What is Structured English Immersion? Variations on a Theme
by Grace McField .......................... 2

Extensive Reading in English as Foreign Language by Adolescents and Young Adults: A Meta-Analysis
by Stephen Krashen .......................... 23

Story Telling Is the Bridge
by Fei-yu Wang and Sy-ying Lee ......... 30

A Note on the Rules of Grammar
by R. Joseph Ponniah ............................. 36

Research Paper Submission Guidelines
.......................................................................................... 38

The Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation: Dramatizing Students’ Lives in the Second Language Classroom
by Steven R. Sternfeld .............................. 39

An Introspective and Retrospective Diary Study of Extensive Reading: A Case Study of French Language Learning
by Shuhui Hong ................................. 71

I+J: How the Butler Can Do It.
by John Gilbert ................................. 78

IJFLT: A free on-line, peer-reviewed quarterly journal dedicated to communicating research, articles and helpful information regarding language acquisition to support teachers as they endeavor to create fluent, multilingual students.
What is Structured English Immersion? Variations on a Theme

by Grace P. McField
California State University, San Marcos

Grace P. McField is Assistant Professor of Multilingual/Multicultural Education at California State University, San Marcos.

Abstract
This paper is the second in a three-part series that examines structured English immersion (SEI), the instructional program mandated by California’s Proposition 227. The first paper examined the history of this program in the research base and compared this history to what is mandated in Proposition 227. In the second paper, descriptions of SEI offered by various state and federal educational agencies and research organizations are reviewed. Next, the implementation of this program in various districts following Proposition 227 is reviewed, revealing wide variation in program types operating under the same label of SEI. The third paper examines the research on SEI before and after the passage of Proposition 227. The main implication of the collective analysis is that future research on the effects of Proposition 227 needs to consider both the wide variation in program description and program implementation in assessing the impact of Proposition 227 in the state.

The Many Faces of SEI: Variations in 227 Interpretation and Implementation

How was SEI implemented in California’s schools upon the passage of Proposition 227? Some districts implemented SEI and did away with bilingual education altogether while some even refused to grant waivers to allow bilingual education. Other districts implemented SEI and also maintained some bilingual programs. The following is a review of the policy on SEI as articulated by state and federal agencies of education, a sample of districts across the state, and select research organizations.

State and Federal Descriptions of SEI

The California Department of Education (CDE, 2003) defines SEI as follows: “Classes where EL students who have not yet met local district criteria for having achieved a ‘good working knowledge’ (also defined as ‘reasonable fluency’) of English are enrolled in an English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with a curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language (ED 305 and 306 (a)).”

At the federal level, it is noteworthy that the National Center for Bilingual Education (NCBE, since renamed the National Center for English Language Acquisition, or NCELA) did not (2001), and NCELA (2001 to present) does not list SEI as one of the programs for ELs. However, NCELA does list Sheltered English / Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English / Structured Immersion / Content-Based ESL all together as a type of program model for ELs. It is also noteworthy that this federal level website does not clarify the difference between English Language Development for beginning ELs and Sheltered or Content-Area Instruction for intermediate ELs. The description for Structured Immersion provided by NCELA is as follows (2001).

- Language Arts instruction is in English.
- The program goal is English acquisition.
- Students can share the same native language or be from different language backgrounds.
- English is adapted to the students’ proficiency level and supplemented by gestures and visual aids.

Under the NCELA glossary (NCELA, 2006), there is a listing for SEI and it reads, “See Structured Immersion.” The entry for Structured Immersion reads as follows:

In this program, language minority students receive all of their subject matter instruction in their second language.
The teacher uses a simplified form of the second language. Students may use their native language in class; however, the teacher uses only the second language (Snow, 1986). The goal is to help minority language students acquire proficiency in English while at the same time achieving in content areas. Also SDAIE and SEI.

The above descriptions of Structured Immersion (NCELA, 2001, 2006) are notably different from Baker and de Kanter’s (1983) description of the program of the same name, which includes a bilingual teacher as well as a minimum of thirty to sixty minutes of L1 instruction per day (see paper #1 in this series, McField, 2006). No information on the history of Baker and de Kanter’s (1983) Structured Immersion is offered, and no mention is made of the role of L1 or the thirty to sixty minutes of L1 from the original description.

These state and federal descriptions of SEI do not fully address the key program components that need to guide effective English language instruction. As noted above, the CDE states that “(N)early all” instruction should be in English and makes a vague reference to comprehensible input but no direct reference to the levels of English language proficiency (CDE, 2003). NCELA makes some reference to levels of English proficiency. Neither CDE nor NCELA makes any reference to any amount of L1 instruction or support (e.g., preview/review in L1) or to a time frame for the duration of an SEI program or for English acquisition.

Yet this NCELA glossary is sure to be referenced by educational groups and other constituencies all over the country. For example, the glossary is used on the website for Color in Colorado (2006), a resource site funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education and dedicated to ELs. Accordingly, clarification needs to be provided on the NCELA chart for program models for ELs and elsewhere on the NCELA website concerning critical aspects that need to be considered in any program for ELs.

In the absence of clear guidelines at the state and federal levels, how did districts in California respond to the SEI mandate in Proposition 227? Below, the major key components of English language instruction are reviewed in conjunction with how SEI has been interpreted by districts in California.

**SEI Implementation in Sample California Districts**

The descriptions of SEI employed by various school districts in California reflect their own understanding and interpretations of Proposition 227. The following table shows the descriptions of SEI as operationalized by twelve districts in the state. In one case, Oceanside Unified operates two programs, SEI and Bridge, that meet the Proposition’s criteria for programs for ELs. Accordingly, both programs are included in the table. The table begins with a district implementing the most conservative interpretation of Proposition 227, no primary language use, and ends with a district implementing the most broad interpretation of the Proposition, a specified amount of L1 use in the classroom. Following the table is an analysis of major program components as articulated by the sample districts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description of Structured English Immersion (SEI)</th>
<th>Teacher Use of L1 (Teaching Assistants L1)</th>
<th>Student Use of L1</th>
<th>Instructional Time in L1</th>
<th>Level of English Learner</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- English is the language of instruction  
- A language other than English may be used in situations regarding the health, safety or welfare of students.  
- A language other than English may be used with parents to discuss school matters  
- A language other than English may be used in discipline and classroom management-related matters.  
- Students may use a language other than English for in-class purposes, recognizing, however, that English acquisition is the primary goal of the SEI program.  
- “…[S]tudents receive intensive instruction that has its focus the rapid development of English speaking, comprehension, reading and writing skills. Students also receive instruction in core subjects commensurate to their English ability level.”  
Bridge –“The Bridge program utilizes grade-appropriate content instruction that is modified by the teacher for English learners… The Bridge program provides for structured English language development (ELD) lessons that are appropriate for the identified English proficiency level of individual students.” Among the methods to be used include content-based ELD methods, grammar-based approaches, phonics/phonemic awareness strategies, and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), also known as sheltered instruction. | No.  
- However, L1 is allowed for health, safety, or welfare reasons, or in discipline and classroom management matters. | Yes. “All instructional and supplemental materials used by students are in English (p.9)” and “If necessary, teachers or instructional aides define words or repeat instructions in both English and the child’s native language (Glossary).” | Yes. | Yes, but amount of time not specified: “If necessary, teachers or instructional aides define words or repeat instructions in both English and the child’s native language (Glossary).” | Beginning and Early Intermediate levels. | “One or more years, depending on need.” |

---

**Research Index** • **Teacher-to-Teacher Index** • **Submission Info** • **Contact Us** • **Subscription Info**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description of Structured English Immersion (SEI)</th>
<th>Teacher Use of L1 (Teaching Assistants L1)</th>
<th>Student Use of L1</th>
<th>Instructional Time in L1</th>
<th>Level of English Learner</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Los Angeles Unified School District | Model A – This is a full English immersion program  Model B – This program is an English immersion program that also “provides limited primary language support.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | A – No.  
<p>| Capistrano Unified School District  Region: Orange County | “students in this program are in the process of acquiring the English language. Classroom instruction in English and a minimum of primary language support can be used. EL students are provided English Language Development (ELD) and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE).”                                                                                                                   | Yes. ‘A minimum of primary language support can be used. “                                                                 | Not stated.                                                                 | Yes, but amount of time not specified. “A minimum of primary language support can be used.” | Not stated.                 | Not stated. |
| Menlo Park City School District Region: Greater Bay Area. | In the structured English immersion program, classroom instruction shall be in English. However, clarification, explanation and support, as needed, may be in a student’s primary language.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Yes. “Clarification, explanation and support, as needed, may be in a student’s primary language.” | Not stated.                                                                 | Yes, but amount of time not specified. “A minimum of primary language support can be used.” | Not stated.                 | Not stated. |
| Murrieta Valley Unified School District Region: Southwest Riverside. | English language development is the primary focus of the Structured English Language Immersion Program. English is taught systematically and intensively, following the district-adopted core English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum. English language learners obtain access to the core curriculum through English; however, curriculum and instruction are modified to be more understandable to non-native speakers of English. Limited native language support is used for clarification and/or interpretation of key concepts. This program does not provide for the development of literacy in the native language as instruction is delivered overwhelmingly in English. | Yes. “Limited native language support is used for clarification and/or interpretation of key concepts.” | Not stated.                                                                 | Yes, but amount of time not specified: “Limited native language support is used for clarification and/or interpretation of key concepts.” | Not stated.                 | Not stated. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description of Structured English Immersion (SEI)</th>
<th>Teacher Use of L1 (Teaching Assistants L1)</th>
<th>Student Use of L1</th>
<th>Instructional Time in L1</th>
<th>Level of English Learner</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario-Montclair School District Region: Greater Los Angeles.</td>
<td>English Language Classroom: An English Language Classroom is a classroom in which the language of instruction used by the teacher is overwhelmingly in English, presented through Sheltered English Instruction. Sheltered English Instruction is comprehensible content-based instruction that recognizes the needs of the English Language Learner. An important component of this classroom is the implementation of the District adopted English Language Development program. Primary language support and materials should be made available. Student Outcome: English Language Learners will become fluent in English.</td>
<td>Yes. “Primary language support and materials should be made available.”</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
<td>Amount of time not specified.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Dieguito Union School District Region: San Diego.</td>
<td>Students receive primary language support in the SDAIE classroom through the use of bilingual instructional assistants, teaching materials in their native languages, and cooperative grouping of students based on native language.</td>
<td>Yes. “Primary language support... through the use of bilingual instructional assistants, teaching materials in their native languages.”</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes, but amount of time not specified.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Description of Structured English Immersion (SEI)</td>
<td>Teacher Use of L1 (Teaching Assistants L1)</td>
<td>Student Use of L1</td>
<td>Instructional Time in L1</td>
<td>Level of English Learner</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos Unified School District, December 13, 1999. Region: North County, San Diego.</td>
<td>SEI: “This primary focus should be accomplished through a systematic Structured English Immersion programs [sic] called ‘Preview-Review’. Under this program, teachers will be allowed the appropriate use of Spanish language instruction in order to preview the lesson that will be taught in English. Following the lesson, teachers will use the appropriate amount of Spanish language instruction to review what was taught during the lesson to determine whether or not the important conceptual development in English is occurring. During the daily 120-minute language arts period, all instruction in reading, writing, and spelling will be taught in English. The ‘Preview-Review’ in Spanish will be employed for the introduction of new concepts and for checking a student’s understanding. This process usually takes less than 15% of the language arts period. The remainder of the instructional day (190 minutes) will be presented in English only, a continuation of our current practice.”</td>
<td>Yes. “Preview-Review.”</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
<td>Yes. Less than 15% of Language Arts time.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos Unified School District, date unknown. Region: North County, San Diego.</td>
<td>Elsewhere, this same district also provides the following definition: Description of Programs Available to English Learners Less Than 10 Years of Age SEI (2002, December) – Students are in all English instruction with other students who are learning to speak, read, and write English. If the teacher is bilingual, he / she may introduce new concepts in Spanish and check for understanding after the lesson in Spanish.” Yes. “Totally in English instruction.”</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No mention.</td>
<td>Yes, but amount of time not specified: “Language Arts instruction is in English (Spanish may be used to give directions, to introduce a new concept, to check for understanding, or to offer an explanation to an individual student who didn’t understand a lesson.”</td>
<td>Not specified: “Students receive Language Arts instruction in groups with other students who are also learning to speak English.”</td>
<td>Not stated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of Programs Available to English Learners for Student Enrolled in Grades 3-4-5: SEI (2002, December)– where all students are totally in English instruction with other students who are learning English. This program is better known as the “Transition” program. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Description of Structured English Immersion (SEI)</th>
<th>Teacher Use of L1 (Teaching Assistants L1)</th>
<th>Student Use of L1</th>
<th>Instructional Time in L1</th>
<th>Level of English Learner</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| North County Professional Development Federation and San Diego County Office of Education (2002) Region: San Diego. | Instruction is overwhelmingly in English  
  • SEI is a 1-year program. Thereafter, the parent must opt in again with teacher recommendation; otherwise, the student goes into Mainstream English.  
  • *L1 support decreases each quarter:*  
    - Q1: 70/30  
    - Q2: 80/20  
    - Q3: 90/10  
    - Q4: 100/0 | Yes.                                                       | Not stated.                                                  | Yes. L1 support, ranging from 30% of the day during the first quarter, to 0% of the day during the fourth quarter of the first year. | Not stated. | 1 year. |

Note: All sources of the various districts’ program descriptions for Structured English Immersion can be found in the reference list.
**Teacher’s Understanding and Use of L1.** The majority of sample districts provided some L1 support or instruction as part of the SEI program, not as part of a bilingual education program, which includes comprehensible input or modified English instruction, L1 language arts, and L1 subject matter instruction (Krashen, 1996). While some districts consider preview/review not actual instruction, I would suggest that preview/review, or “clarification, explanation and support,” are indeed part of instructional time and instructional scaffolding. If preview/review and “clarification, explanation and support” are not part of instructional time and instructional scaffolding, what other function do they serve? Further, bilingual instruction by teaching assistants is considered “teacher instruction” since assistants are teaching in L1 (often in the absence of available bilingual teachers) and effectively facilitating learning. They are teachers to the ELs for all practical purposes. The table reflects this understanding.

**Student Use of L1.** The majority of sample districts do not address student use of L1 during instructional time.

**Instructional Time in L1.** Clearly, individual districts interpreted SEI with great latitude. L1 instruction ranges from 30% of the day in San Diego in the first quarter to 15% of Language Arts (18 minutes or fewer) in San Marcos Unified to L1 support, L1 teaching materials and cooperative grouping by native language in San Dieguito Union School District. Meanwhile, Los Angeles Unified, Capistrano Unified, and Murrieta Unified specify only that students are to receive “minimum” or “limited” L1 support or clarification, while Menlo Park provides L1 instruction “as needed” and Ontario-Montclair Unified states only, “L1 support and materials should be made available.”

**Level of English Learners.** Proposition 227 does not distinguish between SEI instruction for different levels of EL’s, and this lack of distinction is reflected in the majority of districts’ articulation of programs for this population. In the sample districts reviewed, Capistrano Unified and Oceanside Unified were the only districts to distinguish between an emphasis on ELD instruction in the initial stages of English learning and sheltered instruction in the intermediate stages of English learning (Krashen, 1991 -- see also discussion on this distinction in paper #1 in this series, McField, 2006). Oceanside Unified is the only district to have different levels of ELs in programs with different names. Students who score at the Beginning and Early Intermediate level on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) (CTB/ McGraw-Hill, 2002) are to be enrolled in SEI while those who score at the Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced levels are to be enrolled in a program called Bridge. As reflected in the above table, Bridge is essentially SEI under a different program label and targets intermediate and higher level learners.

**Duration of SEI.** Concerning duration of the SEI program, overwhelmingly, the sample districts did not specify a time limit. It would be difficult for districts to stipulate that ELs could only participate in SEI for one year as the Proposition intended since the vast majority of ELs take more than one year before they can participate actively in mainstream contexts and take several years before they are redesignated. In practice, most school districts have continued to place students in SEI for multiple years. For example, Oceanside USD places ELs in SEI for “one or more years, depending on need,” but has instituted another program, the Bridge program, for students receiving English language development instruction beyond one year of SEI or for students at the Intermediate, Early Advanced or Advanced levels. The Bridge program is to last “two or more years, depending on need” (Oceanside Unified School District, 2003, p. 5). This translates to a typical EL being in SEI for one or more years then enrolling in Bridge (SEI for Intermediate or higher level ELs) for two or more years, or a minimum or three or more years in SEI in Oceanside Unified.

Of interest is the fact that Oceanside Unified School District’s English Learner Master Plan (2003) states that Bridge is, “(I)n legal terms…an ‘English language mainstream classroom’” for those students that have acquired a “reasonable fluency in English (p. 11),” suggesting that Bridge is not SEI. However, as noted above, Bridge
is actually a modified program (i.e., SEI) for Intermediate, Early Advanced, or Advanced EL’s. Of additional interest is that the district’s Mainstream classroom is described as a program for Fully English proficient (FEP), redesignated Fluent English proficient (R-FEP), and English Only (EO) students and is also referred to as an “English language mainstream classroom (p. 14),” underscoring the suspicion that Bridge is not a mainstream English classroom.

Perhaps the ambiguous descriptions of Oceanside Unified’s Bridge and Mainstream programs are not surprising, in light of Proposition 227’s ambiguous use of “good working knowledge” and “reasonable fluency in English.” Proposition 227 states, “Once English learners have acquired a good working knowledge of English, they shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms.” The Proposition further states, “‘English language mainstream classroom’” means a classroom in which the pupils either are native English language speakers or already have acquired reasonable fluency in English.”

In summary, under Proposition 227’s SEI, the majority of sample districts provide some type of L1 support (ranging from 30% of the day to unspecified minimum or limited amounts). With the exception of two districts, the programs give little attention to the levels of English language proficiency and little information on the duration of either the SEI program or the length of time it takes to achieve full English language proficiency. Such a composite does not reflect the wealth of literature on effective instruction for ELs. What ELs need is a consistent, quality program with clear articulation of key instructional components for different levels of English proficiency built over a period much longer than the proposition-mandated one year.

Research Organizations on SEI
RAND on SEI and Sheltered English Immersion. Concerning research organizations, RAND (n.d.) uses the description of SEI directly from the language of Proposition 227:

The number of English Learner (EL) students enrolled in a structured English immersion setting is defined as follows: ‘Also referred to as sheltered English immersion…These EL students are receiving instruction through an English language acquisition process for young children in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with a curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language.’

It is disconcerting to see that such a reputable research organization using Proposition 227’s description of SEI without clarifying the critical components of English language instruction (teacher and student use of L1, instructional time in L1, or level of ELs, program duration, et. al). As in Proposition 227, RAND also uses SEI and Sheltered English Immersion interchangeably, whereas the literature and practice on these two programs are distinct (see paper #1 in this series, McField, 2006).

WestEd (1999) on Structured English Immersion, Sheltered English Instruction and Structured Immersion. WestEd (Linquanti, 1999), on the other hand, describes programs in a manner consistent with the literature on research and practice in English language development. First, contrary to Proposition 227’s synonymous use of Structured English Immersion and Sheltered English Immersion (emphasis added), WestEd (1999) describes Structured English Immersion, Sheltered English Instruction (emphasis added), and Structured Immersion differently.

Structured English Immersion (WestEd, 1999) defines the practice where, “Immersion education models initiate instruction in the student’s non-native language, teaching the second language and academic content largely
or completely in this language.” This description makes an important distinction between English language development and academic content instruction but makes no mention of the level of ELs, the time frame for the program, or the fact that academic instruction is typically effective with ELs at or above the intermediate level of English language proficiency. This description, in direct contrast to the description of this same program offered by AIR/WestEd in 2002 after Proposition 227 (see below), is not clear on the role of the native language and bilingual teachers who understand the students’ L1.

Structured Immersion is described in a manner that is partly consistent with Baker and de Kanter’s original description of Structured Immersion (1983). The original 1983 description includes both L1 instruction and bilingual teachers, whereas the following 1999 description includes no L1 instruction but does include bilingual teachers who understand bilingual students’ L1.

- Goal is fluency in English
- All students in program are English Language Learners
- Content instruction in English with adjustment to proficiency level so subject matter is comprehensible (such as sheltered English instructional methods)
- Typically no native language support or development (emphasis added)
- Sizable group of ELLs who speak the same language and are in the same grade; or:
- Diverse population of language minority students (many different languages)
- Teachers use sheltered instructional techniques to meet needs of ELLs
- Teachers have strong receptive skills in students’ primary language (emphasis added)

The description offered for Sheltered English Instruction (emphasis added) (WestEd, 1999) is as follows:

Teaching of grade-level subject matter in English in ways that are comprehensible and engage students academically, while also promoting English language development. Designed for English learners who have reached at least intermediate proficiency and who possess basic literacy skills (emphasis added). Method requires significant teacher skill in ELD and subject-specific pedagogies; clearly defined language and content objectives; modified curriculum, supplementary materials, and alternative assessments. Often used as a bridge between primary language instruction and placement in mainstream classroom.

For the three program descriptions WestEd offers (1999), then, there are more inconsistencies than similarities across the seven program characteristics. Following the literature base, Sheltered English Instruction is described with the most detail. Finally, the most notable distinction among these three programs is that SEI and Structured Immersion include bilingual teachers, whereas Sheltered English Instruction does not.

American Institute for Research/WestEd (2002 and later) on SEI and Sheltered English Immersion. American Institute for Research (AIR) and WestEd, in reports on the outcomes of Proposition 227 among a large sample of districts in California (Parrish, Linquanti, Merickel, Quick, Laird, & Esra, 2002 and Parrish, Perez, Merickel, Linquanti, 2006, Glossary) describe Structured English Immersion as follows:

Programs that use English as a means of instruction for content areas (emphasis added). **Structured English Immersion teachers have a bilingual education or ESL credential and understand the students’ first language** (emphasis added). In the law, ‘sheltered English immersion’ and ‘structured English immersion’ are used interchangeably.

First, AIR/WestEd’s (2002 and later) description claims SEI is simply content area instruction and excludes ELD from the description, contrary to WestEd’s (1999) description that distinguishes between ELD and content area instruction and includes both of these components. Second, the AIR/WestEd (2002 and later) description is
partly consistent with Baker and de Kanter’s (1983) original description of SEI, in that the teachers are bilingual; however, unlike the original description, L1 instruction is not included in AIR/WestEd’s description. Moreover, AIR/WestEd’s 2002 and later descriptions differ somewhat both on the inclusion of both bilingual teachers and L1 instruction components from one provided by WestEd (Linquanti, 1999), which is not clear on either of these points.

Meanwhile, the following AIR/WestEd (2006) glossary description of Sheltered English Immersion (emphasis added) is very similar to WestEd’s (Linquanti, 1999) earlier description of Sheltered English Instruction (emphasis added):

Programs that use English adapted to the students’ level of comprehension, along with gestures and visual aids, to provide content area instruction. This approach is often used for a class of students from varied native language backgrounds. In the law, “sheltered English immersion” and “structured English immersion” are used interchangeably.

For the three sets of program descriptions reviewed thus far, then, RAND’s description of SEI is synonymous with the description of SEI in Proposition 227, whereas WestEd has different descriptions for SEI, Structured Immersion, Sheltered English Instruction (1999), and Sheltered English Immersion (2002, 2006). In fact, WestEd has two different labels for sheltered teaching (Sheltered English Instruction in 1999, being consistent with the research literature and Sheltered English Immersion in 2002 and after, consistent with Proposition 227), as well as two different descriptions of SEI in two distinct periods (1999 and 2002 and after).

Center for Educational Opportunity on SEI. Another description of SEI is provided by the Center for Educational Opportunity (Gersten, 2000, p.9): “English immersion teachers generally use English in the classroom at least 70 percent (emphasis added)—and as much as 100 percent—of the time, teachers and students both may use a child’s native language for some purposes. A teacher might use Spanish, for example, in comforting a child or explaining a difficult concept or clarifying terms” (emphasis added). The wide latitude in the role of the bilingual teachers and L1 use in instruction included in this description is similar to what the substance of SEI programs are in practice, as revealed by the review of sample districts.

The above description of SEI (Gersten, 2000) is consistent with the same author’s descriptions of SEI in an earlier study (Gersten, 1985) touting the benefits of SEI: “Thus, lessons in math and reading, for example, are conducted in English, but at a level appropriate for the students. If necessary, teachers or instructional aides will define words or repeat instructions in both English and the child’s native language (emphasis added).” In the same article, he states,

The key to a (sic) structured immersion is that all academic instruction (emphasis added) takes place in English, but at a level understood by the student (Baker & de Kanter, 1983). At the same time, there are always bilingual instructors in the class who understand the children’s native language and translate problematic words into the native language, answer questions phrased in the native language, help the children understand classroom routines, show them the bathrooms, lunchroom, and playground, and so forth.

One can't help but conclude that there is an abundance of L1 language use in the context of a program called SEI. Moreover, Gersten apparently misunderstood Baker and de Kanter’s (1983) program description from the beginning. Baker and de Kanter (1983) clearly include 30 to 60 minutes of primary language reading, i.e., academic instruction beyond L1 use for clarification, in their original description of Structured Immersion. Yet Gersten (1985) directly cites Baker and de Kanter (1983) and erroneously claims, “The key to a (sic) structured immersion is that all academic instruction takes place in English.” Most importantly, according to the Center for
Educational Opportunity, then, regarding Gersten (1985, 2000), SEI has always included about 30% L1 use, both before and after Proposition 227. This is quite likely a surprise to most ELD researchers and practitioners.

A quick glance at SEI as described by three major research organizations, then, reveals some critical differences, in particular the inconsistencies concerning the inclusion of bilingual teachers and L1 instruction. Moreover of note is that the descriptions of programs districts implemented do not necessarily match WestEd’s (1999) descriptions of SEI, Sheltered English Instruction (emphasis added) or Structured Immersion, or AIR/WestEd’s (2002 and after) descriptions of SEI.

The wide variation in descriptions of SEI offered by various state and federal agencies, school districts and research organizations provides a mottled composite of SEI, the currently mandated program for all ELs in the state. Most importantly, as evidenced above, most state and federal, district, and research organizations’ descriptions of SEI do not clearly articulate the key components of effective instruction for ELs. Clearly, what is needed is a more consistent framework from which educators can draw in working to close the achievement gap and provide equitable instruction for the ELs in the state.

Summary and Conclusions

It appears that state and federal agencies, school districts, and research organizations all describe SEI with some latitude. This is true both before and after Proposition 227. As the review has revealed, state and federal educational agencies, as well as major research organizations, show different descriptions of SEI at different points in time. The descriptions all vary with regards to bilingual teachers, L1, ELD, and content area instruction, and level of ELs. Most do not include information on duration, the length of time for ELs to attain English language proficiency, and the critical necessity of sustained instructional support during this period.

After Proposition 227, the mandatory SEI program has clearly had a significant impact on the formulation, description and implementation of English language acquisition programs across California school districts. Proposition 227 required SEI, and districts responded with a wide range of programs called SEI that included unique combinations of what was known in practice: ELD and content-area instruction. Variation is the consistent theme in program descriptions, with up to 30% of L1 instruction cited, which is probably about the same amount of L1 instruction found in most bilingual education programs in this country. Indeed, AIR/WestEd’s five-year report on the effects of Proposition 227 (2006, p. viii) noted among the school districts in California, “(T)he lack of clear operational definitions for the various instructional approaches to the education of English learners.”

The current review may leave the reader wondering, does 70% English and 30% L1 instruction constitute SEI or “overwhelming use of English” as stipulated in Proposition 227? The answer, based on this review, is yes / no / maybe / sometimes (also see Table 2). The composite description of SEI that includes up to 30% of L1 during instruction is problematic for several reasons. First, the label SEI does not suggest that up to 30% of L1 instruction is part of this program. SEI sounds like and is billed as a program taught “overwhelmingly in English.” Second, how can L1 have the same role in two types of programs, English-only (e.g., SEI) and transitional bilingual education (TBE, the weakest model of bilingual education), programs that have been at great odds with each other in the literature for over thirty years? Yet the fact is that most bilingual education programs in this country probably consisted of about the same amount of L1 instruction as what is currently included in many SEI programs (see footnote 7). Is political ideology fueling and extending a long-standing debate concerning English-only and bilingual education programs, beyond consistent distinctions in the actual practice and instruction for ELs in classrooms?

A related question that may arise from the above review is, does SEI include ELD, content-area instruction, or both? SEI was not articulated in the literature prior to the passage of Proposition 227 and currently remains...
inconsistently articulated in the research literature, as well as in the Proposition, as demonstrated. Perhaps as a result of this collective vagueness in both the research literature and in the Proposition, SEI is also inconsistently implemented in practice as well, often used to refer to either ELD or content area instruction or both (also see Table 2) depending on the source or circumstance.

The question, “What is SEI?” has been explored in this paper. However, the context of SEI in practice is equally critical to the effective instruction for ELs. Perhaps the most important observation to be made is that modified English instruction such as ELD, sheltered instruction, and SEI are in fact critical components of bilingual education (Krashen, 1996). Modified English instruction and primary language instruction are both critical components in successful bilingual education programs. Unfortunately, few researchers articulate the critical role modified English instruction plays in both English-only and bilingual education programs. Perhaps this critical connection needs to be emphasized and made known more widely so that common ground can be nurtured among educators of different ideological backgrounds.

Most importantly, clearer descriptions of bilingual education and SEI programs need to be articulated, and the needs of ELs, not language ideologies must be made central to any coordinated and collaborative discussions of effective programs and instruction for this population.

**Implications and Recommendations**

Given that such a wide variety of programs are currently being implemented under the rubric of SEI, there are three main issues of concern. The first issue concerns the politics of program labels and descriptions. Although programs inherently have some flexibility (Edelman, 1988), what is at issue is the undue influence of the ideologies of researchers and practitioners, with ostensibly the same programs with up to 30% of L1 being called SEI or bilingual education, depending on the source or circumstance. More importantly, the results of this survey suggest that virtually all SEI programs include some L1, up to 30% in some cases; there appears to be a remarkable consensus that L1 does play a critical role in programs for ELs. Accordingly, the role of L1 in the instruction of ELs needs to be officially recognized for the vital part that it plays.

Second, any research on SEI needs to account for the great variation in program implementation, with attention to the significant ambiguities or inconsistencies concerning the differential use of bilingual teachers and L1. The present review reveals that there is a wide variation in program descriptions in the research literature, sometimes with different descriptions given for SEI by the same author (e.g., Baker in 1983 and 1999 – see paper #1 in this series, McField, 2006; e.g., Gersten in 1985 and 2000 above; WestEd in 1999, and 2002 and 2006) as well as variations or gaps in the descriptions offered by state agencies, federal educational agencies, and school districts across the state. Accordingly, any research on SEI must be clear, comprehensive, and consistent in terms of program descriptions, program implementation, and program evaluation.

The third critical issue is language policy; that is, of what the best instructional services for ELs should be comprised (e.g., SEI, bilingual education, or components thereof). California’s language policy is currently founded on political ideologies, not on classroom experiences and sound research. The one-year stipulation in Proposition 227 is a good example of this. Proposition 227’s lofty goals of all ELs becoming fluent in English within one year through the use of SEI not-with-standing, current research reveals that “the probability of an EL being redesignated to fluent English proficient status after 10 years in California to be less than less than 40 percent” (AIR/WestEd, 2006, p. ix).

Given the sparse description of SEI in place in the actual text of Proposition 227, as well as the ambiguous or inconsistent descriptions of SEI in place in school districts and in educational organizations, California’s language policy for ELs needs to be significantly modified to one that utilizes and authorizes the full range of
effective strategies and programs working together to effectively develop English among ELs. It is important to articulate goals for English language proficiency for ELs, but it is critical to also articulate all viable means to achieving stated goals, for only then can all students be truly provided with equitable opportunities to learn and succeed.

California’s policy of compulsory SEI limits what is and what is not included in the education of ELs. Yet the present review of the evolution of SEI, the latest program prescribed for ELs, has revealed a common discourse among subscribers of very different language ideologies, one that has continually included L1 in programs for ELs. The inclusion of L1 in effective programs of instruction for ELs by those of varied ideological orientations demonstrates that the three key components of programs that work for ELs are essentially ELD/ESL in the early stages and sheltered instruction in the intermediate and above stages, along with L1 in varying degrees. What appear to be different pathways for the same end of English proficiency are actually the same pathways under different names. Effective language policy may very well be found in programs that include the three key components of ELD/ESL, sheltered instruction, and L1 instruction, not in unilateral mandates of restrictive, prescriptive monolingual programs that have yet to be shown to be effective (see AIR/WestEd, 2006).
Table 2 - Program Descriptions Offered by Various State, Federal and Research Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Structured English Immersion</th>
<th>Structured Immersion</th>
<th>Sheltered English</th>
<th>Sheltered English Instruction</th>
<th>Sheltered English Immersion</th>
<th>ELD</th>
<th>Content area / subject matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCELA (2001)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>Yes. Content-based ESL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCELA (2006)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAND (n.d.)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>SDAIE.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WestEd (1999)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR / WestEd (2002 and after)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Content-based ESL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Educational Opportunity (2000)</td>
<td>Yes. Used interchangeably with Immersion and English Immersion (e.g., pp. 6-7, 9), as well as with pull-out ESL and ESOL (p. 12).</td>
<td>Yes (see p. 7).</td>
<td>Yes. Also SDAIE.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Yes. Also Sheltered Immersion (see p. 6).</td>
<td>Yes. Also ESL (English as a Second Language) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 3 - Descriptions of Structured English Immersion and Its Variations by State, Federal, and Research Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher L1</th>
<th>Student L1</th>
<th>Instructional Time in L1</th>
<th>ELD</th>
<th>Content area / subject matter</th>
<th>Level of English Learner</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Teacher L1</td>
<td>Student L1</td>
<td>Instructional Time in L1</td>
<td>ELD</td>
<td>Content area / subject matter</td>
<td>Level of English Learner</td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher L1</td>
<td>Student L1</td>
<td>Instructional Time in L1</td>
<td>ELD</td>
<td>Content area / subject matter</td>
<td>Level of English Learner</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In Center for Educational Opportunity (2000), some authors in the volume were more specific in their descriptions of SEI than others. Rossell was less specific than Gersten, who was in turn less specific than Munro. The analysis of this volume reflected in the table is a composite of the various interpretations or SEI.
References


English Language in Public Schools, California Education Code §§300-340 (Proposition 227, authored by Unz, R. & Tuckman, G. M., 1997).


In this paper, SEI refers exclusively to Structured English Immersion programs, not to other programs with the same acronyms, e.g., Sheltered English Immersion or Sheltered English Instruction.

The dates on the descriptions included herein vary, with most ranging from 1999 – 2003. Some districts’ description of SEI show change and development over time (e.g., Oceanside Unified School District).

The high incidence of L1 use was also reported on studies on the effects of Proposition 227. The two-year study, conducted by the American Institute for Research and West Ed (Parrish et. al, 2002, p. IV-9 through IV-11) found that 44% of the 75 surveyed districts in California needed additional guidance on the use of L1 in both instructional materials and in teaching. This report found that 68% of surveyed districts permitted L1 use for academic instruction, and 88% allowed L1 use for preview or review of academic instruction as well, with 48% using L1 with instructional aides. The report noted, “The regularity with which primary language use is reportedly acceptable in SEI settings seems to blur the distinction between these settings and bilingual settings. These findings suggest that there is almost no program model consistency across the state.”

English Language Development and sheltered instruction may be and are often used in the instruction of EL’s of all levels. However, ELD is more comprehensible for beginning and higher levels of EL’s, and sheltered instruction is more comprehensible for intermediate and higher levels of EL’s. The distinction between ELD and sheltered instruction in this paper does not mean that only ELD is used with beginning level EL’s nor that only sheltered instruction is used with intermediate and higher levels of EL’s.

Conversations with teachers in this district confirmed that SEI and Bridge are essentially the same program that targets EL’s of different levels (personal conversations, February 2006 and February, 2007, Oceanside Unified Schools).

AIR/WestEd’s 5-Year Report on the effects of Proposition 227 (2006, p. viii) also noted among the school districts in California “the lack of clear operational definitions for the various instructional approaches to the education of English learners.”

Edelman (1988) emphasizes the discursive practices of policy and the constraints it places on problem identification and solutions. Edelman (1988, p. 16) offers a helpful perspective of [SEI] policy as being continually shaped by the unique contexts of implementation: “ ‘Policy’ then is a set of shifting, diverse, and contradictory responses to a spectrum of political interests.” The examination of SEI herein is ultimately “a close analysis of items that do make the political agenda to see how the construction or representation of those issues limits what is talked about as possible or desirable, or as impossible or undesirable (Bacchi, 2000, p. 49).”

The last few meta-analyses in the field support this suspicion. For example in Rolstad et al (2005), Slavin & Cheung (2005), and Greene (1997), the majority of bilingual education programs that met the selection criteria were transitional bilingual education programs with durations of one to less than three years.

Of interest is the fact that AIR/WestEd (2002, 2006) did not utilize the familiar program labels such as SEI, transitional bilingual education, or English Language Development to analyze the effects of Proposition 227. Acknowledging that program labels are quite limiting and inconsistent with actual program implementation, they utilized the three categories of, “Continuing-bilingual,” “Transitioning-from-bilingual,” and “Never-bilingual” to study districts that either changed or did not change programs after Proposition 227 (Parrish et al., 2002, p. III-17).

These three components that were found to be critical ingredients for effective programs for EL’s by districts and researchers alike are all included in the critical three components for bilingual programs articulated in Krashen, 1996.
Abstract: A review of studies of extensive reading adolescents and young adults studying English as a foreign language revealed a strong and consistent positive effect for both tests of reading comprehension (mean effect size = .88 for nine studies) and cloze tests (mean = .73, 14 studies). Students provided with more access to reading (titles per student) did significantly better on tests of reading comprehension, but there was no relationship between access and performance on cloze tests.

Despite the consistently positive results of extensive reading programs, there still seem to be doubts as to its effectiveness: Study after study says it works, but very few language programs have adopted it. This paper takes another look at the research, focusing on studies of extensive reading using adolescent and adult students of English as a foreign language (1). Older EFL students are an appropriate group to study for both practical and theoretical reasons. Mastery of English is, of course, crucial for nearly all activities that involve any kind of international communication. Also, focusing on foreign language removes one potential confound: the easy availability of English outside the classroom.

There are two goals of this meta-analysis. The first is to determine whether free reading has an overall positive effect. The second goal is to determine the factors that contribute to the overall effect.

We will be able to accomplish the first goal, and take some steps toward reaching the second goal.

The studies examined here were all published in professional journals or conference proceedings. Studies were done in Taiwan (Yuan and Nash, 1992; Sima, 1996; Sheu, 2005; Hsu and Lee, 2005, 2007; Lee, 2005a, 2006; K. Smith, 2006, 2007; Liu, 2007), the Philippines (Lituanas, Jacobs, and Ranayda, 1999), Japan (Mason and Krashen, 1997), and Yemen (Bell, 2001).

In all studies, time was set aside for self-selected reading. Studies in which a significant percentage of reading was assigned are not included here (e.g. Lee, 2005b; Lao and Krashen, 2000), and only studies that included reading tests (see below) were included.

Two kinds of reading tests were considered, cloze tests and tests of reading comprehension. The impact of extensive reading was determined by computing effect sizes. The usual formula for the effect size is the mean of the experimental group minus the mean of the comparison group, all divided by the pooled standard deviation, based on post-test scores. This formula was used here, and when possible the effect of the pre-test was taken into consideration by subtracting the effect size of the pre-test from that of the post-test. The mean effect size for all studies is a measure of the overall impact of extensive reading.
Data on two factors that could influence the impact of extensive reading was included in the analysis: Access to reading material and duration of treatment.

**Access**

For first language development, access to reading material has been consistently shown to be a predictor of how much students read and how well they read (Krashen, 2004). In this analysis, book access was represented by total titles available to students, and the number of book titles per student.

**Duration**

Previous reviews have shown that longer SSR programs tend to be more effective than shorter programs (Krashen, 2001). Duration is included here in terms of the number of weeks, months or academic years the program lasted. This is a crude measure, because it does not consider the amount of time set aside for reading each day or week.

A number of other factors are undoubtedly relevant to predicting the impact of extensive reading programs, but their inclusion will await additional studies, when methods are developed for representing their contributions quantitatively.

**Results**

Table 1 presents data on access, duration of the program, and the results of cloze tests and reading comprehension tests.

Overall, extensive reading programs clearly produce positive effect sizes. All 13 effect sizes for cloze tests, and all nine effect sizes for reading comprehension were positive.

Table 1: mean titles per student and effect sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>titles/S</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cloze</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = number of studies
( ) = adjusted for sample size

For unknown reasons, sample size was negatively correlated with measures, with studies with fewer subjects producing larger effect sizes (for cloze tests, r = -.45, p = .11; for reading comprehension (r = -.81, p < .011). For this reason, weighted means were calculated, resulting in adjusted means of .73 for cloze tests and .88 for reading comprehension.

Details of the studies, as well as notes on effect size calculations, are presented in table 2. In some cases, effect sizes were calculated for each experimental group in a given publication, in other cases this was not possible.
Thus, the average values calculated here should be considered approximate. For studies with no results listed, it was either not possible to calculate effect sizes from the data provided or cloze tests or reading comprehension were not used as measures.

Table 2: Access, duration and effect sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>study</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>titles</th>
<th>titles/S</th>
<th>duration</th>
<th>ES Cloze</th>
<th>ES RC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yuan &amp; Nash, 1992</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sims, 1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sims, 1996</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason retakers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>one sem</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason Jr college</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason university</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason: response L1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason: response L2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lituanas et al, 2001</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell, 2001</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>142.9</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheu, 2003</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheu, 2003</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, 2005a</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsu &amp; Lee, 2005</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Smith, 2006</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, 2006</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hsu &amp; Lee, 2007</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Smith, 2007</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu, 2007</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>one year</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effect size = Cohen’s d.
All effect sizes take pre-tests into account (ES post-test – ES pre-test), except for Mason (Mason and Krashen, 1997) for reading comprehension which was based only on the post-test.
n = number of students in extensive reading group
titles/S = number of separate book titles per student
All Mason studies from Mason and Krashen (1997)
Mason: response L1 = students wrote summaries in Japanese; response L2 = students wrote summaries in English
Number of titles in Mason, response in L1, response in L2 from Mason (personal communication)
In Liu (2007) sample size and titles per student were calculated on the basis of students and titles per class. More than one class was involved in these studies. The Liu (2007) effect size is an average calculated from five experimental classes and 12 comparison classes over four years.
For Yuan and Nash (1992), the effect size in table 2 is the average of three methods of calculating the score (from the t-score of gains, comparison of mean gain scores, pre and post tests).

The reading comprehension test used in K. Smith (2006) also included usage and listening, and was given five months after the course ended.

In Sims (1996) two different experimental classes were used. The number of titles was estimated from the total number of books: 700 books were provided, and “most” were separate titles (Sims, personal communication).

Inspection of table 1 shows that there was little variability in duration in the studies in this sample. Most studies lasted for one academic year. Thus, duration was not examined as a predictor of effect sizes.

The relationship between total titles and titles per student was strong (r = .91). Thus, only titles per student was used in the analysis.

Titles per student was modestly correlated with cloze test effect sizes close to statistical significance (r = .35, n= 13, p = .12, one-tail). Because of the influence of sample size, a multiple regression was done with sample size and titles/students as predictors (table 3). The relationship between access and reading comprehension was not significant in this analysis.

Table 3: Predictors of effect sizes for cloze tests (13 studies): Multiple regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-0.016</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titles/S</td>
<td>0.0009</td>
<td>0.0045</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted r² = .067
n = sample size
titles/S = titles per student

Eight studies provided data for both reading comprehension and titles per student. In contrast to the cloze test results, the two were nearly perfectly correlated (r = .95). Because of the influence of sample size on scores of reading comprehension, the impact of titles per student on reading comprehension scores was investigated using multiple regression, controlling for sample size. As presented in table 4, number of titles per student was a highly significant predictor.

Table 4: Predictors of effect sizes for reading comprehension (8 studies)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>predictor</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>se</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titles/S</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.0033</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted r² = .91
n = sample size
titles/S = titles per student

According to these results, there is a strong impact of access: Setting the predicted number of students to the mean of the eight studies in table 2 (n = 33.3), doubling the number of titles per student (from 27 to 88) would increase the effect size for reading more than a third of a standard deviation (from .98 to 1.36).
Summary and Discussion

The clearest result of this study is that extensive reading is consistently effective. The average effect size for both measures was over .70. There were no negative effect sizes; the smallest effect size was .24.

The attempt to study factors contributing to successful extensive reading results has clearly only just begun. Data from eight studies using tests of reading comprehension showed that providing more titles per student had a substantial effect on the outcome of the study, but this relationship was not present for tests of reading comprehension.

It is surprising that even this much of a relationship between access and the effect of extensive reading was found, because so many other factors are probably at work.

First, access defined as titles per student, as noted above, is a crude measure. A modest number of books, if they are the right ones, can have a strong impact, and supplying large quantities of books will not help if the books are not interesting and comprehensible.

Also, as noted earlier, other factors undoubtedly play a role. These include
1. The duration of the program (Krashen, 2001).
2. The length of time and frequency of each reading session, i.e. massed versus distributed sessions.
3. The extent of comprehension checking: Krashen (2007) has hypothesized that more frequent and more detailed comprehension checking will result in less interest in reading and less progress in literacy development.
4. Whether reading is encouraged by the use of real-alouds, conferencing, and discussion, all of which have empirical support (Krashen, 2004).
5. Whether students are under pressure because of heavy academic loads and exams. Those in SSR programs do more pleasure reading on their own outside of class (Sims, 1996) and it is likely that this contributes to the success of the program. Pressure from exams and other courses can reduce the amount of time students devote to reading. According to student reports, this was the case in Hse and Lee (2007).

Conclusion

This review provides more evidence that in-school self-selected reading works. It must be emphasized that effect sizes were uniformly positive and typically quite impressive. In-school self-selected reading is effective and its effects are robust.

Note

1. There are, at the moment, not enough studies to warrant a meta-analytic review of extensive reading studies done with children acquiring a second language. All studies using children that we have seen, however, have produced impressive evidence for “the power of reading (Aranha, 1985; Elley, 1991; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Cho and H.Y.Kim, 2004; Cho and H. Kim, 2005), with the exception of Williams (2007).
References


with remedial reading students. In Y. M. Cheah & S. M. Ng (Eds.) Language instructional issues in Asian classrooms (pp. 89-104). Newark, DE: International Development in Asia Committee, International Reading Association.


The goal of second language education is to create autonomous language acquirers, students who can continue to improve in the second language after the course ends. There is growing evidence that an excellent way to achieve autonomy is to be involved in free-voluntary or “recreational” reading. A number of studies with different methodologies and done in different situations, confirm that self-selected reading is a powerful means of developing competence in all aspects of literacy, and studies also confirm that reading helps aural language development as well (Hedrick and Cunningham, 2002). In addition, free reading is something students can do on their own, continuing to improve, and will do on their own because it is so enjoyable (Krashen, 2004).

Three obvious conditions need to be met in order to help students develop a reading habit. First, they need access to interesting reading material. Second, they need to develop some enthusiasm for reading. Third, they need to develop enough competence to start reading. As they read, reading itself will supply the necessary competence for more advanced reading.

Trelease (2006) provides us with suggestions for meeting the second and third conditions. The first suggestion is, of course, the use of read-alouds. A number of studies confirm that read-alouds are an excellent means of developing reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge and thereby helping children develop competence in the written language. There is also good evidence that read-alouds stimulate an interest in reading. Children are more likely to select books for independent reading that teachers have already read to them. In fact, the title of one of these papers tells the whole story: “Sixteen books went home tonight. Fifteen were introduced by the teacher” (Brassell, 2003).

A second Trelease contribution is the idea of the “home-run” book. Trelease has suggested that in some cases it takes only one very positive experience to create a reader. (Trelease took the phrase “home run book” from Fadiman (1947), who wrote, “One’s first book, kiss, home run, is always the best.”) A series of three studies supports Trelease’s Home Run Book Hypothesis: Many children, it was found, can name the book that first got them interested in reading (Von Sprecken, Kim, and Krashen, 2000; Kim and Krashen, 2000; Ujiie and Krashen, 2002).

An additional factor of importance is the “series book.” Series books are books that utilize the same characters and often a continuous storyline in several volumes, such as the Nancy Drew and Harry Potter series. This shared background helps ensure comprehensibility and also stimulates interest, as listeners and readers get interested in the development of familiar characters.

Research also supports the use of series books. Lamme (1976) reports that good readers in English as a first language tend to read more books by a single author and books from a series. In addition, Cho and Krashen (1994, 1995) report considerable enthusiasm for reading and substantial vocabulary development among adult second language acquirers who read books in the Sweet Valley series. Also, Ujiie and Krashen (2002) report that the books children labeled as home run books and read more frequently were often series books.
We present below a formula that combines read-alouds, series books, home-run books, and free reading, stating the hypothesis explored in this study:

**Read-Alouds/series books > home run book > time and place to read books of interest > free reading habit**

The prediction is that read-alouds of series books can lead to a home-run book experience. When time and opportunity to read is made available, this in turn will lead to the establishment of a reading habit and autonomy.

English as a foreign language is a particularly important laboratory in which to test these predictions, because EFL programs have, in general, not been successful in developing autonomous second language acquirers.

**The Pupils and the Class**

Eleven “subjects” participated in this study, eight girls and three boys in an after-school class in Taipei. Seven had been enrolled in the class since grade 1, three started in grade 2, and one had joined the class recently. For all students, the class was their primary source of English.

The class met for two 90-minutes sessions per week and was taught by the first author. The first half of each session was conducted with traditional instruction, fulfilling the expectations of parents. The second half of the class, for the first three years, focused on storytelling and read-alouds, with supporting activities. In year four, ten minutes of sustained silent reading was added before story time.

**Story time**

Story time always captured the children’s full attention. Every time the teacher announced that it was time for a story, the children shouted their approval. This was in obvious contrast to their reaction to the “course work” they did during the first half of the class, which can only be described as “calm and cool” (see Feitelson, Kita, and Goldstein, 1986, for a description of similar enthusiasm for reading aloud in Hebrew as a first language).

The teacher’s procedure in the read-aloud sessions was straight-forward. She would first tell the children the name of the author and illustrator, and then discuss the cover of the book, which helped build some background knowledge of the story to be read.

The story was read primarily in English, but Mandarin was used occasionally to facilitate comprehension. The teacher used a variety of strategies that come naturally to those experienced in reading aloud to children. These strategies served to increase comprehensibility, clarify the meaning of unknown words, and also to encourage students’ participation in the act of storytelling (e.g. Snow and Goldfield, 1983; Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, DeBarysue, Valdez-Menchaca, and Caulfield, 1988). These ranged from simple labeling based on illustrations (“This is a llama”), asking questions (“Is David’s teacher angry?” “Who is Willy’s friend?” “What do you think the bear will do now?”), and expansions (“a straw. This is a yellow straw.”). Students were always very interested in the illustrations and were eager to share their reactions with the teacher and the other children. The teacher was always careful to give positive feedback to children’s responses to the story through praise or confirmation (e.g. “Good!” “You’re right!” “Good guessing!”).

After the reading, the children were asked to react to the story in some way. For example, they would show their reaction by drawing a picture of what they thought was the most interesting scene in the storybook, simply sharing their opinion of the story, or relating a similar experience about the events in the story that happened to them. These “book talks,” done in both English and Mandarin, were similar to those used by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) in their Book Flood project with children in the Fiji Islands.
The instructor noted the influence of the texts on their spoken responses. The children easily picked up words from the stories, (e.g. “hug,” “My mom is a supermom!”) and would also respond fluently with short phrases at the appropriate times (e.g. “Read it again!/ “It’s so funny!”/ “Clarence is so bad!”).

**Reading Materials**

Adults cannot always accurately predict what books children will like (Ujiie and Krashen, 2006). With this in mind, the teacher selected a variety of picture books that, from her experience, were likely to appeal to the children (See Appendix). Books were selected that could be read in one class period, not more than 25 minutes, and that contained vivid illustrations.

The teacher typically read the same book several times. The teacher’s experience was similar to that of many parents. Children love to hear the same book again and again (in contrast to adults).

The Appendix provides a list of some the books that were read to the children.

**From Listeners to Readers: Series Books Step In**

Having read picture books to these young learners for almost two years, in year three the instructor introduced series books. Consistent with the research, the students reacted very well to series books. When the teacher was unable to finish a complete story in 25 minutes, students were clearly frustrated and eagerly waited for the continuation the next day.

The first series book used in the class was from the Marvin Redpost series, by Louis Sacher. The protagonist in these stories is a nine-year old boy, and the stories deal with his school life. Our students clearly identified with Marvin, and after listening to the first Marvin Redpost book, *Kidnapping*, were eager for Volume 2, *Why Pick on Me?* This was a major turning point. The success of these two books encouraged the teacher to add silent reading to the curriculum after three years of reading books aloud to the children.

This was a great leap from listeners to readers. Specifically, at the beginning of each session, the teacher set aside a 10-minute sustained silent reading (SSR) session in which the children read chapter books on their own.

SSR was added as a regular in-class activity, not as a replacement of the read-aloud and other related activities. During silent reading time, students would read by themselves, either silently or softly reading aloud to themselves, and the teacher would walk around the classroom in order to be available in case students needed help. The collection available to students included books from the *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *Little Critter*, and *Sesame Street* series (e.g. *Elmo Loves You*).

The children were welcome to pose any questions related to the book to the teacher, who would help either by providing the answer directly in the first language or explaining the novel words in English.

The following anecdote illustrates the children’s enthusiasm for free reading: one day the teacher announced that the students were going to do role-play activities. Upon hearing this, one of the students asked loudly whether there would still be silent reading time after role-play, a request that was eagerly seconded by the rest of the class. Such enthusiasm is rarely seen in any activities in any language arts class.

**Discussion**

Creating autonomous readers is the ultimate goal of language education. In this study, read-alouds successfully brought the pupils to the stage of independent reading, confirming the hypothesis that reading aloud and silent reading are natural partners in developing enthusiasm for reading (Trelease, 2006). As noted in the introduction, the class followed the formula.
READ-ALOUDS/series books > home run book > time and place to read books of interesting > free reading habit

Read-alouds were the core of the class for all four years and clearly resulted in improved English competence and an interest in books. Children found the Marvin Redpost series to be compelling. This series provided a home run book experience for many of the children. The teacher realized that this had taken place, and provided a time and place for reading, a ten-minute SSR period each day. The reaction was extremely positive. Children clearly enjoyed the SSR time.

Of course, the formula is by itself not enough. The teacher also considered the following conditions to be essential to the students’ enjoyment of the class:

(1) The teacher demonstrated her own passion for and enjoyment of reading each time she read to the class. She dramatized the story in many ways, e.g. imitating sounds and voices and performing the movements in the stories.

(2) Class size was small, which allowed the instructor to have better interaction with the pupils and for the pupils to have a better view of the storybook.

(3) To make sure students could see the book clearly, big books were used and seats were arranged in a circle around the teacher.

We did not demonstrate in this study that all of these children went on to become dedicated pleasure readers in English, or that they all developed high levels of competence in English. What we have demonstrated, however, is that the conditions hypothesized to be necessary for this to happen were satisfied and that the children certainly appeared to be on their way to becoming readers and therefore autonomous acquirers of English.

These results should be enough to encourage educators in EFL to at least consider storytelling to be the initial and main activity in the EFL curriculum. It can certainly be no worse than the tedious curriculum now in use -- the assigned textbooks, drilling and quizzing, and memorizing and reciting, a curriculum that is clearly insensitive to pupil’s development and interests.

References


Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author and publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Macdonald Had a Farm</td>
<td>Pam Adams (1975) Swindon: Child’s Play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click, Clack, Moo Cows that Type</td>
<td>Doreen Cronin (2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It has been hypothesized that three conditions must be met for the use of conscious grammatical knowledge in second language performance (Krashen, 1982). To apply rules successfully, second language performers must:

(1) Know the rule. This is a formidable constraint, because rules are complex and are often misstated in grammar books (Hastings and Murphy, 2006).
(2) Be focused on form, or thinking about correctness.
(3) Have time to apply the rules.

This predicts that second language performers will appeal to conscious knowledge less when these conditions are not met, and will appeal to them more when the conditions are met. This study is a direct and simple test of this prediction.

The focus of this study is condition 2. Specifically, it is predicted that subjects appeal to conscious rules less when more engaged with meaning. In this study, condition 3 is controlled: Subjects were asked only about their performance when there was no time constraint, when they were engaged in reading and writing, or were engaged in taking a grammar test. In addition, condition 1 was not an issue as specific rules of grammar were not discussed.

The data was collected from fourth year undergraduate students of an Engineering college affiliated with Anna University, India. Subjects had studied English for ten years, and were considered to be intermediate. All of their previous instruction had been form-based. In this way, the study was deliberately biased to bring out the maximum amount of grammar use—subjects had considerable exposure to grammar, believed in it, and were analytically-minded. Moreover, they had little exposure to comprehensible input in English, that is, they were not aware of and had little experience with language acquisition.

The design was simple: Subjects were asked two questions on a questionnaire concerning their use of English grammar.

1. Do you apply rules of grammar while reading and writing?  
   (in actual performance)
2. Do you apply rules of grammar while taking grammar tests?
Table 1 gives the data of the response of the students to the first question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ response</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>Do not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ response in percentage</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>73.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 gives the response of the students to the second question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ response</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>Do not apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ response in percentage</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response of the students to the first question reveals that about three-quarters of the students say they do not apply grammar rules while reading and writing. No students said they always applied rules, and only 10% said they used rules “often.” In contrast, two-thirds (20/30) said they apply rules “always” or “often” when taking grammar tests, and 10% never did. Responses to the two questions were significantly different, chi square = 29.04, df = 3, p < .0001.

Even though two-thirds of the students said they applied rules when taking grammar tests, this diligence has not paid off. This writer has observed that these students generally score between 45% and 65% correct on grammar tests, and only if the tests cover rules that have been taught, and a simplified version of the rules is presented.

This is a remarkable result: As noted above, the subjects in this study are well-educated, successful students in a demanding engineering curriculum, familiar with and unafraid of highly technical concepts. They had experienced ten years of form-based instruction, clearly had the analytical intelligence to understand and remember complex rules, and believed in the value of studying grammar. If second language students such as these do not apply grammar rules when reading and writing, it is doubtful that those with less technical backgrounds and with less schooling in grammar do so.

It is extremely interesting that one-third of the subjects said they rarely or never used rules of grammar when taking grammar tests. These students apparently use their acquired competence (their feel for English) on these tests, even though they have had little chance to acquire the language.


The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal that advances theory and practice in foreign and second language teaching. IJFLT invites manuscripts on the topic of foreign and second language teaching. Manuscripts can deal with both children and adults in any first language and any target language.

IJFLT seeks manuscripts that deal with both theory and research in foreign and second language teaching that have the potential to speak to practice and practical papers that have the potential to inform theory. In addition, we encourage manuscripts that describe innovations in language teaching that include a theoretical rationale.

IJFLT especially invites short papers (2000 words or fewer). IJFLT believes the profession can be served better by short, succinct papers. Some topics, however, require a longer treatment. Papers will not be refused based on length, but IJFLT encourages authors to submit longer papers only when it is obviously justified.

IJFLT also especially invites replications of previously published studies.

**Manuscripts should include the following:**

1. An abstract, not to exceed 150 words.
2. While an extensive review of the literature is not critical, the manuscript should include a theoretical framework, rationale, and appropriate citations.
3. Whenever possible, authors of studies that include statistical analyses should include measures of effect sizes as well as statistical significance.
4. References and tables can be done in any of the following styles: APA, Chicago, or MLA.
5. Biographical information of approximately 25 words, including name, title, university or affiliation, location, and area of expertise. A photo is requested, but optional.

**Submissions should be sent electronically to:**

IJFLT@TPRSTORIES.COM.
“Abigail”: Four years ago I was looking for any kind of job I could find. I happened to get one teaching ESL to a class of six women from various parts of the world who spoke no English. I had never heard of ESL before. The salary was poor and I didn’t know if I wanted to pursue a teaching career, therefore my approach was very casual and low pressure. My method usually consisted of thinking up a topic to talk about, introducing it, and encouraging each student to express her feelings.

In spite of my casual approach, the teaching was extremely pleasant. I had a deep empathy for anyone who was facing a language barrier because I had just returned from a trip around the world alone as a monolingual. They all started speaking English fairly well after the first two weeks of class. I remember a woman from Colombia telling me she hadn’t spoken English before because she was afraid of making mistakes. After being in class for a while, she spoke

Gradually I became quite career-oriented, and made a conscious decision to try to be a top-notch ESL teacher. I had guilt feelings about the casual way in which I had taught those first six women, and my teaching evolved into the traditional authoritarian style with the textbook dominant. Over the years, it has gotten to where I feel frustrated if a student takes class time to relate a personal anecdote.

I can look back on these four years and see a gradual decline in the performance of my students. Until recently, I have been assuming that I needed to be more attentive to their mistakes in order to speed their progress. My present style of teaching bypasses the students’ feelings and basic needs, and concentrates on method. I never see successes like those first six ladies.


English and made mistakes, but didn’t care. I didn’t attach much significance to the progress that the women made. I had no idea how long it took people to learn a language.
I. Some Unintended Consequences of a Young Man’s Yearning to Go Native

I am not a good mimic, and I have worked now in many different cultures. I am a very poor speaker of any language, but I always know whose pig is dead, and when I work in a native society I know what people are talking about and I treat it seriously and respect them, and this in itself establishes a great deal more rapport, very often, than the correct accent. I have worked with other field workers who were far, far better linguists than I, and the natives kept on saying they couldn’t speak the language, although they said I could! Now, if you had a recording it would be proof positive I couldn’t, but nobody knew it! You see, we don’t need to teach people to speak like natives; you need to make the other people believe they can so they can talk to them, and then they learn. (1964) (Savignon, 1981, p. 245) – Margaret Mead

Determined to pass for a native speaker of the languages I had studied as an undergraduate, between 1972 and 1976 I spent one year each in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. When I arrived at my first destination, Paris, I stayed with Didier Debonneuil, whom I had become friends with while we were both students at Stanford University. Whenever I was out and about with Didier I made sure I let his friends know that I was looking for a place to live, perhaps a tiny chambre de bonne or a room in someone’s apartment. At a party in Palaiseau, a suburb to the south of Paris, a fellow guest told me about an opportunity I couldn’t pass up: free lodging and a small salary for teaching eight hours a week of conversation classes at the l’I.U.T (Institut universitaire de technologie) de Sceaux, a 2-year technical college in Sceaux, another Parisian suburb just up the road from Palaiseau. I contacted the school the next day and was invited out for an interview. Soon I was living at l’I.U.T, along with three other lecteurs d’anglais–two Brits and another American–in exchange for just two days of teaching a week.

I so much enjoyed my work as a lecteur d’anglais that I continued to teach English when I moved on to Italy, then Spain and finally Germany. Though I remained thoroughly untrained throughout these first four years of my incipient teaching career, I nonetheless fancied myself a good teacher, in part because of my youthful enthusiasm–I had just turned twenty-one when I arrived in France–and in part because as an undergraduate language major I had studied French, Spanish, Italian, German, Latin, and Russian.

After four years of teaching ESL, in which I had been able to live in four different countries and become fluent in four languages, I concluded that overseas ESL teaching might be the profession for me. I felt I was ready for a much bigger challenge, so I chose Japan as my next stop. First, however, I concluded it was high time I got some professional training in my chosen field. So in fall of ’76, at the age of twenty-five, I returned to my hometown of Los Angeles–and free lodging at my parents’–while I looked around for a Masters Degree Program in ESL/Applied Linguistics. My first stop was UCLA, since I assumed that my meager savings meant my only option was a public university. When I went to the Department of Linguistics, a youthful but nonetheless imperious secretary announced that their department sought applicants interested in pursuing a Ph.D.–not those merely interested in a Masters, a “terminal degree,” as she put it, which did not allow access to the Ph.D. program. That pronouncement was enough to send me packing and wondering whether there were other ESL/Applied Linguistic programs which did not consider a Masters degree a terminal disease.

When I mentioned my frustration to my uncle Dave, he suggested I check out the University of Southern California (USC), where several of his children had been undergraduates. I protested that I couldn’t afford tuition at a private university. Not to worry, he said, as I would most likely receive a Teaching Assistant (TA) position, which would not only cover the cost of tuition but provide me a modest stipend as well. Off I went in late fall of ’76 to the Linguistics Department at USC, where I met the chair, Prof. Larry Hyman. I briefly described to him how I had spent the last four years in Europe and by January ’77 I was enrolled as a graduate student in Applied Linguistics with an ESL TAship at USC’s American Language Institute.
Stephen Krashen and the Input Hypothesis

When the student is ready, the master appears.
–Buddhist Proverb

That is how fate conspired to make me a student of Stephen Krashen’s. Ironically, during my first semester at USC, the other graduate students dutifully warned me about Prof. Krashen, who, it was said, espoused a radical theory about how second languages are learned and how they could best be taught. My first sighting of Prof. Krashen came when he was a guest speaker in one of my graduate courses. I can’t say he left an impression on me, but perhaps that’s because I already had my guard up.

I respected my peers’ advice and stayed away from Prof. Krashen that first semester. Sometime during my second semester in the fall of ‘77, Paula Porter, a brilliant and acerbic fellow grad student, told me that Prof. Krashen wanted to meet me. Ever compliant, I made an appointment to meet this highly suspect professor. The details of that meeting thirty years ago are long gone, but the gist remains. Prof. Krashen asked me about my language learning experiences and I repeated the story I had told Larry Hyman earlier in the year about my four years of language learning experience in Europe. This time, however, I was encouraged to go into far greater detail. Yes, it was true that I had been able to pass for native by the end of each year in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. However, I now explained that how I went about developing this native-like fluency had undergone a radical shift between my first two years, spent in France and Italy, and my last two years, spent in Spain and Germany.

In my first year in France I worked on my French much as I had done in junior high school and continuing on through senior high school and college. I poured over grammar books and used dictionaries to help me decode texts. I made sure I understood every new word, expression and structure I came upon, carefully copying them into my carnets in preparation for systematically integrating them into my speech whenever I left my room. I assumed that the long hours I dedicated to this study were the foundation of my learning. My interaction with native speakers outside this “one-student classroom” served primarily as a convenient means of testing myself in order to confirm—in the absence of a bona fide language teacher—that I was on track with my private study.

I was remarkably successful—more than one native French speaker commented that my language prowess exceeded theirs: “Tu parles le français mieux que nous!” But I also met other highly successful French language learners who, at least according to their claims, spent no time studying the language. They believed that they could develop their language skills just by using the language in their everyday lives: “Look, Ma: no books!” That, of course, made absolutely no sense to me: How on earth did they expect to improve if they didn’t study? By osmosis? Yeah, right!

Truth be told, I had already come to the conclusion that the French themselves were really not qualified to teach their own language, though I was perfectly willing to acknowledge that they spoke their language—well, like natives, I suppose. Whenever I would stop a French speaker in mid-sentence to demand an explanation of a particular structure that had just caught my attention—a favorite learning strategy of mine—the most common response was “Je ne sais pas” [“I don’t know”] or, more colloquially among my I.U.T. students, “Ch’ais pas moi” or “Moi, j’en sais rien,” the equivalent of “Beats me,” “Ya got me,” or “I dunno.” On the rare occasion when a better educated French speaker ventured an explanation, it came across as so poorly articulated, so blatantly ad hoc, that I was left wondering how these French managed to pull off speaking their language with such finesse.

I spent the summer between France and Italy hitchhiking around France. Having decided to take a break from my intensive study of French, I took the radical step of leaving behind my most trusted companions, my

Research Index • Teacher-to-Teacher Index • Submission Info • Contact Us • Subscription Info
French dictionary *Le Petit Robert* and my French grammar book, *Le Bon Usage*. I found that I actually enjoyed traveling solo. My French slowly shifted from being “better than” to “just like.” I was finally approaching my goal of passing for a native speaker.

Late in the summer, while in Corsica, I had gotten stuck in the middle of nowhere one night and ended up sleeping under a bridge. Early the next morning I got a ride from a *paysan* driving a battered old pickup. He spoke with a very strong Corsican accent that reflects the Italian heritage of the people on this island, which belonged to Genoa before it was sold to France in the second half of the 18th century. We had been shooting the breeze for quite some time when the driver up and asked me if I in fact was from Paris:

“*Vous êtes de Paris, n’est-ce pas?*” he asked.

“*Eh bein non,*” was my terse reply.

I did go on to explain that I had in fact lived in Paris for the last year, but that no, I was not from Paris. He asked me where I had lived before Paris and I told him California. This impressed him to no end. He had heard what a beautiful place California was and had even seen lots of movies that had scenes shot in California. He seemed almost envious and wanted to how I had pulled off living in place as *fabuleuse* as *la Californie*. It was quite simple:

“*Ch’uis américain, moi.*”

I told him I was an American, a native of California, born and raised in Los Angeles. I had just moved to France the previous fall. The driver slammed on the brakes. He stared wide-eyed at me, as if I just revealed that I was the devil himself. I never quite figured out what his reaction meant. Perhaps he felt I had intentionally tricked him into thinking I was from Paris as part of some nefarious plot to take advantage of him. In any case, I used this experience to confirm that I had finally moved from speaking better than the French to speaking like just like them, or at least just like a Parisian visiting Corsica,

Despite this newfound ability to pass for French after a summer free of language study, I returned to my old ways as soon as I arrived in Italy: more dictionaries, more grammar books, more texts. On top of this, I carried the additional burden of not wanting to forget my French while studying Italian, so I made it my business, at least in the early months, to keep a triple ledger: one column for new Italian words and structures, one for their English translation and one–lest we forget–for the French translation. I was very busy.

As in France, I would come across other highly fluent Italian language learners who did not bother with studying Italian. One young American I met, who sounded quite native-like to me, claimed that she had never studied Italian, either before coming to Italy or while in Italy. She attributed her language skills to living with her boyfriend—a medical student from Greece, of all things. Since she didn’t speak Greek and her boyfriend didn’t speak English, Italian was their one and only language of communication. Was it possible that she had become this good in Italian without every having studied? And with an Italian-speaking Greek boyfriend, of all people?

I decided I just had to test the extent of her knowledge of Italian. I asked her to translate from English into Italian a sentence that required the past conditional in the main clause and the past subjunctive in the dependent clause, two different auxiliary verbs, past participle agreement with the subject and double clitic pronouns, to boot:
She would have been better prepared had you explained it to her first.

Her translation was flawless:

*Sarebbe stata meglio preparata se gliel’avessi spiegato prima.*

But she could not explain what tenses she had used, which auxiliaries. Nothing. I simply could not fathom the notion that this young woman could correctly use such complex structures without any conscious knowledge of Italian grammar.

Enough was enough. By the end of my year in Italy, I was forced to admit that my achievements in French and Italian, though universally lauded, were not necessarily greater than those of many of my peers who claimed to invest no time whatsoever in language study. I threw caution to the wind and decided to see what might befall me if I were to turn my back altogether on language study. So upon moving to Spain, I refused to allow myself to buy either a grammar book or a dictionary. I would stop studying cold turkey: not only that, I would even refrain from reading, since I knew that as soon as I had a text in hand, I would begin to dissect it, using whatever internalized language knowledge I could draw on. No, rather than study Spanish I would “live” Spanish. Taking my cue from other learners who claimed to have developed their proficiency primarily by living with speakers of the language, I looked for a place to share with Spaniards. This turned out to be a small, three-bedroom apartment with three Spaniards and one Brit on Calle Marqués de Sentmenat, in the Sants neighborhood of Barcelona.

The results after this year in Spain astonished me. Though I had completely forgone language study, my Spanish language skills had developed to the point where I could once again pass for native. I was quick to attribute my success to the carryover from Spanish’s sister languages, Italian and French, as well as my background in Latin. Moving to Germany would be a more valid test, I told myself. Since I had already done the equivalent of almost two years of German in college, I knew that German grammar, which three genders and four declensions, was far richer in morphology than the Romance languages I had studied and was unlikely to be susceptible to being “picked” up. Yet, when I left Germany the following summer, after having lived in a Wohnsgemeinschaft with six other German speakers, once again I had developed a very high level of fluency and accuracy and could readily pass for a native speaker of German.

This was the story I told Steve Krashen that day at USC. I confessed that I could make no sense of my own experience. How could the results of *not* studying a language while living in a foreign country equal—and in some respects—surpass those obtained with serious, prolonged study? For indeed, unlike in France and Italy, no one in Spain or Germany ever commented that I spoke their language “better” than they did—a comment which I had come to resent in France and Italy because it implied that I sounded different. By the end of year in Spain and the Germany, native speakers rarely commented on my language skills at all because for the most part they readily took me for being one of them.

When confronted with my confession of confusion about the putative benefits of *not* studying a language while living abroad, Krashen replied, “I have a theory that can explain this.” And as he expounded on his theory, what he called “The Input Hypothesis,” for the first time in my life I felt how powerful, how practical—and how personally meaningful—theory can be.

At its core, Krashen’s claim was that we learn a second language by understanding messages that we receive in that language, what he called “comprehensible input.” According to Krashen, the mechanism which allows children to acquire their first language in the absence of explicit instruction remains for the most part intact in
adults and is, in fact, a far more natural—and robust—mechanism than that which is employed in formal study of a language, where learners’ attention is focused primarily on the language itself through a variety of instructional strategies and techniques.

Over the next eight years at USC, as I made my way under Krashen’s tutelage—first during my Masters in Applied Linguistics and then, after a year and a half hiatus back in Italy, during my Ph.D. in Education—I deepened my understanding of the implications of Krashen’s second language (L2) acquisition theories for the L2 classroom. What I came to understand about second language teaching and learning is perhaps best expressed in the following quote attributed to Einstein:

A problem cannot be solved at the level of consciousness at which it was created.

I now believed that second language learning might not actually be best served by providing second language instruction, a solution at the same “level of consciousness” as the problem itself. Krashen’s theories led me to ask whether we, as second language teachers, would not be more successful if rather than teaching students a second language, we taught them something else in a second language. And if the most effective means for promoting second language learning is not teaching a second language itself, but rather teaching in a second language, then what should we, L2 teachers, teach in that second language? In other words, what should the content of L2 instruction be if it is not the L2 itself?

For some thirty years now I have been exploring which content areas might best suited for teaching in a second language. In the process I have designed and taught beginning-level L2 courses in English, French, Italian and Spanish and co-developed and supervised beginning-level L2 courses in German, Japanese and Chinese around subject matter, from the hands-on and practical to the intellectual and spiritual and ranging from skiing to cooking, from geography to history, from newspapers to fables, from film to novels, from word-processing to art workshops, and from yoga to drama. What I have concluded can be couched in a statement modeled on psychologist Jerome Bruner’s well-known pronouncement from the 1960s that “[a]ny subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development:

Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any L2 learner at any stage of L2 development.

II. The Cross-Language Interview: Communicating without a Shared Language

All work is work on yourself. A teacher is someone who works on himself in such a way as to create an environment in which others are free to change, should they so choose.

—adapted from Ram Dass.

After my first year working on my Ph.D. in Education at USC in the early 80s, I switched from teaching ESL to teaching Spanish in order to begin work on my dissertation. My intent was to compare the learning outcomes of students in basic Spanish courses that I myself would design and teach with those of students taught by the other Spanish TAs in traditional, textbook-driven courses. Aiming to develop a simple and elegant application of Steve Krashen’s theories of L2 acquisition and pedagogy, I came up with a 4-skills curriculum—reading, writing, listening and speaking—based on just two instructional components: daily copies of La Opinión, a Spanish-language newspaper published in Los Angeles and the Cross-Language Interview.

Each day as I drove to USC I picked up a neatly bundled stack of 30 copies of La Opinión at the home of...
Ernesto, a distributor who lived less than a mile from USC. Before class I would select three or four articles to introduce to students—in Spanish—in preparation for their reading these same articles as homework. The next day in class there would be a writing assignment and discussion based on the assigned articles as well as an introduction to the articles for the next homework assignment. In this way, *La Opinión* served to develop all four skills, though reading and writing were those most emphasized.

The other instructional component, and the one I will be focusing on here, was the Cross-Language Interview, which also involved all four skills, though it clearly privileged listening and speaking. I had first begun to develop this technique while teaching Italian as an M.A. student at USC and then later while teaching ESL in Milan, Italy, in the hiatus between my M.A. and Ph.D. programs. I called it the Cross-Language Interview because I wanted to stress the idea that the interviewee and interviewer did not share a common language. The interviewer was to assume that the interviewee did not speak the target language whatsoever, and the interviewee was to assume that the interviewer did not understand the interviewee’s language. This conceit served at least two purposes. First, it made it clear that there were no expectations concerning the interviewee’s ability either to understand or speak the target language, i.e., the interview was not a test of the interviewee’s target language skills. Second, it discouraged the interviewee from responding in her own language when she did understand a question. Discouraging answers in English was important for at least two reasons: a) it encouraged students to develop their overall communicative competence by exploiting nonverbal cues, e.g. gestures, drawing on the board, and b) it prolonged the back-and-forth negotiations between the interviewer and the interviewee, which in turn generated more comprehensible input for the students listening in on the interview.

Why develop an activity intended to promote L2 acquisition that presupposes 1) that the learner does not understand the interviewer and 2) that the learner need not and/or cannot respond in the target language? The answer is worth exploring in some detail because it underscores a principle of good teaching—and good instructional design: an effective teacher is one for whom the classroom functions as laboratory for self-discovery, for the teacher himself no less than for his students.

The Origins of the Cross-Language Interview

For years I had understood my source of inspiration for the Cross-Language Interview to be the extensive interaction I had had with my two younger siblings. When I was eight years old my younger brother Dan was born, and when I was eleven, my younger sister Karen. I was very attached to both of them, so much so that I was often resentful when my parents hired babysitters on the assumption—totally erroneous as far as I was concerned—that older strangers were better suited to this task than me.

I began interacting with my younger siblings as soon as they were born and quickly became adept at what is called motherese or caregiver speech:

> Oh! Oh! Did you wet your diaper again! Yes, you did, didn’t you? I bet you’ll feel a lot better with a clean diaper, no? What do you say we take this wet diaper off and get you into a nice, clean one. Now don’t fuss so much. You know you’ll feel so much better once we’ve gotten you into a clean diaper. Now, stop moving around or I’m going to accidentally stick you with a pin and you’ll go “Ouch” and we certainly wouldn’t like that, would we now? There you go, now sit up, young lady. Upsy-daisy. Now, doesn’t that feel sooo much better? Yes, I knew you would smile when you were in a clean diaper.

Later, as Dan and Karen began to understand more and interact with both words and gestures, I developed more sophisticated communication strategies. For example, I learned to frame questions appropriate to their level of
comprehension and production. Rather than hold up three balloons on strings and ask, “Which color balloon do you want?” I might engage in the following monologue:

    Look what I have. Three balloons! Here’s a yellow one and a red one and a blue one. Which one would you like? Do you want this yellow balloon here? Or what about this red balloon? Ooh, how about this blue balloon here?

My years of experience as a boy and young teenager talking to my younger siblings taught me that verbal communication, i.e., communication through words, is just one aspect of human communication. Though at the time obviously unaware of the terms paraverbal, nonverbal and extraverbal, my direct, personal experience showed me how central these other communication channels were in successful interpersonal interaction. What could not be communicated through words alone might be readily understood when supported by paraverbal (or paralinguistic) cues, such as pitch, volume and intonation; by nonverbal (or nonlinguistic) cues, such as facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures; and by extraverbal (or extralinguistic) cues, such as time, place and context. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned was that understanding could so far outstrip speaking that it was perfectly possible to have meaningful, enjoyable and thoroughly satisfying “two-way conversations” with my siblings long before they uttered their first words. Thus, at its core, the Cross-Language Interview reflected my understanding that communication between two interlocutors who did not share a common language was possible as long as one interlocutor assumed responsibility for verbal communication and the other interlocutor was ready, willing and able to exploit all manner of paraverbal, nonverbal and extraverbal communication strategies.

For years then I had assumed that these childhood experiences alone had laid the foundation for the Cross-Language Interview. It wasn’t until the summer of 2007 that it began to dawn on me that other experiences had also contributed to its genesis. For six weeks in May and June I worked in the Czech Republic as director of Project “New Eyes,” a cross-cultural exchange program in Sušice, a town of some 11,000 inhabitants in southwestern Bohemia, about 25 km from the German border. Project “New Eyes” placed about 20 University of Utah students in Czech families with one or more English Language Learners (ELLs). Weekdays our students provided English language support in the schools in the morning and in a variety of businesses and organizations in the afternoon; evenings and weekends students did the same for their families, as well as for any ELLs in the community at large.

Although I don’t speak Czech, I was determined to give a short opening speech in English and Czech to welcome our students as well as their host families. I had bought a decent sized Czech-English bilingual dictionary in Prague and thought, if I kept my speech simple enough, that the dictionary would allow me to construct a Czech version, which I would then have Czech speakers review for comprehensibility. I insisted on doing the translation myself so that I would feel as closely connected as possible to the words I would be reciting in Czech, a language, lest we forget, I don’t actually speak.

I knew that I wanted the theme of the speech to be the meaning of the name Project “New Eyes.” The expression “new eyes” itself comes from a Marcel Proust quote:

        Le vrai voyage de découverte ne consiste pas de voir de nouveaux paysages, mais d’avoir de nouveaux yeux.

The true voyage of discovery does not consist in seeing new lands but in having new eyes.

In my speech I wanted to put «new eyes» into a more personal context, one that would explain in simple but
powerful images what the notion of «new eyes» means to me. I started by scribbling down some notes in English, then seeing if I could identify their Czech equivalent in order to keep my thoughts within range of my Czech-English bilingual dictionary skills. As I moved back and forth between English and Czech, Czech and English, the speech itself slowly began to take shape. Once I knew what I was going to write about, I decided to continue to write the speech in Czech and then translate the Czech into English. To make it easier for me to write in Czech, I decided that even though I was telling a story based on my childhood experiences, I would write the whole story in the present tense. The English-language version of the story, which I also kept in the present tense, went something like this:

I have a big family—seven members: my father, Bernard; my mother, Blanche; my older brother, Nathan; me, Steven; my sister, Susan; my younger brother, Dan; and my little sister, Karen.

When I am a little boy—8, 9, 10, 11 years old—we have a young Mexican girl in our home, Rosa, to help my mother. Rosa doesn’t speak English and my mother and father don’t speak Spanish. This is a problem. But what kind of problem?

My father is very intelligent, very rational, very logical. He studies at the university and is an aerospace engineer. For my father, it is a language problem so he has a language solution. He studies Spanish at night school. He studies hard. But he cannot communicate with Rosa well.

My mother is also very intelligent, but she is very emotional, very intuitive. My mother has five children. She doesn’t have time to study Spanish at night school. But that is OK, because my mother does not think that she and Rosa have a language problem. She thinks they have a communication problem so she has a communication solution. She speaks to Rosa with her hands, her heart and her soul.

I think that my father’s solution is the best, but I see that my mother's solution is the best. My mother opens my eyes and I have new eyes.

It would not be until almost three months after giving this speech, when I was back home in Salt Lake City and writing an entry in my daily journal, that I would connect this story about my parents’ efforts to communicate with Rosa to my experiences communicating with my younger siblings Dan and Karen. Odd as it may seem, it never occurred to me that these two stories, which I have been telling for years, had not only played themselves out concurrently but were in fact inextricably bound up together. After all, it was the birth of Dan and then of Karen which prompted my parents to hire Rosa in the first place. So, while I was busy communicating with my younger siblings, I was also observing my parents communicating with Rosa. These observations allowed me to appreciate how differently my parents approached learning to communicate with Rosa. On the one hand, there was my father focusing almost exclusively on developing his Spanish language skills through formal study—and being quite ineffectual when it came time to talk to Rosa. On the other hand, there was my mother, stringing together words, e.g. limpiar/suelo [to clean/floor] and embellishing this telegraphic speech with paraverbal, nonverbal and extraverbal cues—and being consummately effective.

I now believe that it was these two concurrent and complementary experiences—as a participant in interaction with my infant siblings and as an observer of my parents’ interaction with Rosa—which together laid the foundation for the Cross-Language Interview. These early acquired skills and insights remained for the most part untapped from junior high school through college as I sat through countless hours of traditional language classes, where language, rather than communication, was the focus. On the other hand, these same skills and insights re-emerged during my years in Europe. However, it was not until I met Steve Krashen and became familiar with his theories that I was convinced that what I had previously considered an excellent strategy for
facilitating L2 communication might also be an excellent strategy for promoting L2 acquisition. But before I could apply this new understanding to the design and implementation of L2 instruction, I would need to overcome a serious obstacle: the Affective Filter.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis is one of the key components of Steve Krashen’s L2 acquisition theory. This hypothesis claims that if the L2 learner is unduly stressed, then he is less able to assimilate any comprehensible input he is exposed to: in technical terms, the input does not become intake that develops the learner’s interlanguage. Being interviewed in front of a classroom full of peers may range from only slightly stressful to completely overwhelming for an absolute beginner and hence, according to Krashen, a far from ideal context for promoting L2 acquisition. Indeed, one of the conundrums facing L2 instructional designers and teachers is that a given activity, like one-on-one interaction between, say, an English speaker and an ELL, can be highly effective outside the classroom in a natural setting, yet largely ineffectual in a classroom where the ELL may feel he is being put on the spot by the teacher.

My breakthrough came when I realized that the Cross-Language Interview could serve one function for the interviewee and another for the rest of the class. For the interviewee, the Cross-Language Interview would be an excellent opportunity to develop L2 communication skills, in particular the myriad compensatory strategies that L2 learners rely on throughout the development of their L2 interlanguage. On the other hand, the rest of the class—who were listening in on the interview and knew that they would not be called on—would be able to watch how a fluent speaker and an L2 learner negotiate communication across language. Just as importantly, the language that was generated through this negotiation would provide them—though most likely not the interviewee himself—comprehensible input under low Affective Filter conditions.

Thus, the Cross-Language Interview was presented to the class as a form of three-way communication: the interviewee was collaborating with me, the interviewer, in order to generate language that the rest of the class would be able to understand. In essence, the interviewee was working on behalf of his peers to promote their L2 acquisition under low Affective Filter conditions. Safe in their seats, far from the spotlight, the rest of the students could listen to the interview in a relatively stress-free environment, take notes on the content and evaluate for themselves the effectiveness of their peers’ communication strategies in preparation for their own turn on the hot seat.

To underscore for students the effectiveness of a Cross-Language Interview as a means of generating comprehensible input for absolute beginners I would often first demonstrate what kind of language they would be exposed to if I were to interview advanced or native speakers of the target language. I did this by inviting a fluent speaker to class for my first interview. I would begin with the same questions that I used for the Cross-Language Interview: first name, last name, date and place of birth, etc. Once I got past these basic questions, the conversation might veer off in any number of unexpected directions and soon the beginning students listening in were completely clueless as to what we were talking about.

I would immediately follow this interview by asking for a monolingual, absolute beginner volunteer who did not consider himself particularly gifted when communicating with speakers of other languages. I framed the interview by explaining that although I spoke the interviewee’s language, I would act as if I didn’t. Thus, if the interviewee understood a question in the target language and responded in English, I would feign not understanding and continue to negotiate with the interviewee until, through some combination of gestures, writing on the blackboard and perhaps an isolated target-language word or two, he was able to make himself understood to me. As for his peers listening in, they were to focus on what they were able to learn about the interviewee, taking notes in their native language and/or the target language.
Finally, I would write just one phrase on the blackboard:

**I don’t understand** (or its equivalent in the target language)

Whenever the interviewee seemed not to understand my question I would immediately point to the phrase and prompt the interviewee to repeat it. I pointed out that this phrase was the only one the interviewee would need to produce in the target language during the entire interview.

### A Cross-Language Interview with Antonio Villaraigosa

In the following hypothetical model Cross-Language Interview, Antonio Villaraigosa represents an absolute beginner in an ESL class. Prior to the interview, the class will have been reminded that no one, including Antonio, is expected to remember, let alone memorize, any of the English words or phrases I use in the interview. However, because only Antonio is in the “hot seat,” the rest of the class is encouraged to take notes on the content of the interview, if they so choose. Moreover, since the others know that one of them will soon replace Antonio in front of the class, they are reminded that a good learning strategy is to focus on understanding my questions, which are they same ones which they will be asked.

<p>| Interviewer: Good morning. What’s your name? | Dialogue |
| Interviewee: (Silence) |
| Interviewer: What’s your name? | I point to <strong>I don’t understand</strong>. |
| Interviewee: (Silence) |
| Interviewer: Say “I don’t understand.” | I point to each word on the board as I read out loud <strong>I don’t understand</strong> |
| Interviewee: (Silence) |
| Interviewer: Repeat “I don’t understand” | I first point my index finger towards my mouth to indicate “speak/talk.” Then I point to Antonio, as if prompting him to speak. Then shaking my head back and forth I repeat, “I don’t understand.” |
| Interviewee: I don’t understand. | Antonio shakes his head back and forth. |
| Interviewer: OK. You don’t understand. Let’s see. Is your name John? | I choose “John” because, as an English name with a very similar Spanish equivalent—Juan, it is more likely to communicate to the interviewee that I am asking for his first name. |
| Interviewee: (Silence) |
| Interviewer: Is your name Michael? Robert? | Again, both Michael and Robert are English names with very similar Spanish equivalents—Miguel and Roberto. |
| Interviewee: Antonio. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer:</th>
<th>Antonio. And what’s your last name, Antonio?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>What’s your last name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Your first name is Antonio. What is your last name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>I point to <em>I don't understand.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>Antonio Sánchez? Antonio González? Antonio Rodríguez?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Antonio Villarraigosa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Villarraigosa. How do you spell that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>How do you write Villarraigosa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>I point to <em>I don't understand.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>Here. Take this chalk and write your last name here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>I hand a piece of chalk to Antonio and erase the line where I want him to write his last name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Antonio writes <em>Villarraigosa</em> next to Antonio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>OK. Your first name is Antonio, and your last name is Villarraigosa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I underline <em>Antonio</em> and <em>Villarraigosa</em> as I say them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Now, how old are you Antonio?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>How many years old are you? What is your age?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Let me guess. Are you 20, 21, 22?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I write the numbers <em>20, 21, 22</em> on the board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I point to <em>I don't understand.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Oh, so you were born in 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>So how old are you now? 21?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Oh, so you’re already 22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>And what month were you born in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>What is the month of your birth? Were you born in January? February, March, April, May?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td><strong>Julio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Excuse me, I don’t understand. Can you write that on the board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Oh, that’s July in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July is the seventh month of the year, right? 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January, February, March, April, May, June, July.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So you’re 21 years old and you were born in July, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And what day were you born on, Antonio?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>(Silence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>What day of the month were you born?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>OK, let’s say that this is a calendar for July, 1986. This is July 1, July 2, July 3, July 4, July 5…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 6, July 7, July 8, July 9, July 10, July 11, July 12, July 13, July 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interviewee:</td>
<td>The interviewee writes <strong>6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14</strong> and stops:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OK, so you were born on July 14, 1986.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 14—that’s Bastille Day in France. Do you know Bastille Day? Have you heard of Bastille Day, the French national holiday?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td><em>Si, el día de la Bastilla.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Yes, Bastille Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And where were you born, Antonio?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>I don’t understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>What city, what country were you born in? I was born in the United States, in Los Angeles, California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Los Angeles: July 2, 1951</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was born in Los Angeles, California on July 2, 1951.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Los Angeles: July 2, 1951</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Now, where were you born?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Los Angeles: July 2, 1951</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td>Veracruz, México.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interviewer: | OK, Veracruz, Mexico. | **Los Angeles: July 2, 1951**  
**Veracruz: July 14, 1986**  
Oh, then you celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Cinco de Mayo is the Mexican national holiday, right? Like Bastille Day in France and like the Fourth of July in the United States.  
As I speak I write an equation of sorts on the board:  
**Cinco de Mayo (Mexico) ≈ Bastille Day (France) ≈ 4th of July (United States)** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee:</th>
<th>So, May 5 in Mexico is like July 14 in France and July 4 in the United States.</th>
<th>As I speak I erase the name of the holiday and replace it with the corresponding date: [ \text{May 5 (Mexico)} \approx \text{July 14 (France)} \approx \text{July 4 (United States)} ]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So, Antonio, which of these is your birthday? Here’s the chalk, can you underline which of these dates in your birthday? May 5, July 14 or July 4? Which is your birthday?</td>
<td>After I hand Antonio the chalk, I point to him, then towards the board where the three dates are written. I point again to Antonio, then turn to the blackboard and draw an imaginary line under [ \text{May 5 (Mexico)} ] while I read it out loud. I repeat this same sequence for [ \text{July 14 (France)} ] and [ \text{July 4 (United States)} ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio underlines his birthday: [ \text{July 14} ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Exactly. July 14, Bastille Day in France.</td>
<td>I extend the line under July 14 to underscore France: [ \text{July 14 (France)} ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bastille Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Yes, Bastille Day. Thank you very much, Antonio. Class, a round of applause to thank Antonio for volunteering for the Cross-Language Interview.</td>
<td>I initiate the applause as I stand up, motioning to Antonio to do the same, then indicate that he can return to his seat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With each Cross-Language Interview students’ increased familiarity with the questions would ensure more rapid comprehension, if not always a greater ability to answer in English. Students who hesitated to give their answer in English might quickly resort to gestures or the blackboard to prompt me to speak their answer in English for them. As the pace of questions and answers picked up, I would be able to ask more and more varied questions in the time allotted for each student’s Cross-Language Interview.

Since at times I had up to fifty students in my class, I soon understood that my interview needed to remain fresh in order to keep the attention of those listening in. This, I believe, was the first push in the direction of dramatizing students’ lives. Acting much more like a talk-show host eliciting juicy details about a guest’s personal life than a language teacher contextualizing vocabulary and structures, I learned which questions generated responses likely to sustain the curiosity of those listening in. For example, students from large, blended families ended up drawing complex family trees on the blackboard. Questions about professions might turn up a student who worked three jobs or a family member who harvested skin from corpses for burn victims. Getting military brats to talk about where they grew up could generate maps of the US and the world. Questions about pets might turn up a pig or python. And as our data bank grew, so did the possibility for pointing out both similarities and differences among the students in the class.
Ayer, cuatro; hoy, tres

It wasn’t until the summer of ‘86, however, that I came to appreciate the potential of the Cross-Language Interview to bring into the public sphere the drama in all students’ lives. That summer I was teaching an intensive Spanish class that met four hours a day, five days a week. A good portion of what we did in class during the first days involved having one student after another come to the front of the classroom to be interviewed by me in Spanish. The initial round of questions consisted minimally of the student’s name, date and place of birth, and the names and ages of family members.

I never called on students, always asking instead for volunteers with a facetious “¿Quién quiere ser la próxima víctima?”—”Who wants to be the next victim?” On the fourth day, after several students had already volunteered, a reserved John A. raised his hand. I remembered that John had been present the first days of class but had been absent the previous day. In Spanish I asked him in rapid succession his first and last names and where and when he was born:

“¿Cómo te llamas?”
“¿Y tu apellido?”
“¿Dónde naciste?”
“¿Cuándo naciste?”

Already quite familiar with the interview format, he quickly responded. Then I asked how many people were in his family:

“Entonces ¿cuántas personas hay en tu familia?”

No response. I thought for a moment he might not have understood the question and so I repeated it:

“¿Cuántas personas tienes en tu familia?”

Not only did he not respond, he looked positively terrified by the question. I asked if he understood:

“¿Entiendes la pregunta?”

He nodded. At that point there was total silence in the classroom. I allow the silence continue for some time, if only for want of a way out of impasse. John showed no interest in ending the interview. Finally, not knowing how to continue, I motioned back to where he had been sitting among his peers and asked if he wanted to sit back down:

¿Quieres volver a tu asiento?

He shook his head. I felt helpless. Everyone in the classroom sat in hushed silence until John finally uttered just four words, undoubtedly well rehearsed for the occasion:

“Ayer, cuatro; hoy, tres.”

With these four words, “Yesterday, four; today, three,” John began an announcement that he would continue to negotiate with me in Spanish: his sister had died of cancer the previous day at University Hospital. Later,
during the break, John explained to me in English that he wanted to stay in the course because it would give him something positive to focus on for a good part of the day, but that he didn’t feel he would make it unless the rest of the class knew what had happened and why he was staying in the class.

The lesson I took away from this experience was a profound one. No longer would I assume that my routine, superficial questions could only elicit routine, superficial student responses. No longer would I assume that only I, the teacher, possessed the requisite language skills to bring out the drama inherent in students’ lives. No longer would I assume that I, the teacher, had complete control over the Cross-Language Interview.

Me llamo Blanca Ross

Amongst the thirty odd students in that summer intensive Spanish class were two non-traditional students: my mother Blanche and my father Bernard. My wife and I were expecting our second child and my parents had come to spend a month in Salt Lake to be able to take care of Giuliana, our 3-year old, when our second daughter, Francesca, was born. We all agreed that sitting in on my intensive Spanish class might be an enjoyable way for my parents to spend their time as they waited for the arrival of Francesca.

The day after John A.’s announcement, my mother volunteered to come to the front of the class for the Cross-Language Interview. My first question—¿Cómo se llama Usted?—elicited a highly appropriate “Blanca” as a response. Then came the next question about my mother’s last name:

“¿Y su apellido?” I asked.
“Ross,” came her reply with a slightly trilled R.
“¿Ross?” I repeated quizzically with an emphatically rolled R.

Ross was neither my mother’s married name nor her maiden name; Ross was in fact my father’s middle name, which he had passed on to me and my younger brother Dan. While certainly not as taken aback as I was with John A.’s ayer cuatro; hoy tres, I was caught off guard. Why was my mother not using her real last name? I stared into her eyes, hoping to get a sense of what she was doing. No luck. I decided to play along, asking Mrs. Ross if she was married:

“Bueno, Señora Ross, ¿está Usted casada?”
“Sí,” replied Mrs. Ross.
“¿Y cómo se llama su esposo, Señora?” I continued, now asking for my mother for her husband’s name.
“Roberto,” came her answer.

As I continued my interview, Blanca Ross proceeded to give one made-up answer after another, including where she was from and the names and ages of her children. After class, I asked my mother why in the world she had decided to lie in her interview. She explained that she had assumed that I didn’t want the students in the class to know that she was my mother. I didn’t recall having given either of my parents the impression that they were to hide their identity from the other students during the weeks they sat in on class; but perhaps the simple fact that on the first day of the semester I had not introduced my parents to the class had led them, or at least my mother, to believe that I wanted them to remain incognito.

The lesson that my mother, in her role as Blanca Ross, brought home for me that day, a lesson that had begun earlier in the week when John A. had wrested control of the Cross-Language Interview from me, was that my not knowing where a given interview might end up forced me to be more present, more engaged. The more unexpected, the more unpredictable the interview, the greater the sense of drama the Cross-Language held for
me and, as a consequence, for my students. I was learning that students’ stories, whether real-life or invented, could make for excellent drama—and powerful subject matter for the L2 classroom.

III. Interrogation: Let the Games Begin

All the world’s a stage: And all the men and women merely players.

– Shakespeare, As You Like It

For over a decade, while teaching lower-division language at the University of Utah—first Spanish, then French and finally Italian—I also taught foreign languages every Friday at my daughters’ small private school, the Salt Lake Institute for Learning. The schools never enrolled more than 45-50 children, from Pre-K to Eighth Grade. I taught all the children in all the grades, divided into between six and eight 30- to 45-minutes classes in a day.

My first attempts to use the Cross-Language Interview with the older children met with limited success. True to the lesson we learn in “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” children are far less inhibited than adults when it comes to telling it like it is. When carrying out the Cross-Language Interview with adults, those in the audience politely limited their vocalizations to good-natured laughter that spoke of solidarity rather than derision. If an interviewee had difficulty understanding a question that others in the class understood, there was no risk of the interviewee being heckled by a smart aleck yelling out, “Hey, bozo, he’s asking you where you were born.”

This was most definitely not the case with the children at the Institute. When an interviewee began to flounder, peers would immediately pounce with comments such as “Tell him how old you are, Thomas!” or “Duh, Mary, he wants to know where you were born not when!” While conceivably intended to expedite the interview process, such comments only further raised the interviewee’s Affective Filter. Neither heartfelt pleas to remain silent nor commonsensical appeals such as “Come on, guys. How would you feel if someone shouted that out to you when you are being interviewed?” were effective. The other problem I faced was the children’s tendency to respond in English as soon as they understood a question. Responses in English, while potentially an effective cross-cultural communication tool, reduced the opportunities for the kind of extensive target-language negotiation that best serves L2 acquisition.

Unable to get the children to play along with the rules of the game, as it were, I finally changed the game itself. The Cross-Language Interview became Interrogation with the children playing the role of spies working behind enemy lines. One of spies is captured and is to be interrogated by the enemy interrogator who will pump him for whatever information might lead to the capture of the other spies. The captured spy must do everything in his power to resist divulging any information that will jeopardize the safety of his fellow spies; hence, he must feed the interrogator only false information.

The other spies, mindful that their safety might be compromised if their captured comrade “talks,” infiltrate the interrogation room so that they can eavesdrop on the interrogation. Hiding themselves in imaginary nooks and crannies, they listen in intently on the interrogation, maintaining absolute silence, lest they too be taken prisoner. That was the end of the children’s prompting of the peer on the hot seat.

To discourage the child being interviewed from responding in English, I simply noted that the interrogator absolutely detested everything about the American enemy, but most of all he despised their language. In fact, hearing even one word of English could so enrage him that the interrogator was capable of “disappearing” the offending prisoner. This too proved highly effective in reducing English-language responses.

These two principles—that those not being interrogated risked their own lives if they spoke up and that the...
prisoner himself risked his life if he used English—not only made the Interrogation highly effective as an L2 learning activity but actually made it quite popular among the children. Furthermore, now that we were operating in the realm of fantasy rather than reality, the children found delight, à la Blanca Ross, in inventing their own alternative identity.

I finished teaching at the Salt Lake Institute for Learning when my second daughter graduated from eighth grade in 2000, about the same time I stopped teaching beginning Italian at the University of Utah. I no longer had opportunities to use the Cross-Language Interview nor Interrogation, except on occasions when I would demonstrate the technique for teachers in training. Because it was no longer being used as an integral part of my language teaching, it ceased to evolve. When I did use the technique in teacher training classes and workshops, I might mention how I adapted it for the children at the Salt Lake Institute for Learning, but for the most part on these occasions the Cross-Language Interview reflected how it had been used when I taught first- and second year foreign languages at the University of Utah.

**WWIII and Interrogation come to Velhartice**

During the last week of Project “New Eyes”—Sušice ‘07, one of my students, Igor L., was invited to teach three ESL classes at the Základní škola, the “basic school,” in Velhartice, a town of some 700 inhabitants about 15 kilometers southwest of Sušice. I drove out to observe Igor, arriving close to the end of his first class. I sat through the entire second class, taking extensive notes which I would later write up to share with Igor. As I walked with Igor to his third class, he popped the question: Would I be willing to teach the third class so that he could observe me? I agreed, knowing that, after perhaps half a dozen years, I would enjoy dusting off the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation with a group of young language learners.

Given the vagaries of memory and that fact the following narrative was written more than two months after the lesson itself, I have chosen to focus more on faithfully re-evoking what it felt like to be in that classroom that day than on compiling a precise reproduction of events. Call it dramatic license, if you will.

**Meet George Green, the Newest and Youngest Czech National Hero**

I am accompanied into the ESL classroom in Velhartice’s Základní škola by my student Igor L., ESL teacher, Ivona Duganová, and the school’s English-speaking principal, Petr Jansa. After we enter, other teachers in this school of about 75 children file into the back to observe.

The classroom is large and sunny, with whitewashed walls, high ceilings and large, southern-facing windows that frame the forest of tall, lush evergreens that surround Velhartice on all sides. There look to be at least a dozen boys and girls seated at desks in twos and threes, children roughly the equivalent of our sixth or seventh graders. All I know about the children is that Ivona, their teacher, has told me that they have had “some English.” Wasting no time with introductions, I go straight to the blackboard and write one word:

**theater**

Although I only know a couple of dozen words in Czech, familiarity with two of Prague's premier monuments, Národní divadlo, the National Theater, and Národní museum, the National Museum, has taught me that the Czech word for “theater” is divadlo. But time spent with my Czech/English dictionary
leads me to believe that Czech may also have borrowed the word “theater” from another European language and/or may have an adjective derived from “theater,” such as teatrální.

“Do you understand the word “theater”? I ask.

The students nod, some of them adding a “yes” for emphasis. Both their teacher Ivona and their principal Petr nod, as if to say, “Yes, they have been taught this word.” Then I write a word below “theater”:

```text
theater
 drama
```

I assume if I had success with “theater” that “drama” will be a slam-dunk.

“Do you understand the word “drama”?

Sure enough, more nods and more yeses. I’m on a roll.

“Now,” I go on, “drama takes place in the theater, right?”

I really don’t expect them to understand exactly what I mean by drama “taking place” in the theater. I am mostly interested in establishing that drama and theater are related. More nods and yeses.

Then I add another word to the right of the first two:

```text
theater
 drama
 only
```

“Now,” I continue with my set-up, “is drama only in the theater?” I point to each word on the board as I speak it.

I am assuming that the children will understand the word “only,” though I am ready to provide examples to get its meaning across if they don’t. Lots of nods and yeses. They get the word “only,” if not necessarily the intent of my question.

“Nooooooooo!” I boom. “Drama is not only in the theater! Drama is everywhere!” I draw the “prohibited” sign over the word “only” on the board:

```text
theater
 drama
 only
```

I stretch my arms shoulder height and directly in front of me, my right and left index fingers extended with sides touching. Then, beginning in the middle of the back wall, I draw two imaginary lines, one to the left and one to the right, tracing the perimeter of the classroom.

“There is drama right here, in this classroom. Today we will have drama in the classroom! Do you understand, ‘drama in the classroom’?”

More nods and yeses, even as the expression on their faces belies a range of emotions, from consternation to disbelief.
I realize that I have too little time to set up the entire activity in English at the rate I am going. I decide that I will have to have the rest of the instructions in English translated into Czech. Unfortunately, I can’t ask Ivona, the children’s teacher, to interpret. When I arrived at the school that morning she told me in the teachers’ lounge that she never speaks Czech in front of her students because she convinced them when she arrived at the first of the year that she is an American who doesn’t speak Czech. Several days later I would find out that the children had long uncovered her ruse but had decided to play along, so as not to hurt her feelings.

Luckily, the Petr is highly fluent in English, so I ask him to translate my impromptu speech into Czech, pausing every few sentences to allow him to interpret:

OK, what we are going to do today in your classroom is drama, so you needn’t be afraid of what happens.

Now, you all know about what happened here in World War I. That was the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the birth of modern Czechoslovakia, right?

And you know what happened here in World War II, right. How the Sudentenland was handed over to Germany and then eventually all of what is now today Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia became a German Protectorate.

And then how the Americans and Russians liberated Czechoslovakia. In fact, it was the Americans who liberated Velhartice, right?

Well, in today’s drama we are going to stage an event from World War III. Yes, World War III.

In World War III it is now America that is invading the Czech Republic and I am an American soldier.

All the children in this classroom have gone into hiding in the woods around Velhartice, in those woods that we can see outside these windows.

I am determined to capture you Czech children, so I have devised a plan.

I have gone to the home of your English teacher, Mrs. Duganová, in Kolinec, and taken her hostage. I am threatening to kill her if she doesn’t hand over to me at least one of you children for interrogation.

As the principal translates my speech, I can see that the children have completely fallen under the spell of this theater of the absurd. I ask to speak to their teacher Ivona in private outside the classroom. When we step into the hallway, I tell Ivona to choose a student for me to interrogate who she knows will be a good sport, who will be eager to play along. It doesn’t matter how good his English is, as long as he is willing to get into the spirit of the drama.

Once back into the room, I grab Ivona around her neck and hold a “gun”–my hand with extended index finger–to her head.
“Alright, Mrs. Duganová, hand over a student to me or you’re dead!” I shout.

Ivona, feigning fear, taps the shoulder of a student sitting near the front of the class.

“You!” I snap, “You’re being taken in for interrogation.” I lead the boy to a chair opposite mine in front of the blackboard. The chairs are placed at a 45° angle to the blackboard, 90° to each other, so that we can see each other and the students in the class at the same time.

“So, young man, what’s your name?” I ask sternly.

“My name is Jindrich,” he replies. Later I would learn that Ivona, their teacher, always insists that students respond with full sentences.

Without even thinking, I hear myself respond in a menacing tone, “Jindrich? What kind of name is that? That’s not an American name? You’re not Czech by any chance, are you?” I freeze: I have, without thinking, changed the rules of the game. At the Salt Lake Institute for Learning, the only place I had every played Interrogation “for real,” the children were American spies on foreign soil and behind enemy lines. They weren’t expected to pretend they were French or Spanish or Italian, but merely avoid speaking English so as not to anger me, their interrogator. Although they always provided false information to protect their fellow spies, they never were expected to hide the fact that they were Americans.

Now there are new game rules, rules I myself have not established in advance. This young boy is going to have to pretend that he is an American child who somehow ends up in the Czech Republic at the time of the U.S. invasion. Caught off guard by my own question, I am all the more present and engaged. Now the real drama begins.

“I said, ‘You’re not Czech, are you?’ “ I repeat. I hope the young boy will be less confused than I am.

“No, I am not Czech,” the young boy replies timidly. So far, so good.

“Well, then, what is your name young man?”

“George.” There is a titter of laughter in the class. I breathe a sign of relief. This is going to be very interesting.

“George? Well, why didn’t you say so? George. That’s a fine American name. So, what’s your last name, George?”

“My last name is Sladek.” The look on George’s face tells me he knows he’s just blown it again.

“Sladek? That sure doesn’t sound like an American name to me!” I am glowering fiercely.

“Green,” comes his quick, one-word save.

“Green? Oh, so it’s George Green then. Well, nice to meet you George Green.” I give George a big smile and we shake hands. “So tell me, where’re you from George?”
“New York,” he announces proudly. George is in the groove.

“You’re from New York? Don’t tell me you’re from New York!” George is panicked, his eyes wide open. “No way, you’re not from New York. I know lots of people from New York and you most definitely do not have a New York accent.” My tone is accusatory; George almost looks like he’s cowering. “You know, I bet I know where you’re from. I bet you’re from Utah. Yeah, I’m sure you are from Utah.” My tone is now much more conciliatory. I quickly draw the outline of the 48 states, then draw in the state borders of New York State and Utah. I cross out New York State and circle Utah. “This is really where you’re from, from Utah? Right, George Green, you’re from Utah?”

“Yes, I am from Utah.” Now it is George’s turn to breathe a sign of relief.

“I knew it! So, what city are you from in Utah? You’re not from Ogden are you?” I place a large dot on the map of Utah and write Ogden next to it.” George is undecided, as if he’s waiting for me to signal whether the answer is yes or no. I go on. “Not Ogden? What about Provo?” I draw another dot and write Provo next to it. I look George directly in the eye. “You know what, I bet you’re from Salt Lake City. Utah’s capital.” I place a dot between Ogden and Provo and write in Salt Lake City. Am I right, George, you’re from Salt Lake City?”

“Yes, I am from Salt Lake City,” says George with conviction.

“Nice place, Salt Lake City. So George, tell me about your family. Do you have a mother and a father in Utah?

“Yes, I have a mother and father in Utah.”

“And what’s your father’s name?

“My father’s name is Sam.”

“Hmm. Sam Green. And what’s your mother’s name?

“My mother’s name is Susan.”

“Susan Green. Sam and Susan Green. So you have any brothers and sisters, George?

“Yes, I have a brother and a sister.”

“What’s your brother’s name?”

“My brother’s name is John.”

“And how old is he?”

“He is twenty years old.”

“And what’s your sister’s name?”
“My sister’s name is Mary.”

“And how old is she?”

“She is eighteen years old.”

“OK. So your brother John’s twenty and your sister Mary’s eighteen. So how old are you George.”

“I am sixteen years old,” he declares with confidence. His inflated age elicits a peal of laughter since George is perhaps 11 or 12 at most.

“Sixteen? That’s funny, you don’t look sixteen to me. Are you telling me the truth, George Green? Are you really sixteen?” I resume my accusatory tone.

‘Yes, I am really sixteen,” he says firmly. I can no longer intimidate George.

“Well, you certainly don’t look sixteen to me. Well, OK. So tell me George Green, what’s a fine sixteen-year-old American teenager like you doing here in the Czech Republic?” George doesn’t understand. “You are an American, right?

“Yes. I am American,” he states with full conviction–and a noticeable Czech accent.

“So why are you in the Czech Republic now? What are you doing here in Velhartice? Why has an American teenager come to visit Velhartice? Why, George, why?” I’m ramping up the pressure here. George is stymied but not panicked. Why-Questions can be extremely challenging, far more difficult to answer than typical a What-, Where-, or Who-Question.

There is silence in the room. I can see his teacher Ivona wants to help him out. His classmates recognize that this Why-Question would be challenge to their English language skills as well. I wait, letting the tension build. Silence. Total silence.

“Castle,” eventually comes his reply.

“Castle? You came to see a castle? You mean to say there’s a castle in Velhartice?” I feign ignorance since I, along with everyone else in the room, know about Velhartice’s hulking medieval castle.

“Yes, I came to see castle.”

“I don’t see any castle,” I say as I look out the large windows. “Where’s there a castle? Show me the castle,” I demand. I walk over to the large windows and motion for George to follow me.

“Yes, there is castle,” says the boy as he stands up, walks to the windows and points to where the castle stands in the distance, its view hidden by neighboring buildings.

“I don’t see any castle,” I protest looking back at George. The other children in the class giggle. Even the stern-faced teachers observing me in the back of the room crack a smile.
“Yes, there is castle,” he insists.

“Where there, George?” Once again, I use my threatening voice.

“There!” he points out the window. “You cannot see castle,” he explains.

“I can’t see the castle. Why can’t I see the castle? Is it over there, behind those buildings?” I point in the same direction he has been pointing.

“Yes, over there.”

“Oh, OK, OK. So I believe you, there’s a castle over there. Now tell me then, what kind of castle is it? Is it a big castle or a little castle?

“Big castle.”

“And how old is this castle? When was the castle built?

“When?”

“Yes, when?” I move to the blackboard and begin to write dates: 1800, 1700, 1600. I give the chalk to George and he writes 1300. “Oh, it’s a very old castle. A medieval castle. So, why does a nice boy from Utah come all the way here to see this medieval castle in Velhartice?” George is once again stymied by a Why-Question. Everyone seems to want to help him out. I let the tension build. Again silence.

“OK, here’s the deal,” I continue. “If you can give me one good reason, just one good reason, one explanation, why you came all the way from Utah to see this medieval castle in Velhartice, then I will set you and your teacher free and our troops will move on from Velhartice. Do you understand, George Green? You need to give me one good reason why you came all the way from Utah to see this castle. You give me one good reason and you are free, your teacher Ivona is free.” I wait while George Green ponders. Again, silence in the classroom.

“So, George Green, why did you come to visit the castle? The truth now!” More silence.

“History,” he says finally.

“History? Did you say ‘history’?”

“Yes, I say ‘history’.”

“You mean to tell me that you came all the way from Utah to Velhartice to see this castle because you like history?” I feign incredulity.

“Yes, I like history.” His statement is so matter-of-fact, so straightforward, that I am ready to believe that the real Jindrich Sladek really does like history.

“You like medieval history?” My tone speaks less of incredulity and more of admiration.
“Yes, I like medieval history—very much.” George is smiling.

“Well, that’s fantastic, George. I would have to agree with you there, the Czech Republic is a much better place to check out medieval history than Utah. I have to say that I am mighty impressed that that a young man your age would undertake such a long journey to visit a medieval castle. George, you and your teacher are free to go. And enjoy your visit to the castle.”

I motion for George to take his seat with the rest of the class. As he gets up, I applaud his performance, at which point everyone else in the class bursts into applause. I ask how much time is left until the end of class and decide that there is time to squeeze in at least one follow-up activity. I write two words on the board:

**quiz/exam**

“Do any of you know these words? Do you know what a quiz or exam is?” The children nod yes, as do their teacher Ivona and the principal Petr. “Ok, then, we’re going to have a quiz. Turn to a blank sheet of paper in your notebook. Question no. 1. What is the first name of the boy I just interrogated?” I write the first question on the board.

1. **What is the boy’s first name?**

I repeat the question while pointing to where George Green now sits.

“Now, write down your answer. OK, Question no. 2: What is his last name?” I write this question on the board as well:

2. **What is the boy’s last name?**

I repeat the question and remind them to write their answer in the notebooks.

“Question no. 3: What is the boy’s father’s name?” I write this question on the board as well:

3. **What is his father’s name?**

I repeat the question and remind them to write down their answers. “Now, no. 4: What is the boy’s mother’s name?” I write this question on the board, too:

4. **What is his mother’s name?**

I remind them to write their answer in their notebooks. This is all going very well—too well, in fact. It’s time to change tactics and up the ante.

“OK, what is the next question?” Silence. “OK, let me start over.” I reread the first four questions on the board, then add the number 5 followed by a blank line:

1. **What is the boy’s first name?**
2. **What is the boy’s last name?**
3. **What is his father’s name?**
4. What is his mother’s name?
5. _____________________________

“OK, now. So, what is question no. 5?”

“What is his brother’s name?” comes a chorus of responses and I write this question on the board. And so it continues as I elicit from the children the other quiz questions: the name of George’s sister, his siblings’ ages, where George is from, why he is in Velhartice, etc. After we’ve covered all the obvious questions, I read them out loud again, this time asking students to shout out the answers they have written down in their notebooks. The class scores 100% on the quiz.

“Very good. But now I have the most important question of all. Who did George Green save?” Ivona makes a move to translate the word “save” for her students, convinced that this word is not part of their vocabulary. Not yet, perhaps, I think to myself as I motion to her to be quiet: I will handle this.

“The question is, Who did George Green save? Did George Green save the children of Velhartice’s Základní škola?” As I ask the question, I am already nodding as if to say that the answer is “yes.” Some of the children automatically mimic my gesture. “Yes, it’s true, George Green saved the children of Velhartice’s Základní škola.” I then look over to their teacher Ivona and ask, “Who else did he save?”

“His teacher!” a few observant and outspoken students chime in.

“Yes, he saved his teacher. But that’s not all. Who else did he save?” Here I am beginning to push a linguistic agenda. The answer I am fishing for—”himself” as in “George Green saved himself”—would allow me to introduce a reflexive pronoun. A girl in the front row raises her hand. Ready to receive my answer, I ask, “Yes, who else did George Green save?”

“The Czech Republic,” she exclaims with an exuberance only matched by my own. Her answer is inspired and I immediately and joyfully abandon my hidden “reflexive-pronoun” agenda.

“Yes, but of course!” I exclaim. “George Green saved the Czech Republic.” I pronounce each word in the last sentence slowly and deliberately in order to communicate the profundity of this revelation for me. “Well, in that case, he’s a national hero, right? Do you understand the word “hero?” I ask as I write this word on the board:

**hero**

Lots of nods. “Well, then, I believe we need to build a statue in front of your Základní škola in honor of George Green, the Czech Republic’s newest and youngest national hero. Do you understand the word “statue?” I ask as I write the word below “hero”:

**hero**

**statue**

There is an immediate consensus: they definitely do not understand the word “statue.” Ivona and Petr want to translate, but I signal them with my eyes to be still.
“Now you all know Sušice, right?” Yes, of course they all know Sušice, the largest town in the area, less than 20 km down the road. “And you all know Masarykova? That’s a Základní škola in Sušice, right? Masarykova is named after Tomáš Masaryk, your national hero, the father and first president of Czechoslovakia. And in front of Masarykova there is a large statue of Masaryk, right?” I strike a statuesque pose for emphasis. “So just like the statue of Tomáš Masaryk in front of Masarykova, we must place a statue of George Green in front of the Velhartice Základní škola. Do you agree?”

George Green is blushing as his peers nod in agreement that we should erect a statue in his honor in front of their school. I ask George Green to stand up in front of the class so that I can take a picture of him that will be used to create his statue. There is general applause from the students and teachers for the Czech Republic’s newest and youngest national hero, George Green.

I ask Ivona if we have any more time. “Five minutes,” comes the reply.

“OK, then, we have found out a lot about George Green, the Czech Republic’s newest and youngest national hero. So, would you like to know anything about me?” I am convinced the children have understood my question, for their eyes tell me they are curious, not confused. Yet, not one dares ask a question.

“You have no questions about me? After all the questions I’ve asked you, you really have no questions you want to ask me?” General silence. I have put the students on the spot and the class has quickly gone from animated to anemic. I pause to contemplate my options.

“OK, then I’m going to ask you to answer questions about me.” General consternation among the children: my words are plain enough but their meaning is obscure.

“Question no. 1: Where am I from? Where do you think I come from?” Again silence. “Do you think I’m from New York?” I turn around and point to New York State on the blackboard. There’s moment of hesitation before one student calls out “Utah!”

“Yes, very good. I’m from Utah. And what city in Utah am I from?” I again look over to the map of the United States where George’s “home town” of Salt Lake City clearly indicated below Ogden and above Provo.

“Salt Lake City,” comes a chorus of voices.

“Exactly. How in the world did you know that, I wonder? You must all be very intelligent,” I joke as I crack a broad smile. General laughter, including that of the stern-faced teachers in the back. “And what do you think I do in Salt Lake City? What kind of work do I do? What is my job?”

“Teacher!” is the immediate reply.


“English!” ventures one student.

“Yes, I teach English.” Not exactly true, but good enough. Ivona is signaling me that the period is over. “Well, thank you so much for sharing your class with me. And, once again, a round of applause for George Green, the
newest and youngest Czech national hero.” As I lead the applause, I notice that the Czech Republic’s newest and youngest national hero is grinning—and blushing as well.

IV. The Play’s the Thing: Bruner’s Narrative Construal of Reality

By telling your story, the knowledge you have will become understanding. And that—knowledge becoming understanding—is better than anything there is to feel.

—Tom Spanbauer, The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon.

I began this piece with an extended passage from Earl Stevick’s 1998 Working with Teaching Methods, a story written by an ESL teacher whom he calls Abigail. I first read this passage in a much earlier book of Stevick’s, Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways, which came out in 1980, just as I was beginning my Ph.D. in Education at USC. I saw in Abigail’s bitter-sweet description of her transition from untrained to professionalized ESL teacher a testimony to the potential dangers of teacher training at a time when I was in the midst of my own professional training:

Gradually I became quite career-oriented, and made a conscious decision to try to be a top-notch ESL teacher. I had guilt feelings about the casual way in which I had taught those first six women, and my teaching evolved into the traditional authoritarian style with the textbook dominant. Over the years, it has gotten to where I feel frustrated if a student takes class time to relate a personal anecdote.

Unlike Abigail, I had the good fortune to be introduced in the earliest stages of my training to a theory of L2 learning and teaching that allowed me to build on what I myself had experienced up until that time as an L2 learner and teacher, especially my four years of successful, albeit paradoxical, language learning and teaching in Western Europe. As a result, whereas Abigail’s training led her to experience frustration if a student took class time “to relate a personal anecdote,” my training showed me how to see personal stories, students’ lives, lived or invented, as the stuff of drama.

The Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation is not an L2 teaching method. At best it is a technique, though certainly not one that all teachers or all students will embrace. And though it certainly can be used as a tool for contextualizing language, my own interest lies in its ability to contextualize students’ lives, what I have chosen to call dramatizing students’ lives.

If an ESL student asks what the word “hot” means I will say that it depends on the context. “Hot” as in “hot chili peppers” or “hot curry” will most likely be interpreted as “spicy” while “hot soup” or “hot coffee” will mean “heated to a high temperature.” “Hot” before “mama” or “date” usually means “sexy” but placed before “topic” or “issue,” it means “controversial.” Words like “hotdog,” “hotline,” and “hothouse,” as well as idiomatic expressions such as “hot potato” and “hot to trot” further complicate the matter. This then is what I mean by contextualizing language.

On the other hand, as I hope to have shown, the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation goes far beyond contextualizing language. Who would want to claim that the death of John A.’s sister contextualizes his statement “ayer cuatro, hoy tres” or that George Green’s desire to save his teacher, his classmates—and the Czech Republic—provides a context for words like “mother” and “father,” “castle” and “history”. Much better, I would argue, the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation provides a platform, or better yet, a
stage, for L2 learners themselves to share their stories, the drama of their own lives—real or imaginary—in the L2 classroom.

The primacy of story telling in human culture cannot be underestimated. In his book *The Culture of Education*, Jerome Bruner opens the chapter entitled “The Narrative Construal of Reality” with the following:

What, in fact, is gained and what lost when human beings make sense of the world by telling stories about it—by using the narrative mode for construing reality? The usual answer to this question is a kind of doxology delivered in the name of “the scientific method”: Thou shalt not indulge self-delusion, nor utter unverifiable propositions, nor commit contradiction, nor treat mere history as cause, and so on. Story, according to such commandments, is not the realistic stuff of science and is to be shunned or converted into testable propositions. If meaning making were always dedicated to achieving “scientific” understanding, such cautions might be sensible. But neither the empiricist’s tested knowledge nor the rationalist’s self-evident truths describe the ground on which ordinary people go about making sense of their experiences—say, what a “cool” greeting from a friend meant, or what the IRA meant by not using the word “permanent” in its 1994 cease-fire declaration. There are matters that need a story. And stories need an idea about human encounters, assumptions about whether protagonists understand each other’s preconceptions about normative standards. Matters of this order are what enable us to get from what somebody said to what he meant, from what seems the case to what “really” is. Although the scientific method is hardly irrelevant to all this, it is certainly not the only route to understanding the world. (1996:130-131)

Abigail tells her story about L2 teaching in a just four paragraphs, less than 350 words. Margaret Mead tells an equally compelling story about L2 learning in just one paragraph of about 150 words:

I am not a good mimic, and I have worked now in many different cultures. I am a very poor speaker of any language, but I always know whose pig is dead, and when I work in a native society I know what people are talking about and I treat it seriously and respect them, and this in itself establishes a great deal more rapport, very often, than the correct accent. I have worked with other field workers who were far, far better linguists than I, and the natives kept on saying they couldn’t speak the language, although they said I could! Now, if you had a recording it would be proof positive I couldn’t, but nobody knew it! You see, we don’t need to teach people to speak like natives; you need to make the other people believe they can so they can talk to them, and then they learn. (1964)

At over 15,000 words, my description of the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation–its history, its rationale, its implementation–is far less concise, but it too bares the hallmark of story telling, what Bruner refers to above as the narrative construal of reality. As Bruner notes, there is a strong bias against narrativizing knowledge in the belief that “[s]tory…is not the realistic stuff of science and is to be shunned or converted into testable propositions.” So, let me be clear: this is a story, my story, which I tell so that the knowledge I have will become understanding, that uniquely human experience that Tom Spanbauer reminds us “is better than anything there is to feel.” I believe both Abigail and Margaret Mead would concur.

Classroom activities that serve to contextualize/narrativize/dramatize students’ lives, such as the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation, are among the many tools available to L2 teachers who believe that teaching in a second language is central to helping their students learn a second language. And while
implementing the Cross-Language Interview/Interrogation might not ensure that all L2 students know “whose pig is dead,” they will certainly find out if one of their classmates actually has a pet pig. And that, in and of itself, has the makings of good story.

Editor’s note: Cinco de Mayo is not Mexican Independence Day, which is implied in the interview. Rather, the holidays mentioned are well-known in each culture mentioned.

References


Extensive reading (ER) has drawn much research attention, and its benefits to language learning outcomes have been recognized. Whereas much research has been conducted on the effects of ER as an additional course component, little has been done to examine ER as the only mode of language learning. Even less research has been done employing a diary approach to provide an introspective picture of the ER process. This study, including a learner's journal, analyzes an adult’s reading extensively in French over a period of 12 weeks. Measures of progress were two interviews with French native speakers as well as the DELF (Diplôme d’Études en Langue Française). The results showed that extensive reading helped improve vocabulary and sentence structure, which in turn boosted writing, listening, and speaking competencies. In addition, analysis of the diary entries revealed that non-threatening reading of interesting material helped develop a sense of achievement. This resulted in a change of attitude motivating the researcher-participant to read more in French, thereby helping nurture a reading habit in French. Challenges that the researcher encountered during the ER process were also analyzed. Overall, the study demonstrates that foreign language capacity can be developed from reading alone. It also indicates that the inclusion of journal recording can make ER even more effective and meaningful.

Reading has been identified in recent decades as one of the most powerful methods of language learning (Krashen, 2004). In his discussion of free voluntary reading (FVR), Krashen has emphasized that learners should have full rights of choice, i.e. they read because they want to. They can even stop reading a book which is not compelling and choose another one instead. FVR involves the entire aspect of reading in which learners read willingly and pleasurably.

A number of researchers have devoted themselves to investigating the effects of ER and have confirmed the positive impact of ER on foreign language learning (e.g., Gradman & Hanania, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Cho & Krashen, 1994; Janapoulos, 1986; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989, Elley, 1991; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Nash & Yuan, 1993; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Hitosugi, & Day, 2004; Leung, 2002; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006).

The methodology employed by these researchers was mostly quantitative; therefore, the processes of ER have not been fully understood to a great extent. In an attempt to further understand and present a clearer picture of the processes of ER, this case study employed a diary recording approach in order to provide rich information for an in-depth analysis of ER. The research questions this study addressed are as follows:

1. Does extensive reading help enhance French proficiency in terms of listening, speaking, and writing?
2. Does extensive reading help nurture a reading habit in a second language? If the answer is “yes”, then, how does it nurture a person’s reading habit?
3. What challenges does an intermediate-level foreign language learner encounter in extensive reading?

**DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

In this study, I myself was the researcher as well as the participant. I like learning languages; therefore, if I can find a powerful means to help enhance my language proficiencies, this study may provide some help for
teachers and learners. Before the commencement of the study, I took a DELF test (Diplôme d’Etudes en Langue Française), and I took a second one three months later to assess the effect of ER. In addition, interviews with two French native speakers evaluating my progress in French were conducted to measure my progress.

During the three month period of time, I selected books myself. The books included graded readers from the “Lectures CLE en Français” collection, including level one to four. I read stories which interested me and did not continue those that were not appealing or not within my competency in French. I read at my own pace and whenever I felt like reading. After reading, I recorded my feelings and reflections in journal entries in Chinese. Generally, I spent two and half hours reading per day. Sometimes, in order to get to the end of a story, I might spend up to seven hours in one day finishing my book.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The First Research Question

The journal entries and interviews revealed that ER definitely increased my familiarity with the target language, resulting in a significant improvement in listening, speaking and writing. Moreover, the DELF test also provided evidence of improvement in my speaking and listening.

Listening

The journal entries demonstrate that ER built my confidence in listening both in French and English. Moreover, from the viewpoints of the two French native speakers, I improved in listening. The following are the excerpts of my journal entry and the interviews.

Week 3
“…I went to see movies with M this evening, …. the second one was a French film (Jesus of Montreal.) While I was listening to the dialogues in the film, they were not strange to me at all, and I could understand about 60% of them. However, one thing made me feel confident and proud. This French film, of course, was in French, and the subtitles were in Chinese; M is an American and could not understand what the film was about at all. … Amazingly, I found that the Chinese subtitles had different translations from what I heard; therefore, I decided to listen attentively and carefully in order to be a good interpreter.”

IR : Compared with three months ago, could you tell if there are any differences?
Jack: I think your listening comprehension has improved a lot because when I speak, I speak very fast. And you understood everything that I said.

IR : During these three months, what differences did you find in my French?
Joy: Particularly, you understood everything I said. And you spoke more naturally than before. Also, you have a lot of vocabulary and you integrate it very well.

Table 1 Results of DELF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st test</th>
<th>2nd test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>levels</td>
<td>grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>18/25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B1 = intermediate level
B2 = upper-intermediate level
Passing score = 12.5 out of 25

Table 1 presents the results of DELF tests in French, the first test taken before I started my reading program and the second at the conclusion, after three months. I took the test at two different levels, the intermediate level (B1) and upper-intermediate level (B2). At each level, the passing score is 12.5 correct out of a possible 25. Improvement is thus shown by improving my score at the same level or passing a higher level test. In listening comprehension, I improved from 8 to 9.5 in level B2. In speaking and writing, I was able to make respectable scores at a higher level.

On the first test, I had to understand the systems and functions of the European Union, and remember the member countries as well as their languages, which was difficult because I only had a rough idea about the organization. On the second test, I had to understand details about the history of the Nobel Prize and how it is awarded, another challenge.

After the first test, I was tempted to read some materials related to specialized fields in order to get higher scores on the second test. I decided, however, to follow the pleasurable Comprehension Hypothesis of Krashen, and Principle Three in Day and Bamford (1998), that learners should choose what they want to read. During the study, I did not read books or stories about the history of the Nobel Prize or the systems of the United Nations. The results nevertheless showed improvement between the first and second test.

**Speaking**

In the journal entries, I wrote that I improved in using synonyms in conversation. The entries also show that I was unsure of pronunciation in some cases.

**Week 2**

“…. Now, I understand that instead of using ‘après’ (then) all the time, I can use ‘puis’ and ‘ensuite’ when speaking. I can also use ‘cependant’ (however) to replace ‘mais’. It sounds more beautiful and knowledgeable.”

**Week 10**

“While reading, I found some problems with my pronunciation. I sometimes pronounce words in my mind when reading books; however, I found that I was pronouncing some very similar words in the same way. Strange!”

Furthermore, the interview with the two French native speakers showed that extensive reading not only improved my speaking ability, but also helped increase the size of vocabulary. The following are the excerpts from the interviews (translated from French).

IR: How about my speaking?
Jack: When you speak, you speak automatically. You easily find the words that you want….In addition, you know how to use the “subjunctive.” …This kind of syntax is very difficult to use. …Furthermore, I found it is quite important that you hesitated less than before when speaking French. I think that you can speak better than before. …The words came out quite easily, and you used a lot of different vocabulary to describe the same thing. Compared with before, I think your speaking is more fluent.
IR: It has been about three months since we first met. Do you think that I have made any progress during these three months?

Joy: [Your French is now] very natural. When you spoke, you spoke very naturally. You stopped less often in the middle of sentences…[Three months ago], when you spoke, you stopped in the middle of the sentence to find the words, but now you speak very naturally.

In addition to the journal entries and interview excerpts, the results of the DELF showed, as can be seen from the data in table 1, that I scored 18 on the intermediate level test (B1) at the start and scored 15 on the upper-intermediate level test (B2). The passing score at each level is 12.5 out of 25. Therefore, the scores demonstrated I advanced one level in the DELF, from an intermediate to upper-intermediate.

**Writing**

The journal entries showed I improved my sensitivity to written French and that extensive reading helped build my confidence in writing French.

Week 4

“…I learned some beautiful words that I can use in writing. I used to use ‘quand’ to describe ‘when’, but now I can use ‘lorsque’ instead. And for ‘because’, I can use ‘puisque’ and ‘car’ instead of only ‘parce que.’ I have more choices than before when writing.”

Week 6

“…I feel more comfortable when writing emails in French.

In addition, I provided Jack and Joy with two papers. Paper 1, which was the summary of a story I read at the very beginning of the ER program, and Paper 2 at the end. The evaluations done by the interviewers indicated that I could use grammar and vocabulary more appropriately.

IR: Comparing Paper 1 and Paper 2, which one is better?

Jack: Paper 2 is much better than paper 1. First, the vocabulary. You have more vocabulary now. I knew that you already had lots of vocabulary before, but now you have even more. The difference is that before you used some vocabulary [words] in the wrong context, but now you know how to use them in the correct context. ... Also, when I read paper 1, truly, I did not understand what this story was about, but I could understand paper 2 perfectly. Third, the structures of the sentences, I think, in paper 2 are more correct and clearer than in paper 1.

IR: Could you tell what the differences were between these two papers?

Joy: The sentences in paper 2 are more elegant and I could understand what this story was about. …, and the most important thing is your punctuation. You knew when to end the sentences. That’s important.

As shown in Table 1, I scored 13 out of 25 on the first test (intermediate level, B1), meaning that my writing competency was intermediate. However, I only got 9.5 out of 25 on the second test (upper-intermediate level, B2), so I did not succeed in reaching the upper-intermediate level. In the second test I was assigned the task of writing a professional business letter, and I did not have any exposure to any business materials while conducting my study.
The Second Research Question

Reading Habits.
As shown in my journal entries, I read in French in my free time. Clearly, reading French became part of my daily routine.

Week 6
“When I woke up this morning, I just wanted to read French before doing other things.”

Week 7
“…After lunch, I did not want to watch TV, so I grabbed a French book and started to read. I read a French story for about 15 minutes. I felt great.”

Attitude towards Extensive Reading in French.
Four factors—no pressure while reading, interesting plots, a sense of achievement, and a positive change of learning attitudes—nurtured my reading habits. Without pressure, I really enjoyed what I read and this motivated me to read more. The appealing content of the stories stimulated my interest in reading, resulting in a positive attitude towards reading French. Again, when I had more exposure to French, it led to more learning. The sense of achievement is another crucial factor. Most importantly, I changed my learning attitude. The journal entries revealed that I learned to solve problems in understanding meanings by myself, making me a more autonomous learner. My journal entries also demonstrated that I read for myself because I enjoyed and liked reading the stories. Motivation became intrinsic. When I woke up wanting to read French, I had become an intrinsically motivated, autonomous learner.

Week 10
“…. Remembering when I studied English before, I could not tolerate the ambiguity of the language. …The new vocabulary flowed easily and the sentence structures really varied with different authors…. I learned that a language can be complicated; therefore, to tolerate its ambiguity is necessary.”

The Third Research Question

Challenges Encountering in Extensive Reading
Anxiety, lack of French resources, and selecting appropriate materials were the challenges that I faced when I read extensively. Those challenges were also reflected in my journal entries.
Anxiety. I felt anxiety about my reading speed and the simplicity of the books I was reading. I was afraid that if the materials were too easy then my French proficiency would not improve. The misconception was ingrained in me from the time I had begun to study English. I believed that if the materials were not difficult, I could not improve my ability in the target language. Nonetheless, I did not enjoy reading difficult material. In addition, I knew that I was going to have a second test three months later. Therefore, I sometimes felt anxious and concerned that ER might not improve my French competence. Moreover, I had to remind myself that I was reading—not studying—and I had been taught that study was necessary in learning a foreign language.

Week 11
“...I felt happy to finish reading *The Little Prince*. However, the fact that DELF is approaching makes me nervous because it will not tell people how happy I am when I’m reading.”

Lack of adequate French resources. During my study, there were only two places where I could borrow books. One was the French Institution; the other was L’Alliance Française, which was closed for almost three weeks in August.

Selecting appropriate materials. The journal entries also revealed that when reading an interesting book, I felt excited, and sometimes could not wait to finish it. On the other hand, if I read a story which was not appealing or too difficult, I felt sleepy and became discouraged. Thus, when reading extensively, choosing appropriate materials was crucial because it could encourage or discourage me from continuing to read. The journal entries indicate that it is essential that materials be both comprehensible and interesting. Equally important, they are also required to be within learners’ language competency.

Week 10
“...I felt I was flying when reading *Le Petit Prince* (The Little Prince).”

Week 12
“I had a kind of defeated feeling, when I read the *Candide* of Voltaire this morning.”

In short, the journal entries revealed that the interesting plots, non-threatening environment, and a sense of achievement altered my reading attitude towards French. I became a more independent, and confident learner. These factors motivated me to read more and triggered my passion for reading. So despite the challenges of occasional bouts of anxiety, lack of adequate French resources, and sometimes making an inappropriate selection of reading material, improvement took place during these three months. The interviews, in particular, demonstrated a significant gain in three skills: writing, listening and speaking. Although the DELF test did not show an improvement in my ability to write a business letter, my skills in listening and speaking were given positive ratings, and the French native speakers noticed a great improvement in my writing.

CONCLUSION

After reading 28 books within three months, I not only increased the size of my vocabulary but could use words in more proper context. Using my own words to express my understanding about stories also demonstrated improvement in my writing ability. In summary, ER made me more fluent and more understandable to others. This case shows that the different components of language need not be studied separately; they can be acquired simultaneously from reading.
REFERENCES


Please support the International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, a free on-line, peer-reviewed professional journal.

Order the following resources at www.ijflt.com and help keep international subscriptions free.

Donated as fundraisers for IJFLT:

Foreign Language Education the Easy Way, by Stephen Krashen, $7

The Fundamentals and the Ecstasy of Language Acquisition, live DVD of Stephen Krashen, 2006, $40
Today, in many classrooms, upper intermediate and advanced language students are bored and burnt out by the time they reach the highest levels of their language studies. Traditional language classes are no longer helpful to them. These students are sufficiently competent in English to meet the challenges of their language classroom environment and as a result they are desperately seeking comprehensible input beyond the confines of their regular texts. While some may take a running leap and submerge themselves fully in the input supplied by the outside world, others may be more cautious and desire more practice in the target language before making the plunge into a vocation or academic studies.

Bearing this in mind, perhaps the best way to help bridge this widening gap between upper-level classes and engaging comprehensible input is to provide sheltered literature-based courses.

The comprehensible input gained through reading, according to the Comprehension Hypothesis, should not only sharpen a student’s reading skills, but strengthen his/her competence in writing style, vocabulary acquisition, spelling competence, and grammar knowledge as well (Krashen, 1997).

Ideally, sheltered classes promote narrow and extensive reading, “focusing on a single topic or author to take advantage of natural repetition of vocabulary and syntax as well as familiar context” (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 137). Additionally, a sheltered literature course permits the creation of a “literature circle” in which everyone is reading the same text and is able to discuss the messages they receive from the stories.

Studies of students participating in literature circles found the majority of the students felt literature circles “made reading more pleasant” and listening to their classmates’ “views of the reading helped them understand the texts better” (Dupuy, cited in Krashen, 1997, p. 31).

While there is an abundance of authors and literature to design a sheltered literature class around, the Jeeves stories written by British humorist, Pelham Grenville (P.G.) Wodehouse, lend themselves well to the methodology of sheltered subject matter teaching and have a large following in Italy, Russia, and India. In Russia, for example, the Jeeves books have practically become required reading among the intelligentsia. And in Italy there are Wodehouse Appreciation societies that hold yearly conventions with attending delegates dressing up as their favorite characters (Inglefield, 1998). India, too, appears to be hooked on Jeeves. Indian bookstores sell under 1,000 copies of books in English, but sell over 70,000 copies of Wodehouse novels annually (McClarence, 2006). In addition, the DVD episodes of the 1990s Granada television series based on the Jeeves stories have generated fan clubs throughout Europe and Russia. This mass appeal shows that the Jeeves stories have the ability to generate a keen interest in readers whose culture is non-Anglo and whose language is not English.

Equally noteworthy is the fact that the Jeeves stories do not threaten other cultures or conflict with their values. The stories and DVD episodes are wholesome and free from sex, violence, and bad language. This creates an acquisition-rich environment because no social distance is created that could raise affective filters and discourage the reception of input.

Another important point concerning the DVDs is that they can provide a listening module for the Jeeves stories. This permits the language acquirer to hear the natural rhythm of the target language as it is transformed from its written form into words. From the opening theme song of the Jeeves and Wooster DVD series to the Jazz-age songs Wooster sings in various episodes, the sound of music will appeal and entertain the language learner while providing him/her with a powerful form of aural comprehensible input.
Although there is little difficulty in blending the Jeeves stories with the natural approach to create a literature-based course to teach English, it is important to satisfy three crucial conditions to ensure the learner’s success in developing second language competence. First, the student must have an interest in the literature being taught. If the student doesn’t, the comprehensible input is not going to be absorbed. Second, the student’s language competence should be at an upper intermediate or advanced level so that he/she will have a better understanding of the short stories he/she is reading and DVD episodes he/she is watching. Third, the teacher needs to understand the Comprehension Hypothesis and its application as sheltered subject matter teaching. Likewise, the teacher should be familiar with the Jeeves stories because his/her enthusiasm for the literature is crucial to the motivation of his/her students.

Because of their authenticity, I found that the literature, DVDs and class activities generated by the Jeeves stories inspired my students to read, speak, hear and write English. This inspiration provided my students with the confidence they needed to become independent within the classroom and with the means to absorb the target language. Moreover, I discovered that I could use the stories to promote a shared reading experience in which my class and I could read the stories together and afterwards talked about what we had read. I also encouraged my students to share passages they enjoyed during their reading.

Undoubtedly, sheltered literature classes organized around interesting and fun subject matter like the Jeeves stories could provide both a framework for a college entrance course and an alternative fresh source of comprehensible input. While second language learners may not be in need of Jeeves to rescue them from a meddling aunt or an unlucky engagement, they can certainly benefit from his stories, which will not only expose them to quality literature written by an extremely talented author, but also enthrall them with lively and comical themes, addictive plots, and memorable characters.

References


One more reason to check out You Tube:

Grey’s Anatomy clips in Spanish. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRXjsmxpUE4

The One Semester of Spanish Spanish-Love Song http://youtube.com/watch?v=ngRq82c8Baw

“Americans who travel abroad for the first time are often shocked to discover that, despite all the progress that has been made in the last 30 years, many foreign people still speak in foreign languages.”
-Dave Barry, American Comedian

To submit articles for review, send them by attachment to IJFLT@TPRStories.com

Found a helpful link or interesting website that should be shared with other teachers? Have an idea for an article or something that works in your classroom? Want to let teachers know about upcoming state language conferences, workshops or trainings? Send us an email, IJFLT@TPRStories.com.

Subscribe to IJFLT
To subscribe to The International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, a free, on-line quarterly journal, go to:
www.ijflt.com

Winter, 2004
Spring, 2005
Summer, 2005
Fall, 2005
Winter 2006
Fall 2006
Fall 2007

Free TPRS Coaching Workshops
www.tprstories.com/coaching.htm

Fluency Fast Language Classes
Spring Class Schedule
www.fluencyfast.com

Fall Workshops Schedule, books, DVDs and music
www.blaineraytprs.com

Research Index • Teacher-to-Teacher Index • Submission Info • Contact Us • Subscription Info
Spring 2008 Schedule

Fluency Fast Language Classes
www.FluencyFast.com 1-866-WWW-FLUENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>LANGUAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 7 – 9, 2008</td>
<td>ORANGE COUNTY, CA</td>
<td>Beginning Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20 – 23, 2008</td>
<td>COLORADO SPRINGS, CO</td>
<td>Beginning Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13 – 15, 2008</td>
<td>DENVER, CO</td>
<td>Beg./Intermd Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17- 19, 2008</td>
<td>AUSTIN, TX</td>
<td>Beginning Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28 – 30, 2008</td>
<td>MARSHALLTOWN, IA</td>
<td>Beginning Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30 – May 3, 2008</td>
<td>BAKERSFIELD, CA</td>
<td>Beginning Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New classes are being added regularly! Please check www.fluencyfast.com for newly added classes

About Fluency Fast

Fluency Fast uses a technique called TPRS®, Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling®. TPRS® was invented by Blaine Ray of Bakersfield, California in the late 1980’s. He began presenting workshops to foreign language teachers in the early 1990’s and now thousands of teachers attend training workshops and sessions annually. Thousands more use the TPRS® books in their classrooms. The method involves telling stories using high frequency vocabulary to lodge language in the long term memory. Simply put, TPRS® takes advantage of how we really learn -- re-creating the miracle of how babies are able to understand thousands of words before reaching the age of two!

Don’t Miss our Early Registration Deadlines!!
Speak and learn a new language in just days through TPRS®!

MISSION: The mission of Fluency Fast is to create and sustain a movement that causes a global shift in consciousness by transforming communications among individuals, communities, and countries and inspiring people to use language as a tool to build bridges with other cultures. Our goal is to dispel the myth that learning languages is difficult and to inspire people to have fun learning Arabic, French, German, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish, easily, inexpensively, effectively and in a brief period of time.