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# Incorporating Music, Literature, and Culture in Communities of Second Language Learners

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**INCORPORATING MUSIC, LITERATURE, AND CULTURE**

**IN COMMUNITIES OF**

**SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**by**

**Michael Rhinehart**


**A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the degree**

**of**

**Master of Second Language Teaching**


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ABSTRACT

INCORPORATING MUSIC, LITERATURE, AND CULTURE

IN COMMUNITIES OF

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

by

Michael Rhinehart, Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2011

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This portfolio is a collection of papers that relate to the field of second language teaching. The papers include the author's teaching philosophy, three artifacts, and an annotated bibliography. The subjects covered include: the use of literature to teach a second language, the importance of having a community of learners in the classroom, and the incorporation of culture into the second language classroom. The author also includes an annotated bibliography of articles and books that shaped his teaching philosophy.

(120 pages)

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This portfolio is a compilation of my work in the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) program. It is centered on strategies and theories for teachers of Spanish as a foreign or second language. The strategies and theories covered provide tools for teachers to instruct students.

The use of various forms of authentic literature, to focus on building a community of learners, and to incorporate culture into the instruction will make a rich learning environment. A focus that I have included is the use of music to learn another language. The research that has been done within the field of music shows that anxiety is lessened when teachers include the use of music to learn another language. Another strategy that I have included is the relevance of using glossing techniques to facilitate learning the L2. Additionally within my portfolio I cover concepts that include the importance about identifying cultural differences and the value of teaching students what differences classmates may have. Finally the importance of having a class that works together. This is addressed by helping the class become a community of learners. That is to say that students will work together to share the learning responsibility between each other and be involved with each other.

Many of the examples herein blend my personal experiences. For example: I have taught at the high school level, classes during the time of my military service, and

additionally at the collegiate level. These experiences have introduced me to various practices that have shaped my teaching philosophy. I cover many of experiences and practices that I have learned through the years as well as practices that I have learned while participating in the MSLT program.

The literature and classes that I have been introduced to have provided me a richer appreciation for language learning. I have found that as I include students in the learning and have them collaborate together that I can build a community of learners that facilitates learning. The more I can introduce multiple avenues of learning the more chance I have of making the connection for the  students. This can be done by focusing on the various strengths that the learners possess.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

**Apprenticeship of Observation**

Sarah Caldwell (Charotte & Waisman, 2008, p.181), who said, "Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can, there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did." I have tried to adhere to this type of counsel throughout whatever stage of life I am in. Although teaching is the focus of this degree, I have tried to continue learning even when I am teaching another language.

Teaching is fulfilling to me because it is a constant learning experience. My objective is to never be content with the level of teaching I provide. I want to continue learning new styles and strategies for helping students in all aspects of life. I will strive to put the students first and incorporate in my lessons a student- centered curriculum, in which they can use language to have different experiences in life. I have had many experiences throughout my life that have given me opportunities to teach others: in the military, in the public school system, and at the university level. These experiences have taught me a great deal about teaching and learning styles. I realize that teaching a second language is more than just showing up for class and going through the textbook lesson. I want to focus on the best practices for teaching a second language. I want my classes to be rich with fulfilling experiences that as my students leave, they say to themselves "That was so much fun and I get it."

I have had many experiences that have lead me to teaching and wanting to make an impact on students' lives. This desire for teaching began when I was in high school. I had a teacher who taught me more than just the subject he was assigned. Mr. Alldredge

my high school history teacher spent time in and out of class to teach me life lessons that I would remember in my own teaching practices. He didn't need to do that; he could have just given the lessons and simple gotten through. Instead he put effort into our learning and took it one step further.

I learned the value of teaching and learning as I served as a missionary for the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I did this in the Dominican Republic where I learned and taught many lessons. This is where I started to appreciate the importance of culture and what it provides for a people. Even though I was sent there to teach the people about religion, I learned so much more from them than I think they did from me. I think the key is as Kanu states, "Critical teachers must search in as many locations as possible for alternate discourses, ways of thinking and being that expand the envelop of possibility" (Kanu, 2006, p. 195). Teachers should always strive to learn more as they better their understanding of how to engage students in learning. If the teacher isn't continually learning more, how can he or she expect the students to do so?

As I returned from the Dominican Republic there was the yearning that I had within myself that pushed me out of my little home town.  I went to the university to teach and learn after I had been in the military for a few years and also served as a missionary. I say teach because during this time I was also in the military where some soldiers are expected to train subordinates in basic soldier skills. When I began working in the military in 1989, I had many peers who were not taking advantage of the opportunities to get a higher education. My section chief advised me early in my military

career to get as much education as possible. He said it will never prove wrong to get more education.

I wanted to help others, as I was helped when I was younger, so I chose the new-found passion I had for languages as well as Special Education. I became trained as a Spanish and Special Education Teacher while I was at Southern Utah University. It was a great experience and I felt good about the decision that I had made. I felt that the two degrees complemented each other well. My desire with the two fields was to ensure that second language learners were not being placed in special education classes erroneously. I felt that I would be able to be a good mediator for both fields. I loved the diversity that I had with the two fields.

After my student teaching, I taught Special Education for eight years at Richfield High school. I didn't have a Spanish class but always, when I had breaks, went to the Spanish class to help. I loved it and realized that I really wanted to get into my own Spanish class. I found ways of incorporating my special education classes into foreign language classes as well so that I could be involved that way. I was in line to become the head of the Spanish program but I made some other choices that have led me down a different path. Deployments in the military increased since the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001. These deployments made substantial impacts on my career. Within a four-year time frame I had been pulled away from my classes for two of the four years. I began to feel as if I was cheating the students by not following through with plans that I had for them.

For the most recent deployment, I served on an Embedded Training Team for the Afghanistan Army. I was put in a teaching role which was both rewarding and challenging. I was stationed in a region southwest of Kandahar with a non- commissioned officer and a platoon of Afghan soldiers to a combat outpost. There we taught the fundamentals of artillery to the soldiers and deployed with them for combat operations. I was able to learn about their rich culture as I worked with them for a year. I taught them but they taught me as well.

I contemplated working solely for the military until things settled down a little, but quickly realized that I still wanted to teach. As it was, a position opened at Utah State University in the Army ROTC program while I was in Afghanistan. I applied and was given the position. I couldn't have asked for a better opportunity. I am able to teach in the Army while also continuing my education in the field that I am passionate about. My education in the Master of Second Language Teaching program began as soon as I arrived on campus.

These experiences have taught me many lessons and hopefully I have been able to teach many as well. I will point out throughout my philosophy of teaching the lessons that I have learned and the things that I believe help students to learn.

**Professional Environment**

I see my professional environment as being one in a small secondary school setting or possibly in a junior college. I would prefer these settings as they are the most consistent with my previous experiences. In these rural settings, I can share experiences that show that one can start in these rural settings and venture out and experience things outside the rural communities. Additionally, I prefer the slower pace of life that rural settings typically provide.

Students will walk into my class and immediately feel like they are in another culture. I will have all sorts of cultural artifacts from various Spanish-speaking cultures. These artifacts from various cultures will encourage students to be inquisitive about different culture and enrich the environment. The students will walk into the class wondering if we will be listening to Merengue or Salsa music. Pictures and posters will adorn the walls to help stimulate cultural curiosity.

The students will have access to a large selection of books that will be at the back of the classroom and available for them to check out. It is important to me that the students to have the opportunity to explore various texts in the target language. Students have so many interests that can be addressed through the use of literature. I will encourage out loud reading outside of the classroom. The use of my library will help students to have those types of opportunities outside the classroom.

While learning Spanish, my students will have many forms of exposure to different cultural experiences. I envision bringing guests to my class that will have

experiences from different cultures. It is particularly important to help students see the differences in cultures. Guest speakers can bring a number of experiences that I have not had and help students to see differences in cultures. The incorporation of culture in the classroom will help students with the social aspect of learning another language. The differences in cultures can be confusing. I believe it is the language teacher's responsibility to bridge those gaps and help them see through other culture's lenses.

I enjoy collaborating with others. I want my excitement for education to spread throughout the community of learning within the school. Another great resource is to visit other schools that have language fairs and even host one at our own school. As I have attended a few of these language fairs, I can see the value of working with other schools and bring other views into language learning.

**Personal Teaching Philosophy**

Teaching for me is like marksmanship. There are many things that must happen for anyone to hit the target. One cannot haphazardly shoot rounds down range and expect the targets to go down. Techniques and strategies can be trained so that it becomes habit for the shooter to acquire a target and knock it down. This is similar to second language teaching. One must look at the strategies and techniques that will ensure that the desired result of teaching a second language is achieved. One cannot simply go into a classroom of second language learners without preparing oneself to engage the learners in the "target" language.

In the marksmanship arena there are multiple formats for a shooting range. The type of range I would like to explain is the Army's 25 meter zero range. This range is designed for shooters to focus on techniques that will help them shoot a tight grouping within a shorter distance. The desired results are that when they go to a modified pop-up target range with their weapons, techniques, and strategies that they practiced on at the 25- meter range, they will get a better mark on the qualification. I see teaching a second language the same way. Students could be likened unto the targets. There are concentric circles that make up the targets. The circles on the outer edges are larger and easier to hit. As one gets closer to the center one needs to demonstrate more skill; consequently, hits that make it closer to the center and are grouped tighter are worth more. The most valuable hits are those that hit the center (the bull's eye). Similarly, in teaching, there are various styles and strategies to meet the goals of getting closer to the students. One doesn't have to have the best skills to simply hit the target. One will demonstrate some

marksmanship for just hitting it, but one's chances are fewer for achieving a tighter grouping. A careful consistent practice of hitting in the same place is analogous to finding the strategies that impact students the best. Maximizing effectiveness through careful consideration of techniques will ensure that one finds those ways of teaching students that will create the biggest impact on the students' future.

Therefore one could look at L2 learners as targets. A teacher aims the instruction at them with all the strategies and techniques the teacher has acquired. This will ensure greater consistency of instruction, I must try to influence students with multiple strategies and techniques that are known as good language teaching practices. In this teaching philosophy I will discuss best practices related to: activities that involve multiple intelligences, motivation, popular culture, authentic literature, and the importance of having fellow learners in a local social network.

**Multiple Intelligences**

Every learner has unique strengths and learning styles. Gardner (1983) has written extensively about these strengths which he calls "Multiple Intelligences". People have varying forms of intelligences that help them with acquisition of new knowledge. Gardner states that every person possesses these intelligences to a certain degree. They include: linguistic (use of words), musical (use of lyrics or songs), logical-mathematical (use of numbers), spatial (use of pictures), body-kinesthetic (physical), intrapersonal (self reflection), and interpersonal (social experiences). These intelligences are described by Gardner (1983, p. 390) as he uses the analogy of creating a computer program:

"Logical-mathematical intelligence seems central, because programming depends upon the deployment of strict procedures to solve a problem or attain a goal in a finite number of steps. Linguistic intelligence is also relevant, at least as long as manual and computer languages make use of ordinary language...an individual with a strong musical bent might best be introduced to programming by attempting to program a simple musical piece (or to master a program that composes). An individual with strong spatial abilities might be initiated through some form of computer graphics -- and might be aided in the task of programming through the use of a flowchart or some other spatial diagram. Personal intelligences can play important roles. The extensive planning of steps and goals carried out by the individual engaged in programming relies on intrapersonal forms of thinking, even as the cooperation needed for carrying a complex task or for learning new computational skills may rely on an individual's ability to work with a team. Kinesthetic intelligence may play a role in working with the computer itself, by facilitating skill at the terminal..."

These varied strengths that learners possess should be exploited by teachers. Targeting a wide variety of intelligences, teachers should design learning activities that can engage and excite students to learn a second language.

I believe it is vital for a successful foreign language classroom to have a variety of activities, so that students have maximum opportunity to acquire the target language. Excitement and a smile on my face will demonstrate my passion for giving the students a meaningful experience. The experience that I want to provide combines language and culture learning with the development of greater self-worth that students should have. This can be accomplished by having cultural thematic units in the classroom. The Constructivist Theory (Abrams, 2002; Piaget, 1950; Poplin & Stone, 1992; Wright, 2000) is an approach that will help students become integrated into the classroom. The students will work together to learn from activities with rich authentic texts, including videos, interviews, magazines, and newspapers. Activities that engage the students with small group work should be a key part of the curriculum, with the teacher as a facilitator instead of an instructor. For example, students could write and act out role plays, or write

and edit a class newspaper on various cultural themes. Such group work will require students to be active learners who explore and construct knowledge based on their experiences. The Second language teacher needs to have good relationships with the students so that they feel comfortable producing target language output.

Development of relationships with my students is essential. I want my students to come to class with high expectations of the experience in my class period. Although the class will be demanding, the anxiety level should be at a minimum. A supportive climate will facilitate a lowered affective filter (Krashen, 1983; Lin, 2008). Because of the relationship that I have with them, I will be able to detect when things are not going well for my students. I will know them not only by name, but by their nature and how they respond to different teaching styles. This should be encouraging to the students and help them take ownership in their learning experience.

**Motivation**

Motivation to learn a second language is identified as the most influential factor in successfully learning a new language. (Dornyei, 2001; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Goldberg & Noels, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Skehan, 2003; Yang, 2003) According to Shrum and Glisan (2010), teachers need to tap into the reason a student is trying to learn another language. Some students like to receive receive good grades and demonstrate their ability to study hard, while another reason would be that the students are trying to learn how to communicate in the target language and be as native as

possible. These motivations that have been mentioned are referred to as instrumental and integrative (Gardner, 1993). Instrumental relates to those learners that are trying to get a better job or simply get good marks in their classes. Integrative represents the ability to fit into a target culture. The latter of the two types of motivation is what I am hoping for in my classroom.  Integratively motivated students that want to do the activities like going to shops, eating establishments, and participating in role plays as if they were in the land of the target culture should be afforded the opportunity to practice. Even though the instrumental learners may have alternate motives for being in the language class they can add great input to the classroom. These learners that are motivated by grades can help the teacher have a more balanced classroom by catering to the needs of both types of students' needs.

**Popular culture and authentic literature**

Students will be able to rely on their learning strengths because they will be getting varied styles of instruction. This will enable students to become confident in my class. As a teacher, I must lecture minimally, focusing instead on creating learning experiences for students. We will experience the topics discussed. We will not simply talk about how it would be to go to a flea market and barter with the merchants, we will practice it also. I will obtain audiovisual media, such as news broadcasts, telenovelas, songs, and interviews in the target language for class.

With Content- Based Instruction (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Cummins, 1981; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010; Met, 1999) I can incorporate all the multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993). CBI engages students in learning content through the use of a second language instead of simply learning about language. Students can choose a subject in which they are interested and then they can learn about that particular subject through the use of the second language. By exploring topics in which they are interested, and using the target language to do so, students are likely to acquire the language. My teaching is student-centered so I will find those topics that the students are interested in and bring real-life contexts into the classroom. Once I learn what those topics are, I will ensure that meaningful language tasks centered on the chosen topic are used in the classroom. These thematic lessons will feature visual, auditory, and kinesthetic attributes so that students can rely on their respective strengths to maximize learning.

Deriving meaning from books can be a rewarding and fun way to use the language in the classroom. Verdugo and Belmonte (2007, p. 87) also state, "At an early stage of language acquisition, stories can offer a valuable way of contextualizing and introducing new language, making it meaningful and memorable." This use of books or stories in the classroom can give the students something to grasp onto and remember.

Reading to students can be done by finding texts that can be used in the classroom that will help students relate to past experiences. Verdugo and Belmonte (2007, p. 87) mention, "It is well known that listening comprehension plays a key role in foreign language teaching, especially with young learners." Making connections to things that

they have experienced will not only help them remember but also help lower the affective filters. This benefits the process of learning a second language.

Another way that will help tighten the shot group on the 25 meter target is the use of popular culture in the classroom. I will not solely rely on the textbook for instruction. Some textbooks are great resources, but I will blend pop culture exercises with activities from the textbook to augment my lessons. Language learning does not have to be confined to the classroom. Hallways, classrooms, stages, assemblies, and places outside of the school are additional places for language learning. Let us look at the latter, outside of the school for a moment. Students are involved in a great deal of internet activity in relation to their love of popular music. This can be tied into learning and using the target language. Some examples include: searching industry sites for information on particular groups or musicians, running fan web sites and chat rooms, down loading mpeg files and lyrics, and searching for concert tickets (Morrell, 2004). Accessing target-language media out of the classroom with popular culture-based activities increases involvement with the target language. The students can explore the lyrics of a song they heard in class. With all that available on the internet, out of class assignments can effectively enhance second language acquisition.

The use of popular culture stimulates students' desire to access more learning opportunities. Popular culture is relevant to the lives of adolescents (Morrell, 2004). If they can access target-language popular culture in the classroom, they will be able to make connections to things that they already know. The use of popular culture can

enhance their motivation (Morrell, 2004). Morrell mentions, "teaching popular culture enables the preconditions for achievement motivation" (Morrell, 2004, p. 52). If I can show the learner's ways that popular culture songs can impact their communicative skills and they can make meaning out of texts, I believe they will be more invested in the classroom network we collectively build.

In addition to popular culture, I want to use authentic literature in the classroom. Authentic texts can be beneficial for language learning especially if used with a top-down approach ( Adair-Hauck & Cumo-Johanssen, 1997; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Texts, in whatever format, shouldn't be watered down or made easier. Authentic texts enable students to infer meaning and interpret the message. Reading passages in textbooks are typically short and don't allow students the time that is necessary to come up with conclusions. Texts need to be longer for the students to be able to infer meaning (Maxim, 2002). Using the top-down approach to help students figure out the big picture will help them interpret and provide them opportunities to make meaning for themselves. "The purpose of top-down learning is to give the student a clear and whole picture of how the words and structures they must learn are contained in the context that makes these elements meaningful through the overall message" (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 60). To tap into the motivational part of language learning, teachers need to find things that will help the students get excited and also use texts that can be comprehensible. Students should be guided through a text. Teachers can guide students by incorporating different strategies. Whether students read as an entire class or in small groups, the teachers should take an active role by demonstrating good reading techniques and then encouraging the students

to participate. A strategy that can help students through reading could be graphic organizers that point out key points in the text. An additional practice that could make the text more concrete may be acting out the text while reading it.

Another example of a learning strategy in the classroom to acquire a second language is the use of glossing in the text. A book that may have vocabulary that is beyond students' level can still be used in the language classroom. Teachers must be able to recognize that a specific piece of literature may be above the students' level. Teachers need to anticipate up-front which words might be too challenging for the students. Glossing provides definitions in the margins to help students comprehend difficult words in the target language. Different forms of glossing can be used in and out of the classroom. Glossing in the margins (Davis, 1989) is a typical format used in the classroom. This strategy provides definitions or translations in the margins of words that students may not understand. Hypertexts (Lomicka, 1998) is the use of computer programs to help with words that may not be understood by the learner. One simply scrolls over a word that is not known and a definition, picture, or maybe a sound appears and the student is able to make meaning of the text.

Students seem to enjoy songs, especially those that have catchy tunes and add to background knowledge (Chapin, 2003; Fonsseca-Mora, 2000; Kramer, 2001; Richard-Amato, 1996). The use of songs as literature will help students make connections to

previous learning and provide a wide variety of activities to engage the students'

learning.

**Local Social Network**

Tight groupings are the analogy on which I base my Teaching Philosophy. This

means that I will continually try to find those strategies to teach students that will bring

consistently closer to having maximum effects on the "target" language. An additional

strategy to have maximum effect on the marksmanship is that of building a Local Social

Network (Labov, 2001) in the language classroom. Having a community in the classroom

enhances the teacher's ability to create an authentic-like environment that will in turn

augment student learning. The teacher is a key player in these networks and must

engineer an environment that will support multiple roles on the part of the students. The

more learners can move in and out of these roles in the classroom without feeling

pressured to do something, the more opportunities they will have for language practice.

Students can learn from each other just as much as they can from their teachers. Putting

them into various learning groups will help them access and use the language.

Another way to look at this is as if the class were a wheel. The teacher would

serve as the hub and students would be spokes. In this metaphor of a traditional wheel,

the interaction is centered on the hub, with one single reference point that the students all

refer to. A better metaphor is a more modern wheel, with spokes criss-crossing other

spokes, making the wheel stronger as they mesh together. The spokes cross each other

and are in reference with other spokes. This tighter and stronger construction of a wheel

makes for a sounder design.  For a classroom, this metaphor means that students work toward a greater objective, with the teacher as the hub to which they all refer. The learners can look to the teacher for examples and guidance on how to navigate through input and output activities. The students also have the ability to talk to and listen to classmates. This helps them model for each other and receive input from more than one reference point. Having multiple contact points allows them to practice their communicative skills in a less controlled environment. As this network grows, the learners feel they are part of something greater and have an added investment in the class.

As mentioned above this social community will be essential for a communicative approach. I want to spend as much time as possible developing their communicative abilities in oral and written modes.  To achieve this objective my class will implement as many activities as possible dealing with communicative situations. I want to prepare them for these opportunities. The use of instrumental communication (e.g., trying to get a job) and the integrative communication (e.g., fitting into a particular culture) (Gardner, 1985) will be the focus of my classroom instruction.

Meaningful purpose of the communicative activities is the key to a successful second language classroom (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The use of small groups and pairs should be the focus as it is the most effective in acquiring a second language. Rao mentions, "Through these small group activities, the students are engaged in meaningful and authentic language use rather than in the merely mechanical practice of language patterns" (Rao, 2001, p. 87). I will give clear instructions and examples along the way,

but will let the groups work through problems and situations on their own. This will

provide additional practice opportunities for students to make meaning for themselves.

Classrooms should be places where students can help each other learn about real things.

They should be able to negotiate meaning through interactive dialog. "Negotiation of

meaning" fosters the students' ability to listen and construct meaning through dialogue.

This can be facilitated by appropriate amounts of comprehensible input from all sorts of

texts, spoken and written. As I talk to the students, I will make my output comprehensible

(Krashen, 1993; VanPatten, 1993).


As students communicate with each other they need to feel that they are part of

the class. Student personalities are all unique, and I need to implement teaching practices

to help students handle personality differences. An important teaching strategy to

implement is to have clear and concise instructions on how to do certain activities. Verbal

and non-verbal cues will help students know what the teacher is asking for in the

classroom. Students can have different roles that will give them a feeling of investment in

the classroom. For example, sometimes I have students take attendance for the class. The

roll-calling student is responsible for asking class members a particular question and

getting a response in return. Students know when it is going to be their turn and prepare

themselves in advance to ask questions.

The class will move in and out of different activities and some students may serve

as group leader and report on the activity afterward. Others may serve as scribe to take

notes for the group. When I assign various tasks, students feel more involved and

understand how to work together as groups to maximize the use of class time and feel that they are contributing to the learning process.

**Conclusion**

I have used two metaphors to explain my views of language teaching and learning. I believe what will get me closest to zeroing at the 25 meter range is being the best facilitator of language acquisition. As I mentioned in teaching philosophy I will choose the strategies and techniques for L2 learning and by so doing I am using the practice as used in marksmanship. The use of consistent steady aiming towards the target will ensure the maximum effects on a target. In this case with teaching another language, if I choose the strategies that come the closest to the students, I will be maximizes my efforts to learn another language.

All the strategies and philosophies that I have mentioned before are great in theory. If I don't put forth the effort to be the center of the wheel, "so to speak", there will not be as much success with the students acquiring a second language. As mentioned before I want the class to be as the metaphorical wheel. This means that I would act as the hub of the wheel and the interaction between the students would be as the spokes. I want the students to look to me for security and as a leader in their quest for acquiring a second language. I am confident that I can do this if I stay consistent and stay the course with these strategies. I know I haven't learned everything there is to know about L2 acquisition. I will continually learn how to help students learn a second language. The

topics discussed throughout my teaching philosophy have been the use of activities and strategies that are centered on the use of multiple intelligences, motivation, popular culture, authentic literature, and the importance of having fellow learners in a local social network. These methods for teaching and each new method or strategy that I learn will help me find those ways to achieve the greatest growth in my students. My hope is that I will continue to find the ways to engage my students in language to the point that not only I am hitting the target with the strategies, but they feel like they're achieving their maximum potential.

**ARTIFACTS**

# ARTIFACT I

# INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

This two-part paper reflects my views of how teachers can make various texts accessible for students in the L2 classroom. In the first part, I discuss in the use of lyrical music to learn a second language. While taking LING 6800, I became intrigued with the idea of using song lyrics as texts for language teaching.

In the second part of this paper, I focus on a different aspect of the use of texts. While taking LING 6010, my classmate Randall Garver and I became interested in the effects of glossing on L2 acquisition. We originally wrote this paper on glossing together, but I have since made changes on my own.

The research from this paper was rewarding. I enjoyed looking for the articles that gave examples of what type of music is best for L2 learning. I found that as I listened with intent to the new songs, I was able to pick out lessons that could be used as literature pieces as well for cultural lessons. The greatest impact from writing this paper is that when I listen to music now, I listen for language and culture lessons. It has made me more aware of things I can present in the class to help learners who may rely on more innovative strategies to learn. Additionally as look for the books that I include in my personal library for my class, I have focused on a number of things. One being if they are already glossed and at what extent are they glossed. Another thing that I look for is if I need to gloss the book, how much or little would need to be glossed for the students to understand the message in the book.

**Artifact I - Literacy**

**The Integration of Music and Literature**

**in Second Language Teaching.**

**The Integration of Music and Literature in Second Language Teaching.**

Second language learners will benefit greatly from a variety of activities in the classroom. Students should have fun with the opportunity to learn another language. Enjoyment can be found in the use of various forms of literature. Referring to light-hearted and humorous texts, Richard-Amato states, "Children and adults alike can receive considerable enjoyment from indulging in such frivolity" (1996, p. 157). I believe the enjoyment that can result from using a particular form of literature, namely song lyrics, is particularly powerful for language learners. I also believe that the use of literature is maximally effective when instructors provide glosses for unfamiliar vocabulary.

It is these two topics within the realm of literature that will be covered: the use of lyrical music and the use of glosses to learn a second language. Through the use of both, teachers can lower affective filters or anxieties associated with learning another language (Krashen, 1983), and build on the learners' strengths.

**The purpose of lyrical music**

Teachers are constantly looking for ways to get students to recall past learning. Singing is an easy way to memorize new language elements. Music seems to leave a particularly deep trace in our memories; this could be due to the fact that it is related to affective and unconscious factors (Foncesca Mora, 2000). Murphy (1992) mentions a phenomenon that he calls 'song-stuck-in-my-head.' He defines it is an involuntary

remembrance of a song heard previously. The songs get stuck in our minds and we can recall previous lessons from the time we learned them. People can often recall voices, visualize the places they heard the songs, and even remember faces and expressions that were demonstrated during the performances.

There are arguments from foreign language teachers, psychologists, and theorists that place emphasis on the application of music in the classroom. Blaz urges teachers to, "make the cultural experience authentic, enjoyable, and memorable with some music" (Blaz, 2002, p. 65). Songs offer a number of mnemonic codes, such as repetition, rhyme, and melody, which aid the listener's memory (Maley, 1987). The more educators can link things to be learned to melodies or catchy little sayings, the better the chance is that the foreign language learner will remember what needs to be learned.

Teachers often use music to bring a relaxed aire into the classroom, which can have a positive effect on students' learning. There is evidence that music benefits rote memorization. The ability to memorize can be beneficial to the language acquisition process, since it would be difficult to acquire language without some memorization (Medina, 2002). When various types of verbal information (e.g., multiplication tables and spelling lists) have been presented simultaneously with music, memorization has been enhanced (Gfeller, 1983; Schuster & Mouzan, 1982). The use of music in its simplest form can have great effects in a classroom environment to help students remember previous learning experiences. There are similar occurrences outside the language classroom. For example, catchy commercials on the radio or television involve melodic

tunes that are easily remembered. Simply hearing the tune of a commercial can connect listeners to past learning or input. When children acquire the first language, nursery rhymes are practiced frequently. The same can be done with a second language. Although instrumental music can help in memorization, an additional focus point of my paper will be how lyrical music can strengthen second language acquisition.

Lyrical music can be fun for the students. The use of songs in classrooms has been shown to foster "a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in the classroom" (Jolly, 1975, p. 11). Students can feel at ease in their learning environment and therefore the result will be a lowered affective filter (Krashen, 1983). "Consequently, some learners feel less threatened, which in turn lessens the mental barrier that is caused by low motivation, high student anxiety, low student self-esteem" (Kramer, 2001, p. 30). Students who struggle with anxiety while learning a second language can feel relaxed and benefit from the use of lyrical music.

As stated before, lyrical music helps students retain language learning. Second-language students can be exposed to meaningful word/sound play through jazz chants, music, and poetry, all of which can provide them with a few tools for communication, especially valuable at beginning levels (Graham, 1978). Through these genres, students can internalize routines and patterns with or without consciously committing them to memory (Richard-Amato, 1996). If one thinks back to one's first language acquisition, songs and rhythms can probably be recalled. Therefore, the importance with the use of music in language acquisition becomes apparent.

Another reason for using lyrical music in the classroom is that it helps the beginning language learner with elements of communicative start. During initial stages of language development, students often have the desire to communicate but do not have the necessary skills (Lems, 2005; Murphey, 1992). By having a repertoire of ways to be communicative (however limited), the students are able to form bonds with native speakers and thus be in a position to receive more input (Richard-Amato, 1996). The ability to recall songs and repeat them is a great way to get students to try to communicate using whatever it is that they have learned. The simple use of phrases learned in songs will be a significant achievement in the beginning. Swain (1985) emphasizes that input alone isn't enough. Learners need to speak the language to achieve the higher levels of competence.

**The timing of lyrical music**

At beginning levels, the use of lyrical music can help with basic language learning. It can be used to teach basic vocabulary. The basics of a language such as: numbers, colors, professions, animals, and simple actions are just some of the things that can be covered in early stages of language learning.

Music is often used in a classroom but sometimes misinterpreted. All too often it is used as something to break up the routine, and not a lot of teaching value comes from the use of music. In my experience, I have seen that music is regarded as one tool among

many and employed randomly. Rarely is it incorporated into an overarching pedagogical strategy (Kramer, 2001). This can be a shortcoming of some teachers, who may get excited about trying something new that they hear about at a teaching conference or clinic. The excitement soon wears off when they realize how much work it can take, and they simply return to more conservative approaches to teaching. Yet, music plays a preeminent role in the lives of America's youth (Morrell, 2004). Therefore they have a predisposition to do well with lessons that use lyrical music. The effect of music can be powerful and teachers should use it whenever possible. Teachers can be successful if they tap into the possibilities provided by music.

Songs can take the place of oral stories. A musical medium promotes language acquisitions to the same extent as a non-musical medium. Stated differently, the same amount of vocabulary can be acquired from listening to a song as listening to a story (Medina, 2000). Studies show that songs may even be more effective when used in conjunction with illustrations. The use of photos, drawings, and gestures can help add meaning for those students who benefit from extra linguistic support which results in language acquisition (Medina, 2002). The more senses one can involve during instruction, the more chances one has to link to prior knowledge. Multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1993) addresses many techniques that can be used to break through the barriers of language learners. When one tries to incorporate verbal, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and musical intelligences, one will provide a full gamut of activities that in turn will reach more students.

**Places for lyrical music**

Time outside of class can be utilized to influence language learning. Outside school, many students are involved in a great deal of internet activity in relation to their love of popular music. This can be tied into L2 building activities in various ways, such as searching industry sites for information on particular groups or musicians, running fan web sites, participating in chat rooms, down loading mpeg files and lyrics, and searching for concert tickets (Morrell, 2004). Utilizing time out of classroom with popular culture activities in the L2 will reinforce concepts learned in the language classroom. When students can earn course credit for the type of things that they already do, students will be more prone to use that time out of class towards language acquisition.

One method that can help with out of class L2 access can be through the use of multimedia devices. Today's youth tend to use iPods and similar devices. One cannot go very far without seeing them. Such personal technology devices can be used by our students to access music, lyrics, and cultural information. We can use the technology for retrieving information as an aid in the retention of that information (Chapin, 2003). It makes sense to tap into those things with which students are already comfortable. Students can download programs that give them easy access to L2 exposure. Added

exposure through the use of technology should be encouraged among second-language learners.

Acquiring a new language could be facilitated by using technology outside of class. Lem (2005, p. 2) states,

> Listening to songs is a tried-and-true method by which students can improve their listening comprehension in a new language, and when used as a guided activity its value is maximized even further. Improving listening comprehension is probably the primary use of music.

Students can augment their opportunities of acquiring a second language significantly with out-of-class listening as well as taking the opportunity to practice singing the songs that they have learned. By doing so the students are working through the additional aspects of language learning by focusing on output as well.

**Nature of the lyrical music to use**

Students seem to learn best when they have ownership of their learning and can relate to the material.  I believe popular culture has a great impact on the students (Morrell, 2004).  Popular culture includes all types of reflections of the beliefs and values of a group of people. Thus, popular culture includes literature, music, film, sports, magazines, art, dance, etc. Cultural productions or activities in which students participate may become better engrained in their minds than learning from a textbook.  Activities that involve comprehensible input and relate to popular culture are more memorable and more accessible to the language learner. My language teaching experiences in Richfield

High School involved much use of seasonal songs particularly around the Christmas holiday. The Spanish club made a big production of singing traditional Christmas songs of which the text was handed out and reviewed throughout several lessons. The songs were translated in part by the students and also by the teacher for greater understanding. Because many of the songs were familiar Christmas tunes, students' anxiety levels were reduced. The students rehearsed often and were comfortable when performance day came. The students were excited because they got to visit all neighboring classes and sing Christmas carols. The teacher positioned himself in different places throughout the class so that he could hear the students sing along. It was a wonderful example of lyrical music use in language teaching. I measured success by participation.

Another class at the same school demonstrated a different type of production that incorporated a competition of a particular song that learners had been studying for a series of lessons. The song was chosen because it covered possibilities of employment and personalities that one might have. A guest judge was asked to visit the classes and judge with certain criteria. Pronunciation, enthusiasm, and for those who were daring enough, "a music video production" were evaluated. The students were excited about this activity. There was a lot of positive discussion in the hallways from other teachers. They marveled at students' retention of the songs learned in class.

Anything short and catchy tends to be a good choice when one deliberates what to use with students. Many of the songs in the "top ten" are relatively short. Using these lyrics from popular culture can be very effective since it is something students can relate

to. Morrell states, "… that hip-hop texts are literary texts and can be used to scaffold literary terms and concepts and ultimately foster literary interpretations" (Morrell, 2004, p. 60). If one uses appropriate pop songs as text, the lyrics should be photocopied so that each student can have his or her own copy (Richard-Amato, 1996). It has been my experience in beginning Spanish classes that students enjoy popular songs with a catchy beat. They get involved in the singing of lyrics and having the text ready for them helps them understand the input, which fuels acquisition. Generally speaking, pop songs are repetitive and have a simplistic form. They often contain a dialog type of text that can be interpreted in various ways, allowing students to explore possible perspectives in the text. Many times, songs contain a few lines that get stuck in one's head and are easily retrieved.

Kramer lists important criteria when choosing songs. He states, "The text must fit the students' level, it should stress a particular grammatical point or theme, singer's diction must be clear, and the songs must come from a variety of musical styles" (Kramer, 2001, p. 3). After the text is selected, Kramer recommends three more steps: First, finding the best recording of the song, then annotating the text, and finally creating a handout. Students will benefit greatly when teachers search out the best recording with clearly audible pronunciation. With a handout, students can follow along and see the words being sung and have something visual that they can refer to, which will increase the comprehensibility of the input.

Variety is essential for language input in a class. Simply because one person likes a certain style of music doesn't mean that everyone else will enjoy that style. Different cultural and musical styles will lead to a greater outreach to a wider audience. The key is to keep the target audience always in mind (Kramer, 2001). Students need to be able to relate and feel comfortable with the genre that they are listening to. Considering this need for variety and comfort regarding literature in the L2 learning classroom, I would like to shift attention to a strategy that can add variety and boost comfort. It is the use of glosses in text to facilitate L2 learning.

**<u>Glosses</u>**

I can remember when I took an upper division Spanish literature class for my undergraduate degree. The text "Don Quijote de la Mancha" by Miguel Cervantes is a well-known canonical piece of Spanish literature. I remember signing up for the required class and wondering if I would be able to make it through the course. As I purchased the book the professor had chosen, I soon felt my anxiety lower. He had chosen an edition of this great, challenging, classical piece that had some of the words glossed in the margins throughout the text. My fear before purchasing the book had been that I would be spending countless hours looking up words I didn't know in the dictionary. However, with this edition containing glosses, I was able to read the text and comprehend its meaning with fewer visits to the dictionary. I believe that my professor knew what he was doing when he decided to use this edition with marginal glosses. He lowered our anxiety level and helped us to read a challenging novel with glossing strategies leading the way.

Just as songs have a place in the second language curriculum, I believe glossing to be an influential way of connecting with students. Texts with glosses can be appropriate and effective for teaching languages. In this section of the paper I will cover the purpose of glossing texts, some examples of glossing, and their effects.

**Purpose of glossing texts**

Throughout history glosses have been used to facilitate reading in foreign language. These glosses in foreign-language readers, "are necessary for fluent reading" (Davis, 1989, p. 41). Dating back to the Middle Ages, in scriptures and other texts, glosses were used to clarify meaning and facilitate the comprehension of the text. Glossing of texts has been used for many years and has evolved into various modern-day forms.

Glosses provide readers with opportunities to read a text and have access to the meanings of difficult vocabulary throughout the passages. Readers may be discouraged if they find too many words that are unfamiliar. Davis (1989) observes, "Many literary passages, however, contain so many low-frequency vocabulary items that the reader's background knowledge may be unavailable because of the undue attention required to decode individual word meanings" (Davis, 1989, p.45). Time spent looking up vocabulary in the dictionary and textbooks could instead be devoted to reading more.

Glossing provides the opportunity to read at a higher level and a greater rate which is believed to help L2 learners with second languages.

It can be discouraging for the students if they are unable to construct meaning from the literature. The constant and continuous referral to dictionaries can waste time and be frustrating. Looking for vocabulary can become "a three to four hour ordeal, mainly because of the non-native speaker's constant recourse to the dictionary" (Crow, 1986, p. 242). Since dictionary use requires so much time, the effect of marginal glosses will be greater than that of dictionaries because readers often do not make use of the dictionary (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus 1996). Lomicka asserts, "that incidental vocabulary learning is higher when L2 readers have access to the meanings of words through marginal glosses than through a dictionary" (Lomicka, 1998, p. 42). Easy access to meanings of text encourages the students to continue with the story instead of slowing down or stopping to search for the meanings of the words.

**Examples of glossing**

Students are able to acquire language more effectively when they are not distracted. Distractions can include noticing multiple words in the text that are unfamiliar. Glossing enables students to access the definition of difficult words without referring to other texts to search for the meaning. A constant need to refer to other texts for the meanings of words can be frustrating or impose limitations on reading for comprehension.

Modern technology has come to support new types of glossing, in addition to the traditional glosses printed to the side or below reading passages. A notable new way of glossing texts is with hypertext. The use of multimedia annotations and hypertext is a strategy that can be beneficial when learners access reading passages through the internet or computer generated programs. Programs allow the text to be "invisible and unobtrusive", according to Davis (1989). Through hypermedia annotated text, readers will be able to approach the text more globally (Martinez-Lage, 1997). Since students can access the World Wide Web, they have access to texts from all around the world at a click of the button. In addition to the wide variety of texts available, the ability to receive quick feedback through hyperlinks will help students with reading comprehension.

Hypertext or multimedia glossing can be beneficial in many ways. Quick feedback and definitions help learners be less frustrated with comprehension. Lomicka (1998) and Davis (1989) present research data that demonstrate the effectiveness of computer-based texts that are glossed. Some hypertext is more useful than others. Just as students use the glosses more than time-consuming dictionaries, so are they more likely to use highlighted text as opposed to non-highlighted texts for glosses (De Ridder, 2007). The ability to click on the highlighted text and instantly access definitions for difficult words will help students acquire the second language.

**Effect of Glossing**

While much research has been done on whether glosses are effective tools in vocabulary retention, Yoshii (2006) points out that "future studies need to examine the effect of L1 and L2 glosses, taking the learners' proficiency level into consideration as well" (p. 12). From his study of L1 and L2 glosses with or without pictorial cues, Yoshii concluded that glosses benefited learners at different levels in different ways. Learners who were given the L1 glosses without pictorial cues retained vocabulary items better than those with L1 glosses with pictures or L2 glosses with or without pictorial cues.

Yoshii's study seems to counter the findings of Chun and Plass (1996), who showed that glosses of text and picture were stronger than glosses of text and video or simply text. Jones and Plass (2002) showed that learners benefited more from glosses of text and pictures than just text or just picture in listening comprehension. Regardless of these contradictions, it has been shown that glossing texts enhanced the students' opportunities to learn a second language.

Like Yoshii, Ko (2005) argues that more work must be done as to what kind of glosses works best for which proficiency levels. In her research on Korean students and L1 and L2 glossing, Ko reports that "more than 62% of the participants preferred L2 glosses." The students who preferred L2 glosses had higher mean scores than those who used preferred L1 glosses. L1 glosses however, were more effective for students whose proficiency was not yet as high, making the L2 glosses too difficult to be of much use. From this I conclude that teachers need to choose the right type of text depending on the students' proficiency level.

**Conclusion**

In summary, teachers have many tools at their disposal to help L2 learners acquire literacy skills. Both songs and glosses can play a role in L2 literacy development. Music can serve as a powerful psychological connection in the second language classroom, because it brings enjoyment and lowers the anxiety levels. Popular culture should form the basis for choosing lyrical music to use in the classroom. The factors to be considered by teachers when choosing songs for the classroom should include: how the students can relate to the content, how understandable the song is, and how suitable the text is to the unit of instruction. Additionally, the use of glossing can have a great impact on the students' ability to negotiate a text without spending a lot of time looking up the meanings of unfamiliar words. Depending on the level of the students, texts can be used with more or less glossing. Both songs and glosses as part of L2 literacy instruction will help students access literature to their fullest potential.

Through the use of song lyrics and glossed texts, time out of class can be maximized leaving the time in class for communicative activities. The topics that have been covered address a few literacy skills that will help with learning but the main focus should be for the students to communicate with others. As students use the assignments and out-of-class time to prepare for the classroom, they will have background information that they will be able to incorporate in the communicative activities.

**ARTIFACT II**

**INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION**

This paper explores communities in a language classroom. I became intrigued by the idea that within a group of students there are many key members. To have a successful second language class, I believe that students should feel like they are part of a community of learners. In addition, it is crucial that the teacher take the lead role to ensure that all the needs of the community are being met. After Dr. Lackstrom caught my attention with the concept, I delved into it more deeply. Dr. deJonge-Kannan helped me to refine my thoughts and articulate my ideas.

I thoroughly enjoyed the research I needed to do for this paper. I was able to put a number of the concepts I learned into action in SPAN 1020 at Utah State University during the Spring 2011 semester. It was rewarding to see the class work together as I focused on the various aspects of class cohesion. I learned that to have a successful community of learners, teachers must be aware of students' needs. By identifying and targeting social needs, teachers can help bring the class together and facilitate a better learning experience.

The ability to get things done in society is through social interaction and communication. This communication is done through the use of language and it is the way we are able to do things in groups. In the classroom I believe that social interaction

is the way we can help students to learn another language by learning to collaborate

during their language learning experience.

**Artifact II – Language**

**Local Social Networks in the Foreign Language Classroom**

## Local Social Networks in the Foreign Language Classroom

The ability to connect with others has a great deal to do with the ability to learn another language. Students' ability to learn can be augmented by being involved in social groups, and second language teachers can help students feel part of such a group. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the key role played by groups and communities in all learning endeavors (Appel & Lantolf, 1994; Brooks, 1990; Lantolf, 1994; Rogoff, 1990; Wells, 1998). In my second language classroom, I call the sociocultural context a Local Social Network (LSN). As Shrum and Glisan state, "According to sociocultural theory, our linguistic, cognitive, and social development as a member of the community is socioculturally constructed" (2010, p. 23). Therefore the incorporation of a community-like atmosphere in the classroom lends to better second language acquisition. In this artifact I will cover: 1) clans and local social networks  2) characteristics of the clan environment as they relate to a classroom 3) student involvement in LSNs in a classroom.

## Local Social Networks

Many members make up a group, clan, or community. From researchers investigating the influence of social networks on how people learn (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch & Bivens, 1992). I have concluded that building a social network in the language classroom is essential for building a rich learning environment. For learning to take place, it is critical to focus on ways to develop new knowledge and skills through input, output, and interaction in the class. As L2 teachers create

opportunities for students to learn in the classroom, I believe students will do better if they feel as a part of the group.

Interaction within the class is what I believe to be the key to making this social context of the classroom work. The theory of social interaction to learn another language, largely based on Vygotsky's work (1978, 1986), is based on the view that language learning is more of a social process than an individual cognitive process. Vygotsky claims that when working with others, the language performance is greater than when working alone. Vygotsky explains two developmental levels which compare to learning on one's own with working with others. They are actual and potential developmental levels. The actual developmental level refers to what students may be able to do on their own. The potential developmental refers to what students may be able to do when they work together with someone more skilled or more knowledgeable. This type of learning things together through the potential development of students can lead to greater gains in language proficiency. Shrum and Glisan state, "what learners can do with assistance today, they will be able to do on their own tomorrow (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 24). This help from teachers or peers can make a group into a more cohesive team.

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is what I believe to be the foundation of community-based learning. This theory, when applied in a classroom, can help students move from actual to potential developmental levels.  By getting involved in the classroom with group learning activities, students can cross the gap between actual and potential levels. Vygotsky (1978) defines this as, " the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under

adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). The key to these

ideas is the use of collaboration to help develop students' language abilities.

The development of a social community in a classroom can be fostered in various

ways. The practice of scaffolding (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976)

is but one of those ways. Scaffolding in a classroom is the interaction between the

beginning learner and the teacher. Shrum and Glisan explain scaffolding as,

> "…the expert's help is determined by what the novice is doing, and is structured
> so that irrelevant aspects of the task do not interfere with the learner's range of
> ability. The expert provides the novice with scaffolded help by enlisting the
> learner's interest in the task; simplifying the task; keeping the learner motivated
> and in pursuit of the goal; …reducing stress and frustration during problem
> solving; and modeling an idealized form of the act…" (2010, p. 26).

Through this interaction, the teacher or tutor finds ways for the learner to access the

language without being distracted by a  gap in the learners' actual ability. Teachers find

ways through this Vygotskyian form of ZPD to help students gradually acquire language

skills. By lowering the stress of the activities through the chunking of larger tasks into

smaller more attainable activities in the classroom, students can learn simplified tasks to

achieve the final goal of the activity, whatever it may be. An appropriate amount of

assistance is the key to scaffolding. Learning and understanding the students' level will

determine how much and what type of assistance is needed for the class.

A community of learning involved in a LSN could be compared to a wheel. The

teacher needs to be the center hub of the wheel both in terms of the linguistic and social

functioning in the classroom or network. All the spokes that branch away from the hub as

well as the outer ring make the wheel complete. Without the hub there is no support for

the wheel. This is the same for the community within a classroom. Hall (1995) mentions

the type of learning that could support a LSN is Interactive learning. In interactive

learning, teachers act as the hub. Hall states that, "reoccurring episodes of purposeful,

goal-directed talk" (p. 38) can help the students direct themselves to the teacher for

guidance. This use of goal oriented classroom interaction will incorporate more L2 use

within the classroom dialog.  Without a base, there is nowhere for the spokes to connect

and have strength. Students in the same manner need to be able to turn to the teacher for

guidance when learning another language. Additionally the spokes rely on each other to

have symmetry and roll evenly. Like the spokes of a wheel, students can rely on each

other. Relying on each other to learn is accomplished through interaction designed by the

teacher, which makes a class a communicative experience. When teachers involve

students in dialog and don't focus solely on the input, the L2 acquisition will be greater.


## Clan member characteristics and L2 teachers

In this section, I will cover connections between roles and responsibilities in the

real world and what attributes a second language teacher should have.  I will refer to a

few of the critical members of a clan and how the characteristics that clan members have

should relate to a L2 teachers' responsibilities and characteristics.

The first role found in a clan is that of the chief or leader.  In a typical community

this is the person who is responsible for the well-being of the group. In a foreign

language classroom this is the teacher. The teacher is responsible for a great deal of the

planning, although, as members of the community, the students will be responsible for

their share of class involvement. As clan leaders, language teachers model language and

act as the facilitator for the class. Hall (2001) states that, "modeling exposes students to

the words, phrases, and other linguistic cues they are likely to need to accomplish the task on their own" (p. 84). Communicative activities can bring the class together and build community through discourse. It is the teacher's responsibility to notice what the students need and to accommodate them with activities designed to create more discourse. Like a chief, the teacher is responsible for bringing the community together as a cohesive team and helping the members learn how to function as an integrated whole. The chief needs to maintain order and also show compassion and understanding. The teacher leads all the individuals with their unique strengths and weaknesses to make a clan that connects well enough to function as a cohesive group.

Another role important to a clan is that of nurturers. They are genuinely concerned for the growth and development of the clan members. Nurturers often show characteristics of patience and care. Cautillo refers to nurturing students as a gardener does with a garden,

> As a gardener in my spare time, I see a connection between the nurturing that I must provide for my garden and, in my professional life, for my students. Gardening is my metaphor for teaching. I tend to the needs of my flowers and plants by providing the right environment to help them flourish. At school I must do the same for the students that I teach. I cannot simply count the deliver the skills that have been mandated by someone who does not know my children. I must adapt the curriculum to the children I teach so that there is a direct connection between what is taught and the students as individuals (Cautillo, 2008, p. 98).

L2 teachers need to have these characteristics as well. When L2 teachers use characteristics that demonstrate compassion and concern for the students, the students will become more invested in the class, and the potential for L2 acquisition will be augmented. Teachers should be excited and show care for their students through their enthusiasm for teaching another language. Borich (2000) explains:

A teacher who is excited about the subject being taught and shows it by facial expression, voice inflection, gesture, and general movement is more likely to hold the attention of students than one who does not exhibit these behaviors. This is true whether or not teachers consciously perceived these behaviors in themselves (p. 25).

If teachers display care and concern for the growth and development of students, those students will sense they are involved in important matters and will be more likely to be convinced to invest time and effort into the lessons.

Another vital role in a clan is that of hunters, those who go out to seek new places, new territories, unchartered lands that need to be discovered. I would relate this in two ways to the L2 teacher. First, L2 teachers should continually look for methods and strategies of effective teaching. Second, L2 teachers should always look for the best ways to help their current students. Because students and classes are different, teachers should look for techniques and materials that will help the particular class they are teaching. Teachers should continue to hunt for refinement of the instruction they provide. They should research additional ways of helping students access the L2 with a wide variety of strategies and techniques.

Also critical for the well-being of a clan is the role of healer. When members of a clan struggle with difficult challenges, the healer may refer to past experiences to help them remember what to do in certain circumstances. This parallels practices in the language classroom. The integration of learning strategies in the classroom may bridge the gaps that students may have by making connections to past learning. An important thing that students should feel is that they are members of the "club" of speakers of the target language (Krashen, 1997). If they can use learning strategies to make connections with concepts, the L2 can be more accessible.

The roles of the chief, nurturer, hunter, and healer are important, but they do not include all the members in the clan. The final groups are the other adults and youth of the clan. The other adults/youth in the clan play an equally important role in the growth and learning process of the group. They are continually challenging those around them whether it is in games or sports. Students, likewise, have the inherent desire to compete with and challenge each other. Johnson and Johnson (1987) suggest that when doing activities such as cooperative learning, students are able to help each other and navigate towards the overall communicative goal of the activity. This in turn creates interpersonal skills and increases retention. Ideally, students engage in communicative activities without even realizing that they are learning. There are those in the clan/class that are much more gifted in some aspects and are typically those that exceed the standard. Sometimes, not always, these learners can help out those who may need additional guided practice in whatever it is that they are working on in the class. This type of peer group can bring students together to help learn from each other.

These explanations of clan roles and their characteristics should be considered when contemplating what makes a second language class successful. The qualities of a clan will help the classroom be a community of learning if the teacher assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the class is taken care of and that students feel as part of a group. The orchestration of the community is a big endeavor of the teacher. The classroom needs to have all of these characteristics of a healthy, well functioning clan to be successful. Richard-Amato (1996) mentions,

> Attitudes develop as a result of experience, both direct and vicarious. They are greatly influenced by people in the immediate environment: parents, teachers, and peers. Attitudes toward self, the target language and the people who speak it (in

particular), the teacher, and the classroom environment all seem to have an influence on acquisition    (p. 121).

A strong foreign language learning environment can be accomplished by an active learning group that works well together. Teachers who view their class as an LSN have the responsibility to provide the guidance for the LSN. Blaz (2002) mentions,

> Making connections is one of the most important tasks for the foreign language educator because these connections make it easier for the brain to store the foreign language.  Instead of creating a special "foreign language" section, the information can be stored in an area where storage has already been implemented. The more pathways that are established to an item, the easier it is for the students' brain to retrieve the information (p. 73).

A wide variety of teaching strategies should be used in the classroom to build a community of learners. No two students are identical in their learning approach and each has a distinct learning style.

Teachers should focus their attention on students as the key players in a successful classroom. If the students can get involved and feel as a part of the community, they will become invested in the roles of a LSN.  Students have the ability to augment the instruction by supporting and participating in the activities in class. As teachers rely on students' strengths, they can empower the students by using them in peer groups to help those in the class that may struggle. Hall (1993) states, "The ability to participate as a competent member in the practices of a group is learned through repeated engagement in and experience with these activities with more competent members of a group" (p. 148). This can be very natural in a language class if used correctly. The students' affective filters can be lowered if they are helped by peers in appropriate and effective ways.

It is up to the teacher to notice the strengths that students have, such as acting, listening, or leading. As Hall (2001) mentions,

> Part of what teachers need to know to develop effective communities of foreign language learners entails understanding the larger contexts of school outside of the foreign language classroom, and understanding the identities that learners, as members of these contexts, bring with them(p. 46).

When teachers and students alike become invested in the community of learners and understand that all members have multi-faceted identities, second language acquisition is made possible.

Additionally important to effective SLA is the nurturing that should take place in the classroom. Like nurturers in a clan who use child-directed speech to interact with the younger generation, teachers should adopt the principles of comprehensible input in the classroom. Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) is the use of the target language that will be understandable and just enough above their current level to challenge the students. This can be done by adding a little complexity to the activities with which the language is embedded. This input can be in many forms such as audio, video, written texts, etc. Comprehensible input can be compared with Motherese, also referred to as caregiver talk or child-directed speech (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Although Motherese is a practice used with young children acquiring the L1, I believe it has application in the L2 classroom as well. Like Motherese (Pinker, 2000), comprehensible input in the classroom can help students feel that if they are cared for and that they are receiving the appropriate amount of attention needed to learn another language. The ability to slow the speech down in the target language like a mother does to their own children helps students understand better and acquire the language more effectively. Pinker states that "intensive

sessions of conversational give-and-take, with repetitive drills and simplified grammar"
is how language can be learned. As teachers incorporate these attributes into their speech,
students will have a better chance of learning a second language.

Teachers have a great opportunity to make social networks within the classroom.
The more teachers can get students to integrate into a community of speakers within the
classroom, the more accessible the second language will be in and out of the classroom.
One becomes known by the use of language and interaction (Stevick, 1978). Teachers are
able to influence students to learn by integrating them all into a group and cultivating
their identities as members of the target-speech community. However, while the
communicative use of language can help make a community, teachers should be aware of
the road blocks students potentially face. These road blocks can be dealt with by getting
the students involved with different roles in the classroom. Unless teachers get the
students involved, teachers may find themselves doing all the input and not incorporating
the entire class.

## Student involvement in LSNs

The LSN classroom consists of roles to be successful. A method to having a great
functioning LSN is to have those roles played by multiple players in the classroom. This
provides students with experiences using as many roles as possible without raising their
affective filters. Additionally one should avoid creating roles in the classroom that will
make students feel like they are more important than another. The classroom needs to be

structured so that the students can move in and out of the roles freely. The following is an example of how this type of organization works in my classroom displaying a LSN:

As the students walk in, the teacher meets and greets each student coming in the door. Questions about their day and conversations that review elements from the previous class are strategically employed. This function of checking the status of the students is part of the role of the chief of the clan.

Responsibilities as pertaining to classroom management will be given out. One of the first responsibilities will be to take attendance for the class using the L2. I see this as pertaining to the nurturer role. This person is concerned if everyone is present and how they are doing before the instruction begins. The role of taking attendance will change from week to week and will be part of the responsibility of the students so they know they are included as part of the class. This could be assigned to those that might be struggling to fit in and could be assigned as the teacher sees fit.  The student responsible for attendance will be looking for the cue from the teacher as to when to call roll. The student responsible for the attendance will rotate weekly and the folder with the roll will be at the front of the classroom for the student to pickup and note who is present and who is not. This will all be done by doing the old style of roll call out loud which in a regular classroom may be a little wasteful of classroom time but for a second language classroom it can be quite valuable due to interaction between students.

As one can see, this could be a valuable chance to learn ways of communicating at the beginning of class. It is in a format that won't be too surprising for any of the students because they know when they are going to be called on to be in charge of

attendance. They can rehearse or study the way that they will ask questions and the teacher will model before asking other students the question of the day. The teacher throughout all this discourse will be able to interject and also monitor the progress of their responses. Such feedback and monitoring are examples of the role of the chief.

The class will have a lot of opportunities to do communicative discourses that display "communicative competence" (Bachman, 1990; Cambell & Wales, 1970, Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1972). I see the need for the teacher or chief to be involved with these through examples and demonstrations. Throughout the course the students will become more confident and want to show their knowledge of things they feel they know. Guided instruction of the activities that will happen during the class can be facilitated by the teacher and by classroom assistants who are a little more proficient in the L2. Eventually the students become more confident and become part of this discourse and demonstrations.

The more a teacher can get the students involved with each other through communicative exercises, the more advanced the students will become with their communicative abilities (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). After an introduction or warm up for the class, the teacher could introduce the topics that will be covered for the class. As the teacher introduces the topics of the class for the day, he/she is playing the role of the chief. He/she is doing this by giving clear guidance of what will be accomplished for the day. The students will know what to expect for the day and know what some of their roles will be during the day's lesson. For a lesson that involves learning the use of a new verb tense, for example the teacher could begin by demonstrating the use of various verbs at the beginning of the class.  After a description of how to do the conjugation of some

verbs and modeling of how to do that, students will be given some practice scenarios to do conjugations with their peers. This will give students a chance to interact without being put on the spot. This will help with lower the affective filter in the beginning stages of the lesson. In the small groups all students will be able to use their communicative skills in a more relaxed atmosphere. They want to be participating members of the group but may feel intimidated to take a chance with their new language in a larger group.

Once students are comfortable with the practice that they have done in small groups, the teacher will start another activity demonstrating his/her chief-like traits by first modeling it with students who may have been asked previously or with those who may be more advanced than the rest of the class. For a lesson on the future tense, an activity using a regular ball that will serve as a "crystal ball" could be implemented. The students will be given a demonstration by the teacher of how the activity will be executed. The teacher demonstrates by putting his/her hand on the ball and saying "I see …", followed with a verb of their choice of something that they will do in the future. This is a demonstration of the teacher acting in the role of a hunter. By using a different teaching activity using this game of a crystal ball and looking into the future, the teacher is trying new activities that may be different than anything the students have done before.

Throughout the "crystal ball" activity there is the potential for students to have feelings of being overwhelmed or anxious to try the activity. To counteract this, the teacher/chief needs to manifest the characteristics of the nurturer. When students struggle with their communicative opportunities the leader needs to reassure them by additional modeling or guided conversation. By showing patience and genuine concern for the students, leaders can help students through those challenging times of discourse.

At the end of the class the teacher will have an opportunity to teach using past experiences as a review before finishing the days' lesson. Past experiences refer to the role of the healer. The use of past experiences will help students bring concreteness to the things that they have learned before with the present lesson. This use of past experiences is an important characteristic for the leader who helps students make connections.

The use of multiple activities and incorporating the entire class into interchangeable roles leads to the class being a more cohesive network of learners. The learners have the ability to feel as a part of something that they are willing to invest time into. They are able to look for help from the teacher without feeling intimidated and are able to become risk takers (Rubin, 1976) as they attempt new challenges with acquiring a second language.

Facilitating various roles lead some to think that teachers will be overcome by the Atlas Complex (Finkel & Monk, 1983). They define it as "a state of mind that keeps teachers fixed in the center of the classroom, supporting the entire burden of responsibility for the course on their shoulders" (p.7). Teachers will need to use the opportunities to use classes as a social system to help the students be more engaged. The role of facilitator of learning more than the role of giving all the information is the direction the teachers need to direct themselves.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, if one is trying to create a Local Social Network (LSN) within a second language classroom, one must know what it actually is and some of the strategies to make one. This is particularly important for the humans. Humans are social animals and language is the commonality that can hold groups together. In addition, there needs to be a leader of the network. This is someone that all the individuals in the group eventually look to for guidance.  This guidance can be incorporated in the structure of the activity. Guidance becomes particularly important when talking about a second language learning experience. Students will look to a teacher to model what the language is supposed to look like in the real world. Another way to look at a LSN is as a community. A community of learners all working towards the same common goal could be a LSN. When the teacher incorporates in the classroom different characteristics that real communities exhibit, students in the class will possesses the essential elements for a successful group of language learners. Finally, when students feel like they are part of something, they invest in their learning and have ownership in the community of learners.

**ARTIFACT III**

**INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION**

During my first semester in the MSLT program, I took a class from Tom Schroeder. That class provided me with a good foundation of what culture means and how teachers should incorporate it into the curriculum.

In this paper I present my ideas about the importance of helping students become more culturally aware. It also is about developing students' ideas about themselves and others that they come in contact with. I share in this artifact that there are ways that teachers can help students become more culturally aware. They can do this through language lessons that are centered on beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes.

Culture is multi-layered and exceedingly complex. As a result, I was reminded of piñatas and their many layers. Because I like the use of metaphors, I have related the various layers of culture to building a piñata. I have identified some of the keys points to teaching culture and have described how incorporating beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes can help students become more culturally aware. I learned how important it is to

teach students to be culturally aware. At the same time, I too, learned what it means to be

culturally aware.

**Artifact III – Culture**

**Cultural Awareness in the Classroom**

## Cultural Awareness in the Classroom

The term culture is used regularly in the language teaching field because culture can be used as a vantage point for understanding and learning another language. DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004) offer,

> The term culture is a very general concept, composed of a complex system of interacting elements. Culture is universal, multifaceted, and intricate. It permeates all aspects of human society; it penetrates into every area of life and influences the way people think, talk, and behave. (p. 11)

I will explore a few aspects of culture and how they can be experienced in the second language classroom. As I do this I would like to relate to culture in the classroom as to building a piñata. Piñatas can vary from being a complex and detailed fabrication to being simple and plain. Throughout this paper, comparisons will be made as they apply to cultural awareness in the second language classroom and how this awareness can be built through classroom activities, and finally how a constructivist approach will help students become more cultural aware.

In the earliest stages of the construction of a piñata one has to start with a basic design. In order to understand and become aware of cultural differences one needs to be able to start with the basics, which involves becoming aware of one's own cultural identity. Like a piñata, culture has many layers. The layers of culture are like many layers of paper and glue which relate to beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes. All these elements

of culture are learnt from the earliest days of childhood through the process of enculturation, which is a collective experience (Hofstede, 1980). Customs and practices experienced throughout one's childhood are the major influences on cultural identity information. Communities, small or large, collectively form these elements of culture and instill them in the younger generation. In the following paragraphs, elements of culture and constructivism in the classroom will be discussed as they are referred to as the layers of a piñata.

Every student in my class has a unique story and I want all students to feel comfortable in sharing that story. "Culture resides in persons, in individuals. Each member of a culture, like a miniscule twist in a kaleidoscope, refracts and reflects the common colored lights of their culture in a unique display, recognizably similar, yet unquestionably different" (Moran, 2001, p. 98). Teachers of language have a unique opportunity to look for these differences in culture and integrate them into the second language learning experience. Students should feel comfortable to share their own cultural prospective in the classroom.

**<u>Beliefs</u>**

Valuable lessons that reflect differences in culture can be shared in the classroom to help students have a greater appreciation for other students' beliefs. Beliefs are one of the layers to a piñata that teachers could focus on. Beliefs are direct reflections of assurances that people have about their surroundings. Children are typically raised with a

set of expectations and practices that they grow up thinking are true. DeCapua and

Wintergerst state, "Beliefs are an individual's conviction about the world, convictions

that are shaped by the culture a person is raised in" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p.

17). Because beliefs are different from culture to culture it is important to address the

differences through instructional content. One important cultural belief that may need to

be identified early might be the different perceptions of time. One culture may think time

should be viewed as irrelevant. In such a culture, people emphasize personal involvement

and the culmination of transactions and interactions over rigid adherence to timetables

(DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). When people commonly believe that things will simply

work out eventually, and that time is arbitrary, they are said to be on polychromic time.

This type of culture is referred to as P-Time culture, which contrasts with M-Time

culture, or Monochromic Time. M-Time culture, according to DeCapua and Wintergerst,

places "high value on carefully scheduled time, or on the compartmentalizing of one's

day" (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, p. 58). Students from M-time cultures want to

know when things are due in class and prefer deadlines over open-ended due dates.


     As a reflection from these types of beliefs relating to time I think I could have

lessons in my class that would help students become more aware of the time as it relates

to a calendar. Every culture has important holidays important and in the classroom I will

introduce these calendared events to show the importance of having things scheduled. It

would be a way that students could reflect on experiences that are happening in other

cultures. As well as showing important dates that relate to other cultures, I would

incorporate dates from their own personal calendars. They would share with the class

some of the most significant dates from their lives with other students, bringing relia

from their cultures that are of greater significance. Building a unit of culture that relates

to calendar events is a great way of introducing a thematic unit. This will not only open

up conversations within the classroom, it will show the students that they are valued in

the class.

Once I have introduced the calendared events of other cultures I will have lessons

that will incorporate the use of P-time. From the dates of holidays that they have

identified in various classes, I will find opportunities to do role-plays or watch video clips

that will show the differences in the way cultures deal with time.

**Values**

Values (another layer to the piñata) are a set of standards or cultural perspectives

by which people judge actions as good or bad. Values are encoded implicitly in the

standards people refer to when faced with decisions. Moran defines values as "What we

hold right/wrong, good/evil, desirable/undesirable, proper/improper, normal/abnormal,

appropriate"(Moran, 2001, p. 77). Values are first taught in the family context, as parents

and other relatives instruct the younger generation about the standards of the family and

the wider culture. These values that families have differ greatly from one culture to

another. These values or traditions are passed on through oral and written lessons

(Reagan, 2005). Sets of values or standards are typically taught from examples of others'

experiences. One can be influenced by past experiences or stories to decide what is right,

good, or appropriate. Thus, values are one of those layers of those layers of culture that we should be aware of.

Students' oral or written traditions can be a great addition to the class. Reagan offers, "An important element in the process of expanding our perspectives on the history of educational thought and practice is learning more about the many ways in which different societies pass on their traditions, histories, and so on" (Reagan, 2005, p. 11). In the language classroom, values can be taught through stories such as fables or folk tales. Students could also write or tell their experiences of learning cultural values in their childhood. By writing down or preparing an oral presentation of their childhood experiences, students can share the values that they have been taught by those who raised them.

Teachers could develop a mini unit following the outline developed by Fryer and Wong (1998). They implemented a 4-lesson program that covers cultural values and helps students become aware of different cultural values within the students' lives. The four-part unit includes introduction, preparation, forum, and follow-up. The introduction involves brainstorming in groups about cultural values. Then students compare group-generated ideas with the textbook questions and topic. Finally, for the introduction in groups, they construct scenarios and questions that will elicit cultural and personal values. Another lesson would involve groups, as well as peer-editing the scenarios for grammar and clarity. As a class brain-storms and chooses an "ice breaker" activity that promotes group building, they will prepare and practice the agenda and special

requirements for a Cultural Values Forum. Throughout the lesson students are rotated to different groups and a sort of jigsaw group work is done to get maximum participation from all students (Fryer & Wong, 1998).

## **Norms**

Another layer of the piñata relates to norms. Norms are behaviors that are appropriate in one's culture. These are practices that are acceptable and established through culturally shared notions (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004). An example of differing norms may include such things as eye contact in a classroom. Some cultures view eye-to-eye contact as defiant and disrespectful, while others view this as a form of appropriate non-verbal communication from a student to the teacher. At times norms are difficult to address and are simply "perspectives" (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996) of a particular culture. Perspectives are the values, norms, or beliefs that govern how people relate to each other.

Teachers could use the following activity to raise students' awareness of cultural norms. In advance, the teacher prepares two make-believe alien cultures with certain unusual norms, designing role-plays to enact these norms. When the classroom is cleared of the furniture, the role-plays are acted out. Maley and Duff (1994) claim that introducing cultural norms through the use of drama will help students see these differences and lower the affective filters that Krashen (1982) describes as being a barrier. Critically important is that when members of one cultural group respond

negatively to the norms of the other, they will not be attacking a real group of people. If the cultural role-plays are designed to be exaggerated, students will certainly pay attention and remember the experiences. Hall (2001) claims that "…role-playing provides opportunities for students to immerse themselves in authentic versions of communicative activities in safe or inconsequential environments where they can make mistakes as they learn" (p. 148). I see role-playing as an opportunity to use language and demonstrate unusual norms that will help students recognize differences and become more culturally aware.

## **Attitudes**

Attitudes are another layer of the piñata. Most people have strong emotional responses (attitudes) toward their own culture and other cultures. As Moran (2001) explains perspectives, I believe he captures many of the layers of the piñata: "Practices, products, persons, and communities embody cultural perspectives, and vice versa. Perspectives are explicit and implicit meanings shared by members of the culture, manifested in products and practices. These meanings reflect members' perceptions of the world, the beliefs and values that they hold, and the norms, expectations, and attitudes that they bring to practices" (p. 74). As we understand these things and apply them in class, students will understand why people may do the things they do and understand as Moran does when he asks the question, "Why do the people of this culture do things in the way that they do" (p. 74). While we try to understand another's culture we will change our attitude and better understand the new culture.

In addition to the multiple layers of the piñata which are the values, norms, and attitudes, the piñata has colors and decorations that could be viewed as a person's unique identity. It is critical for successful cultural learning that students become aware of their own identity also. This can be done in a number of ways, such as through class activities that address cultural differences. However, one of the best ways is by modeling. Teachers can demonstrate by pointing out experiences in their own life and enculturation. I personally would relate examples from the many cultures that I have been involved with. When students see the teacher's willingness to discuss cultural differences, the students' affective filters (Krashen, 1983) will be lowered also. Students will become more apt to share with the class. As the affective filters are lowered, teachers can begin to add those colors and decorations into the metaphorical piñata.

Teachers have the responsibility of helping students understand parts of culture that they will encounter for the first time. Teachers should be prepared to share experiences that will help students make connections with cultural perspectives that they have encountered. I believe that, as all students learn more about perspectives, the class will become more aware of differences and it will not be such a culture shock as they experience some differences that they may be exposed to.

An experience that I could relate to my students is the differences that cultures have when pointing. I would like to share a few examples as they relate to pointing and how they can be accepted in some areas while being very inappropriate in others.

Examples of pointing are pointing with the index finger extended to whatever the object may be. This is very appropriate and understood here in the U.S. However, in the Dominican Republic people use their lips puckered up like they are prepared for giving a kiss to point towards something. At first Westerners may think that it is strange. As I encountered it when I lived there, I was quite uncomfortable but soon realized that it was just part of their culture. Interpretation could be made at first that Dominicans are too lazy to point with their fingers. I soon learned from watching hard-working Dominicans that they often work with their hands and as a result they have adapted the ability to use different parts of their bodies to point to things. To a non-Dominican, this may seem a little uncomfortable at first, both to observe and to do. To help students see the non-verbal communication, I will show video clips that show this behavior.

I could also share how Westerners beckon someone by having their palm extended and moving their fingers in and out. This doesn't mean the same "come here" in the Dominican Republic as it does in the United States. Quite contrary, in the Dominican Republic it means that one is romantically interested in another person. Learning about nonverbal communication is a helpful aspect of understanding and being familiar with differences.

When we move from the basic design of a piñata and its many layers, we can think about its colors and decorations. This is analogous to enriching students' cultures. DeCapua and Wintergerst claim that,

> Improved intercultural communication occurs when we approach other cultures with a frame of mind that is open and free from unbending and biased perceptions or stereotypes…Alerting students to the pit falls … focused activities to help them avoid these hazards will be beneficial. Generating in students an even greater awareness of the varied components of culture can be achieved though out introspective readings, role plays, explorations of mass media, and other resources. Through such means, students will be better prepared for their encounters with other cultures whether in the classroom, the society, or the world (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2004, pp. 74-75).

This is what teachers should really be doing: Looking for avenues to help students become more culturally aware. Kirchner states, "The strongest advocates for language study today also call for the cultivation of cross-cultural skills. It is incumbent upon language departments, therefore, to integrate culture into their courses on *all* levels, with emphasis upon both high culture and the culture of everyday life" (Kirchner, 1999, p. 24).

There are many activities that can be beneficial to the students when assisting with cultural awareness. Through the discussion of constructivism one will have some better ideas of how one can create a culturally cognizant classroom.

A constructivist approach is one way that teachers can influence students. Hein claims that constructivism is centered on the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves, and learners individually (and socially) construct meaning, as they learn. Constructing meaning is the definition of learning (Hein, 1991). "Constructivist teaching typically involves more student-centered, active learning experiences, more student-student and student-teacher interaction, and more work with concrete materials and in solving realistic problems" (Winitzky & Kanchak, 1997, p. 62). Once teachers help

students understand this format of learning, students will be more likely to be lifelong learners.

In the 1980's constructivism was introduced and researchers began to see this approach as better than objectivism, which assumes that the essential elements of instruction are communication and deduction. The objectivist approach to education supposes that new knowledge is delivered to learners (Collentine, 2006). Under a constructivist approach, researchers proposed that students are active agents in their learning. Collentine states,

> As agents [students] must explore new concepts from multiple perspectives to increase the likelihood that their previous knowledge stores interface with how they uncover new concepts. Reading tasks began to incorporate advanced organizers to maximize comprehension and facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary. Problem-solving tasks began to emerge in lesson plans, in which, for instance, learners were to design and present a synthesis of the week's important new items in Spanish (p. 40).

When one tries to engage students in a constructivist approach, it is important to adopt a cooperative framework for learning. Cooperative groups tend to foster a more open dialog between students. They become closer to each other which in turn will help raise cultural awareness. The manner in which I see this happening is by having a number of events or activities that have the end result of a production. The following demonstrates how a teacher could use this type of teaching to build a learning group in which learners build on each other's strengths. The construction of the lesson would be up to the students with guidance from the teacher. Small groups may be charged with the assignment to study the culture of a foreign country. Each group member is assigned a

different cultural aspect of a country. They would be assigned particular topics to research outside of class and use class time to share those things with the rest of the groups. Within these topics of the predetermined culture students would determine verbal and nonverbal representations of these topics. Before the students were given the assignments the teacher tells them that they will also be responsible for a production of the cultural aspects that they have researched. The research that they perform could be through books, video clips, movies, etc. These additional references will be the basis for the production. The students have the ability to do any type of production that they desire. They may choose to do a play, a video outside of class which is played later for the class, a reader's theatre, or possibly writing an illustrated book. These types of activities allow the students to build meaning for themselves while the teacher circulates the room and guides the groups towards their production. This use of instruction can encourage students to look for interesting ways to share their findings with the rest of the class.

Approaches to instruction that involve apprenticeship, problem based learning, and student collaboration are direct manifestations of the constructivist philosophy (Brown & King, 2000). Critical thinking and asking their own questions are hallmarks of students pursuing the constructivist approach. Creative arts should be used frequently. Teachers should seize all teachable moments and use authentic learning opportunities. Thematic units will unify curriculum with culture by adding opportunities to build meaning through productions. Integration of language, content, and process (Reyes, 2006) will help create a cohesive learning environment. Social context of learning should

be maximized (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010). These student-based activities help the students feel like part of a new community.

These layers (elements of culture), colors (one's own culture awareness), and the use of constructivism are all important for cultural awareness. The place it all happens is equally important. The classroom should be a place where students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world, and their prior knowledge and questions are valued. Teachers should play an interactive role and mediate the learning environment for them (Reyes, 2006).

In summary it is important that one understand that many of the practices and ideas have been used throughout the years in education. The purpose of constructivist approaches to teaching is to empower students to learn (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Glaserfeld (1995) offers that Constructivism is good for foreign language education, but one very well could argue that it can be applied with any discipline.

> Constructivism does not claim to have made earth-shaking inventions in the area of education; it merely claims to provide a solid conceptual basis for some of the things, that, until now inspired teachers had to do without theoretical foundation (Glaserfeld, 1995, p.15).

Hopefully through these thoughts one can visualize the cultural piñatas in one's classroom and be aware of the layers, decorations, and prizes inside. Classrooms can be rich with cultural experiences if one will look for those moments to manifest them to others.

**ANALYSIS OF TEACHING VIDEO**

# ANALYSIS OF TEACHING VIDEO

The project was conducted in the Linguistics 6400 classes during the spring semester of 2011. The class was given the assignment of teaching a mini lesson, in the language of their choice, to their peers and they critiqued one another on their teaching ability. I felt a little rushed overall with this experience. I had so many ideas of things that I wanted to do in my class that I felt like I was just skimming the top and not getting into the real good material that I wanted to share.

I choose to look at this video segment since I was able to get peer feedback and have the ability to refer back to their comments in the peer evaluations. As I reviewed the video and thought about the comments that were made by my peers I was able to see what they were writing about. It has been my experience that people tend to think that they don't typically do something that is pointed out. I was able to refer back to things that had been pointed out and realize that I had actually done what they pointed out.

The preparation for this lesson was enlightening as it helped me remember all the things that it takes to make up a lesson. I had to keep reminding myself that it was only a portion of the class and not an entire class. I found myself trying to put so many things into the teaching experience that I was rushing through a lot of steps as I taught. As I reflect on the things that I did or that I had planned to do, I would not have tried to do about half of the activities in my lesson plan.

I felt after watching the video that I was able to keep the students engaged in the lesson. I was comfortable in front of the class and felt almost as if I was on stage. I

showed a lot of excitement and passion for the subject. Some students commented afterwards that they had fun in the class and the class was filled with energy. I really like to have fun with students and continually encourage them with positive comments and joking around with them.

Through watching myself on the recording I was able to see my weaknesses and the things that I did well. As I reflected I found how hard it is to make sure I cover the Five Cs. The first of the Five C's that I feel should be manifested in every class is that of "Communication". This was done in a few ways with the students. I modeled the sayings that I wanted them to practice and then put them into small groups to practice. I think that arranging them into small groups also works for making "Connections" with possible previous learning. If the class is working well together and there is a feeling of trust between the students, the classroom "Community" will be strengthened for these types of activities. The affective filters will be lowered and a greater rate of participation will be achieved. As far as getting "Comparisons" and "Culture" into the lesson that didn't really happen in the short amount of time. I think that with more time I could have incorporated these things into the class.

I felt that I could have done a lot better if I would have taken a closer look at what the purpose of the activity was. I tried to blast my way through a lesson to teach the students the subject disregarding a number of the things that I wanted to incorporate in the lesson. A more realistic approach would be to video tape an entire class setting and then take 20 minutes out of a particular time to evaluate it. This would provide a better gauge of the performance.

As I look back on this teaching experience I believe I was achieving the objectives that I had set out from the beginning. The use of small groups during my instruction facilitated multiple opportunities to practice the target language. I was able to move about the classroom freely and ensure that everyone was having the opportunity to communicate with classmates. I could feel that if I was to continue these types of activities that it could lend to building small communities of learners within the classroom. I also noticed that as I taught the lesson that my positive attitude and enthusiasm for the subject and the class were contagious. The students became involved and seemed to enjoy the interaction. Finally as I was able to incorporate various activities within the mini lesson, I was able to touch on some strengths that students may have. By writing, reading, and speaking within their small groups, students participated in exercises that augmented their strengths in learning.

**Annotated Bibliography**

In this annotated bibliography, I have included books and articles that have influenced me throughout the exploration of second language teaching. The annotations include a brief summary of the references and also my reaction to the material. I have organized the references into categories as they relate to each other. The sections by topic are: the use of literature to learn second languages, building communities of learners, and the influence of culture in second language teaching.

**<u>The use of literature to learn L2</u>**

Lems, K. (2005). Music works: Music for adult English language learners. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 107*, 13-21.

**<u>Summary</u>**

Lems states, "In twenty years of teaching adult English language learners (ELL) in a number of instructional settings and at various levels, I have found one truth that continues to reverberate resoundingly across time and space: music works." She reports that music has enlivened and animated her classrooms through the years.

She admits that there has been limited experimental research on music and second language learning. Reporting that researchers have noted that features of music and language are located near one another in the human brain, she suggests a connection between the two.

Pop songs can be effective in boosting language production. They can also be effective in introducing universal themes. She discusses a study done with a college ESL class in which students ranked class activities that they deemed enjoyable. Listening to a song ranked number one, and singing a song ranked fifth. Those two were also ranked in the upper 50 percent for effectiveness.

Lems claims that familiarity with a number of songs gives students a ready topic of conversation with native speakers. I agree with her view that improving listening comprehension is probably the primary use of music in the ELL classroom.

**Reaction**

After reading this article, my interest in how to incorporate music into my curriculum increased. The use of popular music in my class will help students practice and recall target language materials, especially because lyrics can get engrained in a learner. Songs have added potential if they are about something that the students can relate. Music can be an engaging way for students to participate without feeling anxious since they are participating as a class.

Joyce, E.E. (1997). Which words should be glossed in L2 reading materials? A study of the first, second, and third semester French students' recall. *Pennsylvania Language Forum,* 58-64.

**Summary**

This author presents a study that addresses whether glossing in texts helps students with reading materials. The research questions are: Do the marginal glosses provide assistance to the students in their comprehension of an authentic text?  What percentage of the glossed material is recalled by students as shown in their written recall protocols? Using the same reading passage, are the words that were originally glossed in the passage the

same words that seem problematic to these students? The study was performed at

Pennsylvania State University with ninety subjects that were divided into three groups.

A text originally developed for a third-year student was given to each participant. The

students were given different amounts of time to read the non-glossed passage as many

times as possible. At the end of the time allotted, they were to write on the back of the

paper as many words as they could recall. In addition to that portion of the study, they

were given a glossed passage and asked to read it. The third part was to read a non-

glossed text and underline the words that they thought should be glossed based on their

lack of understanding a word.  This part of the study demonstrated that the authors'

choice of glossed words were relative to what the students had chosen. The results

showed that the tests performed with glossed texts did not seem to show significantly

increased recollection of the material. The data however suggests that the authors' choice

of words to be glossed coincidently were the same words that the students chose.

## **Reaction**

I believe that although the results show that there was not a significant increase in the

language acquisition, I will still use glosses in my classroom. When glosses were

provided for the words that were perceived by learners as challenging, their frustration

level was presumably reduced. By researching one can make educated decisions based on

pros and cons of the research.

Fonseca-Mora, C. (2000). Foreign language acquisition and melody singing. *ELT Journal*

 *54*(2), 146-152.

## Summary

The author takes multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) as a focal point for teaching

language learners. It is clear from research that students learn through different strengths.

She believes that all the intelligences should be addressed and developed in the

classroom. One way of doing this is through the use of singing. Singing in the class room

may help students relax and remember more of the material.

Fonseca-Mora claims that it is difficult to ignore sound. She states that music seems to

leave a particularly deep trace in memories, which she suggests could be due to affective

and unconscious factors that happen in one's mind when something is heard. Singing can

be an easy way to memorize something because of these factors. Singing or listening to

music can act as a path or a cue to remember past learning or experiences. Fonseca-Mora

claims that, "students improve their pronunciation skills while singing, but at the same

time the repetitive lyrics in songs have a positive effect on students' language acquisition

level."

## Reaction

After review of the article I believe that it can be argued that a musical approach can accomplish the goals of verbal practice, choral melodic repetition can lower anxiety, and music can facilitate storage of these foreign sounds in long-term memory. The use of songs will get my class involved in acquiring another language.

Lomicka, L.L. (1998). "To gloss or not to gloss": An investigation of reading comprehension online. *Language Learning & Technology, 1*(2), 41-50.

**<u>Summary</u>**

Lomika conducted a pilot study that investigated the effects of multimedia reading software. The study involved twelve college students enrolled in a second semester French course. In this study the students were exposed to three different conditions. They had full glossing, limited glossing, and no glossing capabilities with the use of a computer program. The questions that Lomicka presents are: 1) Do multimedia annotations aid comprehension? If so, how? What is the relationship between type and number of glosses consulted and the number of inferences generated? 2) Do multimedia annotations allow the reader to build a situation model? 3) How do type and number of glosses consulted compare with the level of comprehension achieved?

This study incorporated a think-aloud scheme. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups. Based on the three criteria stated before, the subjects were monitored

for their use of multimedia annotations. Data was collected on the frequency that links were accessed. The author claims that, although more research is needed, the results suggest that the use of multimedia annotations helps with comprehension.

## Reaction

This article opened my eyes to other types of glosses that are available to students. The use of multimedia glossing can affect students who enjoy the use of technology. The ability to scroll over a text to see the definition can save a lot of time when reading. It also helps cater to individual needs of the students. If some students have progressed more than another student, they simply will not need to scroll over the glosses to see the definitions while the students that may struggle will have another strategy to help them learn.

Richard-Amato, P.A. (1996). *Making it Happen: Interaction in the second language classroom: From theory to practice* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Addison-Wesley Publishing Group.

## Summary

In this book, Richard-Amato presents theoretical foundations for teaching and learning a second language. She divides the book into three different sections that help the reader by beginning with the foundations of L2 teaching principles. The second section of the book covers a large variety of activities and methods for teaching students. There are detailed activities that cover techniques for augmenting the students' opportunities to learn The L2. She focuses on a variety of activities such as: drama, role play, use of songs, and games to get students involved. The third part of the book explains how to put it all together from the theories to practical application. She claims that second language learners should have opportunities to play with the language just as first-language learners do and provides many exercises and examples of how teachers can incorporate these techniques into the curriculum.

**Reaction**

I enjoyed the book since it mixed multiple examples of sharing another language with students to give them the opportunity learn the language that is the best for them. Richard-Amato claims that,  "During initial stages of language development, students often have the desire to communicate but do not have the necessary skills. By having a repertoire of ways to be communicative, the students are able to form bonds with native speakers".

Whiteson, V. (1996). *New ways of using drama and literature in language teaching.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English of Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

**Summary**

This text is a compilation of lesson examples that use literature and drama to focus on

second language acquisition. The editor divides the book into four categories: prose,

poetry,

literature, and a mixed bag. The activities are primarily communicative, focused on

involving the students in mini productions. The book is geared toward teaching English

as a second language. Even though it is written with examples using English, many of the

activities could be adapted to teaching a language other than English.

**Reaction**

From this book I learned about the multiple uses of drama for the language classroom. I

will be able to adapt many of the lessons from this text to augment my instruction.

Although there is not a lot of theory or explanation of strategy in this text, it is refreshing

to get examples of how to teach a language by using drama and literature.

Chapin, A. (2003). Memory in the information age: New tools for second language

    acquisition. *ADFL Bulletin* 34(2), 50-52.

## **Summary**

This article suggests that new technology applications can be beneficial for language acquisition. Chapin states, "in this age we depend on technology as a resource for things that are not necessarily important to memorize." He mentions that there are many devices that facilitate our recollection of trivial information such as: phone numbers, addresses, or places of business. One simply can push resend or do a quick search to find previous information on these devices. This use of technology to do quick searches can help learners access help without getting frustrated and overloaded with too much information all at once. Chapin relates other researchers' findings dealing with information overload. Language learners should put language into use and learn through the use of language. To simply memorize a lot of vocabulary shouldn't be the focus of a second language classroom.

The author urges that technology can benefit language learners. He explains an approach through the use of technology that keeps track of recent target language thematic units presented on a screen. The study is called Study DB. It is a set of relational databases with an interface that allows students to create custom study lists from items they find in the database. It is essentially like flashcards, only much more flexible. Students can drill themselves on items and the program.

## **Reaction**

Although I prefer the communicative approach to learning a second language, the use of a database could help students learn more vocabulary. I believe that for some the use of technology will augment their experience. Teachers shouldn't disregard the possibilities of any type of approach to help language learners. With the increasing emphasis on technology, teachers should look at all options for tapping into the strengths that students possess. If this is the way they communicate in their first language, teachers should look for ways to implement strategies for learning with more use of technology.

Kramer, D. J. (2001). A blueprint for teaching foreign languages and cultures

through music in classroom and on the web. *ADFL Bulletin*, *33*(1), 29-35.

## **Summary**

The main focus of this article is the acquisition of a second language through the use of music in the classroom. Kramer mentions the importance of lowering affective filters with learners. Research has demonstrated that the affective filter is lowered and second language acquisition is enhanced through the use of music. Kramer mentions that music was not traditionally used in the classroom and some are apprehensive to adapt the practice. On the other hand he mentions many teachers are open to the use of music in the classroom and don't argue the effectiveness of the practices. Many professors use music occasionally but not exclusively.  Many simply use it as an augmentation of their instruction. Kramer emphasizes the importance of having criteria for using music and choosing the best material. Diction must be clear and a variety of musical styles should

be offered. Once Kramer selects the song, he focuses on finding the best recording, annotating the text, and making a handout. He discusses the importance of having some type of web- based format for preview and review of songs before and after class.

## Reaction

The use of music in the classroom can certainly lower the apprehension in students if it is used the right way. Graphic organizers to go along with the song can help the students with comprehension. The article also helped me realize specific things to consider when working with songs.

Davis, J.N. (1989). Facilitating effects of marginal glosses on foreign language reading. *The  Modern Language Journal, 73*(1), 41-48.

## Summary

In this article Davis discusses past studies on the pros and cons of glossing texts. Disadvantages that he mentions include students spending too much time looking up new or unfamiliar words, which can be a waste of time. The purpose of the study was to determine if the marginal glosses help students with comprehension of the texts. Participants were 71 French 201 students at Pennsylvania State University who had taken at least three semesters of college level French. They were given a popular short story,

which was presented in three versions: with no aids, with questions and comments to guide the reader, as well as the definitions of vocabulary given to them before reading, or the same as the second version only with glosses. The results supported previous findings that glossed texts do help reading comprehension. The author claims that pre-reading exercises, such as looking up definitions given before reading, help with fluency. The study supports continued use of glosses in foreign language teaching. Further research should be done to concentrate on what may be the most efficient gloss type.

**<u>Reaction</u>**

Before reading this article, I had not given much thought to using glosses. I now see they can be very effective in a language classroom. Time spent looking up words could be used more wisely if the difficult words were more accessible in the text. Reading comprehension should focus on the ability to understand the entire text. If students are overly worried about individual words they do not recognize, they may not comprehend the text.

Medina, S.L. (2002). Using music to enhance second language acquisition: From theory

to practice. *Language, Literacy, and Academic Development for English*

*language learners*. Pearson Educational Publishing. Retreived on December 10,

2008, from Pearson Educational Publishing.

http://www.forefrontpublishers.com/eslmusic/articles/06.htm

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## Summary

This article addresses the importance of using music in the classroom to enhance second language acquisition. Medina claims that it is important to have pleasurable experiences while students acquire a second language through music. The students are more attentive and relaxed; therefore, they are more receptive to learning. Music aids in engaging students in authentic samples of the second language. She supports her article by using theoretical support from experts such as Stephen Krashen and Howard Gardner. She leans heavily on Krashen's Input Hypothesis and his Affective Filters Hypothesis. Medina concludes by outlining three steps that can maximize the usage of songs. First, do activities before the song is introduced. Second, perform activities while the song is being presented for the first time. Third, follow up after the song has been presented.

## Reaction

I agree with her when she states: "When second language learners hear "story songs" that is, stories which have been set to music, it is possible to acquire vocabulary." If we can use story songs in conjunction with pictures, illustrations or gestures, we will have a more desired outcome of language acquisition. The students can be engaged with learning and have the ability to recall previous learning through the songs.

Chunxuan, S. (2009). Using English songs: An enjoyable and effective approach to ELT.

   *English Language Teaching, 2*(1), 88-94.

**<u>Summary</u>**

This article is about teaching English as a second language through songs. Many

advantages of using songs are discussed. The use of songs can help to lower the affective

filter. The catchy tunes that are learned and get stuck in one's head can be an enjoyable

way for the class to practice the language. The cultural elements found in authentic

cultural texts can add an important dimension to the foreign language class. Songs can be

highly expressive thus allowing students to tap into their inner feelings. The author

mentions how important an emotional connection can be when trying to tap into the

Multiple Intelligences described by Gardner (1993).

Students are able to learn songs and sing them in class with lower amounts of anxiety.

Activities that require students to come up with their own dialog may make them more

anxious. The lowered affective filters that are made possible by singing songs, help

students to enjoy learning in another way.  They can learn songs that are popular in the

culture that they are studying.

**<u>Reaction</u>**

I believe that teachers have the responsibility to look for teaching techniques to help learners become excited about the target language. The use of songs in my classroom can help lower anxiety and add another engaging learning activity into my classroom. The challenge for me will be to find texts that are going to be the best for my students. The songs would be better if they are tied to popular culture and they would have a greater impact if students could relate to the song.

Pinker, S. (2000). *The language instinct: How the mind creates language.* New York: Perennial.

## Summary

Pinker's book is for all readers, regardless of whether they have a little or a lot of background in linguistics. He covers aspects from the critical period to motherese and how language is learned. He explains how he thinks language is learned and demonstrates his points through numerous examples of language use. He makes linguistics applicable and helps the reader follow along with the examples. His ideas and examples are quite funny at times which helps the reader connect with the concepts that he is addressing.

## Reaction

This was one of the last books I read in the MSLT program and it helped me tie a lot of things together. I was familiar with some of the things that Pinker discussed while at the same time I had a number of "Ahhh Haaa" moments. These moments intrigued me and have spurred me on to dig a little deeper and into the study of linguistics.

**Building a community of learners**

Shrum, J., & Glisan, E. (2010). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction,* (4th ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

**Summary**

In this book Shrum and Glisan outline what it takes to be a successful teacher of a second language. It is a comprehensive outline of the Foreign Language Teaching standards. The standards are described for foreign language teachers and provide multiple strategies, philosophies, and methodologies that deal with foreign language teaching. This is a handbook for language teachers with a Communicative approach. The authors give examples of lesson plans and illustrate how they coincide with theories on second language teaching.

**Reaction**

This book summarizes numerous ideas of what it takes to have a successful second language classroom. I read this book at the end of my course work in the MSLT program and it deepened my understanding of many of the strategies and theories that I have learned. The concepts of the Communicative approach in foreign language teaching are what I believe to be the foundation for a great language class.

Reagan, T., & Osborn, T. A. (2002). *The foreign language educator in society.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

## Summary

The book is focused on helping foreign language educators in become aware of language pedagogy in the classroom. They address the critical awareness of the nature, purposes, and challenges facing foreign language teaching. Two topics are discussed in the book. One is the educational practices in the foreign language classroom and two, what is critical pedagogy. The authors see that it is essential for teachers to become involved in the classroom. Teachers should focus on the differences that students may have and try to understand why students may do the things they do. Social, political, ideological language learning and teaching are covered by the authors. The authors are able to make connections between language learning, teaching, and how the language learning all ties together. Policies, rights, practices, and attitudes are pointed out in the text. They

emphasize that teachers of foreign languages and future teachers need to be familiar with ways to teach students to make connections.

## Reaction

This book covers new ways of looking at foreign language teaching. Teachers of foreign languages should read this book for suggestions and to find additional ways of addressing specific needs of the students. It is through language that learners can organize their feelings and express their beliefs. When teachers help students identify critical opinions based on their identities the foreign language class will be more meaningful experience.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(2), 307-322.

## Summary

Norton and Toohey take a new look at the concept of the "Good Language Learner" (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978). Norton and Toohey explain the characteristics of a GLLS that allow them to achieve proficiency in L2 learning. The authors studied two individuals, Eva an adult second language learner, and Julie, a child learning a second language. They follow their progress in L2 acquisition. Eva is studied

as in the context of her place of employment, while Julie is studied in the elementary school environment.

Eva is faced with challenges at her job based off of how much language one can use at her place of employment, a fast food restaurant. She began with floor mopping and cleanup, which require very little interaction with customers. Once she had the opportunity to have conversations with other employees she learned of her value to the group. Eva had a lot of knowledge of foreign countries. Her coworkers found her stories intriguing and wanted to know more of Eva's experiences. This became Eva's contribution to the community, giving her added value to the group. She began to guard information so that the other coworkers would want to converse with her more often. She did this so that she could be in power of the information, in turn it required the coworkers to begin more conversations with her to learn more about the various locations that she had been.

Once she began talking more with her coworkers, the boss was able to move her into positions that required more conversational skills. Through her ability to assess what she needed to do to access more L2, she found her place in the social realm of the workplace,, which in turn helped her find more conversational opportunities.

Julie adopted a similar strategy to learn as she helped fellow students learn bits and pieces of Polish, her primary language. She held these "secrets", as Eva did with her secrets of Italy, to give her added value to the community. Students wanted to learn

another language that Julie knew, which gave her access to a social network.  Here she

became the leader, of a social network that wanted to learn her first language. Both Eva

and Julie, developed use of their social differences to find positions in their learning

communities.

**Reaction**

Social networks provide a useful strategy for students to access another language.

Research shows that the more a learner is included in a social network, the greater the L2

gains will be. The article has helped me to realize communities of learners are helpful for

students to feel included in a learning experience. I also feel that all students have

characteristics that can help them to be GLLs. Teachers need to look for those

characteristics that will help students to gain access to the community.

Young, L., & Wilson, K. (2006). Second language classroom reading: A social

constructivist approach. *The Reading Matrix*. *6*(3), 364-372.

**Summary**

This article is focused on a constructivist approach to reading in a second language

classroom. Yang and Wilson briefly explain the constructivist approach with their views

on the use of social constructivism in the classroom as the fundamental concept when

building a constructivist classroom. The focus should always be on guiding students

through the reading. Teachers need to spend less time reading to the students and more time on helping them learn good reading techniques for themselves. The authors focus on eight points of the social constructivist theory, and how to use these in a foreign language reading class. The following are the points that they made: Providing a context and purpose for reading, modeling, asking questions, integrating the four macro skills, creating awareness of the author behind the text, using peers-scaffolding, setting the students free, and using macro tasks.

**Reaction**

I like the use of reading in a Second Language class. This article helped me understand the importance of empowering students to make reading choices on their own. Teachers can spend too much time doing a lot of activities that don't engage the students in their learning. The sub sections in this article helped me understand the real purpose of reading in a classroom and covered great approaches to teach reading.

Hall, J. K. (2001). *Methods for teaching foreign languages: Creating a community of learners in the classroom.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

**Summary**

This book offers a comprehensive look at what is needed for foreign language classroom instruction, particularly for curriculum development in middle and high schools. The material presented in the text is designed to guide teachers with researched practices. The use of communicative activities to teach foreign languages forms the core of the book. The intention of the author is to help teachers build a community of learners in their classrooms. This is done by taking the reader from the basic theories of language learning to teaching students with various strategies.

## Reaction

This book was useful to me for the multiple examples of how to incorporate activities into my class. I want to have a community of learners who enjoy coming to class and help each other out. It has helped me think more about how I can encourage more language use in the classroom.

**The influence of culture in second language teaching**

Morrell, E. (2004). *Linking literacy and popular culture: Finding connections for lifelong learning.* Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

**Summary**

In this book Morrell notes the importance of integrating popular culture into the classroom. Advantages of using pop culture to teach language are covered with some examples of how to incorporate the material using strategies that will help students link new learning with previous learning. He mentions the importance of incorporating authentic texts such as song lyrics, films and magazines into learning. The focus is on engaging students with popular culture to help them stay interested and have opportunities to tie personal experiences and knowledge to the current learning. Throughout the book he points out activities that teachers can do to help the students be more interested in L1 literacy. Students are all different so he notes that it is important for students to be able to access the information in different ways. He stresses the importance of teachers employing various teaching techniques to bridge learning gaps for the students.

**Reaction**

I would recommend this book to anyone who wishes to learn about alternate teaching methods. He excites the reader by giving examples of how to do specific activities to engage the students. The use of popular culture in the classroom will be the way teachers of this century should teach their students, whatever the subject. He backs up his ideas with the theories from the scholarly field. The instruction methods that are described along with the application make this a useful book.

Moran, P. (2001). *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

**Summary**

Moran presents a definition of culture based on the realities and potential of the language classroom. These realities integrate language and culture in an understandable manner. Moran refers to the ACTFL standards for foreign language education which include standards for culture. The definition offered by ACTFL has three interrelated dimensions: products, practices, and perspectives. Moran argues that there should be five dimensions. He adds persons and communities, and explains that artifacts, actions, and meanings cannot exist without people and communities. This book can help teachers who want to add culture to the curriculum understand what it means to teach culture in the language classroom. Moran reviews some theories on learning about one's culture and the way

students can relate to their own culture. He emphasizes throughout the book how cultural experiences can help teachers prepare students for greater learning experiences.

## Reaction

This book helped me see that, when teaching any language class, multiple cultures can be introduced. These cultures can be a great aspect of the curriculum in the language classroom. This book demonstrates the complexity of culture and how students can begin to explore various cultures, including their own. This book was used in one of the first classes that I took in the MSLT program. Therefore, it set the stage for how I look at the way people act based on of cultural influences.

Bollag, B. (2007). Foreign-language departments bring everyday texts to teaching
    [Electronic version]. *Chronicle of Higher Education 54*(11), A1.
        http://chronicle.com/article/Foreign-Language-Departments/1773

## Summary

In this article Bollag introduces a new approach in teaching a foreign language. He reports on the practices at Georgetown University. There, his students present favorite omelet recipes, write letters to editors, and postcards to friends. He states that Georgetown is a model for the new approach that is transforming the manner in which foreign languages are being taught. It is an approach that is incorporating culture into language classes. In the current model vocabulary, grammar, and conversation are

followed by literature courses. The new model incorporates culture from the beginning. There has been an increasing focus on culture in the education system and it has made education more relevant. He explains the history of foreign language education, which, until the 1970's, was simply based on drill and repetition.

**Reaction**

Second language teachers should look at using a mixture of the approaches. Cultural emphasis will provide an opportunity for students to learn other norms of living. The use of everyday language should be incorporated in the classroom. The applicability of the exercises can greatly increase the level of the acquisition of the second language. The more I can design tasks and activities that prepare students for typical occurrences, the better students can attach the new learning to previous experiences.

Reagan, T. (2005). *Non-Western educational traditions: Indigenous approaches to educational thought and practice* (3rd ed). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

**Summary**

Reagan refers to Raymond Williams' stance on the word culture as, "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language." Reagan states that "culture" could refer to "high culture," which is an aesthetic manifestation of social life, literature,

music, and visual arts. It could also refer to pop culture, however, including by viewing the work of writers, poets, musicians, and artists who have been or are currently deemed as great. Reagan discusses cultural relativism, empirical relativism, and elementary cultural relativism. Culture can be defined in a number of ways. It has a problematic history primarily because anthropologists are not able to clearly agree on the meaning of culture. Some of the theorists go as far as to say that it is more trouble than it is worth. Reagan explains the problems throughout the book with misrepresentation of culture. It does make a huge difference in how we analyze and understand cultures that are not ours. The book is a great introduction to many cultures that are Non-Western and should be considered as a great platform for more in-depth study into specific cultures.

**Reaction**

It can be a challenging concept to deal with culture as a teacher. I believe that here in the West we need to be more cognizant of people's cultures. If I can understand more about the educational systems of other cultures, I believe I can be more effective as a teacher.

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

## **Summary**

DeCapua and Wintergerst explain how just because accepted and expected behavior in one culture is appropriate, it may not be in another. The authors cover many aspects of culture and how they can affect teaching. There are cultural differences that are not always obvious to those unfamiliar with a given society. The book contains activities that can help bring these mini-societies together in a classroom. It offers ideas on how teachers can involve culture in the classroom to promote cultural understanding and cultural awareness, not only for the students but also for the teachers.

## **Reaction**

This book opened my eyes to the challenges of varied cultural backgrounds among learners in my classroom. Consideration for social roles and cultural expectations (which include family roles, religious beliefs, medical practices, and women's roles) can all play a big part in the classroom. A mixture of culture in the classroom can teach students that discovery of identities, beliefs, relationships, and customs can greatly enrich their perceptions of others. Therefore as I teach, I need to take into consideration all the different walks of life that the students are coming from. I will help them not only learn another language, but see life's experiences through their classmates' experiences.

Brown, A. V. (2009). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language

teaching: A comparison of ideals. *The Modern Language Journal*, *93*(1), 46-60.

**<u>Summary</u>**

This author carried out a study at the University of Arizona in the Foreign Language

Department to find out how teachers and students feel about various teaching strategies in

their foreign language classes. A survey was given to 1st and 2nd year classes across nine

languages to find out what teaching practices students find beneficial. In addition,

teachers were surveyed to see if the perceptions of teachers are the same as those of

students of foreign languages. Teachers have come to believe that communicative

approaches to teaching and learning a second language are more successful for language

acquisition. However, students have experienced the education system which expects

them to show their knowledge and evaluates it with exam scores. Exams typically have

one answer and give the students security that there is an actual correct answer. When

teachers emphasize communicative language learning and use it for some of the

assessments, Brown thinks they add more stress to the students since they are not used to

this type of assessment.

The survey was administered to 83 classes and 49 instructors. The results show that

teachers' and students' perceptions differ regarding what is considered effective foreign

language teaching. The students indicated on the survey, that they would prefer to learn a

language through grammar-based instruction. The teachers thought that a communicative approach would be better for second language acquisition.

**<u>Reaction</u>**

I need to know whether my students' motivation for being in the language class is integrative or instrumental. Integrative motivation is rooted in the desire to learn another language so that one can communicate and interact socially in other cultures. Instrumental motivation means that students take foreign language classes to earn a grade or for receiving some type of advancement. Both motivations are important but I need to know which one the students are working towards. Additionally I need to show the students that, regardless of their motivation, communicative strategies to learn a foreign language will help them learn the language more effectively. I can do this by administering my own survey to find out what the students are trying to achieve in my class.

# LOOKING FORWARD

I am excited about the opportunity to teach at the high school level again. Everything that I have experienced with studies, travel, various cultures, and work experiences will certainly help me when I get back to the high school. I look forward to sharing the experiences that I have had with my students and believe it will be great experience for them. I leave from the MSLT program with a lot more tools in my tool kit. I have enjoyed the opportunity that I have had to put some of those tools to practice already as I taught a Spring 2011 Spanish class at Utah State University.

While simultaneously teaching Spanish and in the Military Science Department I have learned a number of things that have helped me become a better teacher. One of the things that stand out the most is looking for those students' strengths and capitalizing on them. Students come with various strengths and this opportunity has helped me focus on making a collective group in learning. I also focused more on the lessons that would get more interaction within the classroom. Group work that I did in the Spanish classes often transferred nicely into ways I could incorporate group work in the Military classes. Focusing on ways that I could do group activities in a particular setting broadened my views of student involvement. In the Military some instructors may seem quite dry in their efforts to teach material. The concepts that I have learned before and throughout the MSLT program have helped me to share teaching experiences with colleagues in the Military department. It has been rewarding to share these experiences and encourage others to try them as well.

Although my current plan is to continue with my military career, I will continue to study second language teaching practices and look for every opportunity available to teach. I plan on keeping my teaching certificate current by going to conferences and workshops that the State of Utah requires for continuing education.

As I am currently in the military, it will still be approximately 13 years before I am able to retire from the armed forces. After I complete my obligation to the Army, I will happily interview for Spanish teaching positions at rural high schools. Without the obligations to the military, I will then be able to focus on my other passion, which is teaching Spanish.

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