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## Light Reading for Intermediate ESL Students: *Adult ESL students react enthusiastically to “teen romances”*

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This is a report of an abrupt change in student attitudes when methodology changed. The author of this paper was teaching an intermediate level ESL class at a community college in Los Angeles. The students had finished the traditional text assigned by the institution and had four class meetings left. The instructor decided to discuss her own research on free reading, because it had been done with adult ESL acquirers who faced problems that were similar to those faced by these students.

### The Sweet Valley research project

In this research (Cho and Krashen, 1994, 1995a, 1995b), adult female ESL acquirers were introduced to the *Sweet Valley High* series, a genre known as “adolescent fiction” (or “teen romance”). The *Sweet Valley High* books, written at the fifth grade level, were too difficult, as was the *Sweet Valley Twins* series, written at the fourth grade level. Subjects became, however, enthusiastic readers of *Sweet Valley Kids*, written at the second grade level. The result was impressive growth in English vocabulary, self-reports of improvement, comments of friends who were amazed at how the subjects' English had improved, and perhaps most important, a phenomenal increase in pleasure reading. One subject, who had previously done no pleasure reading in English at all, read all 34 *Sweet Valley Kids* books, and many *Sweet Valley Twins* and *Sweet Valley High* books in one year, and had even started to read Danielle Steel and Sydney Sheldon!

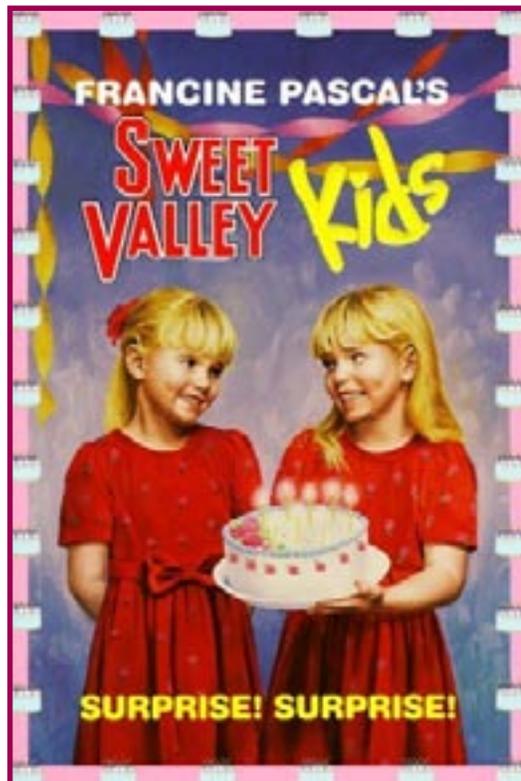
### Introducing light reading

The session began with a brief summary of the research. I was amazed to discover that the students were very interested and wanted to know more, so I read one of my research papers aloud to the class. The students were dead silent, intent on listening to every detail, and many nodded in agreement with the conclusions as I read. I then introduced the *Sweet Valley* books and briefly described the characters and explained the plots.

Few of the students had done any free reading in English, a common situation among students of English as a second language, due most likely to traditional pedagogy, and lack of access to comprehensible, interesting reading (H. Kim and Krashen, 1997). Nevertheless, the students agreed to try reading *Sweet Valley Kids* for the last few classes. Because students were not able to find copies in local

bookstores, I copied a few chapters for use in class.

In the first session, I read aloud from *Sweet Valley Kids* for thirty minutes, stopping when a student seemed to be confused or needed some explanation. Students were clearly more attentive than during the regular class work; they were obviously immersed in the



story. Students even discussed the story during the break.

### Reactions

Some reactions were very intense. One student came to me during break and confessed, “I am happy, I am

so happy, b..b..because I can read and understand the English book. I almost cried, cried. Really, really ...”

Students were asked to continue reading as homework and to select interesting expressions and phrases to share with the class. The most frequently selected expressions were discussed in class. Reactions were enthusiastic; students who had been reluctant to participate raised their hands, willing to share the expressions they had selected. Students were clearly fascinated by some of expressions in the readings, such as “Lila stuck her nose in the air,” “Lila chimed in, and “Lila can’t contain her excitement.”

The second session provided extraordinary evidence for the popularity of *Sweet Valley Kids*: Students were given the option of reviewing the textbook for the upcoming final exam or of continuing with *Sweet Valley Kids*. Despite the pressure of the department-wide grammar final, students unanimously opted to continue with *Sweet Valley Kids*.

In addition, two students borrowed copies from the public library. One student, who was usually very distracted in class, had borrowed extra copies of *Sweet Valley Kids* from the library for his son, who was a first grader. Students continued to be very interested in the story, occasionally giggling and laughing at appropriate moments.

In the last class, I asked for student evaluations of *Sweet Valley Kids*. While some students felt that both *Sweet Valley* and the regular text were valuable, the top five students in the class said that *Sweet Valley* was much more effective than the regular textbook. There was enthusiasm about continuing reading after the class was over.

## Conclusion

Informing students about the benefits of light reading, and then reading excerpts aloud and actually doing it transformed an ordinary class into an involved and exciting class. It also confirmed that creating interest in reading is not all that difficult. We don't need to supply rewards and incentives (see McQuillan, 1997; Krashen, 2003). All that may be necessary are positive reading experiences. Trelease (2001), in fact, suggests that one very positive reading experience, one "home run book" can create a life-long interest in reading, a suggestion supported by studies showing that a surprising percentage of children claim that there was one positive reading experience that got them interested in reading (Von Sprecken, Kim, and Krashen, 2000; Kim and Krashen, 2000).

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There is growing evidence that interest in reading in a second language can in fact be stimulated with the introduction of genuinely interesting reading. In addition to the *Sweet Valley* studies, Constantino (1995) and Tse (1996) documented significant reductions in reading apprehension and increased interest in free voluntary reading after students participated in classes that combined assigned and self-selected reading, and that included instruction in some simple reading strategies. Cho and Krashen (2002) reported substantially increased

interest in reading among EFL students training to be English teachers in Korea after a brief exposure to comprehensible and interesting children's books.

Of course, just because an activity is popular does not mean it is effective. But there is tremendous evidence supporting the efficacy of pleasure reading. Those who read more read better, write better, have larger vocabularies, and do better on tests of grammar (Krashen, 2004).

In the case of language and literacy development, what is good for you also feels good.

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# Junk Food is Bad for You, but Junk Reading is Good for You

by Stephen Krashen and Joanne Ujiie

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The language teaching profession has assumed that students should be restricted to “quality” literature: Advanced, and often intermediate students are required to read the classics, and are rarely introduced to bestsellers, series novels, magazines, or comic books.

The goal of reading the classics is a worthy goal: The study of great literature is the study of philosophy, covering both “ethics” (how are we supposed to live?) and “metaphysics” (what are we doing here?) in a way that it is often difficult to do otherwise. We thus do not disagree at all with the goals of a language program that aims at literature. We disagree with the means used to reach that goal.

In this paper we suggest that an early diet of classical and “quality” literature may be the wrong way to facilitate the eventual reading of classical and quality literature and that encouraging light reading for intermediate students can create the background knowledge, linguistic competence, and desire to read more “serious” literature.

The evidence comes from several sources: We first present studies suggesting that light reading has a positive impact on language and literacy development. We then examine evidence that shows that light reading can serve as

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a conduit to heavier reading; those who read light literature do not typically remain on this diet, but go on to “heavier” reading. In the final section, we discuss the question of just what “quality literature” is.

## Light Reading Promotes Literacy Development

If comics prevent literacy development, as some people fear, we would expect more comic book reading to result in lower literacy scores. This is not what we find. Elley (1994) investigated the relationship between comic book reading and reading achievement by 9 and 10 year olds in 27 countries (Elley, 1994, table 3.1, page 67). Children were asked two questions about comic book reading: How often they read comics per week, on a scale of zero to 6 (the average for all countries was 1.87), and whether they read comics for fun the previous week. The measures were positively correlated ( $r = .78$ ) but did not give identical results.

Elley reported a correlation of  $r = .36$  between reading proficiency and the percentage of children in each country who read comics the week before. (The correlation between reading proficiency and the percentage of children who said they read a book the week before was lower,  $r = .26$ ). The correlation of comic reading with reading proficiency using the other measure, number of times comics were read during the week, was also positive,  $r = .24$ ).

Slightly different results were obtained by considering gender. Elley reported, as have others, that boys were more avid comic book readers than girls. We correlated the relationship between comic book

reading and reading achievement for boys and girls separately (see tables 3.4, p. 72, in Elley, 1994, and table 4.7, page 105 in Purves and Elley, 1994). For boys, the correlation between the amount of weekly comic book reading and reading proficiency was  $r = .33$ , for girls it was  $r = .13$  (Elley did not present separate data for boys and girls for the percentage who read comics last week.) Comic book reading thus seems to be a better predictor of reading proficiency for boys than for girls.

These correlations range from small to modest, but they confirm that comics can have a positive effect and

they are certainly counter to the view that comics are harmful.

## Teen romances

There is evidence that teen romances can have a positive impact on adult second language acquisition. Kyung-Sook Cho (Cho and Krashen, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) worked with a group of women in their 30's, who, despite years of formal (grammar-based) EFL study in Korea and considerable residence in the United States, had made little progress in English. Introduced to the Sweet Valley series, her subjects began with the Sweet Valley Kids series (written for 7 year olds), progressed through Sweet Valley Twins (for readers 8 to 12), and Sweet Valley High (teen-agers), and eventually moved on to adult Harlequins, making substantial gains in vocabulary knowledge.

## Magazines

Rucker (1982) provided junior high school students with two free magazine subscriptions relating to their personal interests for periods of a year and a year and a half. Those who received the magazines made superior gains on standardized tests of reading (but not on a test of "language," i.e. mechanics and spelling). A reasonable interpretation of these results is that the magazines themselves served as valuable input and that they stimulated even more reading. As Rucker points out, magazines are the most "reader interest specific" of all mass media and "may thus consequently be the most valuable as stimuli to reading" (p. 33).

## Light Reading as a Conduit

Many people are fearful that if children engage in "light reading," if they read comics and magazines they will stay with this kind of reading forever, and that they will never go on to more "serious" reading. The opposite appears to be the case. The evidence suggests that light reading provides the competence and motivation to continue reading and to read more demanding texts.

## Comic books

Krashen (2004) presented case histories of individuals, some very prominent, who give comics the credit for being a conduit to literacy. Bishop Desmond Tutu described his father as "very patriarchal," but tells us that "One of the things I am most grateful to him for is that, contrary to educational principles, he allowed me to read comics. I think that is how I developed my love for English and for reading." Jim Trelease (2001) points out that anybody concerned about a possible connection between comic book reading and juvenile delinquency should consider Bishop TuTu's experience.



More and more cases like this are coming to light: Children's book writer Jack Gantos noted, in an article published in USA today ("Teachers are getting graphic, May 3, 2005) that Jean-Paul Sartre "started off reading comic books as a child and that if it wasn't for comic books, he never would have stuck with books." And in a letter to the editor in response to the USA Today article, children's book author Tina McElroy Ansa relates that between the ages of 7 and 11, she "spent the afternoons and summer days immersed in the world of comics, from Lulu and Tubby to Superman, from Little Lotta to Archie and Jughead" and tells us that she knows that "reading comics encourages creativity, imagination, curiosity, more reading – and sometimes writing" (Ansa, 2005).

## An empirical study

Ujjiie and Krashen (1996) asked seventh grade boys about their comic book reading, overall reading, book reading and attitude toward reading. Table 1 shows

**Table 1**

	How often do you read for pleasure?			
	low-income	daily	weekly	monthly/never
heavy comic reader	54% (19)	34% (12)	11% (4)	
occasional reader	40% (32)	28% (23)	32% (26)	
Non comic reader	16% (4)	20% (5)	64% (16)	
middle class				
heavy comic reader	65% (17)	27% (7)	8% (2)	
occasional reader	35% (31)	35% (31)	30% (27)	
Non comic reader	33% (8)	17% (4)	50% (12)	

that those who reported more comic book reading also reported more pleasure reading in general. The results were similar for middle class children and for those who came from low-income families.  
From: Ujiie and Krashen, 1996

Similar results were reported for book reading, and for attitude toward reading, with more comic book reading associated with greater enjoyment of reading. What is especially interesting is that although the middle class boys tend to read more in general, undoubtedly related to the fact that they have far more access to books (Neuman and Celano, 1999), heavy comic book readers from low-income families reported more overall reading than the occasional and non-comic book reading middle class boys.

### An intervention using comics

Dorrell and Carroll (1981) demonstrated that comic books can be used to stimulate additional reading. They placed comic books in a junior high school library, but did not allow them to circulate; students had to come to the library to read the comics. Dorrell and Carroll then compared the circulation of non-comic book material and total library use during the 74 days comics were in the library, and the 57 days before they were available. The presence of comics resulted in a dramatic 82 percent increase in voluntary library use, from about 273 visits per day to nearly 500, and a 30 percent increase in circulation of non-comic material, from about 77 volumes per day to just over 100.

### What do children choose on their own?

Reading professionals take prizewinning books very seriously. Winners of annual awards, such as the Newbery or Caldecott, are announced in reading journals and newsletters, and the books are often put on display at libraries.

Several studies tell us that young readers do not have a strong interest in reading these books and generally ignore what critics regard as “good literature.” We examine three recent studies showing this.

Lamme (1976) examined reading records of 65 middle school children (grades 4-6) over a three year period. She reported that the children “read few Caldecott or Newbury medal winning books and few books on a

standard list of good literature .... Only in the sixth grade was even 5 percent of their reading in medal winning books .... It appears that when these children freely select books, titles considered to be “good” do not comprise a large portion of the selections ...” (p. 24). Of great interest to us, Lamme found no correlation between what children read and their reading test scores: Those who selected “quality” books did not read any better.

Nilson, Peterson and Searfoss (1980) assembled a list of books “highly acclaimed by critics” (p. 530) from the years 1951 to 1975, books that were on various lists of “quality literature” as determined by adults (eg. the list of the Best Books of the Year compiled by the School Library Journal, winners of the Newbery and Caldecott awards). Added to this list were books that were selected by a librarian.

Children’s preferences were determined by ten children’s librarians who were asked to rate the popularity of each book, judging each as a “popular” (book checked out regularly, given two points) or “unpopular” (“I can hardly remember the book.” zero points.) Nilsen et. al. then assembled lists for each year, from 1951 to 1975, containing books published that year along with rankings based on popularity scores.

We present below one of their lists (table 2), containing books that were rated as popular with children, published in 1970. Following each book is the “popularity rating,” from the most popular to the least. Note that the “acclaimed” books are closer to the bottom of the list.  
from: Nilsen et. al., 1980.

1.	Are you there God, it's Me, Margaret (Blume). Score = 20.
2.	Runaway Ralph (Cleary). Score = 19.
3.	A Bargain for Frances (Hoban). Score = 17
4.	Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing (Barrett).Score = 17
5.	* Frog and Toad are Friends (Lobel). Score = 16.
6.	The Snake that Sneezed (Leydenfrost). Score = 16.
7.	Summer of the Swans (Byars). Score = 9
8.	* The Trumpet of the Swan (White). Score = 8.
9.	* In the Night Kitchen (Sendak). Score = 7.
10.	* Sing Down the Moon (O'Dell). Score = 3
11.	* The Marvelous Misadventures of Sebastian (Alexander). Score = 2.
12.	* Knee Knock Rise (Babbitt). Score = 1
	* = acclaimed book

Ujiie and Krashen (2005a) performed a “secondary analysis” of this data using statistical tests and confirmed that Nilsen et. al. were correct: The average rank of the “popular books” (those on the popularity lists but not “acclaimed” by adults) for each year from 1951 to 1975 was higher than the average rank of “acclaimed” books for each year except 1962, that is, for 24 years out of 25. And the difference in the one exceptional year was small (table 3).

Year	Popular	Acclaimed
1975	3.83	9.17
1974	4.5	12
1973	2.5	7.5
1972	5.71	6.5
1971	5	6.57
1970	3.83	9.16
1969	4.8	7.71
1968	3	8.5
1967	5.67	8.14
1966	4.83	8.16
1965	3.25	8.13
1964	5.83	6.2
1963	5.17	6
1962	4.75	4.25
1961	3.83	5
1960	5.44	13
1959	3	7.5
1958	5.83	6.2
1957	3.83	7.33
1956	2.67	6.17
1955	3	6.6
1954	3.4	5.5
1953	4.4	4.67
1952	2.67	5.6
1951	2.5	6

Mean Rank for Popular and Acclaimed Books  
Range = 0 to 20

Application of a statistical test (sign test) told us that the difference in ranks was statistically significant. This test controlled for the year of publication. We also did a t-test comparing ranks for all popular and all acclaimed books for all years combined (table 4).

	ACCLAIMED BOOKS	POPULAR BOOKS
MEAN RATING	6.19	12.38
SD	4.97	5.44
n	126	136

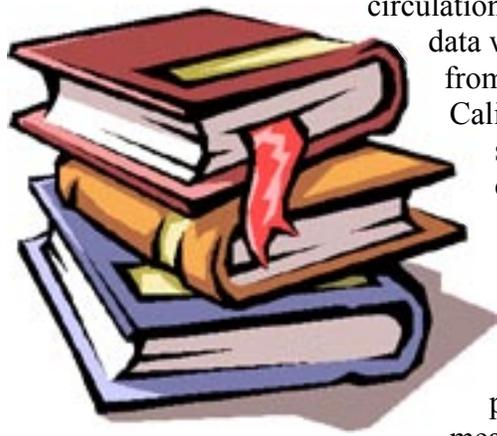
The mean popularity scores were of course significantly different ( $t = 110.7$ ,  $df = 260$ ) far beyond the .0001 level of significance, confirming the results of the sign test, and confirming Nilsen et al’s claim that adult judgments of quality differ from children’s tastes.

Ujiie and Krashen (2005b) examined children’s actual behavior, probing to what extent acclaimed books are taken out of public libraries.

Our list of “acclaimed” books consisted of winners of the Caldecott and Newbery Awards of 2003 and 2004 as well as the runner-ups, known as “honor books.” Interestingly, there was no overlap between the lists.

A list of popular books was obtained from bookweb.org, which provided records of bestsellers from bookstores. Three lists of the top 15 bestsellers were consulted for use in this study: Bestsellers for the month ending January 9, 2004, May 27, 2004, and December 16, 2004. We found that very few, and sometimes no award winners were on any of the bestseller lists.

For each of the bestsellers on the January and May lists, and for each of the prizewinner books, circulation and inventory



data was gathered from six Southern California library systems consisting in total of 127 separate libraries.

Table 5 presents the mean number of bestsellers and prizewinning books checked out from the six public library systems combined. The results from the January and May bestseller lists were nearly identical. Far more bestsellers were checked out than prizewinners. On the average, about 200 copies of the bestsellers were taken out, but only about 35 copies of the average prizewinner were checked out from all six library systems.

Why are some books more popular? The answer is clearly not readability. The mean prizewinner

**Table 5: Mean number of books checked out**

	Total Taken Out	Mean	sd
bestsellers, 1/04, n = 15	3079	205.3	161
bestsellers, 5/04, n = 15	3116	207.7	159.4
Caldecott winners, n = 8	213	26.6	25.1
Newbery winners, n = 8	327	40.9	31.3

sd = standard deviation

readability (Flesch-Kincaid Readability Formula), in fact, was actually lower than the readability level of popular books.

A possible implication of these results is that children don't know what is best for them. Another is that Newbery and Caldecott judges have different standards than the real audience of children's and adolescent literature.

In a third study aimed at revealing children's preferences, Ujiie and Krashen (2002) asked fourth and fifth graders if they had ever had a "home run" book experience, a reading experience that got them

*"One's first book, kiss, home run, is always the best" Clifton Fadman (Trelease, 2004, p.136)*

interested in reading. <sup>1</sup> All 266 children attended a school in which 74% were considered low income and received free or reduced price lunch. All were native speakers of English or considered fluent in English. The question asked was simple: Was there one book or experience that first interested you in reading? If the answer was "yes" we asked the children to give the title of the book or tell us about the experience. In agreement with previous studies (Von Sprecken, Kim and Krashen, 2000; Kim and Krashen, 2000), most children (82%) identified a "home run" book.

As in other studies, children named a wide variety of home run books. Very few titles were selected by more than a handful of students. The champion home run book was Harry Potter (19), followed by Goosebumps (11), the Three Little Pigs (11), Dr. Seuss (6), Animorphs (5), Scary Stories (5) and Winnie the Pooh (5). What is of interest here is that none of these home run books ever won a Newbery, Caldecott or BlueBonnet (Texas) award. In fact, three of the children's home run books (Harry Potter, Goosebumps, and Scary Stories) were on the list of the

100 most challenged books of 1990-1999.

(see [www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/top100bannedbooks.html](http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/top100bannedbooks.html))

These consistent results suggest that if we push "literature" we will be fighting against readers' natural tendencies, but if we facilitate light reading, we will be encouraging a tendency that is already there. <sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, for many potential readers, what they like to read is not easily available. <sup>3</sup>

### **This paper has attempted to make the following points:**

- (1) Light reading promotes literacy in general
- (2) Light reading leads to heavier reading, that is, light reading serves as a conduit for heavier reading
- (3) Young readers tend to ignore books that adults think are "quality" literature.

Second language and foreign language education has made no serious attempts to encourage light reading. This is probably due to several barriers. One is a lack of access to such reading material. Another is that there is no obvious means of paying for them, other than from the teacher's own pocket. Still another barrier is the lack of an obvious mechanism to fit light reading into current programs.

We suggest establishing a firm place for light reading in the curriculum. This place, once established, can also justify funds for the purchase of light reading material. A sheltered popular literature class, to be taken after the beginning level but before the "serious study of literature" might be the place for light reading.

In a sheltered popular literature class, foreign and second language students would be introduced to "ordinary" and popular reading material (Krashen, 1998), presented as "literature," that is, as a means of discussing philosophical issues as well as gaining a deeper familiarity with other cultures. A sheltered popular literature class will also familiarize students with what kinds of light reading are available, and will, we hope, encourage the establishment of a light reading habit, one that will continue after the class ends.

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We should point out, however, that while we predict progress from “light reading” and a transition to heavier reading, there is no guarantee that all readers will go on to what some people define as “quality” literature. Research, including our own, shows that officially designated “quality” literature is rarely popular: Award-winning books do not usually make bestseller lists. Nell (1988), in fact, has questioned the basis for adult judgments of literacy merit, reporting that judgments of literacy merit were positively correlated with judgments of passage difficulty or a measure of complexity (the “Fog index”). His conclusion was that for the judges in his study, “the best medicine tastes the worst” (p. 160). The result held for several different groups, including librarians, university students and university teachers.

We predict, however, that readers will arrive at books that are right for them that they find interesting and that meet their needs.

### **Post-script: Series books**

What struck us in examining lists of books that children truly like to read (bestseller lists, the homerun book list) is that a large percentage of books were “series” books, that is, books that were part of a continuing series with identical characters and a continuing storyline. On the January 9, 2004 bestseller list, 11 out of 15 were series books or at least part of a trilogy (Artemis Fowl, Harry Potter, Unfortunate Events, Captain Underpants, Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, Amulet of Samarqand). On the May 27, 2004 list, five of the 15 were series books. Note also that the 1970 bestseller list (table 1) contains a number of books by very popular authors (Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, EB White).

Our evidence confirms the results of previous studies showing the value of series books: As noted earlier, Cho (Cho and Krashen, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) reported great success with adult second language acquirers of English using the Sweet Valley Series, and Cho, Ahn and Krashen (2005) reported increased enthusiasm in English for fourth grade EFL students in Korea after reading books from the Clifford series.

Series books have obvious advantages, thanks to the familiar background knowledge, setting, characters, and the style of the writer. Series books are thus a form of “narrow reading.” Krashen (1981) has argued that narrow reading; reading focused on one topic,

and/or by one author, <sup>4</sup> is very good for language acquisition, because texts have a good chance of being interesting and comprehensible.

An obvious question that can be raised about narrow reading is whether it will allow students to develop the kind of competence they need to read several different kinds of academic texts. Is narrow reading, and light reading in general, enough? An interesting hypothesis is that enough reading in any genre will suffice to prepare a reader for demanding academic reading and for “serious” literature: Although there are clearly different styles of prose, there is also considerable overlap among styles (Biber, 1986): So-called narrative style has, for example, some, but not all of the characteristics of formal, expository prose. Thus, reading novels will not provide the reader with the ability to read all academic prose, but it will provide the reader with at least some of the features of this style, which will make reading academic prose more and more comprehensible. Someone who has read 100 Goosebumps and Fear Street novels will have a much easier time with a history text than someone who has not.

### **Notes**

1. Trelease (2001) introduced the concept of a “home run” book; a reading experience that readers claim stimulated their initial interest in reading. The idea of a home run book comes from an observation made by Clifton Fadiman: “One’s first book, kiss, home run, is always the best” (Trelease, 2001, p. 136).
2. For evidence that pushing the classics too early can result in potential readers losing the taste for reading, see Carlsen and Sherrill, 1988.
3. Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) reported that school and classroom libraries typically did not carry much of what the children said they liked to read (comics and scary stories). This is an especially serious problem for students from low-income families who often have no other source of reading material. Worthy et. al. reported that “teachers who had such materials usually used their own money to buy them or asked students to donate their used books” (p. 23).
4. Lamme (1974, 1976) reported a positive correlation between reading achievement and reading books by “known authors.”

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## The Robustness of Extensive Reading: Evidence from Two Studies

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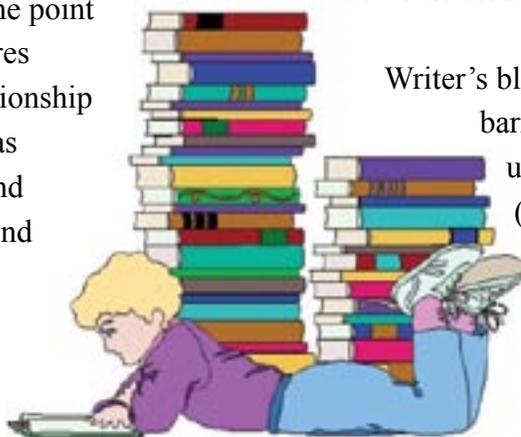
This paper describes two studies that are very different in design, but that come to a similar conclusion: Recreational reading is a good way to increase competence in English as a foreign language. The first study was correlational, in that information was gathered at one point in time and statistical procedures were used to discover the relationship among different factors, such as literacy behaviors, attitudes, and writing performance. The second was experimental in that it involved a group of students that had a special treatment (extensive reading) and was compared to another group that did not.

### Study One

The correlational study was part of a series of studies intended to measure the impact of writing apprehension and writer's block on writing quality. Writing apprehension can be considered an affective barrier to writing. In many studies, the Writing Apprehension Scale (WAS), created by Daly and Miller (1975a,b) has been used to measure writing apprehension. This questionnaire includes questions about writing enjoyment (e.g. "I look forward to writing down my ideas"), fear of evaluation ("I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be

evaluated."), and self-evaluation ("I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.") In a series of studies, Daly and Miller reported that scores on the WAS were related to various measures of writing performance with native speakers of English, and also reported that writing apprehension is most likely to develop via negative past experiences, especially from teachers' low expectations, and excessive error correction.

Lee (1996, 2001, 2002), Lee and Krashen (1997), and Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999) have shown that the WAS is a valid and reliable tool for measuring EFL students' apprehension toward English writing (as well as Chinese writing), but whether apprehension leads to lower writing performance has not been conclusively demonstrated.



Writer's block can be considered a cognitive barrier to writing and has been measured using the Writer's Block Questionnaire (Rose, 1984), which included questions related to the experience of being unable to write (e.g. "At times, I sit for hours unable to write a thing"), self-evaluation of writing ability (e.g. "I've seen really good writing, but my writing doesn't match up to it."), writing enjoyment (e.g. "Writing is a very unpleasant experience for me."), difficulties in composing (e.g. "I'm not sure, at times, of how to organize all the information I have collected for a paper.), and an unwillingness to delay editing (e.g. "Each sentence I write has to be just right before I'll go on to the next."). Although there is some overlap with the WAS, the focus of this questionnaire is cognitive, that is, it considers writing block to be the result of an inefficient composing process.

This study was designed to determine the impact of writing apprehension and writer's block on writing performance in English as a foreign language. To make sure relevant predictors were included that could affect

the results, I also examined the impact of recreational reading, writing practice, and attitudes toward reading and writing instruction. There is overwhelming evidence that those who read more write better (Krashen, 2004). Research has failed to support the common-sense hypothesis that writing frequency was related to writing quality (Krashen, 2003, 2004), it was decided to include a measure of writing frequency, however, because of the popularity of this assumption. Research has also failed to support the hypothesis that formal instruction is useful in improving writing (Krashen, 2003, Elley et al 1976), but measures of writing instruction were also included because of the wide-spread assumption that instruction is effective.

*Those who said they read more did significantly more leisure writing in English, and the amount of recreational reading done was the only significant predictor of writing performance.*

This model hypothesizes that (1) writing apprehension and writer's block are related to each other; (2) both writing apprehension and writer's block are related to writing performance (more apprehension and greater blocking mean lower quality writing); (3) more free reading is related to more writing (those who read

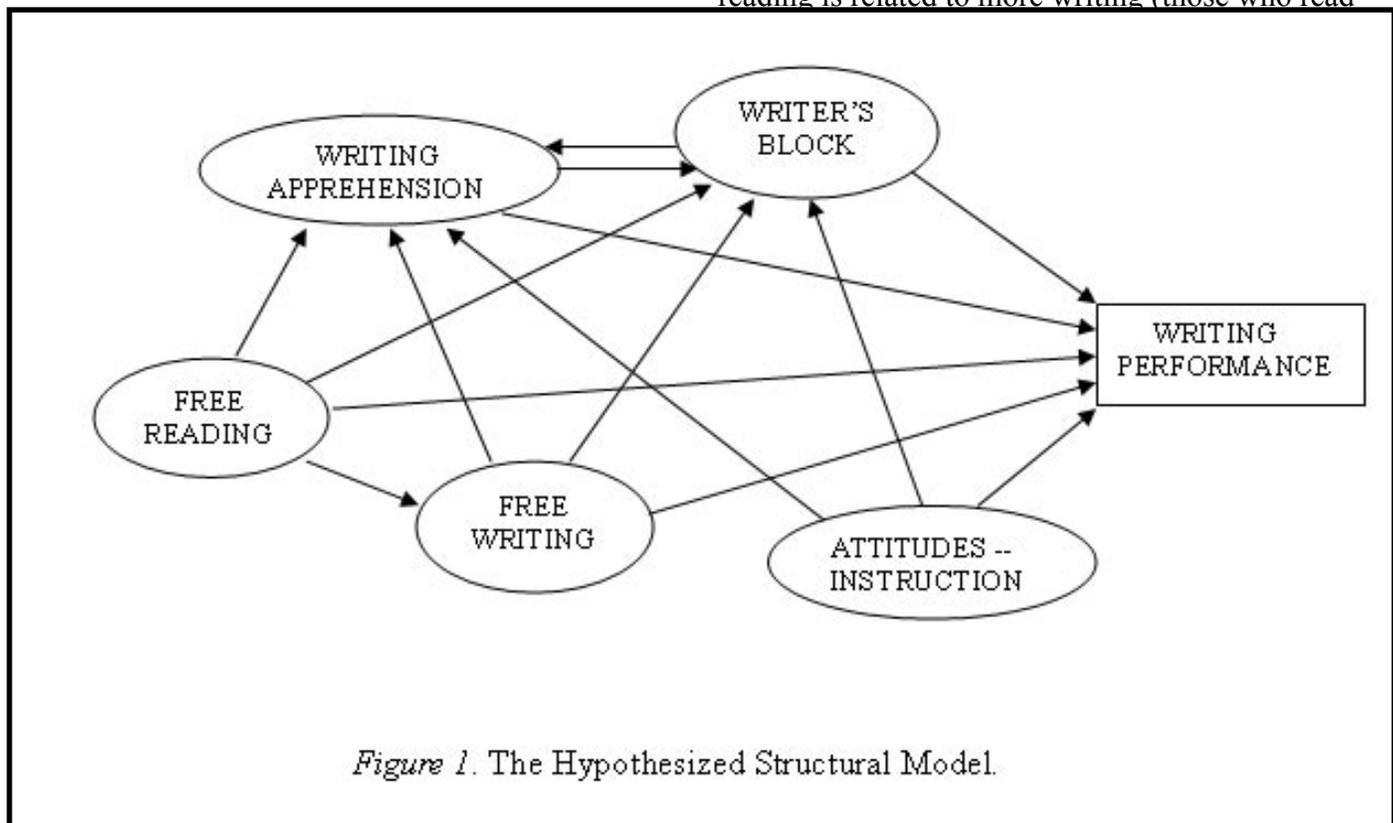


Figure 1. The Hypothesized Structural Model.

### The Method, the Measures, and the Subjects

As noted above, this study was correlational, but it utilized the most sophisticated correlational tool available, structural equation modeling (SEM). In SEM, researchers are able to test whether the data is consistent with predicted relationships among the variables. The SEM used here was as follows:

more will write more); (4) more instruction is related to better writing; (5) free reading, instruction and writing will reduce writing apprehension and writer's block.

Two hundred seventy university students in Taiwan participated in the study. All were taking an English writing course. Subjects filled out Chinese language versions of the WAS and Writer's Block survey. In

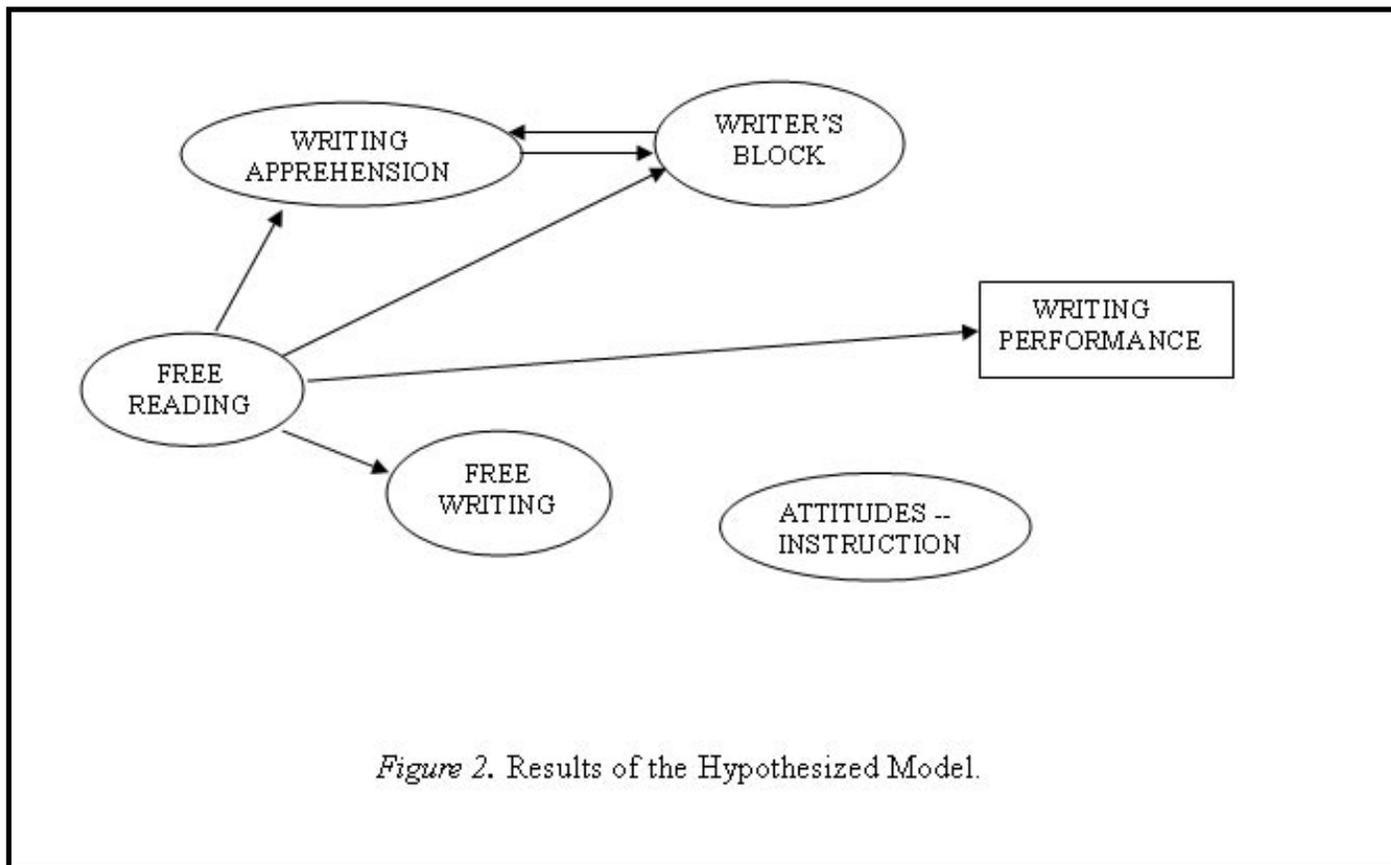


Figure 2. Results of the Hypothesized Model.

addition, subjects filled out a questionnaire designed by the author that probed how much reading and writing subjects did in English, and their views on instructional activities that may or may not be helpful for their English writing. Questions probing reading frequency included “I read in English for pleasure,” “I visit the library or check out books (for outside reading).” Subjects indicated whether they engaged in these activities “almost always, often, sometimes, occasionally, or almost never,” with points assigned from 1 to 5. Questions probing writing frequency included “I have regular mail exchanges in English with foreign pen pals,” and “I keep a diary and/or journal in English.” Questions related to instructional activities included student opinion of the effectiveness of both reading and writing instruction, e.g. “analyzing the grammar and syntax of a text,” and “teachers comments and error correction.”

Subjects were also asked to write a short essay with a 40-minute time limit. The time limit was imposed in order to induce a certain amount of apprehension so that the ability to write under some strain could be seen. (For details and the actual questions used, as well as the method of rating the composition, see Lee, 2005).

***No other studies of anxiety and blocking have produced such results, and the reason is obvious. None have considered the role of reading.***

The results were startling: the only clear winner was recreational reading. Those who said they read more did significantly more leisure writing in English, and the amount of recreational reading done was the only significant predictor of writing performance.

In agreement with previous research, neither the amount students wrote nor their attitudes toward instruction were significant predictors of writing. In addition, more free reading was related to lower writing apprehension and less writer’s block.

Lee (1996) also found a significant relationship (also using SEM analysis) between reading and writing apprehension in Chinese as a first language.

To summarize, the goal of the project was originally to determine the impact of writing apprehension and writer's block on writing proficiency. I found, however, that neither predicted writing proficiency, and that recreational reading emerged as the only significant predictor of writing ability. This result is especially important because of the use of SEM: even when we take other possible factors into consideration, reading emerges as the only winner. In addition, more reading meant more writing, lower apprehension, and less blocking.

No other studies of anxiety and blocking have produced such results, and the reason is obvious. None have considered the role of reading.

## The Second Study

As noted earlier, the second study was experimental. Recreational reading has been put to the experimental test many times and it has done well: Students who participate in in-school free reading programs, such as sustained silent reading, do at least as well as comparison students in traditional classes, and often do better.

Studies have begun to clarify the conditions that help ensure success in in-school free reading: (1) Programs that last longer than one academic year are more effective (2) students read more when there is more access to interesting books and (3) supplementing reading with writing or writing combined with correction does not increase the effect of reading. (Mason, 2004; Krashen, 2004). It has also been suggested that SSR is more effective when it is done a little each day, rather than in a large time-block once a week (Pilgreen, 2000).

This study examines the impact of extensive reading under less-than-optimal conditions: Students read

for only 12 weeks, students had access to a limited amount of reading, were asked to write summaries of what they read, and their in-class reading took place only once a week. In addition, it is likely that the students were not serious about English class. The study took place in the second half of a year-long course; the first semester was devoted to viewing films with Chinese subtitles. For obvious reasons, a new instructor was brought in for the second semester, this researcher.

<b>Results of Study 2</b>		
	<b>cloze</b>	<b>vocabulary</b>
Reading Group	46.39	116.24
Traditional Comparison	43.32	114.42
Vocabulary Emphasis Comparison	47.92	120.14
<i>All means adjusted for pre-test differences</i>		

These conditions were not set up on purpose: they were a result of practical constraints. Nevertheless, the situation offered an opportunity to see how robust recreational reading is, and to determine if it is worthwhile to utilize a recreational reading approach when the situation is not optimal.

There were, however, conditions present that should enhance the effect of reading: Students were taught language acquisition theory and were presented with the research evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of reading. This was done to help them understand the process they were going through. In a previous study of Taiwanese students, students reported that they found this kind of information to be helpful and interesting (Lee, 1998).

## Subjects and Measures

Subjects were first-year university students at National Taipei University in Taiwan, 65 in the experimental (recreational reading) group and 38 in each of two

comparison groups. Subjects had studied English formally for six years. All were students in a required freshman English class, and none were English majors.

Students in the experimental group, the group that did recreational reading, were provided with 215 graded readers, books written for students of English as a second language. This is not a lot. It amounts to about three books per student. Students were also encouraged to read their own books if they did not find interesting or appropriate material in the classroom collection, but only one student did this.

The class met once a week for three hours over a 14-week period, but because of the midterm and final exams, students actually read only for 12 weeks. Approximately one hour and 40 minutes of each class was devoted to reading; students were also required to read at home at least three hours per week, and recorded how much they read. Students were also required to write a short summary or response to what they read in either Chinese or English. One hour of each three hour class session was devoted to language acquisition and reading theory, which included the research evidence showing the efficacy of reading.

The reading group was compared with two different comparison groups. One comparison group used a textbook and did traditional reading comprehension and writing exercises. It was, in other words, a “regular” English class. The other comparison group was unusual for two reasons: They did some recreational reading outside the class (but no record of the reading was kept), and the instructor of the second group also devoted a great deal of class-time to vocabulary instruction. Neither comparison class did any grammar study.

Students were given a cloze test constructed by Beniko Mason at the beginning and end of the

semester, the Nation Vocabulary test, and those in the reading group also filled out a questionnaire at the end of semester.

## The Results

The reading group made significantly better gains on the cloze test than the traditional comparison group (in fact, the comparison group did not make any significant gain at all on the cloze test). The reading group also made better gains on vocabulary, but the difference was not statistically significant.

The second comparison group, the group that did so much extra work on vocabulary and also did at least some outside recreational reading, made the best gains on both tests, but were not significantly better than the readers on the cloze test, and the difference between this group and the readers on vocabulary fell just short of statistical significance. This comparison group did especially well on parts of the test that contained less frequent words, words that were not contained in the graded readers that the reading group read.

I present here the most relevant and interesting results of the questionnaire given to the class that did self-selected reading. In one question, students were asked how the class could be made more effective. Only five students out of the 65 suggested grammar instruction. Many recommended either literature classes (analysis of stories = 21) or book discussions (n = 9). The most popular suggestion was increasing the number of books available (n = 27).

Students were also asked if the books made available were interesting. Only 18.5% of the students said that the books were genuinely interesting, but only two (4%) found them dull. The rest said the books were moderately interesting.

In response to another question, 38 students said they

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would continue to read to improve their English; only one said she would not and 26 were unsure. Eighty percent said that the summary writing was boring and unnecessary.

## Discussion

This is a study that appeared to be doomed to failure. Subjects were not particularly motivated, had only a modest supply of books available, books that they did not find particularly compelling, were forced to write summaries, which they found boring, and the study was short-term. Nevertheless, the readers did better than one comparison group on the cloze test and did not differ significantly from the other group. The vocabulary-emphasis comparison group did best on less frequent words, words not contained in the materials read by the reading group.

The results of this study are consistent with previous reports of the efficacy of using graded readers (Mason and Krashen, 1997), and with the desirability of sharing language acquisition and reading theory with students (Lee, 1998). It was also shown that students of English as a foreign language can improve without producing language, without form-focused activities, and without being tested on what they read.

Although one comparison group did slightly better than the reading group on vocabulary, there is good reason to prefer reading to direct instruction, even when conditions are not optimal. The readers clearly made adequate gains. Also, it is unlikely that students will continue to engage in reading comprehension and vocabulary exercises to improve their English after the EFL program ends. It is, however, likely that students will continue to read if they have access to interesting material; recall that many students said they would continue to read, and when asked for suggestions for improving the course, recommended more books and “literature study.” And if they continue to read, they will certainly read texts with more infrequent vocabulary.

Finally, readers get much more from reading than vocabulary and grammar, and reading is a tremendous source of pleasure. Thus, extensive reading may be a better bet if we are concerned with long-term effects and more than modest differences on performance on vocabulary and cloze tests.

## Conclusions

As noted in the introduction to this paper, the two studies were done with very different methodologies, yet arrived at the same conclusion. They join an impressive body of research confirming the power of reading (Krashen, 2004), and add to this literature by confirming the efficacy of reading with acquirers of English as a foreign language controlling for writing apprehension, writer’s block, frequency of writing, and instruction, and by confirming that recreational reading in school can be effective even when conditions are less than perfect.

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*“Children have become faceless student numbers computer-matched to student scores, individuals being forced into the same mold with no recognition of their differences. School is monotonous drill instead of the creative, exciting, stimulating environment that it should be.”*  
—Sherrie Bjurstrom, longtime Ohio teacher, 5/2/05

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# TEACHER TO TEACHER

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## ANOTHER WIN FOR HARRY POTTER: *More Evidence of the Value of Free Reading*

By Bryce Hedstrom

For years Dr. Stephen Krashen has extolled the benefits of free voluntary reading, allowing the reader's interest to drive him forward in literacy. In study after study his results have indicated that reading is the fastest and surest way to learn language. Krashen's theories have always appealed to me intuitively and I have read many of his books, but I had never witnessed the phenomenal power of reading to develop language first hand until I met Roberto Ortega.

When he was twelve years old, Roberto Ortega came to the United States from Lagunillas, Zulia, Venezuela. He lived in Lakewood, Colorado for one year and went to middle school there till August of 2002, when he went back to Venezuela for the 2002-2003 school year. He returned to the U.S. in August of 2003 and was enrolled as a 9th grader at Roosevelt High School in Johnstown, Colorado. In September of that year he was given the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey. As measured by the survey, he knew enough English and he was not required to take ESL classes. Many English language learners do not reach this level after 5 or more years of study in ESL classes. How did Roberto learn English so quickly?

He attributes his rapid learning of English to reading done during his first year in the United States. But how did he manage to read in a language he claimed he barely knew? Roberto was briefly in my ESL class last year and this school year he was in my AP Spanish class. Through his essays and those of his

older brother in AP, I began to learn parts his story and was intrigued to find out more. His class essays always indicated that Roberto believed that he has learned English rapidly and thoroughly simply by reading the Harry Potter books. I wanted to find out the details, so I interviewed Roberto to find out his story:

**Did you know much English when you first arrived here?**

No. I only knew how to say ‘Hi’ and ‘I want to go to...’ They don’t teach you very much English over there.”

**So you didn’t speak English in your home in Venezuela?**

No, never. Nobody knew how to speak English except my father, but he didn’t speak it to us at home.

**Did you have any English classes in Venezuela before you came to the U.S.?**

I had three years of English classes, but they don’t teach you much. You don’t learn from those classes. You just learn simple nouns and stuff like that.

**You have said that you read a lot when you first arrived in the U.S., and you think that it helped you to learn English. What did you read?**

I read all four Harry Potter books. I read the first Harry Potter Book twice, and then I read all of the rest one time each. I didn’t get to read the last chapter of the last book because I had to go back to Venezuela.

**How could you read when you didn’t know the language well?**

Spanish is almost like English. It’s not like it was

Chinese or some language that is very different. I didn’t understand everything at first, but it wasn’t that hard. There were many words that I didn’t know, but I just kept going. I looked for key words, words that looked like Spanish words and I just figured it out.

**But if you didn’t know a lot of the words how did you read? Did you look up words in the dictionary?**

No, I hated to look up words in the dictionary. It was too much work. By the time I had started to read the third Harry Potter book, my mom had bought me a Franklin translator [an electronic dictionary]. You just type in the word. It was faster, so it was easier to look up words. But I still didn’t look up that many words. I wasn’t reading it to learn words. I was reading it because of the story.

*Roberto Ortega came to the United States from Lagunillas, Zulia, Venezuela..... he was given the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey. As measured by the survey, he knew enough English and he was not required to take ESL classes. How did Roberto learn English so quickly?*

**If you didn’t look in the dictionary much, how did you figure out the meaning of words you didn’t know?**

Sometimes if a word kept coming up I would ask my brother.

**But you didn’t ask your brother all the time?**

No. He wasn’t home much, and he would also get mad if I asked him too many words, so I didn’t ask him much.

**Big brothers can be like that. How did your older brother know so much more English than you?**

Because in Venezuela he listened to music in English a lot, he knew the lyrics and he read the words, and so he was ahead of me.

**How much did you read during that year?**

I read about three hours a night, because I didn’t have anything to do. We lived far from the malls and the family did not allow us to go there much so we

couldn't go hang out a lot. There was technology in the house, but my uncle didn't let us use it too often, so I couldn't use it much. We had a TV, but we didn't watch it much. We mostly just played chess and read a lot.

**Why did you read so much?**

I had just arrived here. I had a lot of free time. I didn't have many friends and I didn't speak English.

*Almost every night the family played a Harry Potter game, so I wanted to play the game and I wanted to learn more about it. It made me want to read.*

**Your brother told me that it took you one whole month to read the first chapter of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. Why did you want to read that book so much that you took all that time and effort?**

Almost every night the family played a Harry Potter game, so I wanted to play the game and I wanted to learn more about it. It made me want to read.

**Who were you living with at the time?**

My uncle and aunt and my nephews and my brother. My nephews grew up here, so they did not speak much Spanish; I had to talk to them in English.

**Did you have any ESL classes at the time?**

Yes. I was in 7th grade at Carmody Middle School in Bear Creek [Lakewood, Colorado]. I had a teacher that helped me all the time. It was hard, but it was good. There were just three people in class, but nobody knew how to speak Spanish. There was a girl that spoke Japanese, a boy that was Danish, and a boy from Brazil that spoke Portuguese. That helped because it forced me to speak English. There was a girl from Mexico, but she came in later. I didn't talk to her much.

**What kind of school did you go to when you returned to Venezuela?**

A private school, almost all of the schools there are

private. There are a few public schools, but they are not very good.

**When you went back to Venezuela again did you take any English classes?**

I took an English class—you have to take one there, but it did not help. They are way behind there. I actually lost some English. That year I wasn't studying much. I was just having fun. I didn't think my grades would matter.

**What do you mean when you say the schools in Venezuela are "way behind" in the way they teach English?**

They just use a textbook with fill-in-the-blank answers. They don't speak that much English. It was an easy class. It really didn't help me learn much.

**Have you continued to read on your own at home?**

Sometimes, but not as much now. I read the fifth book in the [Harry Potter] series last year, and my mom has already ordered book number six which is coming out this summer.

**So the Harry Potter books are the main thing you have read? Why?**

I just like the author. It's interesting. I don't know the reason.

Robert's grade level equivalents (& scores, in parentheses) on the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey demonstrate his steady improvement in English:

<b>Table 1:</b>			
	Broad	Oral	Reading/ Writing
9/18/2003	6.6 (3/4)	7.5 (4)	6.1 (3)
4/16/2004	8.6 (4)	10.5 (4)	7.5 (3/4)
4/19/2005	12.0 (4)	11.4 (4)	12.6 (4)

These are amazing results. Some students who are native speakers of English do not have test scores that are this high. Roberto Ortega is an interesting case. He is obviously an intelligent and gifted young man, but perhaps we can learn something from him. How did Roberto Ortega learn English so fast and so thoroughly? Robert's family situation was a perfect storm of language acquisition. Many elements seemingly conspired to teach him English. What can we learn about language acquisition from Roberto's story? It seems to me that we can take away the following ideas:

Boredom isn't all bad. The isolation of his situation drove Roberto to learn more English. He had a lot of time on his hands. He was not allowed to spend a lot of time watching TV and playing video games. He couldn't hang out with friends because he didn't have any and, by his account there was no place to go. He was isolated socially and linguistically. He couldn't even competently participate in the nightly Harry Potter board game with his young cousins. All these elements steered him towards reading.

Access to books matters. Roberto was provided with books that interested him and encouraged to read. Every time he finished another Harry Potter book, he was provided with the next one in the series. Roberto was not setting out to learn English quickly and well. He was reading because he liked it. He kept on reading because the content fascinated him. Robert shows us that an interesting book can compel voluntary learning at a high level.

Reading the right way matters. Roberto didn't interrupt his reading by stopping to ask about or look up every single word he did not know. He didn't break the flow of thought. Having an older brother in the house that spoke a little more English turned out to be a marvelously helpful way to acquire English. Roberto could always ask if he absolutely HAD to know a word, but he normally just kept on reading because he was always taking a chance by asking his brother too many words (big brothers being notoriously impatient). He normally didn't risk the

humiliation and pain of bothering his big brother and just kept on reading the story in spite of occasional words he did not know, but the help was always there if he really needed it.

Motivation matters. Roberto was not trying to test out of ESL. He may have been trying to escape for a few hours a day from a difficult emotional situation. He was engrossed in a story. He wanted to find out about Harry Potter, a character that he could identify with. Reading also empowered him. Almost every evening he could talk about what he was reading. His young cousins had read all of the books in the series and whenever Roberto read a new passage, he

could discuss it at the dinner table and apply his new knowledge of Hogwarts in the nightly board game.

Of course, Roberto had other advantages, and they are

considerable: Although he did not speak highly of it, he had had three years of ESL before coming to the US. Also, he was able to get aural comprehensible input from his nephews, and, coming from a middle-class family, he had the advantages middle class children have: greater school-related background knowledge and more access to print in general. But even with these advantages, his accomplishment is remarkable.

Will all language learners learn as quickly as Roberto Ortega? No. Not many will have the same motivation, time and opportunity. Most will not have the emotional and intellectual wherewithal to keep at it for as long as he did. But language learners can apply the lessons Roberto Ortega has demonstrated to us and those that Dr. Stephen Krashen (a real-life Professor Dumbledore?) has been telling us: access to interesting books, reading for pleasure, and a little motivation can achieve magical results.

(Roberto's comments and test scores appear with the permission of his mother.)

*Motivation matters. Roberto was not trying to test out of ESL. He may have been trying to escape for a few hours a day from a difficult emotional situation.*

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# The Rainbow of Reading

By Amy O'Connor  
The Colorado Springs School  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

After attending Jason Fritze's presentation at the Spring CCFLT ([www.ccfllt.org](http://www.ccfllt.org)), conference in Denver my colleague Ali Eustice and I were energized and motivated to implement his Rainbow of Reading project. Jason didn't have to convince us about the merits of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and the comprehensible input it provides. Our students at The Colorado Springs School had been participating in a FVR program once or twice a week for years. For the most part, they loved to read, and almost everyone enjoyed our reading to them on Día de Kinder. In his Spring presentation, Jason not only touted the benefits of reading comprehensible material, he outlined a project he had his students create at the end of every semester. In the Rainbow of Reading project, the students created a short presentation of two to five minutes describing one of their favorite children's books. The students' task was to communicate the story in Spanish in their own words in order to entice the other readers to read their book. The students were encouraged to narrate rather than producing memorized speech, as well as to use their creativity to produce props that would enrich their segment and make it even more comprehensible to their peers. Jason not only provided information about how to implement the project but also referred teachers to his website where we could download documents to be used in the project, including an intro sheet, a rubric, and sheet that the audience would fill out the day of the presentations. ([www.comprehensibleinput.com](http://www.comprehensibleinput.com))

The day I introduced the project, we discussed it in detail, including the rubric by which students would be evaluated as well as interim deadlines for storyboards. Students asked questions about the project and the rubric until they understood what a stellar presentation would be as determined by the criteria outlined on the rubric: accuracy, fluency,

pronunciation, content, and creativity. Reaction to the intro of the project in my classes was varied. Some students were very excited and knew immediately which book they would present to the class. Other students, even some who loved to read, simply wanted the usual semester test. In order to help the students organize their presentations and so that students could not procrastinate, a deadline was set for storyboards. On the storyboards students outlined the plot of the book through drawings and text, in their own words, which simplified the plot.

As with any project, students put forth varying amounts of effort, but in the end most students got excited about the project and had a lot of fun creating their presentation, either on video or live for the class. My sixth graders got especially excited about the project, and the best of the group produced extremely creative segments where they narrated for almost five minutes with impressive ease as well as great accuracy and pronunciation for beginning Spanish speakers. Our sixth graders have Spanish every day for 45 minutes. Most of them had Spanish in Kindergarten through fifth grade once or twice a week for 30 minutes. In links from this article ([click on thumbnails below to see the presentations](#)) you will find the best

presentations from my classes this Spring. They are all sixth graders who were here for at least some of grades 1-5. Sarah, Nik, and Eleanor performed live for the class, but the video camera was not working that day so Nik and Eleanor came in at recess to re-perform while Sarah was brave enough to present for my AP Spanish class. Thanks so much to Jason Fritze for his inspiration as well as the practical tools to implement the Rainbow of Reading project. Don't miss the chance to see him present at a conference.

## Please Rock the Babies

### *Casa Hogar, Puerto Vallarta*

by Karen Rowan

Our travels this year landed us in an orphanage in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. As we left, head over heels in love with dozens of children, we promised to find a way to let others know about them. Casa Hogar Maximo Cornejo Quiroz was



founded in 1993. It has always been its purpose to rescue orphaned, abandoned and abused children. Casa

Hogar cares for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs, in a loving, structured atmosphere.

As of June, there were 72 children and babies there.

Some are left by their mothers; some have been taken away by social services for abuse; some are of drug-addicted mothers who may come back for them; some



are visited on weekends and holidays by relatives who simply can't afford to keep them. Some children are born there and one boy has spent 12 years there. These children and babies come from critical



situations due to extreme poverty, abandonment, abuse and loss of parents. The goal of Casa Hogar is to promote the integral

development of the child and make him or her a productive member of society despite his or her situation. The following aspects are addressed: nutrition, health, psychological needs, religious teachings, basic education, and physical education.



A typical day goes like this. 5:30 AM, the children that go to secondary school get up, get dressed, have breakfast and get ready to go to school. 6:30 AM, the elementary-aged children get up, get

ready and have breakfast. 7:00 AM, the kindergarten-aged kids get ready for school and have breakfast. The infants are taken care of constantly in a separate room.

Children age 2-4 are in another separate area of the property. Locked gates separate the older children from the youngest children. At 1:30 the children come back for lunch.



There are some children who can't go to school because they have never been registered and have no papers. There are lawyers trying to work on this, but everything takes a long time. There are student teachers that come there off and on to do community services. On Wednesdays some members of The Friendship Club come and they play with the children.

Aurora and Rocio are in charge. Several other women come to take care of the children during the day but return to their own homes at night. The two oldest girls sleep



in the rooms of the younger children to supervise. The children are given a number and their shoes have a number and when they take them off they have to be put back where the number is. The children shower before they go to bed,



so in the morning they go to the clothes room and there is someone there to hand them some clothes. The clothes belong to everyone. No one has their own clothes. The toys are numbered and kept track of. Each Barbie outfit has a number and has to be checked out.



A prize is given to the person who takes the best care of the toys.

#### **What can you do?**

We visited Casa Hogar in December and January. It wasn't until our second visit that we learned that we were just some of the many visitors full of good intentions that donate toys for the children. On our second visit we brought 100 books, increasing their library by 1000% and we asked what else they really needed. Primarily, they need monetary donations and food.

There is an excess of toys and not enough food, soap, shampoo, tooth brushes, toothpaste, clothing, household supplies or vitamins. (Please, no expired items or those needing batteries or requiring assembly or repair.) Donations are 100% tax deductible.

Their bank account is HSBC account number 0363088389 Mexican Pesos. For dollars it is Banco Norte account number 0128901050.



They need people to play with the children and hold the babies. Visitors are welcome between 11 AM and 1PM and between 4PM and 6PM. Call first 322 221 1908 and ask for Aurora or Rocío. (No email access. No web site. No Internet access. No computer.) Casa Hogar is located on the road below the highway just before the Corona Factory, past the airport going north.

Though it does receive some financial assistance from the local DIF, it is minimal. Hotels donate food from time to time, as do restaurants, businesses and individuals, but there is always a need for more. This time of year is the worst. The savings become depleted as the low season drags on and Casa Hogar's caretakers do not foresee much improvement until



Canadian and American tourists -and part-time residents- return in December. They are the main source of funds for this institution.

During one of our two visits this year, we helped get the 2-4 year-olds ready for bed. Ten sets of pajamas. Seven diaper changes. Ten washed faces. Ten babies coaxed to the bedroom with candy. Ten babies with rotting teeth. Ten crying babies in a heap on the floor, their dormitory beds empty because they preferred to fall asleep playing together with their one 17 year-old overnight caretaker on a large rug. Not one was kissed goodnight. Not one was tucked in. There are simply too many children for rocking to sleep to be realistic. Ten times we fell in love. If you're considering a vacation in Puerto Vallarta, consider staying for a while and rocking some babies.

## Multi-Level Classes with TPRS: Unexpected Gains

By Blaine Ray

TPRS, Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling, formerly known as Total Physical Response Storytelling, has changed the way many teach second languages. It continues to grow as teachers continue to experience great success. At a workshop in Denver in April, 2004 I suggested multi-level classes, based on the idea that in a TPRS class, input will be comprehensible to all students, regardless of level.

Meredith Richmond, a Spanish teacher and Department Chair at East High School in Denver, Colorado attended that workshop. Soon after, she approached her principal about the possibility of doing an experimental multi-level class. The plan was to have students from levels one, two, three and four all take Spanish in the same class. To the best of our knowledge, this was the first time such a class had been attempted.

East High School had already been using TPRS as their primary method of instruction for more than six years and they had experienced much higher enrollments in upper level classes, especially from minority students.

To do the experiment, Meredith wrote a letter detailing the class and the experiment to interested Spanish students in the school. A total of 85 students expressed interest. Based on student interest, permission was granted for the department to proceed.

Meredith and other East High teachers attended another workshop in Colorado at the end of September. One workshop participant asked about the “bored superstar” in the TPRS class, meaning the student at the top of the class who is bored by the thorough repetitiveness of TPRS. I turned to Meredith and had her answer the question. If there was ever an opportunity for the “superstars” to be bored, the multi-level class would have been it. In fact, the fourth year students should have been bored stiff because of the constant repetitions that TPRS demands. I was very interested in Meredith’s response, but it shocked me. She said, “I must admit my level four students have made the most progress in the language so far this year.”

I thought that statement was amazing. I felt maybe we foreign language teachers had underestimated the necessity of repetitions in class. If students really are going to gain fluency, maybe they need many more repetitions of the basics than we had previously thought.

A short time later, Meredith faxed me an essay from one of the first year students. It was written with almost no errors. It was amazing a level one student could write with that much accuracy.

At semester Meredith took some ten minute writing samples from her students. All writers were given the same task: to write a story with a character/s who has or had a problem and to resolve it. The stories were graded both on the number of words and on accuracy. She used a scale developed by Joe Neilson based on the AP test. His scale had scores ranging from 1 – 6, with 1 indicating a lack of competence in written expression and 6 indicating very good competence in written expression (See page 29 [\[click here\]](#))

WRITING SCORES	Homogeneous	Multi-level
first year	1.1	2.25
second year	2.4	4
third year	3.6	4.3
fourth year	3.7	4.8

Students in the multi-level classes had accuracy scores of: first year, 2.25, second year, 4, third year, 4.3 and fourth year, 4.8. These scores were compared to a control group of students also taught using TPRS but at the same level in homogeneous groups. In these groups first year students had an accuracy level of 1.1. The second year students had an accuracy level of 2.4; third year students were at 3.6, while fourth year students were at 3.7.

It is interesting to note that the multi-level students were more accurate at every level than their homogeneous counterparts. Also the level one multi-level students were almost as accurate as the homogeneous level two students.

The results were equally impressive in comparing the number of words the multi-level students produced relative to the homogeneous classes. The multi-level students produced an average of 62.75, 84.5, 90.87 and 132.6. At the same time the homogeneous classes were able to produce an average of 28.5, 56.8, 64.29, and 101.

Table 2:		
FREEWRTING NUMBER OF WORDS	Homogeneous	Multi-level
first year	28.5	62.75
second year	56.8	84.5
third year	64.29	90.87
fourth year	101	132.6

At the end of the year Meredith received feedback from students in the class. It is apparent they were pleased with the class since they all signed up for multi-level class two. Their main complaint about the class was that it was too easy. That is an interesting comment since it would be expected that only the top (level four) students would view the class as too easy. Meredith got feedback from most students that indicated the class was too easy. Students couldn't explain why it seemed they learned more yet did it with little effort.

One student wrote, Nathan (level 3) "I came from Hamilton MS where we worked out of text books a lot. I remember a lot more of what I learn in this class."

Natasha (level 1) "In the beginning of the class I had no Spanish and felt very discouraged and frustrated by my lack of vocabulary. However, the repetition and variety of complicated language is very helpful to me now. I think I learned more Spanish than those in regular Spanish 1 classes and I feel my growth was very substantial."

Adrienne (level 2) "I could see how much I learned when I was reading. At the beginning of the year I picked really easy books and couldn't read them. Now I read much more difficult books. The Spanish movies helped my pronunciation."

Kalif (level 2) "I learned a lot of stuff this year! Last year I couldn't say one sentence!"

Ananda (level 3) "I think the pop up grammar helped me. I look at words differently now. I can see what they mean better."

Sydney (level 2) "I knew more than I thought I did. I realized it when I gave my book talk."

Ali (level 4) "I thought it was too easy until I realized how much we recycled words from 3 years ago and how many I actually know. I learned little details this year."

Meredith reported that 17 of the 26 in attendance the day feedback was collected reported (by show of hands) that they felt a change in their abilities in Spanish. They felt they had really learned something. Nine students weren't sure what kind of progress they'd really made.

She said, "From my perspective, I'd say that enduring the initial struggle, emotional and academic, on the part of the "ones" is the toughest hurdle, closely followed by the "fours" anxiety that the class wasn't challenging enough. It was a constant state of worry vs. trust, which isn't the most comfortable teacher posture. I learned a great deal from the process however and look forward to next years' fine tuning."

She went on to say, "I am fascinated by the "disconnection" between success and the perception of success I mentioned earlier. Is it valuable if it's 'easy'? Is it still success? I am going to work on some strategies to help students see their own growth and then trust it. They are firmly rooted in the traditional paradigm which tells them that their growth isn't real or perhaps adequate without looking like a grammar translation model complete

with book, vocabulary lists to memorize and some agonizing grammar lessons."

This is just a start. There are still many more questions than answers, but it does appear that there is a place for multi-level

teaching in the second language classroom. While no system works well with unmotivated learners, this system seems to give the fours the repetitions they need while at the same time give enough input to the beginners to get great strides in their language skills. Hopefully we can learn in the future if this is a valuable way to teach using TPRS. This is not a blanket recommendation for multi-level teaching or for "immersion submersion." In a non-TPRS class or a non-comprehensible input-based class, it is possible that students might be left in a "sink or swim" type of environment. The level one students may be hopelessly confused the majority of the time. This class appears to have been so successful because the multiple levels made guaranteeing comprehensible input the highest priority.

*Nathan (level 3) "I came from Hamilton MS where we worked out of text books a lot. I remember a lot more of what I learn in this class."*

# WRITING RUBRIC FOR LEVELS 1 and 2

by Joe Neilson, Salpoint High School, Tuscon, AZ

Though students write stories all year long, I “formally” assess writing only in the 4th quarter, using the following scale:

## “ADAPTED” AP SPANISH COMPOSITION RUBRICS\* (FOR LEVELS 1 & 2)

- 6** *DEMONSTRATES VERY GOOD COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION*  
Very good to excellent control of elementary grammatical structures\* and common verb tenses. Vocabulary appropriate to level. Occasional second language interference. May have some errors in orthography and other conventions of the written language.
- 5** *DEMONSTRATES GOOD COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION*  
Good control of elementary structures and common verb tenses. Some errors may occur in more complex structures. Vocabulary appropriate to level. Occasional second language interference. May have some errors in orthography and other conventions of the written language.
- 4** *SUGGESTS A BASIC COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION*  
Adequate control of elementary structures and common verb tenses. Frequent errors may occur in more complex structures. Vocabulary appropriate but limited. Occasional second language interference. May have frequent errors in orthography and other conventions of the written language.
- 3-2** *SUGGESTS LACK OF COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION*  
Numerous grammatical errors even in elementary structures. There may be an occasional redeeming feature, such as correct advanced structure. Limited vocabulary; significant second language interference; pervasive errors of orthography may be present.
- 1** *DEMONSTRATES LACK OF COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN EXPRESSION*  
Constant grammatical errors impede communication; insufficient vocabulary; frequent second language interference; severe problems with orthography may interfere with written communication.

\* The “elementary grammatical structures” include (but are not limited to):

- verb/subject agreement
- adjective agreement
- infinitive uses (“quiere\_\_\_”, “tiene que\_\_\_”, “empieza a \_\_\_”, “va a \_\_\_”, “le gusta \_\_\_”, “puede\_\_\_”, etc.)
- reflexive vs. objective pronouns
- flow of verb tenses: present vs. preterite vs. imperfect (only for Level 2 students)

The following scale is based on the grading scale (excellent=A, good=B, fair=C, poor=D, incompetent=F).

LEVEL 1:		LEVEL 2:	
quarter #4		quarter #4	
6	A+	6	A+
5.5	A	5.5	A-
5	A-	5	B+
4.5	B+	4.5	B
4	B	4	B-
3.5	C	3.5	C-
3	C-	3	D
2	D	2	F
1		1	
F		F	

\* These rubrics are based on the College Board AP Rubrics.

## **Pulling Proficiency Out of a Hat... *Magic Tricks Can Be Your Curtain-Opener***

By Judi Mazziotti

Retired Buffalo, N.Y. Public School Montessori and Italian Educator.  
Ritornello, LLC. Director of foreign language materials development and Instructor of Italian.  
Nazareth College, Rochester, N.Y. Italian Language & Arts Camp, Program Leader

**“Uno, due, tre ... abracadabra - la classe dov'è?”  
(This is Italian for “1, 2, 3 ...  
...hey, where's your class?”)**

Usually that's what you're wondering. Where are your precious students?

Have bland expressions gradually masked their bright little faces? With magic you will know they are WITH you.... perched on the edge of their seats - all eyes on YOU!!!

Like Houdini, you can make objects disappear and reappear, change color, and join together in unity. You can put one color in the hat and take another one out; put in a question, pull out the answer; put in dollars and pull out the euro equivalent; put in broken pieces and pull out the repaired whole; put in ingredients and pull out a dessert; put in the reasons for a war and pull out the results.

You can grow a tiny object into a medium-sized and then a giant one right before everyone's eyes; make objects wiggle and dance; from an empty bag pull out a six-foot colored garland, color by color; make a scarf leap from left to right to center in order to teach directional prepositions; grow a flower in an empty pot; pour water into a newspaper without wetting it, pour it out again and drink it; make the sum of two class-selected numbers rise from a deck of cards; create an instant mini-snow storm in your classroom; make an invisible dog bark and run through the room...

and do just about anything else you can think of!

Stephen Krashen, one of the most influential language specialists of the 20th century with 22,700 mentions on the internet as of this moment, insists on “pleasure from the beginning, on obtaining interesting, comprehensible input [in the foreign language classroom] right from the start ... The path of pleasure is the only path...”<sup>1</sup> From these statements, it looks like Dr. Krashen might approve of magic tricks in the classroom, too!

*“The path of pleasure is the only path...”*

*- Dr. Stephen Krashen*

### **Who Needs Magic Tricks?**

“The philosophical basis for the ... [NYS Languages Other Than English Curriculum] rests on the Board of Regents recognition of the diversity of students in New York State, including students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted students, and educationally disadvantaged students, and has made a strong commitment to integrating the education of all students into the total school program.

The standards apply to all students, regardless of their experiential background, capabilities, developmental and learning differences, interests, or ambitions. A classroom typically includes students with a wide range of abilities who may pursue multiple pathways to learn effectively, participate meaningfully, and work toward attaining higher levels of achievement.”<sup>2</sup>

Because of the heterogeneous nature of classrooms found in schools in New York state and all over the country, teachers must find new avenues to reach their students. Magic tricks will now be mandated (just kidding!). Even if they're not mandated, some magic could certainly come in handy.

### **What the Magic Grew**

I started with a silk scarf atop a bag of props twenty-five years ago and have added to it little by little

over the years. The magic grew my program - like Jack's beanstalk. I began as a general elementary classroom teacher, you know - social studies, math, English, science, etc.. But I began speaking Italian and doing magic tricks every afternoon for my 25 mixed ethnicity second graders after their return from lunch. The 'magic' turned it into an Italian program encompassing all 600 PK-8 students in the entire building. One third of them passed the New York State Italian Regents Comprehensive Exam in the eighth grade (typically an exam given in the eleventh or twelfth grades). I was the only teacher for all 600, and I saw them just once or twice per six day cycle.

*Teaching with TPRS opens up the curtain so that our audience is now PART of the production. They hear the message, feel the energy, laugh with us, love with us. The energy they give back to us fills and energizes us, enabling us to love more and share more - with our "audience" and with each other."*  
*Laurie Clarcq, 2003*

Four years ago I won the school a half million dollar federal F.L.A.P. grant. The award was based on the rather extraordinary success of my "lesser-taught" language program that the federal government thought could be used as a model for others. Pretty magical, right?

## **Perfect? Not!**

Most seemed to love Italian and they could pass the tests. I won many teaching honors over the years. Many students continued on with Italian in college. I felt good about these things. But still nagging at me was the fact that the lower quarter or more of the sixth - eighth grade class (my oldest and the only ones who were tested by the state) was very low and nearly impossible to motivate beyond the few minutes of the magic.

During those years another engaging activity was to start a "phrase of the week" arrangement where students got a point for starting a conversation using the established phrase anywhere in the building any time they saw me. 'Hall duty' became an extension

of the classroom. Students would get a point for using the phrase and more points if they lingered and added anything more. The better students were able to compound the phrases into longer conversations. But the others were not. The "phrase of the week" and the occasional magic trick helped ... but not enough.

## **It Was Time to Open the Curtain For All**

So, there I was, up on the "stage" and the kids were in their seats looking interested, but something was missing. I wanted them *all* to be able to weave a paragraph after watching the scarf trick- not just the "stars." Something had to change!

I'm fifty-nine years old and now retired and teaching small groups at home. But I've turned a corner and seemed to have tripped over the missing link- which one? Master teacher Laurie Clarcq opened my eyes with this statement:

"Teaching without TPRS<sup>3</sup> was like speaking to an audience or presenting a play on stage - with the curtain closed. All of our love, energy, and talent soaring out daily to the audience - only to be blocked by this vast, closed, piece of cloth.

'Teaching with TPRS opens up the curtain so that our audience is now PART of the production. They hear the message, feel the energy, laugh with us, love with us. The energy they give back to us fills and energizes us, enabling us to love more and share more - with our "audience" and with each other.'

Laurie Clarcq, 2003

## **How Did I Get the Curtain to Open?**

I attended several TPRS workshops and purchased some exciting DVDs over the years but felt the method wasn't practical for me since none of the materials were in Italian. Still, I was drawn to learn more about TPRS. At my most recent workshop with Blaine Ray (the originator of TPRS) this past fall, he solidified his "circling"<sup>4</sup> technique and convinced me to try

it. That's one of the greatest things about Blaine Ray, he never claims to be an expert but always a learner, just looking for what works. All teachers ask students questions, but the circling technique brings the students to many, many more reps of a word or structure than ever before - hundreds, even. So I thought I'd try it.

There was yet one more facet missing from the "link" I needed so desperately. It was the facet called personalization - not quite the same as individualization. The TPRS technique called "story-asking," involving the entire 'audience' in a cooperative scriptwriting venture and in 'performing,' a simple walking through the script, as well. Personalization is central to Blaine Ray's TPRS methodology and the opposite of any text book or even any set-in-stone magic trick. The students become part of the story. Prior to TPRS, the story (or magic trick) was mine to perform and theirs to watch. What I had needed all along, was to bring the students INTO the story itself.

## Invite Them into the Story

1. Make them comfortable enough to want to approach acquisition. How? -through ample repetitions of target words during the magic trick, by writing new vocabulary on the board with translation, by integrating cognates and pre-learned vocabulary, by using English whenever needed, by doing some TPR and by always checking for comprehension.

2. Fish for details about students' lives through personalized target language questioning and with even more circling. Your sincere interest in what they do and don't do, love and don't love, eat and don't eat, will bring them closer to you. Continue checking for comprehension.

3. Flesh out the magic trick into a story, using the structures or vocabulary focused on in the trick but this time inviting the class to invent and/or describe

the characters and settings, providing details by way of names, numbers, color, size, etc. Encourage bizarre, exaggerated and personalized details. Those stick in the long-term memory best. And continue checking for comprehension.

4. Toss in a celebrity everyone knows - yet one more tie to their personal lives.

5. Think up a problem and a probable solution suggested by the props in the trick and by the structures to be taught. If a better solution is suggested by the class, go with it.

6. And most importantly, give a member of the class -with his/her familiar name and characteristics, a pivotal role in the story!

7. Then, delineate three physical locations within the classroom.

8. Get a couple of students out of their seats and into those three locations. Have them pantomime as you narrate because memories link strongly to movement and to location

*Your sincere interest in what they do and don't do, love and don't love, eat and don't eat, will bring them closer to you.*

## A Sample Story Line Needing Resolution

So, let's take for example learning the directions - "to the right," "to the left," and "in the middle." Let's use the magic trick about the scarf that jumps from right to left to

middle to introduce these structures. We do the scarf trick using minimal new language, always checking for comprehension, making sure the day's vocabulary and structures and any unfamiliar words are on the board with their translations.

Then we ask some personalized questions: what hand do you write with? Do you like sitting on the right or left side of the room? Which side of the bed do you sleep on?

Gather details ... then start the story relating it to your "audience," like this one relating to mine... "There once was a teacher named L2<sup>5</sup>. Student (name). She wondered which way to go through the woods

(students can name the woods). L2 turned left (students asked to name a direction) but there was a large, (or whatever size is suggested by class) green (or whatever color class suggests) gorilla (or other animal class suggests) wearing a Hawaiian shirt (or muscle shirt or Hawaiian skirt, etc.) and so she turned right. There L2 saw a principal telling her to use a textbook ... (or a phone book).

Change is never easy but for this teacher, after many repetitions the message grew louder and clearer ... “Share it! Share the magic! Share it! Share the magic! Share it! Share the magic!”

### **Magic Tricks are Mini-Stories!**

Magic tricks are actual mini-stories - full of comprehensible input. How is that? They have a beginning, middle and an end! They have a crisis ... and a resolution! The tricks are short and concrete. They contain all the visuals and action you need to make the target language comprehensible. They use few verbs and repeat them over and over while testing possible solutions to the problem. And the children are part of it. The audience participates in guessing the outcomes, wondering and predicting, their heart rates elevated...

### **How to Start**

If you’re already using TPRS, the addition of magic is a new way to introduce vocabulary and structures in a comprehensible story context. If you’re not using TPRS, magic can be an exciting addition to your classroom - especially if paired with TPRS’ circling and personalized story-asking.

Where can you find out more about TPRS? Just do a web search or go to [blaineraytprs.com](http://blaineraytprs.com).

Where can you find out more about magic?<sup>6</sup> Hundreds of books, web sites and magic shops. How do you learn a trick? Read the instructions ... there are plenty of highly effective beginner tricks even a child could do. How do you act while doing the magic? Very slowly and dramatically. Look amazed when a trick actually works. Practice in the mirror letting your jaw drop open. When your students start speaking the target language without being asked and your jaw drops open ... you’ll know it worked!

1. Stephen Krashen, “The Delayed Gratification Hypothesis,” *The Language Teacher*, 28(7), 3-7. (2004). for more, see <http://www.sdkrashen.com>.

2. Languages Other Than English: Checkpoint A Resource Guide, New York State Education Department Office of Curriculum and Instruction, 2001, p. 11.

3. T.P.R.S. stands for Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling.

4. In TPRS “circling” means making a positive statement; asking a positive question (requiring a “yes” answer); asking an either/or question; asking a negative question (requiring a “no” answer); asking the same positive question again; restating the same positive statement; asking questions using other varied question-words (what, who, where, when, etc.).

5. Second Language, also called LOTE (Languages Other Than English) or WL (World Language)

6. Google “magic supplies” and also check on e-bay. This October the author will present a workshop demonstrating these techniques at the NYSAFLT Annual Meeting and elsewhere. Support materials for teachers using magic in the classroom will be available this fall at [www.ritornello.com](http://www.ritornello.com).

## *Trabalengua*

<b>Cuando cuentes cuantos</b>	<i>When you tell stories</i>
<b>Cuenta cuantos cuantos cuantas</b>	<i>Count how many stories you count</i>
<b>Cuando cuentes cuantos</b>	<i>When you tell stories</i>
<b>Cuando cuentes cuantos</b>	<i>When you tell stories</i>
<b>Nunca cuantas cuantos cuantos cuantas</b>	<i>Never count how many stories you tell</i>
<b>Porque cuando cuentes cuantos</b>	<i>Because when you tell stories</i>
<b>Nunca cuantas cuantos cuantos cuantas</b>	<i>You never count how many stories you tell</i>

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## List of Spanish Nicknames

SIMPÁTICA- NICE	GUAPA- GOOD LOOKING	BALLENA- WHALE
PESCADO- FISH	GUAPO- HANDSOME	RATONCITA -MOUSEY
REINA -QUEEN	GUAPÍSIMA-BEST LOOKING	RATONCITO -MOUSEY
REY- KING	GUAPÍSIMO- BEST LOOKING	PÁJARA- GIRL BIRD
CARIÑA- LOVE	PRECIOSA -PRECIOUS	ÁGUILA- EAGLE
CARIÑO- LOVE	CIELO- HEAVEN	TIBURÓN- SHARK
CARIÑOSA -CARING PERSON	PRINCESA-PRINCESS	BICHO -BUG
CARIÑOSO- CARING PERSON	CELESTE- HEAVENLY	ARAÑA- SPIDER
CHAMACA -GIRL	MUÑECA- DOLL	CUCARACHA- COCKROACH
CHAMACO -BOY	CIELITO- LITTLE HEAVEN	MONO- MONKEY
CHICA- GIRL	FLACA- SKINNY (GIRL)	MONA- MONKEY
CHICO- BOY	FLACO- SKINNY	OSO- BEAR
CHIQUILLA- LITTLE GIRL	BURBUJA -BUBBLE	OSA -GIRL BEAR
CHIQUILLO- LITTLE BOY	GORDO -FAT	HORMIGA- ANT
CHIQUITA -LITTLE ONE	HERMOSA-BEAUTIFUL	MOSCA- FLY
CHIQUITO- LITTLE ONE	GORDITO- FATTIE	GATA GIRL- CAT
CHULA- CUTE	ENANA- MIDGET	GATO BOY -CAT
POLLO -CHICKEN --	ENANO -MIDGET	
CHULITA -CUTIE	SONRISA -SMILE	<b>NOMBRES MAS NORMALES:</b>
ZORRO- BOY FOX	CIPOTE- LITTLE GIRL	
BONITA- PRETTY	COMPÁ -BUDDY	LOLA
CHULO -CUTE (BOY)	LOCA- CRAZY	LOLITA
GRINGA -FOREIGNER	LOCO -CRAZY	PACO PEPITA
GRINGO -FOREIGNER	CALABAZA -SQUASH	PEPITO
CHAPARRA- SHORTY	MANO -"BRO"	BETO
GALLO -ROOSTER	PELÓN- BALDY	CHUY
BAJITA- LITTLE SHORT GIRL	VATO -DUDE	CHITA
ROJO- RED GUY	CONDORITO -LITTLE CONDOR	CHITO
NENA -BABY	PÁJARO -BIRD	JESUS
NENO- BABY	PEZ -FISH	PONCHA
MORENA -DARK	CARACOL -SNAIL	PONCHO
LORENZO -DAGWOOD	LEÓN -LION	CECILIA
LINDA -PRETTY	TIGRE TIGER	TEVITO
TRIBILÍN-GOOFY	CULEBRA SNAKE	
LINDÍSIMA- BEST LOOKING	RATA RAT	
PATO -DUCK	RATÓN MOUSE	

## SILLY FRENCH NICKNAMES

ALLEMANDE - GERMAN	ESCARGOT - SNAIL	PATAPOUF - WHOOPS! (ALSO FATTY)
ALOUETTE - LARK	FOLIE - FOOLISHNESS	PATRONNE - BOSS
AMÉRICAINNE - AMERICAN	FORMIDABLE - FANTASTIC	PENSIVE - THOUGHTFUL
ANGE - ANGEL	FOLLE - CRAZY	PETITE - SMALL
ANGLAISE - ENGLISH	FRAISE - STRAWBERRY	POISSON - FISH
BELLE - BEAUTIFUL	GÉNIALE - BRILLIANT	POUPÉE - DOLL
BIEN-AIMÉE - BELOVED	GENTILLE - KIND	PRINCESSE - PRINCESS
BIZARRE - WEIRD	GOURMANDE - FOOD LOVER, BIG EATER	RENAUDE - FOX/VIXEN
BLONDE - BLOND, BLONDIE	GRANDE - BIG, TALL	REINE - KING / QUEEN
BONNE - GOOD	GRAND-MÈRE - GRANDMOTHER	ROUSSE - RED-HAIRED
BRUNE - BROWN-HAIRED	GRENOUILLE - FROG	SINGE - MONKEY
CALME - CALM, QUIET	HIRONDELLE - SWALLOW (BIRD)	SPORTIVE - ATHLETIC
CHAT, CHATON - CAT, KITTEN	INQUIÈTE - WORRIED	SUPER - SUPER, COOL
CHEF - CHIEF	JAPONAISE - JAPANESE	SYMPA - NICE
CHÉRI (-E) - DEAR, BELOVED	JEUNE - YOUNG	TANTE - AUNT
CHEVAL - HORSE	JOLIE - PRETTY	TÊTUE - STUBBORN
CHIEN, CHIOT - DOG, PUPPY	JUGE - JUDGE	TIGRESSE - TIGER
CHINOISE - CHINESE	LAPIN - RABBIT	TIMIDE - SHY
CHOCOLAT - CHOCOLATE	LIBELLULE - DRAGONFLY	TORTUE - TURTLE
CHOU - CABBAGE	LION - LION	TRANQUILLE - QUIET
CHOUCHOUTE - PET, DARLING	MALIGNE - SHREWD, CRAFTY	VACHE - COW
CHOUETTE - COOL	MARRANTE - FUNNY	VIEILLE - OLD WOMAN
CITROUILLE - PUMPKIN	MIGNONNE - CUTIE	
COLOMBE - DOVE	MINETTE - KITTY, SWEETIE- PIE	
COPINE - PAL, BUDDY	MINOU - KITTY	
COUSINE - COUSIN	NUAGE - CLOUD	
CRAPAUD - TOAD	OISEAU - BIRD	
CYGNE - SWAN	PAMPLEMOUSSE - GRAPEFRUIT	
DINGUE - CRAZY	PANTOUFLE - SLIPPER	
DISTRAITE - DISTRACTED, ABSENT-MINDED	PAPILLON - BUTTERFLY	
DOUÉE - GIFTED	PASSIONNANTE - FASCINATING	
DRÔLE - FUNNY		
ÉCUREUIL - SQUIRREL		

# STUDENT INTEREST INVENTORY

Professor / teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Language \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ (F / So / J / Se)

Period \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish Name \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Book Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s)/ Guardian(s):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/ Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/ Pager: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

My language teacher last year was: \_\_\_\_\_

What I like to do most at home: \_\_\_\_\_

These are my favorite hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

These are my favorites:

Book: \_\_\_\_\_

T.V. Show: \_\_\_\_\_

Movie: \_\_\_\_\_

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Singer/Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Song: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

If I had one wish I would want to: \_\_\_\_\_

If I had a million dollars I would: \_\_\_\_\_

If I had no money at all I would: \_\_\_\_\_

---

This is what one of my teachers did last year that I really liked: \_\_\_\_\_

---

This is what one of my teachers did that I really didn't like: \_\_\_\_\_

---

One of my goals this year is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

One of my life goals is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

My hero is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Something about me that no one else knows is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

My expectations of this class are: \_\_\_\_\_

---

I am taking this class because (be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

---

What I WANT to know and be able to do at the end of this class is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What I am willing to do to achieve my goals in this class is: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Use the rest of this page to tell me about yourself. Define yourself, what's going on in your life and your philosophy of life as best you can. Who are you?

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# Links and Resources

## Upcoming Conferences

National TPRS Conference

Kansas City, MO

July 16-22, 2005

<http://www.tprstories.com/ntprs>

Fall 2005 Conference

El Paso, Texas

October 20 - 23

<http://www.tfla.info>

November 18-20, 2005

Baltimore, MD

<http://actfl.org>

2006 SCOLT-FFLA conference

February 16-18

Orlando, FL

<http://www.valdosta.edu/scolt>

March 9-11, 2006

Chicago, IL

<http://www.centralstates.cc/>

OFLA Annual Conference

March 30 - April 1, 2006

Toledo, OH

<http://www.ofla-online.com>

The 2006 Northeast Conference

March 30 - April 2, 2006

New York, NY

<http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/>

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## The National TPRS Conference

Kansas City, MO

July 16-22, 2005

[www.tprstories.com/ntprs](http://www.tprstories.com/ntprs)

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

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## Download Free Question Word Posters in:

French

<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20French1.doc>

German

<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20German.doc>

Spanish

<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20Spanish.doc>

or

English

<http://www.tprstories.com/Question%20Words%20English.doc>

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Summer 2005

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