

# 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

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## Using Dictionaries in Second-Language Classrooms

*This paper presents a case for using a variety of dictionaries, identifies some criteria to consider when selecting a dictionary and suggests activities that teachers may do in their second-language classes.*

At the end of his first round of student teaching, one pre-service teacher reflected:

During my student teaching I realized that many French as a second-language beginner and intermediate level students relied heavily on their teacher to provide answers that could readily be found in their dictionaries. It seems to me that students were hesitant to use dictionaries because they had not been taught when and how to use them.

This reflection aroused the curiosity of the second-language curriculum and instruction professor. What role, if any, do second-language dictionaries play in language learning classrooms today? And, if in use, in what contexts and how frequently are second-language dictionaries used in today's classrooms? How much did pre-service teachers themselves use dictionaries during their practicum? How did they feel about using them in their future classrooms? What ideas did they have about how and when to use them in the classroom? Upon polling her students in several classes of second-language methodology regarding these questions, the following informal observations emerged:

- Some students/pre-service teachers described activities in which

dictionaries were used by individual or groups of students and a few identified situations in which the whole class used a dictionary. However, most of the 45 student teachers had *never* seen a dictionary used in a school setting in their 4-8 week field experience, even though class sets were visible on shelves.

- Only five pre-service teachers had been taught how to use second-language dictionaries as a part of their own high school program. The other pre-service teachers did not formally encounter the dictionary until they registered in an introductory second-language course at the university level. There a dictionary was considered a required text, and through several class activities they were taught a variety of ways of using the dictionary. They accessed grammatical information, lexical items, and discovered polysemy.
- As to whether or not pre-service teachers planned to or expected to use dictionaries in their own second-language classrooms, answers varied from "Yes, for sure." . . . to . . . "Probably. . . but I'm not sure when." . . . to . . . "I don't know. I've never thought about it."

These responses in no way suggest

that dictionaries are not used in our schools. They may, however, suggest that as second-language teachers, we need to pay more attention to their use and to be more aware of the tremendous potential of dictionaries as language learning tools. Within this context of questions and curiosities, a group of pre-service teachers and their instructor formed an after-class reading and discussion group to investigate dictionary use - in both theory and practice. Our work focussed on five areas of exploration:

1. the relative merits of using a dictionary in second-language learning
2. the need to teach young people how to use the dictionary
3. the characteristics of a good dictionary
4. sample French as a second-language classroom activities where a dictionary can be used
5. four recommended French as a second-language dictionaries

### MERITS OF USING A DICTIONARY IN SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

A literature review revealed a number of insights into this area. Monaco (1989) refers to the dictionary writer L. Wittgenstein who said that students should use the dictionary to study language in order to have a better understanding of the world in which they live. Taking a more technical point of view, Luppescu and Day (1993) found that dictionary use can enhance vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Walz (1990B) lists three prime reasons for using dictionaries. First, he says that context is often not enough to adequately define a word or expression, necessitating dictionary use. Next, he points out that a dictionary, reference book though it is, is also a *document*

*authentique*, which we, in our communicative classrooms, hold in high esteem. Dictionaries, today, perform many and varied functions. In fact, bookstores are laden with dictionaries, all of them highly informative, ranging from the fascinating to the *risqué*. Finally, Walz states that dictionaries are the instruments of lifelong learning. It is to dictionaries that we turn to revive our second language skills and to enhance our native vocabulary. It would seem appropriate, then, that students be initiated into the use of these instruments to a greater depth earlier in their exposure to second language learning. Sadly, as has already been related, it is often not until their university years that second-language students begin to use dictionaries actively and on a regular basis.

The use of dictionaries in the classroom, however, is not universally considered to be a positive strategy. While there can be many distinct benefits derived from dictionary use, there are several potential drawbacks that must also be mentioned. In a study examining the relationship between dictionary use, vocabulary comprehension and reading speed, Lupescu and Day (1993) determined that reading speed is significantly reduced when students use a dictionary. In addition, the use of dictionaries can encourage students to function at a word level rather than using context to decipher meaning. Further, it sometimes enables students to use words which they do not yet fully comprehend (Walz, 1990B). Walz (1990A) also notes that innumerable problems with *polysemy*, words with multiple extensions, and homonyms can arise from indiscriminate or uninformed use of dictionaries.

### NEED TO TEACH YOUNG PEOPLE HOW TO USE THE DICTIONARY

That the use of dictionaries in the classroom is a controversial matter should not mean that they ought to be left untouched. Rather, it should indicate that it is not enough to merely advocate their use. We should in fact be teaching students how and when to use them. If we do not teach our students how to use the dictionary, it is unlikely that they will demand that they be taught, since, while teachers *do not* believe that students have adequate dictionary skills, students believe that they *do* (Bensoussan et al., 1984). Were this the case, teachers would not encounter on a regular basis, sentences such as "*Je volonté manger demain*" for "I will eat tomorrow." The author of this sentence has fallen prey to polysemy, by searching for the word *will* in the dictionary and being unaware of which sense of the word was being sought. Or, as Brian reported:

When I was studying grade 10 French in high school, I had the wonderful opportunity to spend a week in Ottawa with both bilingual and monolingual French speakers. During the week I found myself being able to comprehend the spoken language more and more. In particular, word recognition increased. I befriended many of the Québécois and experienced many aspects of their culture for the first time. It was then that I tried *poutine* for the first time. My friends introduced me to some popular music from Quebec. I was smitten by one song in particular...the lyrics seemed quite beautiful and romantic. I can recall thinking about the legendary romanticism of French culture which I had learned about in Alberta. The song spoke poetically of the "wild fire of love". Apparently, the band was a comedy troop and the exact words were *le feu sauvage de l'amour...la maladie du baiser*. To me the song was a beautiful example of the renowned French culture.

Upon returning to my class I eagerly told my French teacher

about this enchanting song. I repeated the lyrics in French and much to my shock he laughed! He explained to me the correct translation of the phrases...the song was actually about cold-sores!

Upon reflection, this embarrassing and funny incident only underscores the importance of being aware of the limitations of word by word translation. This is generally what we learners do when learning a language and utilizing a bilingual dictionary.

Entertaining as these mistakes may be for teachers, it would seem that instead of tolerating them we should be instructing students on how to avoid making them.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DICTIONARY

The functions that the modern dictionary can perform are many and diverse. Dictionaries are being constantly revised and updated, with recommendations for future dictionary improvements being made (Nesi, 1988). Largely to this end, there is a growing number of dictionaries that possess not only descriptions of word meanings, but also encyclopedic entries, a grammatical section featuring verb conjugations, and sometimes even world and country maps, such as *Le Petit Larousse illustré*. Such multi-purpose dictionaries may prove to be both better used by students, and a better investment of often scarce resource budgets for the institution.

These integrated dictionaries continue to perform the three traditional roles of a dictionary. The essential function of any dictionary is to *define lexical items*, resulting in a richer, more accurate vocabulary. The number of entries considered desirable would vary according to the need of the student, though Ibrahim (1988) suggests that 30,000 words be the minimum number of entries.

Secondly, dictionaries are used

to find the grammatical function of a particular word. These are commonly represented in dictionaries by a series of abbreviations, but should also be modeled in the examples provided. It follows then that there should be an explanation of the abbreviations used, and that students should be acquainted with these. (There is also an assumption here that students know the meanings of grammatical terms.)

Third, dictionaries are also used to determine the correct extension of a word in the case where a single word, often a high frequency word, has multiple definitions. A recommended dictionary would therefore give appropriate semantic fields for each entry, detailing the various uses of the word, and would provide the words or phrases that generally occur with the entry. Students who use the semantic fields provided are more successful at accurate translation than those who function at a more lexical level (Lantolf, 1985).

However, given that the dictionary is simultaneously the vehicle, the product and the producer of culture (Galisson, 1984), it would be remiss to suggest that dictionaries fulfill only grammatical and lexical functions. Under the label of *culture* falls a variety of different uses for the dictionary. This is an area where it is often preferable to use a monolingual dictionary, such as *Le Petit Larousse illustré* (Beacco, 1984). The inclusion of cultural elements such as proverbs in this dictionary makes possible a number of exercises and games that can be used in the classroom. Proverbs are of particular interest since they can not only distinguish one culture from others, but also provide inter-cultural insight by comparing similar proverbs in different languages. Similarly, if the dictionary is sufficiently cur-

rent, and idiomatic colloquialisms are included, the student can see representations of contemporary culture as seen through language. In its encyclopedia section, *Le Petit Larousse illustré* includes biographical entries of prominent historical figures, with marked emphasis on those who have contributed to French history. Students can look up prominent individuals such as Hugo or Delacroix and find a brief biography, accompanied by a portrait or, in the case of the latter, a photo of one of his better known works. Furthermore, this heavily illustrated dictionary includes cultural gems like maps of the various *régions*, a cell of the cartoon *Astérix*, samples of paintings from the French Impressionists, and a labelled diagram of the Paris *métro*.

Further uses of dictionaries include, of course, verifying pronunciation, spelling, gender, or looking for a word's homonyms or synonyms.

### SAMPLE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

There are two general roles that dictionaries can play in the classroom. Either they may be employed to complement many activities which teachers are already using, or they may form the basis of *dictionary-discovery* activities. The former enriches existing activities, while the latter enhances students' degree of familiarity with dictionaries.

#### Complementing activities: Simon's use of a dictionary to teach culture

During my practicum experience I had the opportunity to observe the difference that dictionary use can make to an activity. The exercise in question was intended for a Grade Nine extended French class that was learning about inventions. Their assignment was to

modify an existing invention and to describe its functions and components. The activity was presented in the student text in order to practice demonstrative adjectives. Students were intended to describe their invention orally with sentences such as: "This handle is used to open the box, and this shelf is used to store materials". Students in two classes were given the identical assignment and in both classes students came up with a number of exciting inventions. Some students modified automobiles, others modified planes, and still others altered household appliances.

The only difference in the two classes is that, after having presented the assignment to the first class, I came across a dictionary that I suspected might have helped. The dictionary, *Le Visuel dictionnaire thématique*, is a bilingual colour visual dictionary with entries arranged thematically. One could look up "automobile" for example, and there would be an illustration of a car, which labeled the components and provided a translation for each. Unfortunately, only the second class was able to use the dictionary, which afforded me the chance to compare the two classes. The results were as follows. Both classes were asked to create a machine that could be used in their homes. The presentations in the first class were complicated by the fact that without the knowledge of specific vocabulary or terminology, which the assignment required, the students were often forced into long descriptive sentences. This generally meant that they were unable to incorporate the linguistic feature that they were intended to practice — demonstrative adjectives. The second class on the other hand, having accessed the vocabulary they needed through *Le Visuel dictionnaire thématique*, was

able to focus on the learning objective. Furthermore, the level of frustration was far lower in the second class since they were better equipped with the tools needed to complete the assignment successfully. This was an example of just one activity where the use of a specialized dictionary made an existing activity more effective.

### **Complementing activities: Camille's use of Majuscules et abréviations**

Before compiling a list of existing dictionaries, I was unaware of the multitude of dictionaries that I, as a student teacher, could have used to help improve student learning and motivation. As I reflect back on my final student teaching round, I now realize that many second-language class activities could easily be adapted to incorporate successfully not only basic bilingual pocket dictionaries but also more specialized types of dictionaries.

A unit project involving the use of classified ads of a francophone newspaper is a prime example. The two French as a second-language Grade Ten classes I taught were given class time during every class meeting to work on a classified ad poster. Students had learned about different uses and formats of classified ads, and their assignment was to create their own written ad, to be presented on poster-size paper with related drawings. My cooperating teacher and I provided students with recent classified ads from *Le Franco-Albertain* in addition to examples in their textbooks to which they could refer for inspiration. Students enjoyed the 'realia', and many used the ads as a basis for their own creations. However, unlike the ads in the student texts, the actual newspaper ads used many abbreviations. While able to respond to most students' questions about abbreviations, I was not completely

confident of all my answers and referred students to dictionaries. The pocket dictionaries available in the classroom, however, did not always provide the answers.

I later discovered a unique resource, *Majuscules et abréviations*, a dictionary of French abbreviations which would have served well during this project work. With this resource at hand, students would have been able to locate the information they required independently.

### **Dictionary Discovery**

The objective of dictionary discovery activities is to familiarize the student with the functions that a certain dictionary can perform in order to reduce "dictionary-anxiety" and to increase effectiveness of use. Assuming that students know the order of the alphabet and can already read, they need to learn how a dictionary works, how a dictionary or reference resource can help them, and also how to become aware of what they need and what kind of dictionary will best respond to their needs. Activities to teach students about the contents and structure of a dictionary must address what the symbols in a dictionary mean and what different type faces in the dictionary signal (e.g. grammatical change, phrases, idiomatic usages). Further, students need to know what abbreviations stand for, how to use the pronunciation code, where other forms or derivatives of the word are found, and how to find slang usage. Finally, they should know where to find information about these points if they forget them. In order to learn how a dictionary can help them, students must receive explicit guided feedback as well as learn to self-assess.

Students can learn about different types of dictionaries by being exposed to them and by being

given structured activities which require their use. Examples of such activities are included in the next sections of this article. Further examples of the potential dictionaries offer for the development of classroom activities are detailed in Walz (1990A; 1990B), Bertolotti (1990), Beacco (1984), and Clausen (1987).

The activities these authors recommend help students expand their vocabularies, have fun in the language, learn relevant background cultural knowledge and gain a deeper appreciation for how language is constantly changing. Walz (1990B) suggests that students with an elementary level knowledge of the second language could expand their vocabulary by scanning the dictionary for words recently added to the language or for words that come directly from English. Students with an intermediate level knowledge of a second language could expand their vocabulary by checking up on how prefixes and suffixes alter the meanings of words, which, in turn, will give them better skills for inferring word meaning in reading. He further recommends that learners with advanced level knowledge of the second language work with single words to uncover their many usages and meanings. To help more able students recognize the importance and intricacies of word selection, Walz also reminds teachers to have students use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries both to 'decode' the language (find the meanings of given words in a sentence or text) and to 'encode' it (guess the meanings of missing words in a sentence or text and then verify their guesses with the use of a dictionary) (Walz, 1990A).

Bertolotti (1990) encourages readers to 'play' with dictionaries. She advises learners to compare definitions of words in several dic-

tionaries in order to become aware of how different definitions can be. As a class game she suggests that students invent or create definitions of words or proverbs found in the dictionary and try to convince their peers that these meanings are correct. Only the dictionary will confirm whether the student-author is misleading the class or not!

Beacco (1984) draws teachers' attention to how dictionaries can be used to teach cultural information - such as geography, history, and literature, as well as socio-political values. By asking questions about maps, biographies, colour plates and acronyms found in a dictionary, teachers help students build helpful background cultural knowledge as well as see the vast amount of useful information found in a dictionary. If students have a more in-depth knowledge of the second language, Beacco suggests that teachers ask students to look for entries that describe the socio-cultural or 'prestigious' values embedded in the language. (e.g. This might be done by asking students to find the differences between 'familiar' usage and 'popular' usage entries under the same word.)

Clousing (1987) recommends that the dictionary be used as a way of helping students see that language is influenced by other languages. For example, if students looked up the following words in a German dictionary, they would learn that all of these words were of Arabic origin: *Kaffee, matt, Ziffer, Matratze, Laute, Alkohol, Maske, Havarie* and *Admiral*. This type of investigation could lead to a discussion as to how languages influence one another. By raising questions as to how Arabic words entered German, which other Arabic words have entered the language, which other languages have influenced a

language or which words come from similar language roots, students gain a deeper understanding of the second language and its cultural roots.

### RECOMMENDED DICTIONARIES

Dictionaries, if there are any in the French as a Second Language classroom, often are dusty old volumes hidden under outdated worksheets on an unused shelf. Why do teachers and students consign these useful resources to such an inhospitable location? It could be that in these days of fiscal restraint many classrooms have only old, ponderous, unattractive dictionaries. We have prepared a modest survey of some types of dictionaries to help teachers make more informed budgetary decisions for improving in-class resources. We prepared the survey for the purpose of making a recommendation to establish an unpretentious learning resource center. In addition to a class set of high-quality pocket dictionaries, this "mini-library" might include some or all of the following three larger volumes.

#### ***Le Visuel dictionnaire thématique***

*Le Visuel dictionnaire thématique* is a virtual gold mine for classroom French teachers. It is a bilingual dictionary with a twist. As the name suggests, the dictionary utilizes visual aids to increase comprehension of specialized vocabulary. The topics are organized thematically with detailed, labelled illustrations. There are over six hundred different subjects organized under twenty-eight themes. Each of the over 25 000 different lexical items is illustrated and described by 3 500 high quality pictures. This dictionary provides an easy to use reference for specialized vocabulary.

The range of topics covered is

useful. They vary from the mundane world of sweaters to the high technology of the French high speed train, TGV, and everything in between, including cross-cultural content such as a balalaika in the section on music and a Canadian football field in the section on sports! This is not a traditional dictionary in any sense. It does not include anything other than nouns. Even students with very little background in French can understand the visual "definitions" provided and incorporate new vocabulary into their growing repertoire. However, the possibilities for using this thematic dictionary, as described in the story related earlier, are virtually limitless, particularly in student directed learning.

With the focus in the communicative curriculum on student-initiated topics for projects, a reference like this would accommodate a wide range of themes or topics.

#### ***Le Petit Larousse illustré***

*Le Petit Larousse illustré* is a reference book which no classroom should be without. Updated every year, *Le Petit Larousse illustré* is both a unilingual dictionary of 84,200 words and an encyclopedia in one. In addition, it contains nearly three hundred maps, a section on verb conjugations, a mini-dictionary of foreign expressions commonly found in French, a list of proverbs, and 3,600 illustrations and colour plates. The distinguishing characteristic of this dictionary is the importance it places on culture. In the introduction it is clearly stated that the dictionary has a double objective: to represent both the French linguistic and cultural heritage.

The multi-faceted nature of this dictionary is reflected in the many activities to which it lends itself. For example, the dictionary contains labeled diagrams of cars,

animals, playing fields and so on, thereby incorporating elements of the previously mentioned dictionary into a single package. These illustrations are invaluable, since they provide students with vocabulary integral to many projects suggested in our curriculum guides.

*Le Petit Larousse* is also a good resource for studying vocabulary used in Canada and in French-speaking countries other than France. It features definitions of regional lexicon, such as *poudrerie* (Canada) and *septante* (Belgium, Switzerland and Zaire). Moreover, not only are these entries included, but they are also free of any value judgements that might undermine the entry. This dictionary could also be used by students studying the various countries that constitute *la francophonie*. Students might look up Haiti or Cameroon and find a relatively detailed map and a brief history of the country. The sizeable entry for Quebec is accompanied by maps of the province. The encyclopedia section of *Le Petit Larousse illustré* also provides students with background information on France and French culture. The encyclopedia section features biographies of prominent writers and politicians, as well as historical information, and descriptions and illustrations of French cities and *régions*. Finally, given that it is revised every year, it is the dictionary to consult regarding new words. Entries include new computer terminology and new sports; for example, the entry: *le parapente*, a term which is seldom found in other, less current dictionaries.

#### **Detailed Bilingual Dictionaries - Harrap's Shorter Dictionary and the Collins-Robert Dictionary**

Finally, although pocket dictionaries are often favoured by students, no classroom should be without a more detailed bilingual

dictionary. Both the *Harrap's Shorter Dictionary* and the *Collins-Robert Dictionary* would fit this description. However, since visits to local booksellers found the former to be in more ready distribution than the latter, it is the *Harrap's* that will be examined. Significantly, the *Harrap's Shorter Dictionary* was revised in 1996, illustrating the importance of having up-to-date information and the fact that dictionaries lose their relevance. It contains 460,000 translations, with renewed emphasis being placed on Americanisms and Canadianisms. In addition, this dictionary includes 140 pages of grammatical information about the two languages. This section provides a glossary of terms, followed by descriptions of how the various grammatical components function in the respective languages. Furthermore, throughout the dictionary emphasis is placed on the conjugation of irregular verbs and other elements, such as irregular feminines of French adjectives or the plurals of nouns which may pose problems for students. The *Harrap's* is also excellent in that for each entry it seeks to provide all the other words with which it normally co-exists. This is important since it enables the reader to use and decipher phrases and idioms. Pocket dictionaries, it should be noted, however, by virtue of size, naturally tend to provide significantly fewer of these phrases. Careful previewing and choice of dictionary are obviously important.

The *Harrap's Shorter Dictionary*, because of its versatility, can play several different roles in the classroom. First and foremost, it is an excellent bilingual reference featuring a large number of entries and translations. Second, it can be instrumental in the discussion of language register. Upon examination of the inside cover, which

helps to explain abbreviations by showing sample definitions (there is also a list of abbreviations in the introduction), the students can discover the prompts which denote register. The dictionary includes abbreviations for formal usage, familiar usage, children's language, slang, pejorative expressions, technical language in various fields, and finally for vulgar expressions, which are translated no less thoroughly. This dictionary is also useful for advanced students who would be interested in the phonetic transcriptions which are provided for each entry, including alternate pronunciations where they exist. In the introduction, examples are provided which illustrate the pronunciation of each symbol in English and French, as well as the English diphthongs. Finally, there is an excellent conversation guide for English and French which could be used to supplement many activities already in practice. For example, there is an extensive list of expressions on topics related to *buying clothes, addressing people correctly, ordering a meal, or talking about holidays*. This invaluable section could be referenced to form the basis of a vocabulary sheet, or could simply be used to enhance current activities by providing students with appropriate phrases.

#### **PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' CONCLUSIONS**

Clearly there is a place for dictionaries in the French as a second-language classroom (and not on a dusty shelf), but there are several obstacles to be overcome. First, teachers need to be aware of the many different types of dictionaries available to them. It is, however, not always necessary to have a class set of every type of dictionary as long as the ones that are provided are adequate. Second, teachers must not only



advocate their use, but also facilitate their use in the classroom by

1. familiarizing the students with the various dictionaries and
2. modelling their use.

Finally, it is important that teachers do not allow the dictionaries to gather dust, but rather seek both to incorporate their use into everyday activities and to develop dictionary discovery activities. When dictionary use becomes a classroom routine, both students and teachers benefit!

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### Frank and Ernest



*Matt Maxwell*

## Music and Drama in Second-Language Acquisition: Essential Components of a Holistic Approach

*Music and drama offer excellent opportunities for what the author labels 'pleasant repetition', a practice of structures and vocabulary that is motivational and contextualized.*

### BEYOND THE NATURAL APPROACH: THE NEED FOR "PLEASANT REPETITION"

In their desire to avoid repetition and memorization, advocates of the Natural Approach ( Krashen, 1981, 1982; Krashen and Terrell, 1983 ) and related systems might have just possibly "thrown the baby out with the bath water", so to speak. What needs to be pointed out is that it is not repetition *per se* that is detrimental to second-language acquisition, but the mode of its delivery that needs to be questioned.

In fact, when used correctly, in the proper contexts and situations, repetition can indeed play a strong role in second-language acquisition. To better understand this, we must look at the learning process in the most general of terms. All learning (here taken in its broadest sense, and not to be confused with its more limited meaning as outlined in Krashen and Terrell's "learning-acquisition hypothesis") can be said to take place in one of two different modes, which I shall call

- realizational learning and
- repetition (gradual) learning.

Many cognitive activities contain elements of both of these processes, whereas others consist of more or less one or the other. Second-language acquisition requires both of these modes of learning. Realizational learning takes place whenever one grasps a new concept that one can immediately incorporate into one's way of thinking and behaving. This can be as esoteric as a philosophical concept which profoundly alters one's way of perceiving the universe, or as mundane as learning that a bolt is tightened by turning it in a clockwise direction. But once one has acquired a new realization, it unalterably becomes part of one's way of perceiving and interacting with the world. Repetition learning, which involves constant practice, is infinitely more subtle; noticeable changes in cognitive, affective or physical development happen almost imperceptibly, over the course of a long period of time. This is the process that takes place when one is learning musical scales or perfecting a gymnastic routine, as one trains one's mind and body to act in an ever more perfect way.

The acquisition of language, whether it be one's native tongue

in the early years of one's life or a second language at some later point, involves both realizational and repetition learning. The understanding of syntactical and morphological principles that operate in a particular language involve becoming aware of certain underlying rules that describe its operation. While realizations that take place in language acquisition may not happen in a profound and sudden enlightenment way, they nonetheless become an integral part of one's way in communicating in that language; associative and deductive thinking play a critical role in the creation of vocabulary and structures. For instance, once one is aware that *il faut* must be followed by the infinitive (this is assuming that the teacher has not confused the beginning students by introducing *Il faut que* ), the second-language acquirer can easily extrapolate from one verb to another in using this structure. The inevitable slip-ups and errors that do occur following a realization-type learning in second-language acquisition are inevitably due to memory lapses or lack of concentration, and in no way impinge on the basic understanding of the principle.

What the Natural Approach ignores to its detriment, in core French and similar type situations at least, is focused, concentrated doses of the other mode of learning: repetition learning. It is obvious that, in the same way that one can only become a proficient musician through the constant practice of scales, arpeggios and other skill-building techniques, one can only become fluent in another language through constant practice of its vocabulary and structures. In the same way that an imprint in soft clay becomes deeper with each impression, words and structures become ever more embedded in our psyche with constant practice. In an immersion situation, the student is surrounded by

enough of the target language that this repetition will naturally occur – and these are the situations in which content-based communicative programs have really excelled – (although as Lightbown, 1990 pointed out, repetition of incorrect structures which helps to create an Anglicized interlanguage “dialect”, is a grave danger), but in the limited instruction time given to core French (100-200 minutes / week) there are simply not enough opportunities for the necessary repetition to occur.

When a sufficient amount of repetition (the determining of which would be a large research project in itself) does not happen, then it becomes very difficult for second-language acquisition to take place. The students simply do not have the basic tools which are required for even a primitive fluency and become incapable of integrating realizational and repetition learning, because there is simply not enough material to integrate.

This is the quandary that the advocates of communicative approaches are facing: they reject traditional methods of second-language instruction and the dryness of meaningless (semantic-free) repetition, but are not sure what to replace it with in the limited confines of core language instruction. Obviously, constant repetition of decontextualized phrases, the monotony of which is only broken up with the teacher’s correction of the student’s grammar, can only lead to boredom and frustration on the part of both the student and the teacher. Not much better are mini-dialogues which, although they may be written around a particular theme (going shopping, going to a restaurant, working at school, etc.), lack an embedded narrative, have limited emotional content and are consequently of

little relevance to the student. Incessant repetition of these dialogues is likely to create a mind-numbing state in the student which is not conducive to language acquisition.

I posit, however, that, in certain circumstances, namely in musical and dramatic contexts, repetition can indeed be a powerful language acquisition tool. What makes the use of songs and plays very different from other forms of repetition is precisely that they do both have an underlying narrative or story that elicits an emotional response from the participants. In singing a song or acting out a play, we identify with characters in the unfolding narrative. We develop empathy for those, who people these stories, because in them, we see parts of ourselves.

Good songs are stories with music. They have a beginning, a middle and an end; they are complete unto themselves. Unlike decontextualized phrases or dialogues, they are not fragmented and disconnected. They have their own intrinsic depth, both in form and content, which allows them to be entered into at ever-increasing levels of sophistication. Students can, under knowledgeable guidance, become more aware of the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic elements of a song; they can very easily learn vocal harmonies and simple counterpoint. Nor does the practising of songs by any means need to be limited to singing; it can also include the playing of percussion and musical instruments. By their nature, songs lend themselves to performance situations. Preparing for a mini-concert presentation can not but increase the student’s desire to perfect a song both lyrically and musically. With a good song, one which combines a simple strong melody with a relevant, emotionally en-

gaging message, familiarity does not breed contempt. Repetition becomes not only painless or neutral, but rather a positive, motivating experience.

### THE MUSIC / DRAMA CONNECTION

This pleasant repetition can be extended well beyond the song itself. Indeed, the song is best seen as a “starting point”, a *point de départ*, which extends out into a variety of activities. The most important of these, is music’s sister art, drama. In truth, music as an second-language acquisition tool in the way I am proposing cannot be seen in isolation from drama, but rather as a step along the multidimensional continuum of language acquisition, the artistic context of which includes, as well as music, drama, movement, dance.

When I refer to drama here, I am again doing so by taking it in its broadest sense (within an educational context): both as the rehearsal of plays for class and school productions, but later, once a certain level of fluency has been achieved, also as a means of self-exploration and personal growth. In the second-language acquisition model I am proposing, the initial use of drama must be restricted to the rehearsing of carefully prescribed plays that present a limited vocabulary and structure base, with constant repetition of key linguistic elements.

Like practising a song, rehearsing a play requires constant repetition. The creation of a series of plays which use a “pared-down language”, a simple version of second-language expression – sharing some of the attributes of Hatch’s (1979) “simplified input” – has been the massive innovation of W. Maxwell (1997). It gradually grows in complexity over the course of a cycle of carefully designed plays. The use of these

plays is of particular interest here for the following reasons.

1. The astonishing improvements in fluency of French as a Second Language students which can be achieved with core French students. (Maxwell, 1997, 1999)
2. Many of these plays are based on songs that I have written, and are, therefore, natural extensions along the narrative-based second-language acquisition continuum.

Like a song, a play is a holistic entity unto itself. It is a story, an archetypal microcosm of one or more aspects of our daily lives. A good play draws its participants, actors and audience, into itself. A play also provides a means for escaping the mundane in our lives, and touching something which resonates deeply in our hearts. Repetition in this dramatic context is not a painful, boring process, but one that can be suffused with excitement and wonder.

### **GAMES AND "PLEASANT REPETITION"**

Repetition can also be a pleasant experience in the context of a game. Many games are repetitive in nature, whether they be card or board games, or ones that require more physical activity. Every game establishes a certain underlying principle to which it applies a given number of rules, in the context of which the game is played out in an infinite number of combinations which are determined by the actions of its participants and the element of chance. Therefore, games offer a structure around which meaningful and enjoyable repetition can occur.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF AN UNDERLYING HOLISTIC VISION**

Another area that is not explored in the Natural Approach is the ac-

tual nature of the context in which the language learning occurs. Topics around communication have been suggested, such as: recreation and leisure, family and friends, plans and careers, residence, health and illness, eating, travel, shopping, etc., but moral and ethical issues, which are just as relevant to children as they are to adults, are only considered peripherally. Many educators are arguing for the need to incorporate a more holistic vision of the world, which encourages cooperation among peoples of all races, creeds and cultures as well as in-depth understanding of the natural world and all its non-human inhabitants. Given the extreme state of crisis which is the lot of the late 20th century world, many feel that the syllabus should address these concerns of social justice and the environment in an integrated, cross-curricular way (Pike and Selby, 1988; Bowers, 1995; Miller, 1996). Global, environmental and humane education are all areas in the burgeoning field of holistic curriculum which have developed many exciting and innovative ways to encourage students to explore issues of social justice, human rights, animal rights, bio-diversity, pollution, loss of habitat, etc. Unfortunately, core French, in the primary and junior grades at least, has dealt only peripherally with these issues. Whereas most modern basal programs go out of their way to present racially diverse people in the artwork and photos in their glossy textbooks, most of the ecological and social justice issues are marginalized in favour of "safe" themes, such as family life, life at school, circuses and fairs, birthdays, games, etc. There is a feeling that, because instruction time is so limited and because most of the teaching activity takes place in isolation from what happens in the home classroom, there is sim-

ply not time, nor is there the linguistic expertise to deal with such serious issues. While a heavy-handed approach which focuses on the many negative events taking place in the world would clearly be ill-advised, there are many ways that environmental and social justice issues can be integrated into a French program in a clear and simple way, with sensitivity and often even with humour (a good antidote for negativity if ever there was one).

Many of the songs that have written deal with the issue of endangered species, because it is my experience that young people are especially attracted to this area of environmental education. They find it much easier to become concerned about one animal, or one species of animal and then to expand outward from that point than to try to view the many issues initially in an expansive and global way. Songs, like plays, are capable of creating a sense of empathy in the student: they begin to view the world through the eyes of an animal. This world is very different from the "virtual world" portrayed by Hollywood and Nintendo. In the commercially contrived fictional world created for consumption, the protagonists are generally shallow, trite, smug and cynical. Their ego-centric thinking and behaviour are taken for granted and never questioned. They too invite participation and identification, but the characters with whom the viewer is asked to empathize have no new vision to offer.

Songs written around relevant themes pull the singer and the listener into themselves in a different sort of way. They are made real through the faculty of imagination, a process discouraged by the viewing of TV (Kerns, 1981; Singer and Singer, 1977). Because of the synergy of music and words, songs are capable of producing

strong visual images in the mind's eye of the student, who then becomes a participant in this inner landscape. Of particular interest are "biocentric" songs (the word "biocentrism", meaning life-centredness, which recognizes the sacredness of life, demands a re-evaluation of the anthropocentric paradigms which have been at the heart of modernist Cartesian thinking). They invite empathy towards animals upon the part of the singer and the listener. In the following song, *Le roi des animaux*, a lion, speaking as the archetype of all lions, tells us about himself and states in a brief, but impassioned way the abuses that humans have wrought against animals:

### Le roi des animaux

(Words and music: Matt Maxwell)

#### Refrain:

Je suis le roi des animaux  
Je suis grand et je suis beau  
Je suis le roi des animaux

1. Je suis très fort  
Et je suis grand  
Je suis rapide  
Et je suis intelligent  
Je suis le roi des animaux
2. Je suis la noblesse  
Je suis doré  
Je suis la sagesse  
Je suis la liberté  
Je suis le roi des animaux

#### Refrain:

3. Je suis féroce  
Je suis dangereux  
Mais j'aide mes amis  
Quand je peux  
Car je suis le roi des animaux

4. Mais maintenant  
Les êtres humains  
Apportent la souffrance  
Et la faim  
A tous, tous les animaux

#### Refrain:

5. Ce roi vous dit  
Du fond de son coeur  
Je vous prie  
D'arrêter ce malheur  
Car je suis le roi des animaux

This song works on a number of different levels. From a linguistic point of view, it presents a very limited vocabulary with much repetition. Several basic structures (*être* in the first person, *-er* verbs (*aider, apporter, prier, arrêter*), the indirect object (*vous*), as well as conjunctions and prepositions, are introduced. In the process of listening to and singing this song, students are embedding this vocabulary and these basic structures in their psyche at ever deeper levels with each repetition.

But even within the framework of this very limited language base, a story is told. The lion tells us of his qualities, by way of explaining why he is the king of the animals. But even though he describes himself as both ferocious and dangerous (a fact that all animals – herbivores and rival carnivores – on the Savannah will attest to), he says that he helps his friends when he can. So his final plea to humanity for justice and consideration is directed not so much to himself as to all of his subjects, which comprise the entire animal kingdom. Because this song is written in the first person, it invites the student to identify and empathize with *le roi des animaux*. This song is an excellent *point de départ* for an entire unit on issues relating to bio-diversity, such as hunting, loss of habitat, the role of zoos, etc.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MYTH, MAGIC, AND FANTASY

Underlying every culture up to the present day are certain myths and stories which bring meaning into the lives of its members. While in primitive societies many of these tales are concerned with explaining creation or aspects of the natural world (the rising and setting of the sun and moon, thunderstorms, lightning, etc.) they have also served as mirrors for our own psychological and emotional dramas. At the root of

all of these stories is what Campbell (1949) refers to as the "monomyth", the classic tale of adventure which is the basis of all folk tales and myths from around the world, and which appeals to peoples from all cultures and times. Perhaps even more so in the modern Age, the monomyth resonates profoundly with young people as they try to make sense of the world. These are the elements common to all mythology: there is a hero, who is called to adventure and meets with a problem or obstacle. The hero must overcome this obstacle: if he/she succeeds, a reward is forthcoming; failure to overcome the challenge results in a punishment of some form.

Songs, as stories, often encapsulate the essence of mythology. This is especially true of many folk ballads, which, for example, tell the tale of a forbidden love and its consequences (*J'ai une méchante mère*), of warriors going off to battle (*La chanson de Roland*), or fishermen sailing off into the danger of the open ocean (*Partons, la mer est belle*). Unlike modern pop songs, which are concerned primarily with requited and unrequited love, and more recently with nihilistic themes such as suicide, songs for children tell stories that cover a wide range of subject matter. As well as the nature and animal related themes mentioned above, children are drawn to songs that deal with the magical and the fantastical, ones that tell stories of wizards, dragons, monsters, extraterrestrials and the like. Songs based on these types of themes give the student a means of escaping, however temporarily, the mechanistic and the mundane that are part and parcel of modern life.

The mythological/magical song naturally lends itself to being extended into dramatic activities, where the students are given more

in-depth opportunity to explore and identify with the characters of these stories. The exploration of magic and myth not only provides students with a rich linguistic base, but also serves as a vehicle for meaningful self-exploration.

### HOWARD GARDNER'S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Psychologist Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1985) has had a profound impact on the way we view intelligence and the learning process. He proposes seven different and unique intelligences, which each of us possess in varying proportions:

- linguistic intelligence,
- mathematical/logical intelligence,
- kinesthetic intelligence,
- musical/rhythmic intelligence,
- visual/spatial intelligence,
- intrapersonal intelligence and
- interpersonal intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

The implications of this theory are the following: some of us may be "intelligent" in one or more of these centres of cognition, while remaining underdeveloped in other areas. Their existence - as defined by eight criteria that Gardner applied<sup>2</sup> - , even though not verified to the satisfaction of all, has been accepted by many from a variety of fields, including the educational field (Matthews, 1981; Layng, 1995). Acceptance of the Multiple Intelligences theory nullifies traditional concepts of IQ as being fixed and consisting solely of mathematical/logical and linguistic ability. It follows, therefore, that our teaching should be directed at the development of as many of these different intelligences as possible. This requires a curriculum model that is truly multi-dimensional; as French as a Second Language teachers, we must direct our teaching not simply to the acquisition of vocabu-

lary and structures, but we should be expanding the other horizons of the mind as well.

In the holistic model I am proposing for second-language instruction, there are many opportunities to develop these intelligences simultaneously: when we are doing something as simple as singing and acting out *L'arbre est dans ses feuilles*, we are simultaneously developing our linguistic, kinesthetic and musical/rhythmic intelligences; we are experiencing the song in a number of different ways and on a number of different levels. The words and the movements in this particular song are very simple, but there is no reason that one could not introduce over a period of time song material with ever more sophisticated levels of complexity, broadening the horizons in the aforementioned intelligences.

Once one has decided to seriously entertain the notion of Multiple Intelligences, the question immediately begs itself: is there transference from one intelligence centre to another? For instance, can stimulating one's musical intelligence improve one's cognitive development in another area such as visual / spatial, mathematical, linguistic or kinesthetic ability? Gardner's personal biases notwithstanding (he is opposed to this notion of intelligence transference)<sup>3</sup>, the most recent research seems to indicate that the answer to this is a qualified yes. A few years ago Frances Rauscher (1994, 1995) undertook two studies which received a lot of press, one with preschoolers (1993) and one with university students (1994). They seem to have established a fairly strong correlation between music and spatial/temporal reasoning. The latter research project, which established the now famous "Mozart Effect"<sup>4</sup> (which Sony Music capitalized on to present a new re-

lease of Mozart's work), showed significant enhancement of the spatial IQ scores of university students who listened to Mozart's Sonata K448, as compared to a control group who were kept in silence and another group that listened to a relaxing nature sounds recording 10 minutes prior to the IQ test. The encouraging results from this research obviously indicate the need for much further study of the interplay between musical and other intelligences.

It is my belief that, eventually research will clearly establish profound links between our different centres of cognition, and that songs, which encompass such a wide swath of territory - three musical elements (melody, harmony and rhythm) and a linguistic component - stimulate our musical, spatial (when playing an instrument or reading music), kinesthetic (in dance) and, obviously linguistic intelligences.

Given my earlier discussion of music, drama and movement, the implications of the Multiple Intelligences Theory and related work for second-language acquisition should be clear. When we are singing and playing a song, when we are acting out a play, we are developing a number of our intelligences simultaneously; we are working with our musical/rhythmic, kinesthetic, linguistic and interpersonal intelligences. There is a constant flow of activity taking place within and between each of these different cognitive centres; both music and drama invite movement, vocalization, emotional self expression. We are learning and incorporating a second language with our bodies, minds and hearts.

### MUSIC AND ACCELERATIVE LEARNING

Any discussion of music and second-language acquisition which did not acknowledge the enormous

contribution of the accelerative learning techniques pioneered by Lozanov (1979) and further described by Racle (1979) Bancroft (1979, 1982, 1995) and others, would be incomplete. Lozanov's seminal work on Suggestopedia (1979) rocked the academic world with the revelations that adult students were able to acquire and retain up 1,000 vocabulary items from a second language over the course of an eight-hour intensive lesson, which made use of the following powerful memory-enhancing techniques: deep rhythmic breathing, pleasant relaxing classical music (the initial sessions were restricted to the use of *largo* portions of Baroque music, such as Pachelbel's Canon), comfortable surroundings, pleasant lighting, etc. In the initial passive stage of second-language input, the vocabulary was introduced to the students who were able to enter a highly alert "alpha state" by reclining in comfortable chairs, closing their eyes, listening to the relaxing music and hearing the words and phrases repeated to them. In the active second-language reproduction stage which followed, the students reinforced their newly acquired vocabulary and structures by acting out mini-dramatizations and by playing games.

Ironically, even given the astonishing improvements in second-language acquisition that have been demonstrated by the use of accelerative learning techniques that are at the heart of Suggestopedia (Lozanov 1979, Ostrander 1979), the Tomatis Approach (W.J. Bancroft 1984), Dhority's ACT method (W.J. Bancroft 1995) and related methodologies, their use has remained very restricted in language-learning institutions, almost entirely at the post-secondary level and in government and military institutions. Why they have not

gained currency in elementary and secondary institutions is not clear; discovering the reason(s) for their lack of acceptance would make a very worthwhile research project in itself. I would posit that the disregard for such a highly effective methodology might well be due to a fear within the established educational hierarchy of radically different approaches to second-language instruction – any teaching method which smacks of something "New Agey" and which involves the use of meditative and visualization techniques would be considered too controversial to be introduced into a contemporary educational setting, where teachers and administrators are increasingly beholden to the concerns of parents, who are themselves feeling the pressures of an ever more complex and competitive world. In the present climate, 'rocking the boat' with the introduction of wildly innovative programs (especially ones that seem to tinker with our normal consciousness), even if these programs have been proven to be highly successful, is not appreciated. We will have to wait for a time somewhere in the future when people are less hide-bound by traditional notions of curriculum, before we will witness the implementation of accelerative techniques at the elementary and secondary levels of the educational system.

### **MUSIC: A COMPONENT OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

From my perspective, music should be only one of many elements that make up a successful second-language program. It is only one piece in the puzzle, so speak. Asher (1977) points out that as effective a technique Total Physical Response is, without be-

ing integrated with other components of a language program, it is of limited use. The same holds true for music: it is only when music is an integral part of a program that includes a kinesthetic element,<sup>5</sup> drama, the use of visuals, reading, writing and form-focused teaching, that we will witness music's power as a fluency-builder in the second language. Music, both as song and as pure music, and in conjunction with drama and movement, has a key role to play in second-language acquisition.

### **NOTES**

1. Gardener has recently proposed an eighth intelligence, "ecological intelligence"; I suspect that he may have been prompted to do so by statements by the likes of C.A. Bowers (1995), who have argued strongly that the modernist western view of intelligence is based on the notion of the supremacy of the individual, largely ignoring his/her connections with the larger biotic community.
2. These eight criteria are: 1. potential isolation by brain damage, 2. the existence of mentally challenged individuals with savant abilities, 3. an identifiable core operation or set of operations, 4. a distinctive developmental history and set of definable 'end-state' performances, 5. an evolutionary history and evolutionary plausibility, 6. support from experimental psychological tasks, 7. support from psychometric findings, 8. susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system.
3. Gardner is strongly attached to the notion of intelligences being discreet and separate. He states: "An important claim of the theory – though one that needs to be adequately tested – is that each intelligence is relatively independent of the others, and that an individual's intellectual gifts in say, music cannot be inferred from his or her skills in mathematics, language, or interpersonal understanding." (p xi)

4. What is fascinating about Rauscher's research is that, to this point, it has only been shown that specific pieces of music by Mozart elicit this type of improvement in visual/temporal reasoning evidenced in the subjects of this trial. Testing with a large variety of musical pieces, from different cultures and eras would, in my mind be a time and energy consuming, but nonetheless necessary task, involving musicians, musicologists, and psychologists in a multi-disciplinary effort. In the cases where certain other pieces of music create the same positive test results (or ones that produce an improvement in another area of intelligence) the commonality of musical patterns could be explored to further understand the codes which open these doorways within the brain.
5. As well as TPR, there is also the exciting new Gesture Approach developed by Maxwell (1999).

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Alice Weinrib

## Just Published!

The following new publications for and about second language teaching have been selected from the recent acquisitions of the Library of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). To facilitate access, entries have been placed into broad subject categories.

### CLASSROOM MATERIALS/ CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

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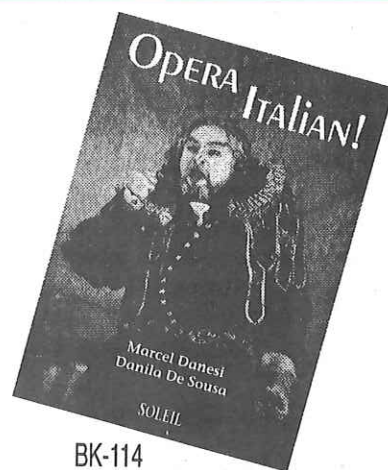
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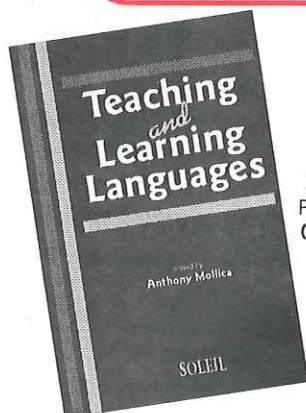
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