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COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

by

Karina C. Mora

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

MASTER

of

Second Language Teaching

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2013

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## ABSTRACT

Communicative Language Teaching

by

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Utah State University, 2013

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This portfolio is a compilation of second language teaching research and ideas put together during the author's time as a MSLT student. It includes a personal teaching philosophy supported by three related artifacts. It also contains an annotated bibliography with an overview of some of the research examined during her time in the program. Her personal teaching philosophy underscores how communicative language teaching can help students learn language through meaningful use. The artifacts suggest ways to implement communicative language teaching by teaching language in content, using multimedia authentic texts, and teaching sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

(134 pages)

For Victor, David, Jacob, Aleksis, y Victor Jr.

También para mami y daddy

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First I must thank my family for believing in me when I did not. Honey, thank you for teaching our children to take care of chores so I could focus on school. Thank you for your love and support in everything I do. Victor Jr., Aleksis, Jacob, and David, you know you are my world and I could not have done this without your help. También quiero agradecerle a mis padres Dulce y Humberto Bravo por enseñarme el amor a los demás, por mi idioma natal y por mi cultura y agradezco a mis suegros Temo y Quika por quererme como su hija. Todos me ayudaron a lograr esto.

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## **INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

As students in the Masters of Second Language Teaching program, we have the opportunity to gather research information regarding many second language teaching theories and methods. We also learn about how culture relates to second language teaching. In doing so, we develop our own teaching philosophy.

This portfolio contains the development of my teaching philosophy in relation to what I learned during my time in the program. My teaching philosophy is centered on the importance of helping students reach communicative goals as they learn language with a focus on meaning. I discuss how language competencies can be taught while teaching content, literacy, and culture through communicative language teaching.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

### **Apprenticeship of Observation**

In the following observation, I will discuss my experiences learning Spanish, English, and French and what I learned or valued from those experiences. My recollections of teachers include those who used any way possible to draw our attention and maintain our interest. They did so by displaying a great enthusiasm for the subject and a desire to make it comprehensible to the entire class. They taught the subject by drawing the class into discussion, song, writing, art, or some other activity. They used every tool available to them at that time to capture our minds and empower us through their teaching.

My first memory of learning language was learning Spanish from my mother. She loves storytelling, proverbs, music and jokes that are very much a part of my culture. She recounted these to us and in conversation with friends and family. Once we moved to the United States, she continued those traditions in our home. When she realized that my sister and I were losing the language, she and my father created the rule to only speak Spanish in our home. She also encouraged continued reading in Spanish. After 32 years of living in the United States, I credit my mother for helping me retain my native language through conversation, music, and reading. She understood that we could only retain our language through continued use.

I initiated my English learning by reading picture books, in the third grade, with dry-erase fill-in-the-blanks answers. My teacher helped me through it and showed me how to read, pronounce, and understand the meanings of the sentences. This was my introduction to sentence structure and word meaning. Those are fond memories, because I

could read at my own pace and I still remember the pictures of Mat on the mat, his friend Jane, and his dog. The hands-on experience helped me take charge of my own learning.

Learning language through music was another memorable experience from sixth grade with Mr. Evans. We learned to sing along with our own musical instrument, whether it was the triangle or the xylophone, and we all had the opportunity to take part of the musical production. The music helped make difficult words manageable through rhythm and rhyme. Those first heartwarming encounters with English and music helped me continue to learn American language and culture through a love of music.

English teachers like my eight grade English teacher, Mrs. Eyre captured our minds with compelling poetry and short stories. They helped us read, understand, and connect to the themes in English literature. Then they helped us write our own poetry and stories, even with the limited language we had. They opened up our awareness of history and culture through the reading, but also taught us that we had the potential to leave the same kinds of lasting memories for others to read.

My first French teacher in seventh grade used comic strips on overheads to familiarize us with Mr. Thibaut and his family. Through Mr. Thibaut, we learned salutations and basic French vocabulary. The teacher also helped us role-play the same discussion to reuse the vocabulary. Another native French teacher in high school, Mr. Paulus, taught us verb conjugation and helped us pronounce French sounds correctly. He enjoyed correcting us until we got it right. Dr. Smith, a U.S.U. French professor, taught us through French pop-culture and current French issues. Mr. Savoy also a U.S.U. professor, taught us through children's literature.

Our French conversation class surprisingly taught me a lot about writing. The teacher used conversation topics to help us write our own impression on the topic. Then we used our writing to converse with one another. It was surprising to us how much we knew and how much we could write on our own. This teacher gave us the self-confidence we needed in our conversation and writing. The conversation class has helped me, even today, to know that our potential often times exceeds the limits we set for ourselves, because we were asked to exceed our own expectations. Through conversation and writing, we learned sentence structure, vocabulary, and grammar.

Another French teacher taught us French through literature. She covered thematic grammar from the chapters and explained the philosophical themes of the stories and poetry we read. We learned from different genres of writing, which gave us a good sample of different vocabulary and writing styles. Through these exercises, we learned to appreciate the greatness of French literature and the great minds of those authors we covered.

During high school, I considered what I might do in my future career. I was compelled to study something dealing with language, even to be a second language teacher or an English teacher. Then in college I continued taking French classes and earned a minor in French. At one point I changed my major to English so I could teach English. My teachers made such an impact on me for their love of language.

All of these teachers, including my mother, used different methods, but their eclectic teaching styles carved lasting memories in my mind and illustrated, to me, the significance of using alternating means of teaching language. As a teacher, I want to use a lot of the methods that helped me learn a second language and help students find a way

to practice and retain their language skills. I will use literature as a foundation for all my classes, including beginning language classes. I will strive to give students the comprehensible input they need to produce the second language and to reach and even exceed their communicative goals.

### **Professional Environment**

My professional environment is how I envision my future classroom. I envision myself teaching beginning Spanish classes and my classroom becoming a vehicle for taking students beyond their current culture and introducing them to new ones. I would like to do this in a high school setting where youth can have an early preparation for higher education and employment in their community.

In addition to beginning classes, I see myself teaching a more advanced Spanish class. It would have its foundations in vocational education and technical writing. Guest speakers from banks, auto sales, and related fields will attend classes and present specific vocabulary and content material. Bilingual immigrants will present information on culture (gender issues, geopolitical issues, family values) because they have a different perspective, giving the students meaningful context to use the language they are learning.

I want my students to see that learning Spanish can be useful in getting them into better schools, enhance their opportunities in their field of interest, and improve their future options. And if I have heritage speakers in my classroom, I want to help them see why it is so important that they improve their speaking and writing abilities for future needs. Opportunities to use language outside the classroom will give students a greater incentive to continue improving their second language abilities.

Most high schools have a structured curriculum. While adhering to the set curriculum, I will add vocational material related to current or future vocational opportunities. I think that schools should offer language classes that help students communicate in business settings, in the workplace, and in school. I will use materials based on these kinds of practical exchanges to help build the students' ability to read and write in Spanish in real-life scenarios.

I will encourage students to write their own conversation scripts that will fit possible business scenarios as well as personal or service-related situations. I will help them learn to write their own advertisements, which can assist them in increased qualifications in the work-place. It can also help them in their own commercial ventures, if they are business-minded. We can also create and practice scenarios where they can use the target language, such as role play to aid a patient in a doctor's office or for someone getting their car serviced, to prepare students for success in real-life situations. These vocational themes and classes will help students see how bilingualism and biliteracy can improve their future options.

These courses will create natural bridges in the community and increase options for students to interact more effectively in their future ventures. In my ideal professional environment, I will build language bridges between English-speaking students and the Spanish-speaking cultures in the community. Then, students will have the option of bridging their language skills to their educational and/or vocational future.

## Personal Teaching Philosophy

### Introduction

My plan is to teach entry-level Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) in a public high school where youth are preparing for higher education and employment. Students are motivated to learn a second language (L2) so they can communicate with an individual or a community. I am inspired by this desire and want to help my future students meet their communicative goals (McKay, 2005). Communicative goals are key in my teaching philosophy. I want to use the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, to design interactive activities that enable students to achieve a communicative goal and ultimately learn a L2 (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1997; Savignon, 2002). Communicative language teaching is when, “the second language learner...(has)...the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language, i.e. to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations” (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 27)

It was through interactive activities that I learned English as a second language (ESL). When I was a child, my father brought our family to the United States to pursue his education. Once I was on the playground, I learned how to speak English because I wanted to play. In the classroom, I learned how to solve math problems so I could pass math. In my physical education class, I learned how to follow instructions in English so I could join in the games. In addition, I had patient teachers who used visual and audio aids to teach me to read and communicate in English.



In my own L2 learning there was a combination of immersion learning as well as context, content, and communicative learning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Savignon, 2002). As a L2 teacher, I want to give my students similar experiences so they can learn language in context by setting communicative goals and creating classroom activities to achieve those goals. The difference between immersion learning and my teaching approach is that immersion does not always include a focus on comprehensible input (Krashen, 2003); whereas in my teaching, comprehensible input will be a key characteristic offered. This is why, besides using communicative goals, my teaching philosophy incorporates elements of philosophies of other researchers. I borrow in particular the philosophies of those who explored the importance of teaching language in a way that is meaningful and comprehensible to the learner and of those who researched the process students might use to learn L2 (Lee & Van Patten, 2003).

In this teaching philosophy, I will first discuss a few of Krashen's hypotheses (Krashen, 1985; Krashen & Terrell 2000), which form the basis of my beliefs and my classroom practice. I will also include a brief discussion of language processing (Han, 2008; Lee & Benati, 2009; Rast, 2008) because I want to take students' processing into consideration when I teach. Second, I will discuss language competencies in terms of input (listening, reading, and culture) and output (speaking and writing). I see these aspects of language learning as important because they geared me to success in learning my L2.

### **Krashen's Hypotheses and Processing**

Language learning and language acquisition are different in that language acquisition occurs implicitly or naturally in the first language (L1); children simply

acquire their native language as they mature. I was a child when I began learning my L2, and therefore I acquired a lot of L2 on the playground. However, I remember working very hard to learn L2 in the classroom and to succeed in every subject. Language learning, in contrast with language acquisition, is done with the intent to learn the language, rather than acquire it naturally or incidentally (Krashen, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 2000). According to Krashen (1985), students need comprehensible input for both language acquisition and language learning. This means input which is slightly above the learner's current interlanguage level, or "i+1" (Krashen, 1985, p. 2).

Lee and Van Patten (2003) describe the introduction of comprehensible input through the use of familiar themes, visual aids, gestures, games, drawing, total physical response (TPR), and the use of the target language to create a communicative classroom (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). It requires repetition and allowing students to make meaning 'binding', which is the term Lee and Van Patten used to describe the cognitive and affective mental process of linking a meaning to a form" (Lee & Van Patten, 2003, p. 39). This describes the use of input for comprehension, which leads to intake or the language being processed (Lee and Van Patten, 2003), for learning and acquisition.

Krashen (1985) discussed the "natural order" of acquisition as the order in which students acquire language rules or forms, regardless of order of instruction. Wong (2002) adds that learners first process language for meaning followed by form. This basic understanding of cognitive processing leads to teaching methods that keep the natural order in account, such as processing instruction and the natural approach (Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lee & Benati, 2009). According to Speth and Ahramjian (2010), "Activities

associated with acquisition expose students to language in the context of communicative situations – a methodology known as the ‘natural approach’” (Speh & Ahramjian, 2010, p. 38). In both the natural approach and the processing theory, the primary objective is to focus on meaning. Krashen and Terrell (2000) explain this focus in the natural approach:

Based on this objective, the natural approach adheres to the following guidelines:

(1) the instructor always uses the target language, (2) the topic of communication will be a topic of interest for the student, (3) the instructor will strive at all times to help the student understand (Krashen & Terrell, 2000, p. 20).

These guidelines are proposed as a means to incorporate the comprehensible input theory. My section on content teaching explains in more detail how I will implement the natural approach. I delve deeper into how content teaching follows the natural order guidelines and focuses on meaning.

Lee and Benati (2009) and Van Patten (2003) make reference to Van Patten’s outline of “structured input activities” (Lee & Benati, 2009, p. 42) with meaning as the primary objective:

1. Present one thing at a time
2. Keep meaning in focus
3. Move from sentences to connected discourse.
4. Use both oral and written input.
5. Have the learner do something with the input.
6. Keep the learner’s processing strategies in mind (Lee & Benati, 2009, p. 42).

I would like to adopt these guidelines for my teaching because of their emphasis on meaning and their focus on the learner's cognitive processing order, thus using processing instruction to achieve instructional objectives.

For example, in a section about daily living tasks, I can structure the class around specific consumer activities. One section can be about managing a checking account. We can focus on verbs surrounding checking account use, such as balancing, tracking, depositing, transferring, and nouns like account, bill-pay, balance, expense, total. We can look at sentences relating to banking accounts and possible on-line banking vocabulary, followed by having the students write a dialogue they may have with a life partner about their checking account. They can practice their dialogue with someone in the class. Then, we can do a section on buying groceries and follow a similar guideline for teaching how to carry out a shopping activity. Successfully carrying out a shopping transaction in the L2 during a field trip to the *taquería* (taco stand), *panadería* (bakery), and *carnicería* (butcher/meat counter) can be the culminating goal. These kinds of activities focused on content can lead to success in achieving communication in real-life scenarios, while keeping teaching strategies simple, breaking down one main activity into simpler subtasks, and promoting interaction in the classroom. I think these kinds of communicative activities are effective because I had a consumer science class where I learned a lot of this important terminology for my own use in the L2 and found it useful and practical.

Krashen (1985) explains that output is characterized by trial and error. Swain describes output as the foremost indicator of what language students know and also as the process of learning language (Swain, 2005). The noticing function involves students

producing language orally or mentally, to recognize what they are lacking to complete the message they are trying to convey. The hypothesis testing function refers to a student engaging with another person and continually checking for correction or for signs of being understood. The metalinguistic function is when and how students reflect to ensure they are understanding and learning correctly. These are all characteristics of language output (Swain, 2005). Teachers need to engage students in activities in which they can produce oral or written language so that students can monitor or correct their own language ability and get feedback from their intended audience (Krashen & Terrell, 2000).

In Canada's French immersion classrooms, teachers speak French and students are expected to use French for all conversation, reading, and writing activities. Such French immersion classrooms give students from English-speaking families the opportunity to be surrounded by French and to practice it throughout the day. This type of immersion learning in the classroom has been used extensively and has also proven successful in the United States (Rodhes, 2007). Although my classroom will be an SFL classroom, I can apply similar immersion practices in my classroom to provide students with comprehensible input. One of the strategies that I would like to implement in my classroom is to provide input through the use of technology by text-based or audio-based software, video conferencing, speech recognition and commands via computer, virtual dialogues, interactive software, and multimedia (Zhao, 2005). Effective teachers can make their classroom as much like an immersion experience as possible while still providing students comprehensible input.

In addition, students need interaction to make their experience with the L2 memorable, meaningful, and beneficial. Student interaction in the target language with other students, aids, or native speakers will play a significant role in language learning because of a close relationship between interaction and cognition (Rast, 2008). As a language teacher, I want to provide students with opportunities to practice their skills by interacting with one another and receiving guidance in the learning process (Rast, 2008). Interaction is helpful in language output or production, whether it is with me (the teacher), with other students, or with media tools (Rast, 2008; Zhao, 2005). Interactive activities will be essential for output. I can also provide opportunities for students to interact with native speakers of the L2 and receive feedback on their abilities. In addition to networking to improve language abilities in these situations students will be naturally exposed to cultural practices and perspectives.

DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) describe culture as a set of shared “identifiable traits, patterns of behavior, worldviews, systems of social organizations, and similar value systems” (Decapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 12). This will serve as my definition of culture for my teaching philosophy. Whether students are attracted by a new culture when they arrive in the classroom or they are later drawn by the interconnectedness of language and culture, cultural awareness can motivate students to improve their language capacities and their ability to interact in L2 communities (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). I want my classroom to be like a journey to a different cultural experience, where students can encounter valuable cultural awareness. I discuss this more in the culture artifact in this portfolio.

Cultural awareness involves stepping back from our own culture and values, which we consider the norm, and being able to notice the cultural traditions, values, or traits of a different community. The use of a Mexican comic book, such as *Chespirito*, in an SFL classroom can be implemented to evaluate what the comic book might reflect about Mexican cultural values. Students should come to see elements of culture reflected in the language because language is an outward expression of culture and conveys some traits of the people who speak it (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). For example, the use of “usted” for adults and “tu” for kids can be examined through *Chespirito*'s neighborhood and discussion on the inherent characteristics of respect for adults shown in the language.

As students become more proficient in a L2, they will desire greater intercultural competence, which is defined as “the ability to relate effectively and appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (Paige, 1999, p. 19). Students will eventually want to interact with native speakers in ways that are viewed as appropriate in the L2 culture and will want to be understood. Greater intercultural competence gives students greater communicative competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Sowden, 2007). Communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discursive competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004). Grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence includes knowledge of vocabulary, social rules, construction of meaning, and communication as a whole (Celce-Murcia, 2002; Samimy & Kobayashi, 2004). These are all key factors in successful communication within a culture and across cultures. Communicative competence and intercultural competence will also increase students' ability to learn pragmatics or intended meaning (Félix-

Bradsdefer & Cohen, 2012; Savignon, 2002) and communicate effectively in the target language. Many things, such as idioms or sayings, can only be understood by grasping cultural nuances (Silva-Carvalán, 2001).

Pragmatics or understanding the intended meaning of conversation involves politeness conventions (Félix-Bradsdefer & Cohen, 2012) as well as the ability to understand jokes, proverbs, music, and historical references in interaction. Pragmatic competence is the ability to, “communicate effectively and appropriately...[it]...entails knowing how to encode, decode, and sequence discourse within a communicative interaction” (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 246). This can include how to begin a conversation, when to take a turn speaking, what topics are appropriate, and how to communicate nonverbally (Silva-Corvalán, 2001).

Language students will find this cultural know-how indispensable in their language-learning journey because they want to express their intentions and be understood. In turn, they will also be able to better understand those of the L2 community, including their nonverbal communication. Critically, pragmatic competence can be achieved only through cultural awareness, not just by learning grammar and vocabulary. For example, when teaching about greeting people in the L2, teachers should have students role play situations and show how physical interaction as well as verbal interaction may take place. SFL students will need to know that in Latin America, a person’s perceived personal space is narrow compared to perceptions of personal space in the U.S. Hence, the teacher’s role is to introduce cultural topics as part of language learning. In other words, a teacher’s function is to provide students with cultural input, so



they can become culturally aware and apply culturally appropriate practices in their L2 communication.

### **Input/Output in terms of language competencies**

This form of cultural input and output is the ultimate goal in language production and communication. Drawing on Krashen's (1985) and Van Patten's (2003) theories, I will address in the remainder of my philosophy the topics of input and output, making the foundations of language processing the anchor of my teaching philosophy.

#### **input.**

Input refers to what students see, hear, and read. Input then leads to intake (Van Patten, 2003) or acquisition as mentioned previously. In the following section, I will discuss various forms of input beginning with listening. I will also briefly discuss how processing applies to providing input (Lee & Benati, 2009).

#### ***input in the form of Listening.***

Listening appears to be one of the students' first attainable skills in L2 learning (Hadley, 2001). Cohen (1990) describes listening to the target language as:

a selective process whereby not all features are processed by a given learner.

Processing involves perceiving the sounds and determining the elements of meaning that are conveyed not only through the words and phrases, but through the stress that words receive and intonation patterns of the utterance as a whole.

(Cohen, 1990, p. 46)

In this description of processing, stress and intonation are given importance. Rost (2005) divides the process into "phases that are simultaneous and parallel: decoding, comprehension, and interpretation" (Rost, 2005, p. 504). They are used along with

expression and negotiation of meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Savignon, 2002).

I will make listening a priority in my classroom by offering listening activities. Whether it is through storytelling, group activities, short video clips, or interactive software to help students practice their listening skills, these activities should be carried out by keeping processing in mind (Lee & Benati, 2009). Students can also assess their own progress by responding and determining if they really understand what they hear. This can be done by dividing the students into groups of two or three and having them ask each other questions. Then, they can retell each other what they hear, or come up with three follow-up questions about the listening activity. They could complete multiple-choice worksheets with visual as the answers or they might answer questions using their tablets or cell phones, selecting the correct audio or visual response with the click of a mouse or the touch of a screen.

According to White (2006), listening has been largely neglected in the language classroom. Listening activities can be more student-centered with the use of audiobooks. Reading and listening to audiobooks can help students tune their ears to the target language. As the students listen to the target language in this manner, they can listen to language structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cadence (Baskin & Harris, 1995). Audiobooks offer pleasurable and valuable listening opportunities in the target language. Interactive book software or cell phone applications (apps) place students in control of language input so they can repeat any word or phrase they want to hear again. They can also access visual, audio, or written glosses for the text. Interactive audio books in any format provide an engaging way of learning to listen and comprehend the target language

(Zhao, 2005). These technological tools provide alternative ways for comprehensible input and an opportunity to hear the L2 from someone other than the teacher.

Like audiobooks, music in the target language can add variety to the curriculum. Technological resources for comprehensible input have been growing, from MP3s to iPods, internet websites, and mobile phones (Zhao, 2005). The lyrics to popular music can easily be found on the internet and projected on a screen in class. By viewing the video and lyrics online, the language class can listen to nuances in the language such as blending of vowels, slurring of consonants, or the sound of accented words. Vocabulary and meaning can be discussed in class. Then for homework, students can be asked to listen to the song and practice saying some of the lyrics or they can be assigned another song for listening practice.

Sposet (2008) asserts that music and lyrics help students learn vocabulary, speech sounds, and language structure in a pleasurable way. Students also get a feel for culture and learn lyrics often without noticing they are doing so, thus becoming active participants of language learning. Rost (2005) stresses the importance of decreasing anxiety and increasing self confidence to help students' listening ability because research shows that low self-confidence affects listeners' ability to comprehend (Rost, 2005). Krashen (1985) refers to this phenomenon as lowering the affective filter that inhibits learners' motivation. Reducing the affective filter allows learners to receive comprehensible input. Krashen and Terrell (2000) place the responsibility on teachers to promote a learning environment conducive to increasing self-confidence and decreasing anxiety. Speth and Ahramjian (2010) have also discussed the benefits of music. They write:

Music advances second language learning by promoting relaxation, creating a positive learning state, and involving different senses to enhance memory and attention... Music is the basis for a multi-sensory pedagogy...[and] stimulates memory uniquely, while simultaneously reducing tension in students. (Speh & Ahramjian, 2010, p.39)

I want to decrease students' anxiety by giving them ample time for repetition and evaluation of the song they select. Sarabi and Tootkaboni (2012) experimented with the use of music to help students' anxiety and the research showed that students who used music and pictorials in their learning increased their writing and creativity more than students who did not do so.

However, just having a the class listen to a song in the target language is not effective. I plan to introduce three songs bi-weekly in class, relating to the subject taught. Students will choose one of the three. They will download the song and listen to it at home to complete a weekly assignment relating to the song, which requires repeated listening and careful thinking about meaning. At the end of the week, we can discuss elements of music, meaning, and cultural nuances. The next week, students will be invited to write their own line or chorus for the song, generating text to fit the musical notes and creating their own meaning within the context of the song. They can then record the line or chorus and submit it for peer and teacher evaluation. Two weeks later, the same will be done with another music genre in the L2 following the same pattern. An activity like this will introduce different music genres from the target culture and encourage students to listen with a purpose.

*input in the form of Reading.*

Teachers can guide students' learning by choosing texts wisely and harmonizing the readings to students' prior knowledge of the language (Eskey, 2005). Whether the learning goal is to introduce vocabulary, cultural artifacts, or academic subjects, the text selected will be the teacher's guide for introducing a subject or grammatical forms. Krashen and Terrell (2000) describe appropriate texts for L2 learners as being comprehensible and interesting to the learner. Relatedly, Eskey (2005) notes that these two criteria can help students receive comprehensible input and learn more (Eskey, 2005). The formula  $(i + 1)$  describes input that somewhat exceeds the students' current L2.

Learning how to read in the L2 will lead students to greater exposure to vocabulary and language structure (Byrd, 2005). It can also open opportunities for learning culture (Swaffar, Arns, & Byrnes, 1991). Alverman, Phelps, and Ridgeway (2007) and Bruton and Marks (2004) explain that much research supports the correlation between reading and improving vocabulary. In addition, Eskey (2005) claims that prior knowledge of the subject helps students understand the reading while current language proficiency also influences students' ability to understand the text being read.

Students and teachers should understand that reading is a process. Before reading, teachers must prepare students to approach reading material by activating students' prior knowledge or building background knowledge for the reading material (Eskey, 2005). While in the classroom, teachers should help students through the reading material and help them increase their comprehension (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). But reading should not take place in the classroom alone. Alverman, Phelps, and Ridgeway

(2007) and Eskey (2005) emphasize that both intensive (classroom reading) and extensive (reading for pleasure outside the classroom) approaches to reading assist language learning.

I will use classroom reading as a way of introducing a text. This will allow students to initiate questions about the text and help each other understand. This can be done by beginning with some background on the text and discussion about some of the new vocabulary being introduced as well as helping the students notice cultural values and nuances present in the text (Eskey, 2005). Multimedia can also facilitate the introduction of new texts by providing background information (Zhao, 2005). Having some vocabulary and background will make reading at home more feasible. There can also be questions dealing with background and vocabulary, as well as writing assignments to complement the reading (Swaffar, Arns, & Byrnes, 1991).

Teachers can approach text in at least two different ways. Eskey (2005) and Swaffar, Arns, and Byrnes (1991) claim that “top-down (concept-driven)” and “bottom-up (data-driven)” reading improves different aspects of reading (He, 2008). Bottom-up reading is a more narrow way of reading, helping students focus on the details of the vocabulary, grammar, and meaning (Holmes, 2009). Top-down reading is a broader way of reading, guiding students to use prior knowledge of the subject and combine large pieces of information to glean meaning from the text (Concannon-Gibney & Murphey, 2010; He, 2008). In either method, the focus is on meaning with the underlying assumption that comprehensible input must precede students’ output (Krashen & Terrell, 2000).

The interactive model shows how students use both types of processing simultaneously (Alverman, Phelps, Ridgeway, 2007; Eskey, 2005). This model employs the use of both top-down and bottom-up reading strategies (He, 2008). It can help students see the text from a broad point of view, such as focusing on some overarching themes in the text while still paying attention to specific elements of the text, such as verb tense, or predicting what a character will do (Eskey, 2005). L2 readers can use prior knowledge to understand the text but may stop to look up unfamiliar words in their reading.

Even when students do not understand texts' entire meaning, authentic texts can help connect students to L2 communities. Authentic texts are the words of an author or speaker written or spoken for the real world and not for learning purposes (Berardo, 2006). Contrary to some teachers' beliefs, students do not become discouraged when they do not know the entire meaning (Maxim, 2002). I will use authentic texts in the L2 to capture students' interest in the culture, help them learn reading strategies, and help them reach their communicative goals (Speh & Ahramjian, 2010; Swaffar, Arns, & Byrnes, 1991). I discuss authentic texts in more detail in the literacy artifact of this portfolio.

Hadley (2001) shows a practical way of how this might be accomplished. According to Hadley's view, students should read authentic cultural texts in a four-stage process which includes thinking, looking, learning, and integrating. In the thinking stage, students study the topic and access their prior knowledge. Then, in the looking stage, students reflect on their own experiences, values, and beliefs. Moving to the learning stage, students can reflect on the meaning of the text relative to the rest of the world and how they relate to it. In the final stage, students apply the text in writing or vocalizing

their perception of it. As Swiderski (1993) notes, the language classroom can lead students to a greater appreciation for language meaning in context by simply introducing cultural themes. As we can see there are many ways of providing meaningful input from listening to reading.

### **Output**

The main reason for providing input is to help learners produce output, which is speaking and writing. I will discuss speaking and writing below, beginning with speaking.

#### ***output in the form of Speaking.***

Oral proficiency appears to be students' main goal when they want to learn a new language (Hadley, 2001; Krashen & Terrell, 2000) because students learn language so they can use it (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Conversation falls within the natural approach activities needed in the classroom (Krashen & Terrell, 2000) requiring a low-anxiety environment for optimal output. The ultimate goal of interaction is for students to receive input, be able to produce output, and reach communicative goals (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Output entails interaction so that students or their audience can assess learning progress (Ellis, 2005; Pica, 2005). However, sometimes anxiety limits students' ability to speak in L2.

Anxiety in L2 speaking activities often contributes to poor performance, as if a mental block occurs. In a study investigating factors that contribute to L2 speaking anxiety, students were interviewed to establish if their experience abroad, proficiency in the L2, or personality factors helped their performance (Osboe, Fujemara, & Hirschel, 2007). Findings indicate that students who feel comfortable speaking their L1 in different scenarios, likewise feel comfortable speaking the L2. Interestingly, L1 language



proficiency contributed to confidence indicators in speaking L2. The teacher's personality additionally played a role in helping students be more comfortable as did opportunities to perform in smaller groups and talking about familiar topics. Proficiency in L2 likewise boosts students' confidence in oral participation in the classroom (Tsou, 2011) and the more students participate in group activities, the more they develop their communication skills (Garrido, 2012).

Yet it is not enough to motivate students to talk during class discussion. SFL students may need to receive instruction on how to participate in class and in speaking activities (Diniz de Figueredo, 2009) to improve their speaking abilities (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). In a study done in Taiwan, EFL learners were motivated to participate more after receiving participation instruction (Tsou, 2005). This instruction included showing students cultural differences in how American students participate. The instructor additionally showed students research evidence on the benefits of participation illustrating how to participate, interject, or ask questions during class. At the end of the research, students in the experiment participated much more and acknowledged their improvements in speaking because they had participated more. The control group, which did not receive participation instruction, showed no improvement in participation at the end of the study (Tsou, 2005). Students may try to gauge their own improvement by teacher evaluation over time, but they can reflect metalinguistically on their own improvement on a daily basis.

Metalinguistic reflection is done either collaboratively or alone, for group or personal reflection on how output can improve (Swain, 2005). Swain has published writings on the notion that students can add momentum to their thought process as they

talk outloud through an assignment. For example, after a culture class about food, students can be asked to research foods in the L2 culture and bring in recipes and pictures of those foods. They can place the pictures and recipes on a wall for exhibition. Students then spend a few minutes looking over the exhibits and thinking outloud about their opinions and perceptions to themselves or with one another. This kind of thinking outloud can also be done during problem-solving activities allowing students to exchange ideas and increase their participation, involving everyone in the class (Hamzah, Ting, & Pendidikan, 2010).

Problem-solving activities are a way of using language in action, ideally for real-life scenarios. Pennington (2002) best describes the reasoning for this approach: “a detailed study of the many and varied types of joint activities in which humans participate is...the basis for a fully adequate account of language” (p. 88). Thus, working together encourages conversation, which can lead to reflection, which in turn fosters conversation, and so on.

Personal voice recordings for the purpose of practicing speech can also help students hear and reflect on their own output after they hear it (Huang, 2010). Journaling can similarly be a form of reflection (Simard, French, & Fortier, 2007), including audio journaling. Audio journaling may help students listen to themselves and hear marked improvements over time.

Technology offers other speaking activity options through virtual conversation software. For example, some programs allow students to say verbal commands and a character moves to the command in a virtual world, visually indicating the correctness of the command. Learners often use monitor practices in output and modify speech for

clarification in response to listener feedback (Pica, 2005; Swain, 2005). Even pronunciation software can be implemented to give learners corrective feedback. Virtual dialogue with native speakers facilitated through multimedia can be used to allow students virtual interaction activities (Zhao, 2005).

***output in the form of writing.***

Writing is a natural extension of reading, which can enhance learners' goals by introducing them to topics of interest and other themes that will likely not be introduced through everyday conversation. Reading opens new venues for communication. In my L2 classroom, I would like to have reading activities closely tied to writing activities, because strong ties have been found between extensive reading and good writing (Hedgcock, 2005; Joshi, 2007; Krashen, 1985). Therefore, teachers should encourage students to read and likewise encourage them to write (Mlandu & Bester, 1997). Topics from readings can serve as topics for writing activities, such as writing a different ending for a story or writing about the same topic from a personal perspective.

Writing a summary can serve as a follow-up activity to reading a text. Asenciór (2006) gives an overview of a study on summarizing in a beginning Spanish class. A short text about characteristics of Hispanic families is assigned for students to read and summarize. The key to this activity is to provide students a topic and related vocabulary to formulate the required sentences. Beginning writing activities require familiar vocabulary for writers to produce enough ideas to write sentences and paragraphs (Corbeil, 2000). Summarizing provides students all the vocabulary they need, but its lack of success in Asencior's (2006) study may be attributed to lack of interest in the topic. The complexity of the text likewise made it difficult for students to understand it and use their

own words to describe it. Summarizing can work if the topic is interesting to students and simple enough to understand and rephrase (Asención, 2008).

Stokes (2007) suggests that L2 teachers make a close assessment of the textbook students are using in class and plan the writing assignment around the vocabulary and language structures being taught. His extensive writing activities involved sections familiar to the students, such as “self description [and] daily routine” (Stokes, 2007, p. 545). The assignments involved students writing about themselves and their course of study as well as how they hope to use the language in their future careers. Writing began with brainstorming and developed week by week, as the students added a paragraph every ten to fourteen days. The success in this activity was attributed to slow writing development coupled with coaching and editing help throughout the entire assignment.

Journaling in the L2 can similarly motivate students to write because it can lower anxiety. Journaling can be linked to participation activities that can also lower anxiety as mentioned in the section on listening and talking. Students need to understand that only the teacher will read what they write (Gruwell, 1999). Teachers can set the conditions and purpose for journal writing and set strict guidelines or allow students leeway, even allowing them to make mistakes (Elbow, 2000). They can have students write a reflection on the topic of the day, write about themselves, or choose their own topics (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). Teachers can use journals as a way to see student improvement and as a way to communicate. Darhower (2004) describes the benefits of journaling based on his research. He underlines that journaling provides an interactive environment where students can take their L2 ability along with their personal experience

and interact on a personal level with the teacher, allowing the student to have personal time and feedback with the teacher apart from the classroom and public experience.

Journaling can supplement any L2 class at any level, even alongside other writing activities. It can also serve as a way to assess students and give feedback. Again, teachers must set the guidelines for what kind of assessment or feedback they may give. Teachers may just give points for simply writing in the journal regardless of content or quality, to encourage exploration and creativity in writing. In a more advanced class, teachers may want students to use these journals as a starting point for written assignments that will be graded.

Writing can be used in many ways to help students produce language beyond the word level and receive feedback. As previously mentioned, peer review and teacher feedback are positive ways to help students notice errors in their writing. Some students prefer teacher feedback to correct their mistakes (Hedgcock, 2005). A combination of the two in the writing process may profit both students and teachers by helping students notice common problems and improve their own writing and lessen demands on teachers' time. Computer software can also aid in signaling low-level grammatical and spelling errors, side by side with educators (Zhao, 2005).

As teachers keep communicative goals in mind, grammatical rules are secondary to constructing meaning in the L2 (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Researchers have described the difference between focusing on forms (focus on grammar) and focusing on form (focus on meaning) (Byrd, 2005). Focusing on meaning points the learner to a topic, whether it is a cultural, scholarly, or a personal subject, and the teacher will focus on form when meaning is compromised or when the student wants

more grammar instruction (Han, 2008). There is a close relationship between form and meaning. According to Han (2008), “Simply put, meaning occupies the background and form the foreground. In attentional terms, focus on form requires a temporary shift of focal attention away from meaning to form” (p. 49). This approach is useful, especially when learners can practice their language skills during communicative tasks (Ellis, 2005; Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006).

The goal of my instruction is to enable students to become their own ‘monitor’, judging for themselves when something is not understood and when they need additional grammar explanations (Krashen & Terrell, 2000). If it is apparent that they are unable to notice or correct their own errors, I can teach them the grammar needed. Ellis (2005) states the following as he outlines his views on grammar, “teachers should endeavor to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be problematic to learners rather than try to teach the whole of grammar” (Ellis, 2005, p. 102). Again, this seems like the natural approach, giving students only what they need when they need it (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

Lee and Benati (2009) explain that focusing on form can be done along with explicit grammar instruction, another meaning-based form of grammar instruction. This grammar instruction approach focuses on the topic of the reading and addresses grammar questions only when the learner, based on previously learned grammatical knowledge, has a grammatical question generated from the topic or text (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). Celce-Murcia (2002) suggests that grammar can be taught especially well through written discourse, which she describes as written language containing a functional communicative purpose and which contains specific forms that can be explained. She

uses an example from her own classroom: where she brings in a paragraph from a newspaper report or a story, has the class read it, then asks questions to help them notice grammatical functions in the text. Questions may deal with what verb tenses are present and what functions of meaning the different tenses may play in the text.

As my students ask for clarification of meaning in context or in communicative activities, I plan to teach grammar explicitly through context-based, literature-based, and culture-based teaching, using themes and topics to introduce grammar points as needed (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & Van Patten, 2003). For example, in my second or third year SFL class we can cover current events by reading newspaper articles. After discussing meaning, if students ask for more in-depth explanation about verbs and why they are written in the different ways, I can go more into more detail about the difference in past tense conjugations and how they are used (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). This kind of exercise can help students who want to know more about grammar to notice when to use the verb form and at this point we can go over how to conjugate those past tense verbs. Then, we can proceed to production in written form (Ellis, 2005) as a form of grammar instruction through communicative tasks.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, because I learned my L2 in real-life activities, I want to offer my students the opportunity to listen, observe, and engage in authentic situations where they can interact and use the language as they are learning it. I want to help my students reach their communicative goals for whatever purposes they plan to use their L2. The key to offering them these experiences is to provide activities with meaningful input, so they can learn to listen to and read Spanish. And to give them opportunities to create

meaningful output, so they can speak and write in Spanish. My challenge will be to find authentic contexts that will be of importance to my students and to create real or virtual activities where my students will obtain the desire and tools for continued language learning.



## ARTIFACTS

## INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE ARTIFACT

I had an education class about content area reading and literacy. Then, Dr. Lackstrom recommended a book “The Art of Teaching Spanish”, containing the topic of teaching language through content. The subject intrigued me because I also learned language through content in the public school system. I have heard recently that many of Utah’s immersion classrooms are also content-centered.

In this paper, I discuss the benefits of teaching language through content and give ideas for this content-centered classroom. This artifact is written in Spanish and the quotes are in English.

## **La Enseñanza Basada en un Tema Específico**

### ***¿Por qué enseñar un tema específico en la segunda lengua?***

Hay diversas razones por las que los estudiantes toman clases para aprender otro idioma. La mayoría de los estudiantes en la secundaria lo hacen porque saben que el tener estas clases les facilitará la entrada a las universidades deseadas. En muchas ocasiones toman cursos por necesidad y no por el deseo sincero de aprender el idioma. En la universidad sucede algo parecido; los estudiantes toman clases de idioma solo para cumplir los requisitos y para poder obtener un título de licenciatura (Bachelor of Arts [BA]). Por lo tanto, la motivación en ambos casos es simplemente para tomar la clase y ganarse los créditos necesarios.

En cambio, cuando los estudiantes tienen una meta específica por la cual quieren aprender el idioma, tienen una motivación adicional que los lleva a esforzarse para dominar el idioma y no solo cumplir con lo necesario para ganarse la calificación o el crédito. Gardner (2007) explicó que estas diferencias en motivación se distinguen entre la motivación que impulsa al estudiante a adquirir otro idioma y la motivación del estudiante dentro de la clase. De modo que los maestros tienen que hacer un esfuerzo mayor dentro de la clase para que los alumnos que no están motivados a adquirir el idioma, lo aprendan. Esta es una razón por la cual la enseñanza de otro idioma debe realizarse para lograr propósitos específicos (content-based teaching) para lograr mayor motivación. La enseñanza, de un tema preferido por los estudiantes, puede enseñarse en la segunda lengua.

Klee y Barnes-Karol (2006) mencionan las razones por las que se debe enseñar languages across the curriculum [LAC] en otros idiomas, de acuerdo con varios grupos educativos:

1. Understanding of a given culture and its documents and artifacts is greatly enhanced through a knowledge of its language.
2. A curriculum that includes materials in multiple languages provides access to a wider range of perspectives, encourages greater depth of exploration, and opens the door to greater understanding.
3. The use of materials in multiple languages significantly enhances any and all disciplinary inquiry.
4. Languages Across the Curriculum enhances cross-cultural competence and the ability of students to function in an increasingly multicultural society and globalized economy. (Klee & Barnes-Karol, 2006, p. 23)

El enfoque de las clases propuestas no es enseñar el idioma, sino aprender el contenido de las clases en cada plan de estudio específico. Sin embargo, el aprendizaje del idioma en los temas específicos inevitablemente mejoran como consecuencia de esto.

Además Klee y Barnes-Karol (2006) mencionan que hay otros programas que se han llevado a cabo a través de los Estados Unidos y el Reino Unido que enseñan el idioma inglés, usando el método de languages across the curriculum, ya sea en matemáticas, en ciencias, u otro plan de estudio. El resultado es el mejoramiento en el uso del idioma.

Klee y Barnes-Karol (2006) también citan a Brinton, Snow y Wesche (2003, p. 241), que explican porqué este tipo de enseñanza funciona al crear “the necessary conditions for second language learners by exposing them to meaningful language”. Luego mencionan otras razones que apoyan la enseñanza de languages across the curriculum:

1. builds on the learner’s previous learning experience in the subject matter, the target language, and in formal educational settings;

2. takes into account the interest and needs of the learners through their engagement with the academic subject matter and discourse patterns that they need to master;
3. allows focus on (communicative language) use as well as on (accurate) usage;
4. incorporates the eventual uses the learner will make of the language through engagement with relevant content and L2 discourse with a purpose other than language teaching; (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003, p. 241-242).

En otro texto Brinton, Snow y Wesche (2003) también se refieren al input hypothesis de Krashen (1989). El input hypothesis indica que las personas solo aprenden un idioma al entender los mensajes que reciben, haciendo necesario que la información que reciben sea comprensible para el aprendizaje. De acuerdo con Brinton, Snow, y Wesche (2003) esta es otra razón por la que la enseñanza de idiomas se debe hacer por medio de LAC. De esta manera, la segunda lengua el segundo idioma funcionaría como el conducto del contenido de la clase. El aprendizaje sucede, “‘incidentally’ (albeit purposefully in a methodological sense), as language is used in the understanding and expression of meaning” (Brinton, Snow y Wesche, 1989, p. 5). De modo que este metodo simplifica la comprensión de la información al enfocarse en el vocabulario de un tema específico.

El objetivo es de que la segunda lengua junto con el contenido de la clase en la segunda lengua se practiquen a tal grado que se haya aprendido el contexto por medio del idioma. Esto es parte de la adquisición del idioma, de que el estudiante hable y escriba automáticamente, como lo hace en su propio idioma. “Only as focal attention builds configurations that can become automatic” (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991, p. 49). Para

los estudiantes de idiomas, el enfoque en un tema les ayudará a adquirir el idioma necesario para desenvolverse en ese tema específico. Esta práctica es común en todas las carreras. Los navegantes, tienen que aprender el idioma de los navegante; Los físicos tienen que aprender el idioma de los físicos. Al enfocarse en una materia o tema específico, los principiantes en otro idioma podrán aprender el idioma necesario para lograr sus metas específicas. Así también tendrán la motivación necesaria para aprender y una comprensión del tema y al mismo tiempo que aprendan la segunda lengua.

Varias escuelas y universidades han utilizado este medio para enriquecer sus programas de estudio de lenguas y de igual manera han ofrecido otros programas de estudio en otros idiomas. Klee & Barnes-Karol (2006) mencionan que la universidad Temple y la universidad de Minnesota han ofrecido clases de materias que no son de idioma y las han enseñado en español. Estas clases han sido populares entre los estudiantes y las matriculaciones para estas clases han sido numerosas. Sin embargo, ha sido difícil medir la eficacia del aprendizaje en la materia y la proficiencia en el idioma. Algunos estudiantes que han tomado estas clases en español en la universidad de Minnesota han declarado un avance en la facilidad del uso del idioma después de los cursos, mientras que a otros se les ha dificultado.

El obstáculo principal que encuentran las escuelas al implementar el programa bilingüe en las demás materias es el presupuesto. Las clases bilingües requieren dos maestros, uno para la materia y otro para la segunda lengua. Además, el número de personas matriculadas en estas clases es menor que los que se matriculan en clases que se enseñan en inglés o el idioma nativo. Esto causa que no tenga sentido mantener las clases por el alto costo con dos auxiliares, refiriéndose a clases impartidas en un idioma

extranjero, cuando la mayoría de las matriculaciones se hacen en las clases con el idioma nativo (Klee & Barnes-Karol, 2006). Aparte de este medio, se han implementado una variedad de programas que apoyan a estudiantes de español o estudiantes de inglés (como los estudiantes de inglés intensivo) como parte de las materias universitarias. Hay una variedad de maneras en la cual se ha implementado esta práctica para cumplir las necesidades de los estudiantes. Algunas de las escuelas que están implementando estos programas son el colegio de St. Olaf, la universidad de Florida, de Kansas, y de Minnesota (Klee & Barnes-Karol, 2006). Además se citan varios ejemplos de programas en otras escuelas y países y su éxito al usar este medio de enseñanza (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989)

Debido a que los presupuestos limitan la capacidad de las escuelas para mantener estos programas en las materias específicas, es posible utilizar la misma práctica dentro de una clase a menos costo sin tener que pagar el saldo de dos maestros por clase. Así cumpliendo con la necesidad monetaria de la escuela y a la vez implementando el medio de enseñanza enfocado en una materia o en un tema específico, que le dará los beneficios de esta práctica a los estudiantes. Brinton, Snow, y Wesche (1989) sugieren dos opciones que cumplen con este criterio.

Uno está basado en la enseñanza del idioma por temas (theme-based language instruction) y el otro es la instrucción del tema en aislamiento o sea en programas intensivos donde solo se aprende el idioma (sheltered content instruction). La enseñanza del idioma por temas se basa en organizar las lecciones en temas específicos, aunque haya variación en los temas. La literatura, las actividades, los juegos y cualquier parte de la lección se basa en un tema seleccionado. Cuando se termine el estudio del tema, se

sigue al otro. Otra variedad de esta instrucción es asignar un solo tema a toda la clase, como economía. Esta clase está organizada de una manera diferente a aquellas que siguen un libro de instrucción y se rigen con la organización del texto (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989). Toda la instrucción se basa en el tema y cumple con los requisitos de la escuela para ganarse el crédito equivalente a la misma clase que se enseña en la lengua nativa.

La clase del tema en aislamiento, la enseña un maestro que sepa la segunda lengua y tenga la capacidad de enseñar el curso seleccionado. Por ejemplo, una clase de negocios en español la enseñaría un profesor de negocios que domine el español. Los estudiantes están en un salón aislados de otros estudiantes que estén tomando el curso en su idioma nativo. Los materiales de instrucción están modificados para tener el nivel adecuado para los estudiantes que son principiantes en el idioma. Esta es la parte complicada. Ya que las clases deben preparar al estudiante para estar al mismo nivel respecto a su comprensión en la materia al compararse con los que tomen la clase en su idioma nativo. La enseñanza del tema por lo tanto debe ser de comprensión general y profunda y no enfocarse en los detalles del idioma tal como otras clases de lengua.

La clase que propongo ofrecer es una en la cual se implementa una de estas dos opciones, en la cual el tema sea el enfoque de la enseñanza de la segunda lengua. Así logrando los requisitos de un presupuesto limitado y el enfoque en un tema para el mejoramiento del idioma en una área específica. Aunque la clase puede ser en cualquier tema, pero vamos a mantener la clase de negocios como ejemplo.

Veremos cómo se puede enseñar una clase como esta, utilizando actividades en la materia que faciliten la lectura, la escritura y el habla en la segunda lengua. Estas tres



habilidades se utilizarán de manera incorporada. Además la fundación de cada actividad estará en el texto o en la literatura que se utilice para la actividad. Primero exploraremos por qué la lectura debe funcionar como la actividad principal de las demás habilidades. También veremos cómo la hipótesis de Krashen (1989) se puede implementar llevando acabo esta clase.

### ***La Clase que Propongo***

La lectura debe ser la parte fundamental del aprendizaje en cualquier tema ya que abre la puerta a diversos géneros de aprendizaje, a innumerable estilos de lengua, a una infinidad de recursos para aprender el vocabulario en contexto, a diferentes culturas, a diferentes perspectivas y otras habilidades. Cuando los estudiantes comienzan el aprendizaje en otro idioma, requieren diferentes capacidades. Algunas de estas incluyen: reconocer vocabulario, ver gramática, entender el desarrollo del pensamiento del narrador, y poder concentrarse en la lectura (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007).

Algunas herramientas que les ayudarán a los estudiantes a prepararse para comprender la lectura incluyen las preguntas pre-lectura y los journals. Las preguntas de pre-lectura sirven para guiar al lector sobre lo que se va a leer o estudiar. De igual manera, pueden contener citas o declaraciones que les ayudarán a reflexionar sobre lo que ya saben del tema, les provocarán pensamientos de desacuerdo, y les abrirán la curiosidad sobre lo que se va a leer. Después de haber leído la asignación también se pueden usar para reflexionar y como una forma de preparación para los exámenes.

Los estudiantes también pueden escribir journals sobre lo que están leyendo o lo que se está hablando en la clase. Es una manera de permitirles reflexionar y organizar sus pensamientos sobre el tema que se está desarrollando. Los journals sirven de muchas

funciones; les permite expresar sus pensamientos sin límites, pueden servir como guía de estudio y pueden crear preguntas que no se hayan considerado antes con anterioridad. Además mucho de lo que se escribe en los journals después se podrá encontrar en sus tareas y ensayos formales porque se podrán usar como ayuda para escribirlos (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007).

Durante la lectura, los estudiantes también pueden escribir o dibujar sobre lo que están leyendo, organizando así sus pensamientos en una guía visual. Las guías visuales se pueden hacer de muchas maneras. Se pueden hacer dividiendo el papel en mitad y permitiendo que los estudiantes escriban en un lado un resumen de lo que leyeron y en el otro lado sus pensamientos sobre el tema. Además se pueden hacer dividiendo los eventos cronológicos, los personajes y sus papeles, o los valores principales que se vieron en en la historia, y de muchas maneras de acuerdo al objetivo de la clase. También se puede dividir la necesidad de los estudiantes o la organización de la discusión de la clase. Estas son algunas herramientas que se pueden utilizar para ayudar al lector a prepararse y comprender la lectura (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007).

Por lo general las clases de idiomas para principiantes inician con la lectura aprendiendo el significado palabra por palabra y aprendiendo que son los elementos del lenguaje desde la estructura más básica, o de la conjugación de los verbos. De tal manera que los estudiantes están aprendiendo de abajo hacia arriba (from the bottom-up). Al utilizar la lectura de diferentes tipos de literatura también se puede iniciar el aprendizaje, aún en clases primarias, de arriba para abajo (from the top-down). Esto significa que en vez de comenzar el aprendizaje de la lectura de puntos elementales, el aprendizaje puede

comenzar con puntos avanzados como la información, la comparación, o la organización (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991).

Swaffar, Arens, y Byrnes (1991) comparan dos personas con la misma habilidad pero con diferentes objetivos. Uno tiene que leer un texto para una de sus clases y comienza estudiando los elementos del texto. El objetivo es poder responder las preguntas del maestro sobre la lectura pero tiene poca motivación para lograr comprender la lectura. Sin embargo, la otra persona con la misma habilidad lee el mismo texto con el deseo de comprender lo más que pueda, usando lo que ella ya sabe del tema y haciéndose preguntas antes y durante la lectura. Luego, esa persona habla acerca de su lectura para obtener opiniones y hacer comparaciones con su propio mundo. La motivación y la metodología durante la lectura son totalmente diferentes. La persona que desea obtener información, logra hacer conexiones personales. La persona que se enfoca en los elementos básicos del idioma no puede alcanzar a ver esas conexiones por perderse en los detalles.

La diferencia está en el objetivo de la lectura. La persona que lee de abajo hacia arriba no usa los procesos cognitivos, la organización de información ni la capacidad para analizar la lectura. Es decir, la persona que se enfoca en el vocabulario pierde el enfoque y la conexión entre las palabras del texto. El resultado es que:

- Stage 1—attention alters processing modes
- Stage 2—processing modes alter retention
- Stage 3—storage breakdown occurs
- Stage 4—attention dissipates

La motivación al leer un tema de interés atrae al lector al texto usando el conocimiento que ya tiene sobre el tema para hacer conexiones e informarse más sobre el tema. Su conocimiento sobre el tema y su motivación le permite moverse de una palabra

a la otra haciendo conexiones sin saber todas las palabras. No tiene que memorizar vocabulario y recordar todas las palabras que no reconozca. “Unlike recall and recognition, the so-called higher order processes of synthesis and analysis create systems of meaning. They permit applications of knowledge.” (Swaffar, Arens, y Byrnes, 1991, p. 53).

El usar la lectura para aprender el vocabulario y la estructura en el idioma en lugar de usar el vocabulario y la estructura para aprender la lectura, es similar a la diferencia entre el aprendizaje implícito (aprender sin instrucción formal) y el aprendizaje explícito de la gramática (aprender con instrucción formal) (Winitz, 1996). Se logra más en la lectura al comenzar desde arriba hacia abajo o con la enseñanza implícita. Sin embargo, la lectura de abajo hacia arriba o la enseñanza explícita también tiene importancia. De las dos formas se debe buscar obtener la información comprensible para el aprendizaje, que es una parte importante del aprendizaje de acuerdo con la hipótesis de Krashen (1989). Swaffar, Arens, y Byrnes (1991) explican la relación entre la manera que el proceso cognitivo funciona en el aprendizaje y la comprensión. “ Learning models look at what the mind does to learn input. Comprehension models look at what the mind does to modify input” (p. 52). En estos procesos la clave es aprender y modificar lo que se recibe. Lo que entra al leer es el idioma. Alverman, Phelps, y Ridgeway (2007) explican que los lectores aprenden mientras extraen el “meaning from the author’s message” y la “comprehension is influenced by several interrelated factors, including the text itself, a reader’s prior knowledge, the strategies a reader can use, and the goals and interests of the reader ” (pp. 191-192).

Las actividades que usa Hess (2005) con historias cortas que describe en su artículo *Parallel Life Approach* pueden servir como un medio para aplicar estas teorías. Esta historia se

trata de una joven que conoce a un Argentino con el cual quiere escaparse para hacer una vida nueva. Las actividades incluyen:

- 1- visualización (los estudiantes pueden visualizarse en la situación de la narradora y su situación como si estuvieran en su lugar, que en este caso está mirando por una ventana y considerando su futuro al elegir irse del país con su enamorado)
- 2- terminar una oración de la historia con un adjetivo.
- 3- crear una oración original con una palabra que se encuentra en el texto
- 4- discusión en grupos
- 5- una actividad de rompecabezas, en el cual a cada estudiante se le pide explicar un parte de la lectura asignada hasta que se cubre toda la lectura y se unen las piezas para tomar el significado entero del texto
- 6- escribir una carta-como si ellos estuvieran en la situación de la protagonista de la historia y a donde se encontrarían en cinco años
- 7- hablar sobre las decisiones que están tomando ahora en sus vidas y cómo pueden cambiar sus vidas
- 8- hacer un anuncio para alguien perdido e incluir los detalles necesarios para encontrarlo.

Algunas de estas actividades son para encontrar el significado de arriba hacia abajo y otros para encontrar el significado de abajo hacia arriba. Ambos tipos de actividades le ayudarán a los estudiantes a encontrar conexiones y aplicaciones personales, el texto tendrá más significado y podrán encontrar más valor en la lectura. Los estudiantes lograrán mayor comprensión al aplicar el conocimiento y relacionarse con sus propias experiencias en la vida (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). Ellos también aprenderán y modificarán el texto para retener lo que han aprendido (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991). Estas actividades también incluyen la lectura, la escritura, y el habla que se han puesto como criterios esenciales en estas materias.

Hay tres razones interpersonales para escribir. Se escribe para aprender, se escribe para demostrar lo que se ha aprendido y se escribe para publicar o compartir lo que se ha escrito (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). También se escribe para recordar durante el aprendizaje y para expresarse aunque nadie más lo lea. Algunas actividades pueden incluir pedirle a los estudiantes que escriban en una tarjeta o que escriban algunas

reflexiones sobre la lectura. También se puede escribir un párrafo y pedirle a los estudiantes que terminen la composición, dando límites de tiempo. Además, se puede hacer una actividad en la cual se pueden pedir reacciones por escrito sobre alguna cita de un autor. Se les puede pedir que escojan un lado de un tema polémico y pedir que defiendan el punto de vista que hayan escogido. Además se les puede pedir que expliquen las relaciones entre los personajes de la lectura. Otra manera de iniciar la clase es dándole un cuestionario a los estudiantes sobre la lectura al momento en que entren a la clase. Esto les ayudará a enfocarse en la lectura y les ayudará a recordar lo que leyeron. Al final de la clase se puede hacer un cuestionario para reflexionar sobre lo que se habló durante la clase (Julie Major-guest speaker, March 30, 2009). De cualquier manera, el escribir es una manera esencial para poder ver la manera de pensar de los estudiantes. “Writing is thinking written down” (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007, p. 292).

RAFT (Role, Audience, Format Topic [Papel del autor, Audiencia, Formato, Tema) es otro medio que se puede utilizar para iniciar la escritura. Las opciones de RAFT se pueden ilustrar en una página colocando las opciones de cada categoría en una columna separada. Luego, se le permite a los estudiantes que elijan cuál de las opciones quieren emplear. Por ejemplo, para un ensayo sobre la historia de la colonización de los Estados Unidos se podrían usar las siguientes opciones:

Table 1  
*Ideas for Writing*

Self Journal
First winter in Jamestown
Friend in Europe Letter First few weeks in the new land
Professional Writer for People in England
Editorial Convince people to settle in New Jersey

(Julie Major-guest speaker, March 30, 009). Esta manera de organizar las opciones permite que los estudiantes escriban diferentes puntos de vista y se motiven a escribir en un género y sobre un tema que les llame la atención. Se puede formular un RAFT para cualquier clase.

Para una clase de negocios, se puede enseñar la manera correcta de escribir cartas usando el formato correcto y la manera apropiada para la cultura. Luego, se pueden practicar frases comunes del proceso y maneras apropiadas para hacer peticiones y comunicar las necesidades del intercambio usando el nivel de formalidad requerido en la cultura (Jenkins & Hinds, 1987). En el mundo de hoy, será práctico aprender cómo comunicarse por e-mail en la segunda lengua para lograr aprender ser efectivo en los negocios. Además se debe practicar escribir reportes, formas y presentaciones de PowerPoint que puedan ser necesarios en la vida real.

En la clase de mercadería descrita por Dannemiller (1993), se hizo una actividad simulando un día de compras en el que los estudiantes tenían que leer, escribir, y hablar para lograr el objetivo. La clase hizo una lista de tiendas especializadas, como una tienda de juguetes, una tienda de ferretería etc. Después de redactar la lista, se les asignó escoger una tienda y trabajar en parejas para vender en su tienda. Además de hacer las ventas, también tenían que participar como clientes de la misma tienda.

Para publicar lo que vendían en la tienda hicieron un anuncio para invitar a los clientes, hicieron un folleto de descripción de la tienda y su mercancía que también sería llamativo para los clientes, hicieron pancartas de publicidad para colocar en los artículos de venta y para anunciar ofertas especiales, grabaron un anuncio para la televisión para persuadir y aumentar la clientela. Como dueños tenían que aprender las expresiones de la

venta como, "¿con qué le puedo ayudar?" Se memorizaron varias frases para servir como ayuda al cliente. También aprendieron cómo hablar del dinero e intercambiar el dinero extranjero (Dannemiller, 1993).

Como dueños, tuvieron que invitar y persuadir a que llegaran los clientes a la tienda, aprender cómo resolver algún conflicto con un cliente y escribir un reporte de queja al fabricante, describiendo los detalles del problema. Las ayudas visuales de información las hicieron los estudiantes y proporcionaron los artículos de venta. El instructor proveyó revistas, periódicos, y páginas amarillas como referencias para la clase. Además, se les pidió aprender frases específicas y conjugaciones específicas que serían parte de la prueba (Dannemiller, 1993). Se planeó la actividad extensa usando una situación auténtica sirviendo como desarrollo de la lectura, la escritura y el habla.

La autenticidad de la actividad es importante porque la mayoría de las personas quieren aprender otro idioma es para poder comunicarse ACTFL ([www.ACTFL.org](http://www.ACTFL.org), 2000) y desenvolverse en tales situaciones. Como Vygotsky explicó, tenemos la necesidad de comunicarnos porque somos criaturas sociales. Entonces necesitamos aprender en grupos y aprender de otras personas (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007). Al planificar actividades que combinen las situaciones auténticas con las actividades en grupo, se establecerán ambientes ideales para el aprendizaje del idioma. Otros medios incluyen:

1. Actuar situaciones (role-play)- esta es una buena manera de practicar lo que se ha aprendido. Se pueden proveer situaciones y pedirles a dos estudiantes que actúen la situación. También se pueden buscar obras que los estudiantes pueden producir como grupo (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).



2. Discusiones en grupo- se les debe permitir que escojan su propio grupo. Este tipo de actividad le da bastante tiempo a cada alumno para desenvolverse. Se debe guiar al grupo con asignaciones específicas y el instructor debe observar para asegurarse que todos tengan la oportunidad de participar, pero no debe tomar parte activa de ningún grupo. En esta situación los estudiantes se sentirán más cómodos compartiendo como grupo que si lo estuvieran haciendo frente a toda la clase (Alverman, Phelps, & Ridgeway, 2007; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

3. Utilizar el idioma fuera de la clase-esto se puede dar como tarea y los estudiantes pueden reportar del éxito que tuvieron al hacerlo (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

4. Información de los estudiantes-entrevistar a los estudiantes y preguntarles qué tipos de amigos buscan y cuáles características buscan en sus amistades (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

5. Crítica-el maestro puede elogiar y dar sugerencias para mejorar en el habla. Se puede hacer de una manera formal, con una de criterios específicos y dando una calificación para actividades específicas del habla o de una manera informal (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

6. Ver por escrito una transcripción del vocabulario que usa un hablante nativo- esto se puede usar para que los alumnos puedan ver la estructura y el estilo del habla. También se puede leer a la par del audio, proveyéndole una ayuda adicional y si es posible, se les puede pedir una reproducción oral de la transcripción (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000).

Al utilizar estas actividades para inducir la comunicación entre los estudiantes, ellos podrán practicar lo que saben y las habilidades que tienen poco a poco se facilitarán hasta el punto que la comunicación pueda ser más fluida.

### ***Conclusión***

Todas estas actividades son medios por el cual se pueden entrelazar la lectura, la escritura y el habla para mejorarlas en la segunda lengua. El valor de estas actividades se encuentra en la variedad y en la oportunidad que proporcionan para mejorar la comprensión del tema, encontrar conexiones personales, emplear las habilidades cognitivas y aumentar el aprendizaje en múltiples dimensiones. Además, pueden ser medios para enseñar cualquier materia como negocios o cualquier otra clase de tema específico, utilizando otro idioma como el medio de aprendizaje.

Al enseñar temas y materias específicas en otro idioma, le ayudará a los estudiantes a querer aprender a comunicarse en términos específicos (discourse) y obtener la praxis para lograr dominar el idioma deseado para los propósitos específicos. En un mundo que se expande más hacia objetivos globales, podremos proveer la opción del enfoque en materias pertinentes al mundo actual. De esta manera estaremos preparando los negociantes, políticos, científicos y trabajadores sociales del futuro para el mundo real.

## **INTRODUCTION TO LITERACY ARTIFACT**

A memorable children's literature class, where I was introduced to the term 'authentic literature', inspired this artifact. I will discuss how multimedia authentic texts can be used to teach listening comprehension, writing, and culture in the second language.

## **Using Multimedia Authentic Text for L2 Teaching**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this literacy paper is to show why teachers should choose authentic texts in different formats, such as children's literature, lyrical music, and video with technology, such as internet, smart phones, and modern communication to access L2 (second language) media. Authentic texts are the words of a fluent author or speaker written or spoken for the real world and not for learning purposes (Berardo, 2006). Authentic literature offers multiple themes, styles, and genres for L2 teachers and learners. From story telling and children's literature to music lyrics to online and audio texts, authentic literature engages language learners with the L2 in its natural form. I will discuss how authentic texts can be used to teach listening comprehension, writing, and cultural understanding.

### **Listening to Authentic Lyrical Music**

Listening to authentic readings and storytelling in the form of children's literature is a natural way to build listening comprehension (Morgan & Rinvoluceri, 1993). Children's stories vary in length and style. Some are written in rhyme, and others are written in verse. Some are written with hyperbole, metaphors, and personifications while others simply engage the reader's imagination thus easing anxiety and frustration frequently felt by L2 learners. This variation gives educators a range of options to achieve their respective goals in the language classroom (Ho, 2000).

How does children's literature help students reach communicative goals in the L2? It can be used to teach a variety of skills at any level. Dykstra-Pruim (1998) used children's literature "to ensure that students, even in beginning weeks of language

instruction would be able to understand...more texts..." (Dykstra-Pruim, 1998, p. 106). Ho (2000) used children's literature in English to help students from the Republic of China listen to and learn pronunciation, such as vowel sounds, and the /r/ and the /l/ distinction. Besides the new vowel sounds, she assisted the students in practicing tone, pitch, and other English speech characteristics used in the rhythm and rhyme of the storybooks.

Audiobooks are another medium for learning pronunciation and comprehension involving listening and reading. This medium allows students to listen at their own pace and repeat the audio as much or as little as needed according to the listener's proficiency level. Audiobooks read by native speakers expose students to pronunciation, cadence, tone, and dialect in the L2 (Baskin & Harris, 1995). For my beginning language class, I will use authentic children's books narrated by native speakers so my students will listen to the spoken L2 in its natural form and with its natural sounds.

In a study conducted in Taiwan by Chang, Chen and Chen (2010), audioguides were used to teach language students ranging in ages 18 to 22. These students were enrolled in a college English class after having taken six years of high school English. Before going on a class fieldtrip to the zoo, they studied some of the vocabulary from the recording. They used the audioguides to guide them through the Taipei City Zoo as they learned about four animals in English, elephants, gorillas, lions, and giraffes. They listened to the native English speaker on the audioguide at average speaking rate, which is 130 words per minute. They could also see the scripts' written text. Audio formats become more comprehensible to students when supported with written text (Elvin, 2004). The authentic texts came from materials used in the San Diego Zoo and National

Geographic websites for the same animals. Students reported they enjoyed learning language with the mobile devices and expressed a desire to continue using this medium for learning the L2 and recommended it to others (Chang, Chen, & Chen, 2010).

Multimedia offer audio books as well, including some added features such as vocabulary audio or video annotations (Sakar, 2005). Students can be asked to initiate pronunciation activities, such as echoing the sounds they hear. Or, they can practice reading a section of the book out loud and perform the reading in front of the class. In a different study L2 students felt their listening and comprehension improved vastly through live video streamed on-line interviews with native speakers of the target language. The texts were authentic as they originated from the native speakers doing the interview. Other students used technology to reduce speech rate when they needed a native speaker to slow down (Zhao, 2005).

DVDs and closed captions were used by Elvin (2010) with Japanese-speaking high school students learning English. The teacher had the students read excerpts of authentic movie transcripts before and after watching video clips such as Harry Potter. The study showed that students made substantial improvements in listening comprehension tests after engaging in these activities. These listening comprehension tests were conducted at the end of the study, requiring students to listen to sound files from an Active Listening series, previously unfamiliar to the students (Elvin, 2004). In another study in which students used closed captions, researchers saw an immediate improvement in listening comprehension, but students did not improve their abilities greatly over time (Zhao, 2005). However, this activity can be used as a preliminary listening activity to trigger writing, speaking, or grammar activities.

Zhao (2005) reviewed how young people's use of technological resources for accessing comprehensible input, such as music, has been growing, including iPods, and mobile phones. Lyrical music provides opportunities for listening to authentic texts. It offers multiple genres, such as folk music and pop music, for listening activities. Listening activities are more comprehensible to students when supported with written text (Elvin, 2004; Speh & Ahramjian 2010).

For example, I can use a song from the popular Columbian pop group Juanes "La Camisa Negra" (the black shirt). I can present visual aids to introduce the song, like a black shirt, and black clothes and even a veil to represent the word *luto* (mourning). I can also bring travel bags and a bottle representing poison and go over the vocabulary for these items. Online I can access and supply lyrics of the song for my students. Then we can listen to the song with the lyrics either as a class or individually on our own devices so students can pause the song as needed. After we discuss meaning, students can be requested to draw some of the imagery from the song with the vocabulary next to it. We can then discuss the satire used in comparing the death of a relationship to really mourning.

### **Writing Activities Inspired by Authentic Literature and Texts**

Authentic lyrical music can also serve as a platform for writing. Sposet (2007) elaborates on how a contemporary music approach (CMA) reinforces writing in conjunction with listening and grammar. This approach entails a focus on listening to a song repeatedly, studying the language used in the song, helping students sing the lyrics from memory and eventually writing their own lyrics to the same music. Regarding music in L2 teaching, Speh and Ahramjian (2010) state, "singing songs in the target

language is a deceptively simple technique that yields results in every aspect of language proficiency” (p. 39). This can happen because students are incorporating listening to cadence and pragmatics, as they are reading, pronouncing, and learning culture.

Lytle (2011) offers an example of how to use lyrical music as a writing exercise in a class of multinational students ranging in age from 18 to 25. Although Spiset (2007) recommends using popular music for this age group, other types of music can be used. Lytle (2011) uses American ballads from different eras in history to teach social issues in American history. In his intermediate ESL class, his approach is to have students write five descriptive summary paragraphs, including the song’s description, story, and history, along with the student’s opinion about the song (Lytle, 2011). Kissner (2006) explains that students can use summarizing as a way to measure their own levels of comprehension. Summarizing can be adapted to a beginning language class as well. For example, students could write similar descriptions in one paragraph about the song, rather than five.

Authentic children’s literature may also help teachers simplify writing activities. Brisk and Harrington (2000) used children’s books with letter-writing themes to lead students to write letters in the classroom. They use “Mi Querido Pedrín”, a version of the Goldilocks story in which Goldilock’s friend, Rabbit, corresponds with her and learns of her adventures with the bears. Students were encouraged to write letters to each other. As a result there was an increase in friendships in the classroom, which enabled more writing in the L2. Students inquired about vocabulary and sentence writing. They corrected each other’s mistakes and improved in their ability to write. The students eventually moved from writing each other to writing to a museum, thanking staff for tours. This exercise



built their vocabulary and their grammatical capacity. It taught them to write to different audiences about different topics (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). Ho (2000) had students write a dramatized script from the children's story, "The Everlasting Shoes", and students turned it into a comedy. After students wrote their script they also performed it. They used creativity in writing the script and performing it.

Moreover, teachers should use children's literature to introduce cultural topics as authentic children's literature offers so many genres as well as a variety of levels of difficulty (Ho, 2000). Metcalf (1998) used children's literature to teach German history and culture. It caught students' attention because they found it much more interesting to learn the history and culture through an authentic children's story than from a textbook. Ho (2000) explains how children's literature in English aided her Chinese students in understanding cultures unknown to them. She found by trial and error that the literature had to be chosen carefully. Campano (2007) uses children's literature to highlight some of the struggles ESL students face with cultural differences and brings those topics into the classroom for discussion.

Reading an extended text in the L2 can provide a continuity of vocabulary and context for students to gain better comprehension and maintain interest. In a study done with L2 German learners, comprehension seemed to improve over time as students read a German novel. They also appeared to maintain interest in the novel as the class progressed (Maxim, 2002).

Writing authentic texts can also be realized through computer-mediated communication such as e-mail, Facebook, and chat (Lomicka, Lord, & Manzer, 2003). Authentic communication can be fostered by setting up a community of native speakers

of the L2 with whom students can communicate within the L2. Ducate and Lomicka (2008) also promote blogging and assert, “although research related to blogs in the FL classroom is in the beginning stages, it is clear that blogs have much to offer to literacy, in developing skills in both reading and writing” (p. 12). Teachers must set clear objectives when creating these classroom forums by having students exchange with a purpose (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008; Lomicka, Lord, & Manzer, 2003). These new forums of communication create multiple L2 writing opportunities for students in the classroom that can lead to authentic communication outside the classroom.

In a study conducted about reading authentic L2 texts on the web, students were asked to summarize their L2 reading experience in their L1 (Chun, 2001). This is a simple writing exercise that can be assigned to a beginning language class and can serve as a way of assessing whether students are understanding the readings. Asenciór (2006) explained the benefits of summarizing, “ In the summary task, the presence of the text encourages readers to rely on textual information, including the rhetorical organization of the information, to distinguish which idea units are important. “(p. 495) Kissner (2006) emphasizes that teachers can use summarizing as a way of capturing student reading comprehension. She also explains that students who summarize the main points of a reading are better able to remember what they read. As previously stated, summarizing can range from a simple activity done in the L1 to one to two page synopsis of the reading in the L2.

Writing assignments can also be designed for the audioguides activity mentioned earlier (Chang, Chen, & Chen, 2010). A summary assignment about the animals can be required from the audioguide tour to the zoo, allowing students to use the audioguide text

for the summary. In a more advanced class students can be requested to write a promotion for the zoo, highlighting some of its features, including the audioguides. A summary can also be done after viewing movies on the Internet or DVD (Elvin, 2004). In a beginning level class, the summary can be just one scene and allow students to use movie transcripts to complete the assignment. In a more advanced class, students can write a new dialogue for a scene in the movie. Writing activities can be connected with audio activities in class, including those related to music.

### **Cultural Understanding Gleaned from Authentic Texts**

Modern technology can be instrumental in bringing the world into the classroom (Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, Valencia, 2011). Researchers using authentic video to teach culture found students learned more about culture related to aspects of every day life (culture with a little c) and learned less about culture relating to the overall civilization (culture with a capital C) (Zhao, 2005). Likewise, researchers have found bloggers communicate more about individual cultural identities (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008) than culture in a broader sense. Yet, these methods of introducing culture brought people together who were otherwise not communicating with each other.

Bloggers have also connected through music as a topic of interest across cultures. Some students share fondness for the same type of music, and others share music as well as pictures and other electronic information, making personal connections (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008). Through the use of music and music videos, teachers can bring awareness of cultural and social topics into the L2 classroom (Sposet, 2007). Teachers should bring music into the classroom to teach language as well as to teach culture (Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, Valencia, 2011; Porto 2011). When I asked to bring a Spanish Christmas

song to a fifth grade class for my MSLT video recording, I took the song “Mi Burrito Sabanero”. As we went over the song and practiced it, the children wondered why the title and lyrics were about a burrito. They wondered how eating a burrito was related to Christmas. This had to do with pragmatics and culture. We discussed that *burrito* in Latin America meant donkey used as a mode of traveling for some isolated areas, but in Mexico is something to eat. We also discussed the meaning of *Sabanero* (from the Savanas) and its geographical significance in some countries.

Authentic texts can promote cultural awareness. By nature, authentic texts reflect people’s cultural identity (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, Soler, 2002). L2 literacy is needed to understand the cultural identity of those with whom students will likely use their L2. “Culturally responsive educators believe in foreign language teaching as educational and aim at their learners’ literacy development, not only language development” (Porto, 2011, p. 46).

As students should be prepared to engage with those in the L2 community, it is important to teach culture in the language classroom. “Culturally responsive literacy education includes the necessary skills for acquiring the ability to read and write in the era of globalization, technology, and access to information” (Porto, 2011, p. 47). This begins with teaching vocabulary in context and progresses to teaching pragmatics as well as helping students to learn language applicable to their future needs. By teaching language in context for communication, students will acquire the necessary ability to use the language they are learning in the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, teachers should choose authentic texts in different formats, such as audio books, video streaming, social media, smart phones, and available modern communication to access L2 authentic texts. Authentic texts present L2 written or spoken for the real world (Berardo, 2006) in its intended form. Teachers can help students utilize all the available tools to learn and use language in its natural form through listening, writing, and cultural activities. Thus students will be prepared to use the L2 learned in the classroom for their needs in their real life interactions.

## **INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE ARTIFACT**

In this article I discuss how I can effectively teach my students to interact in the second language. I explore how pragmatics and language socialization can be taught through communicative activities that introduce the hidden meanings in language in different situations. I further discuss the benefit of using all available interaction to introduce pragmatics in the classroom through the teacher, the classroom, the community, and the available technology.

## **Language Socialization, Pragmatics, and Implications in the L2 Classroom**

### **Introduction**

Recently, I have thought about what it means to know a language. Will students, coming out of my language classes, feel they know SFL (Spanish as a second language)? Beyond teaching them vocabulary and grammar, how can I prepare my students to interact, exchange, and share in the L2 (second language)? According to the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), a national committee comprised of business professionals, educators, and government officials has generated a list of standards that students should achieve in learning language. Among them, they list cultural understanding of ‘practices’, ‘products’, and ‘perspectives’ as a necessary standard for knowing language (as cited in [www.ACTFL.org](http://www.ACTFL.org), 2000). Ishihara (2010) suggests that, as language teachers we are possibly only describing part of language to students, rather than giving them a glimpse of the entire language. Cutshall (2012) suggests that teaching L2 and culture should be intertwined because otherwise an important part of language is left out.

When the comment is made Jane knows five languages, what does that mean? Does Jane know the basic vocabulary and a set of grammar rules? Does Jane know the phonetic sounds of the language? What constitutes knowing a language? Cultural knowledge is an essential part of knowing a language because language and communication are social practices and involve social factors (Cutshall, 2012).

“Language socialization refers to the acquisition of linguistic, pragmatic and other cultural knowledge through social experience and is often equated with the development of cultural and communicative competence” (Duff 2010, p. 49). It speaks to the

importance of learning language in social settings and through communicative practices in context (Lund, 2006). Pragmatics refers to the ability to understand and “express messages appropriately within the overall social and cultural context of communication” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46).

This describes skills beyond linguistic ability, relating to cultural awareness and social linguistic practices. It relates to knowing who the messenger is and who the intended audience is (Östman & Verschueren, 2009). It involves discourse within the L2 culture and becoming aware of cultural, “perspectives...products... and practices” (Cutshall, 2012, p. 32).

Semantics or meaning (Östman & Verschueren, 2009) in the L2 is also constructed through contextual and social factors during interaction in the L2 (Isihara, 2010; Lund, 2006). While interacting, students can negotiate meaning (Isihara, 2010), having their counterpart slow down or clarify by pointing, using other words, or using body language. Lund (2006) explains, “...learning a second language takes place through interaction and participation with native and non-native speakers of the target language...the social and cultural conditions that the learners meet are influential for their possibilities to acquire the new language” (Lund 2006, p. 57). Interaction and participation within the L2 will expose students to meaning in context and communication beyond language (Celce-Murcia, 2007), such as non-verbal communication, and challenge their L2 comprehension and expression abilities (Östman & Verschueren, 2009).

Cutshall (2012) urges L2 teachers to include culture in beginning language classes because learning culture is what students seek when they take language classes. Beyond



culture, students need to learn how culture is ingrained in language or sociolinguistics. Celce-Murcia (2007) discusses Hymes (1972) theories that, “in addition to linguistic competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 42),” students also need sociolinguistic competence or, “the rules for using language appropriately in context (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 42).” So what role should L2 teachers play in the classroom?

As previously stated, pragmatics is learned best when students are interacting and exchanging with speakers of the target language. Does this lessen student’s ability to learn the L2 in the classroom, rather than in an immersion setting? What can I do to give students the opportunity to have this interaction and exchange? As previously noted language is best learned in context. Celce-Murcia (2007, p.42) explains Hymes (1979) argument that, “language structure and its acquisition (are) not context-free.” She further explains that the idea of communicative competence initiated during the time the communicative approach was being considered. Therefore, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and culture can be taught in the classroom with its limitations, through the communicative approach. We just need to determine some avenues to do so.

### **Pragmatics in the classroom**

How are pragmatics learned in the classroom? Cutshall (2012) suggests that we travel through the classroom and explore the culture of a particular city. She further advises that we begin by exploring the culture the class is most familiar with to have a point of reference and comparison to other cultures. For example, Hendrickson (1991) published a Spanish textbook based on this same premise. He organized the textbook by countries like Mexico, Costa Rica, and Spain. Within each chapter, the author states learning goals under the titles, “communicative goals, language functions, vocabulary

themes, grammatical structures and cultural information” (Hendrickson 1991, p. 14). The first chapter covers informal greetings and discusses important cultural information about physical exchanges between friends and during introductions, including hugs, handshakes, and kisses in the air. A textbook like this one, that can cover basic vocabulary and grammar along with culture through communicative activities, serves as the ideal basis for my L2 classroom.

The key to using this pattern is to always promote interaction in contextual settings (Verschueren & Östman, 2009). As Lund explains:

When learning takes place through participation and practice and through explorations in the socio-cultural environment, the active learner is afforded with multiple possibilities for meaningful action and interaction, and with possibilities to study the world and to acquire the language while participating. (Lund, 2006, p. 81).

She continues, “And if we hypothesize contextual factors to be crucial to the learning process we cannot disregard context in the research methodology” (Lund, 2006, p. 82). Celce-Murcia (2007) also posits that students cannot practice the same kind of communication that occurs in a personal social setting and learn from the active participation in this kind of interaction in the classroom. She suggests using videos and films to give students this sort of experience. Hence, teachers need to offer students opportunities for personal interaction in the L2 to experience language in a social setting and in meaningful context.

### **Pragmatics can be learned from the teacher**

Duff (2010) emphasizes the need for the experienced speaker to teach the beginning learner in the classroom. She cites examples of teachers vocalizing affirmations of students' culturally accepted ways of presenting material in the classroom and giving instructive feedback on students who can improve their presentations. Teachers can play an important role in helping students use language appropriately and to acculturate them in their classroom participation.

According to Duff (2010), the role of the teacher or the experienced speaker in the classroom is to teach students or the inexperienced speaker how to participate in discourse. Furthermore, teachers tell students what is appropriate behavior in the classroom, such as how to greet the teacher and when to speak. The teacher gives corrective feedback when a student does not speak-up during a presentation and when the presentation is read (Duff, 2010). These are means used to acculturate student-classroom sociolinguistic behavior. Explaining and modeling can be used in second language teaching to help students acculturate to L2 communities. Lund (2006, p.67) explains Schumann's (1976, 1978) acculturation theory, "If acculturation does not take place, instruction in the target language will be of limited benefit to the language learner." Teachers can use interaction in the classroom as a way to introduce and practice the learning acculturation and other cultural practices.

Ishihara (2010) would describe this as teaching culture by explicit or deductive means, when a teacher helps a student notice a culturally accepted or unaccepted behavior. This contrasts with a more subtle approach, whereby a teacher presents a cultural difference and allows students to notice it for themselves or by implicit or

inductive means. For example, Celce-Murcia (2007) suggests teaching about the meaning of gestures in different parts of the world, such as the Ok sign made by touching the thumb with the index finger. I could also tell my students how in Venezuela it is very common for people to point with their lips to avoid rudely pointing with their fingers. Blakemore (2002) mentions that this is significant because the gesture is intended for communication and it is pertinent to the situation in that culture. I can share with my students how American women often misinterpret this when they do not know the meaning of this gesture. Blakemore (2002) points out that there are other non-verbal gestures of communicative significance. This kind of lesson involves showing students deductively and in detail the difference in meanings.

A teacher could also have a lesson about how some words are not used as defined in the dictionary (Östman & Verschueren, 2009). This can usually be done through stories of the repercussions of doing so. For example, recently I heard a young man tell stories in Spanish about approaching older women in Mexico. Each time he called older women *las Viejas* (the old hags) or *Viejas* (old hags). His audience snickered and continued to snicker as he continued to use this term. The remainder of his talk was quite poignant, but as the audience kept snickering he was approached and given an alternative word *las Viejitas* (old women or older women). If one were to lookup *vieja* in any dictionary, it will be defined it as old woman, but culturally the meaning is different, which can cause an embarrassment on the learners' part and possibly an offense to the intended audience. The teacher can share these kinds of stories as an explicit approach to teaching pragmatics in the classroom.

### **Pragmatics can be learned through interaction with people invited to the classroom and in the community**

Celce-Murcia (2007) advises that interaction go beyond the teacher-student conversation to capture the full effect of interpersonal communication outside discourse. It is critical for teachers to look for opportunities to bring guests into the classroom or to take the students outside the classroom to offer them opportunities to use the L2 in authentic conversation. Lund states,

Language is a social practice, and language mediates the interaction between human beings and the social world. It is a mistake; however, to presume that the responsibility for access to obtaining communicative competence lies individually with the learner, and that he or she can control his or her access to interaction with native speakers (Lund, 2006, p. 74).

She emphasizes the importance of placing language learners in situations that require interacting and negotiating meaning because it is in this contextual exchange that authentic language use occurs and where people, “co-construct meaning” (Lund, 2006, p. 76). In my classroom, I want to bring guests from the community to talk to students about the topic we are covering.

If we are talking about family relations in a beginning Spanish class, I want to bring in a few people that can join group activities for which students and guests bring in a picture of their immediate family and their extended family. I will have one guest talk to a group of three students about their family members by using the possessive terminology to describe the members and describing their age with the verb “tener” (to have). For example: *mi mama se llama Maria* (my mom’s name is Maria), *ella tiene 52*

*años* (she is 52 years old); or *mi Hermana se llama Leticia* (My sister's name is Leticia), *ella tiene 22 años* (She is 22 years old). Then, the students can ask the guests questions about their family practicing the formal possessive form: *¿cómo se llama su papá?* (What is your father's name?) *¿cuantos años tiene su hermano?* (How old is your brother?). If one of my guests were from Mexico, I would ask him to introduce his mother and father as *mi jefa* (my mother-dictionaries defines this as my boss) and *mi jefe* and his brother as *mi carnal* (my brother-dictionaries define this as an adj. for carnal), so that my students can learn that there are other terms used in different parts of Latin America.

In a second-year class, I would assign the class to go to a *carnicería* (meat counter) to order meat by the kilogram one time during the semester. Students would need to go prepared with a script of what to say, including pound and kilo conversions. They may also want to mention to the *carnicero* (butcher), what plans they have with the meat they are buying and how many people they intend to feed with the meat. The student would hand in the script and a journal entry about the experience and what cultural nuances they learned with the experience.

In the same class, I can assign students to go to a taco stand or restaurant and order food in Spanish. Again, they would need to prepare a script and again they would hand in their script and their journal entry describing their experience. These kinds of personal experiences will expose students to interaction in context where they can learn to communicate in authentic discourse and discover the pragmatics of the language on their own. Savignon states, "Systematic 'field experiences' may successfully become the core of the course, which then becomes a workshop where learners can compare notes,

seek clarification, and expand the range of domains in which they learn to function in the second language” (Savignon, 2002, p. 1).

**Pragmatics can be learned through multimedia tools.**

In addition to bringing guests into the classroom and looking for opportunities for discourse outside the classroom, I want to give my students the opportunity to view authentic conversations through video (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Elvin, 2010) or the Internet (Cutshall, 2012; Zhao, 2005). This resource offers a range of possibilities to students from observing movies or TV shows, to reality videos on YouTube or the possibility of engaging in conversation via Skype or FaceTime. These tools can help educators bring the world virtually into the classroom.

Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012) show us one way this tool can be used by students. They offer an online audio of authentic text with the accompanying script. The site also offers the listener time to respond. I can develop a web page for my SFL classroom where students can access authentic conversations with cultural nuances so they can observe, listen, and respond. Part of the assignment should be to notice cultural differences in the language and physical interaction.

In a Canadian study students were taught pragmatics to improve their language abilities for job interviews (Louw, Derwing, & Abbott, 2010). Native and non-native speakers were interviewed and filmed with the same set of questions. The non-native students watched the interviews and practiced how to improve their own interviews. The study showed that there was improvement after the students studied and practiced their pragmatic abilities.

The prospect of using multi-media to teach pragmatics in the classroom equips teachers with seemingly endless options. It requires planning ahead and carefully selecting the kind of video clips or experiences that will offer meaningful context and foster communicative competence.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I began this cultural artifact asking if my students will come out of my classes feeling that they know SFL. I began reflecting on how I might teach my students language beyond vocabulary and grammar. After much consideration, it is evident that learning vocabulary and grammar are key foundations for language and language socialization and pragmatics cannot be learned without them.

My students may not leave my class knowing SFL, but I am assured that I can help my students learn how to notice the interconnectedness of language and culture and meet the ACTFL standards of understanding the ‘practices’, ‘products’, and ‘perspectives’ of the L2 culture (as cited in [www.ACTFL.org](http://www.ACTFL.org), 2000). My plan is to make my classroom a window into the world where we can look out and see how Spanish is spoken in many countries and in many ways, depending on the country as well as people’s socio-economic experience, gender, and other social factors. I also plan to bring that world into my classroom by bringing in native speakers personally or virtually to expose my students to authentic discourse, besides my own. These authentic experiences will prepare my students to seek out their own personal experiences with the L2, where they can listen, observe, and communicate in the L2.



### **ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION OF TEACHING VIDEO**

During my time in the MSLT program, I worked full time. As a result, I had limited teaching experience, but one of my classmates offered her teaching time in a Spanish class for English-speaking K-5 students at the Edith Bowen Laboratory School, on the U.S.U. campus. It was December before the Christmas break, so we planned for me to attend her class and teach the children a Spanish Christmas song.

I looked up the lyrics and a music video of children singing to display while students would sing along. I took my laptop and had it ready for the exercise. When I arrived, my computer did not work because the classroom did not have the correct wiring for my computer. I had a hard copy of the lyrics and quickly wrote the lyrics on the board and tried to recall the tune, as I had not planned on singing by myself.

The fifth grade students were attentive and receptive and willing to follow my instructions. I told them that they were going to be my echo, so they would need to repeat every section of the song I sang. We sang the first verse of “Mi Burrito Sabanero” and followed with the chorus. The children did a great job singing the song and echoing my pronunciation of the Spanish words. When we came to difficult words to pronounce, like burrito, we repeated them a couple more times for practice.

When we finished this process, we began going over the meaning of each word and sentence. At times, the students inferred meaning because of the context, but they were also familiar with much of the vocabulary in the song. The song is about a child’s donkey from the Latin American savannas. The literal translation of the song’s title is

“my donkey from the savannas.” The song is essentially about how this child and his donkey are on their way to Bethlehem and the morning star will guide him there. We covered a couple of verses and ran out of time.

Looking back now, I see how far removed this listening exercise is from my personal teaching philosophy. This video recording took place before I had developed that philosophy. However, I can see how I would repeat some things I did for this activity, based on what I know now. If I were to do it again, I would still prepare myself with the lyrics and video and prepare to sing it, as a back-up plan, if there were technical failures. I would also plan on having the children repeat the song with me, but not as the first part of the exercise.

Based on my teaching philosophy, I would strive to prepare the class with background knowledge on the song and go over new vocabulary with the students before even listening to the song. For fun, I think I would bring in some frozen burritos and a picture of a donkey and talk about the different meanings assigned to this word. I would also ask the class if they know the meaning of *camino* (path). Some of the students may know that it is a form of the verb *caminar*. Then, I would talk about how the word *camino* can be a verb or a noun. Next, we could make comparisons to the verb walk and the noun walkway and make connections to their L1. After going over vocabulary and word meanings, we would do the echoing sing along as we did in class.

In short the difference between what I understand now and what I understood then is the need to help students make meaning connections so they can receive comprehensible input in the learning process. I am grateful I was able to reflect on this valuable teaching experience.

### **INTRODUCTION TO ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The annotated bibliography contains readings that influenced my research, artifacts, and teaching philosophy during my time in the MSLT program. Each reading is summarized followed by a personal reaction. The bibliography is organized in three sections, including theory and praxis, literacy, and culture. However, many of these references could be placed in a different category, as the authors often discuss how these topics are interrelated.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Theory and Praxis

**Krashen, S.D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Lincolnwood, IL: Laredo Publishing.**

Krashen defines his input hypothesis, which encompasses other hypotheses including the monitor, the affective filter, the acquisition-learning distinction, and the natural order hypothesis. They all deal with how humans take in language and process it, whether first language (L1) or second language (L2). He claims that learners need comprehensible input (language input that can be understood) to make them capable of learning language and that a low affective filter (low anxiety and mental openness) is a necessary factor for language learning.

Krashen similarly explains how language learners have a silent period in which all they do is listen and take in language input without producing any language. He explains that this is a normal and natural part of language learning. He likewise draws a parallel between language acquisition of L1 and language learning of L2. He does so by looking closely at studies done on L1 acquisition and factors involved, then he looks into successful L2 programs, like Canadian French immersion and some other bilingual programs, and postulates that successful programs are those that give students comprehensible input. Furthermore, he discusses how reading is a way of giving students comprehensible input for success in L2 learning.

Finally, Krashen examines the different types of language classrooms, ranging from immersion classrooms where classes are content centered and not centered on language, to ESL (English as a second language) classrooms in American public schools. He discusses how learning takes effect when students are receiving comprehensible input

or how language classrooms are lacking success because students are not receiving the right kind or amount of comprehensible input.

### *Reaction*

This theory-filled book lays down the foundation for many future research studies, so it is important to see where research questions originate. I like that Krashen discusses possible flaws in his hypothesis and how he thinks about all the arguments against them, but does not claim to have all the answers. He simply tries to disprove his own theories and reasons why his theories can still work.

I also like that he looks into many different language classrooms. He focuses on how his input hypothesis is necessary and plays an important part in language learning. He gives educators a quick overview of possible teaching modes and allows us an opportunity to reflect on what kind of language classroom we want to create based on the student population's needs. He correspondingly gives examples of how many language classrooms inadvertently do not provide enough comprehensible input to cultivate language learning by focusing too much on grammar or creating too much of a high affective filter, blocking learning.

**Krashen, S. D. & Terrel T. D. (1983). *The Natural Approach*. Hayward, CA: Alemany Press.**

The introduction to this book includes a brief history of different teaching methods that were not highly effective, such as translation methods requiring students to learn language by translating text, and audiolingual methods requiring students to memorize text and practice oral skills repetitively. Krashen and Terrell introduce the natural approach which is based on the idea that people must first understand language to produce it and that students should not be forced to produce language unless it is within

natural learning stages. These stages consist of silent and ‘nonverbal communication’, then one-word responses, then two words, then phrases, then sentences, and finally discourse. This natural approach also focuses on the need for courses to be centered on communicative goals and for the classroom to be conducive to learning by creating an atmosphere where students have low anxiety.

In the next chapter, the authors focus on defining and expanding on Krashen’s hypothesis of language acquisition and learning, natural order, monitor, input, and affective filter. In essence, the authors expand on Krashen’s earlier input hypothesis book using methods that range from adding clarification tables and graphs and to providing explanations and examples.

In the remaining chapters, Krashen and Terrell outline natural approach activities that can help students achieve their communicative goals, whether they need to learn to follow street directions, to describe daily activities, or to read schedules. They use charts and worksheets that can help students achieve their communicative goals. The final chapter is about testing and classroom management. Krashen and Terrell encourage low-anxiety testing so students are not memorizing information, but producing from what they know. Oral and written exams are encouraged as a way of finding out what students understand. They also encourage routines and patterns for language production to establish a routine of production in students’ repertoire and increasing their confidence in production.

### *Reaction*

Overall, this book is a good guide because it outlines the theories and gives applicable activities for classroom use. The hypotheses for a low-stress classroom seem

like a common-sense way of helping students perform language tasks. I like the correlation made, in my mind, between the mind and computers. Computers need input to create output. Then, as programmers create better systems and software, computers can be more functional. Likewise, our minds need input or information to produce output.

The correlation, between how computers process information and how minds process, is similar. Software engineering companies use multiple programmers to make programs highly functional and produce optimal output. Likewise, teachers can use multiple resources to make our language output function at its optimum level, if they keep in mind how our minds process language. I like this book and see why it is a catalyst for other research topics and methods.

**Speh, A. J., & Ahramjian, S. D. (2010). Teaching without a common language: Synchronicities between the pedagogies of music and second language acquisition. *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov*, 3, 37-42.**

The authors of this article draw conclusions from their own language teaching about the need to teach language and music having communication goals as the main focus in both instances. They illustrate how language and music teaching complement each other, for focusing on one while teaching the other subsequently lowers affective filters or anxiety and enhances learning. The authors show examples of various scenarios and draw on their own personal experience to underline their successes. They do so by drawing parallels between teaching language and teaching music.

Language can be used in music teaching by assigning abstract musical pieces in a story that plays out with each note, whether it is a chase, a love story, a drama or a comedy. Music teachers can facilitate the use of stories in the musical sounds to help students focus on the story formation, including emphasis with a louder note, staccato for

speed, or smoothness for love, as they create the music. This kind of focus on forming a story enhances the learning experience for students and lowers their anxiety in learning the actual notes and focuses them on creating and feeling, rather than on performing.

Conversely, music can be used in language teaching. Teachers can have students listen and sing along with music in an L2 to imitate the sounds of native speakers. In doing this, students can focus on the sound, the rhythm, and the pronunciation. In this musical setting, the student is focused on content. Another way used to teach meaning and focus on content is to teach the meaning of a word or a group of words using music as the expression of meaning. This allows students to connect meaning with feeling, giving words in the second language meaning through music.

### *Reaction*

I liked the way the authors drew parallels between two different modes of communication and how they can, conversely, draw from each other to enhance learning. In my mind they made a kind of yin and yang symbol, like marrying two fields that can complement each other. This is an article that I can recommend to any language or music teacher because it can have immediate applications in teaching. Using music in the classroom seems to add dimension to language teaching by using multiple intelligences and reaching students who may learn better with music. It is also an article that I can recommend to parents as an aid in teaching language in the home and to language learners showing them how they can use music at home to practice language.

This article reinforced my desire to use comprehensible input in language teaching. It seems like common sense to capitalize on natural ways of learning, rather than going against the flow of natural learning processes.



**Zhao, Y. (2005). *Research in technology and second language learning: Developments and directions*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, Inc.**

The editors take us through the history of empirical research on technology used in second language teaching, ranging from audio and video to computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The book contains articles regarding the important research questions asked to date and ones that need to be asked in future research. It has an article about the use of speech recognition software and simulated dialogue as well.

The authors cover research on how some kinds of technology have been effective in motivating students, while others have not. For example, one method that did not prove effective or motivational was an audiolingual method involving students listening to language while they were falling asleep. The theory was that the language would reach deep into their subconscious. On the other hand, students who interacted with CALL felt they learned a lot and were highly motivated. Students who used simulated dialogues did virtual interviews with Arabic speakers. Students felt they improved their ability to listen, understand, and speak the language through this method.

Software allowing listener control of speech rate helped students understand speech at their current proficiency level. It also allowed them to increase the speed if they wanted to challenge themselves at higher rates. In one study, instructional videos were used. In a different study, videos were used with closed captions to help students' comprehension. Researchers found that closed captions helped students understand better initially, but did not improve their language ability greatly overtime. Researchers using video to teach culture found students learned more about culture relating to aspects of every day life (little c) and learned less about culture relating to the overall civilization (large C).

Technology additionally offers multiple feedback options for learners. If teachers can harness the multiple options in learning with technology, they can better maximize its use for language learning.

### *Reaction*

The range of articles drew me to this book and captured my attention. The articles covered research on methods that can be easily applicable in any classroom because of the availability of the technology across the country. Some methods can be modified for a classroom of any age group and can serve as a channel for educators looking for practical motivational ideas. I enjoyed this book because it can give educators background on why certain methods are effective and why others may be less productive, so the book can serve as a reference for teaching ideas.

It is interesting how much research has been done on the use of technology, but since this book was written there have been new social networks that can likewise be explored in research, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Skype. These avenues of communication may be an effective way of motivating students to learn the L2 by receiving input, creating output, and receiving feedback. All in all, this book opens a window to ideas on the use of technology in the classroom.

**Brinton, D. M., Snow, M.A., & Wesche M.B. (2003). *Content-based second language instruction*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.**

The authors examine the history and reasoning behind content-based L2 teaching. Content-based L2 teaching, which seems to be a desirable approach for several reasons. For instance, it allows students to learn language for specific purposes, and it motivates students to learn by focusing on a subject they enjoy and will use in their future

endeavors. It also helps students see language as it is used in academics or by theme, rather than in repetitive grammar drills.

There are various types of content-based L2 teaching. One is adjunct language instruction, in which, “students are enrolled concurrently in two linked courses—a language course and a content course” (p. 16). The assignments are the same in both classes, but second language learners are kept in the language course and slowly become a part of the content course. The other content-based L2 teaching scenario is sheltered content instruction. This is where content is taught in the L2, but students are kept separate from native-speaking students. Finally, there is theme-based instruction. This is a language class organized by themes “forming the backbone of the course curriculum” (p.14). Theme-based instruction is more affordable for schools because it simply requires organizing the curriculum around topics or themes. It can be flexible in its implementation because the teacher can organize the topics according to student population and need. This type of teaching is not text-book centered, but teacher-centered, so the teacher generates the topics, materials, and activities used to teach the topics.

The main complication with sheltered and adjunct instruction is that they are usually unsustainable for average budgets. For these programs, schools must find an instructor capable of teaching both content and language or two instructors who can work as a team for the same course. Besides budgeting complications, however, creating a curriculum and progress assessment for these classrooms can be rather complex because they must meet content-learning outcomes as well as language-learning outcomes.

*Reaction*

This book offers a basic outline of different kinds of content-based teaching options and of some of the challenges within these programs. After introducing the types of content-based classes, the authors give some specific examples. Through specific examples such as from the University of Ottawa and UCLA, the actual benefits for students are presented. Teachers and administrators considering implementing content-based teaching in their schools can benefit from reading the examples to learn about the pros and cons of implementing this type of teaching.

Through these examples, the authors also show us some of the challenges schools face, especially regarding funding the programs and finding instructors to fit the classroom needs. I appreciated the candid way of presenting the benefits and problems because we can learn from them, rather than having to learn by trial and error. Then, those who want to implement these kinds of programs can potentially foresee what kinds of measures they may take to avoid the same kinds of issues.

**Schwarzer, D. (2007). Whole language in a foreign language class: From theory to practice. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(1), 52-58.**

Schwarzer introduces the topic of whole language foreign language class (WLFLC) by listing the areas of research supporting a shift from eclectic language programs to whole language programs. The research includes studies conducted on children's learning, oral, reading, and writing development and a shift from standardized testing to alternative evaluation. The research shows that children learn language by being surrounded by language, talking to those close to them, and reading texts. Children also create their own writing systems before they learn correct forms. Schwarzer based his WLFLC on such principles outlined by previous research.

In another section, Schwarzer emphasizes the need to use authentic materials and the need for students to initiate their own questions. He asserts the need to use entire texts, rather than vocabulary lists. He believes students make errors as part of the learning process and teachers should help students make smarter errors, meaning that students move, for example, from using simple past all the time to differentiating between simple past and past perfect, until students become comfortable in taking risks in learning. He encourages students to bring their own native culture into the new culture with a desire to research and reflect. Besides, he encourages critical pedagogy and class discussion on difficult topics of the day relating to language teaching and learning.

Schwarzer's describes his classroom as being full of language and cultural visuals for students to feel immersed in language wherever their eyes wander. He displays their work on the walls and provides them with opportunities to work in groups. Basic resource books are provided for students, such as dictionaries, as well as a library of children's literature. A dialogue journal is kept between the teacher and the student as a way to communicate and assess progress. He does not correct errors in the journal, using it only for communication. Students are asked to keep a portfolio for final evaluation of progress.

### *Reaction*

Visualizing Schwarzer's classroom helped me see what he desires as his main outcome. He wants his students to be fully surrounded, and in a sense immersed, by the L2. From visual aids to libraries, students have access to language in various sections of the classroom. As students participate in oral presentations and writing projects, they collect their work for portfolios.

Portfolios seem like an appropriate way of assessing student progress because the portfolio is slowly built, assignment after assignment. Likewise, the writing of portfolios in the MSLT program helps build and reveal student knowledge and achievement during students' time in the program. Schwarzer additionally uses journals for progress assessment, at no risk to students' grades.

***Osboe, S., Fujimura, T., & Hirschel, R. (2007). Students' confidence and anxiety in L2 speaking activities. *Languaging*, 10, 32–35.***

At a Japanese university, researchers interviewed 62 Japanese students of English; the purpose was to gauge the students' confidence in speaking English across different scenarios. Specifically, they wanted to examine if anxiety in speaking the L2 was related to their English proficiency, if study abroad experience in an English-speaking program improved their confidence, and if anxiety changed depending on speakers involved in conversations. They also wanted to know if L1 speaking trends aligned with L2 speaking behaviors.

Research questions included how comfortable students were, when asked—and asking— questions in front of the whole class, when asked to choose and speak to a partner, and when participating in small group discussions. Students were asked about their confidence in speaking in the L1, which they used to look for personality traits that would reveal if the students were extroverted or introverted. Students were similarly asked about their study abroad experience and how it impacted their confidence in speaking English. Findings suggest that study abroad experience and proficiency in the L2 did not affect students' confidence in speaking the L2 as much as anticipated. Findings also revealed that some students felt strange speaking to other Japanese students

in English and they felt more comfortable speaking in smaller groups, including the entire class.

Researchers found that students were mainly more confident in speaking the L2 if they were confident in speaking L1. Their personality traits played the biggest role in their likelihood of speaking their L2 in group settings, with a partner, or in front of the class. Proficiency levels had little effect on confidence in speaking English. As for practical applications, the researchers found that students need to know mistakes are expected and are an acceptable part of the learning process. Furthermore, students in the study wanted teachers to be “friendly and approachable” (p. 5), boosting speaking confidence.

The study revealed the importance of having patience with students from different cultures and with different personality types. Having a classroom conducive to learning by allowing for mistakes and building a friendly relationship with students seemed to make a positive difference. Besides, it seems valuable to survey a class at the beginning of a semester to learn personality types and preferences regarding group activities and class presentations.

### *Reaction*

I will recommend this article to those who feel study abroad programs may be the only way to boost conversation confidence. According to this article, the main ingredient in boosting student confidence is helping students feel comfortable enough in class to open up and talk. It is interesting to note that student confidence is not improved by improved language proficiency. There may be a way teachers can help proficient students increase their confidence, for instance with activities where high achievement is

guaranteed. For example, drama productions where students have ample time to practice their roles can help students feel more comfortable with their language production.

**Tsou, W. (2005). Improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 46-55.**

This combined qualitative/quantitative study of Chinese native speakers studying English as a foreign language in Taiwan was done to determine if participation instruction (PI) could increase their class participation, consequently increasing their proficiency. The participants were 70 students who belonged to two classes taught by the same teacher. One group was given participation instruction, the other was not.

PI involves three weeks of teaching and coaching students. The first week, the teacher talked to students about participation and its benefits citing evidence from studies. The teacher provided examples of how to participate by interrupting, asking questions, and taking the floor and how to participate in small group discussions. The second week, the teacher provided an example of participation by showing a videotape of an American classroom, which was followed by a class discussion on the cultural differences in classroom participation. The third week, instruction similar to week one and two was repeated and practiced. The teacher taught the same way in both classes and students reported the classroom atmosphere as “warm and relaxed” (p. 50).

Results showed increased participation in both groups, but greater participation was evident in the group receiving PI instruction. Tsou pointed out that the difference in level of participation would have grown over time if the study were done for a longer period of time and if the number of students in the class were smaller. It was found that 83 percent of students in the experimental group perceived they participated much more toward the end of the semester, and 73 percent thought PI activities were enjoyable and



helpful. In contrast, 18 percent of students from the control group thought they participated more toward the end of the semester, and 60 percent thought their L2 proficiency improved (compared to 88 percent from the experimental group).

### *Reaction*

This research is indicative of the necessity to teach students how to participate in class and for teachers to give incentives for participation, especially in cultures where class participation is not expected. Cultural differences, regarding speaking out in class, need to be explained giving students confidence that interrupting the teacher is appropriate behavior in class and even encouraged. It is also important to teach students to ask questions by giving credit for participation.

Repeating the participation instruction also seemed to play a role in the gradual increase of participation over a period of time. The three phases of instruction were repeated and the teacher coached students through class discussion by repeating questions, waiting, and rephrasing questions until responses were given. Over time, this instruction yielded positive results in participation and in students' perception. Students' confidence increased and they had a positive outlook on class participation in the classroom.

**Lee, J.F., & Benati, A.G. (2009). *Perspectives on processing instruction*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.**

In this book, Lee and Benati lay the foundation for their perspective on processing instruction based on Van Patten's Input processing theory. Van Patten's theory deals with learners making meaning-form connections as they are receiving comprehensible input. Van Patten investigates how learners receive input, what they retain, and how it is connected to what learners will do with the language structures to which they are

exposed. His theory is guided by principles of learning, which deal with how our brains naturally process language.

Lee and Benati ask a series of questions in this book regarding the effectiveness of processing instruction (PI). This type of instruction is designed to follow a learner's natural order of processing. This order of processing establishes that students first focus on retaining vocabulary and making meaning-form connections before they process grammar. It is also established that students do not learn grammar by redundant exercises. PI focuses on meaning from initial stages until an advanced stage when students can learn grammar, assuming that students only learn and process language as they are continually gaining meaning from the instruction.

Throughout the book, Lee and Benati question PI's effectiveness, while comparing it to other methods. They further study the instruction's effectiveness in different settings, including the classroom and the Internet. They look closely at what forms of PI should be used for teaching morphology and syntax and its effectiveness in different languages, including Japanese and Italian. They similarly question which approach to PI helps students retain language for a longer period of time and if its effects can be measured.

### *Reaction*

As a language teacher, taking a comprehensive look at PI helps me appreciate the outcomes of research done on teaching methods. It helps me become aware of the need to be continually studying the research and its outcomes and give my students the best instruction for their needs. It makes me aware of the many years of research required to reach conclusions that can make an impact on teaching and learning.

I agree with Lee and Benati's approach of focusing on meaning. If learning language is not focused on meaning, then in my opinion, it is inherently meaningless to learn it. A large part of my portfolio similarly centers on the need to teach language with a meaningful purpose, such as learning an L2 to learn content. I also discuss the need to become literate in an L2 to be capable of reading authentic texts. It will be interesting to continue to follow research on PI and see if we can figure out, in greater detail, how language is processed. Then, I intend to apply the findings in my classroom and improve myself as teacher.

**Sposet, B. (2008). *The role of music in second language acquisition: A bibliographical review of seventy years of research, 1937-2007*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press.**

Sposet (2008) begins this narrative on using music to teach L2 by listing its virtues. She asserts, "Music defines and transmits culture dissolving barriers of religion, race, geography, and class" (p. 5). She continues by discussing how students retain language better through music and how it connects students academically and emotionally to language.

There are different kinds of approaches to teaching language with music, such as suggestopedia, which in a sense allows the teacher to set the pace and mood for language learning in the classroom. The contemporary music approach (CMA) allows teachers to introduce contemporary musical themes. Total physical response (TPR) is an approach involving acting out and moving to teach students by physical movement. The latter method works better with beginning level classes.

Sposet (2008) explains that there are varying ways of teaching music to different age groups. Teaching children involves exaggerated facial expressions, acting out the

song, and involving the children to sing along to practice pronunciation. In later years, students can memorize the songs for presentation and eventually write their own lyrics. Other ways of teaching songs in an L2 include selecting songs to teach grammatical elements or songs that express emotion or a theme. Teachers should be mindful of desired goals when selecting the songs.

In her bibliographical review, Sposet (2008) finds that there have been 23 studies done on this topic from 1937-2007. Of these studies, 52% have been on teaching English; and 12 of the 23, which is 65%, have shown positive results. Unfortunately, the majority of the research was not experimental, so the results are largely inconclusive. However, most of the positive results have been found with children between kindergarten and eighth grade. Additionally, most positive results have been from studies on pronunciation.

### *Reaction*

This research summary gives me reason to continue researching the impact of music on L2 teaching. Although the findings cannot be affirmed as actual success, they lead me to believe music can be explored for its effectiveness with a likelihood of positive results. The additional information about how music has been used historically provides a foundation for possible ways of using music in my classroom. It is possible that I can conduct my own classroom research to see which methods yield positive results and test them by trial and error until I can find a method that works. I want this book in my personal library because of its broad overview. I love music and want to incorporate it in my own teaching, so this article will serve me well. I think many students—children,

adolescents, and adults—love music, too, and using music to teach language, as a result, can lower their anxiety and create a positive environment in the classroom.

**Chang, C., Chen, I., & Chen, W. (2010). More than just audio guide–listening comprehension training of foreign language supported by mobile devices. *Ubilearn2010*. Retrieved April, 12, 2011, from <http://nutnr.lib.nutn.edu.tw/handle/987654321/8107>**

The use of audioguides in language learning was the focus of this study. The authors investigated the effectiveness of audioguides for comprehension and students' reaction to this tool for L2 listening practice. The study was conducted in Taiwan with students majoring in English who had all had six years of high school English before taking this course. The audioguides contained a script with information retrieved from the San Diego Zoo and National Geographic websites, with information about elephants, gorillas, lions, and giraffes. A native English speaker recorded the script.

The 162 participating students were taken to the Taipei City Zoo in groups of four. Once they were there, they used the audioguides at each animal's site. They listened to the recorded information about the specific animal they had selected. They were able to read the scripts as they listened to the passage recorded at natural speed rate, which is 130 words per minute. The scripts ranged in length between 180 to 220 words.

The participating students indicated positive attitudes with this mode of learning because they found it innovative and personal. Students perceived this exercise as an effective way to improve their language skills. They found the experience meaningful because they received useful content while they were physically at the site. They were able to learn by listening, reading, and seeing the information at the same time. Students also saw possibilities for audioguides to give them extended learning outside the classroom, offering other options for practicing their L2.

### *Reaction*

This article caught my interest because now that we have multiple audiovisual mobile devices, it is worthwhile to test their potential in teaching language. The listening comprehension exercise triggers ideas for other ways of integrating real-life experiences with the virtual world of technology and maximize the combination of the two for teaching and learning purposes.

I used audioguides at the USS Arizona Memorial Visitor Center in Pearl Harbor. It was fascinating to see a small model of the harbor with the sunken fleet and listen to the events that unfolded on the day of the attack. Seeing visuals and listening to the information simultaneously, at my own pace, allowed me to take in the information as I was prepared for it. When I read this article, it was easy to see how a lesson with audioguides can become a meaningful experience for students to learn important information, while simultaneously learning language.

### **Literacy**

**Ho, L. (2000). Children's literature in adult education. *Children's Literature in Education*, 31(4), 259-271.**

Ho depicts how literature helped Chinese students of English increase their ability to pronounce, read and write in English better through children's literature. The students practiced difficult pronunciation tasks when they found words strung together with consonants "l" and "r". The stories posed a pronunciation challenge, but allowed them the opportunity to practice and better their abilities.

She did a three-year study to find out the effectiveness of using children's literature to teach adults a second language. She found that students enjoyed reading the literature and found deeper meaning in the literature than what was already there. For

example, from reading “The Plate”, a story about two Chinese lovers who run away together, students got a sense of adventure and freedom from oppression because the lovers ran away from an oppressive regime.

Although the story had a happy ending, uncharacteristic of Chinese stories, students connected to it through its message of freedom and hope. The literature likewise helped teach students about culture in a way that may not have been possible by other means. They were introduced to stories that presented American cultural themes and could connect with some of the themes. However, they were not able to relate to certain themes such as disrespect to parents or chaos in schools. These cultural differences underscore the importance of choosing cultural themes that students can identify with within the L2 culture. Another interesting perspective from the author is students’ ability to use drama in their connection to the stories read in class. She used drama as a facilitator for language performance and mentions puppet shows as another way of allowing students to practice language production and expand their language ability by exploring their artistic abilities.

### *Reaction*

Ho illustrates how children’s literature can be used in the language classroom because adult students enjoyed the use of children’s literature in their learning. Ho’s article has real teaching scenarios and real reactions to the use of children’s literature. The author gives vivid descriptions of class activities that can be duplicated or modified for use in the classroom, such as using artistic forms for language production. I like this because she illustrates how comfortable students were in drama performance settings.

She also makes a good case for how some difficult language characteristics can be introduced and addressed through literature, such as pronunciation, rhythm and rhyme.

The author's perspective on literary themes is particularly interesting because she makes connections between two different cultures through themes in children's stories. She illustrates how she may have underestimated the power in some of the stories because they seemed to have simple themes. In contrast, students were able to draw important conclusions from the stories, which the author had not previously expected.

**Baskin, B.H., & Harris, K. (1995). Heard any good books lately? The case for audiobooks in the secondary classroom. *Journal of Reading*. 38 (5), 372-376. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40033253>**

Just as storytelling and folklore are not always considered 'literature', today's audiobooks may not be defined as books, but they may be just as instrumental as books. They add dimension to the written word because characters' accents, emphasis, and rhythm come through; actors and performing talent come through, grasping the attention of the listener. Humor and drama are captured as intended. Multiple voices can be heard along with other theatrical sounds adding interest to the story. Sometimes, even the authors participate in providing their own narrative on their creative process adding interest and perspective to the literature. Shortened versions of audiobooks are another element adding interest to story volumes that some readers may otherwise avoid.

In the classroom, audiobooks can enhance students' understanding of the story as it was intended. For example, for students who have difficulty pronouncing certain words, audiobooks can facilitate pronunciation. For students who have a hard time capturing meaning while reading, audiobooks add mood, tone, dialects, poetry, humor, and drama where intended. Teachers can use audiobooks to interest students who may



feel too overwhelmed or intimidated to read large books, to become interested in reading without feeling defeated from the outset. This form of reading can help students with any kind of visual impairment or have other learning disabilities that keep them from reading successfully. Audiobooks may capture the hearts of those who may otherwise not be interested in books, but can enjoy literary forms without some of the difficulties possibly encountered in reading.

### *Reaction*

The authors' perspective on L1 reading offers another option for L2 readers. I like the article because of its transferable application in L2 teaching. Just as stated in the article, audiobooks can present listeners with correct pronunciation and dialects to help students listen and mimic sounds. Audiobooks will allow them with the repetition needed for practicing listening and speaking skills. They can likewise help students who are burdened or overwhelmed with tackling the seemingly impossible task of reading a book in the L2. It can introduce students to the L2 language spoken by a native speaker, if they do not have a native speaker of the language as their teacher, or it can add another voice besides their teacher for native accents.

Audiobooks can similarly help students grasp meaning and learn language in context. Students can hear how drama, comedy, and poetry are expressed in the L2 and listen to how rhyme, rhythm, intonation, and emphasis are realized in the L2. Audiobooks can be powerful tools in the classroom and at home for students to overcome reading fears, practice listening, and grasp nuances in meaning that may not be achieved by simply reading a text. The authors illustrate all this very well for L1 reading.

**Crossley, S.A., Louwse, M.M., McCarthy, P.M., & McNamara, D.S. (2007) A linguistic analysis of simplified and authentic texts. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(1), 15-30.**

The researchers of this article take a deep and detailed look at a long-standing debate over which kind of text is better to use for beginning L2 learners, authentic texts or simplified texts. In doing so, they explore at some of the arguments made for authentic texts, which included language being more varied in authentic texts and easier to follow for beginning learners. Furthermore, they investigate arguments for simplified text, which include language being simpler and easier to understand for beginning learners because sentences are shorter and more comprehensible, supporting Krashen's theory of comprehensible input.

The researchers looked into several word categories found in sentences and their frequencies in 105 texts. Some of those included noun use, particular parts of speech and frequency, ambiguity and abstractness, cohesion words, and ambiguity. They analyzed reading passages with measuring devices that counted and analyzed frequency for the mentioned categories, from sections longer than 100 words of beginning ESL textbooks.

They discovered that authentic texts have more variety in both vocabulary and sentence structure than simplified texts. They found that authentic texts are easier to understand because they are easier to follow and did not find that simplified texts used simpler words. Authentic texts actually have more causal verbs and elements that show cause and affect, than those in simplified texts. Besides, the researchers found that authentic texts have more natural language as it is used in the real world. Authentic texts also have more cohesiveness in language, linking thoughts, style, and language structure better than simplified texts.

### *Reaction*

This article was intriguing to me because the authors took a long-argued debate and took care in parsing long texts to make an analytical review of their arguments. They did not make claims based on other authors' research, but took a more scientific approach to prove or disprove the existing theories by measuring specific parts of language and frequency of use.

They made some predictions. They were on-target with some of them, but they were surprised by other findings. They expected simplified texts to be easier to read and easier to follow for L2 learners, but found the contrary. Although authentic texts contain more obscure and varied vocabulary, the connective words and discourse and causal verbs and elements made the text more comprehensible. The text in authentic texts was more cohesive in context, supporting and enhancing meaning. It was interesting to see how minute components of language make authentic texts better for L2 learners as a means for comprehensible input.

**Chun, D.M. (2007). Come ride the wave: But where is it taking us? *Calico Journal*, 24(2), 239-252.**

Having been an editor for Language Learning & Technology (LL&T), Chun is able to see what researchers and educators are studying regarding computer-assisted language learning (CALL). She can see patterns in website hits, an indicator of article popularity, and at the top of the popularity chart are computer-mediated communication (CMC) and web-based instruction. The other less popular categories are “culture and language learning” and “teaching centered”.

Chun points out that the journal additionally keeps record of hits on the most popular articles. The most popular article was placed in the ‘Edutainment’ category. This

category relates to educational entertainment and the top article is “You’re not studying, you’re just...”. The topic relates to educators embracing entertainment content for educational use. The other most popular articles below this one in popularity are related to messaging and gaming, Internet phones, podcasting, blogs and wikis for language learning and teaching.

After discussing these popularity trends, the author examines what we know about the effectiveness of CALL. Research about reading with electronic dictionaries, glosses, and annotations indicates that students who use these aids show no significant improvement on reading comprehension and retention. In some cases, these aids have hindered instead of helped.

Research on teaching pronunciation and intonation with the use of technology indicates that drastic improvement has been made in this technology. Some software has proven effective because it can give learners visual feedback on their pronunciation, yet there is no replacement for human feedback. Research on teaching culture with technology is also under review. Internet communication for this purpose has been widely studied and its effects have been true to real-life communication challenges. Chun states that there is still more research to be done on the effect of technology on language and culture teaching and learning.

### *Reaction*

I enjoyed reading this article, in which the author’s surfing metaphor carried throughout the entire piece. She described clearly how she accessed the data in her position as an editor for the online Language Learning & Technology journal. She brings to light how technology is a popular topic of research and how language teaching and

learning may be affected by using technology in the classroom. It seems clear that teachers and researchers will want to exploit every new avenue of technology for students' benefit.

If teachers and researchers are interested in the use technology in the classroom, teachers should take a look at what the current findings are. If the outcomes show marked improvement in learning L2 up to now, then it is worth investing time and money in experimenting with the use of technology in the classroom. I recommend this article as a good starting point for future research.

**Chun, D.M. (2001) L2 reading on the web: Strategies for accessing information in hypermedia. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 14(5), 367-403.***

In this article Chun takes a close look at research done on teaching and learning in hypermedia environments. She does so by first taking a look at what research has been done on reading, teaching and learning in hypermedia in general. Second, she looks at research done in reading in hypermedia for L2 learners. Third, she explores what the research shows about how individual differences affect reading with hypermedia. Finally, she discusses the research findings based on the look-up frequencies, summary results, talk alouds, and follow-up interviews of the study mentioned below.

Hypertext is different than regular text because it is non-linear or non-sequential. This non-linear way of reading permits readers to click glosses, links, or audio clips during reading, allowing readers to jump around and return to their original place. This can be good for advanced learners to increase their vocabulary and background knowledge and maintain interest in the reading. It may be difficult for a struggling reader to follow the text while having to open multiple windows full of additional information.

The study was done on 23 German students who were fluent English speakers. They were given one of two texts. Text 1 was a netLearn text, including an internal glossary, an external bilingual dictionary, and an audio narration. Text 2 was a German webpage from a German university, including an external bilingual dictionary. The results showed that students who had Text 1 had a more enjoyable experience because they had easier options to navigate. Text 2 proved to be confusing because students got lost in the university website. They did not have so many reference options. Both texts had trackers for researchers to see how many times students diverted to the reference options. The students with Text 1 had more options and they went to those options multiple times. The students with Text 2, who had fewer options, went to those options fewer times.

#### *Reaction*

This research compares two ways of supplying glossing and other reference items. Chun suggests that students need more guidance when directed to websites, especially in an L2. It is interesting to glean, from this research study, that the text with more hypertexting is not necessarily perceived as a better text because of the additional reference options. There is even a suggestion that the hypertexting option may have been perceived by students as being too much, which made the text confusing, rather than benefiting comprehension. This finding is quite intriguing because we often feel as though more information is better. Here it appears, the more students looked at the annotations provided, the more their comprehension scores dropped.

**Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 10(1), 83-107.**

Ellis states that there is no singular or simple answer to the question of how to teach grammar. He investigates empirical questions addressed in the past and those that can be addressed in the future. He defines grammar teaching as involving “any instructional technique that draws learner’s attention to some specific grammatical form that helps them understand it...or process it... so they can internalize it” (p. 84). Then, he covers important grammar teaching questions in detail, beginning with, “should we teach grammar?” (p. 93). To suggest an answer, he reviews research showing how grammar teaching helps students learn grammar faster than when it is not taught explicitly. He continues with the question “what grammar should we teach?” (p. 86). He explains how grammar should focus on structure as well as meaning. Then he addresses, “when should we teach grammar?” (p. 90). He suggests learners should receive corrective feedback, but explicit grammar should not be taught until learners are more advanced.

Other questions that Ellis raises pertain to classroom time and intensity focused on teaching grammar and whether to teach it implicitly or explicitly. He argues that focusing on teaching explicit grammar, combined with a focus on forms and form, is the best option. He claims there is not enough research to know if grammar should be taught over short periods of time or extended periods of time. He also promotes integrating grammar teaching with communicative activities.

#### *Reaction*

I recommend this article for its comprehensive overview of different research perspectives on grammar. Ellis asks important questions many second language teachers may have, and he looks in depth into the available research and concludes that it may be

necessary to use a combination of methods. His point of view may or may not be correct, but the article leaves us great questions for future research. I appreciate his point of view because he concludes that communicative goals should always be at the head of any type of grammar lesson. This goes right along with my teaching philosophy. The final outcome in language classes should be that students achieve communication in the L2.

**Stokes, J.D. (2007). Meaningful writing for beginners. *Hispania*, 90(3), 543-550.**

This article reports on a writing project carried out over the course of a semester of beginning Spanish. The researchers examined the topics of the textbook writing activities, after reviewing its vocabulary and grammar structures. These topics required the students to do a self-description, including daily routines. It also required the students to describe their field of study and explain why they are interested in the field. In the next paragraph they are asked to elaborate on their field of study and why it is interesting to other people and to describe the need for the profession. In the following paragraph they are to detail activities done by people in their field and their typical attire. Then, students are asked to describe how Spanish may be helpful in their profession as described in the previous paragraphs. The last paragraph summarizes the other paragraphs.

Students were provided 10 to 14 days to complete one paragraph, and they were coached along the way. Students were taught how to correct adjective agreement in their own papers and other grammatical help was given when necessary. Additional feedback was provided regarding organization and content, while grammar rules were reviewed as needed.

The response from students about the writing project was positive. They seemed to perceive the writing process as a positive and useful experience. They were able to



complete, the writing activity with the L2 they knew and to reflect on how learning Spanish may help them in their future professions. Students were motivated by the activity because they were able to use the language as they were learning it. They seemed impressed with their accomplishment of writing in the L2.

### *Reaction*

This article serves as a valuable example of how writing can be integrated in a beginning language class. I appreciated the author describing in detail how important it is to study the textbook and extract from that text the kind of morphology and structures familiar to students for a writing assignment. It is clear to me that writing activities like this one can demand a lot from students as well as teachers. Teachers need to be continually reviewing the writing, commenting, correcting, and supporting students through each sentence. Beginning-level students have to be very creative and daring to use the L2 they are learning. This type of writing activity shows how comprehensible input can give students enough information for output and the activity proved to be a low-anxiety activity following natural approach teaching practices.

**Wong, W. (2002). Linking form and meaning: Processing instruction. *The French Review*, 76(2), 236-264.**

The author discusses how focusing solely on meaning can jeopardize learners' ability to understand how to reproduce language effectively or how they may understand language incorrectly. The author also discusses why focusing only on form can hamper learners' ability to place a certain form in the context of when it should be used. Therefore, she argues that teaching should be done with a focus on meaning with a connection to form. The reasoning behind this argument stems from input and processing. She discusses how language changes from input to intake once input is processed in the

learners' minds. Van Patten's model illustrates how learners process input concerned with language characteristics, while asking the "whys" about language form. The author examines why language processing plays a role in linking form with meaning. She argues that in the natural process of learning an L2, learners link form with meaning and in this connection intake is created.

The author illustrates how teachers can teach forms in the proper order for learners to focus on meaning. She shows us that because learners focus on the first part of the sentence (noun and verb) in exercises, teachers can simplify meaning so that students will care to learn the form.

#### *Reaction*

I like this article because the author walks the reader through input, processing, and intake, making clear connections to L2 teaching. Her mathematical formulas help me see why meaning is imperative for teaching form. Then she shows me with different language activities how the formula can play out in an L2 classroom. The grammar activities are in French, but she shows the reader how they can be applicable in other L2 teaching scenarios. I appreciate that she included the use of interactive activities among students and teachers.

I value the fresh perspective on input processing and Van Patten's model. I have read other books and articles about these subjects, but this fresh new perspective with the mathematical equations and the activities charts help visualize how the method can be implemented. The use of present day characters in the activities also shows teachers how important it is to initiate activities with themes that enhance meaning to the L2 learners.

## **Culture**

**Cho, G. (2000). The role of heritage language in social interactions and relationships: Reflections from a language minority group. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 4(4), 333-348.**

This article reports on the advantage of maintaining a heritage language besides English in the United States. The research on Korean-American adults between the ages of 18 and 35 includes interviews about their perspectives on their heritage language ability. Likewise, it includes charts illustrating their demographic information, language competence, and areas of conflict, relating to language competency. First, Cho provides an overview of the role of heritage language in social circles and personal identities. She states that although there are obvious benefits in retaining the heritage language, the trend statistically points toward a diminishing number of Korean-Americans retaining it. Then she illustrates trends with excerpts from interviews conducted with the 114 research participants.

The interviews reveal the participants' feelings about their heritage language. The trends are presented under three headings: better relationships with heritage language speakers, difficulties interacting with the heritage language community, and difficulties interacting with heritage language speakers outside the United States. Most of those interviewed desired to improve their heritage language and improve their relationships with the heritage language community. Those who did not want to improve their language ability excluded themselves from the heritage community to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. An added incentive for improving the heritage language

is the possibility of professional advantages within and outside the heritage language community.

The author concludes that some view language diversity as a problem in the country, making society weaker. Others can see it as a resource and strength, giving society and those who retain the heritage language an advantage.

### *Reaction*

I recommend this article to ESL teachers because it gives unique perspectives of heritage language abilities. I like how the author reveals students' frustrations and points to the kinds of challenges students may encounter as they become proficient in English. Reading this article in an ESL class can bring up interesting class discussion or debate. It can initiate personal reflection and help students analyze goals they may want to establish for language learning and heritage language retention. The author also encourages language teachers to reflect about whether heritage language retention is valuable to individuals and a society.

**Klee, C. A., & Ramos, L. A. (Eds.) (1991). *Sociolinguistics of the Spanish-speaking world*. Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe.**

This extensive description of the origins of the Spanish language origins gives readers a far-reaching historical perspective. It begins by discussing the language in Spain before the Romans, and then describes the different language influences in Spain, ranging from Basque to Catalan to Arabic. The authors describe how the Spanish language evolved in Spain and its different regions. Then, they take us to the officially mandated language of Castilian and how the mandate influenced both language and society for centuries to come.

From Spain, the discussion moves to Spanish in the Americas, focusing on its history of colonization and political influence in Latin America. The authors describe the different indigenous languages in the Americas, their variation and reach, as well as the political influence of these languages. They describe in detail how indigenous languages altered the Spanish language as the languages came into contact. They mention specific indigenous words that were adopted into the Spanish language and taken back to Spain. These words were terms not previously found in the Spanish dictionary, because they were not part of the Spanish vernacular before the Spanish conquered the Americas. They are words like *huracán*, *maiz*, and *canoas*. The authors also discuss how specific word-forms changed over time and were adopted in each region of Central and South America. These forms began as officially mandated by the reign of kings and eventually changed because of the collision of languages in each region. The authors bring the discussion into the 20th century when addressing how Spanish is used differently by gender, class, and regional differences.

### *Reaction*

I like this book because I can use it to help students understand the historical background of the Spanish language and how it expanded across so many countries. I can similarly show students how and why Spanish varies across different countries. In a more advanced class, I can use the book to show students how the language changes based on people's different socioeconomic backgrounds and how the language changes in different age groups. It can additionally be interesting and useful to students to see how women speak Spanish differently than men, such as using diminutives in daily speech.

This book can be used when students are curious about language nuances and changes from region to region and why the changes may have occurred. Some students may even be interested in adopting certain ways of speaking for their future use and can study the nuances, for example dropping the “s” in daily speech, using the “zeta,” pronouncing the fricative palatal “y,” or using the silent “y.” Knowing how to use language to sound more like a native speaker and/or to be more comprehensible to native speakers may be students’ goal, and this book can help me provide students with know-how and know-why in language production.

**Reagan, T. G., & Osborn, T. A. (2002). *The foreign language educator in society: Toward a critical pedagogy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.**

Reagan and Osborn explore social questions regarding language learning. The authors see the language student and the language educator as potential crusaders of fairness for people of socially oppressed languages. They discuss the purpose of the second language classroom in the United States and its usefulness to students. They address the usefulness of language curricula, as prescribed by national institutions. The issue of having official languages and how they affect minorities, subcultures, and micro cultures is presented. We are persuaded to envision the second language student and the second language educator as advocates of people’s rights to language, identity, and culture.

The authors bring up some important questions regarding language learners and how they might be oppressed. They additionally question the current policies in place in the educational system regarding language learning. As they help educators reflect upon their role in making a change for individuals, these questions will help me see students in

a different way than I would otherwise see them. The book is intended to help language educators see themselves in a key role for social change in individuals' lives and in the community.

The title to this book captures what these editors have compiled. The book offers the educator methods of identifying any language conflict situation in society. The book is written in a way that it can be applicable to any conflict situation involving multiple languages in society and the possible dimensions of such conflicts.

### *Reaction*

I recommend this book to teachers. Its user-friendly format helps the reader easily find applicable information. The editors highlight important vocabulary words. They offer meaningful activities that can open thought provoking discussions in the second language classroom. They promote deep thought and reflection on societal and personal attitudes towards other cultures.

Furthermore, the authors discuss the interface of English with Spanish in the United States and how, in some cases, speakers use a convergence of verb forms to match English use. The authors present language communities and the changes they may have as a whole, but admit it is difficult to find similar language communities. The most effective research was done by gathering information regarding one particular language community and grouping the community based on migration patterns and national identity. Reagan and Osborn made me feel empowered as an educator, making me feel like an advocate for individual and cultural rights as a language teacher. The authors help me see the power of one in a language classroom.

**DeCapua, A., & Wintergerst, A. C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.**

The authors use anecdotes, theories, and activities in each chapter to show the complexity of culture. They depict the different ways culture can be taught in the classroom through activities that are easy to implement. They additionally use tables and illustrations as a visual aid to explain some of the abstract theories and teaching applications. They draw from cultural experiences and explore the differences and similarities in cultures. There is extensive discussion on how people learn culture in general, and how educators can apply the same principles in the classroom.

Perspective is an overarching theme throughout the book. The authors illustrate through the anecdotes, drawings, and activities how and why culture is relative through the eye of the beholder. They explain in multiple ways how the definition of culture is very broad and encompasses ways of thinking, attitudes, values, practices, as well as tangible artifacts within a community. Despite its broadness, the authors suggest that culture can be learned through understanding and practice.

A large section of the book covers how communication is an integral part of culture and how culture affects communication. The authors discuss nonverbal communication, which is often overlooked in learning an L2. They also discuss how culture affects meaning when speaking and how meaning can be compromised even within members of the same culture, depending on the speakers' backgrounds, gender, and age. They suggest language learners first need to become aware of the differences to become successful in communication. Once learners notice nuances of meaning within the culture, they can understand and communicate affectively in an L2.



*Reaction*

I enjoyed reading this book because the authors have a sense of humor relating to the topic of culture. It seems that many firsthand experiences relating to people mingling within a different culture are humorous because of ignorance to cultural values and practices. This humorous approach makes me, as a student, relax about cultural encounters knowing that they are part of the learning process. This book gives me the desire to help students handle cross-cultural situations equipped to interact within the culture in a meaningful way, to avoid having an embarrassing experience.

I recommend this book for language teachers to consider how teaching language without culture may impede learners from grasping the full scope of communication. The authors offer a different perspective to communication that can enhance students' learning experience, especially if activities relating to culture and pragmatics are practiced in the classroom and students have the opportunity to practice pragmatics outside the classroom. The book can likewise serve as a trigger for teachers to seek out other activities relating to pragmatic awareness.

**Sowden, C. (2007). Culture and the 'good teacher' in the English language classroom. *ELT Journal*, 61(4), 304-310.**

Sowden quotes an educator who taught for 30 years and felt he still did not know how to teach. He then discusses what makes a good teacher of culture in the language classroom, claiming that the teacher's background and experience is the culture students will be exposed to in their L2 learning. He explains that although this may seem daunting for a novice educator, it is imperative for teachers to develop a sense of who they are and the culture they are bringing to the classroom. This includes the teacher's dialects,

attitudes, and abilities. Swoden claims that even a teacher's interaction with students is part of the culture brought into the classroom.

In the past, culture may have been perceived as art, music, and architecture, but more and more, the teacher may be the closest conduit of L2 culture in the classroom. Authenticity comes through in the individual, even when the teacher is not teaching his or her native language. Classroom practices and implementation of teaching philosophies can communicate cultural differences. Because the teacher's role as an ambassador of culture is important in the classroom, teacher development is very important. A teacher's negative preconceptions about a population will likely be communicated, so teachers must be careful how another culture is portrayed. Teacher development courses are available and are recommended to anyone who is planning on teaching or learning L2. Swoden claims that the key to being a "good teacher" is teacher development and the "enemy of good teaching" is "overroutinization" (p. 308).

### *Reaction*

I enjoyed this article because of its emphasis on teacher development. Most of my research on culture and teaching has led me to articles relating to introducing cultural artifacts and ideas. This is a good article for reflection because we may not realize, as teachers, the kind of impact we have on students. We can even teach culture through our own way of organizing our class, interacting with students, and evaluating their progress. As teachers we need to be careful of portraying other cultures as valuable, not only pointing out their peculiarities. When I teach, I want to refer back to this article and evaluate my way of portraying my culture and the L2 culture to students.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

As I look forward, I feel confident that I can accomplish future goals, after completing this MSLT program. My main goal in teaching is to help students reach their communicative goals. As I do so, I will be fulfilling my goal with theirs.

I am committed to developing myself as a second language teacher and gain experience in this field. I look forward to using the information I gained from this research, in my own classroom. Beyond this research, I want to seek out and build a media library of authentic written texts and conversations to use in my classroom and I want to develop a collection of communicative activities to help students learn in context. Over time, I want to learn what works in praxis and continue improving my own teaching.

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