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The Language Teaching Puzzle

by

Gregory S. Child

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

of

Master of Second Language Teaching

Approved:

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
2012

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Abstract

The Language Teaching Puzzle

by

Gregory S. Child

Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2012

Major Professor: María Luísa Spicer-Escalante

Department: Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies

This portfolio is a compilation of beliefs about effective foreign language (FL) teaching. The core of this portfolio is a teaching philosophy, in which theories, such as comprehensible input, teacher and student roles, and activities are explained. The teaching philosophy is accompanied by a reflection of the authors teaching observed from a video. Following the teaching philosophy and personal teaching reflection are three artifacts centered on language, culture, and literacy. The language artifact contains an observational study in which instructors' practices are compared with their beliefs. The cultural artifact is focused on storytelling. Many civilizations employ storytelling in the form of oral traditions to pass on learning. In the artifact, effectiveness of storytelling as an approach to FL teaching and learning is examined. The literacy artifact is a proposal for a research study. In the proposal, questions are raised about the effectiveness of computer-aided support materials offered to students as they navigate various texts. The final sections of the portfolio contain a "looking forward" section, an annotated bibliography, and references. [152 Pages]

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Dedication

I would like to thank my wife, Lea. She was the driving force behind my completion of this degree. When things got busy and complicated it was she who brought order to the chaos that I had created. Lea helped me every step of the way. Thank you!

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Teaching Philosophy	
Professional Environment.....	3
Apprenticeship of Observation.....	4
Personal Teaching Philosophy.....	7
Teaching Reflection.....	29
Observation of Others.....	33
Artifacts	
The Communicative Classroom: Insights on Perceptions and Practice.....	36
Storytelling in a Foreign Language Classroom	60
Progressive Glossing.....	73
Looking Forward.....	89

Annotated Bibliography..... 91

References.....127

Appendices.....139

List of Figures

Figure 1. The seven pieces of my puzzle.....	8
Figure 2. Variation with puzzle pieces	27
Figure 3. My puzzle.....	28
Figure 4. Progressive glossing step 1.....	140
Figure 5. Progressive glossing step 2.....	141
Figure 6. Progressive glossing step 3.....	142
Figure 7. Progressive glossing step 4.....	143

Introduction

This portfolio is a demonstration of my professional growth as a Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) student. The focal point of this portfolio is my teaching philosophy. In my teaching philosophy, I refer to language teaching as a puzzle in which teaching principles, such as comprehensible input, teacher and student roles in the classroom, implicit versus explicit learning, and classroom activities are described as the pieces to my puzzle. However, unlike many puzzles, the pieces that I describe can be manipulated in many ways to create multiple shapes. Once I was able to identify the shape I was trying to put together (i.e., the goal of my instruction), the pieces fell into place.

Writing my teaching philosophy was a difficult process. I first approached it as if there were one right answer, an answer that I was unable to find. It took me a considerable amount of time to realize that I was looking for what I believe to be effective teaching. Therefore, within my teaching philosophy, I combine research with my own experiences to illustrate what I believe effective language teaching to be.

Accompanying my teaching philosophy are three artifacts that support my beliefs. The first artifact deals with reflecting on practices in the classroom. In this artifact, I discuss a study which I conducted in which I observed that teachers' beliefs about language education do not always match their practices in the classroom. The second artifact is a proposed study on incidental vocabulary acquisition. I believe that using computer-aided readings in the classroom can facilitate vocabulary acquisition. In my final artifact, I examine the effects of using storytelling in the classroom along with a description of how I would use stories to enhance my teaching.

My time in the MSLT program has been valuable to me. I have learned about myself, my strengths, and my weaknesses. I have learned about working with others, specifically that I do not have to have all of the answers and that it is ok to ask for help. And I have learned about language teaching, much of which challenged what I previously believed. Within this portfolio are the highlights of what I have accomplished, but what I have gained from being in this program could easily fill many more pages.

Professional Environment

I hope to be a university teacher of Spanish, working with Spanish classes of all levels and types, including both heritage and non-heritage Spanish speakers. In addition, I want to train future language teachers. I have developed a passion for learning and teaching foreign languages, which I want to use to inspire and encourage new teachers. I see myself teaching methods and theories of second language acquisition to help future teachers develop their own applicable teaching philosophies.

I hope to be instrumental in the development of curricula that fill the gaps that exist between knowledge about language and the teaching of language (Bartels, 2005). I want to research and contribute to the profession and not merely consume others' research. I see myself going to different countries and observing how language teaching is done elsewhere. Gleaning from the best practices of others, I hope to bring back new insights into how to better our own educational practices. Our profession is a dynamic one, always evolving, and I see myself actively involved in making it more effective.

To facilitate my goals I will be attending the University of Iowa starting in the fall of 2012. While at the University of Iowa I will pursue a PhD in foreign language and ESL instruction. Upon completing my PhD I will then seek a position as a university professor where I may achieve my goals.

Apprenticeship of Observation

I never imagined I would be a Spanish teacher, or even a fluent Spanish speaker. While I had always been told that education is an important aspect of life, I never believed it. But I was fifteen when I first heard this and, while struggling in high school, it was then that my father gave me her advice. She said, “I don’t care what you do, you can be a sanitation engineer if you want, as long as you are the best one out there! Which means you must get educated!” It was after hearing my grandmother’s words that my educational journey really began; I would venture to say that it is really just beginning to get interesting.

When I was younger, I struggled in school; all schoolwork was a chore not willingly undertaken. I did, however, have teachers who found ways to make school interesting to me. My fifth grade teacher, Miss Dickamore, was one of those teachers. Her class was fun, because we were always on our feet doing some activity. I can hardly remember *sitting* in her class. She had us sit down only so she could explain the next activity and lay out its parameters. I loved her action-packed curriculum.

After leaving her class and making the dreaded transfer to high school, things became monotonous and flavorless, that is until Spanish class. Of all the classes I had, I was most proud that I was enrolled in that one. It was difficult, and I struggled to earn a ‘C’. However, when registration came around for Spanish II, there was no question in my mind whether I would register for it. This is when the most memorable educational experience of my life came about: the teacher told me “no.” She said that I struggled too hard in the class, that I would just fail Spanish II, and that she was helping me to maintain a relatively decent GPA by not allowing me to fail. I was so mad! The teacher, the person

whom I trusted in the classroom, had just told me that I was not good enough to be given the chance. Looking back now, I should actually thank her; she helped my grades more than she knows, for no matter what I did or what class I took I was going to prove her wrong.

Shortly after graduating from high school, I chose to pursue a two-year volunteer opportunity with my church. I was asked to go to Bolivia and serve among a Spanish-speaking population. Through immersion and not just memorization, I was able to learn Spanish. I was in a situation where the goal was communication and not on whether I could conjugate a verb or not. Being placed in a different situation I was able to succeed and I think I speak it better than my high school Spanish teacher ever did. When I returned home I decided that I was going to become a Spanish teacher and help students realize their goals—be it speaking Spanish or finding academic success—I wanted to be able to tell my students that taking my class would teach them to communicate. I never want any student to be told, by a teacher especially, that he or she is not good enough no matter how dedicated that student may be.

I graduated and found a job as a Spanish high school teacher in Colorado. I arrived to my classroom abounding with ideas of how I was going to help my students achieve more than any class before could. However I quickly got stuck juggling my lofty goals with classroom management and I did not know what to do. As a first-year teacher, I had worried that I would fail, that students would not learn. So at the beginning of the year I observed the other Spanish teachers, and like a sponge looking for the “right” way to teach, I absorbed all that I could. I went back to my classroom with a stack of worksheets and full of false confidence. I had seen the “success” that worksheets provided my

colleagues and thought that I could copy what I had seen and I would not be a failure as a teacher. At first, the worksheets seemed to be great; I thought that students were mastering concepts that before were just out of their grasp. I created an error free environment, however, I noticed, that I could not get the students to converse with me. I attributed that to a lack of confidence, the students had not memorized the vocabulary, or they did not pay attention during class. I placed all of the blame on the students for not being able to use the language; it was not my teaching. I fell into a pattern of not teaching language use, but how to succeed on worksheets.

When I noticed what I was teaching the students, and the lack of my ability to create effective Spanish communicators, I was not happy. I had become the type of teacher I that I did not like, but I was stuck. I tried to break free and teach Spanish the way I had intended. I envisioned my students communicating in Spanish by the end of the year, but I did not know what to change or how to change it. No matter what I tried, the pattern that I had seen my colleagues use seemed to be the most effective. Lecture, worksheet, and test—I hated it—I had become a teacher who did not facilitate students' acquisition of Spanish.

This brings me to my current endeavors in the Master of Second Language Teaching program. This time, I am not here to prove my old Spanish teacher wrong, but to prove that there is a better way of teaching. I believe that every student can learn another language and should be given that opportunity through effective teaching. And so my journey continues, every day learning to be better than the last.

Personal Teaching Philosophy

Personal Teaching Philosophy

When I was young, I was introduced to a puzzle game called *Tangrams*. The objective of this game was to manipulate seven puzzle pieces in order to create different shapes (see Figure 1).

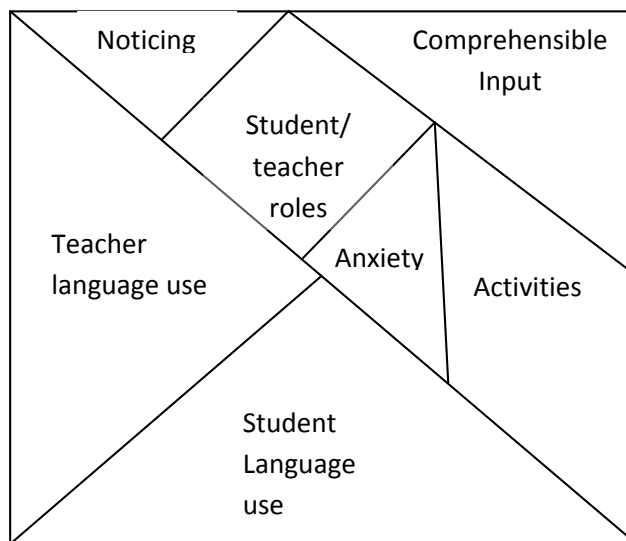


Figure 1. The seven pieces of my puzzle.

I was fascinated with the variety of shapes that can be created by manipulating just seven pieces. As I gained experience with these puzzles, I began to see different uses for each piece. I learned that with the majority of the puzzles one could use the pieces in different ways to produce the same picture, meaning that there was not one correct answer. As I have developed as a foreign language teacher, I have found many similarities with language teaching and the *Tangram* puzzles. Lightbown and Spada (2006) state, “the complexities of second language acquisition...represent puzzles that scientists will continue to work on for a long time” (p. 50). As a language educator, I am in an exciting position as one who is allowed to manipulate the puzzle pieces and create my own shapes.

Learning how to manipulate the *Tangram* puzzle pieces requires gaining experience through trial and error. Similarly, much of what I have learned as a language

teacher I have learned through trial and error. As I have manipulated the pieces of the language teaching puzzle, I have come to believe that certain concepts are essential for language acquisition. The puzzle I am constructing corresponds to my goal of developing proficient Spanish speakers, listeners, readers, and writers. Following is a detailed description of the seven puzzle pieces that I believe are essential in achieving my goals. My beliefs are grounded in current second language acquisition (SLA) research.

I. Proficiency:

Before one can assemble a puzzle it is helpful to know what the shape or the goal of the puzzle is (see Appendix A). As my goal is to aid students in developing language proficiency, it is important to know what language proficiency is. Shrum and Glisan (2010) define language proficiency as, “the ability to use language to perform global tasks or language functions within a variety of contexts/content areas, with a given degree of accuracy” (p. 247). The measurement tool which I use to determine student proficiency/language accuracy is the proficiency guidelines published by the American Council of the Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2012). Specific guidelines have been developed for each of the four language skills areas: reading; writing; speaking; and listening. With respect to their guidelines, ACTFL cautions that they, “neither describe how an individual learns a language nor prescribe how an individual should learn a language, and they should not be used for such purposes. They are an instrument for the evaluation of functional language ability” (ACTFL, 2012, p. 3). These guidelines are a measurement tool I use to develop the rubrics I use in my classes. Now that I have explained my goal as a foreign language instructor, namely proficiency development, I will examine the specific pieces I need to accomplish my goal.

II. Teacher Language Use:

Two important pieces to my puzzle are language use by teachers and comprehensible input. I will begin with input which many researchers have said is essential for students to acquire a language (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Krashen, 1987; Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). ACTFL recommends that the target language be used in the classroom 90% of the time or more (ACTFL, 2010). Lee and VanPatten (2003) acknowledge that this is a daunting task for beginning and experienced teachers alike. When I first entered the MSLT program I was given an opportunity to teach a Spanish I (i.e., first semester) course. The students in my class had a range of experiences with Spanish; some had taken high school classes while others had little or no experience at all. I intended to approach this course the same way I had previously taught my Spanish courses. I intended to lecture on grammar—in English—and then practice what I had lectured on by giving worksheets and simple activities. Upon meeting with my new employer, I was informed that our classes were taught completely in Spanish. I could use five minutes at the end of class to clarify concepts and homework in English, but only if absolutely necessary. I originally disagreed with this practice; I thought it would be impossible to accomplish anything if the students could not first be taught in English. I had previously read theoretical reasoning for using only Spanish in the classroom, but I had never successfully been able to implement the practice in my classroom. Because I did not want to lose the job opportunity I had been offered, I did as was I instructed. To my surprise, students were able to interact with me and their classmates in Spanish. I observed as the students struggled at first but gradually succeeded

in conveying meaning to others. I was very impressed, and have adopted the belief that Spanish must be used in the classroom as frequently as possible.

In support of classroom language use to facilitate language acquisition, it is necessary to examine the distinction Krashen (1987) made between language acquisition and language learning. Krashen distinguishes between acquisition and learning by stating that learning is “conscious knowledge of language” (Krashen, 1987, p. 10). Language acquisition on the other hand is “a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication” (Krashen, 1987, p. 10). Lee and VanPatten (2003) expand on the concept of acquisition by stating that language learners develop an “implicit linguistic system” (p. 15). According to Lee and VanPatten, students use their implicit linguistic system to determine whether a statement is correct or not in the target language, although this does not mean that second language learners develop an implicit system equal to that of native speakers. Lee and VanPatten also recognize that students who have explicit knowledge about language are able to use that knowledge to explain why specific language characteristics operate the way they do. Lee and VanPatten state that language rules are “not the starting point” (p. 16). I believe that, although not the starting point, there is a time and a place for language rules to be studied.

To further emphasize why grammar should not be the starting point of language instruction, I refer back to my teaching experiences. As a high school teacher I frequently lectured on grammar. I quizzed the students on how well they were able to explain grammatical concepts; rarely did I ask the students to demonstrate the use of grammar. My students learned the grammatical rules very well and I was proud that they were able to

describe language features with the details they used. However, I ran into problems when students had to implement what I had taught them. To my embarrassment, I began to get frustrated with my students because they could not communicate with me. I had taught them the rules and it was up to the students to apply what I had taught them. It took me a long time to learn that students do not use explicit knowledge when they speak (Krashen, 1987; Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lee & VanPatten, 2003), I had asked students to do something I had not prepared them for.

Students rely on their implicit system to “create utterances, that is, to speak” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 132). Therefore it is essential that language learners be given an opportunity to develop an implicit linguistic system (Wong & VanPatten, 2003). To provide this opportunity, it is important that students be exposed to input, which contains, “many subtle clues about the way language works, and it is only by getting lots of input that learners can build up an implicit linguistic system” (Lee & Van Patten, 2003, p. 16). Surrounding students with teacher-supplied input facilitates the creation of their implicit language system, which is the first piece to my puzzle. I believe that students rely on their implicit language system when communicating; hence I believe teachers must facilitate the creation of students’ implicit language systems through appropriate language use. The first piece of my puzzle is teacher use of the language in the classroom, but without the second piece of the puzzle the first is rendered useless. The second piece of my puzzle is comprehensible input.

III. Comprehensible Input:

The quality of input students are exposed to has received a lot of attention from second language acquisition (SLA) researchers as it is considered by many an essential

aspect of language acquisition (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Krashen, 1987; Krashen, & Terrell, 2000; Lee, & VanPatten, 2003; Littlewood, 1996;). Krashen (1987) addresses input in the monitor model, stating that in order for students to advance from one language level to the next, it is essential that they receive comprehensible, meaningful input with linguistic aspects slightly more advanced than students' current language level. Krashen states that, "we acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of competence ($i + 1$). This is done with the help of context or extra-linguistic information" (p. 21). Lee and VanPatten (2003) agree that not only must the language be comprehensible, but it must contain a message to which students must attend. There are two essential aspects from these definitions: first, in order for students to advance from one language level to the next, they must be exposed to input that contains features of the next level. And second, input must be comprehensible and meaningful, and students must have a reason to pay attention to the input they are exposed to.

To aid in making input comprehensible, Lee and VanPatten (2003), using a list developed by Hatch (1983), offer several suggestions: a slower rate of speech, simple and high frequency vocabulary, simple syntax, repetition, and longer pauses. This is not a comprehensive list as there are many things that instructors do to make their output comprehensible. In my classes, I frequently act out what I am saying, draw on the board, and rephrase words that my students do not understand. Häcker (2008), referring specifically to vocabulary instruction, states that students are typically exposed only to the language they are given in class. Unless students find another source of comprehensible input outside of class, they are limited to what teachers provide. This is why I believe it is

the responsibility of the teacher to provide comprehensible input to students, as many will receive comprehensible input only from the teachers.

To ensure that students are given ample opportunity to be surrounded by comprehensible input, I will primarily use Spanish in the classroom. I have seen the benefits of conducting my classes using comprehensible input, and the frustrations of not using comprehensible input, as previously described. Providing comprehensible input was difficult at first, but students began to interact with me. I was able to give the students instructions and they were able follow them. I attribute the interaction I had with my students to the comprehensible input they received. Therefore the second piece to my puzzle is comprehensible input.

IV. Student Language Use:

As reported by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001), students who take a foreign language course do so because they wish to communicate fluently and comfortably in the foreign language. Krashen and Terrell (2000) state that, “spoken fluency is not taught directly. Rather, the ability to speak fluently and easily in a second language emerges by itself, after a sufficient amount of competence has been acquired through input” (p. 20). Todhunter (2007) says that the “development of interactional competence is promoted by participation in exchanges that are spontaneous, topically coherent, and extend over multiple turns, which are characteristic of conversations outside the classroom” (p. 605). Shrum and Glisan (2010) claim that “learners must be active conversational participants who interact and negotiate with the type of input they receive in order to acquire language” (p. 21). In other words, to achieve the communication goals of students (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001), students must not only be

exposed to comprehensible input, they must also participate in conversations in the L2. To promote language use by the students, it is important that students are provided with opportunities and motives for using the language (Long, 1996; Swain, 2005;).

Allwright (1984) called interaction a “fundamental fact of pedagogy” (p. 156 as cited in Ellis, 1991). When students interact with each other, they help each other acquire a language. Students support and challenge each other which facilitates language acquisition. When students help each other to accomplish more than they would be able to on their own, they experience what Vygotsky (1978) labeled the “zone of proximal development” (p. 84). While Vygotsky makes reference specifically to advanced students helping less advanced students, I believe that student interaction fosters the same experiences as the zone of proximal development. I have observed students who were both at a lower language level—compared to the entire class—work together to produce conversations equal to their classmates. Naughton (2006) claims that “learners are seen to be mutual scaffolders who give and receive support as they interact with their peers” (p. 170). Students learning languages help each other even when there are miscommunication errors, “requests for clarification (e.g., ‘Pardon’) ‘stretch’ the [learners] by making [them] clarify what [they] said” (Ellis, 1991, p. 7). Ellis claims, “that the role of input derived through interaction is primarily that of facilitating the processes of noticing and comparison” (p. 31). Ellis made reference to the fourth piece of my puzzle which is noticing.

V. Noticing:

Noticing is a process that happens when students are producing language. When students are producing language they, “notice that they do not know how to say (or write)

precisely the meaning they wish to convey” (Swain, 2005, p. 474). In other words, when students are pushed to use the L2, they often notice what they don’t know and are presented with an opportunity to discover how to say or write what is meaningful to them. In discovering how to convey what they wish, students are also presented with opportunities to acquire new grammatical structures in meaningful contexts. Sousa (2006) states that when students attach meaning to information the probability increases that the information will be recalled. Therefore, when students notice they are unable to convey a particular meaning, and go on to discover how to say what they wish, they will retain what they have discovered. I believe noticing is important because once students notice what they need to express, the students make the language important to them.

In my classes I have observed that students retain words they wish to use. Frequently, I am asked about terms that students use in their everyday conversations, such as slang terms. From my own observations of my teaching, I have seen that even with the large quantity of vocabulary to remember throughout a course, students remember the words and phrases they have asked about. I believe this is because the words that students wish to learn have meaning for them, as they are words that the students can use on an everyday basis. Hence, the fourth piece to my puzzle is noticing, which is facilitated through student use of Spanish.

VI. Classroom roles:

Because interaction between students is essential for language acquisition (Ellis, 1991; Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Shrum & Glisan, 2010; Swain, 2005; Todhunter, 2007), classes should not be designed with the idea of covering grammatical concepts. Rather, classes should be designed with the idea that students will exchange information

(Ballman, Lisking-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Therefore, the fifth piece of my puzzle is the roles of the teacher and the students in the classroom. It is the responsibility of the teacher to become an architect designing the course and activities to provide ways for the students to construct meaning and exchange information (Lee, & VanPatten, 2001). According to Brown (2009), students desire to communicate in the foreign language. When teachers implement activities that require students to exchange information, teachers are aiding students in achieving their goals.

It is the teacher's responsibility as the course designer to create an environment in which students are willing to use the target language (MacIntyre, 2007), afford students multiple opportunities to communicate, and provide sufficient amounts of comprehensible input for students to negotiate meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Krashen, 1987; Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Lee & VanPatten, 2003;). Through careful classroom management and activity design, teachers provide opportunities for students to use the language.

There is one more skill which I believe is important for foreign language teachers to develop, that is reflection. Reagan and Osborn (2002) talk about three different reflection practices: reflection-for-practice; reflection-in-practice; and reflection-on-practice. Reflection-for-practice and reflection-on-practice refer to the reflection that needs to happen prior to and after a lesson. Teachers need to be critical about what they are going to do; a teacher should choose to do an activity not only because it is "fun." Rather, teachers need to make sure what they are planning to do has language learning goals (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Also, teachers need to reflect on what they have done. They need to examine the activities they have used and then evaluate if those activities

have enabled students to meet the goals for the day. Often when reflecting-on-practice, teachers reflect-for-practice as they are able to see where they would make changes that would improve future lessons (Reagan & Osborn, 2002).

While reflection-on-practice and reflection-for-practice are important, I consider it essential that teachers learn how to reflect-in-practice. Reagan and Osborn (2002) state that, “reflection-in-practice involves the teacher’s ability to utilize unarticulated knowledge about content, pedagogy, and learners in the classroom context” (p. 23). Teachers who reflect-in-practice are conscious of their classroom teaching and make appropriate changes to improve the way they are teaching their students. I believe this is a vital skill for teachers to master. One of the artifacts in my portfolio deals specifically with teachers’ perceptions of their own teaching. When writing the artifact, I interviewed teachers about their teaching and then conducted observations to see how the teachers put into practice what they said they believed. Not all of the teachers were doing what they said they believed they were doing. I believe when teachers learn to reflect-in-practice, they will see where they can better incorporate the teaching strategies they believe are necessary for effective language education.

In my own teaching, I have had activities that I spent a large amount of time preparing for. Then, when the students began the activities, it has become evident that the activities I planned were not working the way that I planned. In these situations it is my responsibility to adapt to the situation, and make the appropriate changes to my activities. Reagan and Osborn (2002) say, “It is the ability to engage in reflection-in-practice that, to a very significant extent, distinguishes the experienced master teacher from the novice” (p. 23). I believe that it is impossible for a teacher to plan perfect lesson plans for every class.

This does not mean the teacher is a bad teacher, as long as the teacher makes an attempt during the lesson to improve the activities planned for the students.

Teachers have many responsibilities, but students are the active agents in the classroom. Using Lee and VanPatten's (2001) metaphor of the teacher as architect, this means that students are responsible for carrying out the plans they have been provided with. Students need to ask and answer questions, take an active part as interlocutors, and freely join in conversations (Lee & VanPatten, 2001). It is the responsibility of teachers to assist students but accountability for activity completion and use of the language belongs to students. Teacher and student responsibilities are one important piece required to complete my puzzle.

VII. Classroom Activities:

The sixth piece of my puzzle is classroom activities. As previously discussed, it is the responsibility of students to be active participants in their learning. To facilitate student participation, it is essential that activities be designed to guide students in the completion of those activities. When designing activities, it is important to start with a language goal. Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) state that teachers who desire to focus on language use in the classroom should use communicative goals with each lesson, and that communicative goals should be the starting point of each lesson. Once the goal is decided upon, it is then the responsibility of the teacher to design activities that lead to accomplishing that goal. Shrum and Glisan (2010), along with others (Chun, 2001; Chun & Plass, 1996; Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001), mention various strategies for lesson planning, dividing them into top-down and bottom-up strategies. Shrum and Glisan (2010) define a bottom-up strategy as building up to the final goal:

“students analyze and learn grammar rules and vocabulary, and then later practice using them in communication” (p. 58). In a classroom where the teacher uses a bottom-up strategy, the teacher first presents grammar and vocabulary, then the students practice what they have been taught. The students are expected to transfer the knowledge about language into their working knowledge of the language. As I have previously discussed, this is not the most effective way to teach.

The second strategy mentioned is a top-down strategy¹. With this strategy, “learners manipulate language to communicate thoughts using higher-level skills [...] before attending to discrete language structures with the use of lower-level skills” (Shrum & Glisan, 2010, p. 60). In this type of classroom, the students focus on communication as it is through communication that students learn grammar and vocabulary. Crawford (2004) states that the “experience of learning *through* language is important not just because this enhances levels of language input but because the very process of learning requires opportunities to develop negotiation, interpreting, and expressing abilities” (p. 6). When students use the language, they learn by doing, they no longer think of hypothetical situations in which the language will be used, but experience situations in which the language is used.

I believe that a top-down approach is the best approach. When I first began teaching, I used a bottom-up approach; as previously described, students were not able to take the knowledge about language and apply it to real-life situations. However, when I have taught using a top-down approach, I have noticed that students are able to

¹ A top-down strategy is an inductive approach to language instruction while a bottom-up strategy is a deductive approach to language instruction. Throughout the remainder of this paper top-down refers to inductive teaching approaches and bottom-up refers to deductive teaching approaches.

communicate in real-life situations. Students practice speaking from the very start which facilitates transferring what is done in class to real-life situations.

In my classroom I implement a top-down strategy by using task-based activities. Task-based activities are activities that guide students through a series of tasks that lead to a communicative goal (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Tasks are defined as “[activities] in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve, there is a relationship to the real-world, and [...] there is an objective that can be assessed in terms of an outcome” (Skehan, 1998, as cited by Huang, 2010, p. 32). Students need to be made aware of the goals for each activity (Ballman, Lisking-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). As students accomplish each task, they progressively arrive at accomplishing the overall goal.

In my own teaching, I have seen how task-based activities foster new skills in students. In one occasion when my students were learning about directions and addresses, I used a task-based activity. The first task was an activity that required students to recall vocabulary and phrases that they had studied on their own. After students reviewed the vocabulary, they were divided into groups of two and each person in the group was given a different worksheet with a map. The students were required to ask each other the location of different buildings from their maps. Together the students were required to create one map that contained all of the buildings from both maps. This however was not the final goal.

The final goal for this day was that students would be able to give directions and describe the city where they attended school. The final task for that day was to describe where different buildings were located in their city (i.e., grocery store, clothing store, restaurants, etc.). Because the students were given a set of tasks they could follow,

students were able to accomplish the larger goal. In one day, students were able to describe different locations of buildings throughout the city in which they lived, with minimal help from the instructor. By the end of the first day of a new chapter, students were able to use the new vocabulary and phrases in real-world contexts. Task-based activities allow students to be placed in situations where they can use the language to accomplish a task in the target language. Activity design is the sixth piece to my puzzle, but it is not the final piece. In order for my puzzle to be complete we must add the seventh piece; we must take into consideration anxiety.

VIII. Language Anxiety:

The final piece to my puzzle is language anxiety. Krashen (1987) addressed language anxiety in the monitor model. He labeled anxiety and other affective factors of language learning the affective filter. Krashen (1987) said the affective filter is composed of three points: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. When I refer to anxiety, I mean specifically language anxiety. Using MacIntyre's (2007) definition, language anxiety "captures the worry and usually negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using an L2" (p. 565). Na (2007) conducted a study on language anxiety with high school students in China who were learning English for academic purposes. Na concluded that language anxiety can be debilitating for students. When students experience language anxiety, they are not able to perform to their true abilities.

Frantzen and Magnan's (2005) conclusions are similar to Na's (2007). Frantzen and Magnan conducted a study in which true beginners and false beginners were enrolled in the same course. The true beginners were anxious about the way they would be perceived by their classmates who had language experience. The anxiety caused the true

beginners to participate less in the classroom. Students will elect to save face rather than speak up and be wrong in front of their classmates (Gregersen, 2003).

Gregersen (2003), commenting on the nature of language anxiety, states that language anxiety is a cyclical process that students go through. “As errors are made, learners become more anxious, and the more anxious they are, the more errors they make” (Gregersen, 2003, p. 29). Anxiety spurs more anxiety. In my own teaching, I have observed students experiencing what Na (2007) called debilitating language anxiety. I had a student who appeared to struggle in one of my Spanish classes. Every time I called on her, she would first be hesitant to speak and then stutter through her response which was usually incorrect. I thought I was supporting her to help her as she was speaking, but she started to make more errors and began to wait for my prompt before she would say anything. I began to observe her more closely during activities to see how I could help her. When she was working with a partner I would hear her speaking Spanish and would get closer to determine how well she was using the language. When she became aware that I was moving closer or that I was listening to her, she began to struggle with the language. I was perplexed.

In this particular class I had a teacher’s assistant (TA). I asked him to try and listen to her. My TA reported back to me that the student was participating in the group work as an equal partner, and that her language use was in his words “really really good.” I realized that my student was able to speak Spanish well, but when I was near she would become anxious which had a debilitating effect on her language production.

I believe it is the teacher’s responsibility to create an atmosphere in which students are not overcome by anxiety. Na (2007) recommends that teachers be trained on more than

just the material they will be teaching; teachers need to be prepared to address anxiety. In my classes I will do two things specifically to minimize language anxiety. First I will place the focus of the classroom on things the students want to speak about. I believe that having the students converse about topics they choose will help relieve some anxiety. I want my classroom to focus on language use and not on grammar; I believe if the students are focused on meaning they will not be as anxious about getting the structure correct. The second thing I am going to do is have a lot of group work. Students worry about their social standing (Gregersen, 2003), however, I believe that as students get to know each other and as they become more comfortable with each other, they will be less anxious to communicate with and in front of their friends.

Anxiety is the final piece of my puzzle, but nonetheless an important one. I, myself, suffered greatly from language anxiety. I remember mispronouncing a word when I was in high school. The way I said the word was actually another word which was very embarrassing. The teacher told me I was incorrect then proceeded to tell the class what I had just said. The entire class laughed at my mistake, I was very embarrassed. I remember going to great lengths to avoid that and other words that I believed sounded like they could be “bad” words. I also stopped offering answers freely in the class. I believe my grade suffered because I withdrew from participation in that course. Language anxiety is a factor in language learning that cannot be avoided by teachers or students. Teachers must be aware of and account for student anxiety.

IX. Technology:

Before concluding my teaching philosophy I would like to mention two things about technology. I have not yet included technology into my puzzle because I have not yet had enough experience with it for me to formulate any strong opinions as to how to effectively implement technology in my classroom. However, researchers have identified two aspects which I will continue to experiment with through my teaching career. The following is a brief description of two concepts which I believe may be useful in language teaching.

The first concept is the use of technology to provide students with opportunities to interact in synthetic immersive environments (Arnold & Ducate, 2011). Synthetic immersive environments (SIEs) are online environments where people interact with each other in authentic situations (Sykes, Oskoz & Thorne; 2008). SIEs are intriguing because students are placed in situations where they must use the target language to accomplish tasks. The interesting thing about this is that students may use an avatar to interact with others, which protects students and encourages interaction. One of the reasons that students do not participate in language classes is because of the fear of failure, but when students use an avatar it is the avatar that is at risk when students use the language not the students (Sykes, Oskoz & Thorne; 2008). I would like to continue researching the use of avatars in a foreign language classroom. Researchers have said that avatars improve student participation in a foreign language, but I would like to experiment with this myself.

The second concept is the use of computer assisted glossing. I believe that students can learn a lot when they are exposed to authentic literature. The problem with

authentic literature is that it often contains more vocabulary than the students are familiar with. Therefore, to facilitate student use of authentic texts teachers may use glosses. Computer assisted glosses provide teachers with a variety of glossing options (Liu & Lin, 2011). I am interested in investigating which type of gloss facilitates both the comprehension of a text and the acquisition of vocabulary. In my literacy artifact, I propose a study and provide a gloss type (I labeled this gloss progressive glossing) which I believe will be effective, unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to implement this gloss.

These are the two areas in which I would like to continue to study and implement into my puzzle. I recognize that technology will play an important role in the future of language education (Thoms, 2012). With more experience I hope to be able to discover how I can effectively implement technology into my classroom. Until I have that experience however, I will not include technology into my puzzle.

X. Conclusion:

I have described what I believe good language teaching looks like. Seven aspects have been discussed as puzzle pieces that fit together to create what I believe are proficient Spanish speakers. I recognize that there are many ways in which these puzzle pieces can be put together. I also recognize that there are individuals who would exchange one piece of my puzzle for another piece that I have not mentioned. One of the joys of the *Tangram* puzzle is that with just seven pieces it is possible to create a plethora of images (Figure 2).

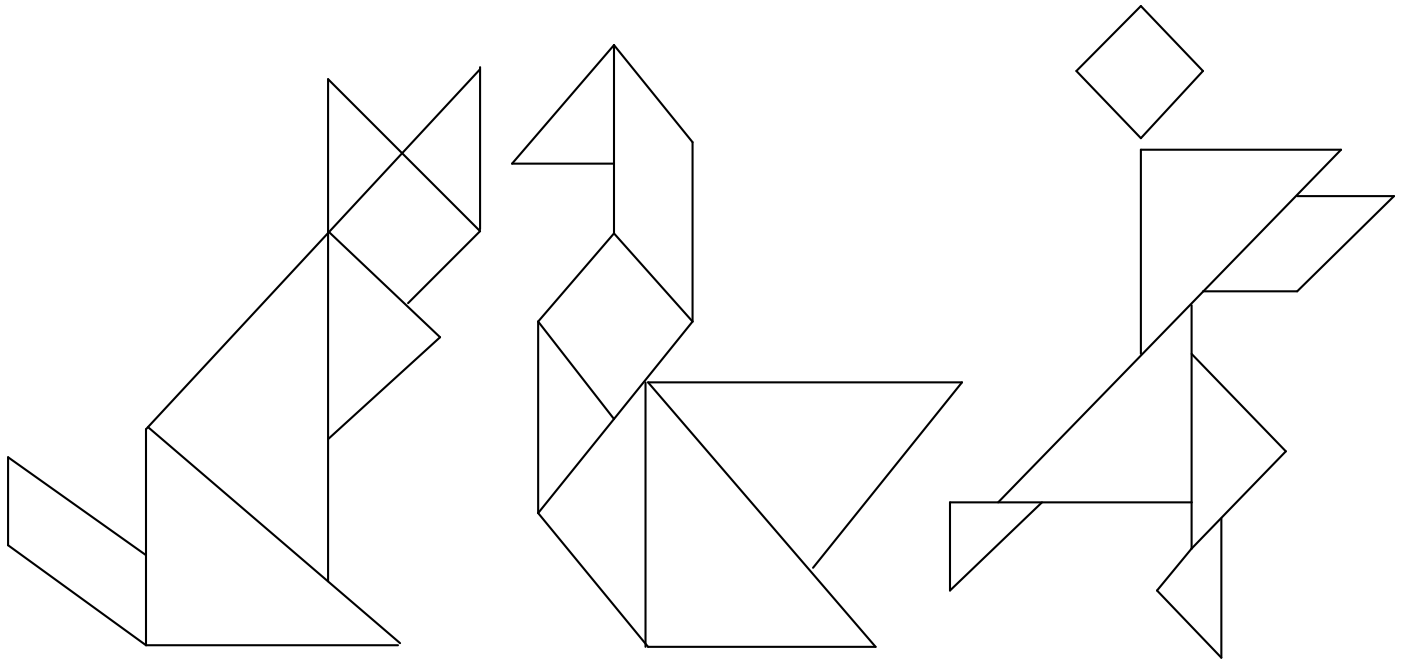


Figure 2. Puzzle pieces variations.

Figure 3 represents the image I have constructed; it is the image that I believe best represents effective foreign language teaching and learning for me. I believe that every teacher is responsible to create the puzzle that best represents his or her teaching style and beliefs. It is important to remember that just as I learned to manipulate the *Tangram* puzzle pieces, I expect the way I position the puzzle pieces to change as I continue to gain experience.

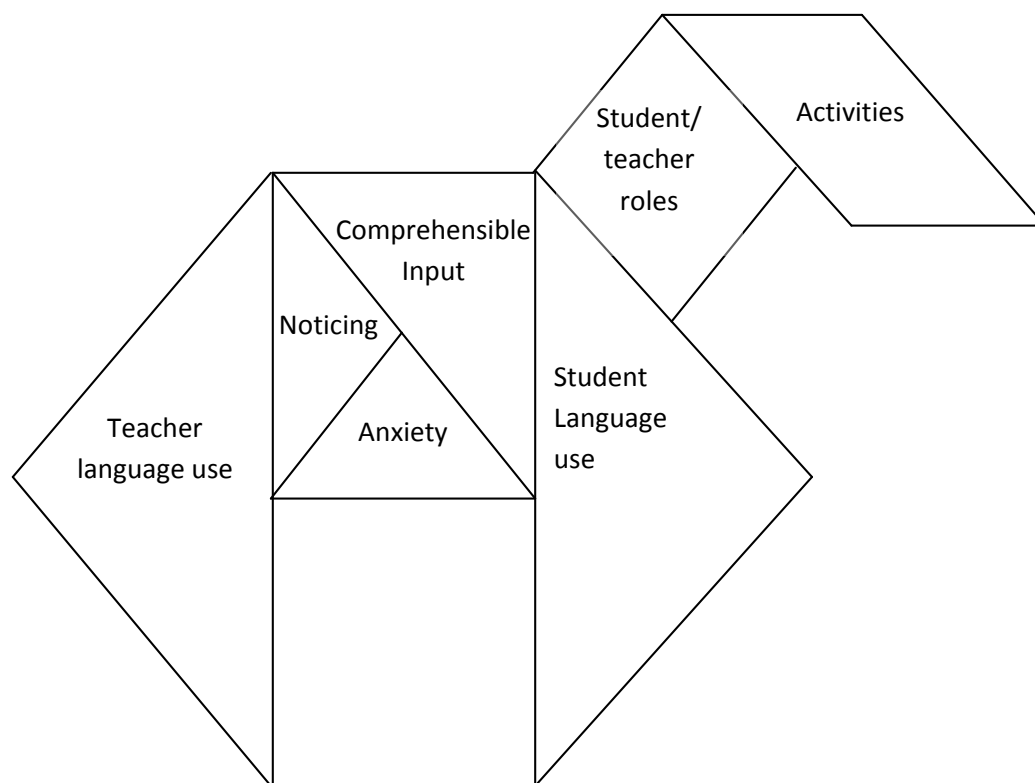


Figure 3. My puzzle

Teaching Reflection

As an assignment in one of my MSLT courses, I had an opportunity to conduct a small study examining how instructors put into practice what they believe constitutes effective teaching. In the study, instructors were asked about their teaching philosophies, and then their answers were compared to classroom observations. By the end of the study, I came to the realization that teachers do not always implement the instructional strategies in which they claim to believe. Upon contemplating what I observed, I recorded one of my Spanish 1010 classes to identify the extent to which I apply my own beliefs. The class took place on October 17th 2011, the class began at 1:30 p.m. and ended at 2:20 p.m. The following is a brief comparison of what I believe good teaching should look like with what I saw myself doing.

The first thing I noticed was the use of the target language. I used the language 95% of the time. The downside to my target language use was that I did not consistently implement strategies to make my output comprehensible. In retrospect, I believe I focused most of my time and effort describing what I wanted the students to do, causing me to overlook how I conveyed my instructions. When I was with individuals, I matched my language level to their language level which facilitated student interaction with me. When I addressed the class as a whole, however, my input became less comprehensible for my students. Since watching this video, I have placed more effort on using comprehensible input. I believe I am improving yet I occasionally notice that students do not fully understand what I say. It is essential that I provide appropriate output for my students. A large portion of my philosophy is dedicated to providing comprehensible output. I believe

that students must be surrounded by comprehensible language in order to acquire that language.

The second thing I noticed is that during my task-based activities, the transition from one task to the next was not done smoothly, meaning that the steps in my activities were not put together in a logical sequence. I knew what I wanted the students to do and I saw how each step was connected. However, if I were an outsider looking in, I believe there would have been confusion. I noticed that several students had to explain to their classmates what they were supposed to do, signifying to me that they needed more assistance than what I offered. Some of this might be due to my lack of comprehensible input.

What I saw that pleased me were interactions between students. Once one of the students knew how to do what I wanted them to do, that student told another, who in turn told another until all of the students knew what I wanted them to do. I liked that students helped each other in this manner helping to understand what was required of them. It allowed students to take charge of their learning. I was in the classroom to answer questions but students were in charge, I was merely a facilitator of the activities.

This coincides with my teaching philosophy. As the instructor, I believe I am responsible to plan activities that allow students to practice and develop language proficiency. I believe it is the responsibility of students to do the work in the classroom. I watched students work together to achieve the final goal. I fulfilled my role by offering support while the students worked to achieve the lesson goals.

The final thing that I observed was a relaxed atmosphere. I believe that providing a relaxed atmosphere promotes language acquisition. Students did not appear to be

apprehensive when they interacted with me. I believe that the relaxed atmosphere diminished potential anxiety towards using the language. What interests me is that while the students will speak with me one on one, it is more difficult to get the students to speak in front of the classroom. During the report portion of a task-based activity, students were not as willing to offer answers to the whole class. I believe this is because of fear; students did not want to make a mistake in front of their peers. Those who spoke in front of the class made more mistakes than they would normally make when they spoke one-to-one with me or a single classmate. In my teaching philosophy, I argue that when students are placed in a stressful or emotionally taxing situation, there is an adverse affect on their language production. It is my responsibility to create a relaxed environment, as I believe it facilitates language production.

Having observed the disparity between my teaching practices and my beliefs has caused me to set goals. First, I am going to start to include notes on my lessons to remind myself that I need to use comprehensible input. I know that there are occasions when what I say is not understood by a large number of students. I am going to focus on providing more comprehensible input. The second change I am going to make is better design the structure of my task-based activities. I am going to implement backwards planning with each activity as I believe it will allow me to create smoother transitions between activities. I believe that task-based activities allow students to achieve more in the target language. I am going to focus on better structuring task-based activities to allow students to maximize the greatest gain from each activity. Finally, I am going to have more paired and whole-class activities. I believe that, as students get to know each other better, they will be less

inhibited when it comes to language production in the classroom. The more a student uses the language, the more the student will acquire the language.

It has been interesting to observe my own teaching and the extent to which I applied what I believe. What I thought I was doing is not the same as what I saw myself doing. I believe that watching myself teach has been beneficial. I have been able to set goals that will help me become a better teacher. In the future I hope to have additional opportunities to observe myself teach. This will help me set professional goals and measure my progress in achieving them.

Observation of Others

Throughout my career as a Spanish teacher I have had opportunities to observe other teachers and glean from their practices new ideas for my own teaching. Several of the new ideas are related to classroom procedures while others are centered on practices which I have or will incorporate into my classroom. The first set of observations comes from opportunities I have had to observe my coworkers at Utah State University, each of those observations took place in either Spanish 1010 or 1020 courses. The second set of observations was conducted during a summer English program entitled Global Academy. The following is a brief description of several of my observations.

The first thing I noticed during my observations of the Spanish courses was the examples the teacher provided her students. All of the examples were about her personal life, including pictures or the places she had visited. When the teacher progressed from one slide to the next there was an explanation of each picture which did not always correlate with what the class was focused on. Some of the students enjoyed the pictures and stories, but others appeared to be bored and disinterested in the stories and pictures. This made me reexamine some of the pictures and examples I use. I think that teachers need to be careful with the examples they use, it is fun to share stories from one's past but it is possible to share too much and lose focus.

The second observation deals with student feedback. I observed a teacher who constantly gave very detailed and extensive feedback to her students. At times she would even complete the task or assignment for the students as a way of answering the student's questions. The teacher claimed that her students were able to outperform any of the previous classes she had taught. When I had an opportunity to interact with her student

however, I found that they were unable to use many of the concepts that she had helped them with. I learned that it is more important to provide support for students in order to allow them to arrive at the answer than to give them the answers.

The next change I made from my observations is the way in which I take attendance. Previously I had called attendance every day to ensure that I had an accurate role. However, after observing a university Spanish class I have amended my practices. The observed teacher placed a role on a table, as the students entered the room they were responsible to mark that they were present. The teacher reported that attendance is a large portion of the students' grade, therefore students should be responsible for it. I agree with the idea the students need to be responsible for their grade, this is a way of allowing students to be responsible for something as simple as attendance.

The first thing I learned from observing the English teachers was how to effectively use technology in the classroom. On one occasion I was observing a classroom designated as low proficiency. The first thing the teacher did when he arrived in the classroom was open a word document, then using a projector he typed the key words from his speech for students to read. This was brilliant; the teacher was able to facilitate student comprehension of spoken instructions by scaffolding with written text. This is a practice I have not yet implemented in my classroom but this is something that I am excited to use this in future classes.

The second observation was from a content based English course. The lesson was on agriculture, specifically irrigation. The teacher presented the concepts of furrows, which students did not understand. At first the teacher tried to draw an example of a furrow on the whiteboard, but this only caused more confusion. The teacher then decided

to use the computer and find a picture on the internet and show the students what a furrow was. Once the students saw a furrow many realized what the teacher was talking about, some of the students appeared to know what a furrow was. This is a practice I use when I am conversing in Spanish with my students. I have found that showing the students what I mean circumvents the need to translate words for my students.

The final observations I would like to mention I saw in an English reading class. Prior to assigning a reading the teacher went through and identified what she considered to be difficult words. The teacher then wrote each of those words on the board and taught them before the students began reading, however the teacher did not teach the vocabulary she co-constructed meaning with her students. Occasionally she would write on the board the meaning that was co-constructed with the students. The students were able to refer to the pre-taught words while they read the text they were provided with. I believe that co-constructing vocabulary meaning will facilitate retention of new vocabulary. This is a practice that I am excited to implement into my classroom.

These are several practices that have learned through observation. I am excited to implement some of them into my current teaching, the practices that I have implemented I have been happy with. Upon reflecting on my observations of other teachers I realized that there is a lot that can be learned by observing how others teach. It is my hope that through observation of other teachers that I may glean from their best practices and become a better teacher.

The Communicative Classroom: Insights on Perceptions and Practice

Introduction

This paper was written for Dr. María Luísa Spicer-Escalante in the Linguistics 6800 course. I originally wrote this paper with a partner, Dora Brunson. In preparing this paper for my portfolio I have made substantial changes to what was originally written. I chose to include this paper in my portfolio because of the effect it has had on my teaching.

Through observations and semi-structured interviews, I examined how two foreign language teachers applied their beliefs about effective language teaching in their classrooms. During the interviews, they were asked about effective teaching practices. Both teachers described what they believe effective teaching is and how they apply their beliefs in their classrooms. When the teachers were observed however, I noted that the manner in which the teachers applied their beliefs in the classroom did not match the teachers' descriptions. I noted that the teachers appeared to be unaware of these discrepancies. From this observation I learned the importance of reflecting upon my lessons, students, and self within the classroom.

I may one day find a teaching approach or strategy that provides many benefits for students. However, if I am unable to apply that approach or strategy in my classroom, then students may not receive those benefits. Reflecting upon my practice is essential if I am going to improve my teaching. Within the last year I have placed greater effort on reflecting upon and evaluating my teaching practices.

The Communicative Classroom: Insights on Perceptions and Practice

I. Introduction:

Perceptions and reality often do not match; often instructors believe that they are performing one way when in reality they are not. The same can be said about the application of second language acquisition (SLA) research to classroom practices. Teachers perceive themselves to be teaching according to guidelines of specific researchers, in this case a communicative approach (CA), when in reality their classroom practices do not match what the researchers define as a CA, nor does it match what the instructors themselves define as a CA. The research questions addressed in this study are the following: 1) how do the perceptions match the practices of foreign language teachers? and 2) do those perceptions and practices match current SLA theory? Because of the complexity of the questions, three specific aspects of CA will be examined: 1) target language use, 2) student-centered activities, and 3) task-based instruction.

II. Literature Review:

a. Target Language:

Target language (TL) use, by instructors and students alike, is crucial for the acquisition of foreign languages (ACTFL, 2010; Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Bateman, 2008; Brown, 2009; Lee & Van Patten, 2003;). In line with SLA research, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has produced a set of guidelines recommending that “language educators and their students use the target languages as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom” (ACTFL, 2010). When teachers and students use the TL, students are provided with invaluable benefits. First, it

creates an atmosphere in which the students must pay attention to and negotiate meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Second, student participation will be in the TL which facilitates language acquisition (Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

However, TL use by itself is not enough; students need to be able to negotiate meaning through the language used. Negotiation of meaning refers to processes followed by learners to establish comprehension of the message conveyed to them by the input given (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). To facilitate negotiation, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide adequate input. Input as defined by Lee and VanPatten (2003) is:

Language embedded in some kind of communicative interchange no matter how trivial or how important. The role of the learner is to attend to the meaning in order to respond to the content or perform a task. Embedded in input are many subtle clues about the way language works, and it is only by getting lots of input that learners can build up an implicit linguistic system (p. 16).

Hatch (1983, as cited by Lee & VanPatten, 2003) asserts that good input consists of input that is meaning-bearing and comprehensible. Meaning-bearing input is input that carries a message of value to the learner (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Input is made comprehensible through the use of a slower rate of speech, high-frequency vocabulary, simple syntax, repetition, and longer pauses. Comprehensible input provides vast resources which in turn assist students in the acquisition of a language.

Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro and Mandell (2001) state, that language that is not simplified requires much more effort on the students' part to be useful for acquisition. VanPatten (1996, as quoted by Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 65) labels

students “limited capacity processors,” meaning that students are unable to focus on multiple aspects of language at once. However, languages are complex systems that require students to focus on many aspects of each word, “how it sounds, how it is pronounced, how it modifies other words, how it can be modified, what it means, and where it can appear in a sentence” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, p. 65). If students are required to spread their focus among several different language features, their attention will be divided, limiting students’ ability to negotiate meaning (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Crawford, 2004). It is therefore important that teachers simplify their output, allowing students to focus on the meaning of the words and sentences and not on the form.

It is also argued that students involved in immersion programs, where they are surrounded by meaningful input, acquire the language with greater ease (Rifkin, 2005). However, this does not necessarily mean that an immersion program must be located in a country where the TL is commonly spoken. Through consistent use of the TL, instructors can create an immersion-like environment that facilitates language acquisition (Anthony Brown, 2009). Instructors should create environments in which students are able to step into a role, such as that of a school teacher or a shop keeper or any other situation that would allow learners to interact in ways that native TL speakers interact in the real world (Coleman & Klapper, 2005; Littlewood, 1996).

b. Task-Based Activities:

Much like an immersive experience, activity design can facilitate language acquisition (Anthony Brown, 2009; Willis & Willis, 2007). When students participate in well-structured activities, students improve their language skills, allowing them to

accomplish more in the TL. Effective activities such as task-based activities (TBA) can provide appropriate structure to expand students' skills. TBA are activities composed of multiple tasks. Researchers define tasks as “[activities] in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve, there is a relationship to the real-world, and ... there is an objective that can be assessed in terms of an outcome” (Skehan, 1998, as cited by Huang, 2010, p. 32). According to Skehan (1998, as cited by Nunan, 2004), tasks have five characteristics: first, meaning is primary. Second, learners are not to recite memorized phrases created by others; they need to create their own meaningful output (Long, 1996; Swain, 2005). Third, tasks must have a connection to the real-world. Fourth, completion of a task must be a priority. And fifth, assessment of the task is accomplished by looking at the outcomes of the task. Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro and Mandell (2001) provide a series of characteristics similar to Skehan's. One major difference is the inclusion that teachers must guide participants through a series of predetermined steps which lead to a communicative goal, meaning tasks should be organized in steps leading to the tasks' completion (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Language instructors assign tasks to slowly expand upon the students' language skills until the students are able to perform tasks that they would not have been able to accomplish without the structure of a TBA. Task design is key. The purpose of each activity needs to be made clear to students, as does a specific time limit to accomplish each step of a task (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). It is important that each portion of the activity require meaningful exchange of information between students. Students must have a reason for seeking information from their partners (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001).

Effectively designed TBA allow students to accomplish tasks with minimal dependence on the instructor. “Task-based instruction is learner-centered in that successful completion of a task is only possible as a result of student-to student interaction” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 76). TBA force students to use the TL to communicate. Savignon (1983, as cited by Lee and Van Patten 2003) states that, “those students who [have] been given the opportunity to use their linguistic knowledge for real communication [are] able to speak [the TL]. The others [are] not” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 50). Students are able to expand their language skills once tasks are broken into manageable sections. Use of TBA provides opportunities for students to see that they are able to break down large tasks and accomplish them. The goal of communicative language teaching is, “to teach students to express themselves, understand others, and to request clarification or express lack of comprehension to others all in [the TL]” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 62). Teachers using TBA provide opportunities for students to interact in the TL in real-world situations, which achieves the goal of communicative teaching.

In my own teaching with TBA, I have observed students accomplish tasks that are above their language level. For example, when students were presented with a topic that related to university studies, I set a goal that students would be able to converse about their university class schedules. At that point in the course, students had just learned how to describe objects. On the first day of with this new topic, I told the students that by the end of the day they would be able to interview another classmate and identify what time, where, and which classes he or she was taking. The students expressed their concern about accomplishing this task as they had only been in the class for approximately five weeks.

The first task required students to identify college courses offered at their university. The second task was to identify the courses they were taking and to write them down in a schedule. The students had been exposed to Spanish question words previously, but in order to assure that students would be able to complete the task, question models were provided. Students then found a classmate and began to ask questions about their class schedules. The questions and answers were simple; nevertheless students were able to accomplish the task. I observed how TBA facilitated student interaction in the TL. My students were able to accomplish a real-world task having only mastered basic descriptive skills in the TL.

c. Student-Centered Activities:

To facilitate language acquisition, it is important that teachers place the focus on topics that interest students, which they know about and want to talk about. This is part of a student-centered classroom (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). By contrast, teachers who use a teacher-centered approach view instruction as passing information and skills to their students. In a teacher-centered classroom, students are “receptive vessels” (Lee & VanPatten, 2001, p. 6), their role, “is to watch, listen, write down, and understand” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandel, 2001, p. 7). Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell (2001) relate this to Reddy’s “conduit metaphor” which, “implies that knowledge can be transmitted from one person to another like a platter of food being passed at the dinner table” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 6). The burden of learning is placed on the teacher and how well the teacher can explain the information (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandel, 2001).

In contrast to a teacher-centered classroom is a student-centered classroom. In student-centered classrooms, the responsibility of acquiring language belongs to the students. The instructor provides an environment of support and opportunities that aid in language acquisition. “Students [should] use all of the resources at their disposal, both internal and external, to create and express meaning” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001, p. 8). This relates to instructors’ responsibilities as defined by current SLA researchers: facilitating and planning student learning. It is the teacher who designs the coursework but the students who do it (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Littlewood, 1996; Sung, 2010).

Sung (2010) states that implementing student-centered activities produces positive reactions from students. Students believe that activities focused on them are fun. According to Sung (2010), student-centered activities provide opportunities for students to express their individual personalities, promoting real-world communication. Utilization of student-centered activities hence promotes TL use and acquisition.

In a study by Lee (2000, as cited by Lee and VanPatten, 2001), it was observed that student-centered classroom activities engaged the entire class. Lee compared teacher-led discussions and activities to student-led discussions and activities that took place in small groups. Students who participated in student-led discussion and group work were able to, “[recall] almost twice as many ideas as did those who participated in the [teacher-led] discussion. The finding was true immediately after the learners did the discussion or activity and one week later” (Lee & VanPatten, 2003, p. 58). Lee concluded that teacher-centered activities allowed only the students called upon to participate, leaving the majority of the students without practice. However, students in student-centered

classrooms not only use the TL but have higher retention rates of the material covered in class.

III. Method:

As indicated above, there are numerous benefits provided by TL use, implementation of TBA, and a student-centered classroom. This study therefore examines how teachers' perceptions of foreign language teaching match their practice in the classroom, and if their perceptions and practices are in accord with current SLA research. The research questions addressed are: 1) What do teachers believe about TL use and how do they apply what they believe in their classrooms? 2) What do teachers believe about activity design, and how do they apply their beliefs about activity design in everyday classroom activities? and 3) What do teachers believe about student-centered activities and how do they apply their beliefs about student-centered activities in their classrooms? This study was conducted at a large university in Utah. The following is a report based on six in-class observations and a series of four in-person interviews of two female language teachers; one who taught Chinese and the other who taught Spanish. The observations were conducted in classrooms and followed by interviews outside the classroom. The Chinese observations were conducted in two classes—levels one and two—and were taught by the same teacher. The Spanish observations were carried out in a level one class. Both teachers were asked the same set of questions, topics covered in the interviews were teaching materials, teacher and students roles in the classroom, communicative language teaching, and activities in the classroom (For a list of the questions see Appendix A); the teachers were encouraged to expand on their answers as they saw fit. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Bartels (2005) mentions that observations are effective in

determining how teachers apply their knowledge about teaching in their classrooms. Bartels emphasizes the importance of interviews, which allow teachers to explain why they do what they do, providing the interviewer with explicit information about beliefs and attitudes towards specific concepts. The goal of this study is to compare perceptions and practices of the communicative approach, hence these two data collection techniques were considered the best approach for attaining the desired information.

IV. Results:

After the interviews, the instructors' stated beliefs were compared with their teaching approaches. Both instructors articulated what they believe about TL use, TBA, and student-centered activities. However, one of the teachers supplied definitions that did not match how the concepts were applied in her classroom.

a. Target Language:

Both instructors were asked how they used the TL in the classroom. The Chinese teacher explained that it is very important that the TL be used in the classroom. Using the TL achieves what she has declared as an aspect of her teaching philosophy, “[helping] students achieve their communicative [competencies]; the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).” She continued, “depending on [students'] current levels, my goal is to help students to reach $i + 1$, to help students achieve the next level of language learning.” The Chinese teacher believed that using the TL will develop the students' TL abilities.

From the observations it was determined that the TL was used in the Chinese classrooms 60% to 70% of the time in the first-year class; the language was used in student-to-student and teacher-to-student conversations. In the level two class, the TL was

used 95% of the time, which exceeds the 90% recommendation from ACTFL (2010). The interactions in the level two class consisted mostly of student-to-student interactions; the activities the students participated in fostered the use of the TL. The use of the TL in the Chinese classes reflected the belief of the teacher. The teacher, when speaking about student-centered activities, mentioned that a student-centered classroom includes using the TL as frequently as possible.

The Spanish instructor, when asked about TL use, responded that using the TL is requisite if one is to acquire a second language. The Spanish instructor emphasized the importance of the TL several times during the interview. When talking about classroom roles, she mentioned that it is the responsibility of teachers to create opportunities for students to use the TL. However, the observations of the Spanish classroom demonstrated that what happened in the Spanish classroom did not match the teacher's responses.

The Spanish instructor used the TL 85% to 90% of the time with all students, nevertheless when interacting with each other, the students did not use the TL with the same frequency (the percentages of language use were generated from the classroom observations). From the observations it was estimated that student-to-student interactions occurred 15% to 20% of the time in the TL. According to the interview, the Spanish teacher believed that the TL was being used appropriately and frequently by all students. However, while the teacher used the TL with high frequency, the students did not.

One of the reasons that students may not have used the TL in class is due to the lack of comprehensible input. The teacher did many things to be understood, yet not everything she did falls under the umbrella of best practices (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001). The instructor frequently used Total Physical Response (TPR), and

scaffolded output – often the scaffolding was in English – yet students appeared unable to negotiate meaning. Scaffolding is “providing temporary contextual supports for meaning, including modeling, visuals, and hands-on experiences” (O’Malley & Pierce, 1996, p. 28). When employing difficult lexical variations, the teacher only simplified output when interacting with individual students. When addressing the entire class, the instructor spoke as if she were speaking to more experienced TL users. Often the instructor spoke faster than the students were able to process. Whether the teacher was aware of her output is unclear; there were several instances when the teacher said something, then sighed when realizing what she said was not understood. When the teacher noticed that what she had said was not understood, she rephrased and repeated what was said, employing the mentioned characteristics of comprehensible input (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, and Mandell, 2001). The teacher did this only when a misunderstanding was noticed, normally the teacher addressed the students as advanced TL users.

The Spanish teacher believed that the TL was being used by all students in the classroom. It was observed that as the teacher moved throughout the room, the TL followed; when the teacher was close to a particular set of students, those students frequently used the TL. As the teacher got farther away, the amount of TL used by those students began to decrease. Because of this phenomenon, it is possible that the instructor believed that all the students were using the TL, contributing to her belief that the frequency of TL use was high.

However, the Spanish teacher was not altogether unaware that the students were unable to negotiate meaning. In her interview the Spanish teacher spoke about motivation, linking TL use with motivation levels of students. The teacher stated that students, when

able to operate in the TL, are more motivated to study the TL. It is when they come to a foreign language classroom and cannot negotiate meaning that students become frustrated. It is with the lower-motivated students that the instructor stated, “maybe it is the target language [that prevents students from being motivated], maybe I have to say it slower and it seems like you have to repeat it and do more.” The teacher recognized what she could do to improve student motivation; however, she did not connect these practices with providing comprehensible input for the whole class, nor did she provide opportunities for them to practice and to use the TL in a meaningful way.

Both teachers valued using the TL with high frequency in the classroom, and both teachers used the TL in the classroom with high frequency. The difference is that the Chinese instructor used the language that students could negotiate and provided opportunities for students to interact in the TL with each other. The Spanish teacher on the other hand provided some scaffolding, but mainly when she noticed that the students were unable to understand her. Students in the Spanish classroom were not surrounded by comprehensible input, which if properly used would allow students to acquire the language more effectively (ACTFL, 2010; Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Bateman, 2008; Brown, 2009; Lee & Van Patten, 2003).

b. Task Based Activities:

Both teachers were asked about activity design, specifically TBA. The Spanish teacher was able to describe what makes a TBA and even gave examples of how teachers could structure TBA. She described the importance of taking the final communicative goal and breaking it down into steps that facilitate that goal’s completion. During the observations, the Spanish instructor used TBA. The activity was centered on a worksheet.

Students used demonstrative adjectives to label vocabulary terms and identify their location on the worksheet. The activity was divided into two steps. In the first step, students wrote the vocabulary terms wherever they wanted on the worksheet. In the second step, the students asked each other questions using prepositional phrases and demonstrative adjectives; their goal was to create a worksheet identical to their partner's based on the questions and answers. The teacher modeled the second step with a teaching assistant, the students then followed the model. The teacher made the activity successful in regards to the day's objectives, but the students appeared to struggle between step one and step two. It appeared that while the tasks were equal in their degree of difficulty, they did not build on each other. Students could not complete the second step without having completed the first; however, doing the worksheet did not seem to help much with the conversations that students were asked to have. In fact, students began to memorize the question and answer forms that allowed them to complete the required work. While the teacher believed this activity to be task-based, according to her own description of TBA, the activity cannot be classified as such. The two steps were only slightly related.

Moreover, it was noted that there was no communicative objective to this activity. The students were not interacting in a meaningful way; their goal was to complete an assignment. The activities' goals that were implicitly conveyed to students were strictly grammatical. The teacher may have had a communicative goal, but it was not made explicit to the students. Because students want to know why they are doing the things they are asked to do, teachers needs to provide that information. Students must know how to apply what they are learning in real-world contexts (Brown, 2009). Students need to know

the goals for an activity to know when they have successfully accomplished what is being asked (Willis & Willis, 2007).

When asked about TBA, the Chinese teacher stated that these activities are a key element of communicative language teaching. The teacher then mentioned an article written by Sung (2010) entitled *Promoting Communicative Language Learning through Communicative Task* and indicated that her goals matched those stated in the article; “[her] goals for the communicative task include developing human relations through the exchange of information, thoughts and feelings, and completing an action” (Sung, 2010, p. 705). Furthermore, “Activities are what learners are expected to do with the input for the task. Three characteristics are emphasized for activities in a communicative task. First, the activities must be authentic in terms of reflecting real-world tasks. Second, the activities should stimulate learners to apply newly acquired linguistic knowledge to real communication. Finally, the activities are designed to help develop the accuracy and fluency of learners’ target language” (Sung, 2010, p. 706).

In the Chinese classrooms, TBA were frequently used. The teacher gave the students in the second-year class an article to read. The students then formed groups and began to read aloud in the TL. In the same groups, students discussed the content and how it related to their everyday lives; their goal was to discuss their views on vegetarianism. They expressed opinions, and had the opportunity to defend their individual beliefs based on content from the article and personal opinions. In the third observation, the students’ focus was on introducing significant others to their family. The teacher taught a new set of vocabulary that would aid in the students’ success of the cumulative goal. Students were then asked to write a story using the new vocabulary. After having written the stories,

students were asked to role play what they had created in front of the class. The students were able to choose how to address this situation, and using new material, created authentic stories that were shared with the class through role play.

c. Student Centered Classroom:

When asked about their role in the classroom, both teachers stated that teachers need to be facilitators of learning, architects who design activities with students doing the work, which follows closely with what SLA researchers have said (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Littlewood, 1996; Sung, 2010). However, the application of this idea was different for both teachers. The Chinese teacher achieved a student-centered classroom, but the Spanish teacher, believing her focus was on the students, appeared to have done most of the work.

When the TL was used, as mentioned above, it was observed that the Chinese teacher focused language use and classroom activities on students' everyday lives. Students were not given many constraints on their choice of topics; activity guidelines were made clear and students were allowed to create meaning according to their own interests. The Spanish class on the other hand had many constraints; the Spanish teacher gave the students specific objectives that were to be met through each activity. The conversations and the interactions did not allow students to create their own meaningful output or develop their own ideas. The Spanish teacher was specifically asked about the activities used. She said that the course was designed by a different person, and, when that person designed the course, the only directive had been to follow the textbook. In order for the teacher to meet pre-assigned benchmarks, activities that she did not fully agree with were used.

In both classes, the cumulative goals of each activity were not made explicit, yet in conversing with the teachers it became clear that they had goals for each activity. The Chinese teacher mentioned to the students how the activities they were doing were applicable to real-world situations, but did not convey a specific goal for the activities in the classroom. The Spanish teacher knew what she wanted the students to accomplish, but failed to express any real-world application of the materials covered in class. The goals of the Spanish teacher were however expressed in her interview, along with ways in which the students would be able to use what they had practiced in real-world situations. The teacher had goals, but those goals were not made known to the students.

A student-centered class will foster student-to-student interactions. In the Chinese class, the students were actively participating in meaningful conversations for a large portion of class time. The Spanish class spent almost the same amount of time in different activities; however the language was not used for meaningful purposes. Activities in the Chinese classroom focused on students' personal interest; as most of the students are young, single adults in Utah topics such as dating, careers, marriage, family, school, and even religion dominated conversational themes as decided upon by the students. In the Spanish classroom, activities were focused on practicing new vocabulary and grammatical concepts. Students were given limited opportunities to create meaningful output that they would use in real-world contexts.

Activities observed in the Spanish classroom were designed to practice specific grammatical concepts that were being studied. There was limited freedom to create meaningful output. While students were not required to memorize scripts, they were nevertheless required to employ specific forms to achieve success in each activity, which

caused several students to memorize and recite one or two question and answer forms. Katz and Watzinger-Tharp mention that, “the focus on form approach attempts to create ideal conditions for grammar learning by drawing students’ attention to a linguistic form *in a real communicative context*” (Katz & Watzinger-Tharp, 2009, p.8). This statement accurately reflects what the Spanish teacher believed. The teacher said, “I really like [the students] practicing the grammar in the activities and not necessarily the grammar principle. I want them to practice the grammar not focus on the grammar. I want them to use the concept in the activity without the grammar looking over them the whole time.” The activities used in the classroom, however, reflected a focus on grammar approach. These activities did not permit the students to create meaningful output.

In a student-centered classroom, grammar instruction is not the focus but a byproduct. Katz and Watzinger-Tharp (2009) claim:

Students who engage in communication invariably experience moments when they need a particular form or construction to express their message. The teachable moment arises whenever a student realizes the gap between his or her communicative need and his or her limited linguistic repertoire. It is at the ‘ah ha’ moment that a linguistic form becomes cognitively salient (p. 8).

Grammar is not the focus, but when the students notice a gap between what they are able to do and what they need or want to do, teachers are there to support students by offering the required grammatical instruction. Student-centered courses are not designed around grammatical principles; they are designed around communicative activities that focus on students. This is what was observed in the Chinese classroom; students were allowed to choose their topics and the teacher then constructed communicative activities around what

the students had chosen. When the need for help arose, the teacher was there to correct and help the students. The Chinese teacher did not focus on grammatical structure; the focus was on student participation in activities. The teacher was there as a resource and a facilitator to help students succeed (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001; Katz & Watzinger-Tharp, 2009).

V. Discussion:

It has been shown that although teachers believe they are using communicative practices, their teaching practices may not match their beliefs. The ability and willingness to apply what one knows about SLA play a critical role in the way classes are conducted. Teachers need to evaluate their practices to determine if the activities and practices used are meaningful to students, and that the teachers' beliefs are accurately portrayed. The ultimate goal is that teachers apply theory to practice, as they foster in students the ability to speak the language with confidence (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001)..

The observed teachers both used their TL in the classroom; both stated that it was important for SLA. However the Chinese teacher used the language in effective ways. The teacher used the TL in a manner that required her students to listen in order to obtain a message. According to SLA researchers, using the TL for meaning-bearing exchanges is essential to facilitate language acquisition (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandell, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The Chinese teacher also constructed activities that fostered student-to-student communication. Student use of the TL is another important factor in SLA (Swain & Lapkin, 1995).

While the Spanish teacher also used the target language, she used it at a level that was beyond her students. Students were not able to negotiate meaning from what the

teacher said. The teacher failed to use the suggestions provided by Hatch (1983, as cited by Lee & VanPatten, 2003) to simplify what she said. Using advanced-level TL provided too much linguistic complexity for the students (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). Students could not focus solely on the meaning of the message, but instead were required to focus on the form and the message that was being conveyed to them. This counters what the Spanish teacher said when speaking about grammar. The teacher said she wanted the students to be able to focus on the meaning of the language and not have the grammar, “looking over them the whole time.” Inadvertently, the Spanish teacher caused her students to focus on the form due to her use of more advanced language. In the Chinese classroom, the TL was used according to the beliefs of the Chinese teacher. In the Spanish classroom, the teacher believes the language is being used appropriately, but in reality the language is not used with the frequency or quality the Spanish teacher believes necessary for language acquisition.

When comparing the activities used by the teachers, it was observed that both used TBA. Both teachers recognized the advantages of using TBA but both teachers deviated from what researchers have emphasized regarding TBA. Neither teacher established connections with the classroom goals and real-world applications of what they were practicing. The Chinese teacher told the students how they could apply the current activity in the real-world but failed to express the goal for each activity. The Spanish teacher in the classroom did not establish any goals, nor did she mention any applicable situations where students would be able to use what they were practicing. SLA researchers have stated the importance of conveying goals to students (Brown, 2009). Making goals known to

students provides benchmarks against which students can assess their own progress (Willis & Willis, 2007). Neither teacher provided any goals.

SLA researchers have also stipulated that TBA are designed with predetermined steps that lead to the cumulative goal (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro, & Mandell, 2001). In other words, tasks build upon each other. The Chinese teacher's tasks built upon each other. The students were first given an article which was read in small groups. The students then had the opportunity to discuss and express their opinions, during which the students participated in a meaningful exchange. The Chinese teacher's practice in this situation matched what she believed.

The Spanish teacher, however, did not apply her beliefs to her practice. The TBA that the Spanish teacher used had two tasks, which did not build upon each other. There was limited meaningful exchange of information. The teacher modeled the activity with a teaching assistant and then the students copied and memorized what they had been shown, thereby not creating output but reciting memorized phrases.

In the observed student-centered activities there was a large disparity between the two classrooms. The Chinese teacher allowed students to choose the topics they wanted to converse about. The activities that the Chinese teacher used were focused on the chosen topics which follows what SLA researchers have said about student-centered activities (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). On the other hand, the Spanish teacher, who mentioned the desire to have students practice language use without being concerned with the grammar, used activities that focused on grammar principles. The Spanish teacher stated that according to her superiors she was required to meet certain benchmarks regarding grammar. Whether or not meeting those benchmarks determined which activities the

Spanish teacher used is not clear. What is clear is that in the Spanish class students were focusing on form and not on the meaning.

VI. Conclusion:

Addressing the first research question, how do perceptions match practice, it was observed that teachers may not teach according to their beliefs. The Chinese teacher was more aware of what was happening in her classroom. The aspects of CA that were important to her were observed and they matched her stated beliefs. The Spanish teacher believed she was effectively implementing what she believed. The observations of her class revealed that in fact she was not effectively doing what she believed. For example, she believed the TL was being used by all students, when in reality not all students were using the TL in meaningful ways. The Spanish teacher also believed that she was using TBA effectively. However, the TBA that the teacher had her students accomplish were not in accord with her own description of what TBA should be like. The same pattern is seen with student-centered activities: the Chinese teacher focused the activities on what the students wanted to talk about, while the Spanish teacher focused on grammatical principles.

The answer to the first question is therefore inconclusive. Some teachers may be more aware of what happens in the classroom than other teachers. This study is however limited in that only two teachers were observed. To derive any conclusions about perceptions and practices would require that more teachers were observed and interviewed. Moving on to the second question, do perceptions and practices match current SLA theory, through this study it was observed that they do. Perceptions of teachers matched current SLA theory. During the interviews both teachers made

references to theories they believed essential in the classroom. However the application of those principles varies according to teacher as previously discussed.

The third question, what do teachers believe about student-centered activities and how do they apply their beliefs about student-centered activities in their classrooms, is also inconclusive. Both instructors recognized the importance of student-centered activities. The Chinese teacher created activities that focused on the students' real-life situations. The Spanish teacher expressed a desire to do the same, but she was not in control of the course she taught. She was required to cover specific material with a specific timeframe. The first part of this question can be answered; both teachers recognized the importance of student-centered activities. Nevertheless, due to course constraints and the inability of the Spanish teacher to use activities she preferred, it is not possible to conclude whether the Spanish teacher would have used student-centered activities. As a result, it is not possible to make a conclusion about how teacher use student-centered activities.

Teaching languages is a world profession, and teachers worldwide have the same goals, wanting their students to use languages in an effective manner (Holliday, 2005). Therefore it is important that teachers implement practices that develop students' language proficiency. To that end, teachers need to become aware of their teaching practices. Being aware of their practices, in turn, aids teachers' application of theory to practice; improving language instruction, and fostering in students the ability to communicate in real-world situations.

Storytelling in a Foreign Language Classroom

Introduction

An earlier version of this paper was written for Professor Schroeder in the Linguistics 6900 course. I first wrote this paper after a class in which we discussed multiple aspects of culture, including the phenomenon of oral traditions. I became fascinated with the idea of using stories as a means of instruction. This paper started as a report on oral traditions. Through extensive editing and rewriting, it has become an analysis of storytelling in a foreign language classroom. I conclude this paper stating how I would incorporate stories into my classroom.

Over the course of writing this paper I have learned two important lessons; one about teaching and the other about writing a paper. In regards to teaching, I realized that I am the one who chooses how to implement teaching strategies in my classroom, which means I do not have to follow steps set forth by others. During my studies as an MSLT student, I have been introduced to many teaching strategies, some of which I have disregarded because of one or two things I do not agree with. In writing this paper, I came to recognize that I can pick and choose what I like from a variety of teaching strategies to create something that I believe is effective.

What I learned about writing papers is that sometimes I just have to start over with a blank sheet of paper. When I was in high school, I took a photography class in which the teacher would frequently tell us that we could not turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. I originally started this paper off on the wrong foot and in place of starting over, I tried to create a masterpiece. It was not until I started over with a blank piece of paper that I was able to write something that I am pleased to add to my portfolio.

Storytelling in a Foreign Language Classroom

I. Introduction:

As a child, I was often entertained by stories. When I went to my grandparents' house, I frequently would listen to old records that contained the stories my mother listened to while growing up. As I got older, I never lost my passion for a good story. However, the stories I was told served different purposes. Through some stories, I learned about my ancestors and the hardships and trials they faced along with how they overcame those challenges. Some stories were used for mere entertainment such as the stories about the crazy things my father did as a child. My favorite stories, however, are stories that were used to teach me something. For example, my father and grandfather are avid fishermen who have endeavored to teach me all they know about fishing, and they teach me through stories. Fishing stories usually begin with being told about the fish that got away and ending with a lesson on which knot should have been used and the appropriate way to tie it.

My family, however, is not the only group of people to use stories for more than entertainment. In fact narratives are present in all cultures and are the most studied literary genre (Spicer-Escalante, 2012). Throughout the world, many cultural groups have relied on stories, commonly referred to as oral traditions, to preserve their identity (Čvorovi, 2009), teach their children (Ishengoma, 2005; Thao, 1970, 2006), and to interpret the world around them (Einhorn, 2000). As a language teacher, I wish to follow the examples set by cultural groups and incorporate stories into my language teaching. In this paper, I will discuss the benefits of using stories for language teaching as well as methods used to

incorporate stories into the classroom. I conclude this paper describing how I plan to incorporate storytelling in my classroom.

II. Stories in the Classroom:

Storytelling is a powerful teaching tool that has been used for centuries (Tsou, Wang & Tzeng, 2006). According to Isbell (2002), storytelling encourages the listeners to get involved with what they are hearing; many times listeners will even retell the story. This would lead one to conclude that storytelling fosters storytelling. Once students become active storytellers, their oral proficiency as well as their attitude toward the language class improves (Tsou, 2005). Because of the potential that stories have to improve language acquisition, it is important to investigate how stories have been implemented in classrooms. It is important to note that storytelling has a variety of definitions, with little consistency throughout the research literature (Roney, 2009). For the purposes of this paper, storytelling refers to stories shared orally. Within this definition, I include personal narratives as a form of storytelling.

Narratives have many uses in the classroom. For example Roberts and Cook (2009) argue that narratives should be used in the classroom as they are more authentic than many activities provided within textbooks. They claim that narratives are frequently used throughout authentic discourse, specific reference is made to job interviews, but they emphasize that narratives are frequently used in a variety of situations. They assert that, “narrative telling is a fundamental human activity which is essential for creating and maintaining a sense of ourselves and our communities” (Roberts & Cook, 2009, p. 635). Using narratives in a classroom allows students to express themselves the way one would outside of a classroom. Narrative use therefore facilitates authentic language use.

Van den Branden (2006, as cited in Nicholas, Rossiter & Abbott, 2001) adds that, “stories like other tasks, ‘invite the learner to act primarily as a language user and not as a language learner’” (p. 252). Nevertheless, according to participants in a study conducted by Nicholas, Rossiter and Abbott (2001), “telling and listening to personal stories provided opportunities [...] for enhanced language learning” (pp. 263-264). Stories transform students into language users. However, Nicholas, Rossiter and Abbott (2001) claim that in order for stories to be used effectively in a classroom, students must first be instructed on how to structure a story.

Sauvé (2002) claims that interactions between interlocutors are occasions in which people share their stories. “One person starts and the other takes the cue and adds a story of her own. You laugh, commiserate, share concerns, reflect on decisions, and in so doing you come to know one another” (p. 89). Telling stories switches the focus from learning a language to sharing personal experiences, which, as previously stated, converts students into language users. However, when students share personal stories caution must be taken not to trivialize what is being shared (Sauvé, 2002).

One way in which students may share stories without putting themselves in threatening situations is to create stories similar to the way Rowe (2011) creates stories with her students. Rowe’s students begin the semester with a blank poster, upon which students attach a picture of themselves. As students learn how to describe themselves they add their descriptions to their poster. As the course progresses, students add more information to their poster until, by the end of the semester, students have filled their poster with information about their family, friends and educational/occupational goals. At the end of the class students share their stories with each other, using their poster as a

guide for what they share. This type of project allows students to slowly develop a story, which, in my opinion, can help prevent students from encountering threatening situations.

III. Storytelling in My Classroom:

The preceding has been a description of the usefulness of storytelling in the classroom. The following describes two teaching methodologies that I will combine to incorporate storytelling into my classroom. Each of the teaching methods will be described along with changes that I will incorporate before implementing them into my classroom. I believe the changes I make will improve storytelling in my classroom, and make it a valuable tool for language learning. The first method that I will describe is the PACE teaching method.

IV. PACE:

The first method I adapt and incorporate into my storytelling is the PACE teaching method. The PACE teaching method is intriguing because it requires that students work with authentic literature and stories from which they acquire a language (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002a; 2010). Authentic texts are texts “produced *by* members of a language and culture group *for* members of the same language and culture group” (Galloway, 1988 as cited in Shrum and Glisan, 2010, p. 85). The following is a brief description of a PACE lesson. Following the description I will highlight the changes I will make to PACE activities.

PACE activities are carried out in four steps: presentation, attention, co-construction, and extension activities (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002a and b, 2010; Groeneveld, 2011). The presentation step is subdivided into two parts: pre-reading activities and the presentation of the story. Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002b) say that a,

“[teacher] needs to set the stage for the storytelling” (p. 281). To prepare students for storytelling, pre-reading activities need to take place. Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002a, 2002b, 2010) emphasize that when teachers present stories to students, they need to be comprehensible; preparing students before the story is presented aids in creating a comprehensible story.

The second part of the presentation step is telling the story. Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002a, 2002b) emphasize that the focus of the story be on its meaning. In some cases, this means that teachers need to edit the story. For example, in place of using future, present, and past tense in a story, it might be more beneficial to use just the present tense (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002a). To ensure that students understand the story, it is suggested that comprehension be checked throughout the storytelling process; comprehension checks can be simple thumbs-up or thumbs-down questions (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b). It may even be necessary for teachers to retell the story to ensure that students have comprehended its meaning. Meaning is essential. As Celce-Murcia (1985) claims “one of the best times for [the students] to attend to form is after comprehension has been achieved and in conjunction with their production of meaningful discourse” (p. 301). This is why meaning is crucial, for it is after establishing meaning that students should focus on grammar (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002a).

The second step in a PACE lesson is to call attention to a specific grammatical concept (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b, 2010; Groeneveld, 2011). It is in this step that a shift from meaning to grammar is made. In this step, teachers call students’ attention to grammatical structures being studied. The attention step can easily be accomplished. Teachers present to students example sentences from the story that have grammatical

structures to be studied clearly marked (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b). Although this is a short step in a PACE lesson, it is very important. “The attention phase is a necessary instructional detour from the main stream of meaningful language in order to call attention to some salient parts or linguistic elements” (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002, p. 283). Once students’ attention is called to specific grammatical structures, students can begin to infer grammar rules. It is important to note that PACE lessons work only with general grammar rules; if there are exceptions to any rule, PACE lessons are not effective in addressing those exceptions (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b).

The third step of a PACE lesson is co-construction (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b, 2010; Groeneveld, 2011). In the co-construction step, students examine the parts of the story that their attention has been called to. The purpose of this step is for students to discover how the language works. Working together, students examine the function of the language and work together to infer grammatical rules. It is important however that teachers be available to guide students, and to assure that students infer accurate grammatical rules. “By paying close attention to the learners’ contributions during the co-construction phase, teachers can determine how much assistance is warranted to help the learners attain the grammatical concept” (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b, p. 286). Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002b) also suggest that students be grouped together during the co-construction step to allow all class members the opportunity to infer grammatical rules, this prevents one student from consistently shouting out answers.

The final step in PACE lessons is extension activities (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002b, 2010; Groeneveld, 2011). The extension activities provide students the opportunities to put together the previous steps and create their own output. Adair-Hauk

and Donato (2002b) state that the possibilities with extension activities are, “endless” (p. 286). The types of activities that students do in this step are left to the discretion of teachers. However, Groeneveld (2011) says that it is important that extension activities be connected to the presented story. When teachers link the extension activities to the story, students are inspired to, “use meaningful language based on the content or form exposed in the presentation” (p. 28). Students are able to create output using the presented words and structures.

PACE provides a model that uses stories in place of textbooks, and that the focus of each story be primarily on meaning. The criticism that I have of PACE lessons is that they require that students are forced to use outside materials. Using authentic literature as a means to acquire a language is intriguing, but in my opinion, allowing students to create their own stories, and then using those stories to discover how language works would be more effective. Nicholas, Rossiter and Abbott (2011) claim that, “stories and storytelling in the language classroom can provide the means for learners to find their own voice in their new language, first by listening to others’ stories and then by telling their own” (p. 255). Using stories from authors outside of the classroom exposes students to the target language but takes away the opportunity for students to create and use their own stories to discover how languages work.

I recognize that Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002b) state that there are many things that can be done as extension activities, which includes having students create stories of their own. My argument does not reflect what can be done in the extension activities. I argue that the original story that students use should be one of their own creation. This means students must first be taught how to create a story. One manner in which teachers

can facilitate story creation is by using an abbreviated form of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS).

VI. TPRS:

TPRS, as describe by Ray and Seely (2008), is a teaching method that is focused on the creation of stories. TPRS activities are teacher-led activities. The teachers ask a series of questions about a story that they narrate for their students. TPRS activities are three-step activities. The first step is to establish meaning (Beal, 2011; Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). This is done with pre-reading activities to prepare students for the story to come. The second step is asking a story (Beal, 2011; Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). To ask a story, students must first be prepared for the questions and statements they will be exposed to.

When asking a story, teachers can elicit student output with questions or statements. They may ask questions to which the answers are known or that require the students to guess answers or they may offer a statement of fact (Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). Each type of prompt requires students to respond in a predetermined manner: stating the known answer, guessing an answer, or expressing interest in the new fact. The story is created by using the answers to the questions in this step; essentially teachers structure a story and the students create the details.

The third and final step in a TPRS story is to read a story similar to the one created in the second step; students should translate the story paragraph by paragraph (Beal, 2011; Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). It is here that TPRS has a major flaw, which is the necessity to translate everything (Beal, 2011; Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). Ray and Seely (2008) claim that “teaching methods that establish meaning by gestures or pictures often leave students wondering exactly what the teacher is trying to say. Even though the

teacher gestures the meaning or uses pictures, students often don't understand since the picture or gestures can have multiple interpretations" (p. 21). It is this statement that translation is justified as necessary. Researchers of TPRS also claim that translation should be used specifically in the third step, but also whenever students may not understand the target language (Beal, 2011; Gross, 2007; Ray & Seely, 2008). From personal teaching experiences, I have seen how translation can hinder students' language acquisition. Therefore, due to its requirement to translate everything, TPRS, as described by Beal (2011), Gross (2007), and Ray and Seely (2008), is not a teaching method I will use in my classroom. However, I will use aspects of TPRS in my classroom as will be described.

The final criticism I have with TPRS is that it requires teachers to ask the story from students, TPRS is a teacher-centered approach. However, if students were taught how to ask stories then this would become a student-centered activity. Once students learn how to ask stories from others, there are situations in which this would be effective. For example, asking a story would be useful to guide students in creating a story.

Combining to my criticism of PACE lessons with my criticism of TPRS, I believe that story analyzed should be of the students' own creation. I recognize that it may be difficult for students to create a story with the grammar structure to be studied; therefore, I would use the second step in TPRS to help my students create a story which could be analyzed to help students infer grammar rules. Well planned, a teacher can ask a story that contains the desired grammatical structures. As Ray and Seely (2008) describe TPRS, the teacher is the person in charge of the overall story. Students provide details through their answers to questions that keep the story progressing, but the teacher is in charge. The

combination of PACE and TPRS allows student-created stories to become the medium of language instruction.

The drawback to a teaching method as I have described is that students may not yet be able to create a story in the first few weeks of beginning-level classes. Asher (2006), the originator of TPR, claims that students must have at least three weeks of practice with TPR before students can begin storytelling. In the first few weeks, I plan on creating stories with my students in the same manner that Rowe (2011) does with her students. I will have my students create stories that will serve as an introduction to the target language, and as a way of aiding students to introduce themselves to the class.

VII. Conclusion:

Stories are more than sources of entertainment. As has been described, stories aid in developing a rich language learning environment. Storytelling among students transforms language learners into language users. I believe that by making the mentioned changes to PACE and TPRS, and incorporating those changes into storytelling lessons, that stories will facilitate the creation of a language program that is student-centered. Furthermore, designing a course in which students provide the content for the language course will enrich my teaching and promote their negotiation of meaning.

Just as I am entertained by stories, I believe that students will also be entertained. The students will no longer focus on learning the language and will place more effort into sharing stories. It is my hope that students come to class excited to share their stories with each other, and that as a product of sharing stories students will acquire the target language. I believe that involving students in creating the materials that will be used in

the classroom will invest the students further in their learning. Once students are invested in their education, I believe they will be active participants in their learning.

Progressive Glossing

Introduction

This paper was written for Dr. Thoms in Linguistics 6520. It is a proposed study on incidental vocabulary acquisition, specifically through the use of computer-assisted glosses. In this study I examine current glossing practices, from which I create a new type of computer-assisted gloss which I call progressive glossing. I speculate that using progressive glosses would allow vocabulary to be developed efficiently by reading authentic texts. If the process of teaching vocabulary through reading is perfected, that would mean that students no longer have to use lists for vocabulary acquisition, but can use content in its place.

I chose to include this paper in my portfolio because it was the first paper I wrote of its kind. Previous to this paper, I had been assisted by professors in creating papers of this type. However, this was the first time I was allowed to choose and develop a topic which I wished to study. This was a difficult paper to write as I was specifically worried about the research design and statistical processes that I would propose for this study. I was surprised as I did my research that I was able to glean from others the solutions to my concerns. One important lesson I learned from writing this paper is that I do not have to re-invent the wheel. This means that I do not have to discover new ways in which I should design my experiments. In seeking advice from several of my professors, I was told to find a research paper that asks similar questions to mine and then look at how the researchers designed their experiments and then base my design on what they did. I followed this advice and found a design that I liked. Moreover, upon finding what I was looking for, I was able to design this study. Replication studies, if designed and implemented thoughtfully, have much to contribute to our field.

Progressive Glossing

I. Introduction:

SLA theorists recognize that language learners are “limited capacity processors” (Ballman, Liskin-Gasparro & Mandel, 2001; Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The act of reading in a second language (L2) requires that students simultaneously pay attention to multiple aspects including, but not limited to, vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and comprehension (Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001). Students’ ability to divide their cognitive processes is not innate, rather, it requires training and “[without] special training most humans are able to pay attention to only one thing at a time” (Gettys et al., 2001, p. 92). Therefore, one may ask when providing support for an authentic text, what can instructors do to take advantage of the limited processing power of students?

To answer this question, instructional strategies should be examined such as top-down and bottom-up strategies (Gettys et al., 2001). Instructors who use top-down strategies focus on global tasks and not on the steps required to achieve tasks (Gettys et al., 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Instructors who implement bottom-up strategies look at all of the requirements needed to complete a task and then separate each requirement and teach it individually, building up to the final goal (Gettys et al., 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). When teaching reading, instructors may use a top-down strategy, reading for comprehension (Chun & Plass, 1996), or a bottom-up strategy focusing on structure and vocabulary (Chun, 2001; Chun & Plass, 1996; Gettys et al., 2001). Both strategies are beneficial, but reading to acquire new vocabulary in the L2 in addition to comprehending a text requires that instructors expose students to a balance of top-down and bottom-up strategies given that “neither alone is sufficient” (Chun & Plass, 1996, p. 195). In the

following study proposal, I examine the relationship between cognitive load and incidental vocabulary acquisition. The literature review begins in the following section starting with authentic texts, followed by cognitive load theory. The literature review concludes with current gloss practices.

II. Literature Review:

a. Authentic texts:

Although not agreed upon by all SLA researchers (Badger & MacDonald, 2010; Widdowson, 1998), authentic literature, as defined by Shrum and Glisan (2010) as texts written by native speakers for native speakers of a target language, can be used as a tool for foreign language instruction (Abraham, 2008; Gettys, Imhof, & Kautz, 2001; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Kern, 2003; Louchy, 2010; Nagata, 1999; Taylor, 2006; Yoshii, 2006). Furthermore, some researchers advocate that authentic literature is essential for students to acquire, “linguistic skills” (Liu & Lin, 2011, p. 373). As access to authentic material has become easier with the aid of the internet, implementation of authentic materials for language learning has increased (Liu & Lin, 2011). Authentic literature exposes students to new ideas through the content of what they read and also gives students the opportunity to acquire more vocabulary (Liu & Lin, 2011). As stated by Kern (2003), “given that language learners in academic settings have limited opportunities to use the language, it is incumbent on educators to provide learners with the broadest and deepest exposure to the language that we can with the limited time we have available” (p. 42). Authentic literature provides an avenue through which students may be exposed to a wider variety of language. The difficulty with authentic texts is that they are frequently beyond the linguistic level of students (Gettys, Imhof & Kautz, 2001; Yun, 2011).

Glossing, however, is a tool that students can use to help make authentic texts comprehensible. According to Gettys, Imhoff and Kautz (2001), “on-line glosses allow instructors to increase students’ exposure to authentic learning materials that are beyond the learners’ linguistic level, thus challenging students to read authentic, unabridged texts. Thus, instructors can use on-line glossing to significantly increase comprehensible input – an important condition of successful L2 acquisition” (p. 91). Using glosses can therefore facilitate the use of authentic texts in the L2 classroom setting. However, there are a variety of gloss types to incorporate when exposing students to an authentic text in an online environment. Therefore, instructors should choose an appropriate gloss type for specific pedagogical goals.

b. Cognitive Load Theory:

Before an analysis of the effect of gloss type can be undertaken, it is important to understand why some glosses are more effective than others. The theory that will be examined to explain this is the cognitive load theory (CLT) (Sweller, 1988). CLT theorists propose that the more cognitive effort one exerts towards acquiring a particular concept, in this case L2 vocabulary, the better the concept will be acquired (Hulstijn, 1992; Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999; Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2004). Each person has a set quantity of attention resources that can be dedicated to tasks (Abraham, 2008; Kuiken & Vedder, 2008; Lee, & VanPatten, 2001). Cognitive loads can be categorized into groups ranging from the cognitive effort required when learning to the required effort when processing and filtering outside distractions (Liu & Lin, 2011; Paas, Renkl & Sweller, 2004; Paas, van Gog, & Sweller, 2010). Because each person has limited processing resources, it is important that instructors use materials and methods that allow students to process the

information effectively. Any task that requires too many or too few cognitive resources is detrimental to student learning (Paas, Renkl & Sweller, 2004). One of the purposes of this proposed study is to provide varying cognitive load to students and observe how that load variation affects incidental vocabulary acquisition. This leads to a discussion of incidental vocabulary acquisition.

c. Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition:

Vocabulary that students use extends beyond the vocabulary that they have been explicitly taught (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996). Some researchers have explained this by saying that students pick up new vocabulary as they are exposed to it (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Liu & Lin, 2011). This is known as incidental vocabulary acquisition. Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996), define incidental vocabulary acquisition as, “the accidental learning of information without the intention of remembering that information” (p. 327). Researchers agree that incidental vocabulary acquisition facilitates lexical development (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Liu, & Lin, 2011; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010).

Pellicer-Sánchez and Schmitt (2010) conducted a study in which students read an authentic text for pleasure. Students were introduced to a novel that contained a series of Ibo words; Ibo is a language that is spoken in Nigeria. The text was chosen because any acquisition of the Ibo words would be due to reading the story; none of the students had previous exposure to the language. The students were given a month to finish the novel after which testing accompanied by interviews was conducted to determine which words had been acquired. As a result of reading for pleasure, students were able to spell, recognize, and recall the target words from the novel. Pellicer-Sánchez and Schmitt

conclude that reading promotes incidental vocabulary acquisition (Pellicer-Sánchez & Schmitt, 2010). Lin and Liu (2011) posit that glossing an authentic text may facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of the text. An authentic text is a text which is, “written to be read by native speakers of the language” (Maxim, 2002, p. 20). The objective of this study is to combine both authentic texts with glosses to investigate incidental vocabulary acquisition.

d. Current Gloss Practices:

The importance of having access to a gloss is shown in Abraham’s (2008) analysis. He conducted a study to identify the effectiveness of glosses with computer-mediated glossing programs. He reviewed eleven studies and discovered that learners who had access to glosses did much better with text comprehension than those without glosses; incidental vocabulary was also reported to be higher. Along with the previous finding, Abraham stated that glosses were not effective for beginning-level students. He posits that novice learners need more than vocabulary glossing, which might have affected the effectiveness of the glosses he tested.

There are a variety of gloss formats, many of which have been studied in an attempt to identify which is the most effective (Acha, 2009; Chun, 2001; Chun, & Plass, 1996; Gettys et al., 2001; Hong, 1997; Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Liu, & Lin, 2011; Louchy, 2010; Nagata, 1996; Peters, 2006; Peters, 2007; Taylor, 2006; Yoshii, 2006; Yun, 2011). In the following I will examine several gloss formats along with studies that have been conducted with each format.

Dictionary or traditional glosses have been studied by many researchers. Hulstijn, Hollander and Greidanus (1996) compared the effectiveness of dictionary glosses against

marginal glosses and no glosses. A marginal gloss is a gloss that provides a definition of a target word in the margin of a text; a dictionary gloss refers to using a dictionary to look up any unknown vocabulary terms. Hollander and Greidanus found that student retention of marginally glossed words was better than dictionary glossed words. Similarly, Lin and Liu (2011) compared computer-mediated glosses with dictionary glosses to see which better facilitated vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension. Lin and Liu concluded that students who had access to a dictionary had to process too much information, as the dictionary provided more information than students required. Students were unable to maintain focus on the text. Therefore, students who used dictionaries had poorer comprehension than those who had access to computer-mediated glosses. Using a dictionary is better than having no gloss at all but dictionaries have been shown to be the least effective in comparison with other glossing methods.

The second type of glosses examined are multiple-choice glosses which offer the reader a set of possible word meanings. Readers must then choose which option best represents the glossed word. Watanabe (1997) concluded that multiple-choice glosses are more effective for vocabulary retention than single-word glosses alone. Hulstijn (1992) discovered that multiple-choice glosses were effective in word retention due to the cognitive load placed on the readers when inferring word meaning. While word retention was higher, Hulstijn noted that if students are not given immediate feedback, then it is possible that students recall the word-meaning they inferred and not the correct meaning. Nagata (1999) conducted a study using multiple-choice glosses with the assistance of a computer. Using a computer allowed the students to receive instant feedback on their

inferences of vocabulary terms. All three researchers concluded that multiple-choice glosses are more effective than single-word glosses for vocabulary retention.

The next type of glosses examined are multi-media glosses, of which a variety has been proposed and tested. Chun and Plass (1996) compared several types of these glosses: text and picture, text and video, or text alone. They concluded that text and picture glosses were the most effective for vocabulary acquisition. The researchers were somewhat surprised at the text and video results as they originally hypothesized that text and video glosses would better facilitate vocabulary acquisition. They offered two explanations for their findings. First, the text and video required that students focus on too many things at once. The second explanation was that, due to the short length of each video, students did not have enough time for the acquisition and retention of vocabulary.

Acha (2008) also used multimedia glosses, specifically pictures, to teach vocabulary younger students. Her results contradict those of Chun and Plass (1996). In her study, students who had access to pictures and text during vocabulary instruction did not perform as well in vocabulary retention as did students with access to direct text translations. However, Acha does mention that multimedia programs may help facilitate vocabulary acquisition by allowing students to learn the words according to their preferred learning style.

The final glosses examined are single-word glosses. Many studies have compared different variations of single-word gloss formats (Gettys et al., 2001; Hong, 1997; Hulstijn, 1992; Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999; Yoshii, 2006; Yun, 2011). Hulstijn (1992), Nagata (1999) and Liu and Lin (2011) concluded that students prefer the single-word glosses over any other gloss format. They also conclude that single-word glosses are the

least effective for vocabulary acquisition and retention, although single-word glosses do promote comprehension of the texts (Hulstijn, 1992; Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999).

Researchers have found that computer-mediated glossing aids in language acquisition. Different glossing types have been studied in an effort to discover which type is the most effective (Abraham, 2008; Acha, 2009; Chun, 2001; Chun, & Plass, 1996; Gettys et al., 2001; Hong, 1997; Liu & Lin, 2011; Louchy, 2010; Nagata, 1996; Peters, 2006; Peters, 2007; Taylor, 2006; Yoshii, 2006; Yun, 2011). It has been observed that glosses requiring cognitive effort from students are more effective in vocabulary acquisition and retention than glosses that provide L1 equivalents (Gettys et al., 2001; Hong, 1997; Hulstijn, 1992; Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999; Yoshii, 2006; Yun, 2011). What is not known about glossing is whether varying the cognitive load of each gloss facilitates vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension.

III. Rationale for this study:

Researchers have claimed that authentic texts provide opportunities for students to acquire more vocabulary (Kern, 2003; Liu & Lin, 2011). The difficulty with using authentic texts is that many of them are beyond the language ability of language learners. For this reason, glosses have been implemented to allow students to work with authentic texts and gain the benefits from using these kinds of texts, such as incidental vocabulary acquisition and the acquisition of linguistic skills (Liu & Lin, 2011). The question that remains to be answered is: Which type of gloss is the most effective? Research has shown that there is a higher probability of retention when students are required to carry a higher cognitive load (Hulstijn, 1992; Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999; Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2004). This potentially means that if students have to use more cognitively demanding

processes to infer the meaning of a vocabulary term, they are more likely to retain that vocabulary. One method of increasing cognitive load is by implementing progressive glosses. Progressive glossing is a form of computer-mediated glossing. Progressive glossing works with the principles of cognitive load (Liu & Lin, 2011; Nagata, 1999) in that students are offered a series of glossing options. Each option in the series progressively requires less cognitive effort for the selected word meaning to be inferred or understood. Thus, according to cognitive load theory, students are allowed to infer vocabulary meaning, which encourages vocabulary retention. Yet if students are not able to infer vocabulary meaning, they are provided more options to infer meaning until they are eventually given a definition of the glossed word, which allows students to maintain focus on the meaning of the text.

Progressive glosses provide an opportunity for students to focus on the meaning of the text and to infer vocabulary meaning. Thus, the questions this study addresses are the following:

1. Does progressive glossing facilitate incidental acquisition of new vocabulary?
2. Does progressive glossing facilitate retention of new vocabulary?

For the purposes of this study, incidental vocabulary acquisition refers to students' ability to infer the correct meaning of the glossed term. Retention refers to students' ability to retain the meaning of the term over a period of time. I hypothesize that progressive glosses will facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition as well as promote comprehension of authentic texts.

IV. Methods:

The participants of this study will be university students in an introductory Spanish literature course. The students' proficiency level is not critical for the results this study, as long as the proficiency level is similar which is expected in an introductory literature course. This study will be carried out in two phases. The first phase will be a vocabulary identification phase. Similar to Liu and Lin's (2011) procedure, ten students from an intermediate-level Spanish literature course will be invited to read the two Spanish fairy tales that will be used in phase two. The ten students who read the fairy tales will be instructed to mark unfamiliar words. Once the students have finished reading, the stories will be collected and a list of words that have been marked by many as unknown will be constructed. From the list of unknown words, the top ten from each story will be selected as the glossed words used in the data collection phase of this study.

Fairy tales were selected due to their repetitive nature. Tatar (2002) points out that one of the characteristics of a fairy tale is repetition, stating that fairy tales repeat key words usually three times. As previous studies have indicated that students experiencing only one occurrence of unfamiliar words are less likely to recall these words for their own use (Chun & Plass, 1996; Nagata, 1999; Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996), repetition is desirable for incidental vocabulary acquisition.

The second phase begins with a new set of thirty students. The new set of thirty students will begin with a pretest. The pretest will be similar to the posttest in that it will contain a vocabulary matching section and comprehension questions about the stories students will be reading. The purpose of the pretest is to eliminate the words that the students already know, thus ensuring that there be no false positives on the post test

(Gettys et al., 2001). Because comprehension and incidental acquisition will be measured, it must be ensured that the students are tested on new information, not on prior knowledge (Gettys et al., 2001; Louchy, 2010; Nagata, 1996).

After the pretest, students will be randomly divided into two groups of fifteen and taken into two different rooms. Following the crossover study format as described by Kuehl (2000), students will read two stories, one with a traditional gloss and the other with a progressive gloss embedded in the texts. Once the students are divided into groups and taken to two different locations, they will be instructed on how to use the glosses available to them. It is necessary that students know how to use the glosses they have at their disposal to eliminate the possibility that the glosses will not be effectively used (Louchy & JoGakuin, 2010; O'Bryan, 2006; O'Bryan, 2008).

The first group of students, group A, will begin with story 1. These students will only have access to traditional pop-up glosses. A pop-up gloss is a gloss that students access by moving the mouse over a given word and clicking on that word; upon clicking students are provided with a direct translation of the unknown word (Liu & Lin, 2011). When students in group A read story 2, the glossing format will be progressive glosses as will be described below. Group B on the other hand will begin story 1 with access to progressive glosses. With story 2, group B will have access to a traditional pop-up gloss. An important aspect of crossover studies is that all treatments are, "administered to an experimental unit for a specific period of time after which another treatment is administered to the same unit. The treatments are successively administered to the unit until it has received all treatments" (Kuehl, 2000, p. 520). Each student who participates in

this study will be exposed to both gloss treatments. Students will also be given a thirty-minute time limit to read each story.

Progressive glosses gradually lessen the cognitive effort required for students to infer word meaning while facilitating the reading of an authentic text. Glossed words will be italicized. The gloss will appear when a student clicks on a selected word. In place of offering only one gloss format (i.e., just a direct translation, or just an audio file), progressive glosses provide multiple gloss formats. The progressive gloss starts with the target word in a different context (i.e., the context will construct the same semantic meaning as in the current text). If the students are able to infer the meaning of the word from the first gloss provided, then they may return to the reading by clicking “return to story.” However, if the students are unable to determine the meaning of the word, they will be given the option of additional glossing. This will be done by clicking a “next” button. The student will then be provided with a picture representation of the word. If students are able to infer meaning from the picture, they may return to the original text. If not, then students may continue with additional glossing. The students will have one more opportunity to infer meaning; this will be a multiple-choice gloss. The students will be presented with the word and then allowed to choose from four different text options. If they select the correct word, they receive a message indicating such and will be returned to the reading. If they choose incorrectly, they will be taken to the final gloss which is a direct translation of the target word (an example of progressive glossing can be seen in Appendix C).

Students will be informed before they begin the readings that they will be required to recreate the story in writing. After a story is read, two tasks will follow immediately.

Students will first be asked to summarize the story they have just read. Along with the re-creation of the story, students will be presented with an unannounced vocabulary post-test. The post-test is the instrument that will be used to measure incidental acquisition of new vocabulary. The quiz will be unannounced because of the study's focus on incidental vocabulary acquisition (Hulstijn, 1992). Peters (2006) found that directing students' attention to an upcoming task caused students to perform better on that given task. Specifically, if students are told before carrying out a reading activity what they will need to do before carrying out a reading activity, students focus on that information during the reading. If students in this study were told before they began the readings that they were going to have a vocabulary test, then the students would pay more attention to the glossed vocabulary. Prior knowledge of a vocabulary quiz would compromise the validity of the results when looking at incidental vocabulary acquisition. To measure vocabulary retention, students will be given a delayed post-test two weeks later. This test will be the same as the post-test taken immediately after the reading. This follows practices established in previous studies (Abraham, 2008; Acha, 2009; Chun & Plass, 1996; Peters, 2007; Yoshii, 2006; Yun 2011).

To fully record student actions, screen recording software, specifically Camtasia², will be used. How students use the provided tools has the potential to directly correlate with student scores on both the immediate and delayed post tests (Lie & Lin, 2011). The recordings will be observed and the different gloss steps annotated to compare with student scores. The story summaries will also be collected and will be reviewed by two

² Camtasia is a program that can be purchased from the following web site:
<http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia-1111.html?gclid=CNOArOXj86wCFQh9hwodQTTWTw>

raters. The raters will be looking for accuracy in the re-creation of the stories. The raters will use the rubric found in Appendix C. The rubric is adopted from O'Malley and Pierce's *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners* (1996, p. 152). Other mechanics of writing will not be examined in this study.

V. Future Implications:

With the results from this study, I plan to identify which gloss type students used with higher frequency. That information will allow me to compare the high frequency gloss used with the post test results and quality of the story summaries. I recognize that progressive glosses are not practical for every teaching situation since they are time-consuming to create. I plan to conduct further investigations to see if the high-frequency glosses used by students are applicable to a wider variety of authentic materials. My goal is to identify the most beneficial type of gloss that adequately challenges learners and does not burden their cognitive load while reading an authentic text in Spanish. This can, in turn, lead to a high probability of incidental vocabulary acquisition and the comprehension of an L2 text.

Looking Forward

After completing the MSLT program I plan to pursue a PhD, for which I will focus on teaching and learning languages. As a Spanish teacher, I have noticed that many of the available materials are not communicative and are limited to certain teaching styles. I am going to create materials that teachers who ascribe to communicative teaching styles can use in their classes.

I am also going to continue to study second language acquisition. I am fascinated by the complexities of language learning. In my professional career, I will develop materials for classroom use. One of my professional goals is to teach future foreign language teachers. I am going to teach them how languages are learned and how this knowledge about language acquisition can be applied to classroom practices. I am going to help future teachers discover and develop their own teaching philosophies. Language teaching is exciting and I want to foster that excitement in future teachers.

Finally, I am going to continue teaching Spanish. My passion for teaching has developed as I have taught Spanish. I do not want to lose the connection I have with the teaching field, especially since Spanish teaching is what first sparked my teaching passion. As well, I wish to stay connected to the teaching field so that I may discover gaps in teaching practices and use those gaps to develop research questions. I specifically wish to teach introductory Spanish classes. It is exhilarating to observe students as they begin to speak Spanish. I am going to stay connected to the teaching field as a way of assuring myself that the research I will be doing is applicable to actual teaching situations.

I have already taken steps towards accomplishing these goals. I have recently been accepted to a PhD program in the University of Iowa, which I will enter in the fall of

2012. The focus of my PhD program is foreign language and ESL education. While attending Iowa I wish study program and course design along with language assessment. After completing my PhD program I will teach courses for future foreign language teachers.

Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

The following is an annotated bibliography that contains the most important articles and books I have read while in the MSLT program. It was difficult to decide which items to include in this bibliography as I read many things that have impacted how I view language education. While I do not entirely agree with what the researchers have said, I believe there is valuable information to be gleaned from each reading. The bibliography is organized thematically, the themes include: activities, classroom, computer-aided language learning, culture, glossing, language learning theories, and students. Each annotation contains the bibliographic references, a brief description of the article or book, and a reaction.

Activities

Adair-Hauck, B., Glisan, E. W., Koda, K., Swender, E. B., & Sandrock, P. (2006). The integrated performance assessment (IPA): Connecting assessment to instruction and learning. *Foreign Language Annals, 39(3)*, 359-382.

Summary:

The authors of this article reviewed a study that was conducted by ACTFL in an effort to improve assessment procedures; this study was a response to a call to reconceptualize language testing. The authors mentioned that far too often educators do not adhere to current research, perhaps because multiple-choice tests are easier to grade. The use of open-ended questions, however, allows stakeholders (e.g., learners, teachers, parents, program coordinators, administrators) to see the effectiveness/usefulness of student learning. IPA assessments are conducted through task-based instruction; each step takes learners through the interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal modes of communication. Keys to this assessment approach are: the students must have a complete picture of what they are going to be doing, students must have examples and models of what is expected of them, students must have a rubric that details what is required to be successful in each task, and quality feedback must be given throughout the assessment. Tasks must also be related to each other and have an important part in the completion of the final cumulative goal.

Reaction:

Creating an assessment from a task-based activity is an interesting approach to assessments. Using activities that students would be accustomed to allows students to demonstrate what they are actually able to do without having to learn a new method to

demonstrate their knowledge. This is also something that could be done as part of an everyday activity which would not create the anxiety that is associated with taking a written test. IPA tests also allow instructors to test students in real-life situations. IPA however, requires a lot of planning to effectively assess what the teachers want to assess. If the instructors are going to assess a certain linguistic skill, then it is important that the activities focus on the desired skill. The authors also called for quality feedback, which takes time. Teachers need to plan time when they can sit down and give quality written feedback.

Elola, I., & Oskoz, A. (2010). Collaborative writing: Fostering language and writing conventions development. *Language Learning & Technology, 14*(3), 51-71.

Summary:

The authors of this study examined the effectiveness of collaborative writing for language learners. Two assignments were given to a group of students. One assignment was completed on their own and the second was completed in a group. The authors discovered that then individuals worked together they were more conscious of their own grammatical errors in the L2. This resulted in constant revisions of their work before and after they submitted it to their partners. Also when students worked together they developed a structure for their paper and did not deviate from that structure. Conversely when students worked alone they used a different writing process altogether, grammatical errors were the last things identified and fixed. The structure of their writing was not as rigid. When working on their own, their work was guided by a thesis statement and not by a predesigned plan. Learners reported liking individual work more than group, as it

offered an opportunity to bring their own voice to the paper. However, learners also recognized that when working with others each individual did have something different contribute to the final product. The authors concluded that while a very useful tool, collaborative writing should not replace individual writing, because both approaches complement each other.

Reaction:

It is interesting to note that students focus on grammar when writing collaboratively. There are advantages and disadvantages to this depending on what communicative goal the instructor has for each assignment. In a communicative classroom I believe this is a good thing because students will be consciously looking for the correct way to express what they choose to say. I believe this promotes gap noticing, and facilitates independent learning; students actively seek out answers to their own questions. Also, writing in groups exposes weaker writers to different writing processes and styles that could improve the skills of weaker writers in the L1 as well as the L2.

Lantolf, J. P. (2009). Dynamic assessment: The dialectic integration of instruction and assessment. *Language Teaching*, 42(3), 355-368.

doi:10.1017/S0261444808005569

Summary:

The author begins with the claim that assessment and instruction are the same process. Along with this, he posits the universal acquisition hypothesis (UAH), which states that there is an order in which learners acquire language naturally. He urges teachers to make sure things are presented at the 'right time' in order for students to fully acquire

what they are being taught. The author states that “effective instruction must precede and indeed lay down the path for development to follow.” Then he presents two forms of dynamic assessment. The interaction form is conducted through predetermined steps for error correction, starting with implicit error correction which gradually become explicit clues until students are able to correct their error. The second type of assessment, the mediated learning experience, enables students and teachers to work together to achieve success in a conversation. Both of these approaches have their benefits, and can happen naturally in a conversation. The author asserts that instructors need to assess what the students will be able to do and not what they can do now. In closing, the author questions which is more important: the test or language acquisition.

Reaction:

The first topic the author introduces is interesting, assessing our students to know what they will be able to do. Is it then more important that we have tests that measure students’ current abilities, or that we measure the probability of success in a real-world context? I believe that measuring the probability of success is important if we expect students to use the language outside of the classroom. But, if by measuring probability of success, we have to question grades, do we grade students on our predictions or their current abilities? I believe there is a disconnect between what the stakeholders want and what using dynamic assessment can provide. Stakeholders want to have the students’ abilities graded now; in contrast, using dynamic assessment helps teachers predict what students will be able to do later. Until stakeholders and instructors agree on what they want to know, assessment practices will never satisfy all interested parties.

Ray, B., & Seely, C. (2008). *Fluency through TPR storytelling: Achieving real language acquisition in school* (5th ed.). Berkeley, CA: Command Performance Language Institute.

Summary:

Ray and Seely begin their book by describing the evolution from Total Physical Response (TPR) to Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). Ray said that TPRS is a combination of Asher's TPR and Krashen's theories of comprehensible input. Ray combines the two concepts together to create TRPS. Ray and Seely then describe the theory behind TPRS lessons. Emphasis is placed on making the class 100% comprehensible, which means that teachers needs to translate almost everything into the native language of the students. The authors then describe the process of a TPRS lesson. First, the teacher must establish meaning of a story, in this step the authors state that translation should be used. The second step is to ask a story. In this step teachers ask a series of questions, all in the target language, to create or recreate a story. Teachers use the answers that students provide to continue to create a story; the authors suggest that teachers use the most creative answers as a way to keep the story interesting and to keep student involved with the story. The final step is reading a story that is similar to the story that was created by the students. The authors finish the book by describing how one could implement a language program using courses taught using TPRS.

Reaction:

The authors of this text describe how TPRS should be used. I do not agree with the authors that this is the only teaching methodology that should be used in a classroom, nor do I agree with translating in a classroom. Nevertheless parts of the TPRS methodology

can be used separately as a supplementary activity. The second step of TRPS, asking a story, would be effective on its own. When asking a story students are working together to create a unique story. In this type of activity students are responsible for their learning, the teacher is the facilitator of the activity. The downside to this text is that the authors frequently made references to other materials which they produce, stating that in order for one to learn how to use TPRS effectively one must purchase these other materials.

Willis, D., & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Summary:

The book is divided into three sections. In the first two sections the authors describe task-based instruction and provide many examples of how task-based instruction can be implemented in the classroom. In the final section, the authors address commonly asked questions about task-based instruction. The authors begin their discussion on task-based teaching by identifying what makes a good task. They caution that any activity that is preempted by any mention of grammar becomes an activity that focuses on grammar. To prevent grammar focus, teachers must use tasks that elicit natural discussions. Each activity must also have an engaging introduction that grabs the students' attention. The authors finish their explanation of task sequence stating that after a task is completed teachers should focus on form, meaning after the students have done the activity teachers should teach about grammar. The authors stated that a focus on form at the end of the task helps students to reflect upon and make sense of the language they have just used. The authors dedicate the remainder of the book to examples of different tasks. The tasks

demonstrate various ways in which teachers can manipulate texts in order to engage students in conversations.

Reaction:

The authors provide a detailed overview of task-based teaching. The examples are effective in demonstrating the variety of activities that can be done with tasks. The authors also compiled an extensive list of examples to illustrate the effectiveness of task-based teaching. The downside to the example tasks provided is that each task is accompanied by a required text. The authors emphasize that task-based activities should be used with texts. The second downside is the suggestion that students focus on form at the conclusion of each task. I believe that students should be given a chance to ask questions, but that does not require that the class focus on form.

Sykes, J. M., Oskoz, A., & Thorne, S. L. (2008). Web 2.0, Synthetic Immersive

Environments, and Mobile Resources for Language Education. *CALICO Journal*, 25(3), 528-546.

Summary:

The authors begin by demonstrating the importance of web-based communication in everyday life. The authors then discuss several WEB 2.0 tools and their usefulness in foreign language classrooms. The first tool discussed is wiki pages. The authors state that in order to adopt this wiki pages, the instructor must agree that L2 learning can take place during collaborative projects. The authors also recognize that learning to use this type of tool is difficult and time consuming. That said, the benefits outweigh the negatives. Students can collaboratively create documents that are of higher quality than if they had

worked alone. There are features that allow both instructors and students to view the changes to each document and see who made those changes. As students track changes they are helping each other acquire a language. The second tool discussed is blogs. When students write and participate in a blog, they are writing to a wide audience. Many people read and comment on blogs, making students feel more like authors and empowering them to say what they want others to read. The authors finish by discussing the implications of virtual environments on L2 acquisition. The opportunities to use the language are limitless in a virtual world. Students can be placed in situations where they are able to acquire communicative competencies that would be difficult to acquire in a classroom.

Reaction:

The potential for technology use in a language classroom are limitless. Willing educators are able to achieve more through wise implementation of technology. The skills that blogs and wikis require of students are skills that can be used in more than the classroom setting. As students work together on these projects they help each other produce something that on their own they would not be able to produce. Technology offers tools that would otherwise be inaccessible in a classroom. Students can enter virtual environments, some of which are designed to mimic actual locations in the world, and gain real-life experiences. The downside to internet use is the inability to know with whom students are interacting, therefore instructors must take precautions to protect students. However, the ability to enter a digital environment and acquire language is astounding. No longer does it require thousands of dollars in travel to gain authentic experiences with a second language; authentic experiences can now be had in a classroom

Todhunter, S. (2007). Instructional conversations in a high school Spanish class. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(4), 604-621. doi: 10.1111/j.1944-9720.2007.tb02883.x

Summary:

Interpersonal communication is achieved by practicing communication with others. This type of communication is characterized by its spontaneity, and the various topics that students choose to speak about. It is virtually impossible to practice spontaneous conversations in a classroom as communicative conversations are planned and tailored to practice specific concepts; classroom conversations will never truly mirror what happens in the real-world. The author of this article studied the use of real-world conversations in foreign language teaching, the conversations were labeled “instructional conversations.” Instructional conversations were originally developed for language minority students and generally focused on literary texts. Instructional conversations are useful because to participate in them, students need to link complex thinking skills with linguistic abilities. Instructional conversations are different than other types of conversations because they are dependent upon the responses of participants to keep the conversations going. The teacher must not use the IRE (initiation-response-evaluation) approach when using these conversations; in place of evaluation teachers must ask follow up questions. The author states that these are high-risk conversations as students are expected to maintain the conversation throughout its entirety. Teachers must be taught how to conduct these conversations in order for students to benefit from them.

Reaction:

Instructional conversations need to be used more; they promote proficiency, real-world communication, and motivation. This is the type of communication that the students

want to do and it is the type of conversation I, as an instructor, want my students to take part in. In instructional conversations students share power as they ask each other real questions. Some communicative activities, although intended to be student-centered, are designed to have students practice what instructors want them to practice, they occasionally lack authenticity. Teachers need to be taught to notice when an instructional conversation is starting. Once an instructional conversation has begun, teachers should be willing to postpone their lesson plan and let their students communicate. The author of the study admits that these conversations are difficult to maintain, but I believe that once students are taught how to be an effective interlocutor these conversation will become more frequent.

Wehner, A. K., Gump, A. W., & Downey, S. (2011). The effects of Second Life on the motivation of undergraduate students learning a foreign language. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24, 277-289. doi:10.1080/09588221.2010.551757

Summary:

The authors examined if using a virtual world is effective for motivating learners of a second language. The authors mentioned that, despite all the things that an instructor is able to provide, motivation must come from the student. A virtual world, Second Life, was introduced as a medium that has the potential to facilitate language acquisition by providing opportunities to use the language in an authentic manner. The authors state that virtual worlds provide a way for students to explore different countries, interact with native speakers and do so without leaving the classroom. In this study, two groups of students were tested to see if motivation improved with virtual worlds. All students were

in the same course taught by the same teacher. When the course was over, motivation tests were conducted. It was seen that there was a positive, while not statistically so, improvement with students who participated in the online environment. The authors acknowledge that this may come from the anonymity offered by creating an online character that acts as a mask for students trying to produce language. In closing the authors state that virtual environments are a tool that, if/when used appropriately by instructors, offers many opportunities to foreign language learners.

Reaction:

This is an interesting concept. There is so much that students could be exposed to by using online environments like the one mentioned in this study. The ability to virtually take students to places where they could practice authentic language is very exciting. However, the concerns I have would be the quality of the input that our students would be receiving. If the input is not comprehensible to the students then it is going to be a frustrating experience. Also I would be concerned about distractions that can be found in the virtual environments. Left on their own, what would students be able accomplish? Major concerns aside, I believe that carefully structured task-based activities could be accomplished in these types of environments. Virtual environments are an avenue which I will further research.

Classroom

Ballman, T. L., Liskin-Gasparro, J. E., & Mandell, P. B. (2001). *The communicative classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Summary:

The authors focus on developing teaching skills that will help students become more proficient in a second language. They cite a survey that states that students desire to develop oral proficiency. The authors suggest that teachers ask their students why they want to learn the language. When a foreign language becomes more than a school subject, it becomes a way to connect with the people who speak the language. To begin the discussion, the authors first discuss what communication is. They state that communication is divided into three parts, presentational communication, interpersonal communication, and interpretational communication. The authors describe how different activities and assessments should work in a communicative classroom. They assert that grammar should not be the focus of classroom activities, the focus should be on accomplishing communicative goals. The grammar that is taught should be in “support of communicative activities” (p. 34). The authors stress that activity construction is essential for language acquisition. If the students are presented with activities that are sequenced appropriately, students will learn the grammar by completing the activities. Several sample activities are provided such as information-gap activities, task-based activities and interview activities; each activity type allows the teacher to focus on language production. One of the final sections is on language assessment. The authors state that teachers should assess the same way they teach.

Reaction:

Students want to speak the language being studied. I believe that teachers need to be cautious that they do not focus explicitly on one of the four language skills; speaking a language is important but being proficient in a language entails more than speaking. The authors present an approach to teaching a language class that I was not familiar with, thus challenging the way I had previously taught my classes. Until I read this book, I had taught grammar and then had the students do activities that I thought would have them practice what they had been taught. As I have experimented with the approach to teaching presented in this book, I agree that grammar in support of activities allows students to focus on activities that aid them in the real-world. Real-world activities aid students when they are using the language outside of the classroom.

Lee, J., & Van Patten, B. (2003). *Making communicative language teaching happen* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Summary:

The authors begin their book by describing the how languages have traditionally been taught. The Atlas complex, a teaching approach in which instructors are responsible for relaying information to students, was introduced as a common model used in many educational fields. A version of the Atlas complex exists today in language teaching, it is known as the audiolingual method. The audiolingual method is based on memorization and drills; students in this type of classroom are no more than passive learners repeating what they have heard or memorized. After presenting the audiolingual method, the authors change their focus to the communicative method. Within the authors' discussion of the

communicative method, they describe a variety of topics, two of which will be described briefly. First, classroom roles of students and teachers are described as the teacher being a facilitator of learning, an architect who designs classroom activities so students are able to accomplish what is asked of them. Students are the active agents in the classroom.

Classroom focus should be on what students will do and not what the teacher will tell them. The authors also describe the importance of comprehensible input, stating that it is through exposure to comprehensible input that students acquire a language. The authors then describe activities which implement the principles of a communicative classroom.

Reaction:

The authors begin by characterizing the nature of many foreign language programs: students memorize and repeat phrases and vocabulary. The authors then describe a different way for foreign language classes to operate. At first I was skeptical about a communicative classroom approach, specifically with the idea of exposing students to the target language almost exclusively. I believed that students need to have some instruction in their native language. After experimenting with comprehensible input and with some of the activities the authors provided, I realized that students are capable of doing more than I originally thought feasible. Task-based activities are the perfect medium for introducing new concepts and expanding on what students are able to do in the target language. The authors create a resource to aid teachers who wish to teach languages in a communicative way.

Levine, G. S. (2003). Student and instructor beliefs and attitudes about target language use, first language use, and anxiety: Report of a questionnaire study. *The Modern Language Journal*, 87(3), 334-364. doi: 10.1111/1540-4781.00194

Summary:

The author reports that many studies support the use of the target language in the classroom. The author explored the research literature looking for why, and who uses the native language in the classroom. Several articles and studies are mentioned as having shown positive results when using the L1 in a foreign language classroom. In this study the author examines student anxiety towards target language, as used by the instructor and students. The author tells foreign language teachers to recognize that their classrooms are not monolingualistic, but they are multilingualistic environments. The author suggests that there are important functions that the L1 can provide in a classroom. L1 use should not be marked as inappropriate in the classroom; doing so increases students' language anxiety. The final finding is the positive correlation between the amount of target language used in the classroom and the anxiety levels of each student. The author concludes that excessive use of the target language will increase the anxiety of the students, which in turn will inhibit their acquisition of the target language.

Reaction:

This study contradicts other theories on exclusive use of the target language (TL) in the classroom. The author mentions that students become anxious at the idea of having to use the TL, but other researchers have said using the TL is motivating. The conclusion is potentially intriguing, but the author does not supply the necessary data to draw this conclusion. The idea that the students' anxiety would increase at the thought of not being

able to use their L1 seems unfounded. If the students know the expectations and benefits of using the TL, then I believe that the motivation to use the language is a natural consequence. I would agree that there are occasions in which the L1 should be used in the classroom, but not to the extent this author suggests it should be. I would like to conduct further research on this topic.

Thoms, J., Liao, J., & Szustak, A. (2005). The use of L1 in an L2 on-line chat activity.

Canadian Modern Language Review, 62, 161-182

Summary:

The authors begin by discussing Vygotsky's theories of social interaction in relation to acquiring a second language. The authors also discuss research which was conducted to see what tools students use when learning a language. From this research foundation the authors conducted a study during which students had to instruct each other through chat sessions in order to complete a series of tasks. Throughout the study the authors recorded several types of L1 use. First students used their L1 to keep the task moving along. Before the task was started students structured the work they were going to be doing in their L1. The second use of the L1 was to define vocabulary that the students did not know. Thirdly the L1 was used when students focused on grammatical forms. The final observation was that when students participated in off-task behaviors it was done in their L1. In conclusion the authors suggest that the L1 is not counterproductive to L2 acquisition. In fact there are times when students are able to accomplish tasks they would not have been able to accomplish if they did not have access to their L1.

Reaction:

This changes the idea of L1 use in the classroom. This is by no means a reason for teachers to abandon L2 instruction, but the authors explain why students use their L1 in the classroom. Instructors should recognize the occasional need for students to use the L1 when working on tasks. Cognitively challenging tasks are better achieved by students when they are able to use their L1 as a tool. In place of penalizing students for L1 use, instructors should recognize the reasons for which the students have used their L1. Instructors can use that information to reflect on how to plan future lessons. L1 use can be used as a tool by both instructors and students and should not be viewed entirely negative in a foreign language class.

Computer-Aided Language Learning

Acha, J. (2009). The effectiveness of multimedia programmes in children's vocabulary learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(1), 23-31.
doi:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2007.008.x

Summary:

The author of this study investigates the effectiveness of multimedia presentations on vocabulary acquisition. The three types of media examined are plain text, a picture without text and a picture with a text. The author explains that texts, accompanied by pictures, facilitate vocabulary acquisition because in place of trying to create meaning for the text, meaning is already given with the picture. The author states that using pictures may be ineffective because of the cognitive load required by students when they process texts with pictures. However, she concedes that this approach may still prove adequate for

children learning a foreign language. The author conducted a study in which the students were exposed to each of the three vocabulary presentations. The results confirm what the author believed: pictures accompanied with text were not effective for vocabulary retention. According to the author, the results of this study indicate that the best way to present new vocabulary is by using text alone. The author concludes stating that using both pictures and text is a cognitively demanding process. Pictures with text may be an effective teaching approach in some situations; however, it was not effective for vocabulary retention.

Reaction:

The author focused this study on younger children who are still developing their cognitive processes. It would be interesting to conduct this study with a group of older language learners who have more established cognitive processes. One of the reasons the author conducted this study was to look at the effectiveness of language learning computer programs. The author concluded that even though this method of vocabulary instruction is not the most effective, yet computer programs that offer this type of instruction are still being used. People in the world want to learn languages but, due to a lack of space in foreign language classrooms, they resort to ineffectual programs to achieve their desires. It is important that instructors in the classroom use effective methods of instruction, otherwise they are not any better than ineffectual language programs.

Arnold, N., & Ducate, L., (Eds.) . (2011). *Present and future promises of CALL: From theory and research to new directions in language teaching* (2nd ed.). San Marcos, Texas: CALICO.

Summary:

The editors present a collection of articles about Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The editors begin by describing how computers were first used in language learning primarily as testing or tutoring tools. As computer capabilities have improved so have the possibilities of CALL. The editors then present articles that explain how CALL is a useful tool pedagogically, stating that CALL provides opportunities for students to be exposed to authentic input and to produce output. The contributors also examine popular language teaching approaches and explain how CALL can facilitate those approaches. After the editors establish the utility of CALL from a variety perspectives, they introduce various articles describing specific uses of CALL in the classroom. One of the mentioned uses is the ability to facilitate reading in a second language (L2). The author of one of the articles states that CALL provides access to authentic texts and a means of comprehending those authentic texts that normally are too difficult for students. When CALL tools are used, students are able not only to read authentic texts with high comprehension rates, but also to acquire new vocabulary. The book ends with an article describing the future of CALL. The contributor of the final article claims, that while teachers and students have a desire to use technology in the classroom, teachers need to be better trained so they can take advantage of CALL tools available to them.

Reaction:

The editors compiled research about technology use in foreign languages classrooms. Previously I had not had positive experiences with technology; I saw it as a method of circumventing language teachers. From the research provided in this volume, I see how CALL can be positively implemented. There are two advantages that particularly appeal to me. First, the internet facilitates students' access to more authentic texts, and with the help of computer programs those texts are no longer too advanced for language learners. Students can click on unfamiliar words to get their definitions, which allows students to focus on the overall meaning of the text. Secondly, I am intrigued by the non-academic use of technology. People have learned languages because of the social interactions that they have online, specifically in computer games. I am astounded at students' academic accomplishments when they are not focused on academic work. When classroom activities are patterned after normal student activities, I believe language acquisition is facilitated.

Hampel, R. (2006). Rethinking task design for the digital age: A framework for language teaching and learning in synchronous online environment. *ReCALL*, 18(1), 105-121. doi:10.1017/S0958344006000711

Summary:

In the beginning of the article the author states that online technology brings limitless opportunities to the types of task-based activities that students may accomplish. Tasks need to be reanalyzed to identify if it is possible to transfer the everyday classroom task-based assignments to the digital environment. A study was conducted at an open

(online) university, where students did not have the opportunity to meet with their classmates or their instructors. Instructors were given a set of tasks that needed to be accomplished through the online learning atmosphere. How the instructors used the activities was up to them. The classroom procedures were also up to the discretion of the instructors. The author examined if teachers could effectively apply task-based activities to an online environment. In conclusion the author found that not all tasks can appropriately be altered to fit an online setting. Students lose a lot of information when they cannot interact directly with a person. If a task is to be adapted to an online environment, instructors need to tailor aspects of each task to appropriately fit an online environment.

Reaction:

One of the reasons that CALL has become popular is because of the lack of classroom space to adequately accommodate each student wanting to learn a language. While a computer will never allow an individual to completely acquire communicative competence, appropriately designed tasks will allow more students to have opportunities to be successful when learning a language. Online tasks help extend the classroom beyond the wall of any building and the benefits are becoming more apparent for the implementation of online learning systems. Instructors should begin to implement technology in their classrooms as doing so has the potential to create independent learners who interact in authentic environments with higher frequency. However, when designing activities instructors need to take into consideration where the activity will take place, online or in a classroom.

Culture

DeCapua, A., & Wintergerst, A. C. (2004). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom*.

Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Summary:

This book serves as a guide to individuals not aware of cultural differences. The main focus is the classroom setting but the principles discussed apply both in and outside of the classroom setting. Tangible aspects of culture are first discussed, starting with monochronic and polychronic time and continuing to the concepts of face. After discussing visible characteristics of culture, the authors begin a discussion of culture shock, describing it as process and analyzing its causes as well as the factors that aid in the production and continuance of the individuals cultural shock. The next section deals with the complicated nature of nonverbal communication. Understanding the differences and similarities in nonverbal actions is crucial in enabling effective communication across a variety of cultures. The authors also discuss social roles and pragmatics, claiming that miscommunication occurs because words and phrases may have different meanings for different people. One important aspect of this text is the practice section that accompanies each chapter and includes a variety of activities for each topic covered.

Reaction:

This is a very useful text for teachers who wish to be more aware of cultural aspects of education. Many of the skills and insights associated with culture learning seem to be the same for language learning. The layout of this text is very practical, enabling the reader to take the principles discussed and easily apply them to a classroom. The inclusion of practice with each chapter helps to make the application of these concepts accessible.

Language and culture are so intertwined that it is impossible to truly separate them. As teachers of foreign languages it is important that we understand that when we are teaching languages we are teaching culture. This idea is recognized within the five C's of foreign language teaching.

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

Summary:

Moran uses his personal experiences to inform language teachers on how culture should be taught. Moran explains that there are four “knowings” that should be addressed when teaching culture; knowing why, knowing how, knowing about, and knowing oneself. With these four ideas, Moran makes the argument throughout the book that learning culture is a process by which people learn about themselves. As students learn about their own culture, they begin to develop empathy for and understand other cultures. A large portion of the book is dedicated to defining the characteristics of cultures. Moran explains that culture can be defined by examining products, practices, perspectives, communities and persons. Moran then dedicates a chapter to each of the cultural characteristics, emphasizing the links between culture and language. Moran calls language a window to the culture: when one learns a language one also learns about the culture of those who speak the language. The book contains appendices full of activities that can be tailored to any level. The activities allow students to reflect on other cultures as much as on their own.

Reaction:

I really liked the portion on language and culture. I agree that students can only learn so much about a culture from books; experiencing the culture is the best way to fully understand it. In order for students to be able to experience a new culture they need to have second language skills. Moran uses the metaphor of an iceberg to describe culture, meaning that most of what is seen is only a fraction of what exists below the surface. I like this metaphor and believe that it is the teachers' responsibility to make students aware that there is more to culture than what is seen. Students need to be taught how to investigate and make appropriate inferences about different cultures.

Regan, T.G., & Osborn, T. A. (2002). *The foreign language educator in society: Toward a critical pedagogy*. New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Summary:

Reagan and Osborn address a variety of topics, beginning with reflective practices. Regan and Osborn state that in order for teachers to become effective decision-makers for their classes, they must develop reflective practices. There are three types of reflection: reflection-for-practice (reflection during planning), reflection-in-practice (reflection during classroom activities) and reflection-of-practice (reflection after the activity). The authors discuss the importance of recognizing that all languages are valid; specific reference is made to three languages, Esperanto, Sign Language, and Ebonics, that have not always been recognized as valid languages. The authors then describe constructionist ideas of language learning, dealing specifically with radical and social constructions. The difference between the two is that radical construction is based on the way the students

perceive the world. Learning/construction is placed completely on the students' shoulders. Social construction is based on groups helping each other to construct their understanding of the world. The authors conclude by discussing the ethics of language teaching. Some places use language as a way to control others, to keep them in the socioeconomic or political stations that they currently occupy. They also discuss how individuals' rights are violated when they are forced to use a foreign language to conduct their lives.

Reaction:

Language carries with it rights; it identifies who an individual is and in some cases what one is capable of becoming. As globalization becomes more prevalent in everyday society it is important that teachers develop skills that address the needs of all their students. The ability to critically reflect upon one's own practice is something that teachers must develop or foreign language education will stop improving. Knowing how languages are learned and how to reflect upon one's own teaching, are essential for teachers to develop to ensure that students are receiving the best education possible.

Glossing

Gettys, S., Imhof, L. A., & Kautz, J. O. (2001). Computer-assisted reading: The effect of glossing format on comprehension and vocabulary retention. *Foreign Language Annals*, 34(2), 91-99. doi:10.1111/j.1944-9720.2001.tb02815.x

Summary:

The authors of this article investigate whether sentence-level equivalency glosses are more effective than dictionary glosses. A sentence-level equivalency gloss is a word that is glossed according to the context of the sentence. A dictionary translation is a word

glossed out of context thereby allowing students the opportunity to infer word meaning. The glosses are compared to top-down and bottom-up approaches. Glosses that allow students to focus on the global meaning of a text are top-down glosses, these are sentence-level equivalency glosses. Glosses which require student to infer vocabulary meaning are bottom-up glosses, which are the dictionary glosses. Students place the majority of their effort on a bottom-up approach; students desire to understand each individual word. After conducting a study the authors conclude that providing a dictionary gloss is more effective than sentence-level equivalents. The authors also note that, while less effective, students prefer to have the sentence-level equivalents as it provides them with a sense of being able to read an authentic text.

Reaction:

Glossing is more than defining words. Glossing facilitates students' negotiation of a text. According to the authors the decision should not be whether to gloss but how to gloss. If instructors want to focus on text meaning they should offer a sentence-level equivalency gloss. If instructors want to focus on vocabulary acquisition then a dictionary gloss should be implemented. I believe that both glossing methods are effective tools that should be implemented in the classroom. One concept mentioned by the authors, which I believe to be essential, is depth of processing. I believe that activities addressing the four language skills should require more than lower-level thinking skills. According to the depth of processing theory, when students rely on higher-level thought processes, such as vocabulary inferring and multiple-choice glosses, they retain and recall concepts with greater accuracy.

Liu, T-C., & Lin, P-H. (2011). What comes with technological convenience? Exploring the behaviors and performances of learning with computer-mediated dictionaries. *Computers in Human Behavior, 27*, 373-383. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2010.08.016.

Summary:

The authors of this article designed a study based on cognitive load theory (CLT). The questions the authors pose are centered on the cognitive load placed on readers using different glosses. Each gloss presented variations of the same words. The authors looked at the time students spent with a text; claiming that if students spend more time processing a text then they are able to retain more. The authors also tested how dictionary type affects incidental vocabulary acquisition. The final question posed by the authors is how dictionary type affects comprehension. The three dictionary types tested were pop-up dictionaries, type-in dictionaries, and traditional book dictionaries. The results of the study show that the pop-up dictionary was by far the most popular. Students accessed this dictionary significantly more than the other dictionaries. The least effective was the book dictionary, students spent more time with the book dictionary but the majority of their time was spent navigating through all the words. No difference was noted in the incidental vocabulary acquisition.

Reaction:

The type of gloss used not only affects where student attention is directed, but also the attention resources needed for comprehension of a text. These authors identify three cognitive process types that require resources. The first is extraneous processes which are the loads placed on a learner by unnecessary words and information. If learners are looking through a dictionary they are needlessly expending valuable resources. The

second are intrinsic processes, which are the processes required to remember an item while doing something else. The third are germane processes, which are the cognitive loads used for conscious learning. Each student has a fixed amount of resources; these resources must be properly managed. Instructors need to have a pedagogical reason for a way in which they gloss a text. I believe each glossing approach is valuable when used appropriately; but each approach must match the goals of the course if it is going to be effective.

Louchy, J. P., Tuzi, F.,(2010). Comparing foreign language learners' use of online glossing programs. *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments*, 1(4), 31-51. doi:10.4018/jvple.2010100103

Summary:

The authors have set a high standard for internet tools. They looked for existing tools that allow students to access authentic texts not requiring simplification. The authors state that in order for students to focus on the context of a text, vocabulary cannot be a hindrance. The authors mention a threshold vocabulary limit to access most readings of nearly 9,000 words. The authors recognize the difficulty in selecting a text and in glossing the right words, as there is not enough time to do all of this for each class. For this reason the authors examined several web tools that facilitate both glossing and comprehension quizzes. In this study the authors also compare two gloss types, a pop-up gloss, and a clickable gloss. The authors conclude that when students have a gloss it needs to be easily accessible or students will not use it. The authors also report that when students had

glossing options that would take them away from the reading, the students would become too distracted and were unable to remain focused on the reading task assigned.

Reaction:

Students need to have access to appropriate resources. Web tools that can create glosses for individual readings have a lot of potential. Web tools that create glosses for students selected texts put students in charge of choosing texts that interest them. If students are allowed to choose the articles they are going to read for themselves, the articles will have more meaning for them, thus increasing motivation for the students. I think that being able to enter any selected text into a program and have that program create an effective gloss is a lot to ask for from a computer program. The authors were able to learn valuable information, but they were not able to find a web program that created the desired glosses. I believe that there is no substitute for instructors preparing material for their students.

Language Learning Theories

Lightbown, P.M., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Summary:

In this book the authors combine research from a variety of language learning topics to create an overview of language learning research. The authors begin by discussing how children learn their first language. Theories such as behaviorism, the innatist perspective, and interactionist perspectives are described. The authors then use the theories of first language learning and combine them with theories of second language

learning. The authors also mention that characteristics of the learner and the environment in which one learns a language affect language learning. In the third chapter characteristics of language learners are examined in greater detail. Along with the characteristics of the learners, group dynamics are mentioned as a factor influencing student perceptions and desires to learn a foreign language. The authors use chapters four through six to discuss what happens in the classroom. Topics such as vocabulary acquisition, asking questions, wait time after a question, and context of language learning are presented. In the final chapter the authors examine several popular language learning notions. They neither confirm nor deny the notions, but rather point out the truths and the falsehood found in each notion.

Reaction:

The authors of this book presented a variety of language learning theories, such as the critical age hypothesis, and teaching approaches, such as innatist and behaviorist. Many of these theories I have heard mentioned by colleagues and in research papers. This is however, the first book I have encountered with references to these language learning theories. The authors of this book covered a variety of language learning topics, for which they provided references to further research. One of the topics the authors explored were the characteristics of language learners. Other researchers have addressed learners characteristics but not with the degree of detail that these authors have provided. This book is an excellent starting point for one who is interested in conducting research on how languages are learned.

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

Summary:

This resource for foreign language educators begins with a brief history of foreign language education. Following the discussion of several prominent theories and their impact, the authors then provide information on lesson and curriculum planning. The idea of backwards planning is introduced along with bottom-up and top-down approaches to instruction. After explaining the benefits of those approaches the authors discuss various methodologies that facilitate language instruction. They highlight the shift to standards-based education and how it has affected foreign language classrooms, now that proficiency in the target language is the new goal of instruction. Ideas on how to plan lessons so students can achieve these standards are introduced and discussed. The rest of the book offers teaching suggestions to aid in developing student proficiency. Supported by current research, this text is a guide for creating a classroom that promotes language acquisition. Each chapter has a practice section containing case studies which illustrate how principles are put into practice. Along with the case studies are comprehension questions that promote further understanding of the teaching methodologies presented.

Reaction:

This book is a great resource that provides information to teachers who wish to expand their current knowledge and skills. When looking for new ideas one can refer to the content of this book for inspiration. The authors cover a variety of topics supporting each with current research. What I especially like about the book is the bibliography that accompanies each chapter, which makes it possible to take a deeper look at the research of

each method. The case studies, with the accompanying questions, have been instrumental in clarifying the application of different concepts for me.

Students

Hoang Oanh, D. T. (2007). Meeting students' needs in two EAP programmes in Vietnam and New Zealand. *Regional Language Centre*, 38(3), 324-349.

doi:10.1177/0033688207085850

Summary:

The author describes needs assessment as having three parts similar to a triangle. One part is the perceived needs of the instructor, another part is the perceived needs of the students, and the final part is the educational institution's needs. The author explains that it is imperative that all these needs be taken in consideration when a course is designed. The author acknowledges that one set of needs can place constraints on another set, but, when each part works together, all parts benefit. The author focuses specifically on student needs. As he presents assessment types that are considered to be of high value in assessing student needs. Hoang Oanh claims that the most important assessment is self-assessment: students who were trained to recognize their own needs reported that they became more independent in their learning. Students taught to self-assess when given the opportunity to choose elective courses made their choices based on self-identified needs and not on superfluous motivators. Two universities were compared, one in New Zealand and one in Vietnam. The New Zealand program used a needs assessment program to guide their instruction. The Vietnamese program was not using this system, but is moving slowly

towards one similar. The Vietnamese instructors have seen benefits of needs assessment and would like to offer those benefits to their students.

Reaction:

Needs assessment is systematic and must be repeated throughout a course to be effective. It is not possible to administer one test and from that one tool know what the students need. Students must constantly be assessed to judge the needs they have. Instructors' must find ways to stay vigilant when it comes to the needs of students. Instructors responsibilities include designing courses to meet the needs of their students. Nevertheless, learning to self-evaluate is an essential skill for independent learners. This is similar to gap noticing, students need to be taught how to notice gaps in their education. Once students know how to identify their needs, they will increase their autonomy.

Macintyre, P. D. (2007). Willingness to communicate in the second language:

Understanding the decision to speak as volitional process. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(4), 564-576. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00623.x

Summary:

The author of this article examines factors that can hinder or encourage student use of the target language in a classroom. The factors explored make up what the author calls willingness to communicate (WTC). The author began with trait specific and state specific anxiety. Trait specific is defined as the long-term or typical pattern of the learners' behavior while state specific refers to different situations that learners find themselves in that cause anxiety to be at higher levels. The author recognizes that the amount of anxiety fluctuates as students learn to cope and manage their anxiety. The author states that it is

important to recognize that today one students may not function well because of their anxiety but tomorrow they may do better. Of particular interest is what happens once a student decides to communicate. The author uses a metaphor to illustrate the student's attempt at communication. When students produce language it is like crossing the Rubicon, it is an action that they cannot take back. Students are met with varying responses to their language production; one common and damaging response is when the teachers respond in the L1. When this happens students receive the that their language is not good enough.

Reaction:

It is daunting to choose to use a foreign language, and once a student has made the choice they need to be met with a positive response. It is the responsibility of the instructor to use the foreign language with every student with every answer. It is also the responsibility of the instructor to guide the students across the Rubicon by ensuring that instructions facilitate and promote language use. While not the main focus of the article the authors mention the negative effect a native language response can have on a student. When instructors choose to respond in the native language they are telling the student what they believe about their language skills.

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Appendix A

- 1) Why are you in this profession? How would you define your teaching philosophy?
- 2) What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
- 3) What is the role of the students in the classroom?
- 4) What strategies do you use in your classroom to achieve these roles?
- 5) What materials do you use in your classroom?
- 6) What is communicative teaching?
- 7) Do the materials you use accommodate communicative teaching? What do you do to tailor your text and other materials to your teaching method?
- 8) What aspects of teaching are important to you?
- 9) What is task based instruction?
- 10) How do you implement task based instruction into your classroom?
- 11) How do you use the target language in your classroom?
- 12) How do you design your classroom activities to keep them student centered?
- 13) What do you do to assure the activities will allow the students to use the language?

Appendix B

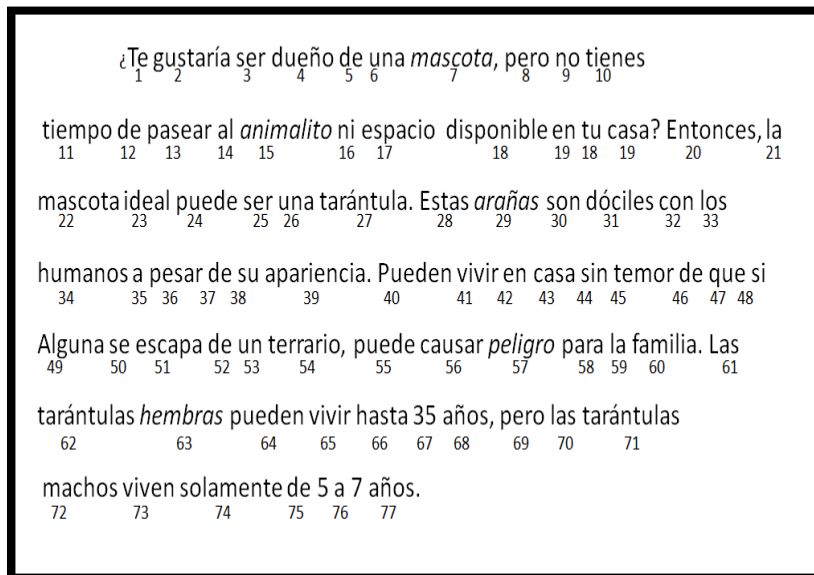


Figure 4. Progressive glossing step 1. The text will appear to students on the screen like this. Italicized words are linked to progressive glosses. For example, the reader might not know the words ‘mascota’ and click on it. This would open up a pop-up gloss as shown in

Figure 5.

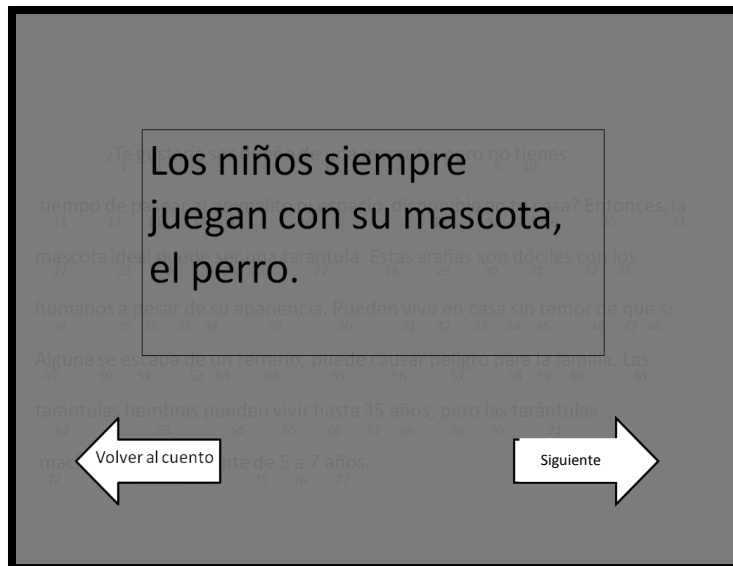


Figure 5. Progressive glossing step 2. The first gloss format presents the target word in another context. The word has the same semantic meaning. From here students may click “Próximo” (next) to continue with the gloss or “Volver al cuento” (return to story) to continue reading the story. If the reader clicks on “Próximo” they will be presented with Figure 6.

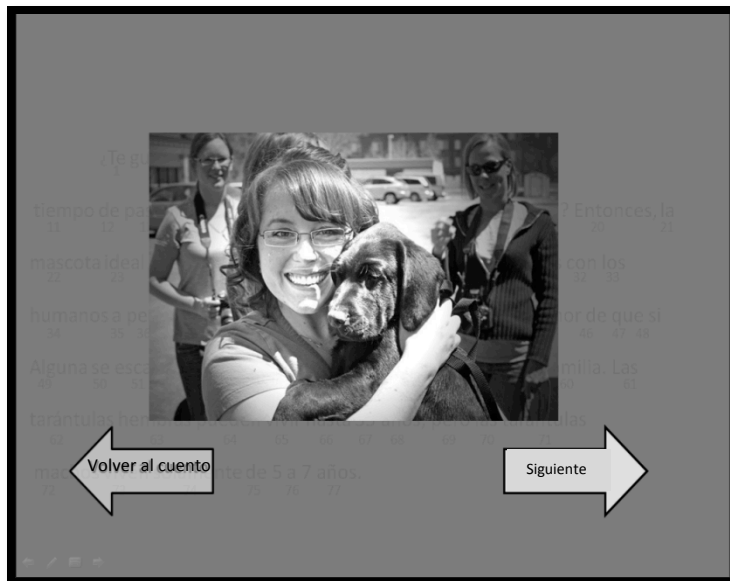


Figure 6. Progressive glossing step 3 The students are presented with a picture representation of the word and are again given the option to return to the story or to continue to the next gloss format.



Figure 7. Progressive glossing step 5 The final gloss option presented to the student is a multiple-choice gloss. Students will be able to choose what they believe the target word means. If the appropriate word is selected a message will appear allowing the student to know the correct option was selected. If the student selects an incorrect word, the correct word will be highlighted and the other words will disappear.

Appendix C

Student _____				
This Student	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Identifies the topic	1	2	3	4
Identifies the main idea	1	2	3	4
Combines/chunks similar ideas	1	2	3	4
Paraphrase accurately	1	2	3	4
Deletes minor details	1	2	3	4
Recognizes author's emphasis	1	2	3	4
Recognizes author's purpose	1	2	3	4
Comments:				