

*Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. — Malcolm Forbes*

The Professional Journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning

# Learning Languages

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**NEL**

National Network for  
Early Language Learning

*Students can use the language to fulfil a real purpose, which can make students both more independent and confident. — Nik Peachey*

*Content-related instruction supports what we know about how the brain makes connections and how learning takes place. — Helena Curtin and Carol Ann Stahlberg*



*We learn by example and by direct experience because there are real limits to the adequacy of verbal instruction.*  
*Malcolm Gladwell*

# Learning Languages

Volume 12 • Number 2

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*An organization for educators involved in teaching foreign languages to children.*

*Mission: Promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language in addition to their own. This is accomplished through activities that improve public awareness and support of early language learning.*

*Activities: Facilitate cooperation among organizations directly concerned with early language learning; facilitate communication among teachers, teacher educators, parents, program administrators, and policymakers; and disseminate information and guidelines to assist in developing programs of excellence.*

*Annual Meeting: Held at the fall conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.*

*Officers: Elected by members through a mail ballot election held annually in the spring.*

*NNELL is a member of the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS).*

*For more information, visit the NNELL Web site at [www.nnell.org](http://www.nnell.org) or email NNELL at [nnell@wfu.edu](mailto:nnell@wfu.edu)*

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# Learning Languages

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# President's Notes



Dear NNEll Members:

Welcome to the spring edition of Learning Languages! As the coordinator of both an immersion and a content-enriched FLES program in my home district of Holliston, MA, the theme of this particular issue—content-based instruction—is near and dear to my heart.

In the fall of 1979, just two years after NNEll was founded, I started a French immersion program at the kindergarten level. There was no general guidebook to the young field of immersion education at the time. Dr. Wallace Lambert of McGill University, Montreal, had recently written *The Bilingual Education of Children: The St. Lambert Experiment*, which spoke of language as the medium (not the sole object) of instruction. The immersion model called for the integration of language and content area instruction to provide meaningful contexts for children to learn new and interesting information. It essentially created a value-added method of foreign language instruction: teaching two lessons for the “price” (time invested in foreign language instruction) of one.

As the immersion model grew throughout the United States, it brought a revolution to FLES programs. The field of second language instruction gained momentum in promoting the belief that all children enrolled in elementary second language programs should be exposed to language structures and meaningful content in the target language. Dr. Myriam Met worked on a curriculum in the Montgomery County Public Schools which integrated content area with content-obligatory language objectives (what language structures do students need to know and be able to apply before attempting to learn this particular content in the target language?) and content-compatible language objectives (what language structures might be easily introduced while students are learning this content material in the target language?).

FLES practitioners became more conversant with the terms content-based instruction (the content is taught in the target language specifically to focus on the content objectives) and content-enriched instruction (content-related lessons and themes enrich students’ knowledge and skills in a number of content areas). We focus on content-enriched instruction in this edition of Learning Languages to provide an update on current practice. You will read articles from practicing teachers, a teacher trainer and an author of a book on content-based instruction.

There are those who argue that there is no room in the school day for an elementary foreign language program. It is like adding more water to an overflowing pail. With content-enriched instruction, we can argue that elementary foreign language programs piggyback onto general curricula, and support students’ learning across subject areas. The content areas can provide a meaningful context for learning a new language. We are not adding more water to the already full pail, but simply “coloring” that water to add a new dimension.

During January and February, I had the honor of presenting three different NNEll Professional Development Workshops in Indianapolis, IN; Farmington, CT; and Atlanta, GA. As I traveled from place to place, I renewed my commitment to early second language learning in these United States. I would like to personally thank the Carmel-Clay Public Schools in Carmel, IN; the West Woods Upper Elementary School in Farmington, CT; and the Autrey Mills Middle School in Alpharetta, GA for hosting these workshops. Many thanks to NNEll members Pamela Valdes, Christi Moraga, and Vicki Alvis for coordinating these events. Please check NNEll’s website for information on how to schedule a NNEll workshop

in your area.

As we move forward with NNEll’s mission of providing information and advocacy tools to early second language practitioners, I would like to thank you all for the support you have offered me. I would like to warmly welcome our new board members: Executive Secretary Dr. Marjorie Hall Haley of George Mason University; Vice-President Paula Patrick of Fairfax, VA Public Schools; and Secretary-Treasurer Scott Wilkolaski of Herricks Public Schools, NY.

Please plan to join us for NNEll’s 20th Anniversary Celebration, entitled **Tea for Tous!**, at the ACTFL Conference in San Antonio, TX on November 16 – 18, 2007. A panel of founding members will review NNEll’s wonderful history of service to the foreign language profession. We will serve high tea and cut the anniversary cake together. As always, we thank you for your part in making NNEll what it has become today—a vibrant network of members who together stand stronger than could any one of us alone!

Respectfully yours,

*Terry Caccavale*

Terry Caccavale,  
President

# NUEVO

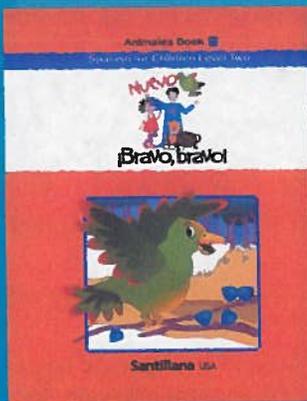


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# CULTURALLY, LINGUISTICALLY, COGNITIVELY DIVERSE AND BRAIN-COMPATIBLE, CONTENT-BASED

Dr. Marjorie Hall Haley, PhD, George Mason University

## Introduction

As a teacher educator in a large public university, my methods courses are frequently comprised of both pre- and in-service teachers who are, or will be, working with culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse (CLCD) early language learners. They face opportunities and challenges for working with this wide array of learners. It is incumbent upon me to equip them with skills, strategies, and a sound theoretical framework so they can create and execute instructional strategies and assessment practices that reach all learners. This article focuses on examining brain-compatible content-based language teaching with CLCD learners. To help early language teachers, the focus is on: 1) building on the strengths of multiple intelligences; 2) the Multiple Intelligence (MI) Survey for grades 3 – 6; and 3) the Brain-Compatible, Content-Based Planning Grid for Early Language Learners. These tools are also available for download at the NNELL.org website.

## Addressing Learner Diversity

The Annenberg Media/WGBH Video, “Valuing Diversity in Learners,” (available at [www.learner.org](http://www.learner.org)) highlights the importance of understanding the diversity of students in today’s classrooms. Of primary importance is to acknowledge that our schools are filled with learners who have differences in linguistic, cultural, racial and ethnic, socioeconomic, and experiential backgrounds; heritage language learners; and those who have different cognitive abilities and special needs, including the gifted. We face the challenge of meeting the needs of all learners with their unique intelligences, skills, interests, and talents. Today’s highly qualified teachers must employ multiple teaching and learning approaches that respond to diversity. Research indicates that multi-modal and multi-sensory instructional strategies and assessment practices can enhance student achievement (Gardner, 1983; Hall Haley, 2001, 2004; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

As language teachers we must provide a curriculum that is not only content rich and standards based, but challenging, relevant, and integrative. We should regard ourselves as co-constructors of knowledge, rather than “knowers.” We must

allow learners to “show what they know” in varied assessments and evaluations. Teachers should offer opportunities for students to build upon their individual cultural, linguistic, and cognitive backgrounds.

The following are helpful strategies for ensuring that teaching and learning are receptive to the needs of all learners:

1. Gather information about your students to address their diverse needs. Use surveys, questionnaires, or informal interviews. (See Multiple Intelligences Survey for Grades 3 – 6.)
2. Encourage students to approach a task from their weaker learning styles or less dominant intelligences.
3. Reflect on your teaching to be certain that you do more than teach to your strengths.
4. Be aware of which kinds of learners pose the greatest challenge to you and why.
5. Look for ways that learning differences positively affect learning in a foreign language classroom.
6. Weigh the different needs and strengths of heritage language learners from students studying a foreign language for the first time.
7. Identify strategies that inspire students who seem gifted and tend to finish ahead of others.
8. Differentiate instruction and assessment to ensure that you reach all learners.

Brain-compatible instructional strategies and assessment strategies reach all learners in early language learning programs.

## Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), first introduced by Howard Gardner (1983), posits the concept that there is no general intelligence, but rather that individuals have several distinct intelligences that they develop throughout their lifetimes. According to Gardner’s theory, there are eight intelligences (See “Building on the Strengths of Multiple

# JUSTICALLY AND RSE LEARNERS ENT-BASED TEACHING

Intelligence	Activities	Characteristics
Verbal/Linguistic	Creative writing, journaling, story telling, debate, presentations, reading	Understanding order and meaning of words, explaining, teaching, humor, memory and recall
Musical/Rhythmic	Jazz chants, music composition, rhythm and percussion, singing/humming, musical performance,	Dance, role playing, drama, aerobic alphabet/exercise, mime, sports
Logical/Mathematical	Graphic organizers, formulas, sequences, pattern games, problem solving, deciphering codes	Abstract pattern recognition, Inductive & deductive reasoning, discerning relationships, complex calculations
Visual/Spatial	Painting, drawing, patterns, designs, using multimedia, sculpture, pictures, mind mapping	Graphic representation, image manipulation, mental pictures, active imagination
Bodily/Kinesthetic	Control of movements, mind & body connection, process knowledge with body motion	Dance, role playing, drama, aerobic alphabet/exercise, mime, sports, simulations, TPR
Naturalist	Understanding of flora, fauna, and other natural phenomena, appreciating impact of nature on self and self on nature	Draw or photograph a natural setting, describe changes in the local environment, plan a campaign which focuses on endangered animals
Intrapersonal/Introspective	Silent reflection, thinking strategies, complex guided imagery, self-paced independent work	Relates to inner states of being, self reflection, metacognition, awareness and expression of feelings, higher order thinking/reasoning
Interpersonal/Social	Giving & receiving feedback, cooperative learning, one-to-one communication, group projects	Discerning underlying intentions, behavior, and perspectives of another, working cooperatively in groups, sensitivity to others' feelings, moods, & motives, verbal & non-verbal communication skills

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Intelligences.”): Bodily/Kinesthetic, Interpersonal/Social, Intrapersonal/Introspective, Logical/Mathematical, Musical/Rhythmic, Naturalist, Verbal/Linguistic, and Visual/Spatial. Every learner can exhibit all of these intelligences, but some are more highly developed than others in certain individuals. MI theory challenges teachers to create learning environments that foster the development of all eight intelligences. Balanced instructional presentations that use the multiple

intelligences benefit *all* learners and expose students to their underutilized intelligences. (<http://gse.gmu.edu/research/mirs/assessment.html>)

MI theory suggests that there is a plurality of intellect. From birth, individuals differ in particular intelligence profiles: “All human intelligences are a function of genes and environment interacting in different ways and in different proportions for each group and for each individual” (Gardner,

## Multiple Intelligences Survey

Grades 3 - 6

Check the  next to each statement that applies to you.

**Verbal / Linguistic Intelligence** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_  
 I love books.  
 I have words in my head, before I read, speak, or write them down.  
 I am good at word games like Scrabble or Pictionary.  
 I enjoy playing tongue twisters, riddles, or puns with my friends.  
 English, social studies, and history are my best subjects.  
 I like to draw off what I write.

**Logical / Mathematical Intelligence** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_  
 I can add and subtract in my head.  
 I like math or science in my favorite subject.  
 I enjoy brain teasers.  
 I like patterns.  
 I like to find out about new things in science.  
 I like things that are logical.

**Visual / Spatial Intelligence** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_  
 I often see pictures when I close my eyes.  
 I am creative in color.  
 I enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles.  
 I like to draw or sketch.  
 I can easily imagine how something might look from overhead.  
 I prefer to read when there are pictures.

**Bodily / Kinesthetic Intelligence** TOTAL = \_\_\_\_  
 I enjoy at least one sport or physical activity on a regular basis.  
 I like working with my hands to build or create things.  
 I like carrying, manipulating, twisting, or turning things.  
 I like to spend my free time outdoors.  
 I enjoy movement and other thrilling experiences.  
 I am well coordinated.  
 I tend to produce a new skill, not just read about it or see a video about it.

Available at [nell.org](http://nell.org)

1996). Life experiences may alter these profiles over time. Intelligences are biological potentials in raw form in individuals.

The literature on multiple intelligences provides a sound theoretical foundation for an integrated, multidimensional style of education across learning styles and cultures. However, the review of the literature points out the paucity of research in practical applications of MI theory in foreign and second language

knowledge with students and parents, guiding students in taking responsibility for their own learning, and presenting worthwhile materials that maximize learning and understanding." By transforming a "one size fits all" curriculum to a multi-modal, multi-sensory set of teaching strategies and assessment tools, language teachers are acknowledging the differences among their students.

Additional examples are earlier studies conducted by this author (Hall Haley, 2001, 2004). The purpose of these studies was to identify, document, and promote effective real-world applications of MI theory in foreign and second language classrooms. Results indicated that teachers were profoundly affected by these approaches: They felt that their teaching shifted fundamentally to a more learner-centered classroom; they were once again energized and enthusiastic about their teaching; and they felt they were able to reach more students. Students demonstrated keen interest in MI concepts and showed positive responses to the increased variety of instructional strategies used in their foreign language and second language classrooms.

Providing opportunities for students to learn in ways to which they are most receptive maximizes their potential for success in the academic setting and in real life (Armstrong, 1994; Beckman, 1998). Integrating multiple intelligences into the classroom setting does not require a major overhaul of teaching methodology or a total revamping of adopted curricula. In general, supplementing and revising existing lesson plans with creative and innovative ideas suffice (Campbell, 1997). Glasgow and Bush (1996; Bush, 1996) emphasize classroom use and real-world application of thematic and interdisciplinary units that provide cooperative learning, and that include a variety of tasks accomplished through a choice of activities for multiple intelligences.

## Conclusion

Brain-compatible, content-based teaching with CLCD learners is now a reality for many teachers who work with early language learners. More than ever before, teachers are seeking ways to reach and teach students who represent a vast array of learner differences. Teachers are being called on to inspire each individual to life-long learning. This fits well with early language programs because there are so many opportunities for integrated content-based language learning. When teachers empower their students to understand how they learn best, they can use this knowledge to find success in both language and content classroom settings.

The year 2005 was widely recognized in the language teaching profession as "The Year of Languages" and ACTFL focused the FL Education Series volume that year on this theme. Audrey Heining-Boynton served as editor and titled the publication 2005-2015, *Realizing Our Vision* (2006). Myriam Met wrote one of the chapters for the publication and stated the following on page 55:

classrooms. Gardner's seminal work on this subject, *Frames of Mind* (1983), devotes over 300 pages to explaining and differentiating what were then conceived as six intelligences, but only two chapters are concerned with the implications and applications of MI theory in education.

In the article "Where Do the Learning Theories Overlap?" Guild (1997) compares the key features and principles of three learning theories: multiple intelligences, learning styles, and brain-based education. She concludes that these theories intersect significantly, particularly in their intended results. One point these theories have in common is that they are learner centered. Other similarities are the teacher's role as reflective practitioner and facilitator, with the student acting as a reflective partner, and concern for the education of the whole person. All three theories emphasize curricula with depth and breadth, and promote diversity and inclusiveness, rather than the "lowest common denominator" approach to teaching where heritage language learners, gifted and talented students, and students with learning disabilities are often left in the margins. These three approaches focus on how students learn differently. "The more diverse learning experiences we provide our students, the more robust their education will be, the more ways they will learn each topic, hence the more they are prepared to succeed in a world marked by increasing diversity and an accelerating change rate" (Guild, 1997).

Since Gardner's announcement of his theory of multiple intelligences, many books, professional papers, and journal articles have been published to fill the perceived gap in field research related to classroom lesson planning based on the theory. One example, *Multiple Intelligences: Multiple Ways to Help Students Learn Foreign Languages* (Gahala & Lang, 1997) notes, "Teaching with multiple intelligences is a way of taking differences among students seriously, sharing that



# What Can You Remember?

## Recall of Japanese after a One-Year Hiatus

Akiko Mitsui, Richard Donato & G. Richard Tucker

During the summer of 2005, the longtime Japanese teacher at a K – 8 school in southwestern Pennsylvania, with whom our research team had maintained a long affiliation, unexpectedly resigned. The school, unable to recruit a new teacher for the 2005 – 2006 school year, chose to suspend the teaching of Japanese and to establish a committee to examine the foreign language program within the overall school curriculum. Until then, the school had offered Japanese to all students from kindergarten through grade 8, and Spanish from grades 6 – 8.

We decided to take the opportunity provided by this unexpected hiatus to investigate student recall of various aspects of Japanese language and culture, and student attitudes toward the program now that they no longer studied Japanese as a regular part of their school day. We believed that information on student attitudes and program outcomes would be useful to committee members as they planned the future of the language program in the school. The research described here was conducted nine months after the program was closed.

### CURRICULUM AND CONTEXT

This Japanese FLES program at this school was implemented in 1992. There are several general review articles in which we discuss this program and the progress made by the students (see Chinen, Igarashi, Donato, & Tucker, 2003; Donato, Antonek, & Tucker, 1996; Donato, Tucker, Wudthayagorn, & Igarashi, 2000; Tucker, Donato, & Antonek, 1996). Here are some of the salient details concerning the program as it evolved over the years.

During elementary school, from kindergarten through grade 5, the students had a 15-minute class four or five days a week. In middle school (grades 6 – 8), the pattern changed and Japanese was rotated with other subjects, such as music and art. The students received a 40-minute class five days a week, for two 6-week cycles in the academic year. During the other cycles, the students studied other subjects.

Every year, new students who were true beginners joined the class. (In one year, because the music class was discontinued, all students who took music suddenly joined the Japanese classes.) Regardless of students' learning stages, the teacher had to give all the students in each grade the same instruction even though in the same classroom there might be several students who could compose a range of sentences, as well as several students who did not know any Japanese words. Sometimes the classes were interrupted by other school activities, or six-week cycles were cut short by preparation for school events.

The curriculum consisted of several thematic units comprising cultural topics in which the students could be exposed to new aspects of Japanese culture each year. Providing something new for individual students, at these different levels, was the driving force (and the source of pressure) for the development of the curriculum and classroom activities.

The teacher's creative personality and strong pedagogical background allowed her to keep developing unique instructional materials.

Three remarkable features of this program emerged from the teacher's trial and error process: One was the use of song (Igarashi, 2003); another was the experience of target language through cultural activities; and a third was the development and use of creative and unique explanations of language (Mitsui, Tucker, and Donato, 2005; Morimoto, 1998). The songs, such as a greeting song, a body-parts song, and a song about personal preferences, were created by the teacher and ranged from vocabulary level to basic sentence structure level. The power and the effects of these songs are described by Morimoto (1998). The students learned language through cultural experiences, such as learning the Kanji character for "brush" (筆) which includes the radical "bamboo" (竹), by practicing calligraphy with bamboo brushes.

The Japanese writing system consists of three types of symbols: Hiragana is a syllabary used for words of Japanese origin and grammatical function words; Katakana is also a syllabary, used for foreign words; and Kanji are Chinese characters. This system was often taught with the teacher's original and unique explanations, such as describing the Hiragana character "no" (の) as "a pig's nose," and illustrating it with a poster board. The teacher always invited students to be creative about songs and explanations like this. Indeed, the students participated in it spontaneously, and some of them developed their own versions of such explanations.

### METHOD

#### Participants and settings

Participants in this study were 20 students from grades 4 – 8 who had taken Japanese classes from kindergarten through

the 2004 – 2005 academic year. Twenty students, two boys and two girls from each grade level, were selected randomly by the teachers to participate in the interviews. We relied on teacher-selected interviewees because only the classroom teachers could identify which students had taken the classes from kindergarten.

### Data collection and analysis

The data were collected through interviews, using questions developed by the research team. The interview protocol consisted of: (1) questions about the students' participation in the Japanese program, (2) questions about what the students recalled about Japanese classes and their attitudes toward learning Japanese, and (3) questions about the Japanese language (see Appendices A and B).

The questions concerning the students' participation in the Japanese program were intended to establish the length of time they had studied Japanese in the elementary and middle school. The questions about their previous instruction and attitudes were aimed at having students share their feelings and thoughts about their experiences studying Japanese. For example, we asked whether they missed studying Japanese and what activities during the class they remembered and enjoyed. Finally, questions about the Japanese language were developed to learn what students reported when recalling class activities and to document what they actually remembered about the Japanese language. For example, students were asked to recall songs they had learned, to state their favorite words in Japanese, and to write their names in Japanese. This last task was particularly challenging as they had not received consistent writing instruction, and in class they were allowed to use a chart of Japanese phonetic symbols.

The three-part interview format allowed us to ensure that the interviewees understood the intent of the questions, to gauge whether they were taking the questions seriously, and to allow the interviewers to be flexible about asking further questions when interesting points emerged in students' answers (Brown, 2001; Dörnyei, 2003; Robson, 2002). The format was also helpful to the students since they could ask the researchers questions to ensure that they understood the meaning of the questions being asked (Robson, 2002).

This interview format was effective because it allowed the interviewer to provide interactive support that facilitated student recall. For example, when an interviewee did not remember how to write his or her name in Japanese, the researcher provided three options of written Japanese words from which to choose. The student's name was included among these options. Although interviewees may not have been able to produce their names spontaneously in writing when asked, we found that they could often recognize their names and choose them from among the three Japanese words. In this way, the researcher documented additional useful information from the interviewees and ensured that the interviews

captured what the students knew, at times with assistance, including not only fully productive but also receptive vocabulary. It was also observed that some interviewees seemed to worry about whether they should talk freely and honestly about their impressions of the program. The researcher explained that the purpose of the interview was to provide useful feedback to their school, and she encouraged them to talk openly about their feelings and thoughts.

Afterwards, the students' responses in the interviews were summarized and tabulated question by question so that trends across the grades could be measured. Parts of the interviews were carefully transcribed.

## FINDINGS

### Length of Japanese Study

Among the 20 students who participated in the interviews, 16 had participated in Japanese classes from kindergarten, three began study in grade 1, and one student began study in grade 2. Thus, the range of years of study for the 20 students interviewed was from eight years to three years. For all students, regardless of grade level or years of study, Japanese instruction was provided by the same teacher.

### Recalling Japanese Instruction

Fifteen students out of 20 reported that they missed studying Japanese. They reported missing the learning of the Japanese language and culture, which they had considered as something new and different from their regular classes. When asked to think about what they had learned in Japanese class and the parts of the class they had enjoyed, they recalled writing Japanese characters, speaking Japanese words, and learning Japanese culture, such as information about the Japanese lifestyle and home. Some students named specific class activities that they liked, for example, the rice ball party. Others stated that they missed the teacher, stories that the teacher told, and Japanese movies, which they had watched in the classes.

Supporting these comments, the responses that students gave when asked for three words that described their feelings about learning Japanese over the past years were mostly positive, such as interesting, fun, and happy. Sixteen students listed more than one of these three words, and two students gave the words good, confident, excited, and fun. Some students even gave specific examples of fun classroom activities, such as "fun rice ball parties" and "origami was also fun." To the question of whether they had made progress studying Japanese during their time in class, 17 students answered "yes" or "somewhat," although two students added that they had forgotten some of what they had learned since they were no longer studying Japanese.

## Recalling the Japanese language

Responses to direct questions about the Japanese language revealed that a large number of students had developed metalinguistic awareness of what they had studied. This awareness of the language system was particularly evident in the older students who had received more years of instruction in Japanese. For example, a grade-8 boy reported that he had forgotten some of the verbs he used to use in Japanese, such as the verb for making a sentence like “She is in the dining room at eight.” A grade-8 girl reported that she had forgotten the structure of Japanese sentences—SOV.

When students across all grade levels reported forgetting, it appeared that they had retained some of their Japanese knowledge but that this knowledge was beneath the surface and not readily retrievable by the students unassisted. To determine what the students retained about Japanese, the interviewer assisted recall through various types of questions, cueing, or the provision of partial information about the answer. In cases where students reported forgetting and where assistance was provided by the interviewer, the students revealed that they could in fact access Japanese words, including strings of up to 12 words. Additionally, the students recognized and produced script and sang songs in Japanese despite their claims to the contrary. The students’ responses to these prompts were all the more impressive given that they had not studied Japanese for at least nine months. Indeed, for these students, Japanese appeared not to have been forgotten but to have remained still active below the surface. In the next sections, we analyze specific instances of language recall that emerged during the interviews.

### Japanese songs

Ten of the students responded that they still remembered the songs that they had learned in class, specifically the head-shoulder-leg, greeting, color, pencil and eraser (or desk), feeling, winter and summer, shapes, days of week, and a-i-u-e-o songs. Table one summarizes the student responses to the question concerning Japanese songs.

Not only did students state that they remembered songs, but 5 also sang songs without prompting and spontaneously used the gestures and dances that accompanied the learning of the song in class. Conversely, although nine students answered that they did not remember any of the songs, two students out of the nine sang a song after some prompting and cueing by the interviewer. An interviewee met a classmate after the interview and decided to return to the interviewer to demonstrate that, in fact, he had not forgotten the song and they could sing it together.

Table 1

### Japanese songs you learned in class

Recalling Songs	# of Students Out of 20
Reported remembering the songs	10
Partially remembered the songs	1
Did not remember the songs	9

### Greetings in Japanese

Fifteen students answered that they still remembered how to greet people in Japanese, and 13 of the 15 could produce at least one greeting. Eight of the students recalled three to four different greetings during the interview. Only five students had no recollection of greetings.

Table 2

### Greetings in Japanese

Recalling Greetings	# of Students Out of 20
Recall greetings in Japanese	15
Production	13
5 greetings ( <i>ohayou, sayounara, konnichiwa, konbanwa, oyasumi</i> )	1
4 greetings ( <i>ohayou, konnichiwa, konbanwa, oyasumi</i> or <i>sumimasen</i> )	5
3 greetings ( <i>konnichiwa, arigatou, ohayou</i> or <i>konbanwa</i> )	2
1 greeting ( <i>oyasumi, or ohayou, or konnichiwa</i> )	5
No production	2
No recall of greetings	5

Additionally, many of the students remembered the meanings and uses of the greetings accurately. A few students sang the “greeting song” when asked if they remembered how to greet people in Japanese. Some students reported that they remembered greetings partially. When they indicated partial retention, the interviewer assisted students by providing one or two syllables of the words. Once these students heard these syllables, they could easily reproduce the greeting that they had been trying to reproduce.

### Writing their own names

Fourteen students answered that they remembered how to write their own names in Katakana, and one student answered that she remembered to some degree. Five students answered that they did not remember how to write at all. However, when the interviewer provided three words in Katakana that

included the name of the student, four of those five were able to immediately recognize and correctly choose their names from among the three options. The fifth student's name was hard to determine in Katakana so the interviewer was not able to provide that recognition task.

6 students correctly wrote their name in Katakana: リアム and アナ. Students who wrote their name with errors included: ナンシー for ナンシー and ローガン for ローガン.

Three students had developed the idea that you write your name in Japanese when the activity is related to Japanese. They asked the interviewer if they should write their names in Japanese when they were asked to fill in their names on the answer sheet provided for the students on this portion of the interview. Students assumed that Japanese writing was necessary for completing the answer sheet, since they recognized that the interviewer was Japanese and that the questions concerned their Japanese classes. Although they knew that the interview was not a class, when they understood that this was a Japanese-related context, they spontaneously tried to use written Japanese.

Table 3

Writing Names in Japanese

Recalling Names in Katakana	# of Students Out of 20
Stated that they remembered	14
Correct	6
With Mistakes	6
No Reproduction	2
Stated that they partially remembered	1
Stated that they did not remember	5
Recognition of name from choices (-1)	4

Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji recognition task

The interviewer provided 3 cards with words written in Hiragana, Katakana and Kanji respectively, and asked students if they could differentiate the three writing systems (see Appendix B).

Eleven students were able to recognize the three different sets of Japanese characters correctly. Three students recalled the picture cards for Kanji and Katakana. Further, three other students could also explain how to distinguish one from another. One of them explained that Hiragana is curvy and Katakana is sharp, and another explained that the length of the vocabulary was a hint: the shortest was Kanji, and the longest was Katakana. Two students in grade 6, two students in grade 7, and one student in grade 5 were able to recognize only one set of characters correctly. Among the four students who could not recognize or differentiate any writing system, only one student was in grade six, whereas the remaining three students who were unable to complete this task were fourth and fifth graders. It appears, therefore, that the older students had a memory advantage for Japanese writing systems over the younger students.

Table 4

Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji recognition task

Recognition of Japanese scripts	# of Students Out of 20
Recognized all three scripts correctly	11
Recognized one of three scripts correctly	5
No Recognition	4

SUMMARY

The findings of this interview showed that the program had been a somewhat positive language learning experience for these students. They easily recalled specific language learning activities from their previous study, stated their attitudes about these experiences, and claimed they missed learning Japanese. What they best retained from their classroom experience turned out to reflect the routine features of this curriculum—the use of song, target language experience through cultural activities, and unique explanations of Kanji co-created with their teacher and classmates. From the linguistic perspective, these students retained more control of the material that they had studied than might have been expected, but their memory “traces” needed to be activated by the interviewer through dynamic assistance and prompting during the interview procedure.

The decision to close this program for one year presented a unique opportunity to examine what students retain when language instruction is no longer available. After a nine month hiatus in instruction, their feelings toward the program remained positive and their language ability for some aspects of Japanese seemed firmly established. We have found that in addition to their positive recollections of their learning experiences and their recall of oral and written language, the older students seemed to have developed an awareness about language that went beyond mere memorization of words and phrases. Indeed, awareness of the structure and function of language is one aspect of foreign language learning that is often promoted as an outcome for students, but rarely documented in the literature.

The findings also suggest that a sustained language learning experience is critical for students' foreign language development. Some may argue that after so many years of instruction what these students remembered was minimal and hardly worth the time and effort spent on Japanese. However, given the nature of this program, the reduced class time, and complications in the scheduling of Japanese in the middle school, it is impressive that after a one-year hiatus these students could recall so much about their language learning experience. Thus, a consistent amount of time dedicated to foreign language instruction that begins early and extends throughout the grades is necessary if students are to make progress beyond what we observed in this study. Our expectations for teaching a standards-based curriculum and for achieving proficiency outcomes with students can only be realized if students are afforded the time, curricular structure, and school-wide support to make progress toward these goals. The findings of our study might represent the realities of foreign language programs that are given less time and

attention in the total school curriculum.

We have shared the information reported in this article with the committee examining the future structure of foreign languages within the school's curriculum. We have also assisted in designing and evaluating the results from a teacher/parent survey concerning their feelings about diverse aspects of the program. We hope that this information from the students' perspective will be helpful to the committee and look forward to the results of their deliberations.

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## Appendix A

Q1: Did you take any Japanese classes with A-sensei?

Yes  No

If yes, how many years did you study Japanese with A-sensei?

about ( ) years from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 don't remember

Q2: Do you miss studying Japanese at School X?

Yes  No

If yes, what do you miss the most?

Q3: Please write three words that describe your feelings, when you studied Japanese at School X.

Q4: Do you feel you were making progress in learning Japanese, when you were taking Japanese classes at School X?

Yes, very much  Yes, somewhat  No

Q5: How much Japanese do you think you have forgotten now that you do not have a Japanese class?

All of it  about one half  Just a little bit

Q6: If you think you have forgotten some of your Japanese, what do you think you have forgotten?

Q7: Do you remember any Japanese songs you learned in A-sensei's class?

Yes  No

If yes, can you sing the songs for me?

Q8: Can you say something in Japanese that you remember? Maybe your favorite word or sentence (or story) that you thought was fun to say when you were studying Japanese.

Q9: Do you remember any greeting in Japanese?

Yes  No

Q10: Do you remember how to write your name in Katakana?

Yes  No

If yes, can you write your name in Katakana?

Q11: Please tell me which of these are Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji?

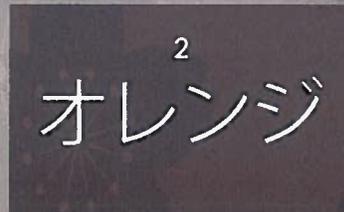
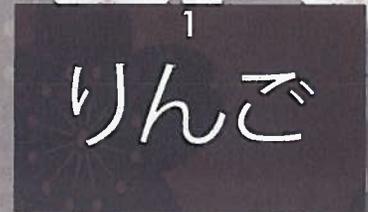
Recognize all correctly  Recognize (Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji) correctly  No recognition

## Appendix B

1) Hiragana

2) Katakana

3) Kanji



# Adventures Through Time and Space

Mark Eastburn

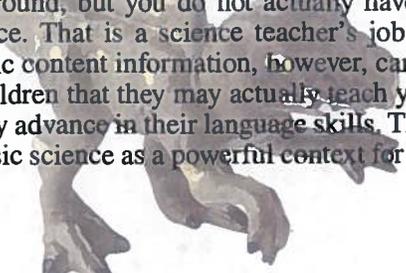


## Introduction

What can get children motivated to participate in world language class? How about a fearsome eight-ton monster that could swallow an adult human in one gulp, a cute ball of fur who desperately needs our help to survive, or a permanent human settlement in outer space? World language teachers will see a tremendous increase in student enthusiasm and participation when they add a bit of science to their classes. In addition, they will see their students personalizing and acquiring useful language because the material is interesting to children. The ideas that I present here are particularly significant in their ability to engage boys in world language class, although girls will certainly join them in their fascination!

In my opinion, connecting world language instruction to content is important for two reasons. First, it gives students a number of different opportunities to use the language that they have been acquiring without repeating the same activities or scenarios. Words and language functions that students hear in class will not remain with them unless they use and reuse them in ways that continue to stimulate and challenge their communicative abilities. Second, the content of a class can get students focused and interested in using the target language. If you would like to create lasting impressions and a love for world language class among your students, then the ideas in this article are for you!

I will present three themes that can form the basis for exciting world language instruction in Spanish, French, and Chinese at any grade level. These ideas could also find a place in an Arabic, German, Japanese, or Italian class. Before I outline these ideas, I must stress my opinion that language acquisition should always be the primary focus of any foreign language class, and the language functions that students develop here should still consist of useful vocabulary, structures, and phrases that children can use outside the classroom. I realize that very few language teachers have a science background, but you do not actually have to teach in-depth science. That is a science teacher's job! A small amount of basic content information, however, can be so enchanting to children that they may actually teach you the science while they advance in their language skills. These three themes use basic science as a powerful context for communi-



cation that never fails to get students excited and enthusiastic about listening and speaking in the target language.

## 1 The Prehistoric World

Where this content can fit into the world language classroom:

I am not proposing that you necessarily need to organize everything into one thematic unit that will focus on the prehistoric world. Although such a strategy would work well, the material here could just as easily be included as a complement to a number of different thematic units, or saved for a time when you feel that children need a little extra incentive to focus and participate in class. These activities could even serve as an incentive to encourage appropriate behavior. This subject matter has a tremendous natural appeal to children. The trick is to use the enthusiasm for the prehistoric world as a way to help them acquire useful words and structures in the target language.

Many different prehistoric animals can be connected to the regions of the world where your particular target language is spoken. Novice language learners can color a picture of a dinosaur or other prehistoric creature and verbally identify the colors that were used. Children can count the body parts of a prehistoric beast, and students can learn various forms of movement and feeding that are associated with both dinosaurs and people. My students never forget the word *carne* (meat) once they see a picture of the Patagonian dinosaur *Carnotaurus* and hear the associated phrase, "*A él le gusta comer carne*" ("He likes to eat meat"). Activities associated with the movements of these beasts (walk, run, climb, swim, fly) allow children to review vocabulary in a fresh context. You can also highlight internal body parts that pertain to prehistoric creatures (particularly bones, skulls, and brains). My students proudly proclaim in Spanish that they have larger brains than even the biggest and most ferocious dinosaurs. The words for blood and temperature can be included in a simple discussion about examples of warm-blooded and cold-blooded creatures and their body coverings (although still open to debate, the feathered dinosaurs of Europe, Asia, and South America were almost certainly warm-blooded).

Once children reach the novice high level on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Scale and can speak in complete sentences, they can select an animal and describe it orally or in written form. When I place a picture of a "terrible reptile" or a giant furry beast on the board, children describe it to me with so many sentences in the target language that I often have to extend

the activity into the next class period. To switch third person sentences to the first person, I ask my students to imagine that they are one of these prehistoric animals and describe themselves to the class. I usually make sure that the other children do not know which animal the speaker has chosen to make it a guessing game. Such an endeavor is fun and allows children to personalize vocabulary without having to describe their own physical characteristics time after time. These activities always leave the children wishing Spanish class lasted longer.

For intermediate and advanced students, prehistory provides a perfect opportunity to describe organisms, environments, and events that occurred long ago. This takes the past tense beyond “What did you do yesterday?” Students may reflect on how

they think a prehistoric beast lived and how it looked, and then share their thoughts in class. A French student for example may choose to think that the fearsome predator *Dubreuillosaurus* discovered in France, had stripes like a tiger or spots

like a leopard and argue his or her point by comparing this creature to the largest predators of the modern world. The discussion can allow for tremendous practice of all sorts of vocabulary and language structures that they have been learning in class. Advanced students can also create stories from the past by imagining that they were cave painters in ancient Europe, for example, or mammoth hunters in northern China.

Although it requires a little bit of research, look for fossil sites in target language regions to provide another context for teaching the local geography of those countries. All of my students can locate Patagonia once they have learned about the animals that lived there. Children will focus on the map as never before in order to find the areas where fossils have been discovered. One site that creates a great deal of excitement in my Spanish classes is the Chicxulub Crater on the Yucatán Peninsula, which may have ended the reign of dinosaurs!

Prehistoric animals are also a wonderful means of getting students to conceptualize measurements in metric units. The

massive *Argentinosaurus*, for example, measured almost forty meters in length. This number never impresses my students until we actually measure the length of this dinosaur down the school hallway. After about twenty meters, they begin to realize that measurements in meters are much bigger than the same quantity in feet. The excitement builds. By the time we reach forty meters, students stand open-mouthed as they visualize this enormous beast that actually walked through South America long before humans appeared. Children can also make size comparisons between prehistoric animals and objects from modern times. For example, a teacher could ask, “Is this animal bigger than the Asian elephants in China today?” or, “This creature measures twenty meters. Is that longer or shorter than a school bus?”

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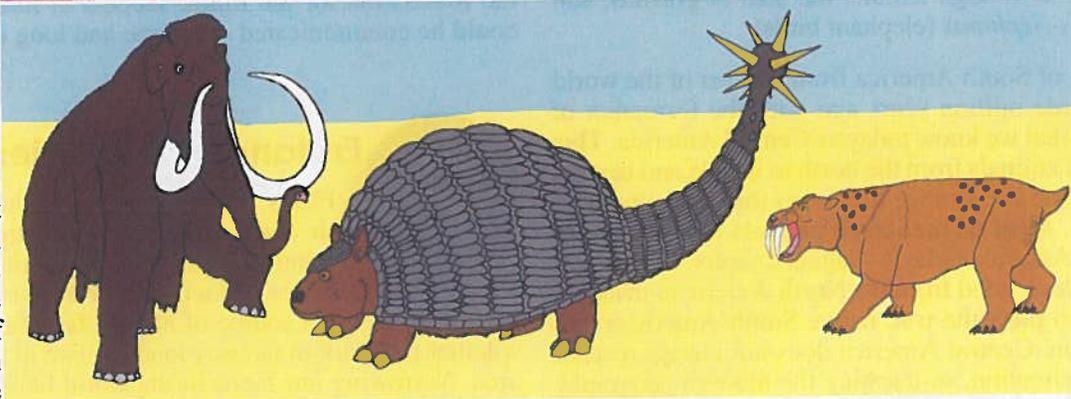
Culture can be taught in this context by looking at regional stories of lake monsters and other mysterious creatures, focusing on the work of national figures involved in the excavation of fossils today, and discussing images of similar beasts in

popular culture through the ages. The symbolism of dragons in both China and Europe and the personality characteristics associated with them certainly come to mind here!

## The Prehistoric World — What Happened Where Your Language Is Spoken?

You may have learned that the seven continents we recognize today were once united in the “super-continent” known as Pangaea. This is a major topic for the fourth grade science curriculum in Princeton Regional Schools. You can reinforce the cardinal directions, the names of the continents, and the actions associated with their movement in your world language class as your students look at world maps of different eras and describe the changes in a sequence that stretches from the breakup of Pangaea to our present-day arrangement. Natural phenomena like earthquakes and volcanoes can also be tied to this continental drift, especially in the “Ring of Fire” that surrounds the Pacific Ocean. Students in Spanish class can take a closer look at the movement of South America, Europe, and North America through time; French students can look at the movements of Europe and Africa, as well as many

French-speaking islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans; and Chinese students can do the same with Asia. One particular point of interest in Chinese class would be the formation of the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas in modern day Asia that were thrust up by the collision of India into the remainder of the continent more than fifty million years ago.



The piece of Pangaea that would one day become Argentina is the site of some of the earliest dinosaur fossils. Children in my classes frequently laugh at the surprising size of these little creatures and their unimposing nature. South America's rival for the title of earliest homeland of the dinosaurs is the former French territory of Madagascar off the coast of East Africa. Fossils of fascinating aquatic animals from the Age of Reptiles have been discovered in many different countries as well. These include the most massive sea monster of all time, the "Monster of Aramberri," in Mexico; the giant sea lizard *Platecarpus* in Belgium; and amazingly, a tiny fossil of what may be a *Hyphalosaur* recently unearthed in northeastern China that had two heads!

Back on land and many millions of years after the first dinosaurs rose from their humble beginnings, several species of enormous dinosaurs (including *Antarctosaurus* and *Chubutisaurus*) walked through the tall forests of monkey-puzzle trees that stretched across Patagonia, and are found in Chile and Argentina today. Many of the strangest animals discovered came from the same period. A flying reptile from Argentina named *Pterodaustro* had a huge brush on its lower jaw to eat shrimp and may have been pink like a modern flamingo. Archeologists have found eggs and nests of dinosaurs at the Patagonian site now known as Auca Mahuevo. On the opposite side of the world, giant dinosaurs from Sichuan Province in China come close to the size of their South American peers, as do fossil beasts from Madagascar and Niger in West Africa. While all of these creatures grab the attention of students and stimulate language production, the savage predators of the Age of Dinosaurs really get the children talking!

China has been the "crown jewel" of dinosaur paleontology for decades. The first dinosaur eggs discovered were found in Inner Mongolia in the 1920s. Such a find, however,

pales in comparison with the delicately preserved fossils of small, feathered dinosaurs that have come from Liaoning Province in recent years. These beautiful (and often dangerous) animals have proved,

almost beyond a doubt, that modern birds are the direct descendants of small carnivorous dinosaurs who learned to fly.

At this point, I would like to stress that I do not usually spend time teaching the actual names of these creatures (many of which come from Greek), nor do I focus on technical aspects of their physiology that will not produce useful language for students outside of the classroom. These creatures inspire students to create and communicate in the target language during class.

The reign of the great reptiles ended 65 million years ago. Many scientists blame the impact of a huge meteorite and the environmental collapse that followed for the disappearance of dinosaurs across the globe. The most probable site of that enormous collision is a crater located on the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. Rumors and stories persist in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in other nearby French-speaking nations, about several unusual creatures which some think are modern-day dinosaurs that survived the mass extinction. Students in French class would surely love to hear stories about the *Emela-Notouka*, the *Mokele-mbembe*, the *Kongamato*, and the expeditions launched to find them, and discuss what these creatures could actually be. Stories of lake monsters that may be relics of the Age of Dinosaurs can be found around Lake Tianchi in northeastern China and *Lago Nahuel Huapi* in Argentina.

When the Age of Mammals began, South America was an "island continent," unconnected to North America. Madagascar had become an island long before when it first broke from Africa and then, later, from India. They would both remain isolated for over 60 million years. This isolation allowed both South America and Madagascar to develop many interesting and unique creatures that were not seen anywhere else on Earth. If we could look at South America during this time period, we would find guinea pigs the size of buffalos, car-sized armadillos that wielded spiked tail clubs, ground sloths that weighed as much as elephants, vicious "terror birds" that measured three meters in height, and marsupial

carnivores with teeth like steak knives. The Madagascan countryside of a mere 2,000 years ago (and maybe more recently) was home to huge lemurs, the size of gorillas, and gigantic *oiseaux-éléphants* (elephant birds).

The isolation of South America from the rest of the world ended about three million years ago with the formation of the land bridge that we know today as Central America. This conduit allowed animals from the north to invade and destroy most of the unique and strange life forms that had populated South America. Most of the iconic animals that we associate with South America today — jaguars, tapirs, llamas and alpacas — are descended from the North American invaders who managed to push the true native South American species to extinction. Central America does not always receive a great deal of attention, so teaching the modern geography of Central America can be tied to this significant prehistoric event. The largest exotic creatures of Madagascar probably disappeared because of the arrival of one very successful species that invaded from the East: modern humans from the islands of Southeast Asia.

Over the last three million years, a number of ice ages froze most of Europe, Asia, and North America. As the cold set in, elephant-like creatures known as mastodons flourished in Mexico and huge herds of mammoths, woolly rhinoceroses, bison, and reindeer were hunted by massive cave lions, early humans and giant hyenas in Spain, France, and China. Telling stories of the *yeren* in Hubei Province and the *yeti* in Tibet could certainly give students in Chinese class reason to question if these early people actually went extinct after all!

Modern humans arrived in Asia 50,000 years ago and in Europe about 40,000 years ago. They left evidence of their hunting adventures in the cave paintings of Chauvet, Lascaux, and Cosquer in France and Altamira in Spain. These are some of the earliest examples of human creativity. At this point, science can enter the world language classroom thorough art, since these people left representations of bison, reindeer, and other animals of the time on the rock walls.

Chinese pictographs have been found that date back 4,500 years. These beginnings of recorded culture and language set the foundation for the future success of humanity, as ideas could be communicated over time and long distances.

## 2

### Endangered Species

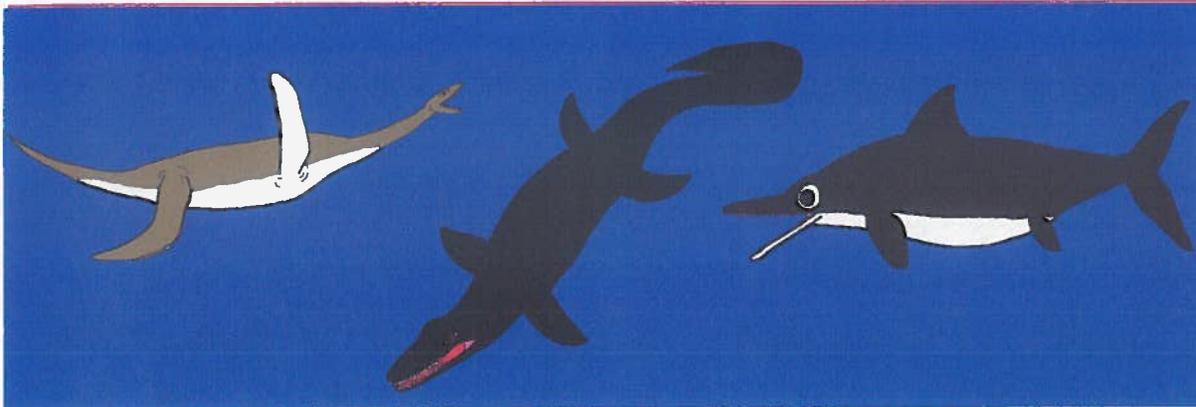
FLES teachers often include animals in their curriculum, many devoting a substantial amount of time to animal units that center on the tropical rainforest. Much like prehistoric monsters, living creatures are a source of eternal fascination to children, whether they lurk in faraway lands or live in a nearby natural area. Narrowing our focus in the world language classroom to endangered species from countries where the target language is spoken enables us to select from a group of animals that possess a diverse range of features, which can be tailored to reinforce whatever vocabulary and language structures we choose. Thanks in part to humanity's tremendous success in spreading across the globe, beautiful and interesting creatures of every size, color, climate, and in every corner of the world, teeter on the edge of survival. Including endangered species in world language instruction also encourages students to take a personal interest in those parts of the world where the target language is spoken and possibly inspire them to support conservation work in an animal's home country.

Endangered species may form a thematic unit or expand on a curriculum on other themes. Teaching about weather and climate may include a section about the conditions of a desert when compared to the tropical rainforest. Spanish class provides a perfect opportunity to include a discussion about the differences between the bighorn sheep of the Sonoran Desert and Baird's tapir from the forests of Central America. In French class, discussions of big objects and little objects could compare the lowland gorillas of Gabon and the giant tortoises of the Seychelles with the tiny mouse lemurs

and the little *kapidolo* tortoises of Madagascar. For other physical characteristics, types of movement, or combinations of the two, there are many species that are furry and fly, that have feathers and swim, or are bright red, slimy, and hop!

Nearly every animal that currently lives in Madagascar is endangered. The same situation applies to China,

Dinosaurs from Francophone Regions © 2007 Mark Eastburn [www.aprenden.com](http://www.aprenden.com)





where iconic species such as the giant panda, Amur tiger, snow leopard, and wild Asian elephant struggle for survival along with lesser-known species like the Chinese alligator, the golden monkey, and the Yangtze River dolphin (which was declared extinct in 2006). Looking at a geographic region of the world in the context of endangered species will help students remember the place far into the future. My students remember the location of Lake Nicaragua when they find out that critically endangered freshwater sharks and sawfish patrol its waters. The rare Corsican snail and wild sheep could do the same for helping students remember Corsica. The beautiful Hainan gibbon and unusual Hainan moonrat will work wonders in helping children remember the Chinese island of Hainan.

As with the prehistoric creatures previously discussed, I feel that it is not always necessary to work with the specific names of endangered species and technical aspects of their biology when we include them in the world language classroom. This is especially true with species that have a large number of different regional names. A scarlet macaw, for example, is called *la guacamaya*, *el guacamayo*, *la lapa roja*, or *el papagayo*, depending on the country where it is found. Generalizing the vocabulary to *un tipo de loro grande* (a type of large parrot) will teach helpful words that can be used regardless of where your students may travel one day in the Spanish-speaking world.

Sometimes, an animal grabs the attention of the world and becomes a powerful ambassador for the plight of their species. Images have crossed the globe of *Copito de Nieve*, the albino gorilla found in Equatorial Guinea and housed for decades in a Barcelona zoo until his death in 2003. Every giant panda or rare Madagascan lemur birth in the United States is the subject of national headlines. Looking at the life of one particular creature will give a child a unique context to narrate life events.

If we discuss the negative impacts that humans are having in particular areas of the world where the target language is spoken, it is only fair that we also highlight the tremendous work that many people in these countries are undertaking in order to save endangered species. A number of national and international organizations are struggling to preserve habitat and ensure the survival of many species. The government of

China has recently announced an ambitious plan to combat global warming and environmental decline by planting millions of trees throughout the country. A meaningful extension of class activities into a community service project could be a fundraiser that would support one of these endeavors. Organizations like The Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund support local conservation projects across the globe. Groups with a more limited focus on one natural area or a particular species include Project Heloderma to save the Guatemalan beaded lizard (less than 200 of these lizards left), the Diane Fossey Gorilla Fund International to save mountain gorillas in the former Belgian colonies of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (about 400 individuals remaining), and the Save the Tiger Fund to ensure the survival of Amur tigers in China (where less than 20 still survive), Russia, and North Korea.

Once students develop concern for an endangered species in a faraway land, they are more likely to maintain a connection with the language and culture of that particular area and may even plan to travel there someday!

### 3 The Final Frontier

On October 15, 2003, China joined an exclusive club when it became the third nation to launch its own astronauts into orbit around the Earth. Due to the success of this mission and another successful spaceflight in 2005, China now plans to send unmanned voyages to the moon, beginning with the spacecraft *Chang'e-1* in the spring of this year. The largest radio telescope on our planet is found in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Moving to a Francophone perspective, both the *Centre National d'Études Spatiales* and the European Space Agency launch the majority of their rockets from the *Centre Spatial Guyanais*, a spaceport in French Guiana. The headquarters of the Canadian Space Agency (*l'Agence spatiale canadienne*) is in Saint-Hubert, Quebec.

Canada, France, and Spain have made major contributions to the International Space Station (ISS). This immense orbiting structure itself stands as a powerful symbol of international cooperation and human ingenuity. Astronauts from all three of these countries have been to the space station to work on a number of projects. Claudie Haigneré of France, for example, was the first European woman to visit the space station in 2001. Pedro Duque of Spain led the *Misión Cervantes*, which included both scientific experiments and outreach to young Europeans, aboard the ISS in 2003. Franklin Chang-Díaz, a Costa Rican native of Latino and Chinese heritage, worked for NASA for many years and flew several missions on the space shuttle. There are at least seven other U.S. astronauts of Latino descent who have made voyages into space.

When children are learning about the parts of a house, you can describe and compare the different parts of the ISS



or the Chinese *Shenzhou 5* spacecraft. Children will surely love comparing and contrasting meals, sleeping, and other daily routines on Earth and in space. The life support systems of these wondrous machines could also be described with simple phrases and used to emphasize the basic needs of people, such as water and oxygen. The lives of famous astronauts can help

students acquire vocabulary to talk about their own lives. Intermediate and advanced students can debate whether space exploration is a valuable endeavor or a waste of money.

Moving beyond humanity's limited forays into outer space, world language classes can review the vocabulary related to weather and climate by looking at conditions on different planets in our solar system. Popular culture in Chile, Mexico, Puerto Rico, France, Canada, China, and many other countries contain attention-grabbing UFO stories as well. Cultural connections on the subject of UFO fascination can certainly be found between the United States and other target language countries. I have asked my students to imagine what life could be like on other planets, then create their own extraterrestrial—describe it, place it in a home on a planet of their choosing, and present it to the class. Nearly every child's desire to share his or her creation with the class overcame any apprehension about speaking in Spanish in front of twenty or so children.

## Conclusion

I hope these suggestions reassure you that science content in the world language classroom can be a useful strategy to get children talking and creating meaningful language that they will be able to use once they leave your class. As you think about how these concepts will work in your classes, please remember that you do not have to take a graduate course in paleontology, zoology, or astrophysics in order to make these themes work in your classroom, since the main goal of our classes is always language acquisition. These creatures and machines will bring immeasurable enthusiasm and excitement to your instruction.



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## Online Resources

**Bilingual Families Connect** ([www.bilingualfamiliesconnect.com](http://www.bilingualfamiliesconnect.com)) offers advice and resources for parents who are raising bilingual children of any language. Topics include approaches, resources, myths and research. Parents discuss the challenges and joys of raising bilingual children in the forum.

Anaclea Kathleen "Kathy" Siddons lists internet resources for Spanish teachers. She also has a section of activities to learn about to César Chávez.



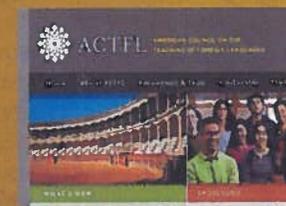
**Ask Asia Kids** ([www.askasia.org/kids/](http://www.askasia.org/kids/)) is a new site just for children. Most of the activities are in English, but the Chinese pictogram game and the Japanese cognate games offer an introduction to language concepts. There is also a section on basic Chinese.



**International Reptile Conservation Foundation** ([www.ircf.org/projectheloderma/](http://www.ircf.org/projectheloderma/)) Project Heloderama works to save the Guatemalan beaded lizard. The web site contains a photo gallery and data about the lizard's life and habitat.



**American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages** ([www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)) The *Five-minute Linguist* reviewed in the edition of the journal and the revised national standards are available in the publication section of the ACTFL web site.



**We Love Spanish** ([www.welovespanish.com](http://www.welovespanish.com)) offers a range of bilingual and Spanish books, audiobooks, music, videos, software, electronic toys and magazines. The section of materials and responsive customer service making shopping a pleasure at this e-store.



**Grammar Girl** podcasts a weekly show with quick and dirty tips for writing better in English. Catch up on previous topics at <http://grammar.qdnw.com/>. Are you thinking about submitting an article? Listen to Grammar Girl to know when to use *which* or *that*.



# CHILDREN AND ART:

## UNCOVERING CULTURAL PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES THROUGH WORKS OF ART IN WORLD LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Dr. Jennifer Eddy, Queens College, City University of New York

"Anything you do, let it come from you--then it will be new. Give us more to see."

Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine in "Move On" from *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984)

### Introduction

The lyric above and the entire play capture how art uncovers and reveals truths while engaging us in change, not only in our understanding of our world but also in the personal process of creating new ideas or works of art from that inspiration. In our lifetime, recursive themes reprise and resurface, allowing us to spiral concepts, skills, and lessons learned, which we apply to different contexts and adjust to new situations. It is this flexibility and high adaptability that are required when faced with new situations in a culture. Predictable rules and rehearsal do not help us understand language and culture; it is exploration, participation and reflection that form new connections and experiences via continuous interaction along the life of the learner. The arts provide us with intentional engagement which creates a relationship involving a response to the art: our experiences, perceptions, concepts, and understandings within the art. Perspectives and ideas essential to a given culture can be uncovered in ways accessible to the youngest learner, prompting further inquiry and changes in perception. Those ideas can then be transferred or transposed through performance assessment. Works of art are culturally authentic materials made by and for the culture (Galloway, 1998) and like any authentic text, are essential in designing authentic performance assessment (Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, & Swender, 2003).

### Aesthetic Education

Maxine Greene states that the aesthetic experience is "brought into being by encounters with works of art" (2001, p. 5) and "a conscious participation in a work, a going-out energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed" (2005, p. 125). One of the goals of the aesthetic educational process is to engage teachers in a work of art, linking it and other human experiences, including social, historical, and cultural contexts (Greene, 2001). *Aesthetic Education* guides teachers to create these encounters with works of art for their students within a standards-based curriculum design (Fuchs-Holzer & Noppe-Brandon, 2005). Connecting to a work of

art through an aesthetic experience enhances the capacity of the young learner to construct meaning, resulting in expanding the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962). This process allows the teacher, and subsequently the young language learner, to explore ideas through multiple points of view (Holzer, 2005), expect unknowns and be flexible to them, and then transfer this understanding to performance tasks and activities that support the work of art and deepen inquiry into cultural practices and perspectives. (Eddy, 2007)

### Uncovering Content via Cultural Practices and Perspectives

The model, *Uncovering Content* (UC ADAPT), aligns our standards to the *backward design* framework (Mc Tighe & Wiggins, 2005) so that language instructors can unpack the standards and shift focus from textbook coverage to performance (Eddy, 2006a). The stages in the model are: assessment, design, alignment, performance and transfer.

UC ADAPT (Eddy, 2005, 2006a, 2007), is a curricular design model that reveals cultural practices and perspectives within recursive topics and themes as the focus of performance assessment evidence and selectivity of knowledge and skills. This design model uncovers content by unpacking the culture standard first, because cultural response to those topics in our syllabus drives the curriculum. Next, the communication standard determines the mode of assessment evidence. We use that standard and the three communicative modes to design the performance assessment task. From there, the teacher can make informed decisions on the knowledge and skills needed for that assessment and the instructional strategies and methodology that best match the desired result. UC ADAPT stands for Uncovering Content: Assessment Design Aligning Performance and Transfer. (Eddy, 2007) UC ADAPT also speaks to a feedback system which helps teachers plan to adjust, continuously informing their practice through assessment evidence.

Backward design (understanding by design) is a well-known design framework for many disciplines, but its adaptation to foreign language curriculum and assessment design with this particular alignment to the standards is unique (Eddy, 2006b). Backward design suggests that curriculum should be designed with the following steps:

1. Identifying desired results with key understandings and sustained inquiry in mind
2. Determining evidence and assessments students will perform to demonstrate those results along with the knowledge and skills particular for that assessment (Eddy, 2006)
3. Selecting the learning experiences and resources to guide students toward the performance goal (Mc Tighe & Wiggins, 2005)

Because the assessment evidence is responsive to and demonstrative of the desired results set forth initially, the teacher has an honest account of what learners are able to do. This further informs practice, defining content and sequencing for subsequent classes and levels. Applied to language teaching and learning, these tenets lead specifically to the understandings we want learners to have and continue to develop across their lifetimes, and to what authentic performance should look like. (Eddy, 2007) Even with the standards, instructors may fall prey to a textbook driven curriculum. Or, abandoning the textbook, they are tempted by the all-you-can-eat buffet of content, a potpourri of activities, thinking about assessment last. Teachers need to create performance-based assessment. Textbooks may not enable teachers to make the paradigm shift that the standards require to make effective curriculum and assessment decisions. The result is that language is assessed and taught through textbook driven, coverage laden, and activity based methods, with no anchor for knowledge and skills, and vocabulary and structures are memorized in isolation (Eddy, 2005).

## The 5 Cs in 3-D

The standards (National Standards, 2006) are presented as: *Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities*. In *Uncovering Content* the culture standard comes first through the *Enduring Understandings* and *Essential Questions*. Culture drives the curriculum, providing the focus for *Uncovering Content*. (Eddy, 2007) To identify the desired results, ask questions to examine a unit theme and develop a line of inquiry: What do you want the learner to remember about the culture? How does this culture respond to ideas on family life, leisure time, personal identity, or meal taking, and in this case, through a work of art? If this were a story from the culture, what would be the moral of that story (Eddy, 2006a)? This refocuses the line of inquiry from facts or products to cultural practices and perspectives.

The communication standard tends to be misunderstood as content, grammar, and vocabulary. Since in this model communication determines the mode of acceptable evidence and is the backbone of our assessment system, we treat it in stage 2 of backward design, when performance assessment built around works of art comes into play (Eddy, 2005). With *Uncovering Content*, culture and the arts from that culture are at the forefront of unit design. Lowenfeld (1952) stated that in order to understand a culture we need to look at its works of art and the different circumstances and factors—social, cultural, and scientific—that led to the artist's intent when creating the work. Those connections hold the most compelling evidence in understanding the time period that fostered

the culture as well as the culture itself. In this model,

Critical thinking skills are essential to widening the cultural lens, encouraging flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, willingness to change one's mind, and asking the *why, who, when, where, and how* of a culture. The learner hones these skills by connecting personally to the work of art and creating new interpretations of the art in performance tasks. The culture standard of products, practices, and perspectives informs the enduring understandings and essential questions by highlighting the non-negotiables of a unit theme. Find these themes when selecting a work of art. Why did the artist choose these colors, sounds, body movements, rhythm, light, or voice for this work? What do learners notice about these elements?

The culture standard drives the curriculum. To develop enduring understandings, we will ask what the target culture thinks, feels, says, or how it responds culturally to a unit theme or concept (Eddy, 2006b). By addressing the culture standard first and designing understandings and essential questions about that theme, three important things occur:

- The teacher focuses on **what is truly worth understanding**, e.g., the concepts, the "moral" of the story, allowing for careful decisions on what assessment will demonstrate that understanding. The enduring understandings and essential questions have tremendous implications for assessment and function like a curricular sieve. Teachers become more selective in terms of what knowledge and skills are required for that assessment, thus reducing the amount of unrelated material. The content and skills are there, but they have been carefully chosen to move the learner closer to understanding the core concepts, addressing the standard and realizing a performance goal (Eddy, 2006b).
- The learner assigns **purpose and coherence** to the knowledge and skills later needed for the assessment, rather than trying to recall skills in isolation.
- The learner automatically *engages the standards of Comparison, Communities, and Connections* which demonstrate the cultural interpretation of the unit theme. Underlying themes reveal cultural practices, products, and perspectives over time, allowing for comparisons of cultures and application of this interdisciplinary content to real life contexts. This further facilitates the assessment system because the best evidence of learner understanding will be with tasks that require learners to use their repertoire of knowledge and skills in situations they are likely to encounter in the target culture (Eddy, 2006b).

## Works of art as culturally authentic material for performance assessment

As explained above, culturally authentic materials, texts, audio, and visuals are the tools for meaningful student responses and should be used for designing performance assessments. For our purposes all works of art, visual and performing art, are culturally authentic materials if they have been made by and for the culture. Culturally authentic materials:

- Are essential components in creating the interpretive mode tasks
- Provide the learner with a tangible representation of the understanding and essential question
- Enable the learner to infer and create meaning

Two questions that guide the instructor are: *How will I use works of art as authentic content?* and *How do I create performance tasks that demonstrate transfer for our students?*

Choose works of art that examine a cultural practice or perspective, a response to a particular theme, or a big idea of your unit. A line of inquiry (Fuchs-Holzer & Noppe-Brandon, 2005) guides the instructor to develop curriculum and performance tasks around the work of art. The line of inquiry can examine a design element in the art such as space, people, colors, light, activity, rhythm, call and response musical patterns, and movement. Design activities before your students engage the work of art, so that they can connect to it personally while devising their own aesthetic choices in response to your questions. Have students experience the work of art several times before the performance assessments. Close with an oral or written reflection and questions that remain about the work of art that bring the instruction back to the understandings and essential questions. To summarize:

- Develop a line of inquiry that correlates to a theme within your unit.
- Create pre-viewing or pre-listening activities that will allow students to connect personal elements to the work of art.
- View the work of art.
- Assess for understanding with three modes of performance assessment.
- Have students reflect on the work of art (Davis & Eddy, 2006).

In this design model performance assessment shows evidence of transfer (Eddy, 2006b). Transfer is the use of knowledge and skills in new or unanticipated situations and contexts (Mc Tighe & Wiggins, 2005). It requires inference, negotiation of meaning, and creation of new meaning; not just facts and completion of a drill. This kind of assessment will require learners to take stock of what they know and are able to do, and to use that repertoire appropriately in a given situation. This means that the learner understands that situations change and flexibility is essential.

What does true performance look like? Consider what happens anytime we communicate. Interactions are non-scripted, information is missing, ideas are not filtered, language is not concise, and vocabulary is not adapted. People must sift through anything they hear or see to get precisely what they need to solve a problem or create something of value (Gardner, 1993). These are characteristics of tasks or assessments that simulate what it is like to be “in the game” or doing whatever the subject is in real life. It is not drill or mastery of facts. The knowledge of isolated pieces is not an indicator of real-world success or performing well in the game. Drills have their place, but the game is not the sum

of the drills (Mc Tighe & Wiggins, 2004). Without transfer tasks, the learner will not be able to develop the flexibility required when faced with unexpected situations in the target culture. Transfer is the hallmark of a well designed performance task in a language class (Eddy, 2006b).

The communication standard guides the assessment system and determines the assessment mode and the performance evidence. Therefore, it is treated in stage 2 of the framework: determine acceptable evidence (Eddy, 2007). The Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) prototype (Glisan, et. al., 2003) shifts from rote memorization and four skills in isolation to authentic performance, moving learners through the three modes via tasks that can connect to a common theme and the chosen work of art. The three modes of the communication standard are:

- **Interpretive:** students discover the appropriate cultural and/or linguistic meaning by listening, reading, and viewing culturally authentic materials. These can be text, advertisements, menus, and schedules; but also can be sculpture, song, theatre, dance, film, painting, or any art media made by and for the culture. Students make connections between existing knowledge and new information. These tasks are not synonymous with translation.
- **Interpersonal:** interactive communication between pairs or groups of students or native speakers that engages in active negotiation of meaning by listening, speaking, and writing in unrehearsed spontaneous exchanges, using information from the previous interpretive mode task that may have used a work of art as the culturally authentic material. This does not mean activities where students know in advance how they will respond, or oral interrogation of grammar forms.
- **Presentational:** communication involving a single student or groups of students to create and present a piece orally or in writing that has been refined, rehearsed, or planned with some anticipation, i.e., reports, essays, surveys, poems, dance, visual art, songs, journals, or plays that recreate the work of art or a theme embedded in the work of art. (Eddy, 2007)

### Examining a work of art within a unit theme

Keeping with the theme of leisure, consider the following understandings and essential questions:

- *People spend leisure time in groups of all ages.*
- *Cultural traditions can play a role in how we spend our leisure time.*
- *What does a typical day off look like?*
- *How do we spend our leisure time?*
- *How do I see the people in my world? How do I see myself?*

Themes such as leisure, community, science, art, perception, colors, and emotions can be uncovered at different de-

velopmental stages with the same work of art. Consider the painting and the inspiration for the libretto quote at the beginning of the article, *Sunday afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat (Art Institute of Chicago, 1884-1886). It provides many lines of inquiry with different elements, people, action, practices, and perspectives that children will notice. The different age groups spending time together at the park is obvious. Older children can revisit this painting and notice different social classes spending leisure time at the same spot.

Consider pre-viewing activities that draw upon the students' background knowledge and their response to the essential questions and your line of inquiry. What small works of art, short play, or scene might they construct to prepare for viewing this work? After they experience the work, what performance tasks will take them deeper into the messages you want them to understand. For interpretive mode tasks, young learners can categorize colors, characters, actions, log their "noticings" on a graphic organizer, and circle and organize elements of the art with key vocabulary. With this information, they can compare the characters and their actions at the park with a partner, asking questions in the interpersonal mode. For presentational mode tasks, they can create a collage, change the genre of the work and create a short play inspired by the painting, or write a brief poem with the new vocabulary. Using works of art within the context of cultural practices and perspectives allows vocabulary and skills to connect with themes that recur in the student's language study.

The benefits of music in education are well known (Jensen, 2000). Culturally authentic songs and lyrics can be integrated into all levels of the curriculum. This art form need not only be used for appreciation of a particular musical genre or as a listening, cloze activity. Songs can be aligned to a theme, line of inquiry, concept, or social issue that appears in the curriculum. Performance assessment yields student products that draw upon their understanding of the lyrics and transfer interdisciplinary concepts, knowledge, and skills. These tasks ask students to solve a problem, reflect, or create a product (Gardner, 1993) from their understanding of the lyrics and the cultural messages they represent.

Music and lyrics help students learn about other cultures, their influence on musical genres, and the practices and perspectives of the cultures that influenced the artists and their work. They apply what they learn about this music to better understand the communities that influence the blends of sounds and genres throughout the world. In this way, students expand their idea of music and understand various cultural communities through a much wider and inclusive lens (Eddy, 2006).

What do you want the students to "take away" from the song and remember about the message or the culture(s) that created the song? What would that understanding look like? What evidence do you want to see from your students that they understand the messages and ideas conveyed in the

song? Now develop a few pre-listening activities—tasks where the students can predict or brainstorm from the theme. Next design the kinds of tasks that enable skills to transfer to application and understanding. In designing performance assessment, your song selection will be the culturally authentic material that guides the learner and provides the motivation for all subsequent tasks. The learner will react to the song, make inferences, list, organize, and listen for the main idea or key details (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). Using vocabulary from the lyrics, students use strategies such as circumlocution, finding cognates, and developing metaphor to work at the meaning of the lyrics and the message behind the music. Open-ended questions do not require students to recall facts in isolation, but to use critical thinking, planning, synthesis, and reflection to prepare a product, presentation, or performance.

The best presentational mode assessments are tasks that lead to a product or performance destined for a specific audience and a situation or opportunity that actually occurs in real life. For example, students write a mini screenplay using a song as the title track, or they complete a survey that deals with particular issues within the song. Maybe they diagram similarities and differences expressed in the song. Perhaps it is a brochure on cultural practices of a place represented in the song, or a short diamanté poem that retells the issue in the song, blending new and previously learned vocabulary (Eddy, 2006). The following list is a sample of performance tasks using music. When students hear music as a work of art connected to a theme or message in your unit, the vocabulary and skills will have purpose and cohere to recurring ideas in the curriculum. These are entirely adaptable and could be used with any song and many other culturally authentic materials.

- Ask questions about artist's intent.
- Write a spoof, parody, or skit based on a song.
- Propose solutions with a classmate on issues presented in a song.
- Change the genre and write a poem based on a song.
- Gather photographs that match situation, action, or themes and give them captions.
- Be a song or art critic.
- Create a story board.
- Design a museum exhibit.
- Change the ending to a song.
- Write new verse.
- Write a movie or theatrical plot based on a song, painting, or photograph.
- Film an original music video for a song.
- Select an object to match the meaning of a word, phrase, or entire song.
- Conduct a survey or poll.

- Create a list of main ideas and match them to phrases in a song.
  - Write a letter to the person in a song.
  - Compare a song track with another song you know with a similar theme.
  - Create an advertisement.
  - Persuade the person singing.
  - Draw a cartoon strip on the topic of a song.
  - Construct a game of the products, practices, and perspectives of the culture.
  - Listen to a song and put illustrations in order or number the pictures.
  - Record an on-air talk show.
- (Eddy, 2006)

## Conclusion

The best advantage for learning through visual and performing arts is the ability to extend the learners' understanding of themselves and their world while guiding them to create meaning and extend their range of self-expression. By connecting to works of art, language and culture come alive to ignite inquiry and active learning. The arts define and transmit culture, dissolving barriers of religion, race, geography, and class. Works of art assert a reciprocal relationship between the learner and the painting, film, song, play, sculpture, or dance. This interaction yields new creations and performances shaped by the learner's interests, point of view, and social experience that shorten the creative distance between the artist and the child.

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# INSECTS: An Interdisc

Heather Leger

I began teaching French in the lower school (grades 1-3) three years ago, after teaching grades 7-12. What a change! I have enjoyed every minute. In contrast to the constraints of following a textbook-based curriculum, I have been able to create my own course of study for my students. My goals were: teach them vocabulary which is relevant and useful to their particular age and experience level; make learning fun and easy; get them communicating; build on what they learned in previous classes; connect to other disciplines and the school community; and incorporate authentic songs and other materials. For the past two years, I have been building a curriculum to meet these goals.

I have taught first and second graders the skills to talk about a theme they love, animals, and extend the vocabulary to talk about themselves and other people. In grade 1, I only see the students once a week for 30 minutes. As a result, their instruction is limited to animal names, habitats, and some general descriptive adjectives. Classes in grade 2 that meet twice a week for 30 minutes are conducive to a deeper look into the animal theme. It is at this level that I have seen the most growth in my students. They absorbed everything I taught them and wanted more. Last year, the students reviewed animals and habitats that they had learned in first grade and added body parts, nature-related vocabulary, more habitats, descriptive adjectives, and actions associated with animals.

This animal topic was very successful for the students but I wanted to take the second graders further. Was it possible to connect their current curriculum in science and other subject areas while still keeping true to my goals for them in French? *Mais oui!* (But yes!) The idea for a unit on insects emerged from my discussions with the science teacher about her curriculum. The unit I created has become the perfect segue for my original unit on animals. Once I decided what language functions I wanted my students to learn in French, I connected it to the current science curriculum in second grade.

## Content

I wanted the students to learn the names of some of the most basic and well-known insects. I chose sixteen insects from the science curriculum plus a new group of seven for their cultural significance, such as the cicada. We then explored actions that might apply to these insects (fly,

swim, etc.) as well as their basic body parts (wings, eyes, etc.). This provided a great opportunity to teach such scientific cognates as *abdomen*, *mandibule* (mandible), and *thorax* and reinforce the definition of "insect." When they began the insect unit in science class, they were bursting to share their knowledge of French (and their amazing accents) with the science teacher and provide scientific clarifications in French class to me. The science teacher met this collaboration with such enthusiasm it spilled over into the art classes. The art teacher crafted a new species of insect which included all the anatomical French vocabulary terms that the children had mastered. I chose this vocabulary carefully to spiral forward from the units on animals and people. I introduced language functions to describe the color, size and characteristics of the insect to reinforce and expand their knowledge of these insects (e.g., *dangereux*).

## Describing Insects

<i>dangereux</i>	(dangerous)
<i>petit</i>	(small)
<i>grand</i>	(big)
<i>gentil</i>	(helpful)
<i>méchant</i>	(nasty)
<i>il vole</i>	(it flies)
<i>il pique</i>	(it bites)
<i>il mange...</i>	(it eats)

## Practice

The following activities helped students practice communication skills (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) and learn about insects with hands-on activities.

### Interpersonal Communication

I introduced the insects orally with a picture and a gesture. Students repeated the word as well as the gesture. For example, *l'araignée* (spider) slowly comes down on someone's head, much like the spider in *Little Miss Muffet*. If a word seemed confusing or closely resembled another, I asked the students for help in finding a more memorable gesture, mnemonic device, or other word association.

After a few classes, the students could recognize most of the 16 insects by picture, gesture, or with a small hint. I would call out the name of an insect and students would

# Disciplinary Unit



choose the correct picture or signal the gesture. Children always enjoyed *la tapette* (the flyswatter) where they slapped the appropriate picture when I said the insect's name. In another activity, students would blindly choose an insect from *la boîte magique* (the magic box) and describe it by pointing to a part of the insect and giving as much information as possible about it in French. These novice level learners used mostly one or two word combinations in an appropriate way.

After learning *J'aime* (I like) and *Je déteste* (I hate), students pasted various insects onto a paper below those categories. Then they milled around the room comparing their preferences with their classmates: *Aimes-tu les \_\_\_\_?* (Do you like \_\_\_\_?). Once they found someone with a similar response, they wrote the student's name on that insect. Finally, I debriefed the students with oral questions and answers, e.g., *Qui aime les fourmis?* (Who likes ants?). With some prompting, students could respond with the information that they gained during the activity, thus practicing insects, preferences, asking and answering questions, and talking about others.

## Interpretive Communication

To help develop their reading skills, the students played a game of matching insect pictures with their written names. By relying on their experience hearing the words and their skills from a French phonics program begun earlier in the year, they were able to read and pronounce most of the 16 insects. We also used children's literature to explore the life cycle of the butterfly.

Students identified insects that fit into certain action verb categories (e.g., fly, sting) by placing the insect pictures into six boxes with identifying sentences. In another activity, students cut and pasted bug body parts to the corresponding French phrase.

## Presentational Communication

These second graders were still learning the basics of writing and spelling in English at the beginning of the year, so my expectations for their writing were limited. With proper scaffolding, they could make simple handcrafted books to present insects. Each page had a student illustration of an insect part with a simple written description. These clues helped us to discover the insect's identity, which was revealed at the end of the book.

In another mini project, the children drew an insect in the

middle of a piece of paper encircled by two sentences that gave its name and type. In the four corner sections they illustrated the insect's real or imagined abilities (e.g., The ladybug flies.).

## Conclusion

I have found content-based instruction engages my young learners. It connects subject areas far easier than I had imagined. It provides students with double the opportunity to practice what they are learning. This type of teaching also bridges a gap between colleagues.



Heather Leger is a part-time lower school French teacher at Applewild School in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. She has been teaching grades K-3 there for the past three years. Previously, she was employed as an 8th grade French teacher for over seven years by the Wachusett School District in Jefferson, MA. She has a bachelor's degree in French and Foreign Careers from Lehigh University, a master's in the Art of Teaching from Tufts University, and a master's in Education from Fitchburg State College. Her experience includes living and traveling abroad and teaching grades K-12, adult education, and homeschooled groups.



# A Young Researcher's Project Early Language Learning: An

Mary Lynn Redmond, EdD, Wake Forest University

## Background

In recent years, many school districts across the United States have included a senior project as one of the requirements for high school graduation. The State of North Carolina has established graduation requirements for students in all districts that include successful completion of a senior research project, beginning with the class of 2010. While districts in the state vary in their approach to project implementation, the criteria are the same: a research paper, a product related to the research topic, a portfolio that details the stages of the project, and a final oral presentation before a panel of judges. The purpose is for students to explore a topic in depth, and to use their oral and written communication skills to share their findings with the community.

Topics vary widely depending on the student's interests, e.g., involvement in community or service-learning activities, exploration of career opportunities, or developing a business venture. The research study, portfolio, and product are guided by the student's advisor or mentor; and the oral presentation is evaluated by the panelists. The project is designed as a performance-based exit evaluation that allows students to demonstrate 21st century skills that they have developed through the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study* (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2006a, 2006b).

In the fall of 2005 Eve Wallwork, a junior at David W. Butler High School in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (NC) School District, contacted NNELL to seek current research as part of her project on the field of early language learning. This district has required the senior project for several years, so it was already an established component of the students' academic curriculum. Eve completed her research paper in February 2006, and in October 2006 she did a presentation before a panel of teachers and community members (see [www.butlerhigh.net](http://www.butlerhigh.net) for Graduation Project Guidelines). In the following interview, conducted on February 6, 2007, Eve shared highlights of her study on early language learning.

## Interview

*What is the title of your project?*

The title is "Early Foreign Language Learning—Benefits of a Lifetime."

*Why did you select the topic of early language learning for your senior project?*

I became interested in early language learning when I studied Spanish as a middle school student. I found Spanish

to be fun because my teacher, Ms. Duque, did all kinds of activities in class that helped us learn to communicate.

When I got to high school, I realized how easy Spanish was for me compared to other students who were just beginning to take it. I also taught Spanish to the children I babysat who were ages five and eight. I noticed how quickly they picked up games and simple vocabulary. It occurred to me that a project on early language learning would be interesting and different, so I wanted to see what I could find out about how young children learn a foreign language compared to older learners.

*When did you begin working on the project and when did you finish?*

The project included deadlines and project checks for each component. I began the project in October 2005 and completed it on October 23, 2006.

*Describe briefly the components of your project as you carried them out.*

The project included four parts: a research study and final paper, a product that was an extension of the study, an oral presentation, and a portfolio describing the stages of the project. I completed the research component during my junior year. I read current research about early language learning in the fall of 2005, and my thesis was that young children can learn a foreign language more easily than adults. I completed my paper in February 2006.

For the product, I decided to make a book as a visual tool to teach basic Spanish. To test my thesis, I taught a group of teachers at Mint Hill Middle School on October 2, 2006, and a group of third graders at Reedy Creek Elementary School on October 9, 2006. I chose the third graders because they are within the prime age to learn a foreign language and they are also able to complete written activities. I chose the group of teachers because there were a variety of ages represented. The book included numbers, colors, greetings, and several cultural expressions used in daily conversation. I also created a handout that reviewed the Spanish I had taught and another that included some common stereotypes of Latinos. These were used as evaluations.

From this brief experience teaching Spanish to young children and adults, I found that the third graders did better on the language portion of the lesson than the adults, but the adults were better able to understand the stereotypes. For ex-



# Interview with Eve Wallwork

ample, I provided statements such as “Mexico is the only country where Spanish is spoken” and “All Hispanics have dark skin, dark eyes, and dark hair,” and asked both groups to respond “true” or “false” to each sentence .

***With whom did you share your project upon its completion?***

I did a 10-minute oral presentation on the topic before a panel of parents, teachers, and business people who live in the community. This was the part of the project that allowed us to share our research beyond the school. The panelists participated in a full day of presentations done by seniors. My speech discussed the process involved in my research, the teaching experience with the two groups, and the product I created.

I also shared the portfolio that we were required to complete. The portfolio included artifacts from the research study, including photos I made during the process, written reflections, and the handouts I used to evaluate the third graders and adults in the Spanish lesson I taught.

***Were you pleased with the outcome?***

Yes, I was very pleased with the outcome of my project! I made a 98 on the research paper and a 96 on the presentation!

***What are some of the most important findings from your research about early language learning?***

I believe that the earlier one can learn a foreign language, the more receptive they are to the language. By beginning at a young age, a child is eager to learn about other cultures and can become more open to others' ways of doing things. And, this experience will be very meaningful later on in life .

***Has your senior project influenced your thinking in any way about early language study?***

Yes, I realize how important it is to study a language for a long time, and that the earlier a child can begin language study, the better. My research and the Spanish lesson I taught showed that young children are very able to catch on to language and are eager to use it. It makes learning exciting for them and it's a positive experience!

***If you could share two or three important ideas from your project with parents, school administrators, legislators, and other stakeholders about the role of early language learning in a student's K-12 academic program, what would you say?***

I think that it is very important to study a language for many years in grades K-12 because that is how a student can get to the level of being able to communicate well and to understand about other cultures. It is very important to raise cultural awareness. Our state is one of the most diverse in the United States—with the increasing number of immigrants from other countries living and working in our communities. It is up to us to reach out to other people and to know more about their lives.

***What do you plan to do next year?***

Currently, I am a finalist for the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program. I hope to major in elementary education and minor in Spanish. I would really love to study abroad in a Spanish-speaking country while I am in college.

***What will you take from your project into your future plans?***

When I become a classroom teacher, I would like to teach Spanish to my students as a part of the regular curriculum. I would like to be in a school where I can encourage my fellow teachers to use their foreign language knowledge, whatever language they have studied, with their students so that we are all sharing culture and language throughout the school.

Eve Wallwork's study is available at [nnell.org](http://nnell.org)

## References

- Public Schools of North Carolina. (2006a). *Exit Standards Implementation Guide*. Raleigh, NC: Department of Public Instruction.
- Public Schools of North Carolina. (2006b). *North Carolina Standard Course of Study, K-12*. Raleigh, NC: Department of Public Instruction.



Dr. Mary Lynn Redmond is Associate Professor and Chair of the Education Department at Wake Forest University where she is Director of Foreign Language Education. She teaches K-12 methods and research courses and supervises Foreign Language Education students at the undergraduate and graduate level. She has taught French in grades K-12 and at the university level. She has served in many positions at the state and national level, including president of the Foreign Language Association of NC, president of NNELL and Executive Secretary of NNELL. She frequently presents at state, regional, and national conferences. Her scholarship and research focuses on K-12 articulation, curriculum design, technology, and literacy.

# Quick Takes

## Niños como yo

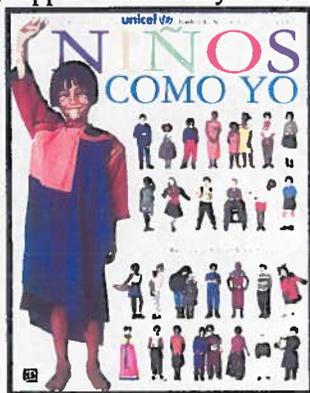


This UNICEF sponsored book shows children from all over the world who describe their lives in Spanish. Handsome photography captures the children, their homes, families, food, and clothing. Oscar from

Bolivia talks about his love of soccer. Omar from Mexico feeds his tortoise each morning. Erik from Spain dreams of playing in the NBA. Aseye from Ghana talks about her favorite doll. Guo Suang from China writes Chinese characters. Michael from Israel introduces his family. Suchart from Thailand leads you around his Buddhist temple home. All in comprehensible Spanish with many photos. Perfect for Early elementary immersion students, upper elementary FLES students, emerging readers.

Hard-cover book is available for \$19.95 from [www.welovespanish.com](http://www.welovespanish.com) in the shop by collection drop down menu.

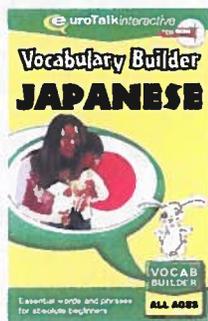
Strengths: Engaging children in photos, full of authentic photos, perfect for reinforcing early social study concepts



## Japanese Vocabulary Builder



This CD-Rom offers activities to learn basic Japanese vocabulary for places, professions, animals, prepositions, colors, actions, and animals. The learning mode presents a strip of vocabulary pronounced by both a male and a female voice. Three games test the ability to find a pronounced word and match it to its picture. My five-year-old tester requested the program several times without prompting and enjoyed re-teaching Japanese words to others. The software is suggested for ages 4 – 12, but it would also help student who need independent practice and learners of any age. Available for \$19.95 CD-Rom (Windows 98/2000/ME/XP and Max OS 9/X), Visit [www.euro-talk.com](http://www.euro-talk.com), but consider purchasing on Amazon.com where the purchase and shipping prices are favorable.



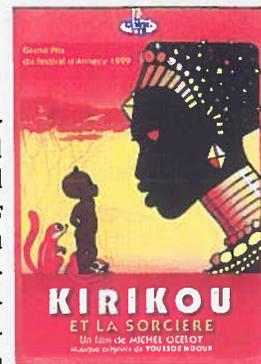
Strengths: Cartoon tiger offers help in 49 languages, works independent of native tongue, vocabulary illustrated with attractive cartoons, even pre-readers can work independently with the program

Strengths: Concise answers on starting a Chinese program, written by leaders in the field, including Vivien Stewart, Shuhan Wang, Greg Duncan, Marty Abbott, Mimi Met.

## Kirikou



*Kirikou et la sorcière* (Kirikou and the Witch) and *Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages* (Kirikou and the Wild Animals) are two animated films that take place in a Senegalese village. The hero is a precocious baby who saves his village with amazing feats of speed and intelligence. In the former, Kirikou matches wits with a mean and powerful woman. He ends up saving his village and, in a surprising turn of events, the witch. In the second movie, the fleet-footed Kirikou solves a series of problems when the village encounters animals such as a black hyena, a water buffalo with golden horns, and a giraffe.



*Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages* has close captioning in French. *Kirikou et la sorcière* lacks this feature but includes an audio track in British English. Michel Ocelot directs and illustrates the film; Youssou N'Dour provides the compelling music. The authentic legend offers many points of comparison with other cultures: village life, houses, clothing, drumming, food, marketplace and the unique West African story form. Please pre-view as authentic animation portrays semi-clothed children and women. You can download a sample permission form at [www.language-shaping.com/kirikou.htm](http://www.language-shaping.com/kirikou.htm). The video is best for heritage speakers, french language learners at the novice-mid level, ages six and up and students studying Francophone Africa



*Kirikou et la sorcière* \$30; *Kirikou et les bêtes sauvages* \$35, available from World of Reading [[www.wor.com](http://www.wor.com) or (800) 729-3703]; A sample permission slip and listening guide can be downloaded at [www.languageshaping.com/kirikou.htm](http://www.languageshaping.com/kirikou.htm)

Strengths: Concise answers on starting a Chinese program, written by leaders in the field, including Vivien Stewart, Shuhan Wang, Greg Duncan, Marty Abbott, Mimi Met.



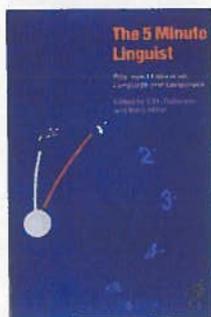
## Creating a Chinese Language Program in Your School

The Asia Society has produced an introductory handbook that identifies elements of a successful program, outlines practical action steps, and connects readers to professional resources. This attractive guide tackles issues such as *Which variety of Chinese should be taught?* *How to staff the program*, and *How to find funding*. The authors compare traditional, FLES, and immersion models, and address curriculum development. Case studies show how three schools created different Chinese programs. Perfect for school board members, educators and interested parents. \$19.95 Softcover Book (52 pages), Visit [www.askasia.org/chinese/publications.htm](http://www.askasia.org/chinese/publications.htm)

Strengths: Concise answers on starting a Chinese program, written by leaders in the field, including Vivien Stewart, Shuhan Wang, Greg Duncan, Marty Abbott, Mimi Met.

# The 5 Minute Linguist

Lori Langer de Ramírez



## Summary

*The 5 Minute Linguist: Bite-sized Essays on Language and Languages* is a compilation of two- to three page essays on a multitude of topics relating to language. The essays give answers to all those language questions that often seem too overwhelming to ask or too complicated to answer. But with chapter titles ranging from the ponderous (“Where does grammar come from?”)

to the cheeky (“Can you use a language to solve crimes?”) the book is both deliciously fun to read and seriously useful as a reference book for anyone—language professional and linguaphobe alike.

Based on the radio series *Talkin’ About Talk*, which was developed as one of ACTFL’s Year of Languages initiatives, the book includes versions of the original 52 broadcasts plus several new essays. You can still listen to the original radio broadcasts on the ACTFL web site ([www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)), but these transcripts offer something invaluable for any language enthusiast: solid information written in a clear, simple style. This is the information that we all scramble for when we are asked to present at a Board of Education meeting or when we need something comprehensible to share with administrators in support of our programs. Most research and scholarly articles are far too complex—or simply too long—to be valuable for advocacy or for non-language colleagues. This book is perfect for sharing with administrators, colleagues, and community members. It is both entertaining and informative in a non-threatening way.

Don’t let the “bite-sized” title fool you! The information is founded on solid scholarly works and the most up-to-date research in our field. “Suggestions for further reading,” a particularly useful element after each essay, includes full bibliographic references for those readers who want to delve into the topics addressed in each chapter.

This is the information that we all scramble for when we are asked to present at a Board of Education meeting or when we need something comprehensible to share with administrators in support of our programs.

## Topics

*The Five-Minute Linguist* is organized into overlapping groups of similar subject matter. The first half of the book centers on general language topics from the perspective of scientific linguists, such as:

- The nature of language (chapters 1–12)
- Language’s relationships with brain function and thought (chapters 13–16)
- The social context of language (chapters 17–25)
- The sounds of language (chapters 26–28)

The second half of the book is more loosely organized:

- Language learning and teaching (chapters 29–34)
- Miscellaneous articles on language in the United States (chapters 35–41)
- Language applications such as lexicography, translation, and forensic investigation (chapters 42–47)

Finally, the last chapters of the book include commentaries on specific languages and language groups such as “Is Latin really dead?”; “Who speaks Italian?”; and my personal favorite, “Do you have to be a masochist to study Chinese?”

## Conclusion

I enjoyed reading this book and have already shared many of the essays and references with colleagues and administrators. To chapter titles like “Can monolingualism be cured?” and “Can you make a living loving languages?” I would add one more question: “Can you resist getting a copy of the book to find out the answers?”

Rickerson, E.M. & Hilton, B. (Eds.) (2006). *The Five-Minute Linguist: Bite-sized Essays on Language and Languages*. Oakville, CT: Equinox.

# Bringing Language to Life

## Science Exploration and Inquiry in the

Amanda M.G. Seewald

Preschool and early elementary science provides engaging opportunities for integrated content-based language learning. This instruction uses the concepts of other content areas as a springboard for language acquisition and self-expression. It is through the active interpretation of content standards by foreign language teachers that the ideas and objectives of a curriculum come to life in the classroom. Content-based teaching that places value on learning styles and language acquisition motivates learners and reinforces their skills. This article provides interactive ideas for science learning in the early elementary language setting aimed at building student capabilities in both the content and target language.

### Why?

Research has shown the value of content-based instruction (CBI) for language acquisition in both foreign language and immersion classrooms. Hall Häley and Austin conclude that "...interactive learning opportunities with content and student collaboration in the classroom provide a means for handling more complex language" (2004, p. 8). CBI can create an educational environment that inspires exploration, risk taking, and open-ended learning in very young learners. "CBI promotes negotiation of meaning, which is known to enhance language acquisition (students should negotiate both form and content)" (*Content Based Language Instruction: What is it?*, n.d.). By organizing language learning around content concepts, teachers provide a springboard for later learning and skill development in both language and other content areas (Anderson, 1990).

### Immersion Programs

Immersion programs focus on teaching content and language simultaneously. This provides the ideal environment for learning to flourish.

When parents commit their children to a full elementary immersion program (K-6 in most cases) immersion students will not only do as well as children in English-only classrooms (with the additional advantage of being functionally bilingual at the end of seven years) but are likely to outperform monolingual students on standardized measurements of English language competency. More recent research indicates that immersion students are also successfully transferring content area knowledge from the target language to their native language (Miller, 1999 ¶4).

The most effective dual language immersion programs use "collaborative mirroring" where teachers find creative, interactive opportunities to reinforce and parallel what their partner is teaching in the alternate language. American Educational Research Association (AERA) research shows that overall language proficiency is dependent on immersion in the language with integration of subject areas, rather than an approach of learning solely for language mastery (AERA, 2006).

### FLES and Pre-School Programs

Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) programs can reap some of the benefits of immersion instruction with CBI. Although typical FLES programs meet for less time, the gap between content and language skills is much smaller than at the secondary level. Teachers in these programs can support learning by reflecting concepts from the other subject areas. Teacher coordination and cooperation also help heritage speakers and speakers of third languages. When heritage language speakers study content in their native language, it strengthens their understanding and self-confidence.

As states build world language programs for their youngest students, the curriculum standards reflect the importance of CBI. "Children are excited about their ability to understand and be understood in a second language and are encouraged to use language in activities embedded in authentic, real-life contexts and connected to content learned in other core areas" (N.J. Core Curriculum Content Standards, 2004, p. 2). The New Jersey Curriculum Content Standards mirror the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) National Standards in their emphasis on building language proficiency while supporting and building knowledge of other areas of learning. (ACTFL, 1996)

# Early Language Classroom

## How?

The National Science Education Standards include competencies in the following areas: science as inquiry, physical science, life science, earth and space science and technology, science in personal and social perspectives, and history and nature of science (National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council 1996). K – 4 science standards include concepts such as systems, order, and organization. These areas of study can engage early learners. Science lends itself to interactive and hands-on activities. Lucia French, associate professor at the University of Rochester's Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development, asserts: "Once children have seen with their own eyes and touched with their own hands, they are ready to do something with the information they have" (University of Rochester, 2000, ¶ 9).

Vocabulary can be made simpler and clearer with a multi-sensory approach based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983). When we invite learners to see, hear, sing, dance, organize, construct, discuss, and play with each idea, we open doors to learning that bolster language acquisition and inspire interest in the content area. This can happen even within the limited time and scope of many elementary language programs.

## What?

### Physical Science - The Five Senses

In the following activities, each of the five senses becomes an interactive center in the classroom that can be initially explored by a whole class, and later in groups to build comprehension. I have given examples here in Spanish, but you can adapt them to work in any language. These activities support the initiative to focus on "inquiry and investigation" as put forth by The National Science Education Standards. (National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council, 1996).

#### La Vista-¿Qué ves? (Sight - What do you see?)

In this activity, students have the opportunity to actively construct knowledge about color change and learn the way that sight plays an essential role in understanding. Have the students put on smocks and paint the colors of the rainbow using previously prepared paper, brushes, and paint. You can assess their comprehension of the colors by telling them which color to paint.

Ask them to note what happens when colors mix or are

painted on top of each other. Use phrases like "*Yo veo rojo*" (I see red) to tell them which color to use, and review the colors in the target language within the context of the activity. To demonstrate their understanding, have students say what colors they see. To focus on the way that our sight helps us remember, you can ask students to look at a partner's work and then move it out of sight after only a few minutes. Ask the students to try to remember all the colors in the other child's painting. This part of the activity will demonstrate the way that brain works with our eyes to create images and memories.

**Content reinforced:** observational skills, properties of objects and materials

**Intelligences used:** visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, verbal/linguistic, interpersonal

*El Olfato - ¿Cómo huele el objeto?* (Smell - How does the object smell?)

Give students "happy face" and "sad face" labels. Have them smell different items on a table, consider their opinion of each odor, and place their label in a corresponding spot on a chart marked "*Huele bien / Huele mal*" (Smells good / Smells bad). Ask students to express their opinion orally as they place the labels on the chart. When all the votes are in, have the class count the number of students who liked and disliked each *olor* (odor). Take the activity a step further by asking the students to smell an object that is not visible to them. This will give them the chance to make connections between the use of sight and smell.

**Content reinforced:** change, constancy, measurement

**Intelligences used:** logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal

*El Oído - ¿Qué oyes?* (Hearing - What do you hear?)

At this center, students are able to see several musical instruments. The goal of the activity is to help students experience the value of using their senses together to come to conclusions, so you can use all different types of sounds—not just instruments. As the students close their eyes, the teacher or a selected student plays an instrument. (For students with hearing impairments, this activity can be done using vibrations from the instruments.)

Have students tell which instrument they hear with "*Yo oigo* (I hear)..." It helps to pre-teach the names of the in-



struments in Spanish. The choice of instrument can reflect a culture of the target language, e.g., a talking drum from Senegal for French, or a seven-stringed zither for Chinese. Students can culminate the activity by taking part in a musical jamboree with the instruments. If actual instruments aren't available, you can use sound files from a computer with large illustrations

**Content reinforced:** properties of objects, skills necessary for scientific inquiry

**Intelligences used:** musical/rhythmic, verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial, interpersonal

*El Tacto* - ¿Cómo es el objeto? (Touch - What does it feel like?)

In this center, students touch five items hidden in numbered paper bags. Natural items such as pinecones, feathers and shells are especially appealing. Ask them, "*En qué bolsa hay algo suave?*" ("Which bag has something smooth?") They can work together to find the correct item. When they open the sacks to discover the items, have them describe the way the objects feel using the new vocabulary. It will be helpful to use *either/or* questions to jump-start the students' answers.

**Content reinforced:** properties of objects and materials, ability to distinguish between natural objects and those made by humans

**Intelligences used:** bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic, naturalist

*El Gusto* - ¿Cómo saborea? (Taste - How does it taste?)

There are two activities that you can use for this center. The first activity teaches the concepts and words in an actual tasting, using facial expressions and body language as reactions to each taste. (CAUTION: Be sure to check with parents regarding allergies prior to doing a tasting lesson.)

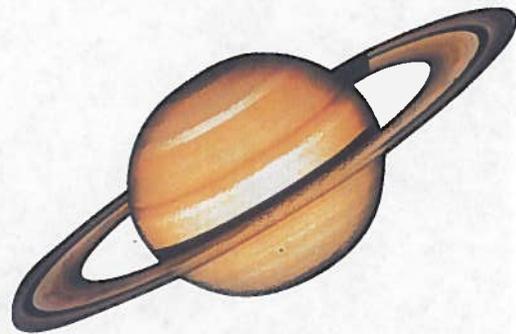
The second activity for "El Gusto" is a visual activity in which students recall the meanings of the descriptive words for taste. The words can be *dulce* - sweet, *amargo* - sour, *picante* - spicy, and *salado* - salty. Use a bottle of hot sauce or a chili pepper, potato chips, a lollipop, and a lemon. Create a sentence strip for each descriptive word and a matching picture (i.e., the word *salado* with a picture of potato chips). Also, bring actual foods. Cover the pictures on the paper, but not the words. Ask students to organize the foods using the words. For preliterate students, read each word. Once they match the foods to the description words, students can look at the covered pictures to check their own work.

**Content reinforced:** evidence, models, and explanation

**Intelligences used:** bodily/kinesthetic, logical/mathematical, verbal/linguistic, visual/spatial

## Earth Science - The Solar System

Students can learn about the Earth and its neighboring planets through simple rhythms or music, body movement, and visual depictions. Cut out samples of each planet on colored construction paper.



Take students on a visual tour by introducing each planet and placing it in front of the students in its celestial order. As you introduce the planet tell about it in the target language, and across each planet write a key phrase, e.g., *Marte - planeta rojo* (Mars - the red planet), *Saturno - planeta con anillos* (Saturn - the ringed planet). Then have students play the roles of the planets to create a living solar system by orbiting around a student acting as the sun. Show them how the planets revolve and rotate by moving them. For advanced learners, you can mark the floor using tape to discern one season from the next on Earth. Students can draw their own depiction of the solar system with black paper and colored chalk.

**Content reinforced:** Objects in the sky, changes in earth and sky

**Intelligences used:** visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic

## Life Science - Animals

This topic taps into a common passion of young students. Since much of children's literature portrays animal protagonists, you can find an engaging animal story to launch the lesson. Music or rhymes can help students acquire the language to discuss the animals. Most importantly, get your students out of their seats and acting out the animal movements and sounds. Finally, the students can create an atlas of all the animals they have studied. On each atlas page the students will draw or glue pictures that show where the animal lives, what it eats; and for advanced learners, one other interesting fact about the animal. Younger students can use the third space to draw their own depictions of the animal.

**Content reinforced:** Characteristics of organisms, organisms and environment

**Intelligences used:** visual/spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic

## Deductive Reasoning - Interactive Experiments

Building question and answer skills in the target language can ultimately help a child pierce communication barriers and move further up the proficiency scale. "The development of logical reasoning is inextricably tied to the development of language" (Morris, 2007 ¶ 2). Each science lesson created within a preschool or primary language classroom should include some type of kinesthetic discovery process for the students. These experiments can be as simple as mixing colors to create new ones, "*¿Cuáles son los colores que hacen el color...?*" (What colors make the color...?), or as extensive as drawing pictures to chart long-term plant growth. "Concrete experiences that require the use of children's senses, such as planting and watching a seed germinate, provide a strong framework for abstract thinking later in life" (Rillero, 1994 p. 2). These activities are essential as they provide the students with the framework for scientific inquiry, which grows with them and transfers to any area of study. "Deductive reasoning underpins everyday cognitive processes, such as categorization, as well as higher-order skills such as mathematical and scientific reasoning." (Morris, 2007 ¶ 1)

**Content reinforced:** Abilities necessary for scientific inquiry

**Intelligences used:** visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, interpersonal, verbal/linguistic, naturalist

## Conclusion

By creating a learning environment enriched with interactive opportunities for students to learn and recognize ideas they see in other areas of study, language teachers can become an integral part of a school's learning map. Content-based language instruction can help us demonstrate how essential language-learning is to our public schools. It can also inspire enthusiasm and desire in students to continue learning language, leading ultimately to a bilingual future for more children in our globalized society.

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# Discussion on a Listserv: What do foreign language teachers

Susan M. Hoyle and Ingrid Pufahl, Center for Applied Linguistics

"I am in a semi-rural area, the midcoast of Maine... I teach by myself, and though I have colleagues I can call, I sometimes feel isolated. Nandu helps so much because it connects me to a large number of teachers all over the country and abroad who willingly share their experiences and ideas. I have found out about curricula, teaching techniques, method books, useful picture and other books, music resources, promoting foreign language programs... and much more."

(A message from a Nandu member, 6/26/05)

Foreign language teachers in grades K through 8 are often quite isolated in their schools, with few opportunities for personal contact with their peers. At the same time, a growing public awareness of the benefits of early foreign language education and the promulgation of national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) have led to an increased demand for staff development. Research tells us that educators "learn more powerfully in concert with others who are struggling with the same problems" (Elmore, 2002, p. 190). Online technologies offer teachers a convenient forum in which they can access professional information, reflect on their practice, and engage in dialogue with far-flung colleagues.

Nandu,<sup>1</sup> a listserv for elementary school foreign language teachers, was designed to address the need for peer discussion and up-to-date resources. In this paper, we report on the findings of a small-scale study of what Nandu listserv participants talk about.<sup>2</sup> Analyses of postings during a six-month period showed that teachers use the listserv to resolve problems that they face in their daily practice, and when conflict arises, they resolve it amicably and (as they explicitly claim) learn from it. The findings of this study will, we believe, be of interest to practitioners and teacher educators who want to learn more about the day-to-day concerns of foreign language teachers in order to provide relevant resources and staff development.

## Background

The Nandu listserv was established in 1999 by the Center for Applied Linguistics, as part of the Technology and Foreign Language project of the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University. It provides a forum in which foreign language teachers can engage in sustained discourse with peers who share their interests and challenges and who offer suggestions and support for one another's classroom practices. The listserv has steadily grown to almost 700 members, mostly in the U.S., with approximately 220 new members joining over the past year, and about 35 unsubscribing. Between mid-July 2004 and January

2005 (a period covering preparation for a new school year and a half year of teaching), about half the listserv members posted at least one message, with about 60 members posting more than 10 messages each. Although the number of postings fluctuates considerably, on average about 15 messages are posted daily.<sup>3</sup> Information about how to sign up for Nandu membership and access to archived messages are available at Nandurl, the companion web site for foreign language learning in grades pre-K – 8, [www.cla.org/earlylang/](http://www.cla.org/earlylang/)

Electronic discussion on the listserv is asynchronous; that is, members do not see messages the minute they are posted, and they need not read or respond to them right away but may do so at their leisure. (This differs from the synchronous nature of, for instance, chat rooms, in which participants are all logged on to a site and exchange messages in real time.) Listserv messages are sent to members via e-mail; they can opt to receive them one by one or as a daily digest. In addition, messages can be read online in the public archives accessible via the companion web site. Subscribers can post messages whenever they like, without waiting for approval by the moderator, and anyone wishing to post a new message or reply to one can do so. Messages go to all members. The welcome message that every subscriber receives encourages people to share their "work, ideas, and questions with others interested in early-start, long-sequence language programs." It also asks that those who post messages give their postings an appropriate subject heading, keep postings related to the overall topic of foreign language education, and avoid directing messages to individuals rather than the group. The moderator keeps a low profile, providing information about new resources, dealing with technical questions or problems with the listserv, and when necessary, reminding users of posting guidelines.<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the main characteristics of Nandu with respect to technology, membership, and interaction, see Hoyle & Pufahl (2003, pp. 6-7).

## Theoretical Perspectives

Our analysis of listserv messages is based in linguistic discourse analysis (Johnstone, 2002; Schiffrin, 1994, 2006; Tannen, Schiffrin, & Hamilton, 2001). Discourse analysts assume that people use language as a means of performing actions and creating a social world, and they focus on how speakers or writers create meaning in context (Georgakopoulou & Gausson, 1997; Tannen, 1989; Wood & Kruger, 2002). The approach is primarily qualitative, with the analyst grounding interpretation firmly in the data—the actual utterances or writings of the participants in an interaction—and exercising caution when generalizing or abstracting. Recently, discourse analysts have begun to analyze not only speak-

# 12 Teachers talk about?

ling and traditional forms of writing, but also interaction carried on by means of computers (Herring, 1999, 2001, 2004).

In casual conversation, the content of people's talk is often secondary to concerns such as sociability or presentation of self (Coupland, 2000), and the same can be true when people interact over computers (Hamilton, 1998; Herring, 1995). However, in professional talk (like that on the listserv), content is central to contributors' purposes: Their goal is the exchange of useful information (Adger, Hayle, & Dickinson, 2005). In this paper, we are interested in a matter closely tied to content: what people talk about and how they collaboratively develop the topics of their online interaction.

## Method

As discourse analysis, we used a qualitative approach, supported by some quantitative findings. We scrutinized the linguistic features of the texts under consideration to characterize their structure and function in context, assuming that the analysis must account for the interpretation and understanding of the listserv participants themselves. In a discourse analytic framework, neither categories of analysis nor tools are imposed upon the data; instead, the data invite the use of particular analytical tools, and categories emerge through iterative inspection (Herring, 2004). In addition, the research question motivates both the kind and size of the data that are selected for further analysis.

## Data Sources

Our analysis draws upon more than 2,400 listserv messages posted during the period July 15, 2004, through March 15, 2005. From these, we selected postings that were of apparent high interest, as indicated by the number of replies they received. We defined the unit of analysis as the *thread*: an initial posting with a subject line (usually chosen by the original poster) and all subsequent replies under the same subject line. We identified for closer analysis threads that received more than 10 replies, as a way of operationalizing "high interest." In addition, we examined postings that occurred within the same time period to find other threads that were related (based on both subject line and content). Finally, we used the search function in our archive to identify other threads that were related topically. Explicit permission to quote was granted by those listserv members whose contributions are included here.

## Data Analysis

After selecting the threads that generated the most interest among Spanish Foreign participants, we performed a detailed

analysis drawing on tools from a range of fields important to the study of language. From cognitively oriented studies on discourse comprehension (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983), we took the analytical tools for identifying the topic or content of a thread and the individual listserv messages. From speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), we took the insight that discourse participants are at all times doing something—in our data they are often requesting or offering information, and sometimes agreeing, disagreeing, making arrangements, etc. Conversation analysis gave us the notions of sequencing and *adjacency pairs* (Sacks, 1995; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). An adjacency pair is a pair of utterances, such as a question and answer, that occur together and are understood together. Listserv members interpret whatever follows a question as an answer. Finally, the insights of interactional sociolinguistics (Schiffrin, 1994, chap. 4) allowed us to examine how listserv members attune to each other's conversational needs by providing abundant details.

Using these approaches, we developed a comprehensive framework for analysis to focus on two aspects of topics that always co-occur in listserv interaction: (1) *what* participants talked about (i.e., the propositional content of a thread) and (2) *how* they developed their ideas (i.e. how they converged upon a shared focus of interaction [Schiffrin, 1988]).

## Listserv Discussion

*What* participants talked about most often—the sort of information they sought from and provided to one another—fell into the following categories:

- *Teaching a certain topic or skill in a foreign language.* People routinely ask for (and give) advice on reviewing vocabulary or on teaching specific lesson units, such as numbers, days of the week, months of the year, holidays, and telling time. They ask for and provide help in designing particular units. One popular thread, for instance, has the subject heading "Need ideas for unit on Spanish for grades [preschool]-3"; other discussions are about a "market unit" and a "unit on school."
- *Translating.* Teachers often request help with foreign language expressions. Most often they want to know the Spanish (or French) word for an English term, but occasionally they ask for the meaning of a foreign language expression.
- *Curriculum and teaching materials.* Teachers ask and advise each other about textbooks for Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) classes, curriculum

Table 1

Nifty threads with 10 or more responses

Discussion Topics	# of posts on original thread	# of posts total topic	# of posters on original thread	# of posters total on topic
Spanish Song List	42	74	27	40
Partner Chants	34	45	21	23
Numbers to 100	19	44	12	26
The Letter 'V'	18	24	16	18
Songs for Months	17	17	13	13
First Days of School, Spanish	17	17	15	15
French Family Song	15	15	14	14
Vocabulary Review Drills	15	15	14	14
Word Ring	15	15	11	11
Spanish Family	14	14	12	12
Unit on Spain	14	14	8	8
Question for Native Speakers	14	14	11	11
Teaching Arrangements	14	20	11	12
<i>Día de los muertos</i> - age appropriate	14	14	11	11
Chants/Songs/Rhymes about Snow	13	13	9	9
Summer in Spain	13	21	11	16
Spanish FLES Textbooks	12	12	10	10
Spanish Names for K-1	12	12	10	10
<i>Las posadas</i>	12	12	10	10
Telling Time	12	12	10	10
Simple or Not So Simple Question	12	12	9	9
Days of Week	11	11	9	9
Resources for Latin Dances	11	11	6	6
First Day of school	11	11	9	9
Mexico Packets	11	11	10	10

materials for preschoolers, and titles and purchase information for books, songs, and craft materials.

- *Managing classrooms.* Teachers frequently discuss issues of classroom management, including how to handle the first day of school, how to motivate students, whether to give students names in the target language, and how to teach successfully when one does not have one's own class-

room but rather travels from classroom to classroom—a problem common to elementary school foreign language teachers.

The threads named here contain a total of 403 posts from 139 different people, with an average of 15.5 posts per thread. Each thread had at least seven participants, and at most 27, with an average of 11.5 participants. (Many people, of course, participated in more than one thread or posted more than once in a single thread.) In fact, the actual number of messages and participants was sometimes higher than this because discussion on a single topic was not always contained within a single thread. The threads labeled "Spanish song list," "Partner chants," "Numbers to 100," "The letter v," "Teaching arrangements," and "Summer in Spain" were part of larger discussions which grew out of, but were not confined to, the named topics. This is indicated in the table: For these discussions, the numbers in the rows labeled "# posts total on topic" and "# posters total on topic" are higher than in the rows labeled "# posts in original thread" and "# posters in original thread."

Identifying the topics of discussion, however, does not tell

room but rather travels from classroom to classroom—a problem common to elementary school foreign language teachers.

- *Professional development.* Listserv participants often exchange information about summer programs or workshops for teachers and pose questions about teacher licensing.

Table 1 lists threads that garnered 10 or more responses during the period analyzed. The numbers indicate that the questions posed were of interest to listserv members:

The threads named here contain a total of 403 posts from 139 different people, with an average of 15.5 posts per thread. Each thread had at least seven participants, and at most 27, with an average of 11.5 participants. (Many people, of course, participated in more than one thread or posted more than once in a single thread.) In fact, the actual number of messages and participants was sometimes higher than this because discussion on a single topic was not always contained within a single thread. The threads labeled "Spanish song list," "Partner chants," "Numbers to 100," "The letter v," "Teaching arrangements," and "Summer in Spain" were part of larger discussions which grew out of, but were not confined to,

the whole story about teachers' interaction on the listserv and what is important to them. Adding a second perspective—that of *how* people develop the topics that interest them—helps complete the picture. Thus we characterized discussion in terms of how much or how little the topic shifted. We found that discussions fall into three broad types: those with no topic shift, those in which the topic shifts slightly and becomes a bit broader, and those in which the topic changes dramatically, from an uncontroversial to a controversial one.

### Type 1 Discussions: No Topic Shift

The majority of discussions on the listserv fall into what we label Type 1, in which participants maintain the topic proposed by the original poster. The thread consists of an initial query and a series of responses. Typically, the original poster asks for advice about teaching methods or materials, and others provide it, offering teaching tips, names and descriptions of games and songs, the titles of relevant books, or links to web sites. The topic proceeds in a predictable manner, with everybody agreeing on the ideas discussed and the purpose of the exchange.

In all Type 1 exchanges, responses are straightforward and uncontroversial. They do vary in length. Sometimes a query elicits succinct replies, as illustrated in Example 1, where a question receives responses recommending a book and a web site. (In all examples, the spelling and punctuation of listserv messages have been preserved. Ellipses in square brackets [...] indicate that some material has been omitted.)

#### Example 1

Subject: Las Posadas - Does anyone know an easy way to make farolitos?

RE: Las Posadas - You can find directions for making luminarias out of paper lunch bags. /see pg 137 December BIENVENIDOS BY T.S. Denison & Co.

RE: Las Posadas - A really pretty way to make lanterns is as follows: <http://www.kids-domain.com/craft/lantern1.html> Hope this helps.

More often than not, however, participants' recommendations to one another are not at all concise. Instead, people explain exactly how to perform activities. Example 2 shows one of many responses to a request for a vocabulary review game for kindergartners; it is quite detailed.

Example 3 is a response that comes from another thread, in which a participant had asked for ideas for teaching Spanish numbers. It, too, is long and detailed.

In both the "buzz word" and "teaching numbers" examples, it is precisely the length and level of detail that make the responses informative and potentially useful for readers. The detailed information that participants offer one another—the very number and unwieldiness of their ideas—is necessary if that information is to be applied to concrete classroom situations. Just as details are crucial in stories that teachers tell in professional development sessions (Adger, Hoyle, & Dick-

#### Example 2

RE: vocab review drills

I play a game called Buzz Word. Put up pictures of the vocab you are studying on the overhead. Send one student out in the hall. The rest of the class (secretly) picks one of the words to be the "buzz word" and then the "exiled" student gets to come back into the room. He/she points to a word on the overhead and says it in the TL [target language]. If that word is NOT the buzz word the rest of the class says it back to him/her, and the turn continues with another vocab word. If it IS the Buzz word the class says "buzz" and the turn is over. I do this with my 8th graders and they love it. Since you use pictures instead of words, I think kindergartners could try it. Hope this makes sense!

inson, 2005), they are crucial in the listserv participants' suggestions. They rarely advise one another to just play, for example, "Go Fish"—and when someone did, another person admitted that she did not know the rules and needed instructions. Instead, they not only recommend games but also explain exactly how to play them, in order to make their contributions useful.

### Type 2 Discussions: Topic Widening

In the second type of discussion, the topic shifts slightly, so that not all responses relate directly to the original question. A discussion emerges that is broader than that envisioned by the original poster, though it remains on the same general topic.

Such topic shift occurs frequently in discussions about translation. One example is a thread with the subject heading "Spanish family." The original question appears in Example 4. Two posters quickly provide the required information: "tatarabuelo." At this point, the request for information has been fulfilled, and the exchange could end. However, the original poster follows up by asking about the word-formation rule that applies.

Initially the discussion in this thread focused on the translation of a particular word. The next poster, however, asks how to say "foster family" in Spanish. That is, she shifts and broadens the original topic. The new, larger topic of the thread is "expressions for family members in Spanish." Subsequent replies supply the term for foster family in various Spanish-speaking countries (which also answers the question as to whether the term exists). A specific request for translation has become a more general discussion about family expressions. Other threads about translation are similar, departing from the narrow path posed by the original question while sustaining an overall higher-order topic.

### Type 3 Discussions: Topic Change and Controversy

### Example 3

RE: Numbers to 100

More ideas for teaching numbers:

- 1) Matamoscas (flyswatters ...you can write the key numbers on the board) 5 min warm-up (not a competition, more like personal satisfaction) (¡Maten el número 40!)
- 2) Chicos y Chicas (Escriban el número 30, el número 30) Gana él que es más rápido y correcto (also about 5 min. or they get too crazy)
- 3) Olé (can go on as long as you can stand it ...I usually do 3 rounds of the class and give stickers to those still standing) For fifth graders who are reviewing numbers, you can do 3's and multiples of 3's. It will stump them. If that's really too hard, do 5's and multiples of 5's.
- 4) Cake Walk I actually use this for a fiesta outside, but not in this weather. It's in the book "Cuadros de Familia." If you have a classroom, or can use space out in the hall, either use sidewalk chalk or magic marker on an old sheet that you tape down. Write the numbers that you are highlighting. Put on music that makes them want to dance (chacha's and rumbas or salsa). Have one child in charge of putting CD player on pause. Another child is in charge of numbers. You say: Sacar un número. ¿Qué número es? Número 60. Vete a comer una galleta. ¡Música! and they dance around again until the next gets a cookie. If child doesn't know his/her numbers, could miss chance for cookie. If you want to do something cultural use the Goya cookies or make dulce de leche served on Graham Crackers (but very sticky).

Type 3 discussions are quite different from those mentioned so far. Here, someone challenges an implicit assumption that underlies a previous posting. Subsequent posters align on one side or another. As they do so, the original topic becomes overshadowed by a second one. The newly raised controversy is itself evidently of high interest, judging from the number of people who participate in the discussion.

Example 5 is a discussion that takes place over four days and includes 45 messages from 23 different people. It begins when someone asks for recommendations of Spanish chants:

The first reply supplies the words to a chant called *Arroz con Dulce*. The next one offers another chant that provokes a change in the discussion. The poster who had offered the chant writes again, apologizing for any offense but explaining her linguistic background and calling for understanding. From this point on, six more messages simply answer the original question—that is, that offer more examples of Spanish chants. But the main thrust of the discussion (34 more

### Example 4

Subject: Spanish Family

I have been teaching the unit on family. I know that the word for great-grandfather is *bisabuelo*, but I can not find the translation for great-great grandfather. Please help. ¡Mil gracias!

In English we keep adding "great" to the front when we keep going back. What is done in Spanish? How far back can you go? Thanks for your help.

abuelo= grandfather

bisabuelo= great grandfather

tatarabuelo= great great grandfather

??????????=great great great grandfather

??????????=great great great great grandfather

RE: Spanish Family

Tataratatarabuelo and as many times you need tatar you add.

RE: Spanish Family

Earlier last week I asked if anyone knows how to say foster family in Spanish. I didn't get any responses. Doesn't this exist in Spanish? Thanks for any help.

RE: Spanish Family

In Puerto Rico we use "Foster family" = Familia de crianza o Familia adoptiva.

messages) turns to the new issues that have been raised: cultural awareness, the appropriateness of using certain words, and whether context makes a difference to appropriateness. Not all the discussion takes place in the original thread; four more threads are started, probably because some posters realize that the subject line "partner chants" does not convey what they are now talking about.

In this discussion, then, the new topic is sparked when one poster takes exception to another's statement that seems to contain an implicit assumption. That is, implicit in the chant from Example 5 is the assumption that it constitutes an appropriate, unobjectionable answer to the query. When the contentious new topic arises, participants examine it thoroughly. After the original strongly worded objection, the discussion becomes cordial and academic. The positions advanced in the course of the discussion are:

- Words like *negrito* are not insulting but rather affectionate when used in Latin American Spanish. Posters who expressed this opinion agreed with the message in Example 14 (e.g., "I am from Cuba and I agree with you. It is part of the culture.")
- We cannot apply U.S. sensibilities to words from other languages and cultures (e.g., "Teaching a language is not just teaching words ... it is learning new sounds, expressions, and ways of seeing; it is learning how to act in another

## Example 5

Subject: partner chants

Does anyone have any partner chants (such as miss mary mack, patti cake) that are culturally authentic in spanish? Thanks.

[...]“Arroz con Dulce.”[...]

RE: partner chants

I use to play with this chant

En un convento

Borom-bombom

Había una negra

Borom-bombom

Con tres negritos [...]

RE: partner chants

Oh my goodness! How appalling and shameful! This chant might be acceptable and popular in Latin America but we certainly can not expose our children to this racism. I find the language offensive and humiliating. I pray that no one is using this song or any like this that offends other races in the classroom. Disgusted in DC

RE: partner chants

I'm very sorry if you got offended by these words. I had not intention to do it so. I'm from Argentina where a lot of people call “negra or negro” to our friends in a very affective way! I still have my nickname “negra”! I understand that there may be a lot of people like you who feel “disgusted” with the words but it'd be very nice to be open and try to find out what is good and why in other countries. When I posted this chant it never crossed my mind that it will be so offensive and humiliating because I used to play it all the time. And of course, now I understand that the meaning of “Negro” in Spanish is far from the English one!

I am very sorry to make you feel disgusted, humiliated and offended!

culture....”)

- Such words are indeed insulting and hurtful, even if they may be intended affectionately and even to native speakers of a variety of Latin American Spanish. Furthermore, other expressions typically used in some varieties of Spanish (e.g., *gordo*) are equally hurtful.
- The questions raised in the current discussion are valuable to us as teachers (e.g., “I have long wondered how [this] could be explored in the context of teaching Spanish in the cultural landscape of the U.S. [...] Do we bring [these issues] to young learners at all?”)

Controversial discussions of this sort arise infrequently on the listserv, but when they do, the amount of participation they elicit shows that they are of high interest to teachers. In

this case many people, including the one originally offended, wrote long, detailed, considered messages explaining their views and in the course of the exchange, some participants explicitly acknowledged that they had learned from it (e.g., “All the discussion has opened my eyes”). Controversial discussions offer participants the opportunity to argue from their personal and academic experience about issues central to their educational mission, discover complexities, and come to appreciate—if not agree with—divergent attitudes.

## Summary and Conclusion

Teachers, especially K – 8 foreign language specialists, benefit from access to a forum for exchanging information, experiences, opinions, and expertise with their peers. The amount of traffic on the Ñandu listserv attests to the interest that such an online forum holds for practitioners: They use it to request specific information, solve practical problems, exchange ideas with their peers, and sometimes air controversy.

We focused on postings that generated the most replies, assuming that the frequency of certain topics would indicate what types of information are of most interest to listserv members. We identified several content areas that listserv participants talk about regularly, including how to teach certain language skills or lesson units, how to locate appropriate teaching materials, and how to locate and assess professional development opportunities.

Discussions range from those in which the topic remains stable to those in which it veers off sharply, all of them providing a window into teachers' interests. In exchanges that consist of straightforward question-answer sequences, we see that teachers are ready, willing, and eager to help each other with their day-to-day practical concerns: by providing quick recommendations, by helping with translation while at the same time exchanging nuggets of cultural information, and by offering very detailed descriptions of classroom practices. In discussions that exhibit extreme topic shift, we see that in the course of solving practical classroom problems teachers may become involved in controversial issues. Controversy is not explicitly sought, but when faced with it participants are eager to voice their views and are open to modifying them.

This study speaks to the interests of educators, teacher trainers, and researchers who want to know more about the day-to-day concerns of practicing foreign language teachers in order to design professional development activities. Our analysis helped us enhance the resources provided on Ñandutí, Ñandu's companion web site, including compiling links to useful web sites. Teacher trainers can alert their students to the advantages of belonging to a professional community of peers who provide both practical and moral support, and to the feasibility of belonging to a virtual community even while working in relative isolation. Current and prospective teachers will find that listserv participation offers not only timely information, but also the opportunity to re-examine their assumptions through collegial discussion.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The listserv name Ñandu comes from the Guaraní language of Paraguay, meaning both "spider" and "to visit." The listserv is a companion to the Ñanduti web site, which is named after the Paraguayan hand-crocheted lace that looks like a spider web. The names Ñandu and Ñanduti were chosen because the spider and the spider web lace symbolize the interconnectedness of languages and cultures of the world and come from a country whose citizens are known for their bilingualism in Guaraní and Spanish.

<sup>2</sup>This article is based on work supported by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, under Contract Number ED-01-CO-0010, to the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University, a program of the Education Alliance, and conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics. A complete version of this research (Hoyle & Pufahl, 2005) is available from the Education Alliance's online publications catalog at: [www.alliance.brown.edu/db/ea\\_catalog.php](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/db/ea_catalog.php)

<sup>3</sup>Although teachers increasingly interact with their peers via electronic mailing lists and forums, relatively few quantitative data are available about such use. We found comparison information about the following listservs:

TESL-L, on issues related to Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language, has 31,293 members in 172 countries (December 2005) and an average of 5 messages per day ([www.hunter.cuny.edu/~tesl/about.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/~tesl/about.html)); FLTeach, on foreign language teaching (mostly high school level): 4400 subscribers, average of about 65 – 75 messages daily (Jean LeLoup, moderator, 2006, personal communication); National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), listservs for elementary level and middle level, with 28 and 56 members respectively, a total of 4 and 28 messages, respectively (August 2004-June 2006) ([www.ncte.org/member/community/listservs/119605.htm](http://www.ncte.org/member/community/listservs/119605.htm)); National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), Elementary Science, an online discussion forum with 79 threads, 135 posts (July 2005 – June 2006) ([www.nsta.org/main/forum/](http://www.nsta.org/main/forum/)); the elementary science listserv has 856 members, but no data about number of postings.

<sup>4</sup>Posting guidelines can be found at [www.cal.org/earlylang/netiquette.html](http://www.cal.org/earlylang/netiquette.html). Details about the textual indicators used for coding both text (propositional) topics and interactive topics at increasingly higher levels of abstraction can be found in Hoyle & Pufahl (2005).

<sup>5</sup>Details about the textual indicators used for coding both text (propositional) topics and interactive topics at increasingly higher levels of abstraction can be found in Hoyle & Pufahl (2005).



# Learning Languages

## Submission Guidelines

Learning Languages, the journal of the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL), serves the profession by providing a medium for the sharing of information, ideas, and concerns among teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of World languages. Learning Languages embodies NNELL's commitment to promote opportunities for all children to develop a high level of competence in at least one language and culture in addition to their own.

In an effort to address the interests of the profession, Learning Languages publishes both scholarly articles and invited features. Both types of submission must demonstrate the author(s)'s awareness of language learning theories and early-language learning classroom practices.

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Scholarly articles are evaluated by at least three members of the board of reviewers through a process of blind review. Reviewers evaluate these articles on the basis of content, originality, information accuracy, clarity, and contribution to the field. These articles are clearly identified as Refereed Article in the journal.

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tions to early language learning, etc.)

- *Theoretical* (e.g. guidelines for practical application anchored in the literature, etc.)

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Features are evaluated by at least two readers, one of which is a member of the NNELL Executive Board, and the editor. Features address subjects of appeal to early language teachers, administrators, researchers, and others interested in the early learning of World languages. They may include teacher-to-teacher advice on issues affecting the profession, descriptions of successful advocacy initiatives, or selected invited contributions on topics of interest to the profession.

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Authors are encouraged to enclose student work with their submissions. However, written permission from the student(s)'s parents or legal guardians must be sent to the editor before any student work can be published. Permission from the parent or legal guardian must include the student's name, age, school, and the teacher's name, address, telephone, and e-mail address (if available).

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