The Presence of and Demand for Comprehensible Input Sessions at ACTFL, Boston 2016
by Karen Rowan

IJFLT attended The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Boston, Massachusetts in November 2016 to conduct interviews and report on the presence of sessions on the topics of Comprehensible Input, TPR Storytelling® and Language Acquisition.

Is there a demand for sessions at ACTFL on Language Acquisition theory and application? Are there sufficient quality sessions to meet that demand?

ACTFL Opening Ceremony, Boston, 2016

ACTFL former Presidents at the opening ceremony, Boston, 2016
CI Sessions that were submitted prior to the January, 2016 submission deadline were self-reported on the Facebook page. Those that were accepted were compiled into a list of recommended sessions teachers wanting to attend TPRS and CI sessions. We were also unable to photograph each CI session, but our experience was similar to those of attendees at other sessions.

Three Teacher of the Year candidates are CI / TPRS teachers. Michele Whaley represented the Pacific Northwest. Darcy Pippins represented the Southwest. Grant Boulanger represented the Central States. Each candidate was initially forwarded by his or her own state organization. Michele Whaley is from Alaska. Darcy Pippins is from Oklahoma. Grant Boulanger is from Minnesota. This is the largest number of Comprehensible Input / TPR Storytelling® teachers to ever be sent to ACTFL as representatives of the regional conferences. Each presented a session at ACTFL, as well.
ACTFL plenary: Myths and facts about second language acquisition and second language teaching

Session Presenters: Dr. Bill VanPatten & Dr. Stephen Krashen
Moderator: Dr. Peter Swanson

“Standing room only in the largest conference room at ACTFL.”
Photo by Diane Neubauer

Dr. Bill VanPatten, Michigan State University
Following this joint session, several participants stayed to request autographs and photos of Stephen Krashen, resulting in a humorous “paparazzi” photo.

Video excerpts of Dr. Krashen’s presentations:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDy9fXuGBjQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-HJw6PVr0M
As we attended sessions or tried to gain entry into sessions, the story that emerged was not the one we had originally intended to tell. For a CI teacher wondering if the time and expense of attending ACTFL are justified by the number and quality of CI sessions offered, we found the answer to be yes. Stephen Krashen, Bill VanPatten and Blaine Ray were among the most well-known presenters. In addition, three ACTFL Teacher of the Year candidates also presented CI sessions. The number of CI Teacher of the Year candidates and the presence of Drs Krashen and VanPatten are indicators that ACTFL recognizes the importance of acquisition-based teaching strategies. The demand for the majority of the CI sessions, though, was consistently significantly higher than the number of chairs in the rooms. While we attempted to take pictures from inside of each session, we quite often were only able to get photos from the doorway, as entry was blocked. In one session at which we arrived early, we were told by hotel security that the room was above fire safety capacity.

**Putting SLA Principles into Practice**
Session Presenters: *Dr. Bill VanPatten & Carol Gaab*

![Dr. Bill VanPatten and Carol Gaab presenting to a full house in an exhibitor session](image)

**Conspicuous by its Absence? TPRS and CI in the college methods course**
Session Presenter: *Carol Dean*

This session was a roundtable sharing session. Approximately 20 people were in attendance for all or part of the discussion. The table had chairs for 8-10. After
borrowing chairs, some attendees kneeled around the table. As the session ended, the table was held over for the next session and the conversation continued for a second hour.

**Assessments that guide instruction and reward growth in proficiency**
Session Presenters: Cynthia Hitz & Mrs. Krista Kovalchick, Palmyra Area School District (Thank you to Cynthia Hitz for compiling the list of sessions.)

**What’s the password? Starting class before class**
Roundtable Presenter: Bryce Hedstrom, Roosevelt High School

**TPRS in the FLES Classroom:** Use TPRS in Your Elementary Classroom Tomorrow
Session Presenters: Molly Bruno, Elvira Colmenero, Rocio Jacoby, Margaret Poleski

**Impacting Fluency with Listen & Draw, Roleplaying, and TPR + Story**
Session Presenters: Haiyun Lu, Blaine Ray

Blaine Ray and Haiyun Lu about to begin. Participants are seated on the floor.
Blaine Ray, inventor of TPRS, and Haiyun Lu

Canela: a movie unit for Spanish 1
Session Presenter: Kara Jacobs, Governor Wentworth School District

Party Like it’s MMXVI: The Fun and the Fruit of 21st Century Latin Teaching
Session Presenter: Justin Slocum Bailey, North American Institute for Living Latin Studies

Justin Slocum Bailey’s session for Latin teachers attracted teachers of all languages and there were no available seats. Justin’s article is at the beginning of the Teacher to Teacher section.

Moviemaking with Sr. Wooly: How to Make your Own Videos Amazing
Session Presenters: Jim Wooldridge, Señor Wooly, LLC & Kelly Ferguson, LaFollette High School

Reading Proficiency: Online Self-Assessment (Russian example)
Session presenter: Michele Whaley (PNCFL TOY) & Jane Shuffelton

Creating Impact with iPads
Session presenter: Theresa Schenker, Yale University & Angelika Kraemer, MSU (Co-host-of TeawithBVP.com)

The Art of Unpacking a Short Novel: Teaching with Comprehensible Input
Session presenter: Anna Matheson

The Compelling Input Hypothesis And The Evolution Of Teaching Methods
Paper Presenter: Stephen Krashen, USC School Of Education

Teaching Latin With The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: It Can Be Done!
Session Presenter: Rachel Ash & Elissabeth Legendre

One Goal, One Sequence, Ten Powerful Lessons
Session Presenter: Carol Gaab

Powerhouse CI Strategies
Presenters: Carol Gaab & Kristy Placido
Making A World Of Difference: Engaging Students Globally And Locally
Session Presenter: Carrie Toth, Carlyle High School

How To Teach A Novel
Session Presenter: Darcy Pippins

Darcy Pippins, SWCOLT TOY and representative of the Oklahoma Foreign Language Association
Waiting for Darcy Pippins’ Novel session to begin.

Darcy Pippins, SWCOLT’s article on Teaching for the AP exam with TPRS appeared in the May, 2016 issue of IJFLT.
KAREN ROWAN: THE PRESENCE OF AND DEMAND FOR COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT SESSIONS AT ACTFL, BOSTON 2016

ImpactFL Voices: Languages Beyond The Classroom
Moderator: Juan Carlos Morales, Miami Dade College
Session Presenters:
Lynn Sessler Neitzel, Clovis Grove Elementary; Carrie Toth, Carlyle High School; Joshua Cabral, Brookwood School

Breakout EDU: Immersive Learning Games For The World Language Classroom
Session Presenter: Leslie Davison, Summit School District

Tea With BVP 3:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Tea With BVP, live from ACTFL 2016  www.teawithbvp.com

Group photo after TeaWithBVP became the cover photo for the IJFLT CI Facebook page.  www.facebook.com/groups/IFLTNTPRSCITEACHING/
Well-kept Secrets Textbook Publishers Don’t Want You To Know
Session Presenters: Dr. Stephen Krashen & Carol Gaab

Sprouting A Garden – Simple Steps To Grow A Comprehensible Input Classroom
Session Presenters: Brigitte Kahn, Massapequa School District & Janice Kincaid, Massapequa Public Schools

Storytelling 101:
How To Create Comprehensible Stories For Young Learners
Session Presenters: Rebecca Collora & Niki Tottingham

Chinese Literacy: Cold Character Reading In The Three Communicative Modes
Session Presenters: Reid Wyatt, Canterbury School

From Compelling Commercials To Comprehensible Input
Session Presenter: Kristy Placido, Fowlerville High School

Putting The Big C (Communication) Back Into Immersion Programs
Session Presenters: Gayle Westerberg & Leslie Davison

Content-based Storytelling: Redefining K-8 Learner Outcomes
Session Presenter: Barbara Cartford, Janice Kittok, Karen Lichtman

Shifting To A Much Needed Proficiency-based Grading System
“Assessments That Guide Instruction And Reward Growth In Proficiency”
Session Presenter: Lance Piantaggini, Independent Scholar

Making Movie Clips Comprehensible For Cultural Impact
Session Presenters: Diane Neubauer, Pumei Leng & Haiyun Lu

Creating Culture: Speaking Before They Can
Session Presenter: Grant Boulanger (Central States TOY) & Robert Patrick
As ACTFL came to a close on Sunday and the halls emptied and attendance at sessions became typically sparse, this session by Grant Boulanger did not have an empty chair. Resources from this session were posted here: http://www.grantboulanger.com/free-stuff/

If this is a trend at ACTFL, and sessions on the topics of language acquisition, Teaching with Comprehensible Input and TPR Storytelling® continue to increase and the acceptance rate of CI sessions increases, ACTFL may become a valuable resource for CI teachers. Unfortunately, many of these sessions were in competing time slots, making it difficult to attend more of them. It may also be time for teachers to consider creating an ACTFL Special Interest Group. The number of Teacher of the Year candidates and the presence of Dr. Stephen Krashen and Dr. Bill VanPatten by itself was of great value. Many sessions on the practical application of language acquisition theory to the classroom are needed to meet the demand of the teachers in attendance and seeking those resources. IJFLT would like to encourage presenters to contribute articles to the Teacher to Teacher section of IJFLT to share their ideas with an even wider audience. We look forward to ACTFL, 2017 in Nashville, Tennessee.
To submit articles for review, send them by attachment to ijflteditor@gmail.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 at ijflteditor@gmail.com.

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