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ALICE'S ADVENTURE THROUGH SECOND LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION:
AN EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

by

Jessica Pryor Lee

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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2014

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Abstract

Alice's Adventure through Second Language Acquisition:

An Educator's Perspective

by

Jessica Pryor Lee: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2014

Major Professor: Dr. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

The author employs narrative writing to illustrate annotated bibliographies, classroom observations, research and research proposals, and self-reflections for second language learning. Elementary, secondary, adult, and college-level teachings are addressed. The author focuses on communicative language teaching, brain-based teaching, and dual language immersion with content based instruction. She addresses the importance of writing, authentic materials, task-based activities, communication, and the recognition of heritage learners. The main character is Alice and she travels through Argentina and Chile. Footnotes are used to keep the narrative style of the portfolio coherent. While the storyline is fictitious, all information included is based on the author's research and actual classroom observations. (200 pages)

Preface

A dear friend of mine, an EMT and a survivor of a heart attack told me, “Jessica, you shouldn’t take yourself so seriously, no one makes it out of life alive.”

I teach; I am a teacher and educator in every sense of the word. I prefer the word *educator* to *teacher* in that *educator* comes from the Latin ‘to lead out’. I believe the ability to learn is innate and my job in the classroom is to help students realize their innate potential; I give them not knowledge but rather an opportunity to learn.

This portfolio was written as a narrative, as a journey, in order to reflect the actual process of portfolio writing. While other portfolios on the shelf are perfect, polished, and refined, this I hope, illustrates the struggles of finding a philosophy. It is the allegory of trying to figure out where one stands as an educator, and going beyond to grow into a professional, who benefits our profession.

When I started the MSLT program at USU, I had already completed half of a Masters in TESOL from another university. I was crushed to realize that only six credits would transfer. My plan was to find ways to implement what I had already written and studied into the USU coursework, doing only what was required. I chose a topic that would satisfy all requirements: *Writing in the Second Language with a focus on Heritage Language Learners*. (Doesn’t that

sound fluffy?) Every paper and presentation was going to be about that. My portfolio would be easy. I would simply reuse the same resources throughout my classes. The bibliographies would align and I would have a single thread. My portfolio would require no 'glue'.

Unfortunately/Serendipitously the *awesome* faculty, Dra. Spicer-Escalante and Dr. deJonge-Kannan convinced me otherwise. Not explicitly through words, but through their leadership and examples, and their encouragement, I soon abandoned my plan of 'path of least resistance'; I wanted to work harder. I was given unique opportunities during my studies here at USU including working with the Global Academy and working with the Iraqi Fulbright Scholar program. These proved to be especially influential in this Portfolio Process. Through these opportunities I met fantastic people including Dr. Austin who inspired me to try something different. I realized that people are not papers and philosophies, they are experiences and stories. I hope this portfolio illustrates that. But most of all, I hope you have fun reading this, because life is too short to take yourself so seriously. And, as Lewis Carroll's Alice Liddell proposes, "What is the use of a book without pictures or conversations?"

Acknowledgments

There are so many who have helped this project come to fruition. Directly, my professors who were patient with my learning processes and allowed me to work outside the box I wish to thank Dra. Maria Luisa Spicer-Escalante, Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan, Dr. Ann Austin, and Dr. Rogers. Dr. deJonge-Kannan was especially encouraging in that she trusted in the finished product even though she only saw copious revisions of anachronistic pieces. Thank you for never showing signs of any doubts you might have had in the finishing of this portfolio. Thank you Dra. Spicer-Escalante for your patience in waiting for the project to take enough shape to be comprehensible.

I wish to thank my teachers who helped me see both how to teach and how *not* to teach. I wish to thank my students who have helped shape me as an educator and provide me with material from which I could draw my characters. I wish to thank Ms. Mason, the librarian—Yes, it is possible to write a book using second person.

I wish to acknowledge the fact that I won the parent-lottery and I thank my parents, John and Trudy Pryor, for always being on my team and reminding me that there isn't anything I can't do. They have shown me my wings so that I may fly, but also kept me mindful of my Southern roots; our family's oral tradition and storytelling.

I wish to offer a special thanks to my soul-mate, and beloved husband, Patrick Lee, who has supported and encouraged me throughout this endeavor—who endured pizza nearly every night for dinner for one semester while I was writing.

I also wish to thank my furry sidekick, Roo—the dog.

Map



Dear Reader,

This narrative that I am about to share with you, is set in the magically realistic continent of South America. You will follow a young woman named Alice Leedell in her quest to consult teachers at an English School of Antofagasta, Chile. As you might have guessed, Alice's plans will go awry.

On her journey, she will have the opportunity to witness spectacular teaching and see the influences of research and philosophy in practice. You, dear reader, will listen to her thoughts and share her observations on her adventure. Just as Alice learned from these experiences, so have I. I hope you find something worth gleaning, regardless of your students' ages.

Happy Adventures,

Jessica Pryor Lee

PS: Because I am I, you will be you, and 'you' will be Alice's assistant 'Jessica'. Enjoy.

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Chapter 1: CLT? Who's ever heard of such a thing?

"CLT"?! Who's ever heard of such a thing? You ask yourself as you wander through the third floor of the library. These requests have been getting out of hand! Dual-Language Immersion! Bilingual Education! Authentic Materials! Where is she getting these? She's the 'expert'; you're just the assistant. Why can't she just use Wikipedia like everyone else?

Call number.... LB1578--.156.... *Interpreting Communicative Language Teaching: Contexts and Concerns on Teacher Education*. Finally, here it is, 255 pages!?!? She *is* off her rocker!

Dear Ms. Alice Leedell,

Wed. 10:52pm

I just received your email. Here's what I found so far on Communicative Language Teaching.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) refers to an approach to language teaching based in the fundamental belief that language is a tool used for communication, a means rather than the end. "Communicative language teaching (CLT) refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning"¹ Teachers have communicative goals for students to complete through interaction in the target language. The teacher anticipates

¹ Savignon, 2002, p. 1

necessary language acts and familiarizes the students with these before the tasks. The students can only be successful by using language acts to complete the communicative task.

I've found many authors who talk about CLT. I need to mention here that CLT goes hand-in-hand with task based activities (TBA). I know that you always said 'activity' is a four-letter word and no respectable teacher has 'activities' in her classroom, but TBAs are different from 'activities'. The key difference is TBAs are goal-oriented; students must be able to complete an actual objective in the language in order to have success. Traditionally, activities (the four-letter word one) are just to keep students busy; there is no didactic or communicative purpose. TBAs create meaningful situations for student communication and hence, language practice, and therefore language acquisition. So, here are some of the highlights for CLT and TBA.

What about input and its history?

CLT recognizes the role of input, but it goes beyond its behaviorist predecessors. Skinner's and Pavlov's ideas and the Audiolingual method are based in the belief that language development comes from input, the stimulus, and production is simply a response. Whereas behaviorists typically believe input becomes output and it is essential to minimize poor input because it leads directly to poor output, CLT is based in the belief that there is input, intake, and then output. Input is, of course, what the instructor provides or the authentic material provides. However, "intake

refers to the linguistic data in the input that learners attend to and hold in working memory during online (real-time) comprehension” and “learners selectively attend to features in the input,”² which would clearly affect output. Intake is a filtered version of input. The “Noticing Hypothesis”³ also addresses the importance of attention in learning. This hypothesis asserts that “what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning”⁴ and input does not equal intake⁵. Perhaps it would be valuable for teachers to help students to determine what is *noticibleworthy*.

Additionally, there are listed criteria for what makes ‘good’ input. Krashen has formulated the “input hypothesis model” and includes “i+1”⁶ when discussing quality input, (I sent you information on this in an earlier email). Input must also be meaning bearing. Furthermore, teachers should teach (almost!) exclusively in the target language”^{7,8}. Students need the opportunity to practice listening and using their new language and to produce output. A concept called “negotiation of meaning”^{9 10} is used by communicators to be understood and to understand. These can include paraphrasing, repetition, changing rate of speech, and using non-verbal cues. Students need the opportunity to practice these in the target language as well. Communication “is the focus on negotiation of meaning,

² Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 18

³ Schmidt, 1995

⁴ Schmidt, 1995 p.20

⁵ Lee & VanPatten, 2003

⁶ Krashen, 1985

⁷ Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 135

⁸ ACTFL, 2010

⁹ Ballman et al., 2001

¹⁰ Lee & VanPatten, 2003

rather than on practice of grammatical forms”¹¹. Negotiation of meaning plays a central role in CLT and language learning for communication. Teacher-fronted activities provide little to no opportunity for practicing negotiation of meaning¹²¹³. Students must play the lead role in learning.

What are some key features?

The key feature of CLT is that each lesson must have a communicative goal. Students must also have the opportunity to use their language skills for meaningful purposes, to complete the task. “Communicative language ability – the ability to express one’s self and to understand others – develops as learners engage in communication and not as a result of habit formation with grammatical items.”¹⁴. Teachers, in turn, are responsible for creating communicative opportunities for students to develop not just language, but communication strategies. “By encouraging learners to ask for information, seek clarification, to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they [can] muster to negotiate meaning, to stick to the communicative task at hand, teachers [lead] learners to take risks, to venture beyond the memorized patterns.”¹⁵. Genuine communication is based on the ability to create organic word (morpheme) combinations in a meaningful way. This is where behaviorism has its shortcomings. Memorizing phrases does not permit language learners to generate their own sentences. It is necessary

¹¹ Savignon, 2002, p. 21

¹² Lee & VanPatten, 2003

¹³ Ellis, 2012, p. 214

¹⁴ Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p.51

¹⁵ Savignon, 2002, p.3

to create opportunities for students to explore how to best express themselves in the target language.

How hard is it to use CLT?

Teachers often have trouble implementing CLT in their classrooms. There are several ideas about the cause of this. Teachers have to set-up predetermined steps for students. There is specific grammar and communication features that teachers have to create for the students. It might simply be that “teachers may experience professional development during in-services, workshops, or conferences, but actual onsite coaching where teachers receive immediate feedback and support to implement CLT methods seems to be nonexistent”¹⁶. This would indicate a simple lack of sufficient training and then, ongoing support. The larger problem is that it is difficult to implement CLT if teachers are unwilling to let go of Atlas teaching concepts and grammar-translation based teaching models¹⁷¹⁸ ¹⁹. Research with Japanese EFL teachers showed that, while the teachers often believed they were implementing the CLT model, they were bound to the paradigm of the way they were taught²⁰ – Atlas, traditional models.²¹ Key difficulties include allowing students time in class to practice meaningful, unrehearsed communication. Meaningful communication practice is a central component to CLT. Students must

¹⁶ Burke 2012, p. 715

¹⁷ Spicer-Escalante & deJonge-Kannan, 2014

¹⁸ Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999

¹⁹ Burke, 2012

²⁰ Spicer-Escalante & deJonge-Kannan, 2014,

²¹ Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999

have a task that requires communication in the target language to complete. For example “sign here” is an activity that is similar to a scavenger hunt in that students must ask and answer questions to find people in their class who meet target attributes. “Sign here” requires students to interact in the target language to complete the task.

Another potential ‘pitfall’ includes the notion that CLT is exclusively for speaking and listening. This is not true. CLT empowers teachers to make decisions about TBA in class. Teachers can create reading and writing tasks for communication. The seeming ‘lack’ of standardization may worry administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. “Controversy over appropriate language testing persists, and many a curricular innovation has been undone by failure to make corresponding changes in evaluation.”²² Perhaps educators could utilize alternative assessments including “more holistic assessments of learner competence” because they “represent and encourage learner achievement.”²³ Ultimately, TBAs give teachers freedom to assess learning to see how language learners are actually progressing with their communication. There are few ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers in communication. There are “appropriate”, “inappropriate,” and “more appropriate” answers. Through Task Based Assessments students learn which strategies work best and which language features promote pragmatically ‘correct’ responses. Teachers

²² Savignon, 2002, p. 4

²³ Savignon, 2002, p.4

must help students negotiate meaning to find the best option for a communication situation.

What about grammar?

Appropriate grammar instruction concerns many language teachers²⁴ because they believe that CLT bans grammar instruction. The answer to the question of grammar instruction is not *yes* or *no*, but rather it is a sliding continuum. “CLT does not exclude a focus on metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of the rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness. Grammar is taught in the way that it is determined necessary for communication. Focus on form can be a familiar and welcome component in a learning environment that provides rich opportunity for focus on meaning; but focus on form cannot replace practice in communication”²⁵. Although it is difficult to discretely assess, communication is the essential fundamental component and outcome of language learning and should be the focus of language teaching. However, “teachers’ rejection of research findings, renewed insistence on tests of discrete grammatical structures, and even exclusive reliance in the classroom on the learners’ native or first language, where possible, to be sure students ‘get the grammar,’ have in some cases been reactions to the frustration of teaching for communication”.^{26,27} Each lesson might

²⁴ Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999

²⁵ Savignon, 2002, p.22

²⁶ Spicer-Escalante & deJonge-Kannan, 2014

²⁷ Savignon, 2002, p.5

warrant a specific amount of grammar instruction. It is important to note, in CLT, that the teacher must plan for how much and which grammar is needed for each TBA. It is not necessary to teach *all* grammar, only the necessary components for communication. For example, if the activity is “Students will give a description to the police of a suspect” students will need to know how to use the verb for physical descriptions in the third person and how to match adjectives and nouns. It is not necessary for students to talk about themselves in this lesson. *Soy* and *somos* can be taught later.

CLT with TBA helps students visualize themselves not as language learners but as language speakers (users and understanders). CLT can increase “willingness to communicate” or “WTC”²⁸ because it can improve “situation-based variables”²⁹ that provide learners with opportunities to *use* the target language rather than to produce it. Motivation plays an important role in language learning but Ellis warns that there is no concrete evidence that it directly relates to “intake”; students must pay attention before they can notice and learn. It would be logical to infer that increasing WTC benefits language learning outcomes. Several researchers contend that a language teacher’s classroom goal is not so much linguistic or communicative competence, but actually creating a

²⁸ Ellis, 2012, p. 323

²⁹ Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 255

classroom environment that fosters WTC³⁰ so that language learning can happen.

So, is it actually possible to implement CLT/TBA in a real classroom?

A possible drawback to using TBAs in the classroom is that students may not pay attention, or 'notice' the elements of language. Students may focus solely on the activity and may not place emphasis on the language. It has been contended that communicative tasks do not go far enough³¹. Students often try to simply complete the task without paying attention to forms. If students record their activity and then later transcribe it, they will pay attention to their forms more than when they are 'simply' communicating.

Supplemental communicative techniques are necessary to improve language learning. Because most textbooks and teachers' manuals are deficient in these activities it is important to supplement and provide students with communication activities.³² Educators must not overlook the importance of properly sequencing activities and adjusting them to meet the needs and level of language learners.

Because many existing texts are deficient in communicative learning opportunities and meaningful TBAs, it becomes necessary for

³⁰ MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998, p.545

³¹ Foster & Skehan, 2013

³² Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim, & Thomson, 2010

teachers to create their own.³³ Focus should be on the planning component necessary for CLT and TBA. It is important for learners to have the skills necessary to complete a task. In essence, when planning a CLT-based activity, the teacher must begin “with an inventory of target skills and ask what learners need to be able to do in order to perform those skills”³⁴. Furthermore, successful TBAs include problem solving and scenarios that the language learner may actually encounter outside the classroom. Interactive activities promote communication among students. Student collaboration can be successfully promoted by including certain tasks—such as role-play, performances, problem solving activities, project work, filling in worksheets, and preparing for group reports—in which students work towards a common goal and which require the preparation of a single group project. By providing opportunities for interactions, teachers encourage authentic language use.³⁵ Grammar and pronunciation are never listed as tasks³⁶. Teachers must anticipate what tasks the students will need to know how to do and they must plan for the skills necessary to successfully complete each task.

By anticipating which skills are necessary to supplement existing materials, teachers can plan for the success of their language learners. Communicative Language Teaching through the use of Task-Based Activities allows students to increase their willingness to communicate by

³³ Nunan, 2012

³⁴ Nunan, 2012, p.67

³⁵ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 22

³⁶ Nunan, 2012, p.131

providing them the opportunities to see themselves as participants with the target language. It is important for teachers to call their students' attention to various linguistic features of the target language so that they can 'notice' it. Focusing students' attention to linguistic features allows students to see/feel how they work in communication. Negotiation of meaning is an integral part of communication and it is beneficial for students to practice various techniques in negotiating meaning in the target language. With proper training and mindset, teachers can design a student-centered classroom (rather than teacher-fronted) that offers students the best opportunity to use and learn the target language.

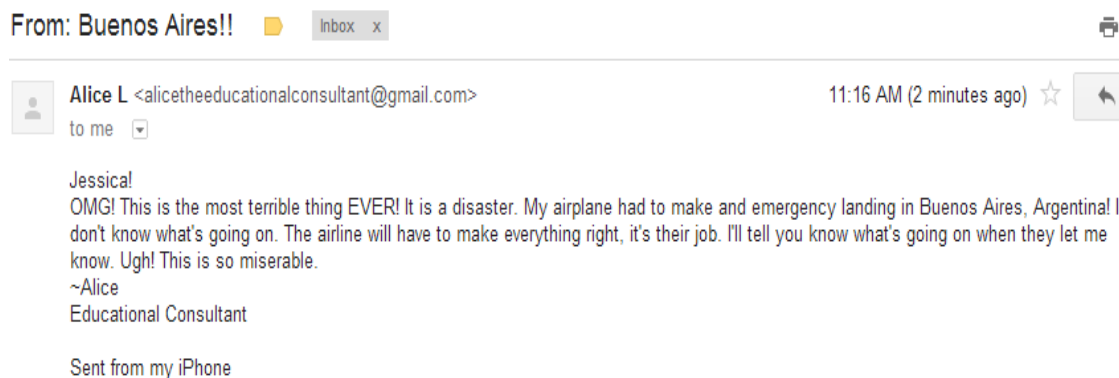
Sincerely,

Jessica

You click [send](#).

It seemed like a simple job when you applied. "Assistant to Educational Consultant" duties include email, answering phones, filing, scheduling... perfect for a graduate student. Research was *never* on the list, you have enough of that for your classes.

The first week was fine; you just had to schedule a flight for a job in Antofagasta, Chile. Even then everything was fine. You drove your boss to the airport Saturday morning, everything was fine, she texted you when she got to Miami, fine. The next communication was from Buenos Aires Airport on Sunday:



Since then, everything has been topsy-turvy.

Chapter 2: The Cancelled flight and the effects of Audiolingualism

“What do you mean you can’t find my luggage?!? I am an educational consultant! That means people *pay* me to teach them how to teach. All of my priceless resources, worksheets, dialogs, PowerPoint handouts, listening-tapes.... Lost! I demand to speak to your boss this instant!”

Passengers throughout the terminal were starting to stare. The Frontera clerk blinked blankly at Alice’s tirade. She did not understand. Those were not vocabulary words in her “English for Airlines” manual, they never practiced *those* dialogs. It sounded a little like exercise 7B so she replied,

“Thank you ma’am for choosing our airlines. I see you are upset. Let me assure you we will do everything to make this right.”

Incensed at the incompetence, Alice tossed her hands up in disgust, marched to the nearest seat and sank into it. Alice blinked at the passing travelers in the Buenos Aires

“Yep, sh’said the same lines to me. Word for word and prob’ly doesn’t even understand a lick of it,” a tall man slowly drawled.

Alice looked at the man sitting next to her. ‘Texan’ she thought to herself as she eyed suspiciously the Marlboro-looking gentleman with a sun-aged face and knowing brown eyes. His clothes put her off. He looked so out-of-place:

cowboy boots in a sea of suits and outdoor wear. He would have been more appropriate as an extra in a John Wayne movie than at an Argentine International airport. How dare *he* speak of language learning to her. The drawl interrupted her assessment.

“It’d be more useful if she’d learned to have a conversation instead of dialogs.”

“I speak Spanish!” Alice snapped.

The Texan held her in his gaze for a moment before he blinked and continued, “Great. Do you know where they’re puttin’ us up ‘til we can get on to Santiago?”

“What?!” Alice replied incredulously.

“That’s what I gathered. There was a small fire in the luggage hold and we landed here rather than in Chile. I reckon we’ll go out on the next flight in the mornin’ – least that’s my suspicion, my Spanish is a little rusty. It’s what I picked up from my workers, none of that ‘repeat after me’ or ‘correct the verb’ stuff. ‘Course didn’t do much for her” the Texan said, nodding in the direction of the Frontera clerk who was still spouting off, “Let me assure you...” to the customer at the desk.

Alice’s mind was still reeling from the idea that her plan would have to be rearranged- but this last comment snapped her back to the present.

She chuckled condescendingly at the Texan, “You must be unfamiliar with research from Skinner, Pavlov, and Charles Fries. Whose theories support such structured methodologies for language learning.”

“I’ve heard of Pavlov, my dogs don’t need to learn a language, but they need to do more tricks and slobber, I don’t mean any harm ma’am”

<Paging passengers Dakota Jenkins and Josh Wernicke> interrupted the PA system.>

“Good luck ma’am” said the Texan as he rose, nodding slightly.

How ridiculous, though Alice, as she watched him walk off. Students learn a language by engaging in pattern practice to form a ‘set of habits’ everyone knows this.^{37,38,39} Look at the enormity of the success in the *Audio-Lingual Method*.

Everyone knows, thought Alice to herself, that language is simply a set of symbols formed and organized by patterns. Children learn language by imitating adults. They learn because they repeat what their caregivers teach them. They are rewarded when they are correct and it reinforces correct vocabulary. If a child wants milk and says ‘wawa’ the child receives nothing. He must notice that his caregiver tells him, “Milk, say milk,” as she hands him a bottle. The next time the child tries “melg” and is successful it teaches him that melg is the white

³⁷ Ramírez, 1995, p.117

³⁸ Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 48

³⁹ Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 9-10

drinkable food in a bottle. A symbol for an item. A good caregiver will correct the child's mistake and say, "milk" and only hand the child the bottle once his pronunciation is correct. Good language teachers do the same; inaccuracy should be avoided at all costs⁴⁰. Skinner and Pavlov have proven that language is simply stimulus and response... how absurd to question science!?!

<Paging passengers Alice Lay-day!> interrupted the PA system again.

Alice walked to the customer service desk of Frontera Airlines.

"Your name?" a short dumpy man asked in a slight unidentifiable accent.

"Alice Leedell"

"Ah yes," he said, staring only at the computer screen in front of him under the counter, "Let me assure you will we do everything in our power to make this right."

"Yes," Alice rolled her eyes, "I know."

"It seems there is a flight tomorrow morning for Santiago, Chile. Yes... at ten o'clock. You can take that one."

"But it is three o'clock now," snapped Alice, looking at her watch. "I have been up for nearly 20 hours. I'm tired, I'm hungry, and I need a shower and I HAVE NO CLOTHES!"

⁴⁰ Ballman et al., 2001, p.22

“Yes, yes. We have a voucher for a hotel. It is 20 minutes from the airport, very nice. You will have food there and we will provide a voucher for clothes in the morning. A car will pick up you.”

“What about tonight?” asked Alice, incredulously.

“No, it is Sunday. We do not have the paperwork ready until tomorrow.”
replied the little man.

“Ok, fine.” Alice conceded.

“There will be a shuttle for you if you follow this woman here.” He indicated the young clerk from before, who looked almost frightened that she should have to deal with Alice again. “She will lead you to the shuttle with the others. Thank you for flying Frontera.”

Alice followed the Frontera clerk through the endless terminals of the Buenos Aires airport and she finally saw the exit.

She waded through the sea of families and friends greeting loved ones, among kisses, embraces, and handshakes, she made her way out the door, alone. She stepped into the shuttle. The sun streamed in through the van’s large windows, it was warm on Alice’s face. She sank back into the worn cloth seat and gently closed her eyes.

Now what? Alice thought.

Chapter 3: Looking for the silver lining

Two other passengers joined Alice in the shuttle. An older woman with a remarkable smile was talking animatedly to her colleague who was younger and much taller.

“That’s okay,” she said to him, “we’ll make a few changes to the schedule.”

“Do you think Dra. Vadea will mind if we stop by while we’re in the neighborhood?” he asked.

“I would imagine she would be insulted if we didn’t. I am excited to see what she’s done with her program.”

The shuttle driver skillfully maneuvered Buenos Aires’ traffic.

“Being Sunday, I would not expect to take a train until tomorrow.”

“Sure, why not see the sights? I’ve always wanted to visit *El Retiro*. We’ll leave tomorrow afternoon for Rosarios,” said the woman, smiling as dazzlingly as ever.

Looking out the window, Alice saw the blur of buildings, pedestrians, and bicyclists. She closed her eyes, and opened them again to refocus. They were at a cement-colored hotel.

The driver opened the door and the two Americans got out. Alice followed them.

They walked through the automatic doors of the hotel into the red-carpeted lobby dodging bellmen and brass luggage carts. Alice waited her turn at the counter. A young woman greeted her.

“Bienvenida a Buenos Aires. ¿Está viajando con Frontera?”

“S” answered Alice.

“What is your name?” asked the receptionist.

“I am Alice Leedell.”

“Yes. I see. We have you in room 717. You do not have luggage?”

“No.” Alice answered sharply. The receptionist was taken aback.

“Oh, we have a food voucher for you to eat dinner and breakfast in the hotel. You will have a clothing voucher and a taxi for tomorrow.”

“Yes, I know.” Alice replied.

“Here is your key,” said the receptionist as she slid a brass key across the white marble counter.

Alice took the key and walked to the elevator to her room.

In her room Alice looked around. She checked her cellphone. She had reception and she decided to send Jessica a message.

She freshened up in the white marble bathroom. It was clear that the hotel had once been the height of luxury in the city, but now it was unmistakably dated. *At least it's clean* Alice thought.

Alice rode the elevator downstairs and decided on dinner.

Alice saw the couple from the shuttle. She paid them no attention and ate in silence.

After finishing her meal Alice returned to her room, she flipped through television channels. Unimpressed, she turned off the television and turned out the light.

Alice awoke when sunlight streamed through the vertical blinds in her room. She was disoriented and looked around trying to get her bearings. She remembered what had happened. The airplane's unscheduled stop due to a fire in the baggage compartment, her luggage being lost in the fire, and now she is at a hotel in Buenos Aires waiting to buy enough clothes to get her through her trip before flying on to Antofagasta, Chile where she is scheduled to work as a teacher consultant for the English School of Antofagasta.

Alice slowly rose and checked her watch, 9:03 a.m. She had enough time to shower before she needed to catch a taxi to the store to replace her luggage and clothes.

After her shower, Alice gathered her carry-on items, notebook, pens, toothbrush, cellphone, iPad, and chargers.

She checked the room once more and then left, locking the door behind her.

“Favor de llevarla a Walmart,” said the receptionist to the taxi driver.

“Wait!” exclaimed Alice. “Walmart?!?” she repeated incredulously. “You expect me to replace my clothes, my Tahari suits, my dress shoes at Walmart?”

“Ma’am, I am sorry, the voucher from Frontera only serves Walmart. Please, you can just pick up a few items... for comfort,” added the receptionist seeing the anger in Alice rise.

“What choice do I have?” Alice asked, rhetorically.

The receptionist looked relieved that Alice was leaving. The taxi driver escorted Alice to his cab.

“Ah, American?” he asked in heavily accented English.

“Yes,” said Alice shortly.

“I show you everything in Buenos Aires. No cry for me Argentina,” he said with a smile.

Alice was not amused, and she clearly displayed it on her face. She plopped into the cab. “Walmart please,” said Alice shortly.

“Obvio. This is the Casa Rosada, very famous.” They turned a corner and sped through side-streets. “This is the Retiro, very famous.” They sped through yellow lights, catching several red. Alice could count on one hand the number of times the taxi stopped at an intersection during the 20 minute ride, zipping through narrow streets crossing wide ones of ten lanes. “This statue, very famous.” “This store...”

“I know, very famous.” Interrupted Alice.

“No,” said the taxi driver, disheartened, “is Walmart.”

“Oh,” said Alice, a little sheepishly.

“I wait for you here.”

“Fine, yes, thank you.”

Alice entered Walmart. The layout was eerily familiar and yet, different. It was surreal. Smiley faces looked down at her. *Ahorre* read signs everywhere. Alice walked to the women’s fashion. Although she had never been to this Walmart she knew where to go. She found black pants and tops that would pass

for casual business attire. She found a backpack, a jacket and a few other items that she might need for the next week. Shoes, however, posed a problem. Alice could not find any shoes to fit. She would have to settle for her travel sneakers. Perhaps Jessica could express mail her some shoes and clothes.

Alice placed her items on the conveyer at checkout. A young lady dressed in a blue smock sitting in an ergonomically designed black chair smiled at her. The young lady swiveled the chair as she rang up the items and bagged them. *Wow, what efficiency. Why don't the Walmarts in the U.S. do that?* thought Alice.

She carried the four Walmart sacks to the front of the store. Alice couldn't see the taxi anywhere. She walked up and down the aisles of the parking lot. Still, no taxi. She walked back to the front of the store, she turned and the taxi was there.

"You need help?" the taxi driver asked, "I will put those in the boot."

"Boot?" asked Alice.

He opened the trunk and pointed "Boot, you do not speak English?"

"I am from America. Of course I speak English." Alice snapped.

"I am from America also," smiled the driver, "SOUTH America."

Alice rolled her eyes and sat in the seat with her four Walmart sacks.

"I will show to you the best of Buenos Aires."

"No, thank you. Just to the hotel please. I have a flight to catch," stated Alice dryly.

They drove through narrow streets weaving between busses and cars. "The Plaza de Mayo, very famous. You come back Thursday; you will see the mothers, very famous."

Alice had no idea what he was talking about; she thought it best to not talk to him. He needed his full concentration on the road. Alice was thrown forward as he narrowly missed a car that had just pulled out.

"*Cafetera*," he moaned at a jalopy of a car. The taxi driver looked in his rearview mirror at Alice who had pulled herself onto the seat again. "You do not know the mothers?"

"No." said Alice, trying to watch the traffic, since he clearly wasn't.

"In *La Guerra Sucia*, the mothers' childrens were taken from them. *Desaparecidos*. Gone. They march with photos of their childrens. They look for them."

"Oh."

"Very famous, very sad. We're here."

Alice was again thrown from her seat as the taxi stopped in front of the concrete hotel. Alice looked up. It was her hotel, but it was different. Alice got out of the cab and grabbed her sacks, making sure she had everything. Alice walked through the automatic doors to the front desk. The receptionist looked panic-stricken.

“Oh, Mrs. Leedell!”

“Ms. Leedell,” Alice corrected her.

“Your flight... you are late... you lost your flight.” The receptionist braced herself for Alice’s tirade.

“WHAT!?! What time was the flight? Why didn’t you call? I need to talk to Frontera immediately. I need a phone, please dial the number.”

The young lady pulled out a receiver of a phone from under the desk. She quickly dialed, relieved that Alice’s ire was not directed at her.

“Please press 2. Press 6. Dial 5324.” Alice instructed the receptionist as she listened to the automated choices.

“This is Alice Leedell, I was on flight FNT619 that was diverted and cancelled.... Yes.... No, but... I am trying to... what do you mean the replacement flight left? When? 10:00? You mean to tell me that while I was out trying to replace my items that were damaged on YOUR flight at WALMART in the taxi that YOU sent... my flight left?...Ok, I would like to book the next available flight...

what do you mean the voucher is not valid... only for part of the flight? The part that was incomplete? How much will you refund towards the purchase of another ticket? \$347? Fine. From Buenos Aires to Santiago, Chile with a connection to Antofagasta, Chile, I would like to book the next available flight. \$1,027 plus taxes?!? You're joking. Do you have anything cheaper?... \$578? How is that possible?... ugh.... When? A week from Thursday? No. Give me the refund. I'll be in touch. Take a survey?.... You don't want my opinion." Alice hung up.

The receptionist, although frightened by Alice felt sorry for her. "I visit my grandma in Iquique. I take the train to Tucumán and then the bus to Salta through Jujuy to Calama. I know the bus goes to Antofagasta. Is a two-day voyage. Very pretty."

Alice glared at her.

"Sorry ma'am, I did not ..."

"No, no. This train, when does it leave?"

"The next train will leave tomorrow morning at seven."

"From where?"

"*Estación Retiro*. There is the metro connection from the corner."

"Thank you. I will stay another night."

The receptionist looked relieved. Alice returned to her room and organized her Walmart backpack for her journey tomorrow.

This has turned into quite an ordeal.

Chapter 4: The Language train; It's a vehicle, not a destination

The following morning, Alice boarded the train from the *Estación Retiro* and pulled out the newspaper from her hotel. The blue velour-cushioned plastic seats were arranged with four seats facing each other. She took a window seat that faced the front of the train. The seats across the aisle filled as did the seats behind her. Soon the only seats left were the ones in front of her and next to her.

“Many a person who has tried to master a foreign language in school has thought back wistfully to his (or her*) own learning of his native tongue.”⁴¹

Boy, isn't that the truth Alice thought. If only it were so simple.

A man and a woman took the seats in front of Alice. It was the same pair from the airport shuttle.

The man continued “Without the help of a grammar book or a trained language instructor, without the sanctions of a course grade, all normal children readily acquire the language spoken in their vicinity.⁴² More remarkably, children who are too young to sit at a school desk but who happen to grow up in a polyglot environment can master a number of languages; they even know under which circumstances to invoke each tongue.”⁴³

^{35,41,37} Gardner, 1991, p.1

He has a point thought Alice, keeping her eyes in her newspaper. She paused to consider that she had never thought about this before. She, of course, learned her first language, English, without texts or teachers. She had texts in school and grammar education, but she could still speak and understand. She had seen children who could seamlessly move between languages.

“That’s because language is a means, not an end,” replied the man’s colleague, interrupting Alice’s musings. “It’s a shame that schools treat language as a subject. How absurd, they never pause to consider that language is the medium for all subjects. Imagine,” she chortled, “teaching math in grunts.”

Her colleague laughed, “It will be refreshing to see what Dr. Vadea has done at her school. Which Dual Language Immersion model did she decide on?”

“I’m not sure—I believe it is the 50/50 model, the one they have been using in the state of Utah, back in the U.S. It is also referred to as ‘early partial immersion’⁴⁴ ”

“It has shown promise and it would make sense, seeing how she’s from Utah. Have you seen the data from Collier and Thomas?”

“No, I haven’t...”

⁴⁴ Genesee, 2008, p.39

The train shuddered to a screeching halt. Alice was thrown from her seat. Luggage toppled from the racks and people were screaming and yelling. Alice's booth mates helped her back into her seat.

"¿Está bien?" asked the man.

"I'm fine, thank you." Alice replied, still shaken.

"I wonder what's going on?" asked the woman.

Almost as a reply to her question the conductor entered the car, somewhat exasperated, "*Disculpen las molestias, hay un auto en la vía. Vamos a continuar bien pronto.*"

"Bien pronto? That could be an hour or two," sighed the woman. She looked up at Alice, held out her hand, "I'm Lucy Littles and this is Bob Peck," she glanced at her colleague.

Alice shook their hands, "Nice to meet you. I am Alice Leedell, educational consultant."

Lucy raised an eyebrow. "We are too, in a way. We work specifically with language schools."

"Dual language immersion to be more precise." Bob added.

“Oh, how interesting.” Alice replied, having no idea what he was talking about. “I’m not as familiar as I would like to be with the subject. Could you tell me a little more about them?”

“We could. I’m not sure what your schedule is like, but perhaps you would prefer to see?”

Alice looked quizzical.

“You see we are going to visit a dear friend of ours, Dr. Vadea, she runs a dual language immersion school not far from here,” Lucy said, looking out the window. “I’m sure she would love for you to see what she is doing. She adores visitors.”

“Oh no, I really can’t. I am already late, I need to be in Chile tomorrow...” Alice began.

The conductor entered the car, “*Disculpen, pero no vamos a continuar hoy. Hubo un choque que dejo las vías intransitables. Pueden bajarse. Hay un autobús para llevarlos a la ciudad de Rosario.*”

“See, it’s settled, we’re here already and you can’t go anywhere.”

Alice consented. She grabbed her backpack and jacket and climbed down from the train and onto the waiting bus.

From the terminal Lucy and Bob walked with Alice to a hostel.

“Will you join us for dinner?” Lucy asked.

“Uhm,” Alice hedged, “I hate to be a bother.”

“We’ll see you at seven,” Bob stated flatly.

After they each received their keys for their rooms, they put their luggage away (this was easy for Alice, having only a backpack).

Alice entered her room; it was small, but clean. It had a single twin bed and a desk. There was a sink in the corner. *A shared bathroom* Alice sighed. Ah well, she could survive one night. Alice freshened up at the sink. At a quarter ‘til six Alice walked to the lobby.

Lucy and Bob were waiting for her.

“Are you ready?” asked Bob, enthusiastically.

Lucy smiled her remarkable smile as they headed down the street. Alice had to be mindful of where she walked, the sidewalks were uneven.

“How long have you been working as an educational consultant?” Lucy asked kindly.

“This is my first year,” Alice hedged.

Reading her perfectly, Lucy continued, “How do you like it so far?”

“It’s turning out to be a bit of an adventure,” Alice understated.

Lucy's smile widened. "I see."

"Tomorrow will be a real treat for you then," exclaimed Bob.

They stopped in front of an Italian-themed restaurant.

"Does this suit you?" asked Bob. Alice nodded.

They entered and were immediately seated and brought garlic breadsticks. The lighting was dim, but the green and white checkered tablecloths on each table were clean. There were black and white photos of Italian food decorating the walls. Alice suddenly realized how hungry she was. She ordered meatballs and spaghetti in tomato sauce. The waiter automatically brought red wine to the table.

"Dr. Vadea is one of the best in the business." Bob began, "She worked in Utah for three years to help implement the state-wide dual language immersion program there. Just two years after she left, Utah had 98 schools participating in dual language immersion programs.⁴⁵"

"That's incredible," Alice said, still not knowing what a dual language immersion program was.

"I know! 54 Spanish programs, 28 in Chinese, 11 in French, and five in Portuguese⁴⁶. Think of all of those students who will be bilingual," smiled Lucy.

⁴⁵ USOE, 2014

⁴⁶ USOE, 2014

The food came quickly. Everything was flavorful and delicious. The waiter brought more wine, then coffee, then tiramisu. They ate. Paid and ambled back to the hostel.

“The real challenge for the DLI program has been finding qualified teachers,” said Bob.

Lucy looked crestfallen. The trio reached the hostel lobby.

“People don’t realize that simply speaking a language does not qualify someone to teach in it. It is necessary to find teachers who understand the material, pedagogy, and methodology, and have patience and insight necessary to reach their students. For example, Utah requires proficiency based on Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI) and state teaching certification. Teaching is an art, there is no formula that will exact student results and so it is necessary for educators to understand the art of teaching.⁴⁷ But as an educator, you know that.”

“Good night.”

Alice went up to her room and was so tired that she didn’t remember falling asleep.

⁴⁷ Asher, 2009

Chapter 5: Dual Language Immersion, what it looks like

The following morning Alice awoke to syncopated taps of raindrops hitting the window in her room. She opened her eyes, collected her thoughts, remembering the train and her unwilling promise to visit the Dual Language Immersion School. She dressed and brushed her teeth.

Alice descended the stairs and found her traveling companions smiling at her from a small table. They waved and she joined them.

“Won’t you have some juice?” asked Bob.

Alice looked appraisingly at the Tang in his glass. “I think I’ll pass,” she said.

“Perhaps some coffee or mate?” Lucy smiled, “It *is* Argentina.”

Alice smiled, she had read so much about Argentines and their love of mate. Alice nodded, stood up and walked to the drink bar.

“*Un maté por favor.*” Alice said to the dark haired young man behind the bar.

He smiled and poured hot water into a cup and handed it to Alice.

She carried the steaming cup to the table.

“It’s usually served in a gourd,” said Lucy.

“The better ones are ‘seasoned’ from years of maté,” added Bob.

Alice looked into the cup. It looked like dried grass clippings or parsley bits dumped in water. The steaming water was turning yellow from the leaves.

Alice tentatively took a sip. It was hot and it tasted like grass clipping tea. It was bitter, *how on earth could anyone drink this?* Alice set her cup aside.

“Not your...cup of tea?” smiled Bob.

Lucy grinned. Alice did not. “No, not so much.”

Lucy looked at her watch, “Oh, we should be going, it’s going on nine o’clock.”

Bob got up, Alice and Lucy followed.

A green cab waited for them outside the hostel. They climbed in. It was no longer raining, but it was overcast and dreary. Alice thought *this wasn’t on her itinerary, but it would be interesting to see what another school did. She was an educational consultant after all. It would be the professional thing to do.* She looked out the window as they sped through residential neighborhoods, stopping suddenly in front of a non-descript cement building. A small plaque read “Dual Language Immersion School of English and Spanish of Rosarios/ Headmistress: Dra. Vadea”. Bob pressed the little white button next to the gate. Alice didn’t hear anything.

Suddenly a voice crackled over the speaker, “¿Bueno?”

“It’s Lucy Littles and Bob Peck. We are here to see Dra. Vadea, we have brought a colleague.” He smiled at Alice.

The gate buzzed. The three entered.

“Bienvenidos, I am so glad to see that you have made it!” a shorter, curly white-haired woman smiled.

She kissed Lucy on each cheek before greeting Bob. The woman stretched out a hand to Alice, who shook it.

“This is Ms. Alice Leedell, she’s also an educational consultant.” Lucy said warmly.

Dra. Vadea smiled, “Welcome.”

“Thank you.” Alice returned her smile.

“Have you seen a DLI program before?” Dra. Vadea asked.

“I’m afraid not, this is the first,” confessed Alice.

Dra. Vadea smiled at Lucy and Bob. Her warm coffee eyes twinkled. “Oh, isn’t she in for a treat.”

Alice stood, nonplussed.

Dra. Vadea began, "I remember how difficult it was for me to learn my second language. I remember how much I hated it."

Alice smiled cynically, "So you opened a language school?"

"Of course, I learned from the mistakes of my teachers. They were under the impression that language is a subject, like chemistry or algebra. They treated it as such, breaking down components into little unrecognizable bits that have no meaning. If x is contrary to fact then y is subjunctive and constructed like this..."

Dra. Vadea winced. "I couldn't speak Spanish at all."

Alice was surprised, she assumed that Vadea was a Spanish name.

"But you learned Spanish?" Alice asked tentatively.

"I did." Dra. Vadea smiled. "I became *pololeada* and married a Chilean. Best language program *EVER*. I realize this is not feasible for everyone. I looked at how I learned language. My husband told me how he learned English."

"Oh, how was that?"

"His family moved to the U.S. and he wanted to play with the other children in the neighborhood. He was the weird kid who sat and watched the others play. He saw how the other children initiated play and one day he gathered enough courage to ask, 'I play?' and he got to play. Fortunately, it was soccer. He was an instant success."

“That makes sense. How is his academic English?” Alice asked, knowledgeably.

“He can read and write fluently, but his Spanish lags.” Said Dra. Vadea, slightly crestfallen. “Moving ahead several decades, after our wedding, we ended up in Utah. I was teaching at a school along the Wasatch Front and some parents sought opportunities for their children to continue their bilingual education. I attended a couple meetings and I was sold!”

“I thought this was dual language immersion school, not a bilingual school.” Alice said.

“It is. Bilingual programs refer to any program that has two languages. Subtractive bilingualism is technically a bilingual program but the goal is the death of the native language in order to have monolingual second language⁴⁸. Dual language immersion or DLI, is a specific bilingual model, it is additive⁴⁹. It ensures growth of two languages simultaneously⁵⁰. Good programs promote bilingualism and biliteracy without sacrificing academic achievement.^{51,52} The goal is true bilingualism.”

“Learning two languages at one time? Where do you find the time? Do you cut recess or math?” Alice asked.

⁴⁸ Potowski, 2007, p.2

⁴⁹ Howard & Christian, 2002, p. 6

⁵⁰ Genesee, 2008, p. 37

⁵¹ "CAL: Topics: Foreign Language: Bilingual and Dual Language Education," 2014

⁵² Cummins, 2000, p.221

“Neither. Both are integral parts to the DLI program. We use the Utah model. 50/50, it’s also popular in the Eastern states⁵³, but Utah has widespread implementation of it. As I was saying, at this school we follow their model, it has been highly effective. So, let’s say each school day is 6 hours, for the sake of simple math.”

“Ok”

“Thirty minutes of lunch, thirty minutes of recess.”

“Ok”

“One hour of math, two hours of literacy, one hour of science/social studies, one hour of ‘specials’ which includes library, music, P.E., and art. Those rotate each day.”

“Ok,” said Alice thinking back to her own school days.

“Now, in the 50/50 model, three hours of the day are in English and three hours of the day are in Spanish.”

“Ah,” said Alice, triumphantly, “in only 6 hours, you did not say Spanish, or English, or whatever language your students learn.”

“Exactly!” smiled Dra. Vadea.

⁵³ Potowski, 2007, p.10

Alice was confused. It must have shown because Dra. Vadea continued, “Thirty minutes of our students math time is in English, and thirty minutes is in Spanish. One hour of literacy is in English and one hour is in Spanish. We currently have an English speaking coach who teaches P.E. and our Art teacher also speaks English. Recess is in Spanish on Tuesdays and Thursdays because we do not have an English-speaking cafeteria staff.”

“So, thirty minutes of science is in English and thirty minutes of social studies is in Spanish?” asked Alice incredulously.

“Precisely,” smiled Dra. Vadea. “Using the Utah model, we have two teachers for each grade. One teacher is the Spanish-speaking teacher, the other is the English-speaking teacher. While both teachers speak both languages, the students do not know that. The students speak only the classroom’s target language. Let’s go see.”

Dra. Vadea waved Alice down a long corridor. She heard snatches of English and Spanish in the different rooms as she passed. They stopped at a blue door, ‘Sr. Torrejón 1o Básico’ was lettered in white.

They stepped in. The children didn’t even notice. A smiling tall, lean man with glasses, high cheekbones, and thick black curly hair glanced up at them.

“Entonces, si Javier necesita quince minutos para caminar al andén, ¿a qué hora tiene que salir su casa para no perder el tren?” while he was speaking

he mimed some of the key phrases such as *caminar* and he walked with his fingers and when he asked *¿a qué hora?* he pointed to the clock.

“No sabemos” blurted several students.

“¿Por qué?” asked *el maestro* Torrejon shrugging his shoulders and holding out his hands.

“¿Cuál tren?” and *“¿Cuándo sale?”* were blurted.

“Ah, necesitan más información. El tren sale a las diez y diez.” he pointed to his head and wrote 10:10 on the board.

He waited. *“¿Cómo podemos empezar este misterio matemático?”* He shrugged his shoulders again and held out his hands.

Three children raised their hands. He continued to smile. Two more hands went up.

“Hablen en grupitos.” He waved. The children began to whisper. Alice noticed that the students’ desks were grouped into fours.

“Ya. Javier, ¿cómo empezamos?”

A mousy-looking boy who did not have his hand up initially began to speak, *“¿P-p-podemos di-di-dibujar un r-r-reloj?”*

“¿Qué piensan ustedes?” He motioned to the rest of the class.

The other children nodded. *El maestro* Torrejon smiled at Javier.

He held up a marker. *“¿Quién quiere dibujar?”*

Eight hands shot into the air. *“Palitos”*

Sr. Torrejon grabbed a cup on the desk beside him and shook it. It had popsicle sticks in it. He pulled out a stick and called out, “Sara” the hands went down. Apparently, each student’s name was written on a stick. Sr. Torrejon handed a dry erase marker to Sara who marched to the front of the class.

Sara drew a clock on the board. She drew the hour hand at the ten and the minute hand at the two. She counted back by fives, drawing the path of the minute hand. *“Cinco, diez, quince”* stopping at the 11.

“¿Ya?” asked Sr. Torrejon.

“No. Porque cruzó el doce, tenemos que cambiar la hora.”

“Javier, ¿Cuándo tiene que salir?”

A girl whispered to Javier.

“A las nueve y cincuenta y cinco.”

“Spanish is their first language?” whispered Alice to Dra. Vadea.

“Yes.”

“So, this is no big deal?”

“Let’s go next door,” suggested Dra. Vadea. They left quietly.

They stopped in the hall outside an orange door with ‘Ms. Tweedle, 1st Grade’ stenciled in white.

“So, if Juan needs to leave for school at eight o’clock,” she wrote 8:00 on the board, “and he needs to brush his teeth,” she mimed brushing her teeth with an imaginary toothbrush, “eat breakfast,” she mimed eating, “ get dressed,” she mimed putting a shirt on, “go to the bathroom,” she emphasized these words with a look of ‘you know’ and the children giggled, “and feed his dog,” she mimed petting a dog, “what time does Juan need to get up?” she shrugged her shoulders and held out her hands. This gesture was similar to the one used by Sr. Torrejón when he asked a question to the class.

“Seven o’clock.” Shouted a boy.

“Perhaps Juan, but do we know if you have enough time?”

“No,” a girl blurted. “We need more information.”

“What do you need to know?” asked Ms. Tweedle shrugging her shoulders and holding out her hands?

“How much time Juan needs to brush the teeth, eat and everything.”

“And go to the bathroom” blurted a boy.

The class giggled.

“How can we find that information? Should we use the Internet?” asked Ms. Tweedle walking to the computer and pointing to it.

“No. We need an *entrevista*.”

“Good thinking. An interview,” replied Ms. Tweedle emphasizing the last word. “Let’s interview Juan. We should write some questions.” she grabbed a marker.

Several students raised their hands. Ms. Tweedle called one.

“How much time you need to brush the teeth?” Ms. Tweedle drew a toothbrush and wrote the question on the board, mistakes and all.

Alice looked horrorstruck, “There are mistakes!” she hissed at Dra. Vadea.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” she smiled, “Teachable moments. She’ll use these as examples later; she can create mini-lessons to focus on necessary language.

“How long do ya need to eat your breakfast?” said a girl in a distinctly American Southern accent.

“Thank you Janie,” said Ms. Tweedle as she wrote it on the board.

“She’s American,” whispered Alice, incredulously to Dra. Vadea.

“We’re all American, but she is from the United States, if that is what you mean. The DLI school benefits all students by supporting their native language

and helping them develop their second language⁵⁴. This is a key feature of DLI schools. They are perfect for second language learners, students learning the dominant language. In the U.S. it is great for ESL students, but here it is Spanish language learners, like Janie.”

“Do you have many students, like Janie, who are Spanish language learners?” asked Alice.

“We have a fair number, there are quite a few ex-pats here in this area and there is a fair amount of foreign industry here. I would say about 20% of our students are native English speakers. However, because we don’t have *fairly equal numbers of the two groups*⁵⁵, the requirement for a ‘two-way immersion program or TWI,’ our DLI program is a one-way immersion program. We hope to attract more native English speakers. It is a great benefit to both groups to have a TWI. Why do you ask about English-speakers?”

“I had never thought that there might exist ESL students in other countries, but not ESL but rather... Spanish as a second language, SSL anyway,” Alice shook her head as she trailed off. “The rest of the students, they speak English in this class?”

Dra. Vadea waved Alice into the hall.

⁵⁴ Potowski, 2007, p.47

⁵⁵ Howard & Christian, 2002, p. 2

“Yes, we are very adamant about keeping Spanish in Spanish time and English in English time. This is why the two-teacher system works so well. It is important for teachers to be mindful to adhere to the target language in the classroom. In other programs it has been observed that teachers, who worry about standardized testing, will slip out of the target language⁵⁶. I do not threaten my teachers with test scores; I know that our students will outperform monolingual peers on standardized tests and in general cognitive abilities, regardless of the language of the assessment⁵⁷. True bilingualism! And as an added bonus, the we ask teachers to try to adhere to cultural norms of the language, so we also foster biculturalism.”

“I noticed that the teacher was teaching math but the students were learning how to ask questions and conduct an interview. Those are language standards.”

“Yes, every lesson is a language lesson. It is language in context. Vocabulary is important in each lesson, even if it is not always content specific⁵⁸, it is always context specific.⁵⁹ Language is the vehicle, it is the means for teaching, it is not the tested end.”

“Both classes were learning the same thing,”

⁵⁶ Potowski, 2007, p.45

⁵⁷ Collier & Thomas, 2004

⁵⁸ Handscombe, 1994, p. 354

⁵⁹ Met, 2008, p. 61

“Yes. This way students see the parallels between language without translation or explicit instruction. Occasionally we will need to explicitly clarify, but we avoid that whenever possible. Language and literacy instruction must be in all content areas throughout the school day⁶⁰.”

Alice raised an eyebrow. This school was very strange. Language not being a subject... weird. She glanced at her watch, 1:34.

“Thank you for your time, I appreciate your hospitality. I need to be returning to my hotel. I have to figure out my transportation for tomorrow.”

“Of course. Here’s my card. If you have further questions or perhaps, I don’t know. It’s South America, anything is possible.” Dra. Vadea smiled as she handed her card to Alice who tucked it into her notebook.

“Thank you again,” said Alice as she stepped out of the gate. She realized that her traveling companions had disappeared. She hailed a taxi and pulled out the key of her hostel. It had the address neatly printed on the fob. Alice sat back thinking about everything she had seen.

She had so many questions but she did not know how to articulate any of them.

⁶⁰ Hamayan, Genesee, & Cloud, 2013, p.115

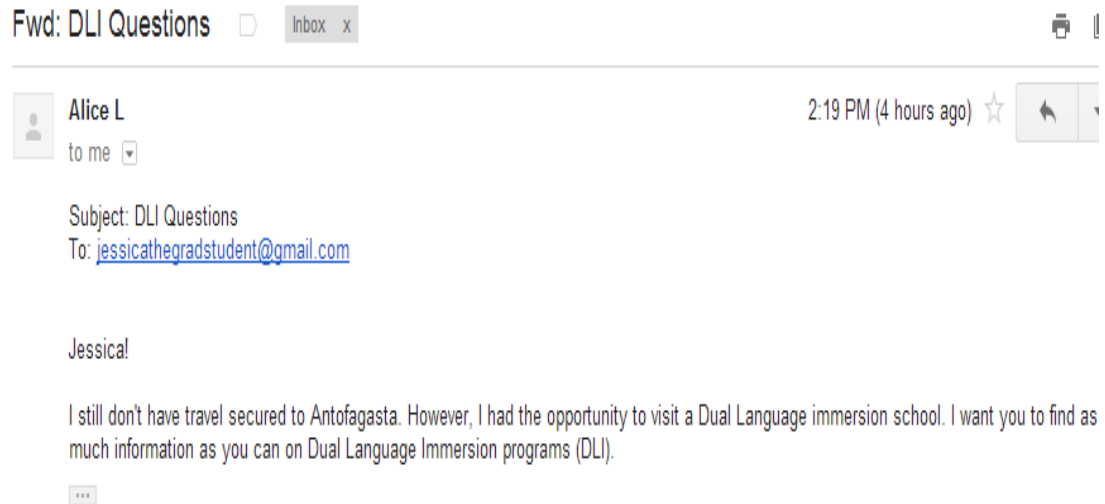
Alice arrived at her hostel. She paid the *taxista* and walked next door to the café. She bought a *bocadillo* and Coke. She returned to the hostel. There was internet and she sent a message to Jessica.

Alice felt better after eating. Her mind cleared a little. *What a strange school.* She began looking on-line for bus tickets to Antofagasta. She clicked a link where she saw that she could take a bus to Cordoba and then onto Jujuy then over the Andes, stopping briefly in San Pedro de Atacama then on to Antofagasta. Perfect.

It looked like these tickets were available through the hostel, a bus left tomorrow at 9:00. Perfect. She clicked to buy the tickets. Alice checked her Gmail account once more, when suddenly...

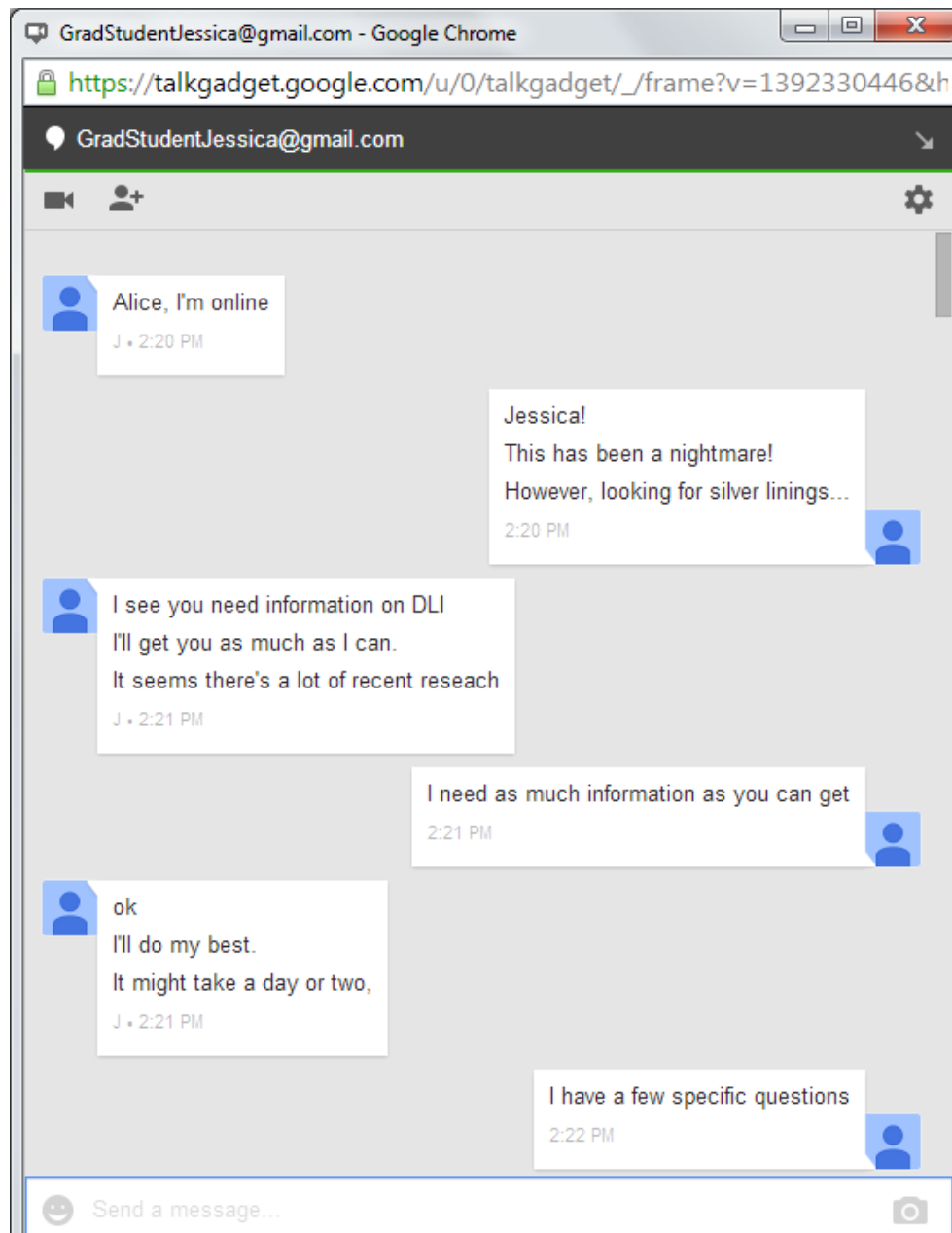
Chapter 6: What is DLI?

It has been a busy day in class. You get to the office and open your Gmail account. You see Alice has just sent you an email.



You sigh. This job sounded so simple. It's beginning to turn into another class. You start searching for articles and scrolling through journals. There's a flyer for a Dual Language School in your area. You print the brochure. This looks interesting.

You notice Alice is online. You message her.



great!
perhaps I can help you with those
J • 2:22 PM

1) Why has it taken so long for DLI to catch on?
I would imagine every parent would want his/her children to be bilingual
2:23 PM

I know
I wish my parents would have sent me to a DLI school.
But, the research indicates a political pressure against DLI
at least in the US
DLI has been successfully implemented in Canada and Finland.
J • 2:24 PM

really?
2:24 PM

an author by the name of Crawford, in 2003, outlined some of the political
strategies involved in defeating educational funding for various dual language
and bilingual education measures
It seemed that opponents to DLI used scare tactics to frighten parents from
voting in favor of funding DLI programs
J • 59 mins

GradStudentJessica@gmail.com - Google Chrome

https://talkgadget.google.com/u/0/talkgadget/_/frame?v=1392330446&h

GradStudentJessica@gmail.com

scare tactics?
2:27 PM

uhm... I'm scanning through here
it seems he said that parents were told their children would lose their English and monolingual English programs were the best way for English Language Learners (ELLs) to learn English.
J • 59 mins

it's not?
58 mins

no
It seems, according to the research and scores that multilingual instruction is best
J • 57 mins

Like grammar support in L1?
right
57 mins

no
not necessarily
J • 57 mins

A screenshot of a chat conversation with a light gray background. The chat is organized into four distinct message bubbles, each containing text and a timestamp. The first bubble is on the left, the second on the right, the third on the left, and the fourth on the right. Each bubble has a small blue profile icon in its top-left corner. The text in the bubbles discusses research by Collier and Thomas (2004) on DL programs, mentioning that DL students outperform their peers in reading and achievement tests, and that the studies were conducted in Texas, Maine, and California. The conversation also touches on the universality of the DL model.

Actually, according to Collier and Thomas from 2004, the data indicates that students who are enrolled in DL programs outperform their peers in reading and overall in achievement tests
J • 55 mins


where were their studies conducted?
53 mins

They researched schools in Texas, Maine, and California.
J • 52 mins


3 states!
52 mins


Yes.
Collier and Thomas compare some data that may not necessarily match, but the overall trends indicate DL students are not harmed by DL.
They even indicate that cohorts of students outperform monolingual peers.
J • 50 mins

Interesting
I have another question...
Is there a universal model for the DLI or are there variations? Could this possibly affect the effectiveness of the program.
48 mins


 It seems that there are indeed different models
I would imagine that some programs are more successful than others.
As James Asher says, 'Teaching is an art not a science'...


J • 48 mins

?
48 mins 


 I'm sure there's variation in teaching that would account for some effectiveness


J • 47 mins

what are some of the different models?
46 mins 

 There are many, but May (2008) seems to count two primary types
there are subtractive and additive programs


J • 44 mins

additive?
subtractive?
44 mins 

 yes... umm.. it seems..

Subtractive is where you start with the native language and it disappears as education progresses. The first language stagnates and eventually disappears
these programs seem to be least effective

J • 46 mins

I see
stagnation is always bad
46 mins 

GradStudentJessica@gmail.com

Create a group Hangout with J
yes... additive

that's where students receive instruction in both languages
there is L1 (first language) maintenance and support while L2 develops. The two languages grow simultaneously
J • 47 mins

what would that look like?
47 mins

I'm not sure. Subtractive is like English Only (which is what the opponents of DLI push for)
according to May (2008) even 'transitional' language programs are subtractive
J • 45 mins

ok
so, what do the good, additive programs, look like?
I saw a Dual Language School today
the students had strong English (L2) and they seemed to have have strong L1 (Spanish)
44 mins

Interesting.
May, he says Maintenance/Heritage Language programs are additive
J • 43 mins

Heritage Language
I didn't hear anything about that today
44 mins

No...uhm
it seems dual language immersion programs are the strongest additive programs
there are two-way and one-way immersion programs
J • 43 mins

what's the difference?
41 mins

Genesee (2008) outlines the differences in these programs
He talks about one-way programs exist where less than approximately 33% or more of the students in the classroom are native speakers of one of the languages.
J • 37 mins

...
what does that look like
that makes sense
36 mins

so two-way DLI is where
J • 35 mins

let me guess... at least 33% of the students speak one language natively and at least 33% of the students speak the other language natively
34 mins

exactly. Each place has slightly different rules, but yes...
J • 33 mins

how effective is this program?
36 mins

Well, this model, the two-way model, seems to be highly effective, especially if the program is 50%/50%
J • 36 mins

50/50?
36 mins

If the school day is equally divided between the two languages
I have a brochure from a local school, I'll scan it
The two-way immersion is better because the students have native models and because they want to play with their friends so the students are motivated to learn both languages
I think the brochure for the school I have is a one-way immersion. It seems to be appealing to monolingual English parents
J • 33 mins

I'll expect it
32 mins

Did you have other questions?
J • 32 mins

Yes.

Today, in the school there was a boy who was from Canada. He spoke mostly French. What does the research say about what to do with students who do not speak either target language natively?

27 mins



That's tough.

Oh, that reminds me

There was an article by Swain and Lapkin (2005) conducted in Canada (and Korea)

it discussed the importance of L1 support

sometimes L1 support is not possible

J • 26 mins

that's not fair then

25 mins



but... because of the environment created by a dual language environment...

the students are more accepting of students with a different language background and they are more likely to integrate themselves into the classroom culture

J • 25 mins

is it still additive?

24 mins

The screenshot shows a chat interface with two participants. The messages are as follows:

- Participant 1:** "I'm not sure
Perhaps if the teachers pull-in outside resources
J • 25 mins"
- Participant 2:** "like from a university or cultural center?
25 mins"
- Participant 1:** "exactly
J • 25 mins"
- Participant 2:** "very good
25 mins"
- Participant 1:** "Are there other specific questions?
J • 25 mins"
- Participant 2:** "No, not at this time. I will eagerly await your annotated bibliography on DLI
😊
25 mins"
- Participant 1:** "thanks...
I'll scan the brochure to you
J • 24 mins"
- Participant 2:** "excellent
25 mins"
- Participant 1:** "Have a good evening. I hope your trip gets better.
J • 25 mins"
- Participant 2:** "It will. It can't get worse. I should be in Antofagasta in two or three days.
25 mins"

At the bottom left of the chat area, there is a small smiley face icon.

It's a good thing you caught her. You scan the flyer. The DLI school looks really interesting. Perhaps you should go observe.

You click [send](#).

Hopefully there won't be much more drama.

So, Your school offers Dual Language Immersion... Now what?

DLI: What it means for you and your community

Your student has the opportunity to join his/her polyglot peers in the world. Your child can master two languages and content without sacrificing either.

My neighbor said...

My child would lose his English.

Truth: In a dual language immersion setting, students continue to receive support and instruction in English. Your child will not simply maintain his/her English, but it will improve!

My child's math and reading scores would suffer.

Truth: Students who are enrolled in a quality DLI program actually outscore monolingual peers on national exams. Learning two languages improves overall cognitive ability, even in math.

A second language is best learned in high school or college.

Truth: While this is a hotly debated topic, pre-pubescent language learners have more native-like fluency. Younger children are ideal language learners they tend to have less inhibition, their brains have undergone less dendritic pruning, and level-appropriate materials are also age-appropriate. Learning a language now is fun and FREE.

Students receive the same amount of content instruction as monolingual programs. The second language is merely the *vehicle* for learning.

Day spent in each language



English	Spanish
Literacy (Reading, Writing)	Literacy (Reading, Writing)
Math	Math
P.E.	Music
Social Studies	Science

Chapter 7: Córdoba and CLT

Alice's alarm went off; she checked it, "6:45." She quickly dressed, gathered her things and went downstairs.

She grabbed a pastry for breakfast and ran out the door; she walked to the bus terminal, ignoring strange looks from people watching her eat as she walked.

Alice boarded the bus. Half of the worn red velvet seats were occupied. She sat down in her assigned seat. This should only be a couple hours, then she could switch buses and head to Jujuy. She could be in Chile tomorrow!

The bus began its trip down the road. It was very noisy. Alice looked out the window as the scenery changed from urban to countryside. The bus stopped in a little town. Two people got off, four people got on. One of them was an older man with three huge suitcases. The driver argued with the man about having to buy another seat for his suitcases. He found room for them and in fifteen minutes they were off again. The driver sped through the countryside, probably trying to make up for lost time. Alice closed her eyes. She was awoken when the bus came to a screeching halt, gears grinding, she looked ahead. A herd of cows were crossing the road. "Villa Maria 15" she read on a white sign with black lettering.

In the town of Villa Maria the bus pulled into the station. All passengers were told they would have 30 minutes for a break. They would need their tickets and luggage may not be secure.

Alice disembarked the bus. She walked to the food court. There were greasy hamburgers and fries. She reluctantly ordered some. She found a seat among the crowded station, sat down, and began eating her lunch.

Stray dogs wandered close, hoping for a dropped morsel. The hamburger was dry and greasy at the same time. Alice couldn't eat it. She finished the fries and gave the hamburger to the dogs.

She found a restroom and freshened up. She looked at her watch, 2:24. She had six minutes to spare, she walked back to the bus. The dog she fed followed her.

"Sorry. All gone," she said to the dog as she climbed on the bus.

She was the only one on the bus. Alice felt uneasy, she checked the bus number and platform, it was her bus. The old man's luggage was still on. Alice sat in her seat and checked her watch, three minutes, two minutes. She saw a crowd of people walking toward the bus. She recognized them as her fellow passengers. They got on. Alice was relieved but she asked the lady who sat behind her, "*¿Vamos a Córdoba?*"

"Sí." Answered the woman flatly.

Relieved, Alice put her backpack under her seat. Three more hours to Córdoba and she should be able to catch a bus to Salta tonight.

Two Americans got on. “What time tomorrow are we meeting Phil at his school?” asked the middle-aged

“Nine-thirty, I believe,” answered the tall lean woman.

“He has been so excited to talk to us. He’s been blowing up my email box; I can hardly receive mail from anyone else.”

“I know! Mine too.”

The pair chatted on, Alice tried to focus on the scenery but she caught snippets of “communicative language teaching” and “second language acquisition”.

It was nearly seven o’clock at night when she arrived in Cordoba. Alice walked to the nearest hostel. It looked clean and there was a café closing up shop.

Alice managed to buy the last pastry; it was an apple filled pocket that the owner called, “*küchen de manzana*”. Alice got a room in the hostel. She noticed that there was a little office.

“¿Podría chequear mi correo electrónico?”

“Claro” answered the boy at the front desk.

Alice sat down at the computer and logged into her email, she saw that Jessica had sent a brief bibliography of DLI sources. “¿Podría imprimir algo?”

The boy looked nervous, “Sí...”

Alice clicked ‘print’ but nothing happened. She returned to the front desk, “No funcionó.”

The boy shrugged his shoulders.

Alice sighed, it’s not like she could get any of the books right away.

She went to bed, thinking about her journey so far. She wondered what communicative language teaching was as she drifted to sleep.

Alice awoke, dressed and went downstairs to the café for breakfast.

It was busier than she imagined. Alice was second in line. She gingerly took a menu from the shelf and began reading it. Everything looked so delicious.

“Sandra! They have pancakes!” exclaimed a man’s voice. The entire café turned to see who was speaking. He grinned apologetically. Alice recognized him from the bus yesterday.

Alice returned her attention to the menu.

"Discuple, no hay asientos disponibles," apologized the waiter.

"No, she can join us, we have space," offered the boisterous man.

"No, that's ok," said Alice smiling.

"No, the pancakes here are the best on the continent. Join us."

Alice smiled and consented. "Thank you. You are very kind, I'm Alice Leedell."

"I'm William Lobo and this is Sandra Blanc," he said. The woman named Sandra smiled. "I'm so sorry but I saw your printout in the office, I picked it up by mistake this morning. DLI?"

"Oh. No worries, yes. What about it?"

"We're friends with Dr. Vadea." Sandra offered.

The *mesero* came to the table, "*Me gustaría pan con dulce de leche y mate. Por favor.*" Alice ordered.

"I met her yesterday. She's a remarkable woman who has been able to implement her vision of education."

"We think highly of her too," smiled Sandra.

"Do you know Mr. Cheshire too?"

"No." Alice replied.

“Oh, we’re here to visit him today. If you were impressed by DLI, perhaps you would enjoy visiting at CLT school for adults.”

“CLT?” Alice asked.

“Oh,” William looked at Sandra and raised his eyebrows. “Mr. Cheshire will love to meet you!”

Alice’s food arrived, “*Pancito con dulce de leche y mate,*” said the mesero.

“CLT is short for communicative language teaching, it’s a methodology that looks at language as a means rather than the end of an educational goal.” Sandra said.

“It sounds interesting.” Alice said.

“We’re headed that way. We’ll leave after you finish your breakfast.”

Alice found that the mate was growing on her. She finished her breakfast quickly.

After they paid, they left for the school. *Another observation* thought Alice. *At least it’s more experience.*

Alice's companions were greeted by an enthusiastic, small, middle-aged man with deeply blue eyes. Wearing a double-breasted, electric blue and grey pinstriped suit, he was dressed as an eccentric used car salesman. He even had a perfect dazzling smile to match. Alice was astonished that anyone could manage to show every tooth while grinning.

"Welcome! My dear friends! It has been too long, too long indeed."

Alice pegged this man as one who would use six words where two would do.

"Bill! Sandra! My dear, dear friends." The small man walked up and greeted them each with the customary Argentine kiss. "It seems you have brought a new friend that I have not yet met," he said, nodding at Alice.

He held out his hand and gave Alice a bone-crushing handshake. Alice readjusted her ring; it seems he had actually bent it. "I am Phil Cheshire, director here at the Language School for Communication in Córdoba."

"This is Alice Leedell," said Sandra, before Alice could introduce herself. "She is an educational consultant on her way to Chile. She is very interested in seeing what you do here. She is not familiar with Communicative Language Teaching."

Mr. Cheshire looked as if Christmas had come early, "Really?"

"No, she has never heard of CLT." added Bill.

“Well, then, I am honored to not tell her, but to *show* her, in true CLT style,” exclaimed Mr. Cheshire straightening his lapels as he teetered on his toes and heels.

“We need to talk to Ms. Mathis about some of the scheduling concerns you had.” Sandra said.

“Oh, of course. I do remember. Please go ahead. Would you think it rude of me if I were to give Ms. Alice here a tour of our school?” asked Mr. Cheshire, his blue eyes shining.

“No, please. We are in town for several days.” Bill replied.

“Wonderful!” exclaimed Mr. Cheshire, clasping his hands together. “Let’s get started, shall we?” he opened the door for Alice.

“Our school began in 1998, with a single class and a revolutionary idea. Language is best acquired when it is *used* in a *meaningful* way for the purpose of *communication*.^{61,62,63} Since then, it’s taken off. We teach adults English... or rather adults acquire English here. You see, it is a student-centered idea.”

Alice blinked; this man was clearly passionate about his work.

⁶¹ Savignon, 2002

⁶² Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001

⁶³ Lee & VanPatten, 2003

“Here we have a kitchen for the students to *use* English to cook. We have various rooms for games and a computer lab so students can see the language in *use* in a non-classroom setting.”

Alice followed Mr. Cheshire down the hall.

“And in here,” announced Mr. Cheshire, “we have our newest students. This is the second week of our beginning level.”

“Where is the teacher?” inquired Alice.

“She’s in there.”

Alice blinked. She only saw a projection of a drawing with boxes and lines; perhaps a family tree. There was no teacher at the front of the class, not at the desk, not even in the back. All of the student desks had been pushed aside. Alice only saw students mingling. This is the most inefficient classroom Alice had ever seen; students, running amok.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” asked Mr. Cheshire rhetorically.

“No one’s teaching. The students are just up talking.” Alice retorted.

“Exactly!” smiled Mr. Cheshire, teetering on his toes with delight. “A good teacher creates the conditions and environment⁶⁴ for interacting which leads to learning. A good teacher designs the blueprints for the conditions for

⁶⁴ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003

acquisition and the students do the work. As you know, whoever is working is the only one learning.⁶⁵ Listen closely!” beamed Mr. Cheshire.

Alice strained her ears to catch snatches of student conversation. To her amazement, it was in *English*. The students were introducing themselves and asking questions about familial relations. They were asking each other their names and ages. A random exclamation of “You’re my FATHER!” or “You’re my brother!” could be heard from the corners of the room. No one looked bored. Everyone was speaking English. Everyone was engaged simultaneously.

“This is a beginner class?” Alice asked, incredulously.

Mr. Cheshire smiled nodding triumphantly. “That’s right, no grammar drills, no worksheets. Just good ole fashioned communication. The grammar is integrated into the lessons. The teachers determine how much, and what grammar is necessary for each lesson⁶⁶. It is modeled but never explicitly taught, translated, or *heaven forbid* drilled. Honest language use. The waiting lists for our classes are dozens long for each class. Some businesses buy subscriptions so their employees are always enrolled. I wish more people would catch on. I’m not selling a franchise here. I’m simply demonstrating a more effective, efficient, effervescent way to teach and to learn!”

Alice thought he might pop with excitement.

⁶⁵ Wong, 2009, p. 168

⁶⁶ Ballman et al. 2001, p. 32

“Look, here, a role-play. The students are at a family reunion.” He indicated the classroom. He motioned for Alice to follow as he trotted to the next classroom.

“Oh, this is our advanced beginning; they’ve been here for nearly two months. Let’s peek in and see what they’re up to...” smiled Mr. Cheshire as he flexed his fingers.

Alice peeked into the classroom. The students were in ad hoc groupings⁶⁷. The teacher was sitting in a casted chair, moving from group to group—she listened a lot, but seldom spoke.

“Why are the students grouped together. Won’t they have trouble paying attention to the teacher?” Alice asked.

“We do not like rows, it creates inequality among students, the teacher-fronted arrangement is extremely controlling, emphasizing only teacher-student visual contact and thus helping the teacher completely occupy the centre of the communication network⁶⁸. This enforced teacher-dependency is an obstacle to group processes. Remember, language is used for communication, not lecture. It should be taught as such,” Mr. Cheshire replied. “Besides,” he continued, “willingness to communicate, WTC, generally improves in group settings because

⁶⁷ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 82

⁶⁸ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 80

students wish to gain *affiliation*⁶⁹. That is to say students feel that they belong to a group.”

The students sat in groups of three. They were looking at various advertisements from an American magazine.

“Go in, go in,” whispered Mr. Cheshire, motioning.

Alice walked in, eyeing the advertisements; she recognized most of the products. They ranged from shampoo, to laundry detergent, to fabric softener, and even toothpaste. The students seemed to be examining the language of the ads.

“This says ‘whiten’.” She heard a student say to her partners.

The teacher noticed Mr. Cheshire and rolled to him. “Good afternoon.”

Alice involuntarily looked at her watch, *where had the time gone*, she thought.

“A wonderful afternoon to you Ms. Duchesson. Would you mind outlining for Ms. Leedell here what your students are doing?”

“Not at all,” Smiled Ms. Duchesson. “My students have been studying verbs. Last week we used ‘shampoo writing.’”

Alice looked was bewildered.

⁶⁹ MacIntyre et al. 1998, p. 551

“Have you ever noticed that even though most literate people know how to use shampoo, the shampoo companies still find it necessary to include written instructions?”

Alice raised an eyebrow but nodded.

“There’s not much space on a shampoo bottle. The authors of the instructions have to be exceedingly concise and deliberate with their verbiage.”

Alice, having washed her hair nearly every day in her life had never paused to think about this.

“Using ‘shampoo writing,’ the students had to write directions for a basic, routine task. They found it necessary to find concise verbs that related specifically to each action. We’ve continued to spice up our vocabulary. Authentic ads are a great way to help students learn about action-specific verbs for consumers.⁷⁰ Additionally, authentic ads integrate cultural knowledge into the classroom⁷¹ “

Alice reflexively interrupted, “authentic?”

“Oh yes. I try to incorporate authentic materials into my teaching whenever possible. Essentially, they are materials taken from real-life sources rather than unauthentic or scripted materials, like textbooks.^{72,73} These are

⁷⁰ Ramírez, 1995, p. 221

⁷¹ Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 180

⁷² Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 85

materials that are resources that come from the target language's culture and are produced for a purpose other than explicit language learning.⁷⁴ They help students see that culture is embedded in the language. Sometimes it is difficult to bring such a *foreign* culture into the classroom. The students enjoy using authentic materials. Magazine ads are perfect."

"That makes sense," replied Alice.

"The students will be creating their own verb-laden ads. The students will describe what a product does in English, using the authentic ads as a model."

"That does sound like fun," Alice said thoughtfully.

"Next week we will springboard into résumés," Ms. Duchesson added.

Alice was puzzled, and her face must have shown it.

Ms. Duchesson quickly continued. "Students often have difficulty describing what their job duties or skills include. By continuing with action-specific verbs, they can better illustrate what they have done."

"These are all business students, except that one," said Mr. Cheshire nodding in the direction of a petite woman. "She is here because she will be moving to the U.S. in two months on account of her husband's job."

⁷³ Savignon, 2002. p. 97

⁷⁴ Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 367

Alice nodded. She liked those students; they were highly motivated. They were always better than the students who simply took a language class for credit.

As if he could read her thoughts Mr. Cheshire said, “We don’t give grades here. Students are here for language acquisition. Classes run every two-months. Typically, students complete classes and are ready for the next class in the series of progression; students tend to move in cohorts. Occasionally we have a student who wishes to repeat a class. It is not disadvantageous, because the students create the learning environment. A student can take the same class four times and each time it is completely different. The students essentially run the classroom. The teacher creates the conditions for students to learn. “

“That’s a lot of work!” exclaimed Alice, “A different answer key each class...”

“It is a lot of work, but there are no answer keys,” assured Ms. Duchesson. “I know what language will be necessary for my students to acquire before continuing on their paths to fluency. I see where they are and think about what they will need to get where they’re going. Experience helps me anticipate what the students will need. I have had stunning, successful lessons, and I’ve had utter failures. I see those as a learning opportunity for me, as a teacher, to improve. But essentially, I build a blueprint for the lesson, and anticipate what materials the students will need. They do all the work.”

Mr. Cheshire remarked, “Mark Twain once said, ‘If teaching were as simple as telling, we’d all be a lot smarter than we are.’ Thank you, Ms. Duchesson, for your time. Shall we continue?” he said, gesturing toward the door.

They stepped into the hall. “She’s a remarkable teacher; she lets the material do the talking.”⁷⁵

“So,” Alice began, “your students just do these activities? They don’t do worksheets or exercises?”

“In short, to move students beyond the role of recipient, we must give them both the responsibility and the appropriate materials.”⁷⁶ No one ever flies to a foreign country and is refused a stamp on his passport if he is unable to conjugate *-ar* verbs into pluperfect! I apologize. I do enjoy my soapbox. Language teaching just seems so plain, so simple, but alas.” He shook his head. “Come let me show you more.” Mr. Cheshire said, his enthusiasm returning.

“Here we are, this class is our intermediate class, and it focuses more on writing and literacies. Let’s see what genre they’re using today.” Mr. Cheshire grinned.

“Oh my goodness! Look what came to your hotel room!” exclaimed a lean young man dressed in khakis and a blue polo shirt. He distributed a single

⁷⁵ Finkel, 2000

⁷⁶ Lee & Van Patten, 2003, p. 23

envelope to each four students. They sat at tables; there were roughly twenty adult students in the classroom.

The students immediately began opening the envelope and reading the contents.

“Welcome! The young man said. I’m James Penny.” He shook Alice’s hand.

“What are you up to today?” asked Mr. Cheshire, warmly.

Mr. Penny beamed, “Today, it seems the students have lost their luggage.”

Alice shivered.

“A topic close to home?” Mr. Penny asked, noticing her reaction.

“Yes, a bit.” She smiled.

“Here, take a look. See how close the document is to reality. I didn’t have a recent letter from an airline.”

Alice joined a group. The handout was a letter from an airline. Alice recognized it as a business letter. The standard apology for losing the luggage, but it included instructions, in paragraph form on how to go about reclaiming the lost luggage⁷⁷. The letter looked authentic⁷⁸, and it was clear what actions the

⁷⁷ Ramírez, 1995, p. 226

students were supposed to take. They had to reply in a business letter. They had to describe the suitcase and its contents. They were also supposed to include contact information.

“How clever,” exclaimed Alice. “And you don’t even have to teach.” She smiled, this last statement clearly tongue-in-cheek.

A student noticed Alice, “Are you new here?” she asked.

“No, I’m just looking at how you’re learning.” Alice remarked, slightly shocked at her word choice, *you’re learning* as opposed to *they’re teaching*.

The student did not miss a beat, “I like this school. I have been to three other language schools. They only have ‘repeat after me’ exercises. This school is different. Here I communicate my own opinion in my own words, listening and understanding others’ opinions, this is important.⁷⁹ This school is better.”

“It really is too bad she isn’t here on Friday.” Mr. Penny said to Mr. Cheshire.

“Oh. Indeed,” said Mr. Cheshire, suddenly crestfallen.

“What happens Friday?” Alice asked.

Mr. Cheshire exclaimed, “Oh! Fridays are *Fusion Fridays!*” teetering on his toes.

⁷⁸ Shrum & Glisan, 2010p. 85

⁷⁹ Savignon, 2002, p. 86

Mr. Penny looked at Alice, “On Fridays, we mix the different levels of students for a task-based activity. This Friday, I believe, the students have a situation that they have to negotiate in a business setting. An intermediate student plays the customer and has purchased a DVD from a beginner student, playing the clerk.”

“In real life?” interrupted Alice.

“No, in the scenario. Unfortunately, the DVD is faulty. The intermediate student, customer, goes back to the *clerk*,” as Mr. Penny used air quotes, “ and asks for amends. The beginner student has to go to the advanced student, who is the manager. The three students must resolve the conflict in English.⁸⁰”

“How interesting, I would never think of combining students. Aren’t the more advanced students usually bored and the beginners usually frustrated?” Alice asked.

“No. We know that generally students benefit most by being grouped with students who are academically at the same level; however, lower-level learners improve the most when they are with more capable peers⁸¹. This way, the students are actively participating and they must choose their words for the purpose of communication in order to negotiate meaning,” continued Mr.

⁸⁰ Ramírez, 1995, p. 238

⁸¹ Jensesn, 2005, p. 97

Penny. “And because the interaction is contextualized, students benefit from comprehensible input.⁸²”

Some of these last terms were lost on Alice. She made sure not to show it. She knew she needed to research Communicative Language Teaching. It might benefit her, and her clients, as an educational consultant.

“Goodness, look at the time,” remarked Mr. Cheshire looking at his oversized gold watch. “Do you have more questions? Would you like to come back tomorrow?”

Alice shook her head. “No, no, you have been very helpful. I have a lot to think about. I appreciate your time and hospitality.”

He snapped out a business card from an inside pocket from his double-breasted suit. “Please, do not hesitate to call or email. I enjoyed your visit. You now have a friend in Córdoba.” He grinned his dazzling toothy smile and held out a hand for Alice to shake.

Alice, remembering her ring, instead opted for the traditional Argentine kiss.

“*Adiós,*” she waved.

“*Hasta luego,*” he replied.

⁸² Krashen 1985

Her traveling companions had disappeared. She caught a cab back to the hostel. The computer was free so Alice sent an email to Jessica, her assistant.

~ ~ ~ ~

On Wed, at 07:04 PM, Alice L <alicetheeducationalconsultant@gmail.com> wrote:

Jessica!

I am outside of Córdoba, Argentina, I hit another travel snag. I will be spending the night here at a little hostel. I will take a bus to Salta then on to Antofagasta from there, I'll be in Antofagasta by Friday. Please make necessary arrangements.

I had the opportunity to visit a language school that uses Communicative Language Teaching. It seemed *highly* effective. The students were *using* the target language and the teachers... they were facilitating more than teaching. It seemed to work though. Please do some digging and research CLT for me. Please give me a brief background. I have 5 questions: 1) What are CLT's foundations? For example, what role does input play? 2) What are the key features of CLT? 3) What are some drawbacks to CLT? 4) What is CLT's position on grammar instruction? 5) Is it feasible to use CLT. I know I saw it in a school today, but is it really possible to implement CLT?

I await your annotated bibliography and answers.

~ ~ ~

I am very hungry and tired. I'll be in touch.
~Alice

The scent of something meaty and delicious had made the final lines of the email agonizing. It had occurred to Alice that she had not eaten lunch. She went next door to a little bar/restaurant and ate what was called a *Milianesa napolitana*. It was a tasty beef-veggie-pizza-thing. Stomach satisfied, she returned to her room, closed her eyes, and fell asleep almost immediately.

Chapter 8: Brain-based learning; Wax museums and bubbles

“We’re sorry to have abandoned you yesterday,” said William who was sitting in the café.

“Did you enjoy your visit?” asked Sandra.

“I did, it gave me a lot to think about. Thank you.”

“No worries,” said Bill. “By the way, what are your plans from here? Would you like to go back to the school with us?”

“No, I really must be leaving, I have a long way to go,” Alice replied. “I need to go to Salta to catch a bus over the mountains.”

“Perfect. We have another colleague in Tucumán. It’s on the way; she is the director at an elementary school. It is based in research and brain-based pedagogies. Haha, that sounds weird, based in brain-based,” William laughed at himself.

“Brain-based?”

“We’ll send a message, her name is Tamara Virnes. Here’s her information.” Sandra gave a card to Alice, it was printed with a street address.

“Thank you. I will see her then.” Alice walked to the bus station and caught the first bus to Tucumán.

A middle-aged, athletic woman with dark hair and light eyes walked forward and stretched out her hand to Alice, "Welcome to our English Immersion school, my name is Tamara Virnes. I'm the director here," she said warmly, yet matter-of-factly in an Australian accent, "this is our seventh year. We are privately funded, but we welcome all students. Many students come from the community on a *beca*, but we have students here whose parents are international, they pay tuition."

"I'm Alice, I'm an educational consultant." She held out her card. Tamara took it gingerly. She held out her other hand welcoming Alice into the courtyard of the building.

"We pride ourselves on school safety. We have not only basic physical safety measures as required by government regulations but also emotional safety measures in place. We provide education on bullying, what it looks like, and how to stop it both at school and on-line. We also have a full-time nurse at school. Students need to feel safe in their environment. Are you familiar with Stephen Krashen's *Affective Filter*? "

Alice nodded, “The Affective Filter Hypothesis proposes that students with high anxiety and low motivation will not learn and students with high motivation and low anxiety will learn a language more easily.⁸³”

“Yes, but remember, attitudinal variables relating to success in second language acquisition generally relate directly to language acquisition but not necessarily to language learning.⁸⁴ It is important to differentiate between learning and acquisition.

Alice shook her head to herself, “Yes. I keep forgetting.”

“I digress,” Tamara continued, “Concerning the Affect Filter, there is actually ‘research that represents the actual neuroimaging visualization of it.’⁸⁵ PET scans show how information coming from the sensory receptor areas of the brain must travel through the amygdala to get into the hippocampus, from where it can be sent to the executive function and long-term memory storage areas in the frontal lobe. These scans demonstrate that when the amygdala is in its highly metabolic state of hyperstimulation from stress, these pathways leading to memory storage are blocked.’⁸⁶ We hope students feel safe. They report that they do. Our teachers also keep students engaged in the classroom; there is little room for anything else.” Tamara smiled. “Our teachers also ‘set

⁸³ Krashen, 1982

⁸⁴ Krashen, 2000, p. 37-38

⁸⁵ Willis, 2006, p. 26

⁸⁶ Willis, 2006, p. 26

students up for success' because as you know, success generates success. The most challenging part of doing something is knowing *if* it can be done."

Alice thought, wondering if arriving in Chile could be done. She brought her attention back to Tamara.

"Would you like to take a gander at some of our classrooms? I'm sure, as an educational consultant you've seen so many—perhaps you could give us some advice."

"I would like that." Alice nodded, smiling.

"Smashing. Would you like to see a third grade classroom and a fifth grade classroom?" Alice nodded again. Tamara led her through the courtyard and down into a hallway. Inside there were cement stairs leading into a basement with three doors, one on each wall in the small atrium space.

Alice walked into the basement classroom on the left; Tamara flipped on the light switch, the fluorescent lights flashed twice and hummed on. Although Alice's initial impression was that of a sterile jail cell, it was apparent that the teacher had made efforts to humanize the space as much as possible. She had placed a lamp in a dark corner. Plants surrounded a lit twenty-gallon fish tank as fan-tailed guppies and mollies swam among pavonine rocks. Five student-sized tables were surrounded by four student-sized chairs each with chair pockets.

Tamara remarked, “Mrs. Williams appreciates the fact that the environment affects the learning. Pleasant decoration is not merely the icing on the cake but has been found to play an important role in facilitating learning.⁸⁷ Even the placement of chairs and desks exerts significant influences upon the status of students occupying them, the patterns of participation, various leadership opportunities and the affective potential of group members.⁸⁸ When you see her in action, well, her students in action, they usually work in groups, you’ll see what I mean.”

A rocking chair was next to the white board. A brightly colored rug covered the floor space just in front of the chair. Three bookshelves were filled with reading and reference materials. Three beanbag chairs sat invitingly at the base of the shelves.

Graphic organizers hung about the walls. One of the more prominent ones was scrawled on a giant PostIt. A blue word “Farming” was written in the center, circled in blue. Just outside of the blue ‘bubble’ were four black bubbles, each containing a word, “food”, “economy”, “environment”, and “education” respectively. From each of those bubbles, scrawled in green third-grade penmanship styles, were words like, “necessary”, “export”, “fertilizer”, “jobs”, “college,” and “motivation”.

⁸⁷ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 83

⁸⁸ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p.77

Another PostIt was still on the board. Inside its blue bubble was “Education”. This seemed to be a current topic that the class was working on.

Alice imagined what the children might devise. Words like “teacher” and “textbook” surfaced, but suddenly Alice glanced back at the first PostIt; the students had not chosen “farmer” and “tractor” for the prior PostIt. These words were conspicuously missing. These third-graders volunteered answers concerning outcomes and effects. Perhaps she should take Tamara up on her offer to observe. No normal eight-year old would come up with these answers, unassisted. *No.*

Alice glanced at the clock. “What time does school start?” she asked tentatively.

“Students arrive at 8:45, class starts at nine o’clock. Would you like to stay and observe?”

“It would be very interesting; I must say you’ve piqued my curiosity. These are Spanish-speaking children?”

“Yes. This is an immersion school. They are here to learn in English. Would you like to visit the fifth-grade classroom?”

“May I?” Alice asked eagerly.

“Mrs. O’Danny’s class is the second door on the left once you’re upstairs, room twenty-seven.”

Alice climbed the stairs still incredulously going over the third-grade graphic organizers.

Room twenty-seven was where Tamara had described. Alice knocked and walked in.

The cinder-block bowling alley of a room was open. Student desks were pushed along the walls. The high-ceilinged pink-walled room was somehow inviting. There was a human quality to this room too. A single window provided natural light in the back of the room. Plants thrived in this room as well. Each student desk had 3-5 neatly stacked books on the top. Walking in further Alice noticed titles such as, *Nikola Tesla: Imagination and the man who invented the 20th century*, *Jim Henson: A biography*, *Steve Jobs*, *Walt Disney: An American Original* scattered among the desks.

“Sorry you caught us in the middle of a project,” said a female’s voice from the doorway. “I’m Mrs. O’Danny,” she continued, holding out a hand.

Alice shook it.

“We’re getting ready for ‘Wax museum’ in two weeks. We are in the beginnings of our research.” Mrs. O’Danny said warmly.

“Oh. What *is* wax museum?” asked Alice.

“The students must present a short, 1-2 minute presentation about a ‘creative’ person of their choosing. We are working on the “Creation” string of our curriculum. Students need to learn about what others have created before them. They will create a brief presentation that they can give multiple times throughout a one and half hour evening. Friends and family will come and learn about the various people who created important and interesting things. I try to provide as little structure as possible; I want students to take ownership of the project. I enjoy surprises.”

“Won’t you get junk?” Alice interrupted.

Chuckling slightly, “I used to worry about that too. It has taken me a while, but I have learned to trust my students. When I was first getting started, I worried that my students would be lazy if I wasn’t constantly pushing them. I found at the end of the day that I was the one doing all of the work. Remember, Harry Wong says, ‘Whoever is working is the only one learning.’⁸⁹ I was getting burned-out, and after only six years. I moved down here to Argentina and Tamara introduced me to new, exciting ways of teaching. We use brain-based research for our teaching. I had to learn about motivation before I could buy in to the system. Tamara was surprisingly patient. I suppose she thought I had *potential*,” Mrs. O’Danny smirked as she used air-quotes with this last word. She continued, “Yes, I had a lot of research to do, but many of the books were

⁸⁹ Wong, 2009, p. 168

applicable to the classroom, and written in a way that actually modeled what they taught.”

Now it was Alice’s turn to smirk. She could count on one hand the number of articles, books, or chapters she had read that actually pertained to genuine classroom learning.

“Motivation seems to be a worry of the past. I tried gold stars and treats but I found that external rewards seldom work very long⁹⁰. I used to think that I needed more power as a teacher, more power to punish, that I could punish my students to work or follow rules⁹¹. One of the most helpful articles on motivation was about the “Ten Commandments of Motivation” and it included ideas for me and my classroom. I needed to set a personal example; I had to learn to model the behavior I wanted to see⁹². I needed to create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere⁹³. I also needed to present the tasks properly⁹⁴, if the students did not know what I expected, I would usually be disappointed and frustrated. I know now that introducing assignments is my responsibility. I needed to develop a good relationship in the classroom⁹⁵. Now I see that students need power in the classroom—school is for *them* after all. I also set students up for success so they can build confidence in the classroom.⁹⁶ As the teacher it is also beneficial

⁹⁰ Kohn, 1993

⁹¹ Glasser, 1998a, p. 88

⁹² Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.215

⁹³ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.215

⁹⁴ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.215

⁹⁵ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.216

⁹⁶ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.216

for me to make the lessons interesting for the students.⁹⁷ I can do this by personalizing the lessons for the students and promoting learner autonomy⁹⁸. I have found that putting students into groups frees them from their dependence on me and, in doing so, gives them both power and freedom⁹⁹. It reduces behavior problems and management issues. And so I always begin by putting students into groups, a basic requirement for taking learners beyond the expected level of achievement is the belief that they *can* do it if they try –in other words, the teacher’s *trust* in the group.¹⁰⁰ Once students realize what they *can* do, and they know that I trust them, they are unafraid to try. I need to help my students be goal-oriented.¹⁰¹ Now students sometimes complain when a unit is over, they want to do more work,” remarked Mrs. O’Danny. “When students choose their topics and base their learning on what interests them they are already motivated. I can focus on skills rather than carrots and sticks.”

Alice paused, pensively. Thinking back to her classroom experiences, she realized she spent more time managing than teaching. She was always correcting and punishing behavior. She tried everything, names on the board, lost recess, smiley faces, treasure-chest for the little ones and detention and write-offs for the middle-schoolers. Nothing ever worked for very long.

⁹⁷ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.216

⁹⁸ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.217

⁹⁹ Glasser, 1998a, p.82

¹⁰⁰ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 102

¹⁰¹ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.218

“I think about what students need to do, not just learn.” Mrs. O’Danny interrupted Alice’s musings, “Students need to read a biography, and they need to summarize a longer reading passage, students need to narrate an event in sequence or chronologically. The Wax museum activity will meet all of these criteria. I simply design an activity and leave the learning to them. If I am worried that an assignment may be too unstructured, I will provide a rubric outlining my expectations.”

Suddenly, students started filing in, quietly. Alice looked at the clock, it was ten o’clock.

“Excuse me. The students have just returned from Music. Would you care to stay?”

“Oh, I don’t want to be a bother,” Alice stammered, she was interrupted by Tamara Virnes’ entrance.

“The third grade teacher Mrs. Williams is available.” Tamara smiled.

“Thank you for your time. You have given me a lot to think about.” Alice said as she left Mrs. O’Danny’s room. Mrs. O’Danny smiled as she turned to her students.

Tamara and Alice walked down the stairs towards Mrs. William’s third grade classroom.

“She’s a talented teacher,” Tamara noted.

“She is,” Alice agreed

Alice asked, “How long has Mrs. O’Danny been with you?”

“I believe this is her fourth year with us, but tenth teaching. Mrs.

O’Danny had a different notion of ‘teaching’ when she arrived. She used to teach ESL in the States. She thought teaching language was about rules and correction. She worried about discipline, but she learned, that students must sense that the teacher wants to help them be right rather than catch them being wrong¹⁰².

With a little patience, trust, and time, Mrs. O’Danny’s one of our most creative teachers. The students love her and learn in her class.” Tamara smiled wistfully.

“She seems to be concerned with motivation.” Alice noted.

“She is.” Tamara confirmed.

“Motivation is such a hot-button issue. Everyone’s talking about how to motivate students.” Alice stated, knowledgably.

“Ability and motivation—that have been traditionally found to be responsible for most of the variance in students’ academic performance—simply do not explain the whole picture.¹⁰³ Attitude towards a language, using a language by choice in social settings, not only in mandated settings is integral to the actual learning of a language¹⁰⁴. That’s where learning styles come into play.

¹⁰² Sousa, 2011a, p. 48

¹⁰³ Dörnyei, 2005, p. 24

¹⁰⁴ Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009

Mrs. Williams' knowledge of learning styles is quite evident in her classroom."

Tamara smiled. They arrived at Mrs. William's classroom.

"Hello, sorry," said breathlessly, a brown curly-haired woman with deep brown eyes and an irresistibly warm smile "I just finished walking my children to P.E. I'm Mrs. Williams," she said, holding out a hand.

Alice shook it. "Nice to meet you, I'm Alice Leedell. You'll have to forgive me; I was snooping around your classroom earlier."

"Wonderful. Did you find anything interesting?"

"So, why do you use these papers with bubbles on them?"

"We call them bubble maps, they are a kind of graphic organizer," smiled Mrs. Williams. "Linking information is important for learning; growing more brain connections¹⁰⁵ helps students learn. Learning is essentially the ability to retrieve information. By helping students organize their information, we help them learn. They must make connections between old and new information."

Alice nodded, "That makes sense."

"As teachers," Mrs. Williams continued, "we have only so many hours to help students learn a specific amount of stuff," she laughed. "Remember, effective teachers know how to guard instructional time as their most precious

¹⁰⁵ Willis, 2006, p.4

resource, packing as much as they can into class time.¹⁰⁶ I work so that class time is used as efficiently as possible. The goal of research-based education is to structure each lesson to rely less on inefficient and tedious rote memory.¹⁰⁷ For example, simply using flashcards is inefficient. They are isolated bits of information, and only have one, maybe two points of input. Copying notes is inefficient, there is one source of input and the students do not do anything with the information. There are more effective strategies that can promote better learning, that is to say better processing and organization of information. Some of these strategies include partner discussions and Think-Pair-Share. Students can write *dend-writes* instead of notes. These often include doodles because knowledge is stored in two forms—a semantic or linguistic form that holds the meaning and an imagery form for image-based knowledge^{108,109}. These doodles help learners visualize abstract information¹¹⁰. We also use these graphic organizers for students to see relationships among ideas. Being able to see how information fits together in chunks is, therefore, a hallmark of learning, a way of working with larger and larger amounts of information.¹¹¹ Furthermore, students can visualize the information to not only make connections but to have insights and draw new conclusions.¹¹² ”

¹⁰⁶ Wong, 2009, p. 126

¹⁰⁷ Willis, 2006, p.6

¹⁰⁸ Sousa, 2011b, p. 39

¹⁰⁹ Marzano, 2001 ,p.73

¹¹⁰ Willis, 2006, p.11

¹¹¹ Wolfe, 2001, p.100

¹¹² Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p.79

“But why drawings? Can’t students write the words?” Alice asked.

“These drawings are strategies that lend themselves to different learning styles. I’m sure you are familiar with Howard Gardner.”

“He’s the guy with the idea of different styles of learning, right?” Alice answered.

“Yes, he calls them, *Multiple Intelligences*; they include, but are not limited to linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, and so on.”¹¹³ Mrs. Williams clarified. “They are modes in which a person is geared to learn and live. Everyone has every intelligence to some level; some intelligences are more prominent than others. These are the modes in which the individual learns best and the mode in which he/she performs best.”

“But you can’t have some students act out their homework while others draw pictures! Can you? In the real world a boss wouldn’t play charades with his employees to conduct a business meeting any more than a doctor would sing a diagnosis,” Alice interrupted.

“No. That wouldn’t be fair to the students to only teach or assess in their strengths. In the classroom, as the teacher, I try to present opportunities for learning in multiple ways, and I try to provide opportunities for students to produce learning outcomes in multiple ways. There are unmistakable differences among learning styles. For example extroverts are more talkative and use fewer

¹¹³ Gardner, 1991, p. 15

pauses than introverts, while the latter tend to use more formal speech with more careful grammatical constructions.¹¹⁴ Each student has the opportunity to find a lesson that matches his/her learning style, but there are times those same students are challenged to think, learn, and perform outside their comfort styles. Students need to be prepared to meet challenges, but they also need to understand that tasks have more than one solution. In the classroom, I try to provide a safe environment to help students lower their Affective Filters¹¹⁵ and experience continued success, and sometimes, surprise success or success that is earned is the most valuable kind.”

“I see,” said Alice, dubiously.

Picking up on Alice’s disbelief, Mrs. Williams added, “Would you like to stay until lunch? You can see how it works.”

Alice raised an eyebrow, but smiled. “Thank you, it wouldn’t be a bother?”

“Not at all. I need to collect my students,” smiled Mrs. Williams. “I’ll return shortly.”

The children returned with Mrs. Williams.

¹¹⁴ Dörnyei, 2005, p. 25

¹¹⁵ Krashen, 2000

“Children, how was P.E.?” chimed Mrs. Williams.

“P.E was wonderful,” chimed her class, in unison. Alice smiled smugly. She remembered the rote dialogs she would practice with her students. Mrs. Williams is all talk no meat. This is no different from what I used to do. I did brain-based teaching, we just called it teaching.

“I am glad that you have found your seats. I want you to think, you can use your detective notebooks if you need to review your dend-writes, what did we do in Social Sciences yesterday?” Mrs. Williams gave the children almost a full minute to think about what they had done.

Goodness that’s a lot of wait-time reflected Alice.

“Give me a thumbs-up when you feel that you are on the right track.” Most students put up their thumbs and smiled warmly at Mrs. Williams. Two students on the table next to the plants hesitantly put their thumbs up. “It looks like all of my detectives are ready to *confer*” Mrs. Williams put emphasis on this last word. “Let’s see who remembers what to do when we *confer*. The tables of Africa and Oceania know how to confer.” All remaining students looked to one of these tables before they began to share ideas in hushed voices. Alice noticed for the first time that above each table hung a notecard, suspended by a string and paperclip with each of the seven continents. “Three minutes and then we will *assemble*.” announced Mrs. Williams.

Alice sat, astonished, 'confer,' 'assemble'. These are not third grade words. Alice decided she would start 'dend-writing'. She pulled out her notebook. She wrote: *confer* and *assemble*. She drew a question mark around them.

Alice caught snippets of student conversation. To her surprise it was about 'impacts' and 'lasting effects' not about the newest toy or what to trade at lunch. These third-graders were having an *academic discussion*! Alice added this to her notebook: How do you start academic discussions with third-grade students?

After the students had departed for lunch, Alice carried her notebook to Mrs. Williams.

"I have a few questions," announced Alice. She startled herself after hearing the tone of her voice, it was genuine inquisitiveness. She had never in her adult life muttered this phrase without calculating sarcasm. Alice felt a slight pang in her stomach, embarrassment.

"Great!" smiled Mrs. Williams warmly. Alice's pang of embarrassment vanished immediately.

"I noticed that you used advanced words with your students. Why....how..." stammered Alice.

Mrs. Williams looked kindly, “Yes,” she assured, “I thought it preposterous that an eight-year old could use such *advanced* vocabulary. The best vocabulary instruction is natural. By *incorporating* new vocabulary into daily context, students learn it more efficiently. Teachers should use concrete examples when presenting an abstract concept and by incorporating larger words into daily context¹¹⁶, it creates context and the students have an easier time learning the vocabulary. Words are simply a component of language. Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning.¹¹⁷ It would be inefficient to teach such vocabulary out of context. The students would struggle to organize it and recall it. Besides, it is impossible to teach all necessary vocabulary explicitly to the students. I could teach 300 words at best.¹¹⁸ I have to be creative in vocabulary presentation. When teaching academic vocabulary, I teach thematically¹¹⁹. However, whenever possible, I integrate words into ‘teacher talk’. Using words in context allows students to connect the words with meaning and situations.

“So, *confer* and *assemble* have actual meaning in action instead of being simple abstractions on a page.” Alice reflected.

Mrs. Williams smiled.

¹¹⁶ Sousa, 2011b, p. 39

¹¹⁷ Krashen, 2000, p.55

¹¹⁸ Nagy, 1984

¹¹⁹ Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 95

“I noticed that you gave a lot of wait time¹²⁰. Why so much? Doesn’t Harry Wong say something about using your time wisely?” Alice asked.

Mrs. Williams smiled, “He does. We have a lot to do. I can have my students recall information to help them relearn it. Students store the same information in different networks, depending on how they link it to their past learnings¹²¹. The way in which the students store information will require different amounts of wait-time on my part. If I call on the first hands that go up, I disadvantage my slower-retrieving students in two ways¹²². First, those students feel they do not get teacher recognition, which lowers self-concept¹²³ and they have to seek attention in other ways. Second, by not retrieving the information into working memory, they miss an opportunity to relearn it.¹²⁴

“I don’t mean to be rude, but I noticed that you don’t really...teach,” Alice hesitated.

Mrs. Williams raised an eyebrow but did not stop smiling.

Alice quickly continued, “...but the students learn. I saw something similar at another school I visited. An adult language school outside of Córdoba, they used Communicative Language Teaching. Could you tell me your thoughts on this?”

¹²⁰ Rowe, 1986

¹²¹ Sousa, 2011a, p. 114

¹²² Sousa, 2011a, p.115

¹²³ Sousa, 2011a, p. 115

¹²⁴ Sousa, 2011a, p. 115

“To be an effective teacher, I try not to monopolize the classroom discussion. It is through discussion with classmates that students practice important skills like negotiating meaning, clarifying and confirming information, elaborating on ideas, persuading others, disagreeing and evaluating options.¹²⁵ Besides, if I monopolize the classroom, not only am I depriving students of the opportunity to use and practice language, they must learn to depend a great deal on themselves, their own creativity, and other members in the classroom¹²⁶. Students spend their time learning and communicating with real language, used in thought and communication of thoughts that students so desperately need. Einstein said, “Education is not the learning of many facts but the training of the mind to think” (1921) in reference to a college education. Why wait until college to learn to think? I try to provide my students with the opportunity to think and share their thoughts with each other.”

“Your teachers work hard to create context for learning.” Alice added.

“They do. Take for example, in Brazil, adolescent street vendors use mathematics with 98% accuracy on a daily basis, but many of those same adolescents cannot perform those same skills on a formalized math assessment. Skills are highly context dependent, not that the learners lack any general cognitive capacity¹²⁷. By creating context, the students are motivated because

¹²⁵ Sousa, 2011b, p. 111

¹²⁶ Glasser, 1998a, p.82

¹²⁷ Jensen, 2005, p.117

they see application for skills and they will be more likely to know when to use them.”

“I’ve noticed some trends in your school,” Alice remarked to Tamara.

“Oh?”

“I’ve noticed that your teachers don’t teach, but rather your students learn. The students work together most of the time.”

Tamara smiled, “We contend for all classes in general, and specifically for language classrooms, the principal mediational means of all learning for any group is the *interaction* between the members. ... it is also the main means for constructing learning collaboratively¹²⁸”

Alice nodded, “I’ve also noticed that there are no behavior problems. I don’t see names on the board or children missing recess.”

Tamara smiled, “As far as behavior is concerned, students who are engaged in meaningful activities rarely have time to engage in counter-productive activities. Our school prescribes to Choice Theory, because it explains that we will work hard for those who we care for, for those we respect and who respect us, for those with whom we laugh, for those who allow us to think for ourselves, and for those who help us make our lives secure.¹²⁹ Behavior is affected by motivation. Motivated students tend to have fewer behavior issues.

¹²⁸ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 76

¹²⁹ Glasser, 1998b, p. 24

Demotivators include learned helplessness and lack of positive relationships¹³⁰. Brain-based education believes that it is necessary to limit these for successful learning.”

Tamara changed her demeanor, “Generally, do you like what you have seen?” Tamara asked. Although it was a rhetorical question, Tamara asked it in a genuine way. She genuinely wanted to know if Alice had appreciated the work at the English Immersion School.

Alice thought, and pensively replied, “Yes, yes, I liked what I saw. In fact, I am quite impressed. You have given me a lot to think about. Thank you.”

Tamara smiled and handed Alice her card. Alice pocketed it gingerly.

“*Gracias por venir.*” Tamara said as she walked Alice to the gate in the courtyard that exited to the street.

Alice shook Tamara’s hand, “*Gracias por invitarme.*”

Alice turned. A small black liebre was waiting for her. She got it, and it took her swiftly to the bus station. Alice caught a bus to Salta.

Alice reviewed her notebook on the surprisingly uneventful ride.

In Salta, Alice found a hostel with Internet. Alice checked her gmail account.

¹³⁰ Jensen, 2005, p. 103

She smiled as she read Jessica's annotated bibliography about CLT. Alice wrote a short email to her assistant Jessica:

Subject: Thanks for the CLT report
To: jessicathegradstudent@gmail.com

Dear Jessica,
Thank you so much for the thorough annotated bibliography. I appreciate your time and answering my questions.
Today I had the opportunity to visit a school that used research-based and brain-based teaching. Will you leave a note on my desk to research it when I return from Chile, if I ever get there. I plan to stay here in Salta tonight. I will take a bus through Jujuy to San Pedro. I'll contact you from there.
Have a good evening.

~Alice

She grabbed dinner. Alice climbed the stairs to her small room. Washing her face, she reflected on what she had witnessed today—how different teaching was had she'd been taught. She brushed her teeth thinking about how many hours she had wasted in the classroom. Alice crawled into bed, clicked off the lamp and fell into an uneasy sleep.

Chapter 9: The Stover Sisters: Heritage Language Researchers

This should be a fairly short ride, Alice thought as she boarded the bus in Salta. Jujuy is not too far away. She was definitely beginning to feel the altitude as she sipped her water bottle.

This had to be the craziest, most surreal journey in her life. Just last week she was packing her worksheets and lecture notes in her suitcase, which was now nothing more than a crispy memory. This bus was not very comfortable – at least the trip would be short. Alice stopped suddenly in her thoughts, no. No, that never has anything to do with her actual arrival time. She half-heartedly wondered what adventure awaited her on this leg of the journey.

Alice began to imagine who she might find when she overheard two silver-haired women talking in pleasant hushes as they boarded the bus and settled into the seats in front of her.

“Oh no, I don’t think...”

“But what if we...”

“Perhaps if instead... look here, *language learners*, not *heritage speakers*.”

Alice smiled to herself, her interest was piqued. “I’m so sorry,” she interrupted, “but did you...”

“Oh my,” said the first woman, excitedly, in her airy voice, “are *you* a heritage speaker?”

“Don’t be silly Agnes,” chided the second. “She’s a native.”

“Oh, but what is she doing down *here*? Ooh, do you think...” she whispered this last part especially excitedly, “she has any *children*?”

“I haven’t a clue, don’t be rude.”

Alice sat, staring blankly at the two, “uhm, well, I just overheard you talking about language learning and I was interested. My name is Alice.” She held out her hand.

“What a pleasure, I’m Agnes,” smiled one, shaking Alice’s hand.

“And I’m Martha,” said the other, shaking Alice’s hand. “We’re sisters. We retired from school teaching about seven years ago...”

“Seven?” Agnes questioned.

“Seven.” Martha confirmed.

“Goodness me, I remember five, but six...I suppose, time flies at this age.”

“We retired from school teaching seven years ago...” continued Martha, “We noticed so many trends in our classrooms that we decided to see if there were predictable patterns to them.”

“We decided to research. You know, for the benefit of future generations. A legacy if you will.”

“We wish to look at heritage language learners. Particularly younger ones, in a non-United States setting, so much research has already been done there.”

“We have to find our niche – something a little different.”

“We’re looking for younger language learners, learners of English, who do not live in an English-speaking area, but whose families speak or spoke English natively,” Martha continued.

“It’s a bit tricky. There are a fair number of ex-pats here in Argentina,” said Agnes, expectantly.

“Yes,” replied Alice, “I’ve met a few. I’m an educational consultant and I’m just travelling,” added Alice looking intently at Agnes whose gaze only flickered with brief disappointment. “Uhm,” continued Alice, “what exactly is a Heritage Language?”

Agnes’ excitement returned to her face as her pale blue eyes lit up.

Martha began, “Heritage Language refers to...”

“No, it’s *my turn*, you told the last one about it,” interrupted Agnes.

“Oh. So I did; go ahead dear sister,” Martha motioned.

“Thank you. A Heritage language is a language spoken by a Heritage speaker.” Agnes smiled.

Alice looked puzzled, waiting for Agnes to continue, but the woman remained silent, smiling.

“Oh, I see,” said Alice, not seeing anything useful in that definition.

“Go on dear sister, don’t be rude. Can’t you see the poor girl’s still puzzled?” scolded Martha.

“Oh. Alright,” conceded Agnes. She drew a great breath and began “When a person comes from an old country to a new country, and in this new country the people speak a different language than they did in the old country, the language of the old country becomes a ‘heritage’ language in the new country for the children of the old country in the new country.” Agnes said, breathing for the first time since she began.

Alice blinked, more puzzled than before.

“Ok, dearie, put it to you this way,” Martha began to explain, “Let’s say Agatha comes from England. She speaks English right?”

Alice nodded.

Martha continued “Agatha decides to move to Argentina,”

“The climate is much more agreeable,” added Agnes.

Martha ignores her and continues, "In Argentina, Spanish is the spoken language."

Alice nodded.

"So she lives in Argentina. She is a Spanish-language learner. English is her native language. Well, let's say Agatha meets Fernando and they fall in love. Fernando, a handsome Argentine, speaks Spanish, natively. They eventually have children."

"I do love romantic stories," sniffled Agnes.

"Yes, yes, I know. Agatha's children will be bilingual, perhaps, if Agatha keeps her English alive at home."

Alice nodded in understanding, encouraging Martha to continue.

"Well, Agatha's children grow up, leave home and find Spanish-speaking Argentines of their own."

"It happens so fast."

"They have children. Agatha's grandchildren will probably not speak English at home. They might hear a word or two from mom or on the phone to Grandma Agatha, but for all intents and purposes, they will have to learn their English at school. These grandchildren of Agatha are Heritage Language Learners.

English is their heritage language^{131,132}. They might have cultural connections, but linguistically, they are not native English speakers.”

“I see,” said Alice, truthfully this time.

“In our classrooms, when we taught high school Spanish in Michigan, we noted that there was a stereo-type, a prejudice among fellow staff members, ‘Oh, his last name is Hernandez, he’ll do great in Spanish.’ This was not necessarily the case. Some students did well, but not necessarily better than their peers with last names of Zemanova and Uhelski.”

“This was frustrating. So we decided to do research, and hopefully publish it to put an end to this nonsense,” remarked Agnes.

“We don’t think that Heritage Language Learners are necessarily better at language learning than non-heritage it is just that they have more experience with a language in context and for the purpose of communication.”

Agnes added, “We propose that anyone can improve language skills and acquire a language quickly if they just seek out opportunities to do so.”

“Here is our proposed research study. We want to look at the relationship of time spent with the target language, in context, outside of class, and improved language test scores.” Martha pulled out a bound document,

¹³¹ Valdés, 2001, p.39

¹³² Wiley, 2001, p.33

resembling a movie script and gingerly handed it to Alice who began to flip through it.

“My name was *supposed* to go first,” Agnes quipped.

“Of course,” Alice assured.

“We designed it for the Lackstrom Linguistics Symposium at Utah State University. And don’t you go stealing our research ideas...” Agnes glared.

“No, of course not. You have my word,” Alice replied.

**The Effect of Access to Native Language Use on Target Language
Proficiency Scores: Comparing Heritage Language Learners and Non-
Heritage Language Learners**

By Martha Stover and Agnes Stover

Abstract

Heritage Language Learners (HLL) have been thought to possess special language learning abilities. Some people might attribute it to the “critical period” (Penfield & Roberts, 1959) and “language acquisition device” (Chomsky, 1956) or even that particular individuals might be genetically predisposed to a language and speaking traits (Grigorenko, 2009). It might be possible that HLL tend to excel in a language because of attitudes toward the target language and access to extracurricular use of the target language. In this study, we will measure the relationship between measured language proficiency and time spent engaging in extracurricular target language activities such as reading authentic texts, listening to fluent conversations, and interacting with fluent speakers. Through pretests and posttests to measure changes in target language proficiency and open and close ended questionnaires to note attitudes toward language learning and extracurricular target language use, we will compare HLLs with non-HLLs. The sample size for this pilot study will be 50 students enrolled in Argentine English language schools taking an English level III class in the fall semester. Half of the students will be heritage language learners and half will be non-heritage language learners. We will test for correlations between

extracurricular English use and increases in English proficiency scores. The prediction is that students who have more access to the target language will have greater gains as measured by an exam. If this is found to be the case, the implications of this study will impact the ways in which HLLs and second languages are taught and the support provided outside the classroom. HLLs understand that they provide unique benefits in the language classroom. HLL tend to bring cultural understandings and some linguistic background that can benefit other students in the classroom. If the prediction is supported by the results, the implication for second language teaching is that resource availability and allocation for extracurricular activities in the target language would be necessary and must be promoted.

Background

Heritage Language Learners (HLL) typically have more access to a target language than their foreign language learning (FLL) peers. We intend to explore the relationship between target language access and target language proficiency gains. We expect to find a strong positive correlation between time spent in extracurricular English activities proficiency gains. In other words, we expect students who spend more extracurricular time with authentic target language use to have greater gains in test scores.

Literature Review

While there is much research on the topic of Heritage Language Learners (HLL), it has been difficult to find a standard definition; many

authors have trouble defining the term (Hancock, 2002; Kondo-Brown, 2005; Lynch, 2008). According to Valdés, HLLs in the United States can include: children who are born in the United States, foreign-born immigrants who immigrated to the United States at a young age, American-born children of immigrant parents, and occasionally the American-born children of parents who were also born in the United States but whose parents immigrated to United States (2005). The experiences of these heritage speakers are similar. Often the HLLs hear and sometimes speak their heritage language (HL) at home and in their communities but do not have the opportunity to learn the language formally at school (unless bilingual or dual-immersion education is available), thus leading to a deficiency in literary skills in the (Valdez, 2005). These learners have some degree of background in the target language, this may even be their first language, but they live in a society that speaks a different language. In addition, Hancock (2002) notes the importance of dialect for HLLs in formal language classroom, noting, "Spanish speakers [in the United States] who encounter negative attitudes toward their dialects in the Spanish class may become embarrassed and reluctant to participate for fear of ridicule or correction" (2002, p. 1).

It is especially interesting to notice that HLLs often have difficulty defining themselves. Lee (2005) looks at whether language learners view themselves as HLLs or not. Because identity plays a large role in learning, it is important to look at the various motivations and identities behind the responses. Lee looks at which parameters students focus on to determine

their status. Some students use birthplace, ethnic heritage, exposure to language, religion, and even language proficiency to include or exclude themselves from “heritage” status (Lee, 2005). Once students are classified as HLLs, whether through self-reporting or language background, proficiencies and confidence in heritage vary greatly. Alarcón (2010) looks at self-reported proficiencies of HLL enrolled in a university language class. Most students report great proficiency in listening, with only occasional difficulties concerning accent. Literacy and speech differ greatly from student to student. Some report high literacy in the HL, others rely on primary language literacy skills to read in the HL. Writing seems to be the most difficult. One common feature, although there are exceptions (Webb and Miller, 2000), is the fact that HLLs enjoy using their HL because “they are proud of their heritage” (Alarcón, 2010, p. 278). Some students feel it is an obligation to achieve a certain level of fluency (Alarcón, 2005; Lee, 2005). Even though actual language ability may be lower than that of FL peers, as measured by various assessments, students who have HL backgrounds often self-report higher confidence in language skills than foreign language (FL) peers. (Kondo-Brown, 2005; Lee, 2005). Because of differences in HLL and FL learners, it is necessary to provide different instructional models for them.

Valdés, Fishman, Chavéz, and Pérez (2008) investigated programs that have been set up to promote HL learning. They found that typically, in the secondary and post-secondary fields, HL is taught as mainstream FL. Webb and Miller also address this fact (2000). Valdez, Fishman, Chavéz, and Pérez

looked for trends in programs and examined effectiveness for each model. Some researchers have also looked at patterns of HL use in comparison to FL use among HLLs and FLLs in the same class.

A common problem for language learners, in general, is the lack of opportunity to use and practice the target language authentically with others. According to Kondo-Brown, HLLs with parents who speak the target language self-report more target language use than other categories, especially those who are “general” heritage language descendants (2005). Research shows strong positive correlations between language proficiency and opportunity to use “authentic language” outside of class (Kondo-Brown, 2005).

Authentic materials were also referenced by Widdowson, a British researcher who discussed the ownership of a language. The question of *who determines the authenticity of language* arises. In this idea of language ‘ownership’ he defined authentic materials as he states, “Over recent years, we have heard persuasive voices insisting that the English presented in the classroom should be authentic, naturally occurring language, not produced for instructional purposes” (Widdowson, 1994, p. 386). It is generally accepted that authentic materials are part of ‘good practice’ in language teaching (Savignon, 2002). Through authentic material use, language learners have models of target language and target culture. Widdowson also highlights the relationship between language in culture, “ [n]ow the obvious point about this naturally occurring language is that, inevitably, it is recipient

designed and so culturally loaded.” (Widdowson, 1994, p. 386). In essence, authentic material is culturally-loaded material that is intended for consumption by native speakers who understand the culture of the material. Perhaps this inter-play between culture and language reinforces various linguistic aspects and helps language learners speak and maintain the target culture and the target language.

According to Kondo-Brown, who researched Japanese language students, the students who have a native Japanese speaking parent and self-identify as the heritage language “group seems to use more extensive contacts with Japanese as well as opportunities to use the language, especially with family members and for entertainment” (Kondo-Brown 2005,p. 575). This reinforces the idea that language access refers to more than circumstances, it must involve a meaningful interaction for communication.

This idea was also presented by Lynch (2008) who concluded after comparing data between Spanish language HLLs and non-HLLs: “It appears that the most decisive factors leading to the linguistic similarities among the participants are of a social nature: Do speakers regularly use Spanish at home? Do they use it in personal relationships? Do they frequently tune in to Spanish-language television or radio? Have they spent much time abroad in the Spanish-speaking world?” (p. 270). It seems language maintenance is more important than simply being born into a language. Access to the HL plays an important role in proficiency development. Language users need to

have genuine need for a language and the opportunity to use it meaningfully. It becomes necessary to find opportunities for learners to meaningfully use the HL.

HL schools create opportunities to use language, but the use is not always meaningful. Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, and Martin (2006) looked at British “complimentary schools” which are publicly funded after- school programs for instruction in a student’s HL. These researchers asked students about their HL use, the adolescent students said they felt uncomfortable using non-English language outside of school, even with friends from the school (2006). Test results of their HL abilities showed that they struggled with the target language. Schools need to foster an acceptance of language use. Again, this reaffirms the evidence that language use outside of the classroom is essential in language development and preservation.

Although HLLs are a subset of language learners, the key feature for improved language proficiency might be the opportunity to use the target language. For heritage speakers, time spent abroad is one of the best indicators of HL fluency and maintenance (Mikulski, 2010). Opportunities to use the target language in a meaningful way are imperative to language learning.

Research questions

While HLLs seem to out-perform FL peers in communication, and students who have opportunities to use a target language out-perform their peers who do not participate in such extra-curricular opportunities, still

several questions linger. In foreign language settings, do HL students have greater proficiency gains than students who take English in a foreign language setting? Does the number of hours that students have the opportunity to use English in an authentic way positively correlate to proficiency gains? Does the number of hours that EFL students have the opportunity to use English in an authentic way positively correlate to proficiency gains? Is there a significant difference between the correlations of the two cohorts? This study seeks answers to these questions.

Method

We will find 50 students between the ages of eight and ten enrolled in an English class, 25 of whom would be HLL and 25 of whom would be non-English background students. We will determine HL status through a questionnaire (see Appendix A). Also included on this questionnaire are open-ended questions that assess background and experience with the English language. All students will take an English proficiency test to assess proficiency in speaking, listening, reading comprehension, and writing prior to beginning classes. Students and their parents will be informed about the importance of using the target language outside of class, because without strong parental support, there [is] little motivation ...to seek additional skills in the home language” (Webb & Miller, 2000, p.25). The instructor, who would not be a researcher, will explain the differences between authentic language and inauthentic language. Students and parents will be asked to log,

weekly, the amount and types of English they have access to and use outside of class throughout the semester (see Appendix B). At the end of the semester, students will take a post-test similar in style to the pre-test.

Analysis

The students will be categorized by their responses to the background information. Students who indicate that they were born in an English-speaking country, their parents and grandparents speak English, they attended English-speaking schools, and English is spoken in the house will be considered “Native Speaker” (In which case the student may not be properly placed in the class). No native speakers will be used in this study. Students who indicate that they speak only a language other than English in the house, that they have no parents from English-speaking countries, will be “Non-Native” speaker and will be coded as EFL. The students who do not meet either of the criteria for native or non-native and answer ‘yes’ to four or more of the questions of having English background, would be considered a Heritage Language learner and would be coded HLL.

Students will take two proficiency exams as part of this study. The first test will be completed before classes begin, the second at the conclusion of the semester. The scores will be compared and we will look for significant trends in scores. We will examine gains between the first and second tests.

We will also ask students to keep extracurricular language logs (see Appendix B). We will tabulate the number of hours students spend working with English outside of class. We will look at totals during the semester.

We will compare the hours spent outside of class using the target language with proficiency score change. We will look for correlations. We will then separate HLL and EFL and compare their proficiency scores and hours in the log and determine if there is a stronger correlation for either group.

Expected Results

We would expect to see that students who use more English in an extracurricular setting would have greater gains in proficiency regardless of HLL or EFL status. We would expect that students who use English outside of the classroom with greater frequency would have greater gains in proficiency.

Implications of Expected Results

If this is the case, strategies towards Heritage Language Learning would shift towards maintenance rather than relying solely on background. Furthermore, L2 teaching practices would find support (resource and financial) for extracurricular, learner-oriented activities as recommended by Ellis (2012) rather than teacher-driven in-class exercises.

Appendix A

Name: _____
(first) (last names)

In which country were you born?: _____
(if not Argentina, how old were you when you came to the Argentina?)

Where was your mother born? _____

Where was your father born? _____

Where were your grandparents born? _____

Did you receive bilingual education in elementary or middle school?

When you were growing up, what language (s) did you speak at home?

What language (s) do you speak at home now?

What language is easiest for you to speak?

Do you currently participate in extracurricular English language opportunities? If so, please list them:

Please explain any experiences with the English language you've had outside Argentina or in an English environment:

Appendix B

Date	Interactive Yes/No	Type of activity	Number of minutes spent in the activity	Notes
1/2/2014	No	Watched soap opera	45 minutes	I understood part of it, Sammy is in love with John, but she thinks they are cousins, but she doesn't know that she is adopted.

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“Wow, that’s quite the undertaking,” remarked Alice.

Martha and Agnes beamed at each other. “We’re glad you like it.”

“I have a question,” Alice asked, “Wouldn’t you have to teach a heritage learner differently from a foreign language learner? Wouldn’t they have different needs?”

Martha answered, “We would imagine so, we’ve seen evidence in the classroom with our heritage learners, particularly with storytelling, narrations, you know. Often our bilingual students will have richer detail in Spanish but be more analytical in English¹³³ ...”

“We haven’t gotten that far into our research,” Agnes interrupted, looking pointedly at her sister, “You must start at the beginning, not at the end.”

Alice thought, *maybe I should have Jessica look into that.*

“You two have everything well planned; I’ll look for your published work soon.” Alice smiled.

“We have hit a little snag, you see,” said Agnes, sheepishly looking at her sister.

¹³³ Spicer-Escalante, 2012, p. 6

“You read the part of the study where we will find Heritage Language Learners and English as a Foreign language learners. Well,” Martha paused, looking at her sister, “we don’t have any.”

“Oh, that *is* a problem,” remarked Alice, “You *do* have IRB approval?”

“Yes, of course,” snapped Martha.

“Oh well, I didn’t mean...” started Alice

“What kind of monsters do you take us for?” questioned Agnes, visibly offended.

“It’s just that, I know of a school that has students whose parents are expats, some of them.”

The sisters looked at each other and could barely contain their excitement, in fact, Agnes couldn’t. She threw her hands up in the air, Alice looked around nervously, worried about what the other passengers on the bus would think, but it seemed they have given up to expect anything less from these gringas.

Alice pulled out her notebook from her backpack and wrote the email address and contact names of the staff at the DLI for the Stover sisters.

Martha and Agnes looked at the piece of paper as if it were a ticket to Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory.

Martha took it gently and placed it carefully, deliberately, in her notebook.

“Thank you.”

“I do not know if it will work out to conduct your study there, but perhaps they might know another school that would better fit your needs.”

“We are so grateful!” exclaimed Agnes. “I could just hug you.”

“I’m sure she’ll settle for friends on Facebook.”

“Yes, thank you.” Alice remarked.

They exchanged contact information.

“Let us know if you need any research. We’ll even include you in our dedication page,” Agnes remarked.

The bus arrived at the station. The Stover sisters hurried to the counter to buy a ticket to Rosario.

Alice waved at them again from across the station.

Here it is. TURBUS. The lime-green sign read: *Jujuy to San Pedro, Chile.*

Finally, thought Alice. The sun was lowering in the sky. It would be night soon. She could sleep on the bus. The next bus left in...15 minutes! She ran and

bought a ticket, used the bathroom, and ran to the buses. Platform number 17.

Before boarding the bus she asked, “¿Va a San Pedro de Atacama?”

“Sipo*” replied the driver.

**Sipo is a Chileanism for “Yes”. It is common for Chileans to end a shorter word with –po in daily speech to keep the rhythm of the conversation. There are also “yapo,” “nopo,” and “napo”.*

Chapter 10: Head in the clouds

After boarding the bus, Alice found her seat and sank into it. She had a ten-hour bus ride over the Andes to look forward to. It seemed like a great opportunity to sleep. Besides, she was getting a terrible headache.

Alice bundled her jacket into a ball and leaned against the cold window to sleep. Her throbbing head could feel each vibration and bump as the bus rolled out of the station and into the night. After leaving the lights of Jujuy behind, the rhythm became relaxing as Alice closed her eyes and drifted off.

Alice saw she wasn't on the bus anymore. She was in a dimly lit school, everything was shaded in grey. She could smell the chalk dust and it caught in her throat.

"Repeat after me!" droned a voice that Alice recognized as Mrs. Fowler. Alice was a student, back in school, learning Spanish, AGAIN! *This is a nightmare.*

"*Ya sé español,*" said Alice.

"*Yo sé español,*" corrected Mrs. Fowler. "Error free, repeat after me."

"No, you don't understand," Alice began,

Mrs. Fowler cut her off, "Language is not for understanding; five minutes off recess. Repeat after me, *Yo como las manzanas con el gato.*"

“*Yo como las manzanas con el gato*” droned voices all around. Alice realized there were other students around her. She saw they were as monotonous as their response, each the same as the next, colorless, expressionless, grey. They stared blankly forward as they repeated the phrase.

Alice shook her head. “No, this is not the way,” she began.

“Ten minutes from recess. You will have to write your paper again. You had six gender agreement errors, two verb tenses wrong, and you missed twenty accent marks *and* you missed a semicolon!” said Mrs. Fowler, holding up Alice’s paper, dripping in red ink.

She announced to the class, “Do you see this? This is what I don’t want you to do.” and Mrs. Fowler proceeded to shred the paper in front of the class. She tossed it meaninglessly in the wastebasket.

Alice remembered how long it took her to write the paper. She could feel her eyes becoming warm and wet. Her face was warm, was it embarrassment or was it anger? Her head throbbed. She only thought one thought, *I will never be Mrs. Fowler.*

She closed her eyes and wiped her cheeks.

Alice opened her eyes, and blinked. She was in a brightly lit white room. There were no walls, just blank space. Her head still hurt.

Her principal, Ms. Joad was there, holding permission slips, shaking them at her, "What are these?" she demanded.

"I had hoped to host a cultural evening for the..." began Alice.

"They are NOT on the test!" snapped Ms. Joad. "Your test scores are dismal!" she continued. She snatched an envelope with her sausage-like fingers. "FAIL" was written in red ink that dripped across the front. The toad-like woman slowly began to advance on Alice.

Alice shrank back and bumped into a tall lanky man with bulgy eyes. Alice wheeled around and jumped back. "Mr. Serf," she gasped.

The vice principal shook a canary yellow form at Alice, "Another behavior referral?" he demanded.

"I was teaching what the book..." Alice stammered, "he refused to do the lesson, I had to do something..."

Mr. Serf began advancing on Alice too. She felt very heavy, her head felt like it would split in half.

Suddenly, there were parents all around. "Why is my child not in the top Spanish class, she knows all the pronouns?" shouted one.

"Why did you mark five wrong on my student's paper? He's a heritage speaker!" shouted another.

“I want to switch my daughter out of your class, I need a native speaker.”

“You’re a terrible teacher, you don’t teach *vosotros!*”

“You have no classroom management; you always pick on my son for the irregular verbs.”

“You don’t teach enough accents.”

Everything became heavier, the parents were closing in. Alice’s head hurt more than ever. Her shoulder’s ached under the weight. She could still hear refrains of “Your test scores...” and “Another behavior referral?!”

Alice didn’t think she could take anymore. Her knees began to buckle under the weight. It was too much for one teacher to hold! Assessments, lesson plans, fairness, behavior, language, verbs, nouns, accent... Alice wanted to scream, her head felt like it would burst. Her shoulders ached, she couldn’t carry it any more, the world of the classroom on her shoulders was too much. The angry voices closed in on her.

She closed her eyes, tears streaming, shoulders sagging. Alice couldn’t hold any more.

Alice thought about using language to communicate. She thought about negotiation of meaning. She thought about providing students with opportunities to communicate. Suddenly, Alice felt lighter. *I must be getting stronger* she thought. She thought about grouping students to interact socially.

She felt lighter and lighter. The pain was leaving her shoulders as the weight lifted.

Alice was able to open her eyes. She blinked; her eyes were met with the big brown eyes of Melisa. She was smiling. Melisa was not alone, other children were there. Smiling, as if they were playing, other children lifted their hands to reach and lift the weight off Alice's shoulders.

Alice thought about Mrs. William's graphic organizers, Mrs. O'Danny's wax museum. The weight on her shoulders became lighter still. More students came to help, adult and even kindergarten students. The angry voices were drowned out by giggling and happy chatter in Spanish and English.

The students had completely lifted the weight off Alice's shoulders. Happy students surrounded Alice, protecting her from the administrators and adults. They were not even shadows in the glow of the bright light that surrounded Alice and the students.

Alice smiled and giggled.

Suddenly, she realized she was still on the bus. She had been asleep, she woke herself up giggling. *What a strange dream!* She thought.

Alice looked out the window into the dark, trying to piece together parts of the dream. It was so real and so strange. Being a student, teaching the way she was taught, problems she faced as a teacher, but ... *Of course!* She thought.

“The students are not the question, but the answer,” Alice realized, aloud.

A passenger across the aisle gave her a stern look as he placed a finger to his lips.

Alice grinned sheepishly but smiled genuinely to herself, closing her eyes. Her head aching slightly, but her shoulders feeling astonishingly light she drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 11: Reflecting in the Oasis

Alice awoke, head still aching slightly. Alice rubbed it. It was a little tough to catch her breath, just sitting on the bus. The passenger next to her handed her a water bottle, "*la altura*" she said kindly.

Alice thanked her and drank.

Daylight was dawning but the sun had not yet shown itself behind the bus, through the mountains. The sky was a deep cloudless indigo. Alice could only see vacant desert landscape through her window.

The sky lightened and Alice could see a pocket of cacti here and there. Some people on the bus began to stir. Alice heard an excited child, "*Mira mami, mira...*" Alice looked out her window. Three alpaca-like vicuña were walking on the desert plain.

The bus slowed. There were trees. The bus turned. A sign read, "San Pedro de Atacama".

Alice's headache had relented only slightly. She decided to stay in San Pedro, it was Saturday morning and going to Antofagasta would be a waste, especially in a village so picturesque. The white adobe buildings stood in stark contrast with the brilliant blue, cloudless sky, dwarfed by distant volcanoes, dormant for millennia.

Alice waited for most passengers to disembark; she grabbed her bag and jacket and followed them. The sun was up and shone brightly. Alice blinked, and followed the mother with her child to the center of town. San Pedro de Atacama was smaller than she imagined, but Alice walked the streets watching tourists who were not unlike herself, discovering the adventures that South America had to offer. Alice paused and thought, *Yes, I am simply a traveler, exploring, journeying...*

Alice found a quaint Hostel and walked to the counter. She was able to get a room for two nights; it would not be ready for an hour. There was no internet here, but an Internet café was on the other side of the village.

Alice decided to find it and send Jessica a message, to let her know that she had arrived safely to San Pedro.

Alice ambled easily along the dusty streets. She paused along the stream that babbled through the town. Since her camera had been lost in the fire on the plane, Alice thumbed through post cards. *I should send one to Jessica* she thought. Alice selected several cards that best represented her location and took them to the cashier.

"I don't have Chilean pesos." Alice said.

"*Dólares?*" asked the cashier in accented English.

"*Sí, cuánto valen?*"

“Five” she held up five fingers.

It seemed a little steep but without local currency, it’s hard to bargain. Alice handed the cashier a \$20. The cashier gave Alice a brightly colored pink bill, a slightly shorter purple bill, and a brightly colored green bill. They looked like monopoly money, but Alice saw that it was \$8000 pesos.

“*Ocho mil*” said the cashier, now eyeing Alice suspiciously.

Alice thanked the cashier and left. Alice found a post box, but remembered she didn’t have stamps. Nevertheless she pulled out a postcard for Jessica...



Photo: Jessica Lee 2005

Alice wrote:

Dear Jessica,

Saturday

Thank you for your hard work. I appreciate the hours you have put in to help me on my journey. This is the iglesia in San Pedro de Atacama. I should be coming back by the time you get this. Thanks again!

~Alice

Alice pulled out her notebook and wrote her business address on it. *I'll mail this on Monday, when I get to Antofagasta* Alice thought.

Alice bought snack foods and checked her watch. Two hours had passed, incredible. She walked back to her hostel and checked in.

The room was dim—the terracotta colored walls seemed to absorb the scarce light from the single porthole of a window. Alice flipped the light switch and the compact fluorescent light bulb in the solitary lamp flickered on and did not illuminate the room much more. Alice sighed, *at least it's clean* she thought.

Alice pulled out her notebook and a pen. She left her backpack and jacket on the squeaky bed. She locked the door behind her and walked into the sunbathed courtyard of the hostel.

Alice sketched a map of South America. She retraced her journey, writing notes in the margins.

Sunday: Buenos Aires (lost luggage, ALM fails)

Monday: Language is a vehicle, not a destination

Tuesday: Dual Language Immersion: one school two languages, bilingual and biliterate

Wednesday: Communicative Language Teaching: Using language rather than memorizing rules

Thursday: Brain/research-based learning: Teaching the way the brain learns

Friday: Heritage Language Students: a different kind of learner, with experience

Saturday: San Pedro

One week, it took Alice one week to arrive in Chile. Alice reflected as the wind rustled the leaves of the courtyard's only other inhabitant, a time-worn pomegranate tree. Alice closed her eyes...

This time last week I still thought that language was a set of facts. Grammar rules, vocabulary lists to be learned and recalled. I thought that recall was key to fluency and language learning. I believed that audiolingualism was the most effective way to learn a language. Ha, that even a language could be learned. I thought that the teacher was the center of the classroom. I thought I

could control my students—I could punish them into completing assignments. I thought that language was a destination.

Language is not a destination, it is the vehicle for the journey.

A teacher does not tell her students what they learn. She creates, designs opportunities for them to meaningfully practice and negotiate communication in social contexts with peers and, if possible, native speakers and authentic materials. The classroom is not hers, it's theirs.

Dual language immersion is a model for language acquisition. Students use the language, in its nature as a vehicle to learn other things and to interact. It is a natural, effective, beneficial design for language acquisition.

Heritage learners have the opportunity to use language in a meaningful way. Language is owned by its speakers, not textbook companies.

I've come so far in my journey.

Alice felt the warm sun on her face. In the distance she heard other travelers.

“Está aquí con el grupo de Frontera ¿no?” asked a man's voice.

Alice reluctantly opened her eyes.

She was not in a sunbathed courtyard, but in a shuttle that had just pulled up to a large concrete hotel. The large sun was smiling at her from the white and pale blue flag that flapped in the wind.

Argentina? Buenos Aires?

Chapter 12: Antofagasta at last: Atlas rests

Alice cautiously walked into the Argentine hotel lobby.

“Ma’am” a female voice cautiously called, “You are Alice Leedell, ¿no?”

“I am” assured Alice, smiling.

The woman looked relieved, “They have found your bag.” She indicated a large blue suitcase on rollers and a bright pink tag.

“Yes, that is it!” Alice exclaimed.

“Here are your tickets for the departure flight tomorrow morning at ten. Frontera is very sorry for your inconvenience.”

Alice closed her hotel room door. *This is so strange.* Alice was confused, she checked her phone, and it was still Sunday.

After a four hour flight over plains and the Andes, Alice felt the plane descend. Alice looked out her window, *where am I?* She couldn’t see any signs of human existence past the wings. No buildings, no houses, not huts, not even a goat! She waited, finally she felt the plane land and bounce to a stop.

After deplaning, she collected her luggage and walked into the sea of people.

“Miss Leedell!” she heard a voice shout at her through the din of greetings.

A man with a sign, “Alice Leedell” waved at her. *How did he know it was me?* Alice wondered, but then she looked around, and noticed that she was clearly the only gringa on the flight.

“I am Mr. East,” said the young freckled man. He couldn’t have been more than a year out of college. “Welcome to Antofagasta! I hope you had a good trip.” I have a car; I’ll take you to your hotel. I am a teacher at the English School of Antofagasta.” Alice smiled, *finally made it* she thought.

The following morning Alice got out of bed and walked across her carpeted hotel room to open the curtains. *A corner room on the 12th floor is very nice*, thought Alice. She looked out south across the shorter buildings, to the east across the four-lane street, across the narrow beach at the dark blue ocean. The morning was clear, cloud-free. She could see a brown mountain in the distance across the bay. Surveying across the south and to the east she could see the brown *cerros*. *Such contrasts, ocean and desert*. Alice dressed for her first day of work.

Stepping outside, Alice could smell the salt of the ocean and the exhaust from the cars as they sped past. Suddenly, a small sky-blue Honda Civic stopped in front of Alice. She recognized the car and the driver as Mr. East.

“Good morning!” he smiled. “Hop in.”

Alice climbed in the car and buckled in. The car lurched as Mr. East shifted gears to match the traffic. They U-turned to head south. Alice looked out her window and saw only the deep blue of the ocean. *Incredible!*

“Did you eat breakfast?” Mr. East asked politely.

“Oh, yes, there were round biscuit-like bread things with cold cuts of ham, Swiss cheese, and avocado, which I believe was labeled “*palta*”.

Mr. East smiled. “We’ve arrived.”

Alice looked at the new school that looked almost carved into the side of the cerro. The brightly painted signs and gates were the only visual cues that the building was not actually part of the rock. Alice followed Mr. East from the car through the doors.

“This is María José, our beloved secretary.” Mr. East smiled.

María José blushed a little but she stood up to shake Alice’s hand.

“Welcome Miss Leedell. Don Ponte is expecting you.”

Alice thanked Mr. East. She entered Don Ponte's office and he stood up to greet her excitedly. Don Ponte was tall and rotund. He spoke clearly with a deep voice, and always in Spanish.

"Gracias por venir. Espero que haya tenido un buen viaje. Voy a mostrarle nuestra escuela."

"Ésta es nuestra clase del tercero básico." Don Ponte indicated.

Immediately the secretary came down the hall and whispered something to him.

"Perdóname." Alice smiled.

Alice walked in the classroom. The teacher looked up, she was very young, barely twenty-two, thought Alice. She looked very nervous, but she managed to smile.

"I'm Ms. Argo," she said.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Alice." Alice held out her hand warmly, and Ms. Argo's clammy hands rigidly grasped Alice's. "You have a good looking class here," said Alice. Ms. Argo smiled weakly. "Don't let me distract you...I'm watching your students." Alice said, truthfully as she took a miniature seat in the corner and pulled out her notebook.

Ms. Argo turned to her students.

“You have ten minutes to complete your worksheet. No talking, I want to see what you can do, not your neighbor.” The class began the assignment. ‘Unenthusiastic’ would not be adequate to illustrate the manner in which the students worked on the assignment. Ten minutes passed. “Pass them to me.” Instructed Ms. Argo as she collected each page individually. “I will grade them. Take out your Reading textbook. We ended on page sixty-two and we will begin on page sixty-three.” The children lethargically took out their textbooks. One student dropped her book, the others giggled. “Katina! Five minutes off recess. Go put your name on the board.” stated Ms. Argo.

Katina scooted her chair back, noisily and excessively. She slowly walked to the front of the classroom, tapping each desk as she walked along the rows. She picked up the blue marker from the whiteboard. She slowly, dramatically took off the cap. Fiddling excessively with it, she finally attached it to the top. She started to write her name on the board. The marker squeaked loudly as she slowly, deliberately formed each of the letters in her name. She capped the marker with a ‘snap’. She looked sheepishly, yet defiantly at the teacher and smiled at her classmates as she returned to her seat.

“Let’s go down the rows to read. Alejandro we will start with you. Read one paragraph and then it will be Beatriz’s turn for one paragraph, then Carlos and so on,” instructed Ms. Argo.

A boy raised his hand. “Yes, Alejandro?”

“What page are we on?” asked the boy.

Ms. Argo was flustered, “If you would use the bookmark like you’re supposed to or if you’d pay attention instead of playing with Katina. We’re on page sixty-three.”

After the students read, some too quickly, some painfully, and most without comprehension, the teacher passed out a second worksheet. “You have ten minutes to complete this. Do your best, if I cannot read it, you will do it again during recess. No prize for first.”

No one spoke, Alice noticed a girl in the back just playing with her pencil. “Katina! Back to work, whatever you don’t finish, you’ll have to do at recess.”

A boy shot the girl called Katina a giggly glance. “Nicolas, you too.” In exactly ten minutes the Ms. Argo stood up and collected the papers, picking up each one. “Katina! You have not finished your paper. You will do this at recess.”

Katina didn’t say anything but she looked neither surprised nor hurt.

“Now is silent reading time. You will read until lunch. No talking or you will lose recess.”

The students pulled out their books from their desks. Katina even pulled her book out. Alice walked around the class. Some students were flipping pages mindlessly. Others seemed to be genuinely reading. Many students opened a book but never read a word or turned a page. After a few moments, Nicolas

started looking at Katina's book. Katina was watching Ms. Argo over the top of her book. Ms. Argo was busy grading papers. Katina, deciding that it was safe, started whispering to Nicolas. Alice listened intently.

"So the story is about this girl who sees this rabbit. So she chases it. The weird thing about the rabbit is that it has clothes! I know!" Katina whispered.

Nicolas' eyes grew to the size of saucers. "Yeah? Then what?" Nicolas asked conspiratorially.

"Then she falls in this hole. At the bottom there are doors. She wants to go in one door but she's not the right size. Do you know what the silly girl does then?"

Nicolas shook his head. Now the girl next to Nicolas was listening intently.

"She finds this bottle with a strange liquid inside,"

"Is it Tang?" interrupted another boy.

"No, silly. But get this, the tag says 'drink me' just sitting on the table..."

"She doesn't drink it, does she?" asked the girl, her eyes matching Nicolas'.

"Yep. She sure does."

A collective gasp came from the corner. All eyes dart to Ms. Argo who was feverishly writing in the gradebook.

“What happens?” asked Nicolas cautiously.

“Does she die?” asked the boy.

“No. She SHRINKS!” Katina whispered, dramatically. Theatrically indicating with her fingers what happens to the character in the book.

Another gasp came from the corner. This time Ms. Argo was on top of it. “Katina, five *more* minutes from recess. Nicolas, write your name on the board. Felipe, you too. Sara, I’m disappointed in you. You know better.” The girl called Sara looked ashamed.

“I’m sorry, I was telling them to be quiet.”

The others shot Sara a nasty look. “Thank you. That’s my job hon.”

The three children returned to their seats. “Ok, the rest of you put your books away. It’s time for lunch. I’m looking for quiet children.” Ms. Argo proceeded to call the children one at a time for lunch. Katina was last. She dawdled down the hallway to the cafeteria. Ms. Argo, who was at the front of the line, did not notice.

Ms. Argo:
3rd

Advice for changing it...

- 1) Consider grouping students for assignments. Students can learn more in groups. Besides, you'll have fewer papers to grade.
- 2) You have a very active student in the back, keep her busy. Give her a job. She would love to pass out or collect papers.
- 3) Use the textbook as a guide. There are a lot of great ideas in the textbook. Incorporate your own to make the class fun, not just for your students, but for *you*!
- 4) Routine is great! Especially in a second language class. Is it possible for you to give your students choices in activities. Partner reading, small group reading? Read it like a fairy? A troll? Have a deck of cards and students randomly pick one.
- 5) Write page numbers on the board. Use different visuals.
- 6) You have students who are eager to share their books. Let them! Have a day, perhaps Fridays, where students give a book review. This will encourage you

What I saw that could be changed...

- 1) Students tend to be isolated during assignments: this leads to students acting out seeking attention
- 2) You do things that the students can and it takes time from *you* (passing out papers)
- 3) You seem to use each page of the textbook and each worksheet (it's a resource, not the gospel)
- 4) Your routine has turned into a rut. It's great that the students know what to expect, but they have nothing to look forward to
- 5) You tell the students the page number, and you have a procedure for finding the page number—great. Remember, some students are visual learners. For procedures, your goal is to keep the class moving, practice listening comprehension in other ways.
- 6) The books that the students read are in isolation.

What I liked...

- You use the target language: English AWESOME!!
- You gave time limits (this is great for pacing)
- Students do the reading (Thank you for not reading what a student can)
- Consistency, if you say something is going to happen, it does (just remember to be consistent with all students)
- Silent reading!! I LOVE, LOVE, LOVE this! It seems the students choose their own books. This is great!

'Fifth Grade' read the sign on the classroom. Alice walked into a classroom. There were papers on the floor. Stacks of papers were on the teacher's desk. The walls were covered with posters covering topics ranging from photosynthesis, to a periodic table, to the human body, a map of Chile and Europe, a list of class rules, an alphabet chart, and migration. There was not an inch of wall uncovered.

Mr. East "Remember, quiet mouths, learning ears." He walked around the class passing out worksheets. When he finished, he returned to the front of the classroom.

"Who can remember what we talked about last week in Science?"

No hands went up, no one spoke. Suddenly, a boy who was too tall for his desk raised his hand.

"Great, Scott, do you have an answer?" Mr. East said, relieved that someone had an answer.

"No, can I use the bathroom?"

Mr. East looked annoyed. "Quickly. This is the fifth time you've gone today."

The other children snickered. The boy named Scott looked embarrassed. He clumsily got up and galumphed out of the room.

“Again, who can tell me about what we learned in Science last week?”

Mr. East hedged, “Anyone? Anyone? Something about plants or animals?

Plants.” Said Mr. East, answering his own question.

He sighed, “Ok, look at your worksheets. You will need to fill them out.

Try to see what you can do on your own first.”

The students looked at their worksheets. A few started filling in the blanks. Most sat, nearly motionless.

A student raised his hand, “What are we doing?”

“You need to think back to last week in Science. We learned about plants. Try to fill in what you can remember.”

Several students got up and sharpened their pencils. Alice noticed most of the pencils were already sharp. Mr. East had returned to his desk. He was checking email.

Scott returned. “What are we doing?” he asked.

Mr. East repeated the directions to him.

After ten minutes, most students hadn’t written anything on their papers. “Ok class, you can talk to a partner and use your books to finish the worksheet,” announced Mr. East from his desk.

The students started talking. Most of them were talking in Spanish about their weekends.

“¿Y qué hizo tu hermano?”

“No, ya está pololeada. Se llama Lorena, ella tiene quince años. Yo sé. Es vieja.”

Alice counted three of the seventeen students actually on task. This lasted nearly fifteen minutes.

“Ok class, finish up. You have about five minutes before lunch.”

The students began packing up. Mr. East was still working on email. The bell rang. “I need your papers!” shouted Mr. East over the din of students. Most students left their unfinished papers on the desks. Some papers were taken out the door.

Mr. East looked at Alice, “I guess we’ll finish next class.”

East:
5th

Advice for changing it...

- 1) Reward students for using the target language. At least initially, let them get into the habit of using English. It is through English use that they learn.
- 2) Have posters up that relate to what you're teaching. Change posters with each new unit. The students will notice the new posters and they may ask about them. Introduce the posters. You put them up for a reason, share that reason with your students.
- 3) I am going to get you a copy of *The first days of school* by Harry Wong.
- 4) You dismiss the students, not the bell. By letting students leave, you have no closure, students need to remember what they've learned. A journal will integrate writing, provide closure, and give students a place to look back to see what they've learned. They will have to attend class.
- 5) Having a procedure for restroom might help the flow of your class.
- 6) A few simple changes can make class enjoyable for your students and you!

What I saw that could be changed...

- 1) You need to encourage your students to use the target language.
- 2) The environmental print needs to be related to what you are doing in class.
- 3) I noticed that you answer your own questions. You're a teacher, not a preacher.
- 4) I noticed that the bell dismissed the students.
- 5) Your students have the same procedure for asking and answering questions as for going to the restroom. It seemed to disrupt your class.
- 6) You do a lot of the work that students can.
- 7) The students seemed 'checked out' and you followed suit at the end.

What I liked...

- You use the target language: English This is great!
- I like that you have a lot of environmental print. Posters can be a great way to provide literacy input.
- I like that you ask your students to recall past information.
- I am so happy to see that you encourage your students to work in groups. You have great foundation for using individual learning and group work. We can make this more effective. 😊

Alice walked into the eighth grade classroom, Mrs. Rosas was teaching language arts. The students were in rows, English textbooks open.

“Bien. En inglés si la respuesta es negativa, es necesario usar el verbo auxiliar. Ejemplo uno dice,

‘Johnny has apples.’ Repitan.

The class repeated, “Johnny has apples.”

“Johnny tiene unas manzanas. La respuesta es, ‘Johnny no tiene manzanas.’ Pero a causa de inglés, que viene del alemán, es necesario usar el verbo “to do” o ‘hacer’. “Hacer”s el verbo auxiliar. ¿Qué tipo de auxiliar es? ¿Principal, marginado, o modal? Principal. Porque el sujeto de la oración es tercera persona y es singular. El tiempo del verbo de la oración es presente simple, ‘to do’ cambia a ‘does’ con la ‘s’ final. El verbo ‘has’ cambia a la forma básica o la forma simple. La palabra ‘not’ muestra la negación, que va entre el verbo auxiliar y el verbo infinitivo.

La respuesta está escrita y es, “Johnny does not have apples.” Repitan.

The class repeated monotonously, “Johnny does not have apples.”

“Bien. Para la tarea de ayer, cambiaron las oraciones afirmativas a oraciones negativas.”

“Vamos a leer. Cambien papeles, y recuerden, tinta roja.” The children switched papers and took out red pens.

“Number one, Fernando.”

“Jane eats bread. Jane does not eat bread.”

“Good. *¿Qué significa?*” asked Mrs. Rosa.

“Jane come pan. Jane no come pan,” stated the class.

“¿Cuál es la acción para comer pan?” Mrs. Rosas asked. The children outlined imaginary bread with their fingers and pretended to eat it.

“Number two, Stacy.”

“Bob sings a song. Bob doesn’t sing a song.”

“Stacy, no es exactamente correcto. ¿Alguien puede ayudarla?”

A boy said, “Bob sings a song. Bob does not sing a song.”

“But I hear my mom say *doesn’t*, why is it wrong?” Stacy asked.

“Es informal. No se usa en la manera escrita,” Mrs. Rosas replied.

The class finished reading, translating, correcting, and miming the homework. Alice glanced at the clock. The entire class period had been used to correct the homework. There were five minutes left. Mrs. Rosas noticed the clock too.

“O, la tarea para hoy es esta hojita. Es cómo usar verbos auxiliares modales para cambiar el tiempo de la oración,” the bell rang, *“página trescientos veintidós en el libro, tiene la explicación,”* she called after her students as they left.

Rosa: 8th
English

Advice for changing it...

- 1) Students need the opportunity to use the target language. Language is not acquired simply through comprehensible input, but also through the opportunity for meaningful output.
- 2) The students probably don't care about what Jane does or Johnny has. Find language opportunities that are important to your students. "Is your sister going out with Steve?" "No, she isn't."
- 3) Provide up to five minutes to clarify specific homework questions that the students have. You grade the homework. If it's not worth your time to grade, it's not worth their time to do.
- 4) Break the information into small chunks. Create mini-activities that allow your students to work together. Lead them to the class goal. Less teacher talk will make your students work harder.

What I saw that could be changed...

- 1) Please use the target language, English, in the English classroom. If you need to use L1 for support, perhaps set aside some study hall time for that.
- 2) The language the students work with needs to be meaningful to them.
- 3) Class time is your most valuable asset, guard it. I will lend you a book by Harry Wong. Homework is to check independent practice.
- 4) Class time is for prepare not repair. If you spend your class time letting students practice new forms, they will have fewer misunderstandings in the homework.
- 5) It is clear that you are well versed in English grammar. Your students don't need that much explanation. The goal is communication, not inundation.

What I liked...

- I like that you use positive feedback for students.
- Movement in a lesson is a good thing. Remember to make sure it is meaningful to the student. Not movement for the sake of movement. I will lend you my TPR book by Dr. James Asher.

Alice completed her observation notes. She was contracted to stay here for a month. She would hold a couple workshop dialogs for the teachers. She would model teaching for the classes she had seen, incorporating her advice and inviting other teachers to come watch. Alice also decided to help the teachers plan activities and classroom grouping.

Alice began typing up a note for the school.

Dear Fellow Educators,

I wish to extend my most sincere thanks for inviting me into your school.

It is clear that you are dedicated to your students and their learning. I will be here for a month. In this time I hope to make it easier for you to achieve your goals. Here are some things I have noticed this far:

- Many of you use the target language 100% of the time in the classroom. This is fantastic because it models the language you want your students to produce¹³⁴.
- You praise your students. Students need to know what they're doing right. Specific praise is best¹³⁵.
- Some of you are using groups in your classroom. Learning is a social activity and grouping students is one of the best ways to achieve this^{136,137}.
- There is emphasis on literacy. I noticed some teachers use environmental print and others have self-selected reading¹³⁸. These are excellent ways to incorporate literacy in the classroom!

You work very hard. Some tips I can give you to make your life easier include:

- The work assigned may not be properly introduced¹³⁹. Students may not have a clear picture of teacher expectations; this can create de-motivation in the

¹³⁴ Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 135

¹³⁵ Faber & Mazlish, 1982, p. 176

¹³⁶ Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003

¹³⁷ Glasser, 1998a

¹³⁸ Krashen & Terrell, 2000

classroom. Also, the amount of work assigned may be too much. If it is not worth your time to grade, it is not worth their time to do. Assign fewer, more meaningful activities¹⁴⁰.

- Many of you are doing all the work in the classroom. Never say something a student can say and never do something a student can do¹⁴¹. School is for them, not for you.
- If you are bored, they probably are too. Design shorter activities with smaller goals. The goals need to be communicative and meaningful to the students. Design the activities so that by the end of class, or by the end of the week the students have cumulative skills and goals for a bigger goal^{142,143}.
- Writing is an important component in language. Literacy skills can be improved by writing. Even something as simple as having students write in a journal about what they did in class or writing as a class what you did that day in a shared journal (depending on the age) can help your students see the importance of writing. By telling students that they will need to write about what they have learned, it can help them attend while they are in class¹⁴⁴.
- Heritage language learners are present in the school. Please address their needs. They may have inside information on the language including relevant vocabulary and grammar constructions, please do not dismiss their valuable

¹³⁹ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.215

¹⁴⁰ Ramirez, 1995

¹⁴¹ Wong, 2009

¹⁴² Savignon, 2002

¹⁴³ Lee & VanPatten, 2003

¹⁴⁴ Foster & Skehan, 2013

information^{145,146}. Invite them to share and it will improve the status of the target language¹⁴⁷. Culture also plays an important role in student motivation¹⁴⁸. Heritage language learners and their families can help contribute to this in the classroom.

- While some of you use groups, there are many ways to improve grouping¹⁴⁹. Jigsawing, for example, is a fabulous technique to help students become responsible for their learning. People are social, take advantage of this in your classrooms to improve behavior and learning.

I know you are very busy. Don Ponte has offered three days for training/questions.

Some topics that might be beneficial include: TPR, Self-selected reading, Learning groups, Time management, Classroom management, and adapting existing lessons. Think if there are some other topics you would care for us to address. I am here for you, as a resource, we can work together to think of other options.

Sincerely,

Alice Leedell

¹⁴⁵ Spicer-Escalante, 2012

¹⁴⁶ Valdés, 2005

¹⁴⁷ Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009

¹⁴⁸ Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.218

¹⁴⁹ Dörnyei & Murphy, 2003

Alice printed copies of these for each of the teachers and placed them in their boxes.

“Oh, Don Ponte,” Alice exclaimed, “Thank you for inviting me to your school and allowing me to work with your teachers.”

“*Claro*, they work so hard. I was hoping you could help them. You see we have a high turn-over rate. I get their *papeles* and they leave. Very expensive.”

“Yes. Hopefully I can help with that. I was wondering, have you ever considered opening a dual language immersion school?”

“*¿Un qué?*”

“I think have a contact in Argentina. Dra. Vadea, I’m sure she would be delighted to show you what’s she’s done. You have the perfect opportunity. If you used the Utah model, 50/50 your students would be proficient in both English and Spanish.”

Don Ponte raised an eyebrow.

Alice proceeded to explain the DLI program.

Epilogue: Home at last

It seemed surreal. Just two months ago Alice was in Chile.

She opened bills, ads, coupons. There were four letters formally requesting her educational consulting services: China, the Philippines, Ohio, and South Africa...

In a white business envelope Alice recognized the address from the English School in Antofagasta.

The note read:

Dear Ms. Leedell,

Thank you so much for taking time to come to our school. You have really made a difference. The students seem to enjoy coming to classes. They are tired at the end of the day, which means they are the ones working. They use English with each other during lunch and free time. What a difference.

Several grades will take the national exams next week; the teachers are not even stressed. We teachers have been working together. We have paired struggling 6th grade readers with first grade. They have to prepare books with questions for the first graders, they love it. Their English reading has improved. It seems they have recasts themselves as teachers, rather than struggling students.

We write across the curriculum. The students design posters for their classrooms. They help provide feedback for the teachers so they can meet their learning needs better. Several teachers have started clubs, now that they are not stuck grading homework. Mr. East has started a science club, his students hope to compete in three months in the regional competition.

Mrs. Rosas is going to visit Utah. She and Don Ponte have just arrived from a Dual Language Immersion school in Rosario, Argentina. I'm not sure what Dual Language Immersion is, but it sounds interesting. Also, two women will be coming to do research here for a few months.

Katina is a shining star in my classroom. She has even written a book to share with her classmates. She initiated a book club for

grades 1-4. It's amazing. I love coming to school every day!
Thank you so much for everything. Please come back anytime.

Sincerely,

Ms. Argo

How lovely thought Alice. It's nice to make a difference.

Under the next bill Alice found a postcard:



It was addressed to Jessica at the office, but was marked, "RETURN TO SENDER."

Surreal, indeed.

Glossary of Terms:

50/50 Model: Describes percentage of time in a day dedicated to a particular language in a dual language immersion program. This model is also known as the "Utah Model" because it is the statewide model for the DLI program in Utah.

ACTFL: American Council on Teaching of Foreign Language. Organization that publishes research on foreign language learning. Provides standards and proficiency levels for language abilities.

Affective filter: Describes the idea that higher amounts of stress inhibit learning. Stress can be caused by physical or social factors.

Assessment: Includes formal tests, standardized tests (SAT, ACT, GED), projects, and informal questioning in a classroom to determine learning, potential, or retention of information.

Atlas complex: The idea that all learning that takes place in a classroom is the teacher's responsibility. The teacher controls, and must maintain control over all activities and communication.

Audiolingual Method (ALM): A language learning method popular in the 1940's and through the 1960's where 'participants' repeat set phrases and dialog in the foreign language. Pronunciation, intonation, and words must be error-free. Classrooms often have a teacher with a book reading drills to students while the students repeat. Later ALM classrooms had headphones and language tapes and tracks for the students to repeat.

Authentic Materials: Language samples (audio, visual) that come from a target language's culture. The materials are produced for consumption by native speakers of the language. Newspapers, commercials, and music are popular examples of authentic materials.

Bicultural: (Adj) being able to navigate seamlessly between two cultures, knowing nuances, gestures, and popular culture references.

Bilingual: (Adj) being able to speak two languages fluently.

Biliterate: (Adj) being able to read and write fluently in two languages.

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching: A teaching model characterized by basic principles. Each lesson must have a communicative goal. Students must

also have the opportunity to use their language skills for meaningful purposes, to complete the task. Teachers provide necessary framework for students to communicate.

Dendrite: One of many cells in the nervous-system that relay information from one part of the system to the other. Important in learning.

DLI: Dual Language Immersion: An educational model that delivers a certain percentage of content material in a student's native language and a percentage of content in a student's target language.

Fluency: The quality of correctly speaking or writing. In speaking, correct word usage, intonation, emphasis, and pauses. In writing correct word usage, mechanics, organization, and tone.

Grammar: The organization of a language at a word level. Includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of speech. The study of how each word functions in a phrase.

Graphic organizers: Visual sketches, sometimes a drawing, that illustrate organization, and relation among ideas or words. Examples include "bubble maps" "Venn Diagrams" and "Flow charts"

Heritage language: A language that is hegemonic in an area, sometimes an indigenous language, that is common to a culture.

Heritage language learner: Highly contested term that can range from a student who speaks a hegemonic language at home and then receives formal education in it at an older age or a person who identifies as a member of a culture group and studies the traditional language of that group with no (or little) prior language background.

i+1: Comprehensible input is input that is one level above a learner's current proficiency.

Input: The spoken or written language that a learner is exposed to

Intake: The input that was filtered by the learner according to what he/she could attend to and comprehend

L1/L2: First language/Second language: L1 is the first language a person learns, also a native language. L2 refers to the second language a person learns, sometimes a misnomer for children who live in multilingual settings

Language Acquisition Device (LAD): A part of the brain that is believed to be 'wired' for language learning that eventually disappears after childhood.

Monolingual: (Adj) Having the ability to speak and understand only a single language

Native language: The initial language(s) a person learns, in a natural, home setting, without formal education

Negotiation of meaning: The use of various communication techniques (including speech, gestures, writing, intonation) to understand and to be understood by others

TBA: Task Based Activity: A feature of CLT. An communicative-goal based activity that requires students to use language to communicate in order to complete a meaningful task. The teacher takes the learners through pre-determined steps so that they can complete the task, but it is learner-centered. For example, students must exchange phone numbers using the target language. Students will discover the location of an item using direction words.

Think-Pair-Share: A technique used in the classroom that allows students to answer questions. Students have time to think about the answer individually, students then find a partner and they discuss and validate their answers. Having already received peer validation and clarification, students share answers aloud in the classroom

TL: Target language: The language intending to be learning in a specific setting

Vocabulary: A set of words to be learned/acquired in a language or setting

Wait time: The time the teacher waits for students to think about answers (ideal at least 15 seconds)

WTC: Willingness to Communicate: Describes a student's motivation for wanting to be part of the group of a language speaker, also includes the level of safety a student feels in being accepted.

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About the Author

Jessica Lee's Apprenticeship of Observation

An educational upbringing:

My mother is a teacher in the fullest sense of the word. My father has helped me gain insights and value of experience. He has a strong science background. He grew up on a farm and studied chemistry. He sees practical applications of abstract concepts. My grandmothers have always helped me learn. My Grandma Lucy has the patience of a saint and has always let me explore as I saw fit. Messes are ok, but you just have to clean them up. She always has fun stories to tell. I have favorites. Perhaps some of my desire for storytelling comes from her.

Sometimes you learn what to do by knowing what not to do:

I promised myself I would never be her! She was terrible. For instance, I have always had terrible penmanship. (I have been asked to type every assignment since the third grade.) Second grade curriculum in Ohio required that students learn cursive writing. This was so difficult for me. I would *finally* finish my work and my teacher, would walk by with her red pen, stop, click her tongue disapprovingly, snatch-up my paper, and announce to the class, "Children, you see this? This is what I don't want you to do!" She proceeded to shred my paper, crumple it into a ball and threw it into the trash. I had to re-do the paper again at

recess. This type of “teaching” continued. I decided that I would make her life more miserable than she made mine. I can recall every ‘lesson’ she tried to teach. We had worksheets and workbooks up to our ears. I did not learn anything, except for how terrible school could be. I hated school. I ended up being diagnosed with stomach ulcers.

The juxtaposition between my second and third grade teachers allowed me to clearly see two powerful extremes in teaching:

In third grade, my reputation preceded me just as my third grade teacher’s preceded her. She was scary and she got all the naughty children. She wore pigtails with leather straps braided into them every day. She had glasses and she would growl and bark at children in the hallway and in the lunchroom. The first day of class, everyone was silent. She announced, “Oh, I’ll bet you heard from other students that I’m mean and scary. Well, it’s true.” We went over classroom rules. She had one: Respect. She explained that it was based on the fact that everyone and everything has value, it is important to respect the value of these, whether it is a pencil, paper, or a person, it has value. I honestly do not remember being taught anything in that class, but I learned more that year than any other in school. I magically emerged from third grade a completely changed student. I could read, I could write (still terrible penmanship, but I could type my stories), I knew math, and I knew everything I needed. This is one of the happiest

school years of my life. I still keep in touch with my third grade teacher on Facebook.

Language Experience:

I took Spanish in high school. It was required and I hated it. I did not mind the fact that Señora never spoke English (in fact, I didn't know she could until my sophomore year). It was the drudgery of text books with endless exercise. Do and check, haz y corrige, to death. I dreaded Spanish. I tried to switch to German, but it was too late. While the walls of the Spanish room were decorated with bright colors, they could not trump the workbook and mountains of worksheets. What I learned about teaching in the Spanish classroom: "If it's not worth my time to grade, it's not worth your time to do." It would be weeks before we received feedback on worksheets. The second thing I learned, "A good teacher makes every student believe he/she is a favorite." Señora made sure we knew who her favorites were, in Chile, se dice *regalón/a*. Needless to say; I did not fit that category. I barely passed Spanish each semester.

Why Spanish?

While in Spanish class, I often pondered, "What am I doing here?" Then I thought back to middle school...

I had the opportunity to go to England with my mother, my aunt, and my Grandma Lucy. I was in seventh grade and too cool for everyone... except for

Grandma, NO ONE is EVER too cool for Grandma. While a trip to England is an amazing life-changing event for anyone, it was particularly life-changing for me. It is possible to reflect on life and see moments that are truly cruxes in the path of life. My mother decided she wanted to see Stonehenge. It was not an original part of our tour, so she added a package. It was a day trip from Bath to Stonehenge, to Salisbury and back to London. I still had jet-lag and didn't want to go. I didn't have a choice. It was amazing. Stonehenge was really cool. When we arrived in Bath, it was a typical British town, however, we went down into the Roman baths. It was the coolest thing I had ever seen! I couldn't believe it; these people from a really long time ago figured this stuff out! I mean, plumbing!!! My parents told me that *they* didn't have running water as kids. And here these people who didn't even wear pants had these fantastic indoor swimming pools where they took baths. Wow! It's better than the YMCA. What happened that we, as civilization, lost all of these things? What else is there that is left undiscovered? All around at the Bath there were inscriptions, in Latin. I decided, at that point, I needed to learn Latin.

Eighth grade, we were allowed to start a language. The only choices were French and Spanish. I had already had a couple months of French. But, I thought back to when my family vacationed in Tahiti there was a French girl who was my age and I wanted to play with her, I tried to talk to her using the French from my phrasebook and she was very rude. She snorted and walked off to her mother and father. I decided to take Spanish, it was closer to Latin.

I went to the International Academy of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, because they offered Latin. The school follows the International Baccalaureate curriculum. I was required to take a living language, Spanish, for proficiency. I chose to take Latin as an elective. I loved Latin, despite being in the “leftover classroom” (or even in a closet). It was presented in a fun way. Despite hours of translating *In Catalinam* and Virgil, I loved it. It was like a puzzle. There was a Latin Club. We could speak to each other, we played and joked with the language, and we went on field trips. It was everything a high school student loves.

Spanish, however, despite being a “living” language, was murder! I hated every minute in the class I barely passed Spanish each semester. My parents got a tutor for me. She was from Argentina. I learned a lot from her. She had business Spanish books, but our sessions worked best when I had specific questions for her. I learned more with her twice a week for two hours at a time than I did in class 90 minutes a day. It was my junior year, I knew that the IB tests were a year away. There was NO way I could pass Spanish. I begged my parents to let me do an exchange trip to Spain during the summer. My best friend’s family was going to Spain for a vacation. I would fly to Munich with them and they would drive to Barcelona. They wanted me to help translate for them. I had saved a lot of money from babysitting. My parents agreed if I kept my grades up, they would match my funds. It was set. I worked really hard, but still hated Spanish.

Study Abroad: I was like *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Kraus (I highly recommend this book if you do not know it)

Finally, everything went through. I was set to go to Spain. The entire trip from Munich to Barcelona was in Slovak. We got to our hotel in Barcelona. I could not even ask for more towels. I did cultural things. I loved it. I still could not speak or understand Spanish. I had the opportunity to go to ruins of Ampurias, a Greek, then Roman city on the coast. There was Latin graffiti. I was so excited! I could read it! My Latin had paid off, it only my Spanish had. Alas, after three years of Latin, I read the signs, "Scintilla Made This," "Horatio Made This." I was crestfallen. All that work, just to read "Made by Romans" .

The time had come to begin my exchange program. I still could not speak Spanish. I boarded the plane and flew to A Coruña. I met the coordinator, he introduced me to my new family. I met my mom and my sister. Neither of whom spoke English. Ok, I thought, I can do this. We got home, I met the dog. I met my older brother, he spoke some broken English, still better than my Spanish. My father came home, he spoke no English, well, he spoke Beatles. I couldn't understand anything! Everyone talked so fast. The accent was impossible to understand.

I carried a dictionary around for the first couple days. I found it was of little use to me. People would talk to me for a minute or two. I must have had the 'deer in the headlights' look. They would borrow the dictionary, show me a

word so I would understand what they were talking about. I would smile and nod. I could not talk at all.

I remember the first phrase I learned (in beautiful Gallego accent) was 'Ten cuidado'. This is an important survival phrase for cars, luggage on a train, and uneven sidewalks. I remember the first time I was able to shout this at a native speaker to prevent a possible head injury.

The first week, I sat at home and watched television while my family went to work and school. I still couldn't speak Spanish. They came home in the afternoons. I would run errands with my mom and sister. I would watch my father cook in the evenings. One night, he brought home octopus to eat. He showed off his English skills. As he was preparing the dish, he sang, "I like to be, under the sea, in the octopusi garden wish you"

I wanted to focus on how I acquired a language, what was the process. I thought to myself, 'goodness, I should pay attention; I might need to do this again.' Never did it cross my mind that I might have to teach others how to learn a language. I noticed the first thing that happened, it took a week and a half, but the words started to slow down. That's the first thing monolinguals tell me, "Man Spanish is just so fast." I laugh to myself and reply, "English is fast too, you just don't notice." Almost simultaneously, the accent disappeared, to the point where it did not interfere with understanding the sounds. I still was unable to understand or speak Spanish at this point. These two critical steps allowed me to

focus on the words. I would listen to conversations. I carried a little notebook and I would write repeated words and make a note of context. I would go home for siesta and use my dictionary to figure out what people were talking about. I was developing phrases and vocabulary. I learned basic structure to communicate simple ideas.

I went to Santiago de Compostela with my father. He had studied Latin. He spoke Spanish but would use Latin to clarify. I also found that I had an easier time understanding Gallego than Spanish. My Spanish was coming along. I was learning new meanings of words. My understanding of the word “llevar” was to wear. I was told that I was going camping and I was going to *llevar* my lunch. I looked down because I thought I had food on my shirt. I didn't. My sister mimed to me what we were going to do.

It was during this camping trip that my language learning began to emerge. No one spoke English, but a boy named Jacobo was planning a trip to England next summer. He was particularly interested in communicating with me. With his help and just sitting and listening, I began to understand Spanish. I noticed they used compound tenses. They used “haber” with frequency to express past tense. Of course I could fill in verb charts, but hearing the use of *¿Has visto la película?* made more sense than a thousand worksheets. They used “tener+que” to express commands. They used “estar+gerund” to express present tense, and they used “ir+a+infinitive” to express future tense. Once I

figured these out, I only had to look up repeated words in my dictionary. The language began to “fill in”. I still couldn’t talk. My family and friends kept saying, “Yesi, you are so quiet. You need to talk more.” I understood, but I couldn’t say anything.

I came back from that camping trip and I could communicate my needs. I could use what little vocabulary I had. I talked with my father about Spanish politics, and Gallego as a language. I went grocery shopping with my mother. I went clothing shopping. I needed help; my sister was good at listening to what I needed. I still sounded like a three year old, but I could understand what people were saying. It was easier to understand than to be understood.

I was far from fluent when I left at the end of the summer.

I returned to school two weeks later. I loved Spanish! I had a new teacher, I think that helped some. I excelled in Spanish for the first time EVER! I could understand. I could answer questions. Señor told jokes in class as an informal assessment to see who understood the language. For the first time I had a purpose for communication! We played games to practice our language. We used authentic materials. We were encouraged to use, not regurgitate, nor parrot, but *use* Spanish. I really enjoyed the language. I learned so quickly. I was more efficient at organizing new vocabulary and structures for meaningful purposes.

I passed my IB Spanish test. Of course, my university had never heard of IB so I CLEP-ed Spanish. I ended up majoring in the very subject I loathed two years prior.

Afterward:

I did have the opportunity to return to Spain as a junior in college. I visited my host family. It was so funny. They said, "Wow, you can speak. You talk a lot; that is good."