

In This Issue...

Immersion: Why Not Try Free Voluntary Reading?

In this short article, Krashen suggests that reading is a powerful source in acquiring language competence.

Stephen Krashen 1

Sociopolitical Awareness, Intercultural Sensitivity and the Language Teacher

What are the costs to language teachers who remain disengaged from sociopolitical debate in a pluralistic society?

Peter J. Heffernan 5

Another Language Teaching Approach: Dhority's Acquisition through Creative Teaching (ACT)

Bancroft describes how Lozanov's Suggestopedia has influenced other teaching methods to create yet another approach to second language teaching.

Jane Bancroft 10

The Effects of Pleasure Reading

Constantino's research supports Krashen's theory on the benefits of free voluntary reading. She identifies the impact it makes on the TOEFL test.

Rebecca Constantino 15

Creative Writing: Poetry in the Language Classroom

Some "recipes" for writing of poetry to expand vocabulary in the target language.

Anthony Mollica 18

Teaching Culture in a North American Context: Columbus Day

Background to Columbus' historical voyages.

Anthony Mollica and Frank Nuessel 20

Quotable Quotes...

What the "authorities" in the field have said on various aspects of second-language teaching and learning.

Various Authors 25

From the Editor's Desk 2

Immersion: Why Not Try Free Voluntary Reading?

Stephen Krashen

Immersion programs have not given comprehensible input a real chance. The author suggests reading as one of the solutions.

In recent years, observers of immersion programs have been very concerned about the finding that immersion students do not speak the second language perfectly, even after years of participation.¹ There is the widespread conviction that the solution lies in focusing more on form and using more direct teaching of grammar. I maintain that this conclusion is premature and that immersion programs have not yet given comprehensible input a real chance.

We can explain the "imperfection" of immersion easily without abandoning the Input Hypothesis. As others have pointed out, immersion students are exposed to a limited range of input and have no peer interaction. In addition, immersion has never attempted to exploit one of the best sources of comprehensible input: free voluntary reading. There is an enormous amount of research that confirms that free voluntary reading is the source of a great deal of our reading ability, our writing style, our ability to use complex grammatical constructions, our vocabulary, and much of our spelling ability (Krashen, 1993). Students who participate in free voluntary reading programs in school, such as sustained silent reading, typically outperform traditionally taught comparison students on a variety of measures of literacy competence (second language studies of in-

school free reading include Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Elley, 1991; Pillingreen and Krashen, 1993), and that more reading outside of school is associated with more literacy development (second language studies include Tudor and Hafiz, 1989; Cho and Krashen, 1994; Constantino, 1994).

Immersion children do not read for pleasure in their second language. Romney, Romney and Menzies (1995) reported no relationship between the amount grade 6 immersion students said they spent reading in French, and their scores on a test of reading comprehension. The reason for this result is that the children hardly read at all in French: "They spent an average of 3 1/2 minutes a day reading French books and one minute reading French comics, magazines, and newspapers..." (p. 485). In comparison, they averaged 26 minutes per day reading English books and seven minutes reading English language comics, magazines and newspapers. When asked to name their favourite French authors, only 3% of the students could name an author; in contrast, 81% were able to name their favourite English author.

There is, in addition, no clear evidence that focusing on form is effective. I have argued that focusing on form leads typically to short-term

continued on page 3

Mosaic

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The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate.
There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field.

Peter Heffernan



From the Editor's Desk

The Editorial Board

In this issue we have added new names to the members of the Editorial Board. We appreciate the fact that these colleagues have accepted to evaluate manuscripts, to promote *Mosaic*, and to encourage researchers and practising teachers to submit articles of interest to our readership. The word "evaluate" may sound intimidating, particularly when the author submitting an article knows it will be read by authorities in the field. It is not meant to do so. Members of the Editorial Board are practising teachers who are very interested in the day-to-day activities going on in the language classroom.

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Anthony Mollica

Voluntary Reading

continued from page 1

gains for limited aspects of language, and these gains are apparent only on form-based measures; the knowledge gained in this way does not become part of true linguistic competence (Krashen, 1992, 1994a, 1994b).²

In light of the overwhelming evidence that free reading is a powerful source of language competence, the finding that immersion children do not do free reading, and the lack of clear evidence for focusing on form, one is led to the conclusion that free reading should at least be considered as an option. Students interviewed by Romney et al. explained why they didn't do much reading in French: there was little for them to read in French that was both interesting and comprehensible. The solution to this problem means assembling collections of interesting (and comprehensible) books in the second language, providing some sustained silent reading time, reading good stories to students in class, and discussing good books in class. This is certainly an easier, more pleasant, and more promising route than doing more activities that focus on the conditional and Imperfect.³

Notes:

I should like to thank Jeff McQuillan for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. One often reads that immersion students have "fossilized." Harley and Swain (1984), however, conclude that for the early French total immersion students they studied, "there is currently no evidence that immersion students' interlanguage stops developing... while growth towards target language norms in productive language may seem remarkably gradual, we find at any grade level... that there is new development relative to earlier grades" (p. 300). Duchesne (1995) arrives at a similar conclusion. In a study of errors of French immersion students from grades 1 to 6, he found that while some errors did remain, "les erreurs, en général, diminuent en fréquence d'année en année... on obtient une image beaucoup plus dynamique et optimiste de la situation que celle que dessine la fossilisation." (p. 527). Improvement slows down after grade three, but continues to take place.

2. Studies specifically done with immersion students have not made the case for focusing on form: Harley (1989) provided grade six French immersion students with eight weeks of special instruction on the imparfait/passé composé distinction. Her experimental groups averaged 11.9 hours of work on this comparison, while control groups did less than half that amount. Experimental students scored significantly better on two out of three (form-based) measures, but differences on one measure (the cloze test), while significant, were small (less than 3%), and delayed post-testing done three months later revealed no significant differences among the groups.

In light of the overwhelming evidence that free reading is a powerful source of language competence, the finding that immersion children do not do free reading, and the lack of clear evidence for focusing on form, one is led to the conclusion that free reading should at least be considered as an option.

In Day and Shapson (1991), seventh graders focused on the conditional for six weeks and showed better gains than a comparison group on two out of three measures, but tests were form-based, and delayed post-testing was done 11 weeks after the treatment ended. This interval may have been too short: As noted above, Harley's subjects' gains disappeared after three months. Using adult subjects, White (1991) reported that gains from conscious learning were lost when subjects were tested one year later. Scott and Randell (1992)'s adult subjects showed clear declines in performance on consciously learned aspects of French grammar four weeks after post-testing. Their subjects studied each grammar rule for only four minutes while Day and Shapson's subjects had three periods per week of instruction for six weeks. Working much harder, however, may only delay the inevitable). In Lyster (1994), grade 8 French immersion students showed some gains in the use of tu/vous after 12 hours of instruction over five weeks, and held these gains at delayed post-testing one month later; as in Day and Shapson, this interval may have been too short. Improvement in another fea-

ture of politeness and polite closings in letters did not endure to the post-testing. One post-test, a multiple-choice test, clearly focused students on form, and the others, involving written and oral production, had elements of form-focus as well, as students taking these tests had just experienced a great deal of instruction on just those forms required on the tests (e.g. the written task required students to write an informal letter and a formal letter).

I find it very hard to believe that the children love grammar instruction.

Salomone and Palma (1995), in a study of French immersion in the United States, assert that "increased attention to students' grammatical competence... has made this particular immersion school even more successful" (p. 232), but provide no data. In their thorough analysis of six teachers' implicit theories and classroom behaviour, there is no mention of free voluntary reading in French. Duchesne (1995) suggests that immersion students' improvement in certain structures (e.g. agreement of possessive adjectives) was due to an increased emphasis by teachers on these structures, but without a comparison group that did not receive instruction, there is no evidence this is so.

There is a great deal of evidence that children enjoy hearing stories and reading books that they select on their own.

In at least one instance in Salomone and Palma's report, "grammar instruction" was really "language appreciation." Mr. Loffland, the principal, explained: "We're teaching a lot more grammar now. I was observing in an upper-grade classroom, and the children were conjugating 12 verbs. They loved it. One boy couldn't do the passé composé of *lire* so I said: 'Jason, j'ai ...' and he said, 'lu.' They know it intuitively." (Salomone and Palma, p. 230). What Mr. Loffland observed was language performance, not language acquisition or language learning: Jason had already acquired the correct form, and Mr. Loffland elicited it.

I find it very hard to believe that the children love grammar instruction. McQuillan (1994) asked 49

adult second language students who had participated in extensive reading about their preferences: 84% said that reading was more pleasurable than grammar, and 78% felt reading was more beneficial than grammar, suggesting that once students do it, they like it and understand its benefits. In addition, there is a great deal of evidence that children enjoy hearing stories and reading books that they select on their own (Krashen, 1994b).

3. It has been pointed out, most recently by Tarone and Swain (1995), that immersion children lack competence in the nonacademic, conversational style of the second language. Light reading might be of help, because it contains a great deal of everyday language. For some evidence, see Cho and Krashen (1994).

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CATHY



by Cathy Guisewite

Sociopolitical Awareness, Intercultural Sensitivity and the Language Teacher

Peter J. Heffernan

Language and politics in a pluralistic society make fascinating bedmates – a relationship that language teachers ignore or downplay at their peril.

Introduction

Canada's liberal, progressivist and, until quite recently, nearly unanimous political ideology favouring official bilingualism and the promotion of the "multicultural mosaic" (Mollica, 1993) is currently being assailed, as it were, on all fronts. Among other things, it is being made the scapegoat for Canada's current deficit and mounting debt woes. It is being blamed for sovereignty or separatism – use the nomenclature you prefer – while being simultaneously mindful that the choice to use the one or the other term is laden with divergent, underlying assumptions, values and world views. In conjunction with liberal immigration policies, it is being singled out as uniquely responsible for division in Canada's ranks, its lack of a common vision or cohesive system of values, widespread, growing criminality and impending chaos. It is being castigated as the trumped up pipe dream of fuzzy-headed, latter-day Trudeauists (i.e., "revisionists" with vested interests intent on re-inventing the country, while re-writing its history, the so-called "chattering classes", out-of-touch politicians and bureaucrats, conspiratorial media types and a certain kind of dithering academics sequestered in their Ivory Tower pretentiously spouting polysyllabic inanities while the world that allegedly real or legitimate workers are paying for with their blood, sweat and tears is caving in all around them). Its proponents are, so the saw goes, the sanctimonious elites who were put in their place by being turfed unceremoniously after the 1992 Charlottetown Accord *débâcle* and related misadventures. In keeping with this line of thinking, they all got their comeuppance and their

ideology the rejection it duly deserved.

David Bercuson (1994), a history professor and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Calgary, exemplifies the forces working against bilingualism and multiculturalism. From a national pedestal, for instance, he has recently jeeringly slighted bilingualism as "the centre of the new artificial Canadian identity", something apparently contrived and to be got rid of with the supposedly honourable motive of salvaging Canadian authenticity (i.e., to be monolingual is to be "real").

Coincidentally, in this extended scenario, while heritage/international and official second language programs, such as French immersion, are facing enrollment challenges (Tanguay, 1992) and undergoing a bout of negatively biased scrutinizing in the current political climate, the euphemistically, if not also ironically, self-described Canadian Heritage Front and other such racist cabals – against visible and other minorities, against bilingualism, against multiculturalism – strut arrogantly on the national stage (Makin, 1994). Self-styled rightist liberators, they proclaim their intent to slay "sacred cows" (some of which, they say, are listed above) and take them to the "barbecue". Symbols of intolerance become cherished Canadian banners. The long-respected Canadian Legion, for example, votes convincingly at a recent national convention not to allow former comrades in arms, who wear turbans or other religious headgear, into their midst at Legion halls across the country. A federal political party, whose elected numbers almost rank it as the Official Opposition, sports Members of Parliament proudly ap-

propriating their "redneck" moniker, with its disciples proclaiming "Redneck liberation" (Alberta Report, 22 August 1994), suggesting a parallel between being redneck and being Christian, and who frequently, incongruously, make much touted, demeaning remarks about various ethnic groups and situations, thereby lending credence to a value system of indifference or jeering condescension and bigotry. It is as if any suggestion of beneficence, tolerance or understanding were signs of weakness to be obliterated. Ever at the ready, the proponents of this countervailing ideology would characterize these critical observations of their positions as ranting, wanting in sense of humour, exaggerated and, especially, "politically correct", the cop-out *par excellence* for the new right.

It might be argued, for reasons of competitiveness and understanding in trade alone, that money spent on learning languages in Canada today is an investment in the country's future wealth and well-being.

In a progressivist era, some remarkable excesses characterized by *-isms* carrying their particular ideologies to non-sensical extremes have led, among other things, to new, unwieldy codes being devised to control comportment, language and so forth, all, for better or for worse, in the name of political correctness and with a view to protecting those being victimized and inequitably treated. Now, however, the new rightist orthodoxy at the antipode of the sociopolitical spectrum, as if robotically, invokes political correctness as a natural put-down for whatever does not suit its neo-conservative agenda (i.e., intellectualism, any measures to nourish social equity, and so forth). Two wrongs (read as "extremisms") do not make a right.

Not about to be duped, the majority of Canadians, including many language educators, who do not subscribe to this alternative ideology, choose to ignore it, assuming that, with time, it will dissipate, and rea-

son and human compassion will prevail. This may not be a misguided strategy. However, conversely, it might just as well be assumed that by their silence they are also showing their acquiescence.

In line with this latter reasoning, the desirability, indeed the necessity, of sociopolitical awareness and intercultural sensitivity for language teachers is highlighted. If, like many Canadians, they too succumb to "constitutional fatigue" or become apathetic generally about politics and politicians, they can only blame themselves if the sociopolitical agenda and intercultural entente on which Canada was built get distorted or, eventually, do not resemble at all what they thought them to be.

A clarion call for sociopolitical engagement on the part of educators generally and language teachers particularly is nothing new. Quite to the contrary, the mantle of leadership or the role of conscience of the masses has traditionally fallen quite naturally to educators, individuals graced by the nature of their professional vocation to be thinkers and shapers of destiny. Typically, too, as with the Japanese and their "sen-sei", societies have respected and valued the civility and wisdom teachers as community leaders have brought to bear on public discourse and decision-making. They ought not to be cowed then into submission by the current fad, predominantly though not exclusively North American, of apparent rejoicing at the prospect of systematically deriding intellectualism and downplaying helter-skelter formal education and the educator's role in society.

As for language teachers particularly, various means exist whereby their participation in the local, regional and national sociopolitical debate can be both informed and meaningful.

The Debate on Deficits and Debt

The annual reports and other publications of the Commissioner of Official Languages (COL), available basically on request, provide a wealth of factual data relative to languages in Canadian society in general and educational institutions

in particular. Routinely, they give information, for example, about specific costs of bilingual programs, about enrollments in various kinds of language programs, or about results of surveys, scientifically conducted, of Canadian public opinion relative to languages and language education. All national budgets, like personal and family budgets, target planned spending on the basis of preferences and priorities. In the Canadian case, consistently, according to the above-mentioned COL reports, there is strong majority support for language programs; interest in languages as witnessed in enrollment trends is high; and, in relative terms, the percentage of overall national budget spent on languages education is picayune (less than one-half of one percent) compared with spending in other areas of budget, while at the same time proving cost-effective, as the percentage proportion of bilingual Canadians is steadily growing, particularly among young people.

The recently renegotiated General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), renamed the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the potential for hemispheric expansion to include other countries of the Americas in the free trade agreement, currently limited to Canada, the United States and Mexico (i.e., the NAFTA), to cite only two examples of a pronounced trend towards globalization, not to mention on-going, in-house Canadian discussions to break down inter-provincial barriers hampering the free flow of goods and services within the country, ought to retain our attention. It might be argued, for reasons of competitiveness and understanding in trade alone, that money spent on learning languages in Canada today is an investment in the country's future wealth and well-being. This calls to mind the anecdote, with which many readers may be familiar, of the Japanese businessman who, when asked which language in the world he thought was most important for conducting international trade and commerce, replied without hesitation: "Why, quite obviously, that is the language of the enterprise or nation with which I am doing business."

None of this is to suggest that careful controls ought not to be placed on language education costs, as on all public spending. It is a given, in an era of restraint occasioned by burgeoning deficits and debt loads, that if one is not part of the solution, one is part of the problem. Language teachers and their associations (e.g., the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), Teachers of English as a Second Language - Canada (TESL Canada), l'Association Canadienne de Linguistique Appliquée (ACLA), l'Association Canadienne des Professeurs d'Immersion (ACPI), l'Association Canadienne d'Éducation de Langue Française (ACELF) and, where applicable, their provincial/territorial counterparts, along with the Canadian Languages Association (CLA) and its provincial/territorial/local heritage/international language teachers' affiliates across Canada) can contribute to the solution by suggesting more efficient, cost-effective ways to develop and deliver language programs, without diminishing quality. The ball is in their court to do so. At the same time, though, uninformed naysayers must be taken to task for spreading partial truths and, sometimes, falsities relative to languages' costs.

The Debate on Canadian Unity (or Disunity), Degenerating Values and Lost Common Cause

Canadian official bilingualism and multiculturalism policies have also been faulted recently with having contributed to, or even with having primary responsibility for bringing about Canadian disunity, degenerating values and lost common cause.

Behind these assertions is a new right reminiscence of times and conditions past having constituted a sort of Canadian Utopia. In the linguistic-cultural arena particularly, the French in Canada, for instance, are remembered fondly for having submitted gracefully to English-language pre-eminence and Anglo-centric conformity (well exemplified, especially in the Québec context, in English dominating the workplace when the majority of workers were French, English bosses orchestrating French-language labourers' lives,

Francophones naturally, as it were, speaking English in large, national department stores located in the world's second largest French-speaking city, English schools for the English minority in Québec with the concomitant denial of French schools for Francophones living in other Canadian provinces, military regiments of Francophones under English-language commanders and obliged to use English only, approximately one million French-language Canadians living 'a mari usque ad mare' outside Québec without access to French-language radio or television, French-speaking Members of a House of Assembly obligated to apologize publicly for the audacity of using French in a provincial legislature, etc.).

Some new rightist sophisticates argue that resurrecting such instances of past and recent victimization is trite. Bercuson (1994) alludes sneeringly, for example, to the onset of the Quiet Revolution in Québec of the 1960s as "Third World-style anticolonialist thinking [coming] to the halls of power in Québec City", insinuating that there was no legitimacy to Québec claims of systemic inequities. Moreover, he suggests that then Prime Minister Pearson's mistake was in not taking Québec to task immediately for its egalitarian aspirations, whereas he ought to have opted instead for a threat of civil war à l'américaine if Québécois made so bold as to get out of sync with Anglo-dominant ways of being. By some remarkable feat of intellectual contortion, he and his ilk deem perfectly à propos remembering soothingly, and as being normal, the so-called good, old days when Francophones, they contend, accepted as a matter of fact and circumstance the above-mentioned abominations. Shades of 'the way we were,' hordes of anti-official bilingualism, anti-multiculturalism new right politicians descended recently *en masse* on Ottawa, denouncing it as "too Frenchified", though study after study and the experience of anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear show the balance in language usage in Ottawa officialdom, not to mention the national capital region, still tilting overwhelmingly in the English language's favour. Yet, notwithstanding the facts, while expressing

concern about "preserving the party's original philosophy", the Reform Party of Canada, at a recent national conference, voted overwhelmingly, for example, to dismantle Canadian multicultural policies and, by a 96 percent vote, to repeal the Official Languages Act (Thanh Ha, 1994: A-1).

The Utopia to which they appear to wish to return never existed, other than as selective, wishful remembering — a collective chimera of the new right. Obviously, the French in Canada never fancied themselves as inferior beings (Mahé, 1993). Not unlike suppressed wives in a demeaning, inequitable relationship, Francophones living both in and outside Québec, in the course of the past 35 years (i.e., since the dawn of the Quiet Revolution), have re-asserted their legitimate place as full-fledged partners in Confederation. No wistful remembering on anyone's part will ever see them prepared to accept a return to the pre-1960 *status quo*.

Language teachers, sensitive to intercultural perspectives, have a role to play in engaging this debate, showing that tolerance, understanding and negotiation will do more to create authentic unity and agreement on certain key values

In the meantime, overall Canadian demographics have also undergone a series of significant transformations. From the British dominance and Anglo-conforming self-identification that characterized early times in the history of the country, Canadians have become a multi-ethnic people. Nordic white supremacists, if not from another universe, must surely be of different origins from other peoples constituting the currently multicultural Canadian mosaic. Indeed, not unlike their French-Canadian compatriots, the original, early Irish-Canadians, for example, starved out of their homeland and transported to North America aboard wretched coffin ships, countless hundreds dying *en route*, forgave; they too never forgot.

Descendants of the definitely un-British, early Ukrainian peasant homesteaders, who opened up and settled the West, recall their forebears coming under pressure to capitulate and assimilate or be jeered at, ostracized and alienated. Each successive wave of immigrants, even including the First Nations peoples who beat all others by millennia in coming here and, particularly, the so-called visible minorities, who have arrived on Canada's shores in greater numbers in recent years, face these and countless other challenges as they integrate in their own way and become part of the Canadian mosaic.

As the demographics have shifted, so too has the sociopolitical fulcrum had to be adjusted. This is not to suggest there are no Canadian symbols and allegiances and no collective sense of being, quite to the contrary. However, it is recognized also that it is anthropological oversimplification to imagine that, within and subsumed under this broader Canadian identity and being, there are not also numerous other very significant linguistic, cultural, religious and related secondary affiliations. To deny this and attempt to roll back the clock to a hypothetical era of oneness is akin to attempting to square the circle. Likewise, reminiscing about a glorious past when Canada, without the untidiness of manifest cultural differences, existed apparently as a marriage of economic convenience (Bercuson, 1994), where the dominant partner took almost all and the minority partner(s) placidly accepted that state of affairs, is akin to dreaming in technicolour.

An evolving, maturing Canada will have to keep coming to grips with this issue. Denying it, as recent years' periodic outbreaks of racial and cross-cultural unrest have demonstrated clearly, only forces it to the surface with greater impetus, even violence. Language teachers, sensitive to intercultural perspectives, have a role to play in engaging this debate, showing that tolerance, understanding and negotiation will do more to create authentic unity and agreement on certain key values so long as, unrealistically, some false notion of sameness and uniformity is not "rammed down everyone's

throat" (to resurrect a cliché from another era and used for divergent reasons in Canada's unrelenting saga of pursuing its elusive, quasi-mystical common cause).

Recognizing old-style nationalism's moribundity, did we as Canadians not opt, after all, for a different experiment in nation- and nationality-building? Why turn our backs on this process now, even in the face of periodic reverses? A recent study by the C.D. Howe Institute, for example, holds that the idea of the "Canadian mosaic" – as distinct from the American "melting pot" – is a fallacy. As well, according to University of Toronto sociologists Jeffrey Reitz and Raymond Breton, authors of *The Illusion of Difference*, immigrants to Canada assimilate as quickly into the mainstream society, as do immigrants to the United States. Among rightist intellectuals and shapers of opinion, this is apparently a turn of events to be promoted. Tom Flanagan, a one-time advisor to Reform Party Leader Preston Manning and political science professor at the University of Calgary, offering his opinion on "Indians" in Canadian society has suggested recently: "I am more than ever convinced that assimilation is the only realistic option for Canadian Indians". Such thoughts, for French-Canadians, recall the infamous remarks of Lord Durham, made over 150 years ago, about the French in Canada being a people without history and culture and destined to be absorbed through assimilation into the allegedly superior British linguistic-cultural tradition.

While some quite remarkable "new arrivals", such as Liberal M.P. John Nunziata and the celebrated writer Neil Bissonnath, also are critical of some superficial aspects of so-called "official" multiculturalism (and bilingualism), it is clear that they are over-simplifying the debate and, in any case, it is not at all apparent that they share either Flanagan's or the late Lord Durham's overtly hostile, condescending views favoring Eurocentric, Anglo-conforming assimilation. In the meantime, outsiders observing us laud the principles underlying our "mosaic" effort and pray for our continuing wisdom to maintain our delicate, nigh magical social equilibrium (what a recent

Globe and Mail editorial has referred to as "the genius of Canada") (Thorsell, 1984).

The Anti-Elitism Debate

A mean-spiritedness of recent date among Canadians has also led to our wholesale rejection of perceived elites. And, take note, as McLuhan said, perception is reality.

In dogmatically "uncool", avowedly "redneck" circles, there is a swaggering self-assuredness in belittling intellectualism, grace and sophistication, the underlying premise being one of emulating pioneer spirit in speaking one's mind, in calling a spade a spade, and such. Targets include, for example, Francophones, university professors, community leaders, media types and so forth. This brings to mind Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's recent, pointedly innocuous, if somewhat derisive, remark: "I took French lessons when I was mayor of Calgary but my teacher ran off with a flamenco dancer". Less innocuous by far, of course, are remarks of the nature: "F_ _ _ Meech Lake. Save Canada. Kill all the Frogs. Wanted: Dead Frenchmen Frogs" [sic], graffiti appearing in recent years on the wall of a smaller university of Alberta in a mid-sized Prairie city. Adam Finn of the University of Alberta reports also on the apparently blighted status of being francophone or francophile in Alberta, on the basis of a study he and Mukesh Lohtia recently completed: "We saw some very strong, very anti-Québec sentiments that people filled in on the back of forms, the sort of 'if the French don't like Canada, they can go back to France' kind of comments". Of course, it must be remembered, in the first instance, that patronizing condescension is a form of sarcasm or catishness (that, surely, 'real men' don't stoop to) and, in the latter, that graffiti and related, surreptitiously scribbled remarks are authored by dastardly, transparent figures, never accountable for their hate mongering; they write such behind your back (and on the backs of anonymous forms).

Because university professors and researchers come up with data which periodically, if not frequently, question underlying assumptions, intuitions and biases, they also are

written off as irrelevant elites, out of touch with reality, feathering their own nests. For many academics, this perception and accusation of elitism, belies reality. Frequently, so-called intellectuals are descended from humble, working class or agricultural origins. They too have known sweat, tears and long hours at work, many of them unpaid (and so they, too, have lived in 'tomorrow country'). Their only counter-argument to those chanting the new anti-elitism mantra is their begging to differ that this kind of roots, and other kinds of roots, do not justify bigotry in them or anyone else.

Treachery is undermining the well-established, hard-earned reputation Canadians have acquired as a nation given to broad-based tolerance and understanding.

The anti-elitism crusaders can indeed be aptly characterized as the proselytizers of an alternative orthodoxy, which they would wish to become the new 'politically correct'; that is, taking the politically viable to its new lowest, most common denominator. As Henry (1994) has noted: "The term 'elitist' has come to rival if not outstrip 'racist' as the foremost catchall pejorative of our times (cited in Kingwell, 1994: C-9). And, as Kingwell notes in his review of Henry, "it's mainly intellectual elites that receive the scorn these days" (ibid.).

Accused of "social engineering", such liberal "do gooders" and "bleeding hearts" are denounced for leading us down the garden path to official, hence obstructionist, multiculturalism and bilingualism. Their rightist counterparts, wearing their mantle of academism with great care and deftness, argue instead that they are in favour of the flourishing of languages and cultures, but without government intervention of any kind. One such thinker and academic (Bercuson, 1994), for example, self-righteously, almost bombastically, proclaims English-speaking Canada's "true liberal democracy" a foil to Québec's "ethnically based nationalism." This must be recognized as the sophist

posturing and historical amnesia it is. Indeed, this thinking very conveniently, if not hypocritically, abstracts the social engineering in Canada of yesteryear, which deliberately forced francophone Québec into its Laurentian enclave and brought Canada's francophone population outside Québec to its presently precarious state. (Few Franco-Westerners, for instance, have forgotten legal and constitutional social engineering antics in 1890 in Manitoba, the results of which were more recently ruled anti-constitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada). At the same time, it panders to the false notion, gaining currency in rightist quarters today, of an intolerant Québec monolith, with no federalists (though opinion poll after opinion poll demonstrate the majority of Québécois are) and with no opening up to persons not of Québec origins (which is not the case, as statistics have shown, and the personal experience of thousands who have come to know and appreciate/understand Québec's major language and culture has corroborated).

Machiavelli-like, the apostles of uniformity set out to divide and conquer. Ideas are distorted so that Canadian public opinion, only recently generally favourably inclined towards fostering diverse languages and cultures in our midst, is gradually bent towards a view of bilingualism and multiculturalism as being the *châteaux forts* of special interest groups and profiteers. Incongruously, languages, the great equalizers of a sort (as all humans without exception speak one or more languages), are being made to appear, by anti-elitism crusaders, as accomplices in the contemporary abuse of our declining system, which is leading to our apparently deteriorating quality of life. Bilingualism and multiculturalism are being made scapegoats.

The argumentation in this section is being presented without mincing words. This is intended. Literally, treachery is undermining the well-established, hard-earned reputation Canadians have acquired as a nation given to broad-based tolerance and understanding. In no small way, workers in the field of language teaching have helped to bring about this kind of Canada. Consequently, they should not stand for rhetorically obfuscating, deflective name-calling (i.e., being referred to derisively as elitists) nor for the worthwhile fruits of their efforts being disparaged.

Conclusion

Time and tide wait for no one. Carpers maligning bilingualism and multiculturalism are being given the upper hand, reinforced by the general meekness or want of response on the part of language teaching professionals. Disengagement or capitulation in the face of the mounting barrage of recent assaults on bilingualism and multiculturalism as components of Canadian being and identity are choices they take at their risk. In 1995, particularly, which the United Nations Organization has officially declared the "year of tolerance", and every year, activism is required on the part of all language teachers to ensure that the carefully and beautifully crafted mosaic that is Canada, in the making of which they have contributed significantly, is not unglued and dismantled.

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Another Language Teaching Approach: Dhority's Acquisition through Creative Teaching (ACT)

W. Jane Bancroft

Researchers have created new approaches by combining Lozanov's Suggestopedia with other language-acquisition methods.

As can be seen from the ERIC Documents on Foreign Language Teaching and Linguistics and *the Journal of Accelerative Learning and Teaching* (formerly, *the Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching*), there are many language teachers who have been using *Suggestopedia* or who have been combining suggestopedic strategies with those from other methods or approaches (Botha [1988]; Felix [1992]). Particularly in the United States and Western Europe, a number of educators have created their own suggestopedically-inspired systems (Bancroft [1978]; Felix [1992]). In Germany, for example, Rupprecht Baur (1984) has transformed *Suggestopedia* into *Psychopädie*; in the Netherlands, Wil Knibbeler (1989) has combined the *Silent Way* with *Suggestopedia* to create the *Explorative-Creative Way*. In the United States, Donald Schuster and Charles Gritton (1986) created *Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT)* for the teaching of various subjects (including foreign languages) in the early 1970's; Charles Schmid (1978) founded the LIND (*Language in New Dimensions*) Institute in San Francisco in 1976 for the teaching of his version of *Suggestopedia*.

Perhaps one of the best of the approaches inspired by *Suggestopedia* is the one developed by Lynn Dhority (1992) at the University of Massachusetts, following upon his training by Georgi Lozanov and Evalina Gateva in 1979. Dhority creatively combines key principles and elements from *Suggestopedia* with strategies and concepts taken

from other communicative-based approaches (Aller and Richard-Amato [1983]; Bancroft [1988]) such as Asher's (1993) *Total Physical Response* and Terrell's (1983) *Natural Approach*. While Dhority is a professor of German and has developed his approach for the teaching of this language in an intensive format at Levels 1 and 2 in a university setting, his ideas also apply to the teaching of any second (or foreign) language and are of interest not only for the college language teacher but also for language teachers in the secondary schools.

In the preface to, and the first chapter of his book, *The ACT Approach*, Dhority (1992) states that his method, *Acquisition through Creative Teaching (ACT)*, seeks to provide a holistic, whole-brain model for language acquisition in a positive and relaxed atmosphere and a multi-sensory learning environment. Dhority's approach is "heavily indebted to Lozanov" (p. 18) and to Lozanov's belief that students have extraordinary, untapped learning capacities which can be brought out by a competent, personable teacher skilled in the proper use of suggestion in the classroom. *ACT* is based on the principal theoretical elements of the first version of *Suggestopedia* (the version elaborated by Aleko Novakov at the Institute of Suggestology in the late 1960's and early 1970's):

- authority of the teacher and prestige of the educational institution;
- infantilization (or confidence and spontaneity of the students);
- double-planeness (the importance of the environment and the personality of the teacher);
- intonation (or tone[s] of voice);

- rhythm and rhythmic presentation of material;
- concert pseudo-passivity (a state of relaxed alertness during the concert presentation[s]). (Bancroft [1975, 1977]; Lozanov [1978]; Belanger [1978]).

Dhority's approach is also based on the three principles incorporated into the second version of *Suggestopedia*, the one elaborated by Evalina Gateva at the same Institute in the mid-1970's:

1. joy and absence of tension;
2. the unity of conscious and para-conscious (i.e., whole-brain learning);
3. the suggestive link (i.e., suggestion is used to tap the normally unused reserves of the mind for increased learning). (Lozanov [1978]; Lozanov and Gateva [1988]).

First impressions are critical when it comes to establishing good teacher-student rapport, as well as a positive student attitude toward the subject that is to be taught.

The suggestopedic means of version two (psychological, didactic, artistic) are also a part of the *ACT* Approach.

In practice, *ACT* also combines elements of both versions of *Suggestopedia*. However, Dhority's approach in both theory and praxis also incorporates "many invaluable contributions" (p. 18) made by American educators and researchers:

- Hart (1983) and his theories of brain function and brain-compatible education;
- Schuster and Gritton (1986) and *SALT*;
- Bandler (1982) and Grinder (1981) and *Reframing: Neuro-linguistic Programming and the Transformation of Meaning*.
- Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and *Pygmalion in the Classroom*;
- Krashen (1982) and his hypotheses about language acquisition;
- Asher (1993) and *Total Physical Response (TPR)*;
- Terrell (1983) and his communicative-based *Natural Approach (NA)*.

Following the example of Lozanov (and Rosenthal), Dhority lays great stress on the role of the teacher and on his/her ability to motivate the students in the classroom through the creation of a positive psychological atmosphere. The teacher must be competent in his/her field and must manifest a genuine enthusiasm for his/her subject area (p. 46). While projecting a natural sense of authority and self-esteem, the teacher must also show genuine interest in, and concern for the students as a group and for each individual student. Student-teacher rapport should be easy and relaxed. Group dynamics should be positive and supportive. In the cultivation of a positive presence in the classroom, the "evocative power" of words and images chosen by the teacher is very important (pp. 59 ff), but so, too, are such factors as

- attitude and mood;
- facial expressions;
- voice quality;
- intonation (for example "anchoring" as used in *Neurolinguistic Programming*);
- rhythm of speech;
- body language (such as *Neurolinguistic Programming* physical "mirroring");
- and dress.

The classroom should be esthetically pleasant, attractive, colourful, comfortable, "engaging to the senses."

According to Dhority, the "messages contained in such unconscious forces can literally create success or failure in our classroom(s)" (p. 45). First impressions are critical when it comes to establishing good teacher-student rapport, as well as a positive student attitude toward the subject that is to be taught. Dhority stresses the importance of welcoming the students to the class and of giving them, from the beginning, positive suggestions for pleasant learning. (These positive suggestions may be in the form of images and affirmations; guided visualizations; the story-as-metaphor; relaxation fanta-

sies; *SALT* early pleasant learning recall).

In accordance with the theory of *Suggestopedia*, Dhority emphasizes the importance of the physical environment in which the language learning is to take place. The classroom should be esthetically pleasant, attractive, colourful, comfortable, "engaging to the senses" (p. 44). Full-spectrum (as opposed to fluorescent) lighting should be utilized. To soften acoustics and provide a comfortable surface for games and relaxation exercises, the floor should be carpeted. Pictures (ethnic landscapes and cultural scenes), charts, maps and colourful posters hang on the walls. These peripheral stimuli are both esthetic and instructional and are changed regularly so that they are integrated with the lesson content. (Following *Suggestopedia 2*, *ACT* makes great use of posters which blend language paradigms with decorative, visual shapes and colours. Remarkable learning results (Hall [1982]) have been achieved when visual stimuli are integrated into the instructional environment without the instructor's drawing conscious attention to them [p. 77]). Living plants and/or fresh-cut flowers grace the room. The students are seated in a semi-circular or crescent-shaped arrangement in comfortable chairs (with head and arm support) and to promote greater student-student contact, they are encouraged to change seats every time they enter the room ("fluid seating" [p. 78]). The classroom has good ventilation, windows and plenty of natural light. Easels, flip charts and/or white boards with colour markers are used instead of the traditional blackboard.

A good-quality stereo music system is used to provide the various kinds of music used in the *ACT* Approach. These include:

- baroque fanfares to introduce the class;
- classical and baroque music for the concert sessions;
- "subject-appropriate" music for songs and dances;
- mood or "New Age" music for relaxation and guided fantasies or visualizations;

- the music of Mozart and other great composers for low volume background music during the class itself.

Dhority confirms in his book what other teachers have found, namely that trained musicians find background music distracting [p. 95]. However, in his experience, as well as in the experience of other instructors, suitable background music helps create a positive, pleasant environment and relaxed and cooperative students.

Video equipment is available for the taping of classes. When the students enter the room before the class begins and/or during breaks in the three and one-half hour class, they have at their disposal a refreshment area with hot water for tea, coffee and chocolate. All elements of the physical environment in the Dhority *ACT* Approach (as in *Suggestopedia*) are meant to suggest a new, different and positive learning experience.

In accordance with *Suggestopedia 2*, the Gateva version of *Suggestopedia*, the *ACT* Approach accords great importance to the text and, more specifically, to a text specially written for the course. The beginning language manual, which introduces 1,500 to 2,000 new words during the 90-hour Level 1 course, is written as a series of approximately nine "Acts" and comprises a coherent dramatic story with authentic characters and situations. The Acts are some 500 to 700 words long; the first, which is the longest, introduces some 500 new words. As in *Suggestopedia 1* and *2*, the Acts are written in a dialogue format, in parallel columns, with the target language in the left column and the native-language equivalent in the right column. Following the precepts of the *Natural Approach*, there is no formal sequencing of grammatical concepts although earlier Acts are written with simpler, though nonetheless authentic language. Basic grammatical structures and paradigms with examples are presented in appendices and are used as reference materials by the students. The text is amply illustrated with images and photos designed to suggest and reinforce the content being presented. Un-

bound, the ACT text is contained in an attractive three-ring binder. Because new material can be withheld, suspense and interest in Acts yet-to-come are heightened. With this format, it is also possible to revise and supplement the text on a regular basis.

The ACT text combines language content with “embedded suggestions” at many levels to help the students learn (p. 87). (When the text is musically introduced to the relaxed and receptive students during the concert session, the “suggestions” will have considerable impact). Direct suggestion is embedded in the text – for example, in introductory and instructional statements. Students are encouraged to enjoy the drama, the humour and to participate fully in the proceedings. Indirect suggestions are also embedded in the text; characters in the drama encounter similar challenges and obstacles to the ones the students encounter. Lively, dramatic, filled (in accordance with the Krashen hypotheses) with a large volume of natural, authentic input and situations for conversational reenactment as well as positive suggestions for pleasant learning, the ACT text has as its purpose to promote language acquisition in every way possible. (Supplementary materials in the form of a grammar text and readings are also part of an ACT course and they are introduced when and where appropriate to promote learning [in the Krashen sense of the term]).

The beginning German course in the ACT Approach starts with a “cocktail party” during which the new suggestopedically-inspired roles and identities are distributed to (or rather, chosen by) the students. A list of professions or roles is presented on colourful charts, and each student is offered a prop to accompany his or her choice (dancing shoes for a dancer, for example). Before the cocktail party begins, students are led through their first of many musical experiences by singing an identity song: “Ich bin ich” (I am “me”). During the imaginary cocktail party itself, students make the rounds introducing themselves briefly in German. As in *Suggestopedia*, a playful, relaxed atmosphere is established, but one which

has important psychological (or psychotherapeutic) implications: the students leave behind their old, “limiting” identities and assume new roles, ones which are “limitless” in possibilities for learning.

Normally, however, the ACT Approach follows the precepts of Krashen and Terrell in the *Natural Approach*, as well as Asher in *Total Physical Response* in that comprehension should precede production, and production should be allowed to emerge in stages. According to Dhority, the reason for encouraging students to venture speech production within the first hour of the course has to do with the group bonding process and the building of teacher-student and student-student rapport as well as with the affirmation of the newly assumed student roles. Apart from the initial “party,” ACT uses *Total Physical Response* strategies, *Natural Approach* picture files and other listening comprehension activities during the first 10 to 15 hours of the beginning language course. (Words, phrases and diagrams are, however, written or sketched on easel pads with colour markers, and gradually, single sheets of illustrated vocabulary and phrases are given to students as a supplement to classroom activities). Following a TPR-inspired “silent period,” student speech production is then allowed to emerge in stages. (This is in direct contradiction to *Suggestopedia* but, following the theories of Krashen, Terrell and Asher, Dhority says he has experienced “even better results” by delaying the introduction of the text [or language manual] and the first real invitations for oral production until at least after the tenth hour of class [p. 84]).

Following the opening “cocktail party,” and an initial period of listening comprehension activities based on TPR and NA during which considerable linguistic material is introduced, the ACT Approach generally follows the format of *Suggestopedia* in that the class is divided into three parts:

- presentation of new material;
- concert presentations;
- activation phase (or period of review).

Dhority calls the formal presentation of text material before the

concert session the “global prelude” and says that it has two purposes: 1) to give a rapid preview of material and create a context for what is to follow; 2) to suggest indirectly to the students that what is coming is interesting, engaging and comprehensible (p. 98). During the global prelude, the teacher acts out the content of the text using gestures, props, peripheral aids in the room, including posters with key phrases from the lesson material.

the ACT Approach follows the precepts of Krashen and Terrell in the Natural Approach, as well as Asher in Total Physical Response in that comprehension should precede production, and production should be allowed to emerge in stages.

When discussing the concert session, Dhority proclaims his agreement with Lozanov’s theory that music creates a relaxed state and carries the material to be learned into the brain. (The ACT Approach is also in agreement with contemporary theories of whole-brain learning in which music is generally considered a “right-brain” activity and language an activity which appeals to or engages the brain’s left hemisphere). (Williams [1983]). In his intensive language classes, Dhority uses the two concerts of *Suggestopedia 2* for the reading of the dialogue (but not, however, every day; concert sessions are offered about every eighth hour of the course and are always structured to end that particular day’s class). For the first or “active” concert, which he shortens from 50 minutes to 30, he prefers such Classical composers as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven to such Romantic composers as Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Insofar as the second or “passive” concert is concerned for the reading of the same lesson material, Dhority follows the dictates of *Suggestopedia 1* in using only the slow movements from such representative Baroque composers as Bach, Corelli, Handel, Telemann and Vivaldi. In a note, he says that, “in my own experience, the slow movements seem to sustain the relaxed

atmosphere better" (p. 216). Dhority's "passive" concert lasts about 10 to 15 minutes, i.e., a shorter period than in *Suggestopedia*. In accordance with Lozanovian theory, the concert presentations in ACT constitute a kind of "ritual" (p. 101) and great importance is attached to their preparation and performance.

In his discussion of the activation phase (or review of previously presented material), once the period of listening comprehension is completed, Dhority essentially follows *Suggestopedia 2*, although he provides a better organizational framework than his Bulgarian sources of inspiration. Dhority divides the activation activities into two categories: primary and secondary (pp. 106 ff). Used for a block of text approximately 250 words in length, primary activation activities are:

1. whole group choral echo/antics in which the students echo the teacher's model reading of the text, complete with expressive gestures and a vivid imagining of the images in the text as they speak;
2. role reading in twos or threes (the number reading depends on the number of roles available in that particular section of the text-dialogue);
3. individual or small-group role reading for the class with costume props (which help keep the focus off the "real" personality of the readers);
4. comprehension check in which the students, as a group, answer the question, "What does that mean in English?" (Although this activity is translation under another name, an exercise-like quality is avoided by the teacher's expressiveness and tone of voice).

In the early stages of the beginning language course, as the major source of "comprehensible input," the teacher does most of the talking. As student comprehension increases, so, too, does student confidence and a desire to speak. The goal of the secondary activations in an ACT class is to provide authentic opportunities for communication, rather than drills and exercises. According to Dhority, this phase is characterized by "playful, imaginative, spontaneous ways of encourag-

ing full and authentic receptive and expressive communication" (p. 109). The secondary activation phase, in contrast to the primary one, does not attempt to stay too close to the text. As described in *The ACT Approach*, secondary activation activities are:

1. appeals to the imagination in the form of students' new biographies and "stories" as well as guided fantasies in the target language (for example, an imaginary trip to a foreign country) which utilize embedded positive suggestions and images;
2. props (including costume articles [especially hats]); physical objects (these are used also during the early stages for TPR activities); pictures (picture files are taken from the *Natural Approach*), slides, videotapes; puppets (especially the humorous Onkel Fritz [inspired by *Suggestopedia 2*] with whom the students are able to communicate more freely than with a real person such as the teacher);
3. singing, physical movements, miming and dancing (these activities are used for linguistic purposes [for example, hand clapping for learning numbers, mime for learning verbs]; to create an "ethnic" atmosphere in the classroom; and to encourage spontaneity on the part of the students);
4. dramatizations (the dramatization of language material in interesting and humorous situations is basic to the ACT Approach); as in other communicative-based approaches, short skits such as arrival in a foreign country, phone calls, changing money, a café scene, a taxi ride, a bus trip and so on, are frequently used;
5. games (which create a play-like atmosphere but which also facilitate linguistic performance); these include "playing ball" (from *Suggestopedia*), card games, Simon says, and so on.

During the secondary activation phase, students bring to life the material they have received and encoded during the receptive, musical presentations. Although most of the new vocabulary is presented in the concert sessions, the activation

phases (the secondary one, in particular) continue to offer new input. In addition to vocabulary, through authentic communication experiences and activities which "playfully stimulate the imagination" (p. 113), students learn intonation, timing and gestures - so important for true communicative competence.

ACT does not neglect such elements of the traditional language course as error correction, grammar, homework, evaluation and testing.

While the ACT Approach is primarily interested in fostering language acquisition and Dhority states in his book that he is opposed to the current obsession with "testing, judging, measuring, evaluating and demonstrating" (p. 176), an obsession which he sees as having a negative impact on both students and teachers, *Acquisition through Creative Teaching* does not neglect such elements of the traditional language course as error correction, grammar, homework, evaluation and testing. Errors which would interfere with comprehensibility are corrected, but gently. Grammar is gradually introduced after 25 to 30 hours of concentrating on listening and oral skills; grammar points are first presented passively or peripherally in the form of attractive, colourful posters which display structures and paradigms. Homework includes traditional exercises as well as such activities as reading over the texts studied in class just before going to sleep while listening to a tape of the second (i.e., baroque) concert presentation of the material. (An interesting parallel arises here with the work of Alfred Tomatis who emphasizes that a very effective technique for learning foreign languages is the combination of audio and visual elements [Tomatis (1970)]). Dhority's (and the students') subjective evaluations of very positive course results are backed up by videotaped records, results of the Modern Language Association (MLA) exam in German and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPI).

In the MLA exam in German, designed for students who have com-

pleted two semesters of college study, ACT students scored "excellently" in listening comprehension and speaking. (On the discrete-point grammar section and in the writing section, quite understandably, they did not score as well). Since 1985, Dhority has used the ACTFL OPI to evaluate ACT students after Level 1 and then again after Level 2. The majority of ACT Level 1 students achieve an ACTFL Speaking Proficiency Level of Intermediate-Mid. Insofar as Level 2 is concerned, the majority of students in this course achieve the Intermediate-High Level on the OPI.

In the experimental ACT program conducted at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in the early 1980's for the United States army, more controlled evaluative measures were used than would be possible in a college or university language course. The results point to the superiority of the ACT pilot program over previous classes regarding the achievement of the language program's objective: achieving a level 1 or better on the Defense Language Institute Rating Scale. Most noteworthy is the fact that the pilot program's results were obtained in slightly less than 1/3 the time spent in the regular program.

Although Dhority says he is uncomfortable with our society's test mentality, he demonstrates in his book that it is possible for the ACT (or language-acquisition) teacher, not only to be creative but also to test, produce data and prove methodological effectiveness.

In conclusion, Dhority's ACT may be said to constitute an "ideal" combination of strategies for effective language acquisition since it creatively combines and enlarges upon the essential elements of *Total Physical Response*, the *Natural Approach* and *Suggestopedia*. While an intensive format offers advantages that are not available in the "regular" classroom and while teachers are not always able to persuade the administration to create the optimal physical environment for learning, it is still possible to take inspiration from *Acquisition Through Creative Teaching*. All language teachers can create a "low-anxiety" environment and good student/instructor rapport, make use of "authentic" mate-

rials (such as dialogues and interviews) and utilize such memory enhancing and linguistic-structuring devices as games, songs and role-playing (Calvé and Mollica [1987]). Other strategies which appeal to the right hemisphere of the brain can also be incorporated into a fifty-minute class session: physical movement (such as that used in Total Physical Response); creative activities (such as those used in the *Natural Approach* and ACT); relaxation and visualization exercises as well as a mini-concert for presentation of language materials adapted from ACT/*Suggestopedia* (Bancroft [1982]; Besnard [1985]).

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The Effects of Pleasure Reading

Rebecca Constantino

Passing the TOEFL test doesn't have to hurt.

Evidence strongly supports that free voluntary or pleasure reading makes an impact on language acquisition in terms of vocabulary improvement and writing ability, as well as oral/aural development (Elley, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 1993; Cho & Krashen, 1994). This evidence is also substantial in terms of second language acquisition and literacy (Krashen, 1993; Constantino, 1994). However, for varying reasons, many second language learners do not do much pleasure reading in the target language.

Many second language learners hold the notion that reading is a task-laden, rule-oriented skill that requires close attention to detail and meaning (Constantino, 1994). They claim that good reading involves decoding and searching for meaning. A good reader is loyal to the dictionary and pays close attention to ensure every word is understood. This often results in discouraging and unrewarding experiences with reading in a second language. Quite often, these notions stem from the type of instruction received in home countries as well as in the U.S. system. Instead of receiving ample opportunity and encouragement to simply read for pleasure, second language learners are given timed reading practice that entails vocabulary tests and grammar knowledge.

There is a large population of non-native speakers of English who are living in the United States for various reasons but who are unable to study at the university or graduate level because of poor TOEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language) scores. Since free reading is beneficial in various aspects of language acquisition, it is logical that it would be beneficial for those hoping to improve TOEFL scores. My hypothesis was that if students were provided an array of interesting and understandable texts (following the comprehensible input hypothesis set out

by Krashen, 1985), they would engage in pleasure reading that would result in progress in language development. This language development would be evidenced in several ways, but for the purpose of the study, in improved TOEFL scores.

Defining Free Voluntary or Pleasure Reading

It is necessary that students, as well as teachers, have a clear understanding of pleasure reading. There are a few key points as to what free voluntary reading involves:

1. Students choose the reading material.
2. There is no book report.
3. There is no work sheet.
4. There is no journal or log about the reading material.
5. There is no pre-reading exercise.
6. If a student does not like the reading material, he/she does not need to finish it; he/she just chooses another.
7. There is no set amount of time for reading; students read when they want to.

The Subjects

Four English-as-a-Second-Language speakers participated in the study. All had previously taken the TOEFL and received disappointing scores (400-450). Like many immigrants and foreign students in the U.S., they had little, if any contact, with native speakers of English. They each had a television, but they did not watch it, because as Julia said, "It is difficult for me to understand because there is so much of slang and things I don't understand. Also, a lot of the things on TV are areas I don't understand."

Julia is a Russian immigrant who has lived in the United States for six months. As a geologist, she has a good chance of receiving several scholarships for graduate study. Maybe because of the scientist in her, Julia pays close attention to all her work in English and always

strives for the perfect answer and pronunciation. Several times Julia was encouraged to throw out her grammar book and dictionary and read for pleasure. She refused and set out to study for the TOEFL with a list of vocabulary words and a handbook on sentence structure. Julia never reads for pleasure in English stating, "I need to do well on my test and I have no time for reading - I don't see how it will help." The only book Julia was interested in reading was one related to TOEFL preparation.

Lus, who is staying in the U.S. with her husband who is a visiting journalist from Mexico, wants to study psychology in the United States. With some time to spare she is more interested in seeing Los Angeles and raising her sons than sitting at a desk studying. She immediately took to the idea of reading for pleasure. Lus' main worry was finding books or other reading material she could understand and enjoy.

An artist and musician from Thailand, Prinda hopes to study one of her subjects in the U.S. In preparation for her previous TOEFL test, she had studied with grammar books and vocabulary builders, but she was unsuccessful in receiving a high enough score for university admission (450). In the hope of improving her TOEFL score, as well as filling hours of loneliness, Prinda was interested in reading for pleasure in English.

With an exuberant and inquisitive personality, Ilmi, like Lus, did not want to spend hours studying and was interested in doing well on the TOEFL. She was also worried about finding interesting materials to read, but with little encouragement she agreed to read for pleasure instead of spending time with grammar-based materials.

The Study

While a great attempt was made to get all four students to read for pleasure, Julia opted to continue her preparation with TOEFL books, grammar drills and vocabulary lists. The other three agreed to merely read for pleasure. Since one issue in free reading is access to an array of reading materials (Elley, 1992), great effort was taken to ensure that stu-

dents had a great variety and number of books, magazines, and newspapers to read. Students were invited and encouraged to join “the literacy club” of English readers (Smith, 1988). I brought in several magazines and books such as romance novels and other paperbacks. Since a previous study showed that immigrants and foreign visitors may not be aware of the availability of pleasure reading materials in the public library (Constantino, 1992; Constantino, 1993), we, as a group, visited the local library where the students obtained library cards and toured the library so they became aware of the abundance of pleasure reading materials.

Students were told to read whatever interested them, whenever they felt like it. In other words, to imitate good native language reading practices. If they chose a book that they later did not enjoy, they were instructed to choose another. Also, they were discouraged from decoding practices and searching for the meaning of unknown words. If the material seemed too difficult, they were to choose another book, again, as they would do in their native language. A brief explanation was given concerning the “input hypothesis” introduced by Krashen (1985) that states that for language acquisition to occur, input must be comprehensible yet somewhat beyond the learner’s ability. They understood this concept and agreed to discard materials that were too difficult while keeping with material that provided some challenge, as long as it interested them. Lastly, the students were told to read when they wanted to and had time. They did not need to keep a log or journal of time they spent reading nor did they need to be sure to read a certain amount of time each day. (This they found hard to believe since all other reading assignments required these types of activities).

For three months, Julia passed her time with grueling pre-TOEFL tests, vocabulary drills and extensive writing exercises. Lus, Prinda and Ilmi read what they wanted, when they wanted and for any amount of time they chose. They did not do any exercises or TOEFL pre-tests.

They started out by reading current magazines such as *People*, *The*

Star, and *Newsweek*. Within about six weeks, they were reading popular romances by Danielle Steele and Judith Krantz. They became bored with the romance novels and so, eight weeks into the study, were reading popular best sellers such as those by John Grisham or Richard Creighton. Lus even tackled a biography of Fidel Castro.

Results: Attitudinal Changes Changes Toward Reading

While the ultimate goal was a passing score on the TOEFL score, in the three months the three readers had attitudinal changes about reading in English. They realized that they did not have to spend hours looking up words and focusing on minute details about the text. Rather, they could relax and enjoy reading as they do in the native language. Not only were they thoroughly enjoying reading in English, they were extolling its praises to others. They began to exchange books and magazines, and they tried to recruit others as well.

Moreover, they insisted that they were not only becoming more confident readers and speakers but also very knowledgeable about American culture. As Ilmi said, “I feel that I can really read in English now. Since there was no stress for tests or homework, I could just read. That made it fun. I feel now more comfortable to talk and speak. Another thing, I now know more about American things like the law and relationships.”

Changes Toward Writing

Also, students who engaged in free voluntary reading were very eager to do more language activities. For example, all became more comfortable writing in English – something they previously had tried to avoid. As we had discussed the psychological benefits of writing about their experiences as visitors or immigrants in the U.S., they were all keeping diaries or journals in their native language. After reading for several weeks, they decided to write their experiences in English. As Lus said, “Now that I am reading and reading well in English, I think it is better to record my feelings in English; that way they are more authentic and

true to my thoughts.” Ilmi responded, “I feel that I want to practice more since it feels more natural. Now I am not so scared.”

Comprehension

All three pleasure readers felt that their comprehension ability had increased. They attributed it to the new vocabulary words they had acquired. Prinda said, “I was watching TV and I understood a lot. I think a lot of the words were ones I had read and I knew what they meant from the books I have been reading.” Lus added, “Since I have been reading, I feel I understand so much more of what is around me. Also, I am not so scared to try to understand. I know so many words now.”

TOEFL

The reason that Prinda, Lus and Ilmi had decided to read for pleasure was to improve TOEFL scores. The day before the test, we discussed tactics they should use in preparing for the test. For instance, I advised them to get a good night’s sleep, to eat a big breakfast, and to tell themselves that this is only one test in their life and that they could take it again. The main thing was to relax and to do their best. During this discussion, Julia was quite worried about the pleasure readers and tried to coax them to take her TOEFL preparation materials home for an all-night cram session. I convinced them that they would not learn anything in one night and to just relax.

I called all the students the day after the test. The three pleasure readers felt that they had done well, but more importantly, their best. They were confident that they had passed. Julia was certain she had done well on the written sections but had “so much trouble with the listening that it seems no good.”

We waited several weeks and were quite pleased with the scores. Prinda, Lus and Ilmi received scores of 550, 590 and 600 respectively. Julia received a score of 450 [out of 900] – not high enough for graduate school admission or the much needed scholarships. However, she will take the test again.

Conclusion

There are several factors involved in TOEFL scores such as test anxiety, exposure to the English speaking environment, and personality. However, these students show the strong effect that reading for pleasure had, not only on the TOEFL scores but also on their general attitudes toward reading and their own comprehension. The improved TOEFL scores are a measurable and viable result of reading for pleasure. However, the attitudinal changes that the students had are not as easily measured but no less significant. With pleasure reading came increased confidence to use the language for other purposes such as watching TV, writing, and interacting with native speakers. These notions are perhaps more valuable than increased TOEFL scores. As Ilmi said, "I feel that I am now and for-

ever a reader of English. I feel comfortable and even happy now when I am reading English."

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"Quotable Quotes..."

On Culture

Learning about culture helps students become aware of another way of life, often creates in them an interest about that other way of life, and ideally, develops acceptance and even appreciation of those differences. Learning about culture is a short-range goal in the language, whereas a cultural fact or insight may be acquired in just one class period. At the same time, cultural learning is long-lasting; students may forget how to conjugate a verb, but they usually retain knowledge and interests developed in cultural study. For all of these reasons, culture is a valuable part of foreign language study.

Constance K. Knop
"On Using Culture Capsules
and Culture Assimilators."
The French Review

The perennial lament that cultural content is not available because the administration has chosen such a textbook is not valid. A few weeks of hard work in planning the introductory second language course can provide the teacher with an integrative approach which has as its main objective the teaching of language in its sociocultu-

ral context and, most important, as a system which once begun can be revised and improved each year.

María Elena de Valdés
"Thematic Organization
of Cultural Content in Second-
Language Teaching." *The Canadian
Modern Language Review*

On the Language Classroom

To what extent does the environment of the language classroom appeal to the senses? How much smell, taste, touch, emotion and visual impact has the language lost by being forced into the classroom? Is it possible that, in order to squeeze the language into the learning box, we have lopped off the very things which lend meaning to the language? How often do students leave a language classroom, not entirely sure whether they have just had a French lesson or a period of Math? All that we need do, perhaps, is to compare the student's exposure in the classroom to what he would experience in the actual milieu where the ground, the paralinguistic blanket, is to be found in school. Our language programs surely have to

allow the students not only to discover language facts, but also to soak up some of the feelings, the sounds, the sights and the smells which accompany them. This is what gives language some element of reality, of life; this is what makes it enjoyable and meaningful to learn.

William T. Mitchell
"Self-Assessment for the Language
Teacher." *The Canadian Modern
Language Review*

On Crossword Puzzles

The clues are central to the drilling objective of the crossword since most of the information the student gets for doing the exercise is found in them. The clue is to the crossword exercise almost what the prompt is to the old pattern drill: it is the stimulus that keeps the drill going. As such, there is no place here for ambiguity, deliberate or otherwise. On the contrary, clarity is essential. By reading the clue, the student must know with a fair degree of accuracy which word is required, since in most cases he is being confronted with a linguistic problem well within his capabilities and knowledge.

G. Latorre and Gloria Baeza
"The Construction and Use of EFL
Crossword Puzzles"
English Language Teaching Journal

Creative Writing: Poetry for the Language Classroom

Anthony Mollica

Many teachers are reluctant to teach or, indeed, even introduce poetry in the classroom. And yet many students are “closet poets”. They write poetry but they are not willing to share it with adults or even with their peers. They tend not to do so because poetry is personal; they do not wish to reveal their personal feelings. Faced with this obstacle, how can teachers encourage them to use their newly-acquired language to express themselves freely? How can students be encouraged to think, write, feel and be at home in the target language? The solution may not be as difficult as it first appears. Teachers may wish to provide some “recipes” which students can follow with little or no difficulty.

Why poetry?

Poetic writing demands preciseness. The word precise embodies the ideas of delineation and limit. Writing poetically helps students develop this language skill. The suggestions we are putting forth for consideration are “recipes” which students can follow with little or no difficulty. To assist them at the early stages of poetry writing, we recommend that they be asked to co-author their poetry by working in pairs or in groups.

The following are some suitable examples, but the choices are certainly not exhaustive:

a) The cinquain

After learning the present tense and the agreement of adjectives, students may be asked to become “instant” poets by being given these rules in the target language:

1. On the first line, write down a noun: a person, a place, or thing.
2. On the line below that, write two adjectives (or two present participles, or two past participles). Separate the adjectives by a comma.
3. On the third line, write three verbs that tell what the noun on

the first line does. Separate the verbs by commas.

4. On the fourth line, write a thought about the noun. A short sentence will be quite acceptable.
5. On the fifth line, repeat the word you wrote on the first line or write down a synonym or some other related word.

The best way of approaching this task is to do a brainstorming of vocabulary with the entire class while the teacher or a student records on the blackboard the lexical items suggested by the class. Once the topic or title has been selected, the brainstorming begins. For example, the topic may be “Love”.

- Teachers should ask students to suggest adjectives which, in their opinion, describe the title or the topic. The answers will obviously vary; the vocabulary suggested will be drawn from each student’s own linguistic background which may vary. This variation of vocabulary may very well bring to light new words; hence the activity will not only be a review of vocabulary already known to most students but also an introduction to new lexical items. Suggestions received during the brainstorming session may be:

tender, passionate, kind, faithful, painful, friendly, confusing, hot, everlasting, fickle, romantic, exciting, emotional, sensitive, erotic, platonic, comforting, physical, sensual, wild, selfish, selfless, primal, paradoxical, fragile.

- Ask students to suggest verbs - action words - that come to mind when they think of “Love”. Lexical suggestions may be:
protects, destroys, unites, separates, exhilarates, excites, protects, grows, changes, endures, hurts, heals, gives, shares, stimulates, burdgeons, blossoms.
- Ask students to provide a thought about the topic.
*Love makes the world go round.
Love is unconditional.*

Love is everything.

Love is companionship.

The thought may be from a proverbial or Biblical phrase:

Love is blind.

Love is patient, love is kind.

from a maxim or saying:

Lucky at cards, unlucky in love.

Love is a double-edged sword.

It’s better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all.

from a movie title or movie dialogue:

Love is a many splendoured thing.

Love means never having to say “You’re sorry.”

from a song:

Love me tender, love me true.

I love the way you love me.

or from other poems:

My love is like a red red rose.

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

- Ask students to provide a synonym for the topic:

passion, affection, friendship, adoration

or an antonym:

hate.

Some students, instead of selecting a synonym or antonym for the topic, decide to insert the name of the boyfriend or girlfriend! This is bound to create some humour in the classroom and this emphasizes the “fun” element of the activity.

Once teachers feel that they have “exhausted” the various possibilities, they should then ask students to create their own poem by following the instructions suggested above. Teachers should then ask all students to jot down the title of the poem, “Love”.

Next, teachers should ask a student to read slowly from the blackboard all the adjectives which describe the topic. Students are asked to select three adjectives from the list. It is obvious that different students will select different adjectives.

The same process - namely, asking a student to read the suggested answers written on the blackboard - is followed for the verbs (third line), the thought (fourth line) and the repetition of the topic/title or antonym for the fifth line. The reading of the lexical items on the blackboard will provide repetition to the activity.

When students have completed the task, no poem contains exactly the same vocabulary because each student has selected the lexical items of his/her choice. The poem, although done with the assistance of the entire class, becomes personal since it is the poem of the student who has selected the words.

Love
platonic, passionate
protects, enriches, destroys
 Love is blind
 Friendship

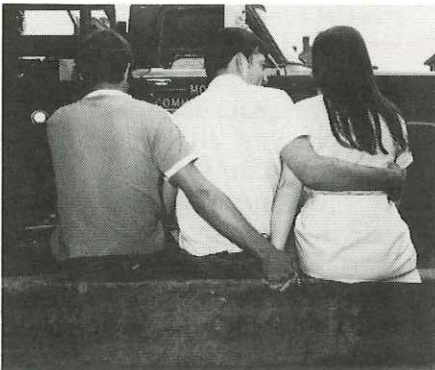
Love
sensual, mysterious
excites, endures, shares
 Love is companionship
 Jennifer

Students who generally would be reluctant to share their feelings will probably do so willingly for they attribute the vocabulary as not being theirs but selected from the lists given by the class.

Since the poem deals with "love", students may decide to insert their poem in a suitable illustration, such as a heart.



Students may be asked to find suitable illustrations from magazines or newspapers to embellish their written task.



Once teachers have established this as a "fun" activity, they may be encouraged to work on other types of poetry such as the following:

b) The diamante

Teachers should involve students in a vocabulary brainstorming similar to the one described for the cinquain. Once the various lexical items are somewhat exhausted, students should be asked to write a poem by following these suggestions:

1. On the first line, write down a noun.
2. On the second line, write down two adjectives describing the noun. Separate the adjectives by a comma.
3. On the third line, write three participles.
4. On the fourth line, write down four nouns related to the subject. (The second two nouns may have opposite meanings from the subject.)
5. On the fifth line, write three participles indicating change or development of the subject.
6. On the sixth line, write two adjectives carrying on the idea of change or development.
7. On the seventh line, write a noun that is the opposite of the subject.

c) The Haiku

The *haiku* is a Japanese poem that does not rhyme. It is about nature and the seasons of the year. The *haiku* has three lines and totals seventeen syllables.

Students do not have to follow the syllabic count exactly, but they should use a word that hints of the season of the year as they write these nature poems. The simplicity of the form of this type of poetry centers in its syllable count.

The *haiku* has seventeen syllables divided into lines of five, seven and five syllables. Students should keep in mind that the seventeen syllable count serves as merely a guide for writing a *haiku*; it is not a stringent, inflexible rule.

This activity is particularly useful when teachers are teaching syllabification.

d) Name Poems

If adjectives have been taught, the name poem may be a suitable activ-

ity to review or expand the "adjective" vocabulary...

Teachers should ask students to write their name vertically. Each letter should be followed by an adjective beginning with that letter. This is a good review/learning of adjectives. Again, teachers may wish to involve the class in brainstorm sessions. Letters of the alphabet should be written on the blackboard and as many adjectives as possible beginning with that letter should be suggested. Students then select from the list. The final poem may be written in sentence form

G generous
E energetic
O organized
R reasonable
G gorgeous
E eager

or as one-word poem:

Generous
Energetic
Organized
Reasonable
Gorgeous
Eager

In essence, this is an *acrostic* and may be structured differently as well. For example, instead of simply writing an adjective, students may decide to write a short sentence.

e) Concrete Poetry

Students may be asked to write concrete poetry. For this activity, students use letters, words, and sentences to form the poetic images and ideas they want to convey. Concrete poetry can take various shapes and is only limited by the students' imagination.

Bulletin Board Displays

Teachers may decide to allot a portion of the bulletin board to display students' work. The space may be labelled "The Poets' Corner" or another similar title. Students' work can be posted there. Past experience has shown that other students read these poems and compare them with their own creative work. Poetry writing has now become both a writing *and* reading activity!

To promote language learning, teachers may decide to invite students of other languages to write poetry and to publish the poems in book format.

Several years ago, the English consultant for the school board and I decided to provide this activity to Grade 7 and 8 students in our jurisdiction. The result was a collection of bilingual poetry.

Students with a knowledge of desk top publishing can provide camera-ready artwork. Binding will vary with the size of the book. Saddle-stitching can be very inexpensive. Perfect binding will obviously cost a little more. However, the end result is far superior.

Once these poems are in book form, copies of the book should be placed in the school board's libraries and complimentary "author's" copies should be given to each contributor!

Grade 7 or Grade 8 students are delighted to see their names in print! The activity need not be restricted to these grades but can be done at any level where teachers think it appropriate.

Anthony Mollica is Professor of Education, Faculty of Education, Brock University.

Forthcoming Conferences

October 23-24, 1995

International Language Symposium sponsored by Centro Canadese Scuola e Cultura and several school boards from the Toronto area. *Theme:* "Language and the Common Curriculum." *Keynote Speaker:* Norm Forma. *Location:* Colony Hotel, Toronto. *For further information:* Alberto DiGiovanni, Tel. 416-789-4970. Fax: 416-789-4246.

November 24-26, 1995

Saskatchewan Organization for Heritage Languages. *Theme:* "Bright Minds, Bold Hearts and Boundless Frontiers." *Location:* Delta Bessborough, Saskatoon, Sask. *For further information:* Elaine Gillespie, Tel. 306-780-9275, Fax: 306-780-9407.

December 11-13, 1995

American Association of Teachers of Italian. Co-sponsored by the Università per stranieri, Perugia and the Università per stranieri, Siena. *Location:* Chianciano Terme, Perugia, Siena. *For further information:* Anthony Mollica, Tel./Fax: 905-788-2674.



Teaching Culture in a North American Context: Columbus Day

Anthony Mollica and Frank Nuessel

Through a "time-machine" interview, we were able to reach Christopher Columbus and question him about his discoveries which led to the celebration of Columbus Day.

Mosaic: We note with great interest that you have different names: Cristoforo Colombo in Italy, Cristóbal Colón in the Hispanic world, Christophe Colomb in French-speaking countries. What is the real spelling of your name?

Columbus: My name is Cristoforo Colombo. I was born in the city of Genoa in Italy in 1451. Throughout my entire life, I remained a loyal citizen of that city. I have always been proud of my heritage. In fact, I never renounced my Genoese citizenship.

Mosaic: When did you first become interested in navigation?

Columbus: At an early age. As a young man, I worked as a weaver for my father, but I soon became enamoured with the sea when I began to gather supplies for him. By the time I had reached my early twenties, I began to make longer voyages to places like Marseilles, Tunis, and Chios in the Aegean Sea. In 1476, I was on my way to Flanders and to England...

Mosaic: We understand that that was a disastrous trip...

Columbus: Yes... My ship was sunk by privateers. After that frightening incident, I made my way to Lisbon. Once in Portugal, I enhanced my education by learning to read and write Portuguese and Spanish. I also gained additional navigational skills. Within a year of my arrival, I set sail for Ireland and Iceland. A year later, I went to Madeira in order to buy supplies to ship to Genoa...

Mosaic: ... And in Madeira you met your first love...

Columbus: (*smiling*) Yes, I did. In 1479 I married a lovely young woman named Felipa Perestrello e Moniz, the daughter of a distinguished and well-to-do Portuguese family. We decided to live in Madeira since my wife had property there. We had our only son, Diego, a year later.

Mosaic: How did you prepare yourself for the great adventure in 1492?

Columbus: While living in Madeira, I became more intensely interested in the sea and I learned all I could about matters related to sailing. Moreover, I took another voyage in the 1480s to the Gulf of Guinea. In many ways, I believe that by 1492 I knew all that was necessary to undertake such a daring and bold adventure.

Mosaic: How did you come to travel westward? In your days, that was an entirely unknown land...

Columbus: For a long time I felt that it would be possible to reach the Orient, i.e., Japan and Cathay, or what you now call China, by sea. We already knew that the earth was round. What we did not know at that time, however, was that an entire continent, what you now call North America, lay between us and Asia...

Mosaic: For this project, it is obvious that you required a sponsor substantial funding...

Columbus: I first began to seek government funding for my voyage from Portugal. Because of Portugal's heavy commitment to exploration in West Africa, my petition was not supported. I sought help from England, but to no avail. On a second occasion, I sought support from Portugal, but because of Bartholomew Dias' successful return from the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, that solicita-

tion was also denied. Portugal was deeply committed to an African route to Asia.

Mosaic: How did you finally obtain funding for your project?

Columbus: I decided to approach King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in the recently United Spain.

Mosaic: What was their reaction?

Columbus: When I first presented my proposal, the King and Queen were somewhat reluctant, but eventually they provided me with a crew and three seaworthy ships: our flagship, the *Santa María*, and two smaller vessels, the *Niña* and the *Pinta*. We set sail on August 3, 1492 for what I truly believed would be a new route to the East.

Mosaic: You and your crew must have been quite excited...

Columbus: You're right... We were all excited, but we were also a little frightened at the length of the journey. On our way across the Atlantic, we stopped at Gomera in the Canary Islands for supplies. After what seemed to be an interminable voyage, we finally sighted land on October 12th at a place you now call the Bahama Islands. We took possession of the land in the name of the Spanish monarchy and called this place *San Salvador*. At that point, based on what I then knew of the world, I calculated that San Salvador was somewhere near Japan. We continued to sail until we reached the northeastern coast of what is currently called *Cuba* and the northern coast of *Hispaniola*, which now has the two nations that you call *The Dominican Republic* and *Haiti*. We landed there and traded some of our cheap trinkets for a few pieces of gold jewellery that the natives had hand crafted...

Mosaic: The quest for precious metals and other treasures, real and imagined, would soon become the primary motivation for the continuing exploration of this area by Spain and other European countries. In spite of these successes, you and your crew had some bad luck...

Columbus: Yes... It was around this time that I lost my flagship the

Santa María and I was forced to change my plans to go to Cathay. I left some of my men at a settlement that I called *la Navidad*. I then decided to return to Spain but very bad weather forced me to stop at the Portuguese Azores and then in Lisbon. The authorities there demanded to know what I was doing. Because of the animosity between Portugal and Spain, the Portuguese made a claim on my recent discoveries...

Mosaic: But once you reached Spain you received a rather warm welcome...

Columbus: True... Once in Spain, I was received with great acclaim and I was awarded the titles of Viceroy and Admiral. Moreover, I was promised a share of the riches that my expedition would provide the Spanish monarchy. At the time of my return to Spain, the King and Queen sought the support of Pope Alexander VI, himself a Spaniard, to nullify a claim to this territory by the government of Portugal. By 1494, with the Treaty of Tordesillas, a partition of the Atlantic accorded the western domain to Spain and the eastern sector to Portugal.

Mosaic: Did you make a second voyage?

Columbus: Yes, I did. I left at the end of September in 1493 with a fleet of seventeen ships, nearly 1,500 passengers, and many supplies, including livestock and seeds, to sustain us once we reached our destination. Upon my return to the settlement of *la Navidad*, on the island of *Hispaniola* that I had established a year before, I found nothing at all. I then chose a new site for another colony which I called *Isabela*. I must confess that this second locale was not successful either, in part, because of my inattention. In reality I had spent most of my time during this second voyage in further exploration of the surrounding area which I believed to be Asia.

Mosaic: You left your brother in charge...

Columbus: I put my brother in charge of choosing another permanent site that he would give

greater attention and care to. Bartholomew subsequently moved the *Isabela* settlement to the south coast of the island... to the city you now call *Santo Domingo*...

Mosaic: ...and you returned to Spain...

Columbus: Yes... but upon my return to Spain early in 1496, I did not receive a hero's welcome. Instead I found that the King and Queen were unhappy.

Mosaic: Why were they unhappy?

Columbus: They felt that now, more than three years after my initial voyage, they still had no return on their initial investment.

Mosaic: Did you set sail a third time?

Columbus: Yes, I went back again in 1498. This voyage was not so pleasant. Few volunteers stepped forward, and I had to recruit prisoners as crew members on some of my eight vessels. During this voyage, I encountered the Island that you call *Trinidad* and also sighted the coast of what is now *Venezuela*. I then returned to *Hispaniola* to see how my brother was faring. I was horrified to learn that the new settlement was in a state of disarray. Many of the settlers were in open revolt against my brother. In order to quell that uprising, I granted pardons to the rebels and gave them land grants. More significantly, however, was my conceding to those insurgents a division of the indigenous peoples as "labourers." This insidious process came to be known as the *repartimiento* system. In part, this is why historians have revised their opinion of my historical contributions. By the spring of 1499, the Spanish monarchy appointed Francisco Bocado as the new Governor. He was to replace me and to investigate certain allegations made against me. I was sent home in chains...

Mosaic: What did you do after all these difficulties?

Columbus: Back in Spain, I decided to return once more for a fourth voyage. Funding and permissions for travel were hard to obtain, but I finally succeeded and left *Cádiz* in 1502 with four worm-eaten

ships. Though my health was beginning to fail, I still wanted to return. This time we managed to cross the Atlantic in what was then a brief twenty-one days. It was still my intention to reach India via this route. On this voyage we stopped at the place you now call *Honduras* and at *Panamá*. We managed to engage in some worthwhile bartering with native inhabitants and we acquired a large quantity of gold from them.

Mosaic: How were your last years spent?

Columbus: I must confess that they were not happy ones. Even though I had returned to Spain in 1504 from what was to be my final transatlantic voyage, I was not able to have an audience with the King and Queen until the spring of 1505. We got into an unfortunate argument about the amount of money due me. Through persistence, I did manage to gain concessions from the King, but I spent the remaining bit of my life as a virtually unknown person involved in constant legal disputes. I died in Valladolid on May 20, 1506.

Mosaic: How would you rank your accomplishments?

Columbus: Self-evaluation is always problematic and somewhat biased. I believe that I was persistent in my goals and that this persistence helped me to accomplish what I did achieve. Nevertheless, in recent times some critics have argued that I was somewhat avaricious in my pursuit of material wealth. These same commentators also stated that I was inattentive to certain duties of my command and thus I was indirectly responsible for the death of many people at the hands of my subordinates. Despite all this negative commentary, I believe that I accomplished much during my lifetime.

Mosaic: Indeed... What you originally called the West Indies were in fact a series of islands, and explorers who followed in your footsteps found two entirely new continents – North and South America.

Columbus: I always believed that I had found a new way to Asia...

Mosaic: The new continent... America... was named after Amerigo Vespucci, the great Italian navigator who explored the New World coastline after you. Are you disappointed?

Columbus: Not really. It pleases me to know that the continent was named after a fellow countryman. In spite of the fact that the continent does not have my name, I have received much recognition...

Mosaic: You must be very proud that October 12 is a day set aside as Columbus Day so that Americans may recognize your achievements.

Columbus: I do feel proud; for in celebrating me, they are also celebrating many famous Italians who have contributed significantly to the world in the realms of exploration, science, and the arts.

Mosaic: In the United States, cities such as New York and Boston began to celebrate your exploits as early as 1792.

Columbus: Yes... and Washington Irving wrote a two-volume book about me in 1850 entitled *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. His book probably helped to establish me as a hero in the USA. Moreover, about a century ago, in 1893, Chicago held the internationally-acclaimed Columbian Exposition in my honour. This celebration received a great deal of attention and did much to enhance my image...

Mosaic: Three years ago, in 1992, the world celebrated the quinquennial of the discovery of America. Like many celebrations, there was

a negative aspect. You were accused of mistreating the natives whose land you discovered.

Columbus: Those were different times, but they certainly do not justify my actions or those of my crew...

Mosaic: On the positive side, the film industry produced films to portray your exploits.

Columbus: Yes... I understand that the first film made of me was *Christopher Columbus* in 1948. It starred the late, great actor, Frederic March. There was another film about me in 1985 made originally as a television mini-series. For the quinquennial anniversary, two more films appeared. The first was entitled *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* and the second was entitled *1492: The Conquest of Paradise*, and it featured Gérard Dépardieu.

Mosaic: In addition to movies, many scholars and others with an interest in your life and deeds have discussed, evaluated, and written about your exploits.

Columbus: I am delighted that even today – some five centuries later – I am still fondly remembered...

Mosaic: Did you ever have any doubts about the impact of your explorations?

Columbus: No. Never. Even though I was wrong in my belief that I had found a new route to Asia, I never had any self-doubts about my exploratory voyages...

Mosaic: Thank you for granting this interview and for sharing your thoughts with us.

Anthony Mollica is Professor of Education, Faculty of Education, Brock University, where he teaches second-language methodology.

Frank Nuessel is Professor of Modern Languages, University of Louisville, Kentucky.

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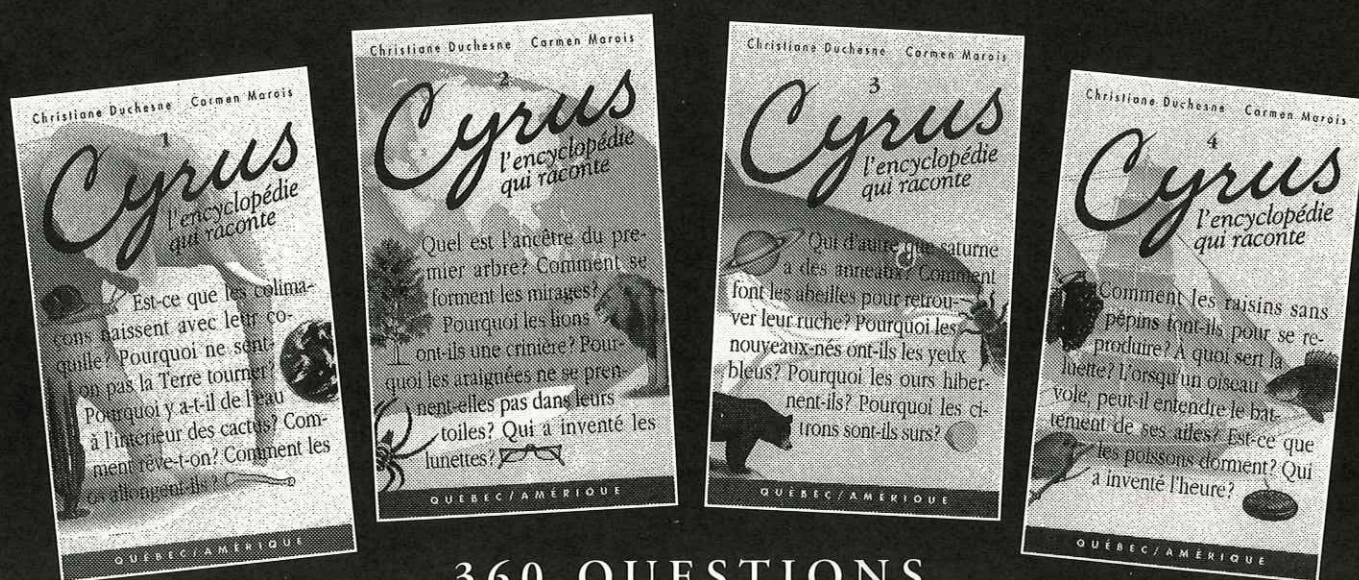
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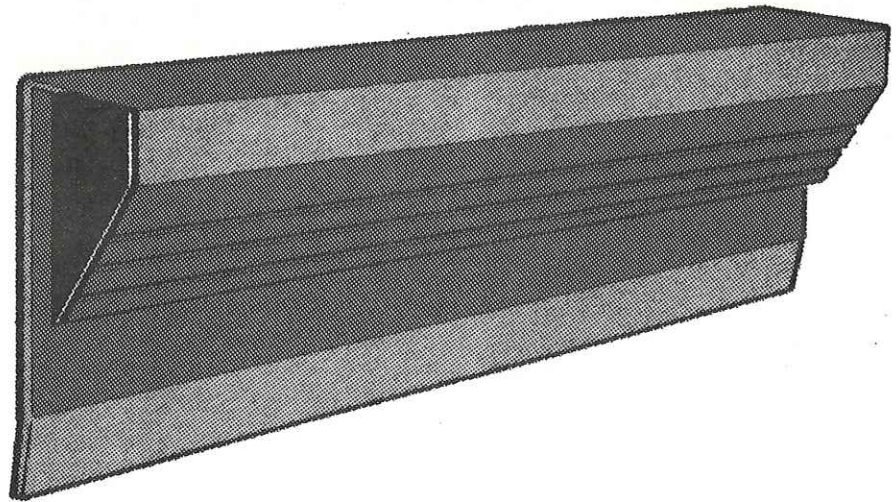


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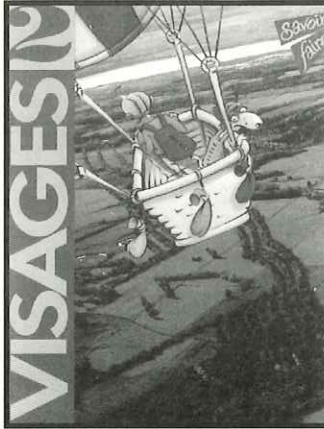
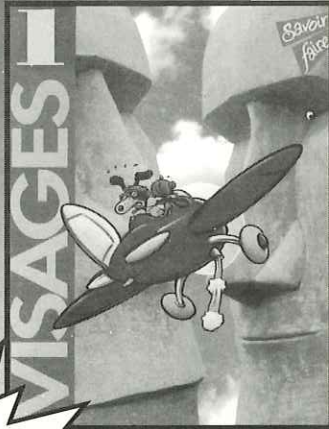
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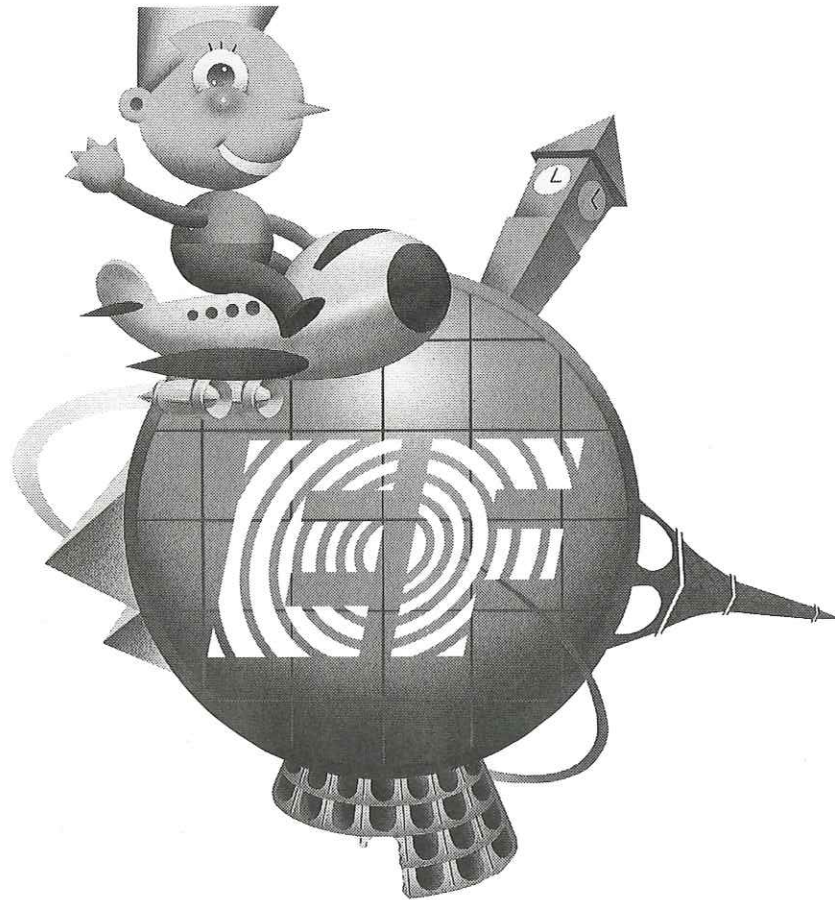
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