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Introduction

The world we live in today is increasingly accessible. Every year more students take advantage of study abroad programs, exploring the world and experiencing life in different cultures. More locally, the Internet allows us to connect with people from all over the world without ever leaving home. But if the world is getting smaller, why is it that only 44% of American high school students include a second language in their studies (Secretary)? Current Secretary of Education Arne Duncan believes that, “For too long, Americans have relied on other countries to speak our language. But we won’t be able to do that in the increasingly complex and interconnected world” (Duncan). Many believe that because English is so widely spoken throughout the world it isn’t important to learn a second language. This mindset sets them at a serious disadvantage, closing them off from people who speak another language and from access to international resources.

Student teaching made me realize that instilling a love of learning in children is my passion. Working with my third and fifth grade students gave me the opportunity to see that these students are curious and imaginative, enjoy learning something new and exciting, love showing off, and are eager to please. Their days are long, filled with math, spelling, reading, writing, science, and social studies, and yet somehow they absorb it all. Someday they’ll wonder at how something as simple as deciding how to punctuate the end of a sentence or adding two single digit numbers had ever given them trouble; it’s just natural. Later this year, my third graders will spend a week looking into one culture on each continent, studying the traditions and lifestyles that make these cultures unique. Unfortunately they will have to wait another six years before beginning to learn the best way to know, understand, and communicate with the people of these cultures: language. At that point their brains will have lost the ability to acquire a new
language in the same way, as well as some of the enthusiasm for new information that drives the language learning process.

Though 95% of adults with a college degree have some level of foreign language experience, only 5% feel comfortable enough in their abilities to use it (Werstler). This is linked to the late age at which most of these students begin learning the foreign language. By beginning to learn a second language while in elementary school, students learn at a time when their brains are most receptive to learning a new language. Their ability to distinguish between the various sounds of different languages has not yet been lost, and they are able to pick up on language intricacies in a way that is similar to an infant learning his or her first language. One of the leading contributors to the field, Stephen Krashen, believes that because their brains are still maturing, children become fluent in a second language differently than adults do. He believes that children acquire language through implicit exposure and experience with the language, while adults learn through explicit instruction and practice. Educators and linguists have long debated how the brain works, and how to teach in away that best supports this. However, it is clear that because it is still developing, a child’s brain has the ability to shape itself through the actions it carries out.

In an effort to understand how the foreign-language-learning process works, I taught a series of Spanish lessons to a group of 21 fifth-grade students. Using the Total Physical Response Storytelling method, developed by James Asher and adapted by Blaine Ray, the students learned the vocabulary necessary to comprehend the story that we focused on. The method mirrors the way an infant learns their first language by immersing the child in the language and allowing them to communicate through motion before they are expected to respond verbally. In our four 40 to 60-minute lessons, the students actively participated by finding
movements to represent vocabulary words that were spoken in Spanish and displayed in picture form on a SmartBoard. As I told the story, the students would follow along by using the appropriate motion when I came to particular words, saying the word along with me orally when they felt able. They were not expected to produce the language on their own until they felt ready. In the end, they were assessed on their ability to use the correct motions, without my modeling to guide them, as I told the story. They were also asked to fill out a worksheet connecting the Spanish words to associated pictures, though they had not seen the words in written form before. Finally, a group of volunteer students were asked to retell the story either individually or in small groups, using as many of the vocabulary words as possible, and demonstrate that they understood the plot of the story.

This practical experience with the Total Physical Response method allowed me to analyze several of the ideas developed by various researchers, specifically Krashen’s ideas on implicit language acquisition versus explicit language learning. I found that implicit learning, having the students pick up the language through exposure rather than explicit instruction, benefited the students in a number of ways and was an effective approach to in introducing the students to vocabulary. Some students were even able to pick up on grammatical components of the language. However, to attain fluency in a language implicit instruction is not sufficient. Many of the children repeatedly made mistakes that would become habit if not given explicit instruction that corrected what had confused them. To learn to the fullest extent possible and to reach every student in a meaningful way, a foreign language class needs to contain a mixture of both implicit and explicit instruction.

My study was by no means fully conclusive, as it was only one group of students. The inclusive classroom that I worked with included an academically advanced group of students.
This may have given them an advantage, but their age may have also set them back with this particular method of instruction. The importance of beginning foreign language study in elementary school stresses that students should be exposed to foreign language before puberty. As 10 and 11 year olds, the maturity level of some students inhibited their willingness to take the risks that are necessary to acquire language. Finally, the unit was concentrated due to time restraints; given more time with the method and exposure to the language the results may have differed. Further research should be done by assessing similar programs on students with different abilities, lifestyles, and at different ages.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate the importance of learning a foreign language, and why it is vital to begin the foreign language education process at as young of an age as possible. After reviewing the history of second language education in the United States, we will see, as mentioned above, that the development of the brain best supports the natural process of learning a language the younger the learner is. Children are in a development stage that allows them to learn a language more easily, but the instructor needs to create an environment meeting certain criteria to ensure that each child has the ability to learn. Should the process begin in elementary school, there are countless benefits. Between boosted academic achievement in other subject areas, being introduced to and educated on the diverse cultures in our world, and having the chance to be a part of the social, political, and economic aspects of the global community through communication, students profits immensely from studying a foreign language. Finally, the variety of foreign language programs and methods used in elementary schools will be examined. I will also investigate the effectiveness of the Total Physical Response Storytelling method as a teaching tool in relation to the conditions theorists believe must be met for a
beneficial learning environment. All of the above support foreign language as an essential component of the elementary school curriculum.

“In a world where what you know means much more than where you live, we all have a responsibility to make sure America’s education system gives students a chance to succeed. Preparing our students for the future begins long before college (Secretary).” Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings’ words show that long before one decides where he or she will go in their lives, the education provided determines how far one is able to go. It establishes whether the future of the United States, the children, will make a lasting impression on this Earth. As educators, it is the duty of teachers and administrators to give the students in classrooms around the United States an education that supports the brightest future possible. Adding courses to the elementary curriculum that will help children understand the world around them is an important step that the United States needs to take to secure its place in the global community, and gives students the opportunity to begin learning a language when they are best able, giving them the greatest chance of success. School boards in districts across the United States need to introduce mandatory foreign language programs into the elementary school curriculum.
History of Foreign Language Instruction in the US

Throughout the history of the United States, interest in foreign language has been in a constant cycle of interest and disinterest. Emphasis on particular languages grew to reflect the current US population during times of immigration, while it diminished during times of conflict. Foreign policy needs also prompted a push in learning a second language depending on the current priorities of the country, including a countrywide surge in foreign language education spurred by competition with other countries. Criticisms on particular programs and beliefs expressed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages\(^1\) (ACTFL) and the Modern Language Association\(^2\) (MLA) have also swayed public opinion on foreign language education. Today there is a new wave of interest in foreign language and its value in creating a more dynamic, influential population in the globalization of economics and politics. ACTFL created a set of standards for foreign language programs to work to towards, giving foreign language education in the United States even more focus. Continuing down this path and further improving foreign language education will have a positive impact on our society.

An elementary curriculum that incorporates foreign language is nothing new to the US education system. In Colonial times, Latin was found in nearly every classroom, and while it was often seen as un-American, German, French, and Spanish lessons were common during waves of immigration, particularly German in the 1830s and again in 1848 (Curtain 406). During World War I, there was such an intense dislike and distrust of Germany, its language, and its people that all foreign language classes were abandoned in an effort to show American pride and solidarity. Interest in foreign language education, particularly Spanish, sparked again in the 1940s when the

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\(^1\) The ACTFL formed in 1967 to improve foreign language learning and teaching at all instructional levels

\(^2\) The MLA was founded in 1883 with the purpose of improving language and literature, including English, in education.
US began concerning itself with improving conditions in Latin America—Spanish language programs for both Spanish speakers and for English speakers developed throughout the Southwest (Curtain 406).

In more modern times, the United States became very interested in foreign language education during the Space Race of the 1950s-1960s. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act funded language, math, and science education in an effort to compete in advances being made around the world. During the 10 years that funding lasted, new institutes developed to train foreign language teachers with methods similar to those used to train the army in foreign language during WWII. These institutes focused on a new method called the audiolingual approach. In this method, the traditional study of grammar and syntax were abandoned and the focus moved to forming habits. The idea was that elementary students would learn more quickly as they were use to the habit-creating drills and repetitions that the method required (Curtain 407).

Unfortunately, the interest and excitement in foreign language education lasted only around 5 years. As early as 1961, programs faced critiques such as that by the MLA’s “Survey of FLES Practices.” Programs were put down for a lack of results in the four language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), unskilled teachers, a lack of planning, and for teaching in ways that lacked meaning to the students and would therefore never be retained (Curtain 408). As a country, we had jumped into the idea of language instruction with too much haste and programs didn’t have the planning, the supplies, or the teachers they needed to continue effectively. All had noble goals that would undoubtedly benefit the country, but most relied on native language speakers who didn’t have the training or teaching background to instruct their students well (Lipton 50). Even programs that were successfully teaching their
students began to lose credibility (Curtain 408). Foreign language classes focused mainly on oral
language, some taught through drills and patterns, others taught through songs and games. Both
methods were criticized for being ineffective and were not taken seriously, and when students
moved to high school they typically had to start learning the target language again from the
beginning. Children had little exposure to reading and writing in the target language, and there
were hardly ever tie-ins or consistency with the rest of the elementary curriculum (Lipton 50).
The importance of including connections and believability in second language education surfaces
again in the section “Learning Development.” Once the Vietnam War began, like during WWI,
foreign language study became seen as ‘un-American (Curtain 408),’ and interest moved to
including more technology in schools (Lipton 50).

Recently, foreign language study has regained popularity in elementary schools around
the United States. While Spanish is still the top language taught throughout the US, French,
Latin, and German are also still commonly taught in elementary schools. Chinese, Japanese,
Arabic, and Russian are now being offered in an effort to reflect the changes in the global
community both economically and politically (Curtain 411). Even more, school districts are
making an effort to mirror the community in which they are based, offering Czech, Greek,
Hebrew, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Persian, Portuguese, and Welsh depending on the local
population (Curtain 411). Both in our own country, and in relation to countries around the world,
being fluent in a language in addition to English will help American children immensely by
allowing us to communicate with the people around us.

In 1986 ACTFL created Proficiency Guidelines that give foreign language educators
goals and standards to work towards. Instead of focusing on grammar when testing, like in the
Colonial years, or on drills and habit forming the way the 1960s education worked, educators are
helping students communicate their meaning. The standards were redefined in 1999 and again in 2001 to focus them more towards current goals and ideals (Curtain 414). Every foreign language program today adheres to standards created by the ACTFL, whose mission is to “provide vision, leadership and support for quality teaching and learning of languages” (Standards). The philosophy of the association gives a purpose to foreign language programs around the country:

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiency in their first language. (Standards 2)

The standards reflect what children should know and be able to do in the foreign language and are categorized into five goals. These five goals, known as the ‘Five C’s’ cover all of the reasons a student might study foreign language and will need to use it in their lives: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (Standards 3). Being able to efficiently communicate in a second language means having the skills to express oneself orally and in writing, as well as being able to comprehend what is said while reading or listening to the second language (Standards 4, 5). Knowing and having a concrete understanding of the cultures of different groups who use the language helps students to better understand the people who use the language, and gives students insight into different circumstances in which the language may be used (Standards 4, 6). Students who study a foreign language have access to a entire other body of materials than students who are monolingual, and are therefore able to make more connections
than their English-speaking only peers (Standards 4, 6). They also come to understand the abstract ideas of language and culture more thoroughly than monolingual students. They are able to compare and contrast their own language and culture to those of their second language and can see that there are different ways to view the world sooner than other students (Standards 4, 6). Finally, students who study a second language have access to different communities around the world and can participate more fully by being able to use the community’s own language (Standards 4, 7). Every good foreign language program attempts to uphold the standards, which reflect the outcomes of the best of programs, but each has its strengths and weaknesses. While Immersion students are by far the strongest in terms of communication, students in FLEX programs have more cultural experience. Immersion and FLEX programs are discussed in depth in the section titled “Methods of Language Instruction.” However, as we will see in the section on “Why Should FLES Be Included in the Elementary Curriculum,” including foreign language in the elementary curriculum and exposing students to any of the Five C’s is giving the students an advantage over the students without the exposure.
Learning Development

The push for foreign language study to begin in elementary schools starts with the basic development of language skills, and the difference in abilities of children and adults. For the practical piece of my research, I taught a series of Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) lessons to a group of 5th graders, and so focused on the brain development in children and the learning theories that make TPRS an effective method of instruction. Beginning with the very structure of the brain, children have an easier time learning a language and have the ability to gain language skills that adults have long since lost. Beyond brain development, the differences in how children and adults attain second language proficiency, specifically learning versus acquiring and explicit versus implicit instruction, can vary the success of a language program. Finally, a foreign language teacher must meet a certain set of conditions to ensure that her students learn to their greatest capacity. Before it can be discussed why it is important to learn foreign language, it is important to understand why it is essential to begin the process at the youngest age possible.

There are two areas of the brain that control speech and language; the Wernicke’s area transfers the form and meaning of words and sentences to the Broca’s area, where signals are sent to the face, jaw, throat, tongue, and vocal cords to put these words into action (Kettelkamp 44). This means that learning a language is cognitive, a linguistic, and a motor skill. In each language, speakers learn to move their lips, tongues, and mouths in different ways to make different sounds. The older a person gets, the more difficult it is to learn these new motor skills (Hoff-Ginsberg 31-36). Neuropsychologist and Nobel Prize Winner Roger Sperry’s Right Brain Hypothesis suggested that the different hemispheres of the brain performed different functions that would lead to different types of learning. According to Sperry, the right and left hemispheres
of the brain work independently and transfer information across the corpus callosum. While the left-brain communicates through speaking and verbal language, the right brain communicates through physical language and behaviors. Repetition and memorization were typically used throughout history to teach a second language, but these left-brain functions are good for short-term memory and not for long-term retention (Werstler 17-18).

A child’s brain is incredibly receptive to new information, making childhood the ideal time to begin learning a second language. Dr. Michael Phelps, chairman of the Department of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology of the UCLA School of Medicine says that this is because a child’s brain is still developing. The brain of a two-year-old has double the amount of synapses, or neural connections, as an adult. As the brain evolves and grows, it loses the ability to make the connections that it doesn’t use (Curtain 393). The neural connections for language are made when a child is very young, so it easier for students to acquire a new language the younger they are. As a person grows older, connections are made less quickly and less often. If the connections are not made, the neurons are pruned, making a person’s intellect more specific, but less expansive (Newquist 103)\(^3\). One example of this is that as babies, humans have the ability to pronounce most different sounds. However, as a child grows, he loses this ability if the proper connections are not made. He ends up able to pronounce the particular sounds that he has heard those around him use, but not the ones that he hasn’t been exposed to (Curtain 393). This losing and gaining of neural connections is called plasticity. Basically, plasticity is the brain’s ability to change. The younger a child is, the greater the plasticity (Restak 55). Neurosurgeon Wilder Graves Penfield, who studied the functioning of the mind and supported improved education both at home and in the classroom, recommends that foreign language instruction

\(^3\) Parts of this paper have been adapted from Streisel, Jessica. “Foreign Language in Elementary Schools.” Unpublished essay, April 2007.
begins no later than age 10 so that the brain still has the plasticity to make connections for language and speech patterns different from the child’s native language (Lipton 5). A young, developing brain is still changing and is formed by the activities it performs, while an adult, fully developed brain doesn’t have the same ability to adapt to new information (Hoff-Ginsberg 31-36). Because of this, the younger a child is the greater his ability to acquire a second language.

All languages are built from only about 200 different sounds called phonemes. Of that 200, only about 38 are used in the English language. Infants are born with the natural capability to distinguish the changes in the sounds of world languages because the sounds that are not a part of their native language have not been pruned yet. These sounds, the phonetics, make up just one piece of language. There is also grammar, semantics (word meaning), and syntax (word order). Each piece of language is processed by a different system in the brain, and different sensitive periods exist for each piece (Restak 38, 47). A sensitive period is “a time span that is optimal for certain capacities to emerge and in which the individual is especially responsive to environmental influences” (Berk G11). We can observe the grammar sensitive period in children, comparing their skills based on the age they arrived in the United States. A study comparing immigrants from China and Korea to native English speakers found that as adults they were able to score as well as native speakers on grammar tests if they arrived between the ages of 3 and 7. As their arrival time to the United States increased, the scores decreased (Berk 300). For phonetics, young children are in a sensitive period; the sounds they hear in their surrounding environment are responsible for the sounds they are able to produce. Children are in a sensitive period when it comes to learning a second language because they are still in the process of making many neural connections, and for mastery in foreign language to occur, the learning process must begin in childhood (Berk 300).
Because they are still in a sensitive period for phonetics, young children have a much easier time learning to speak a new language with native-like ability. Even with the most vigilant of students, learners who start during or after puberty have a more difficult time speaking without a noticeable accent. In her research on foreign language in elementary schools, Dr. Mildred R. Donoghue of California State University, Fullerton, states that:

Ideally, the age for beginning the learning of a second language is at birth. But when considering language learning in relation to schooling, the optimum age for beginning the continuous learning of a second language seems to fall within the span of ages four through eight... In this span of ages, the brain apparently has the greatest plasticity and specialized capacity for acquiring speech. This capacity includes the ability to mimic properly all of the speech sounds, intonations, and stresses and to learn readily all language patterns. (Curtain 392)

After 12 months, infants begin to lose their capacity for recognizing the phonetic differences between languages. In adulthood, the lack of ability to notice these differences can be seen in the difficulty Japanese adults have in recognizing the R and L distinction in the English language. Pat Kuhl of the Department of Speech and Hearing at the University of Washington compared Japanese and American infants. The Americans and the Japanese infants distinguished between the R/L differences about the same, but after one year the Japanese children had begun to lose this ability while the Americans were becoming more able (Restak 38, 46). There is no L sound in the Japanese language, so the connections to that sound are pruned and lost if the child is only exposed to Japanese. Children are able to speak a second language without a noticeable accent because their brains are still forming language connections (Newquist 103).
Erika Hoff-Ginsberg of Florida Atlantic University explains that the sensitive period for language acquisition can be seen clearly in feral children, or children who grew up secluded from any communication with other humans. In “Is There a Critical Period for Acquisition?” she states that the perfect study would be to remove select infants from any human contact (and therefore language) and compare them to children growing up in a normal, communicative environment. However, doing so would be unethical and so scientists turn to the rare cases of feral children. Though most have not been adequately documented, some of the more recent cases have provided scientists with insight. Genie, an abused child who authorities discovered in the 1970s, is one such instance. Restricted to one room by her mentally ill father, Genie was never exposed to any language; none of her family, or anyone else, ever spoke to her for the first 13 years of her life. When found, she had absolutely no language. At 17, after 4 years of exhaustive therapy, Genie had the vocabulary of a typical 5 year old and could make short, basic sentences, though her grammar skills were poor. While this study furthered research on the critical period for learning language, it was inconclusive. The difficulty she had learning language at her age strengthened the argument that to become proficient in a language, study needs to begin at an early age. However, Genie was only one girl, one subject, and she had suffered unbelievable abuse. There is no way to know whether her language learning results were due in total to the late age where she was first exposed to language, or if her ability to learn was impaired in some way because of, or even before, the abuse (Hoff-Ginsberg 31-36). What is clear is that Genie’s capability to learn language at 13 years old was much lower than the natural language acquisition rate of a typical child.

What Donoghue says about children acquiring a second language touches on a difference besides the sensitive period that children have from adults in language development. According
to influential linguist Stephen Krashen\textsuperscript{4}, the difference between how children and adults become skilled at a new language is that adults are ‘learning,’ in that they study grammar and memorize vocabulary. Children, on the other hand, are ‘acquiring’ the language by listening to their teachers and participating in classroom activities using the second language until they are ready to use it on their own (Curtain 2). They take the time to become comfortable with the language and use it slowly on their own terms. In the TPRS lessons I used with a 5\textsuperscript{th} grade class, discussed more thoroughly in the section on “Methods of Language Instruction,” students were expected to acquire the Spanish vocabulary and sentence structure of the what we discussed. By building on language from previous lessons, the students picked up the vocabulary at their own pace, even though they had never been exposed to it before. They followed along with my instruction, repeating words and using motions to represent words until they were ready to use it themselves.

Immersion classrooms also expect children to acquire rather than learn the language, using only the target language during instruction. Acquiring a language means that the child is becoming familiar with the language in a way that a native speaker might, by listening and interacting with the language at a rate that is comfortable to them. However, these students don’t have the same experience with practicing grammar and will often use the wrong verb tenses, not understanding how the language functions. This can also be seen in young children learning their first language; in the beginning, they will misuse words and speak in a way that is grammatically incorrect because they don’t understand the way their native language works. With more practice and grammar instruction, the grammar improves. This is where language learning, as opposed to acquiring, fits in. Krashen believes that adults tend to learn languages better (Curtain 2). They

\textsuperscript{4} Krashen is known for his work in bilingual education, particularly language acquisition and has over 350 published works.
are better able to learn the grammar, syntax, and semantics of the language by studying it in a formal way.

Educators and linguists are in constant debate over whether learning or acquiring is more effective in learning a second language, and determining whether students should learn explicitly or implicitly. In explicit instruction the teacher explains a grammatical concept directly, and then has his or her students complete a variety of controlled exercises that practice and manipulate what they have learned (Shrum 12). Some say that for real learning to occur, explicit instruction is too passive of a role for students to take\(^5\). While this might be true in some instances, it gives students a chance to practice with new information and manipulate and work with it until they are ready to move on. FLES instruction, found in “Methods of Language Instruction,” typically has students learn the language through explicit instruction rather than acquire it through implicit. Because of time constraints and because of the nature of the lessons, students are usually given grammar and vocabulary lessons and they learn through practicing with the current lesson. Implicit instruction focuses on the idea that students can acquire the grammar, vocabulary, and the rest of what is necessary to understand the language if they are exposed to it enough, without specifically teaching each piece. Given the time and contact, they will eventually be able to determine how to use each piece of the language on their own (Shrum 12). This approach feels very natural to some students. It goes back to the way a child learns their first language, and can be very successful given the right environment. However, it can be very frustrating to older students or to students with different learning styles who want to be able to compare what they are learning in the target language to the rules of their first language. It also does not guarantee that every student will eventually be able to make those linguistic meaning

\(^5\) The theory of multiple intelligences tells us that each individual learns in a different way; the intelligences include interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, naturalistic, and existential.
connections, and those students will flounder without direct, explicit instruction (Shrum 12). When I had my students evaluate the TPRS method, I had very different responses. An example of the evaluation can be found in Appendix J and further conclusions from the evaluation in Appendix K. Many loved that we learned through movement, through pictures, and through stories. They liked that they drew pictures of what happened in the story and were glad not to take notes. Many of these students picked up on grammatical pieces not covered in lessons, such as one boy who while retelling the story on his own, used the correct singular and plural forms for the word for *hunter* each time he used it in the story. Other students wrote that they wished we had used more worksheets and taken more notes, and that we had translated the words into English. Many confused grammatical functions, particularly possessives and plural nouns. Neither explicit nor implicit instruction takes into consideration that every student in every classroom learns in a different way- a combination of all methods is necessary to reach every student in a meaningful way.

In a study by educational psychologist and Harvard Graduate School of Education professor Catherine E. Snow, and Marian Hoefnagel-Hohle of the University of Amsterdam (1978), English speakers ages three-adult were tested on their Dutch language ability between six month and one year after moving to the Netherlands. None of the participants had any prior exposure to the Dutch language before moving; while the children all went to Dutch schools and were exposed implicitly to the language at least 26 hours a week, basically in an Immersion style classroom, the adults had some formal, explicit instruction with the language but were not exposed to native speakers nearly often. The children were exposed to the language in their classrooms and expected to acquire it, while the adults learned the language through lessons. The participants were tested on their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and their comprehension
of written text; though the children had the most exposure, they scored the lowest on every test. It was surprisingly the students between the ages of 12 and 15 who scored the highest. These students were both exposed to the language in school implicitly and had the background knowledge on the formation of language to pick up a second language quickly. The study suggested that while starting at a young age results in better language ability, adults are able to learn more quickly than younger language learners (Hoff-Ginsberg 31-36). Children who start acquiring a language at a young age, given enough time, will eventually surpass the language proficiency of those who start learning a second language after puberty. Their skills will be closer to those of a native speaker. However, in terms of pace, adults and older students learn a language more quickly and will show results in the language sooner than young learners.

For implicit instruction to work, another of Krashen’s theories, which builds on the basic pedagogical philosophy scaffolding, needs to be used: comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is what a student can completely understand plus a small bit that is above their current level (i+1) (Curtain 2). For a student to learn, the language they are exposed to has to be presented in a way that ensures that the student understands the message at all times. Though a word may be unfamiliar, the idea is communicated through pictures, gestures, examples, and in the context of previously learned words. In Total Physical Response (TPR) lessons, students learn the vocabulary without any English translation, but will see a picture of their new vocabulary word, come up with a movement to represent it, and practice it by using it in relation to words they already know; they learn at a comprehensible level. Often times, teachers trying to expose their students to the target language will present the material in a way that is too far above the students level, and at that point the learner checks out. If the student feels overwhelmed, or they don’t understand the majority of what they are hearing, he or she might come to the conclusion that
they are incapable of learning the language and give up (Curtain 1-4). The students in my TPRS class had a difficult time during the first lesson because the language was completely new and overwhelming to them. The only building block they had to scaffold from was that they were familiar with our basic story, a spin off of Little Red Riding Hood (our story and an English translation are found in Appendices E and F, respectively). However, with each lesson they knew more and were able to build the new information off of what they already knew. The input was comprehensible because it was in the context of words they were familiar with. Merrill Swain, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, expanded on Krashen’s ideas, stating that comprehensible output was also essential. When a student is learning a language, any corrections made to what they are saying need to be based on meaning rather than grammar. The student needs to know that what they are saying, or attempting to say, is valued for the meaning they are trying to get across. Any corrections made should be to help shape their message into something communicatively understandable rather than grammatically perfect (Curtain 1-4). This ensures that the student continues trying and practicing to communicate their message and feels comfortable expressing themselves.

Knowing that what they say is of value contributes to the emotionally comforting environment a child needs for motivation. The learner needs to feel safe and confident in his or her abilities. Krashen believed that we have an affective filter, which he described as a part of the brain that has the potential to block out language input if the right emotional conditions aren’t met. When students are insecure, unmotivated, or anxious, the learning is unpleasant to them and the filter goes up, blocking any language gains. When the students are stress free, motivated, and confident, the filter goes down and makes it easier for the students to learn (Curtain 8-9). Certain teaching methods pose a problem when they have the potential to both raise and lower the
affective filter. In Immersion classrooms and in the TPRS method, the first few lessons can become problematic because all language is in the target language; nothing is in the child’s first language. This can be very overwhelming to students at first. During my first TPRS lesson (see Appendix A for the complete lesson plan and reflection), many of the students were lost as to what I wanted them to do. Though we used movement and pictures and they were not expected to use the language orally, they were overwhelmed by the newness of it and the anxiety surely blocked some language gain. However, this same method works to lower the filter by incorporating movements and pictures to ensure that the students are able to participate before they are able to orally produce language. Their confidence is boosted when they can respond physically to spoken language, even if they can’t answer orally. I was able to see the excitement and enthusiasm of the students as they followed along with the movements, and even more enthusiasm when they were able to produce either the words or the movements without my prompting (see video Sections 1 and 2). It was exciting to them to see that they could contribute, and gave them confidence in their abilities.

When we want to learn and are excited about new information, we are actually better able to learn. Part of this is attributed to the way the instructor speaks to the students. When the instructor uses what is known as caretaker speech, very similar to the way a grandmother might speak to her young grandchild, the students feel comfortable and have the best chance of understanding what is being said. In caretaker speech, the speaker speaks more slowly and pronounces each word distinctly. They use shorter, simpler sentences and rephrase each sentence a number of times, checking constantly to see if the listener understands. The speaker doesn’t rely solely on their voice for communication, using gestures and visual cues to help guide the listener to understanding (Curtain 1-4). This is especially important in TPR and Immersion
classrooms, where every spoken and written word is in the target language. Caretaker speech helps students to feel comfortable and lowers the affective filter, allowing comprehensible input to be received and understood (Shrum 12).

Depending on the learner’s age, different factors can trigger the affective filter to block out new information. Middle school, when many schools begin foreign language instruction, can be a very difficult time to introduce students to a new language. At this age, students are figuring out who they are, trying to find their individual identity and can be critical of anything different from what they know. Because acceptance from their peers is so important, these students tend to be self conscious and less likely to try new things in front of the other students for fear of embarrassing themselves. The discomfort of working with something so new can make it hard for many middle school aged students to learn the target language (Haas 48). Even as soon as 5th grade, I saw that a few of my students were uncomfortable stepping outside of their comfort zone. One girl in particular was embarrassed doing the movement that TPRS requires, and her ability to comprehend, remember, and use what we learned in class was negatively affected. On a scale of 1-10, the students of my class rated how well they knew the vocabulary, and while no other student graded themself below a 6, she gave herself a 4. On a comprehension assessment, the students connected a picture from the story to the correct word in Spanish, and while 9 out of 13 students got every question correct, she missed 3 out of 10 words (the lowest in the class). She also wrote on her assessment of the TPRS method that she didn’t like language or standing up (which the method requires for free movement), and that the lessons weren’t any fun to her. An example of the assessment can be found in Appendix H, the evaluation in Appendix J, and a complete reflection on the assessment in Appendix K. She exemplifies that at this age, students are not as readily able to be language learning risk-takers. They tend to fear failure and the idea
of messing up holds them back. In elementary school, on the other hand, students still have the ability to learn how to be risk takers; they don’t fear failure as thoroughly. If the first foreign language is learned as a child, this ability to take risks in learning a language continues into adulthood for further foreign language studies (Heining-Boynton 1-4). The affective filter has already been lowered often enough, and the idea of learning a new language isn’t new anymore, so comprehensible input is received. Luckily, a teacher who understands each age level and the characteristics that define it can help students to feel comfortable and confident. Students who are conscious of peer approval love to work with these same friends and work effectively when allowed to work with their friends. Knowing her students well gives a teacher a greater chance of lowering her students’ affective filters (Haas 48).

Even in the most comfortable of environments, the way information is presented to the students needs to be significant. Learning requires meaning; to learn in a meaningful, memorable, true way we scaffold the new information on to what we already know. Patterning is the difference between rote memorization and making meaningful connections— if we can put information into a meaningful pattern, sequence, or order— it is easier to remember (Curtain 7-8). Take the three lines below as an example:

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B T L A L B A G T I W M F B L P C N A G U H K O E
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Picnic beach lay to and love bring always a go the I water my for by lunch blanket

I love to go to beach and lay by the water on my blanket. I always bring a picnic for lunch.

Each line gets longer and technically has more letters to memorize. However, for the first line we rely solely on memory to ‘learn’ this random series of letters. For the second line, we probably remember more— the brain can attach a picture, or at least a meaning, to each of those words. Even though the words don’t seem to belong together, we at least have some background that
makes them more memorable to our brains. With the final line, we have a concrete meaning. The words have a purpose and together they have significance. The pattern that they form activates prior knowledge and is easier to remember than words, letters, or sounds alone. We can use background knowledge and our own experiences and personal connections to understand and remember. The same is true for learning a language, or really anything new (Curtain 7-8). When a student is presented with an isolated item, be it vocabulary or grammar, it doesn’t have meaning for them to grasp on to. However, when it relates to the learner, they are able to see and understand what they are learning in a meaningful context and grasp it more quickly and easily; it has believability.

Think of the three lines again without looking back; chances are you don’t remember the order of the letters in first line, but you most likely remember at least part of the third line. Because it had meaning and context, it will be held onto for longer, as will meaningful information presented to students learning a second language. In TPRS classes, students are presented with vocabulary, seen in Appendix G, in the context of a story. The words they learn relate to each other and together have meaning. With my group of 5th graders, I found that they immediately, with the first 4 words taught, started putting the words together and trying to give them meaning. For example, we learned the Spanish words for ‘book,’ ‘movement,’ ‘family,’ and ‘wolf.’ It took a little time for them to understand the meaning for ‘movement’ because they wanted the word movimiento to mean ‘moving’ instead of ‘movement.’ To them, ‘moving’ fit better into the narrative that they were building in their heads. Children want what they are learning to have meaning, and if what they learn has meaning it has more significance, more believability, and is more memorable to them.
Why Should FLES Be Included in the Elementary Curriculum?

If mastery of a second language does begin in childhood, there are countless benefits. The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington D.C. found that not only does learning a foreign language help one with just the target language, but also progresses understanding of the native language, increases the rate of mental development, and helps the child to understand and being accepting of other cultures (Stevens). By studying foreign language, students give themselves an advantage in the global community of today’s world. Because it increases the mental abilities of a student, grades tend to improve and intellect is benefited. The study of foreign language also gives students the chance to celebrate the diversity of our world and interact with the diverse people who inhabit it. Multilingual students are able to participate more fully in the world around them, contributing to the increasingly globalized economy. The importance of learning a second language seems to grow exponentially every year.

A common concern among educators is that their students will get behind in other curricular areas if time is taken for foreign language study. However, researchers have found that over time, students do better in math, social studies, and English if they are multilingual than their monolingual peers, as learning a language is really more of a cognitive that a linguistic endeavor. Children who study foreign language typically score higher than students who do not on math tests, specifically on tests of problem solving, even when language study takes away from time spent in math classes during the school day (Learning). This was proved in a study held by Penelope W. Armstrong and Jerry D. Rogers, authors of Basic Skills Revisited: The Effects of Foreign Language Instruction on Reading, Math, and Language Arts. They observed the connection between bilingual studies and the basic abilities of an elementary school student by giving third graders three 30-minute Spanish lessons each week. In the end those with
Spanish lessons scored just as well or better than a second group that did not receive Spanish lessons on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, especially math and language, after only one semester of study (Learning). A similar study made by the FLES Organization\(^6\) found that early language learning improves a child’s cognitive abilities. A group of 67 sixth grade students was divided into four groups; one group received no French lessons, and the other three received lessons for 6.5, 15.5, or 24.5 months. In the end, the students who studied French for the longest amount of time scored significantly higher on three different areas of the Ross test, all of which involved evaluation. Evaluation is considered the highest cognitive skill on Bloom’s taxonomy (What) and involves the students creating an argument, assessing, discussing, or justifying a particular point.

Proficiency in a second language gives students the mental capacity to excel cognitively, and to understand the inter-workings of language in general. A 1986 study by Eileen A. Rafferty, of the Office of Research and Development for the Louisiana Department of Education, found that of the 13,000 3\(^{rd}\)-5\(^{th}\) grade students observed, those with foreign language lessons did far better than students who had been given additional lessons in English Language Arts. What’s more, after three years of continuing the extra lessons, the foreign language students scored twice as well as the students who had been given extra English Language Arts lessons on ELA tests (Winburn Robinson 39). Because the study of foreign language gives students a better understanding of language, studying a foreign language gave them greater insight into English. Research in Canada has found that young children who are fluent in a second language are sooner able to understand the theory of object permanence. For example, whether it is called an English “doll” or a Spanish “muñeca,” it is still the same exact thing.

\(^6\) The FLES Organization, founded in 1975, works to provide elementary schools with quality foreign language programs in Spanish, French, and Mandarin Chinese.
Children develop a consciousness of the words they use, the power of their own language, and learn to express themselves in more abstract ways (Curtain 397).

By learning a second language, students thinking in general improves; “In trying to systematize a second language, individuals must work at perceiving, intaking, storing, and recalling information. These very processes make one think harder” (Wilburn Robinson 37). A study by Deborah Wilburn Robinson of Ohio State University reviewed research gained from 144 different studies that took place over the span of three decades. He found that early experience with two different languages leads to “a mental flexibility, superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities” (Learning). Even standardized test scores increase, according to a study by Dr. Thomas Cooper, Associate Professor Emeritus of Foreign Language Education at the University of Georgia. He inspected SAT scored from 23 different high schools in the southeast portion of the United States in 1987, and found that students who studied a foreign language scored noticeably higher on the verbal sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (Learning). Specifically, students who studied a foreign language scored about 100 points higher on their SATs (Why). Each of these studies shows us that by learning a second language, students set themselves ahead academically.

The personal academic benefits of learning a language are significant, but it is the way that language brings people together that gives foreign language studies such importance. “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.” Nelson Mandela makes an important point; being fluent in multiple languages allows people to communicate with others from around the world, and partake more fully in the global community (What). It gives the opportunity to know the people of a culture through personal contact and conversation. By knowing a second language, one is
able to access a whole new set of information by reading, watching, and listening to information in that language. Children are much more open to other cultures and people who speak other languages, which helps them to develop better people skills while they are still young. It helps them to develop a sense of respect and an appreciation for the diverse cultures within our world and our country.

A major part of foreign language education is multicultural education, which benefits students in a number of areas. With basic multicultural education, students learn about different cultures, and the important groups and individuals who made major contributions to society from that culture (Slavin). The “five F’s,” including food, fashion, festivals, flags, and famous people are the focus of many basic multicultural and are great starting points, but we need to move beyond these. The focus, for true multicultural learning to occur, needs to shift from the fun, festivities, and food to learning about how cultures develop and how different countries interact, as well as how to communicate with the people of those other countries. Learning about other cultures can help children comprehend how different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups impact the world in different ways, and what we have in common. It can help children to become more understanding and empathetic to those who are different from them (Slavin). According to Martha G. Abbott, the Director of Education for the ACTFL, “young learners have a natural curiosity about learning which is evident when they engage in learning a new language. They also are open and accepting of people who speak other languages and come from other cultures” (What). When someone is more interested and open to learning, they often have a much easier time learning. Language is such a large part of a culture that learning a second language can help students to gain an understanding as well as a respect for other lifestyles. As Lois-Ann Yamanaka, a poet and novelist who has written about many controversial ethnic issues, said,
“with language rests culture. To sever the language from the mouth is to sever the ties to homes and relatives, family gatherings, foods prepared and eaten, relationships to friends and neighbors. Cultural identity is utterly akin to linguistic identity” (Cavanagh). This said, how better to connect with those from other cultures than to learn their language?

While cultural awareness and understanding is incredibly important, the need for foreign language education in today’s society goes beyond this. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan states that, “today’s call to action is an economic one. We need to build a strong foundation for growth and prosperity” (Duncan). The economy is going through a globalization. Today, four fifths of new United States jobs are somehow connected or dependent on international trade, and many companies see most of their growth being in overseas markets (Curtain 398). Workers need to have a sense of international understanding (Stewart). Mike Eskew, the CEO of UPS, says that he needs workers who are “global trade literate, sensitive to foreign cultures, [and] conversant in different cultures” (Steptoe). In a foreign language program based on the ACTFL standards, students are exposed to material that gives them the background and experience to be exactly what Eskew says he’s looking for. In addition to UPS, the healthcare, social services, law enforcement, and international business fields all prefer bilingual workers to monolingual workers (Why). Workers in the United States are beginning to be replaced by workers from overseas. Secretary Duncan admits that this is justified, as we are far behind our economic competitors in terms of being a multilingual society, and it is our duty as a society to give our students the opportunity to master foreign languages. Norm Augustine, head of the National Academics Gathering Storm committee, and former chairman of Lockheed Martin, states that, “Americans find themselves in competition for their jobs not just with their neighbors but with
individuals around the world” (Secretary). Including foreign language in elementary schools will put American children ahead in this competition both as United States and global citizens.

In addition to the economy, the health and security of the US depend on a better global understanding. Terrorism, epidemic diseases, and national disasters such as drought or energy shortages all call for cooperation between nations (Stewart). With countries like China gaining status in the global community, and with so much conflict in the Middle East, it simply makes sense for US students to begin learning languages such as Chinese, or Pashto (the language spoken by the Taliban), in addition to other languages, when they are most receptive to the information. The National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) is a large effort proposed by former President George W. Bush to fortify the nation’s ability to understand critical languages. Though the world that the September 11th disaster left the nation in demands an understanding of foreign languages and cultures, there is still an insufficiency of language education in US schools (Budget). The NSLI’s goal was to increase the number of Americans mastering languages, especially critical need languages, and starting the learning process at a younger age. It also planned to increase the number of foreign language teachers and the resources available to them (Teaching). With a budget over $65 million, the initiative planned to provide for the development and implementation of foreign language programs starting in early childhood and into college, as well as funds for teachers to develop critical language skills (Budget).

Before September 11, 2001, no United States public college had a regular class in Pashto. The 9/11 Commission gave a report stating that the lack of linguists able to translate the Arabic language made it difficult for them to fight terrorism. A popular culture comparison helps to see these ideas on a clearer, more personal level. In the 2008 remake of *Iron Man*, lead character Tony Stark is captured by a group of terrorists who are shown sending a video, in their own
language, to Stark’s business partner. Though there are no subtitles, it is assumed that they are asking for ransom. However, later in the movie we find that the business partner had been working with the group of terrorists the entire time and the terrorists had basically discussed the entire plot of the movie within the first five minutes. Had viewers understood Urdu, the language spoken by the movie terrorists, they would have known the plot twist an hour earlier. In movie time, Stark doesn’t discover what had happened for at least a year. Had Stark understood Urdu, he would have been able to fight the terrorism and his conspiring business partner (Rebus).

Luckily, some districts, like that in Fairfax County, Virginia, have high school programs that offer Arabic, as well as Japanese, Russian, Korean, ASL, Italian, French, German, and Spanish. The elementary schools in Fairfax County have also begun offering partial Immersion programs, in which the elementary students spend a half day studying their regular subjects in Spanish, French, German, or Japanese (Ashford). “The world is getting smaller and smaller,” said Ilryong Moon, the Fairfax County School Board Chairman, “and I believe all students in Fairfax need to be able to speak a language other than English. As a person who came here as a teenager, I had a difficult time learning a new language. It’s much better to start at an earlier age.” Moon moved from South Korea as a teenager, and started taking English lessons when in 7th grade (Ashford). Introducing foreign language programs into elementary schools would promote an understanding of other cultures, in addition to a competency in other country’s native tongues that would encourage joint action and synergy.
Methods of Language Instruction

Though there are undoubtedly countless methods of teaching foreign language, here we will focus on Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES), Foreign Language Experience (FLEX), Immersion, and Total Physical Response. FLEX and FLES have similar acronyms, but give students very different experiences with the language. Immersion programs result in fluent and proficient students by teaching all elementary core subjects in the target language. This can either be done bilingually, or in a Total Immersion experience. TPR and TPRS have students teach students through implicit instruction, involving movement and pictures to get meaning across. Each program has its benefits as well as its drawbacks. However, all provide students with insight into foreign cultures, exposure to another language, and instill an interest in learning foreign language that hopefully continues through the students’ later years.

FLEX, or Foreign Language Experience programs are typically more investigative than intensely language instructional. Teachers introduce their students to at least one new language, focusing on how language is formed and used. In FLEX-Exploratory, students are exposed to two or more languages while in FLEX-Limited Exposure, the focus is only on one new language (Lipton 15-16). While other programs expect much more actual language learning, the most important goal in a FLEX class is to learn about other cultures (Heining-Boynton 1-4). The focus in either is typically on the culture and comparison ACTFL standards and less involved with the communication standards. These programs can last anywhere from 3 weeks to multiple school years (Curtain 425-426) and typically, depending on the desired outcomes, needs and financial resources of the community, and grade levels included in the program, take up only from 2-5% of the school schedule (Lipton 15-16). Depending on these same goals and resources, the FLEX lessons can be taught either by the regular classroom teacher or by a foreign language specialist.
in self-contained foreign language classes. This means that districts don’t necessarily need to spend the extra money hiring a specialist (Heining-Boynton 1-4). Usually a program will include thematic, linguistic, and cultural units at the discretion of the teacher, and because of the variety materials are varied, plentiful, and effective (Lipton 15-16). Teachers can relate their topics of study to language arts, music, art, social studies, and other areas studied in their elementary school curriculum where they see it appropriate (Heining-Boynton 1-4). Relating what they learn in the FLEX classes to what they already know activates prior knowledge and gives the students ownership of the information. They are able to connect to it and understand it better because it is believable to them.

In a FLEX program, there is a very low expectation on communication aptitude. There is little to no foundation in the four language abilities (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), with any communication focused on developing verbal skills (Lipton 15-16). However, while the students may not become fluent in the target language, they are introduced to the idea of learning another language and how to go about it. The begin to understand how important it is to be able to communicate in another language, and are motivated to continue throughout their academic career (Curtain 425-426). Learning a language, as discussed earlier, has countless academic benefits that to shape a learner’s brain for the better. Students become aware of language itself, how we use it, and even become more aware of the way the English language works (Curtain 425-426). Whether in a Limited Exposure or Exploratory program, students are able to compare the foreign culture to their own, and begin to appreciate the similarities and differences. They develop a bond with this other culture at a young age, encouraging them to continue learning the language and about the culture in future studies (Lipton 15-16).
Focusing on culture in these FLEX programs can be a wonderful way to excite children about learning languages. However, as University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill professor Audrey L. Heining-Boynton discusses in “What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of FLEX, FLES, and Immersion,” even a well-meant program has the potential to fuel stereotypical views of a country and its people. The decisions of a classroom teacher can vary instructional content, and what is presented to the students can easily become less than accurate; a teacher who chooses to focus on folk dances and food portrays cultures in a one dimensional way. The “Five F’s” mentioned earlier can be a starting point if presented meaningfully and only as supplemental material; it can’t be everything. Heining-Boynton compares teaching the Mexican hat dance and tacos as essential elements of Mexican culture to teaching about American culture through square dancing and French fries (Heining-Boynton 1-4). That said, while FLEX can provide students with a meaningful introduction to language and culture, it needs to be implemented carefully and thoughtfully.

The second program has a similar acronym but a significantly different outcome than FLEX: FLES, or Foreign Language in Elementary Schools. The most common type of FLES program is Sequential FLES, where students take classes in one foreign language for a number of school years (Lipton 14-15). This lengthy study and contact with a single foreign language gives students the opportunity to learn to use the language in a more formal way, including communicating in a written and oral format, listening, and reading. Like FLEX, students are also introduced to the different cultures that speak the language being studied (Lipton 14-15). Students are likely to leave the program with a desire to continue learning the language and an interest in other cultures. Unlike FLEX, however, students in a Sequential FLES program come away with a language proficiency that allows the student to use the language more completely.
The students don’t look into a variety of languages like in Exploratory FLEX, but instead focus intensely on a single language for lessons that, depending on the district, vary from 2-5 times per week. These lessons last anywhere from 20-60 minutes each (Curtain 423-425), taking up a total of about 5-20% of the school schedule (Lipton 14-15).

Depending on the time commitment, skills of the teacher, the budget, goals, and support from the community, the results of FLES programs can differ. Some schools have the regular classroom teacher include foreign language lessons in her schedule, while others use an itinerant teacher who only teaches language and moves from class to class. Either way, the foreign language classes tend to have connections to the other areas studied in a typical elementary school classroom (Lipton 14-15); the teachers are able to relate the content and vocabulary to whatever else they are studying in the classroom. The possible topics that can be studied in a FLES class is broad, so teachers have an extensive selection of materials to work with and can choose the best quality that works best with their class’s needs (Curtain 423-425). One of the benefits of this method is that the students learn to converse about a variety of topics. They understand and are able to communicate meaningful ideas because they have specific, communicative experience with the language (Curtain 423-425). For years, they work with the same language, which gives them the time to become comfortable and familiar with it, as well as environment to use and practice it. Relating it to the other content areas in elementary school gives what they are learning even more power as it lets the children build background knowledge and give the foreign language a purpose (Heining-Boynton 1-4).

Like any program, FLES has its drawbacks. Despite the variety of materials available, the program can be difficult to keep going due to high expenses. A successful program depends on the support and enthusiasm of the entire school community, including teachers, administrators,
and parents. According to Heining-Boynton, much of the program’s success has to do with public relations (1-4). She says that “FLES programs can flounder or fail based on the advertising savvy or the amount of time available for advocacy on the part of the FLES specialist” (4). For foreign language programs to become a staple in elementary school curricula, more of the American population needs to get on board and understand how important it truly is.

Another popular, effective teaching method is Immersion. This method results in language proficiency higher than any of the other options because in an Immersion classroom, all of the typical elementary curriculum classes are taught in the target language, ranging from 50-100% of the school day (Lipton 16-17). In a Total Immersion classroom, instruction is solely in the second language for the first 2-3 years of the sequence. Students do all of their studies in that language, including learning to read (Curtain 421-423). Each year after that, English instruction increases until about 6th grade where 50% of learning takes place in English while 50% remains in the target language (Lipton 16-17). Typically, there isn’t any English at all until around 2nd or 3rd grade (Curtain 421-423), and the students are well versed in the second language. Other districts use partial Immersion, where some instruction is in English, from the beginning, like that in Fairfax, Virginia mentioned in “Why Should FLES Be Included in the Elementary Curriculum?” In these programs, the development of skills is mainly through implicit instruction because students are addressed, taught, and expected to communicate in the target language. They pick up the language as they go. However, because students learn even the most basic of literacy skills in the target language, some instruction, particularly in younger grades, is explicit. It seems that the mix of the two helps students to both acquire language implicitly through daily communication, as well as learn to be fluent and grammatically correct through explicit instruction and practice.
The goals of any Immersion program are to have students with a functional proficiency in the target language while still maintaining an average to high level of achievement in all other elementary subjects (Lipton 16-17). In an effective program, students master not only the language but also the content material, and have a high level of understanding the culture(s) that speak the second language. More of the ACTFL standards are covered in an Immersion classroom in comparison to FLEX and FLES, giving students communicative, cultural, and comparative skills superior to their peers in non-Immersion classrooms, as well as the ability to connect their own experiences to those of culturally different people around the world and around the country. Students are both learning and communicating in only the target language, and because they are learning material that they would be learning in a mainstream classroom, they are learning to discuss material in a second language on topics that are age appropriate (Curtain 421-423). These students, though English is used so little, still tend to achieve at an equal or superior level in English Language Arts in comparison to students who learn in mainstream schools (Curtain 421-423). They typically go on to study foreign language in their higher education and maintain an interest in other cultures (Lipton 16-17).

While in FLEX and FLES programs school districts have the option of choosing an educator who is language proficient but without teaching certification to instruct their students in language, Immersion classrooms utilize the same teacher for core subjects and the target language. These teachers need to be skilled and fluent in the target language, but also must be trained to meet the teaching standards of the state and district. Because of this, students in Immersion programs typically work with highly qualified, talented teachers (Lipton 16-17). Districts love this because while it may be demanding in terms of work for the teacher, no extra specialists are hired and the program becomes cost efficient in terms of labor expenses; only one
teacher is needed per classroom. Classrooms also don’t require the instructional materials that might be necessary in a non-Immersion classroom; the Math, Social Studies, and Science textbooks are also the foreign language textbooks (Heining-Boynton 1-4).

Another option with Immersion programs is Two-Way Immersion, or bilingual education. In these classrooms, the student body is mixed between English speakers and children who are native speakers of the target language. The curriculum is split 50/50 between English and target language instruction. Students are able to interact with native speakers of their second language in both social and academic contexts, practicing and learning together. The end goal for every student to be adept in the second language while they are still learning and expanding their skills in their first language (Curtain 421-423). Bilingual education keeps a child’s native culture alive, validating their personal experiences and their cultural history as important.

*Children can become bilingual in two ways: learning both languages at once, or learning the second after the first. Children of bilingual parents seem to have no problem with language development, speaking both with good to native ability in both (Berk 300). But when a child develops a second language after the first, and is only exposed to the second, problems can result in the development in both languages. For Hispanic children in the United States who learn English as their second language, semilingualism is a common problem that adds to the high rates of failure and dropout for this group. Semilingualism is when the native language is neglected and forgotten as a result of learning the second language. The student ends up stunted in both languages. The debate is whether time should be spent working with the first language if it takes away from success in the second, or if bilingual education is the more effective method, where mastery in the second begins while continuing to learn the first. The second would seem to be the better choice, as it allows the child to realize that their customs are valued, but at the*
same time prevents semilingualism. However, many states in the United States have declared English as the official language, meaning that school districts have no responsibility to teach minority children in any language other than English, even if it would help the student learn. This poses a serious problem for students attempting bilingualism, because in classes where teachers speak only English, students who are trying to learn this language don’t actually understand what is going on and end up feeling frustrated, bored, and withdraw from the class. The affective filter blocks the child from learning anything because the comprehensible input is too far above their heads. On the other hand, in classes where both languages are spoken, children who speak a language other than English can be more involved in the classroom and in discussions, and are able to learn more easily (Berk 300-301). While children can easily learn a new language, programs need to be developed so the student feels a desire to learn, not so that the student feels frustrated.

The question districts need to ask themselves before implementing an Immersion program is whether or not their students are going to receive a good education. An elementary school is meant to give students a basic understanding in the four major content areas: Math, Social Studies, Science, and English Language Arts. Attaining knowledge in these areas is the goal and while acquiring a second language is important, having a standard level of competence in the elementary curriculum areas are typically thought as more so. Materials are very limited for each subject, so no matter if a textbook is effective or not, if it is the only 2nd grade Science book in the target language, it has to be used. Materials typically need to be either translated or imported from a country that speaks the target language and are often not cohesive with the United States curricula and standards (Lipton 16-17). This can mean that students don’t learn necessary material and are behind in their grade level. Implicit instruction, the basis of
Immersion programs, doesn’t guarantee that students will naturally pick up the intricacies of the target language and this too can leave them behind in their grade level. As with any program, a district intending to implement an Immersion program needs to determine whether it will help or inhibit it’s students.

“Strange as it seems, language acquisition occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication” (Principles and Practice 1). In the late 1960s, psychologist James Asher developed a method of teaching foreign language that focused on Krashen’s ideas on communication (Curtain 40-48), and on Roger Sperry’s Right Brain Hypothesis. In order to internalize the information, Asher believed that learning should be done primarily through right brain functions, such as activating the various senses or through movement (Werstler 17-18). When learning to speak their first language, babies are constantly internalizing their surroundings. They observe their caretakers, listening to the various sounds and patterns of language and watching for visual cues and signals, making neural connections based on what they are exposed to. Long before they are able to communicate verbally, the child comprehends what is being said to them. Communication at this point can be seen as a conversation between the language and the body. The parent speaks, using oral language, and the infant answers physically (Segal Cook). Through the reinforcing spoken and body language the parent responds with, the infant grows to understand what is being spoken. For example, parents are constantly giving their baby instructions that can be answered physically, such as “Look at Daddy!” When the baby finally does ‘look at Daddy,’ and is given positive feedback both physically and verbally, they come to understand what that particular command requires in response. Though they cannot answer verbally yet, the child comprehends what is being said and can respond
through their actions (Asher 2-4). Speech appears progressively and imperfectly when the child has internalized enough; it comes naturally when the child is ready (Segal Cook).

Asher knew that even the youngest of children understand more than they can express, and that if this worked in acquiring their first language, it would also work in acquiring a second. “It is no accident that listening precedes speaking. It may be that listening comprehension maps the blueprint for the future acquisition of speaking” (Werstler 7). Asher’s statement was the premise for Total Physical Response, the method that taught by immersing the students in the target language and having them follow a teacher’s commands with physical movement. Between 1/3 and 1/2 of all statements made to young children are in the form of a command (Werstler 6-7), and Asher believed that learning a second language should mimic this. In a TPR classroom, students respond with body movement rather than by speaking. Because they aren’t immediately expected to respond orally, the students are able to internalize the new language until they are ready to produce it on their own (Asher 2-4). By allowing the children to produce spoken language when they are ready, rather than forcing it too soon, the affective filter is lowered and the students are more receptive to what is being taught.

Krashen’s Natural Approach focused on the idea that the student must comprehend the message behind what is being said to really acquire a language. The comprehensible input needs to be at a level where even if the students don’t know every word, they understand enough to comprehend the meaning of what is being expressed. In this approach, and in TPR, the students do not need to consciously learn grammatical rules because they aren’t necessarily necessary to comprehend the message (Werstler 13). The student focuses on expressing their message rather than whether or not what they are saying is grammatically correct. In his Monitor Hypothesis, Krashen stated that consciously learning grammar isn’t very important in speaking a second
language. What we pick up naturally while communicating with others is responsible for what we are able to produce, while the grammatical rules that we learn are our ‘monitors.’ These monitors help us to edit our speech, but only occur after the speech has been created and uttered (Natural Approach 30). When they are ready to respond orally, students are able to make guesses at correct grammar based on what they pick up in class communication, and focus on getting their message across; they use grammatical features that sound and feel right to them (Werstler 19).

The goal of any good foreign language program is for its students to be able to speak and understand the target language, and in Asher’s TPR method this is meant to be achievable without any English translation or explicit grammar instruction (Curtain 40-48). TPR presents vocabulary to students in a way that is believable and personal to the students; learning a language has a purpose that can be used immediately. In a TPR classroom, the teacher delivers commands to the students. At first, these commands involve the entire body and use large motor skills, such as standing up and sitting down. As they progress, the commands instruct the students to interact with pictures, maps, manipulatives, etc. The verbs students learn direct an action that they are able to do at that moment and so they relate what is being communicated verbally to a physically communicated response. Using movement activates the kinesthetic sensory system. The large motor skills the student uses in response to target language commands engage the student in a way that guarantees long-term retention of the vocabulary. It is comparable to learning to ride a bike or learning to swim- these are muscle memories that aren’t easily forgotten. By associating commands in a target language with a muscular movement, the body and mind are able to establish meaning in a concrete, retainable manner (Asher 2-4).
In the first year of TPR with a new foreign language, the first five or six weeks are referred to as the Classical TPR period, where 150 words are learned, practiced, and combined in a variety of different ways. The goal of these first few weeks is for the students to be completely comfortable and confident with all of the vocabulary (Ray 40). The first few times the teacher uses a new command, he or she models it for the students. Because the students are able to physically participate immediately, they feel successful immediately, gain confidence in their abilities as a language learner, and their affective filter lowers and allows the student to obtain and retain more information (Segal Cook). After a few repetitions with modeling, the teacher waits to use the action herself to check the students for comprehension, and eventually removes the model entirely (Ray 40). As the students get more and more comfortable, the teacher combines the commands in different ways to ensure that the students are never bored and the lessons are never overly predictable. The teacher can add in adjectives or adverbs that direct the student to move a certain way, and nouns that have the student move a certain body part or object (Curtain 30-48). By combining commands in novel ways the students learn to listen carefully and to be creative with the language. They also see that they understand more than they had realized, and thus build their confidence, when they are able to respond to language and commands expressed in ways they haven’t been exposed to before (Curtain 40-48). When the students feel ready, they can respond orally but they are not expected to. Moving at their own pace allows the students to feel completely confident when they do start to speak, but using movement allows them to feel knowledgeable and successful even before they are able to orally communicate. The first oral responses are typically one word replies and yes/no questions. Students then work in either in pairs or as a class, taking turns to give the commands (Curtain 40-48).
Teachers often find that students start feeling bored with the TPR lessons. They grow accustomed to the command and response sequence after a while, which Asher calls adaptation. A “TPR Wall” goes up and students hit a plateau. Blaine Ray, a California high school Spanish teacher, found that her students had hit this wall and came up with a way to continue using TPR, but in a new way that was interesting for her students ( Werstler 7). Ray’s new method was called Total Physical Response Storytelling. Using the vocabulary and sentence structure learned in Classical TPR and a few new phrases learned with associating motions, teachers would instruct their students through storytelling. Like TPR, students watch and listen to their teacher, growing comfortable with the language and vocabulary before being expected to use it orally (Curtain 40-48). Krashen believed that by appealing to the senses, information is better retained, and because this method uses aural, visual, and kinesthetic associations and stimuli, students are able to fix the new vocabulary in their memories ( Natural Approach 33). By using storytelling, the students feel a more personal connection with the new language. Events and occurrences within the story are fixed in the students’ memory through movement, and students are able to recall the words used to describe these memories and movements (Ray 40).

For TPRS to be effective, students should have a solid vocabulary base to build upon, such as the 150 words learned in a Classical TPR period. A TPRS unit revolves around one main story, teaching vocabulary necessary to understand the story through a number of mini stories and situations. In each mini story, students are generally taught 3-4 new words or phrases, and come up with motions to represent each (Werstler 20). The teacher can combine the words in different ways, having the students do the motions whenever they hear particular words or phrases. Due to time constraints, my TPRS classroom functioned a little differently. We did not include a Classical TPR period, instead working with TPRS as an isolated strategy. Though they
did not have the Classical TPR background to scaffold from, the story, a variation on Little Red Riding Hood, was familiar enough to serve as comprehensible input. I had told the students ahead of time that we were going to read a story, and even as complete novices with Spanish they began putting the words into a narrative within the first three words. Patterning the words, giving them a context in which they were meaningful and believable together, helped the students to remember the vocabulary and the accompanying movements. It seemed to be completely natural for them to form the words into a story, and happened without my prompting them to create the story.

Attaching movement to the vocabulary words is incredibly helpful in comprehension and in recall. I taught between 11 and 14 new words, seen in Appendix G, for the first three lessons in the context of mini stories (all four lesson plans and reflections can be found in Appendices A-D). The stories all revolved around the same theme and built on each other, so each week our main story grew. Using a SmartBoard to display a set of pictures, shown in Appendix L, representing each word to the students, we created movements together to stand for them. The stories all revolved around the same theme and built on each other, so each week our main story grew. At the beginning of each lesson, we would review the vocabulary from the previous day by going through the pictures on the SmartBoard while I told the story and did the motions. I saw that all of the students were soon able to do the motions, whether I modeled them or not, when we came to the associated word in the story (see video Section 4). What’s more, many times throughout the story the students were able to use the correct motion simply because they knew it was coming in the context of the rest of the story. For example, they knew that whenever they had to bring (italicized words are vocabulary words) something, the something was medicine. Even before I said medicine, they would have done the motion for both bring and medicine (can
be seen in video Section 16). Having the motions also allowed the students to have something to fall back on if they couldn’t remember a word orally. In a final assessment, discussed further in Appendix K, I had a group of three students do the movements of the story while I read it out loud and was pleased to see that all three knew the movements for almost every vocabulary word. By doing the movements as I spoke, they showed me that they comprehended the meaning of the story. As another assessment, I had a group of students volunteer to retell the story, in their own words, using the motions and vocabulary words. While they were retelling, the students would occasionally forget a word, but would be able to do the motion for the word they wanted to use, showing me they understood the story and the meaning behind what they were saying. This can be observed in video Section 15. Eventually, doing the motions would spark one of the student’s memories and they were able to verbally remind their classmates what the word was. In terms of vocabulary, using the motions for the words was a valuable tool in teaching students in an effective and memorable way.

Like in TPR, the teacher needs to constantly check for understanding; if students are having a hard time or the teacher is moving too quickly, they will tune the lesson out and the class time would be essentially lost and useless (Werstler 20). Teachers are able to do this by asking yes/no or either/or questions, pausing to allow students to fill in a particular word, or by having students correct mistakes she intentionally makes in the story (Curtain 40-48). For some words, especially when I knew the students knew the word well, I would pause and allow the students to fill in the blanks and by lesson 3, I found that the majority of my students were able to orally produce all of the vocabulary learned during lesson one and quite a few from lesson two with only picture or motion prompts from me (see video Section 4). During comprehension checks, I
would give them a motion and two word options, and the students nearly always were able to give me a correct response as to which word the motion represented (see video Section 9).

Questioning the students was difficult at first because many words aren’t specifically taught. In early lessons, because I had them repeat vocabulary and sentences from story after me, when I would ask a question, even if the tone of my voice and my body language were telling them it was a question, they would repeat the question instead of answering, as is seen in video Section 7. In later lessons, however, they came to understand when I was asking a question and when I wasn’t. For example, though I had never introduced them to the word “who,” when I asked the students who a particular character was and showed them a picture, they were able to tell me. The words I used were all new to them but through my body language, tone, and props they knew what I was asking of them. The same was true for asking the students to repeat the words after me verbally in addition to using motions. Though they didn’t know the word for “word” in Spanish, and we hadn’t learned the word for “speak” yet, by using encouraging gestures, asking for oral language while pointing to my mouth, and repeating the word verbally myself a few times, they implicitly understood what I was asking of them and were able to respond correctly. An example of this can be found at video Section 6.

With each retelling of the story, the teacher embellishes and adds. Students answer guided questions, practice retelling the story with their peers, and help the teacher to revise the story or come up with a new ending. As a class, they work with the vocabulary in different ways to build on the story. After the series of mini stories, the teacher will tell the main story. At this point the students should be familiar and comfortable with the language, and are able to act out the vocabulary and phrases from the mini stories. Students can then retell the story in their own words and create their own story using vocabulary from the entire unit (Werstler 20). When I
told the main story to my students, I was pleased to see that most had remembered a good number of the words and were able to orally produce them. They had retained the motions, and for most the spoken word, for the vocabulary we had learned in mini stories, and were able to demonstrate their comprehension through active verbal and/or physical participation.

An issue I found in the TPRS method was with grammar. While the implicit instruction of the TPRS lessons helped my students to acquire a great number of vocabulary words, the grammatical intricacies that we used in each lesson were lost on most students. I found that most had trouble with syntax, using words in the order we use them in English rather than the way we had used them during each lesson. For example, to say “Uncle Wolf’s house” in Spanish is “casa de Tío Lobo,” and while we used that form in every telling of the story, when asked to retell the story the volunteers used “Tío Lobo’s casa” each time. This can be found at video Section 18. Most students were also lost when it came to plural versus singular nouns. Because the first time we used the words for hunter and for wolf they were used in the plural form, even when I used the singular forms and the students were repeating immediately after me they would use the plural (shown at video Section 10). This wasn’t always the case; a few students were able to innately make the distinction, such as that shown in video Section 12, and given time perhaps more would have as well. Some students were able to pick up filler phrases that weren’t specifically taught, such as when we talked about the house “in the” woods (see video Section 5). We had learned the words for both house and woods, and because we had used the words for “in the” so often the students knew them even though they had not explicitly learned them. One of the main issues with the implicit instruction that TPRS utilizes is that not all students do naturally pick up these grammatical workings. For a student to learn to speak a foreign language proficiently, I believe that TPRS is a wonderful tool and that Krashen’s Natural Approach works
well to a point. However, when students are repeatedly making the same grammatical errors, explicit instruction would help the students to understand these details before the errors become habit.

Students build their confidence by being able to actively participate in a TPRS lesson whether they feel comfortable enough to be engaged verbally or not. By working with words and phrases in a variety of ways, they are able to experiment with sentence structure, and because they are focusing on getting across a message, they can build their oral fluency (Werstler 6). Though there are a number of issues, in TPRS lessons the students learn in a way that is believable and meaningful to them. The stories allow them to connect personally with the language and thus internalize and truly acquire the language.
Conclusion

It is clear that learning a foreign language is critical in today’s society, as well as that elementary curricula should include foreign language education. As a country, we have included foreign language in the school curriculum for hundreds of years. Though its popularity and presence in schools has come and gone in phases, its importance today is great. Language education is essential to international relations and foreign policy, giving our country a place in the global community, and making our own country a more stable place to live. Beyond that, the personal benefits of proficiency in a second language are extensive. It allows us to communicate with people from around the world and to truly be citizens of the world.

A child’s brain is in the stage of development that best allows the student to learn a second language. Because the brain is still maturing, it still has the plasticity to make the neural connections necessary for acquiring a language with native-like ability. According to Krashen, children acquire the language through exposure and experience, picking up on language details as they as they are in contact with the target language. I observed my own students using untaught details within the Spanish language within just four lessons, and am sure of their ability to go even further with language given more instruction and practice. Young students are also a point where they feel most comfortable taking the risks that are necessary in learning a language. For the most success with foreign language, a student must first be exposed to it as a child.

Immersing students in language allows them to access language and use it as fully as possible. They gain language skills from what they are experiencing as well as from what they are taught. Students learn with purpose and in a context that has meaning, making it memorable. The Total Physical Response method immerses students in the language and allows them to interact with it in a way that is similar to how they acquired their first language. An infant listens
to and observes those around him or her, picking up on the meaning of words through what they are able to observe as the words are spoken. Their first means of communication is through physical movement, responding to the words spoken to them with action. Total Physical Response is similar in that students learn through immersion in the language, responding physically to commands until they are ready to participate fully. Total Physical Response Storytelling goes further by having students tell a story through movements that they develop to represent vocabulary words.

I found Total Physical Response Storytelling to be an effectual method of instruction. The students were involved and excited, had fun, and learned a great deal in just four lessons. Using the motions in response to verbal communication before they were expected to respond orally helped them to feel comfortable with the language before they needed to use it themselves. Learning through a story gave the words a purpose and a context that made them meaningful to the students. They were able to recall words because they had significance and were immediately usable. The students learned implicitly, picking up on the meaning of 37 vocabulary words in just four lessons through pictures, movement, and context clues. However, beyond vocabulary this was not enough to ensure that every student really learned. Many of the students picked up on some grammar and connecting phrases throughout the story, but without explicit instruction many others would continue making grammatical mistakes that would undoubtedly become habit. Total Physical Response Storytelling is a method I would recommend for any foreign language classroom. Its use as a tool in an Immersion classroom would be well received and beneficial. However, its use as a sole teaching means without some explicit instruction would leave students with different learning styles at a loss. To effectively teach students a second
language they should be fully immersed in the language, receiving both implicit and explicit instruction.

According to Sandra Savignon, “Learning to speak another’s language means taking one’s place in the human community. It means reaching out to others across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Language is far more than a system to be explained. It is our most important link to the world around us. Language is culture in motion. It is people interacting with people” (Curtain 395). From improved academic achievement to being able to further contribute in the global community, learning a foreign language has plentiful benefits. Because children pick up languages more quickly than adults and adolescents, it makes much more sense to begin teaching foreign language in elementary schools. It would help American citizens intellectually, as well as culturally, socially, and economically, and create a better future for this country. To do this, the school boards need to place compulsory foreign language programs into the primary school curriculum.
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Appendix A
Lesson Plan 1 (implemented March 16, 2012)

Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL)
1.1 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
1.2 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Objectives
- Teacher will introduce students to the TPRS method by speaking only in Spanish to the students
- Students will participate in activity by moving as the teacher does, and expressing ideas on what different vocabulary heard from the teacher and seen in pictures through movement
- Students will draw a picture to represent what they believe was discussed in Spanish

Materials
- Passport Folders
- Potato stamp (wolf face)
- Crayons/Pencils
- Promethean Board
- Computer
- Picture PowerPoint (TPRS Day 1)
- Video Camera
- Props:
  - Little Red Riding Hood cape
  - Basket
  - Story

Procedure
1. Introduce students to TPRS method through PowerPoint on the Smartboard- using pictures and movements, explain to students that we are going to tell a story through movement (only speak in Spanish).
2. Have students come up with the movements for each word introduced today (libro, movimiento, familia, lobo, casa, bosque, mamá, hijo, tío, enfermo, vayás, medicina, desconocidos, and cazadores).
3. Giving students one word and two movements, have students pick which movement correctly represents each vocabulary word to practice.
4. Tell the first story segment using motions. Have the students follow along with movements as the teacher tells the story.
5. Have students return to their seats and draw what they think happened in the story so far on “Día Uno” in their passport folders. As students draw, move throughout the class to stamp their passports.

Reflection

Today was my first TPRS lesson; it didn’t go too badly! I used a SmartBoard to show my PowerPoint to the students, who I knew well from student teaching earlier this year. Each page of the PowerPoint had a different picture on it with which I introduced the name of the word and asked the students to help me find a motion to represent the word. Because I was speaking in Spanish, it was really difficult at first. The students didn’t know what I meant when I would ask them to come up with a motion for the first bunch of words because all of my instructions were in Spanish. Today I introduced two instruction words (book and movement), and 13 story words (family, wolf, house, woods, mother, son, uncle, sick, medicine, go, bring, stranger, and hunter). Some words were really hard to get across to the students, especially stranger- a method that was suggested to me was to give the students two options with motion to represent a word, one that is correct and one that is very clearly wrong, and have the students choose which motion is correct for the word. Being able to do the right movement boosts the children’s confidence and gets them more involved. I was able to see this a few times with my students. To practice words, I would give my students the motions for two of our words and ask which represented one of them. For example, I would show wolf and mother, whose motions were very different, and ask which represented wolf. All of the students would be able to show me and it got all of them moving. Next lesson I need to try this with new words in addition to practice words.

Another element that I didn’t include was having the students say the words along with me. In my next lesson, when I teach the movement for a particular word, I’ll have the students say it along with me so that they can begin producing words in addition to responding to them. This should lead to other activities and practices that we will be able to do.

Today I was able to see how anxious the students were. I was feeling incredibly nervous because even though I knew the students well, it was my first Spanish lesson with them and a new method to me. However, they were also anxious. The couple students who are usually my class clowns and eager for the center of attention were actually some of the most timid. A few of the students picked up quickly and others looked a little lost until the end. When I had them sit down at the end of the lesson to draw a picture of what had happened in the story, some began right away while others didn’t seem to know where to begin. Hopefully including students in the speaking in addition to the motions, and helping them to come up with motions will make the lesson flow more smoothly next time so that they understand better.

Another thing I noticed was how quickly the students started narrating the story. I started by telling them, again, in Spanish, that we were going to read a book with movement about a family (italicized words were the vocabulary words that were done with movement). Almost immediately, they put it together to be a book about a family that’s moving. When I added that it was a family of wolves that lived in a house in the woods, they put it together to tell me that it was the story of a family of that moved to a house in the woods and were attacked by wolves. Though this was incorrect, the point was that they began to put the words into a story. The words
meant more to them because they were in the context of a story that they knew (I showed them a little red riding hood cape and told them it was a libro about ‘Capucita Roja,’ and they were able to tell me who they thought she was.

Though TPRS does not typically include any English, I found myself very tempted to clarify in English with the students, especially when they were confused about ‘movement’ versus ‘moving to another house.’ Immersion can put a lot of pressure on both students and teachers in the beginning, but with time and practice it is a very effective method that I’m sure I won’t regret using with my students. The students all guessed what the pictures were of aloud in English and while this is not usually a part of the storytelling, I let it slide today so that they could start understanding sooner. Next class I will have to work on that more.

Finally, I was shocked at how much preparation goes into one 40-minute lesson. Though I’ve done student teaching and seen what goes into classroom lessons, rewriting a story to simplify it, planning motions, and finding pictures to represent each motion took an incredibly long time. On top of that, I’m assessing the students for comprehension by having them draw what happened in what we talked about that day in a folder booklet- for each folder, I stenciled it to make it look like a passport with a handmade stencil, and am making stamps for each lesson to stamp their ‘passports.’ After spending weeks in preparation, the lesson went quickly and maybe not as well as I would have liked. However, it was definitely something I learned from and anything that went wrong seems like it will be fixable. I’m happy to have the first lesson done and excited for the next one so I can keep practicing with my students.
Appendix B
Lesson Plan 2 (implemented March 22, 2012)

Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL)
1.3 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
1.4 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Objectives
- Teacher will introduce students to new vocabulary through pictures, orally presenting it to the students, and movement
- Students will participate in activity by moving as the teacher does, and expressing ideas on what different vocabulary heard from the teacher and seen in pictures through movement
- Students will repeat words and motions after the teacher, using the language both physically and orally
- Students will draw a picture to represent what they believe was discussed in Spanish

Materials
- Passport Folders
- Potato stamp (paw print)
- Crayons/Pencils
- Promethean Board
- Computer
- Picture PowerPoint (TPRS Day 1)
- Video Camera
- Props:
  - Little Red Riding Hood cape
  - Basket
  - Story

Procedure
6. Have students explain the method and how to participate in the lesson to students absent in the previous lesson (English).
7. From here, only use Spanish. Review words with the students on the Smartboard from the previous lessons. The teacher will state the word and do the motion with the students. The students will then repeat the word while doing the motions.
8. While reviewing individual vocabulary words, use them in the context of the story. Have students repeat words, phrases, and movements as they present themselves.
9. Introduce students to the new vocabulary words for the day (anduvo, encontró, abuela, hola, ¿cómo te llamas?, habla, me llamo, ¿adónde vas?, ver, terrible, escopeta, cazar,
escapar) orally and in the context of the story. Let the students pick between an old movement used for another word and a new movement which represents the new vocabulary word.

10. When students seem ready, have them come up with movements for new vocabulary words.

11. Practice with the words by giving students two movement options and having them pick which represents the given word, and by asking yes/no questions about whether or not movements represent given words.

12. Tell the story through part 2, and have the students participate orally and physically by repeating movements and words after the teacher.

13. Have students return to their seats and draw a picture of what happened in today’s story on “Día Dos” in their passport folders. Encourage them to write down any words and label what they can in their pictures phonemically. As they draw, stamp their passport folders.

Reflection

Today went so well! The students understood better what I wanted from them and were able to participate more fully because of that. I think overall, we all felt more confident with how the lessons were meant to work and that showed in better progress. I had the students start saying the words and repeating after me verbally rather than just doing the motions. At first, the students were very timid. It was interesting seeing that they knew I wanted them to speak and repeat after me orally when they didn’t know the words I used to tell them to speak. All I did was say “Con los movimientos y las palabras,” repeat the word with distinct articulation a few times, and use an encouraging hand gesture. At first, they didn’t speak up very loudly or with much confidence but it grew on them (see video Section 6). Most timidly whispered the words, and I could tell that they were nervous and unsure. After a few times, they completely understood that when I gave a word, I wanted them to repeat it verbally and physically.

Though they were speaking, the students remained pretty quiet throughout the lesson. I found that they were far more comfortable repeating words than they were at producing. Even when I would give them an option with a movement and two words to choose from, they were very quiet and few students tended to answer, so I switched to other practice exercises to help build their confidence. They were constantly looking for approval from their peers; whenever a student would make a small mistake, say they wrong phrase, or do the wrong motion, I saw that they would look around to see if their classmates noticed. For the next few questions, they would be a little less vocal, but by participating by following along with my movements they’d start feeling more comfortable again.

I tried a few new things that seemed to work well for the students. In the last lesson, I expected them to come up with motions. When I’d give them a word I tried to get them to figure out what it meant and come up with a motion to represent it. This was really too much for the students so for today’s lesson, I had motions ready for each word and let the students choose whether my new motion or a motion representing one of our previous words went along with the new vocabulary word. They were always able to tell me correctly that the new motion went along with the new word. Because they were never stumped, they felt more confident with the new
words. They were a lot more enthusiastic in using the movements today than they were on day one and I think feeling successful made them surer of what they were doing.

I also used a lot more questioning with the students. While telling the story, I would stop and ask a question, in Spanish obviously, like “The family lives in a house… In a house where?” Adding questions when they were expecting narrative through some students off a little. They were confused at times but I think it helped them to see that the language could be used in different ways than exactly how it went in the story. At first, they had no idea that I was even asking a question and would repeat the question as they would a part of the narrative (see video Section 7). I had to use a lot of modeling here and would do so by asking a question, waiting a second and then answering it myself. I’d do this a few times and then have the students answer the same question to get them into the habit of answering questions.

After I looked through the students’ pictures, shown in Appendix M, I was so excited to see that many of the students had begun labeling their pictures. The spelling was incorrect in almost every picture, but almost all were phonemically correct. They knew select words and were comfortable enough with them to write them down! I do think that TPRS is lacking in this area. A student can acquire an incredible amount of language orally and aurally, but a major part is knowing the grammar and knowing how to spell. However, the way I see it is that this method aims to help students learn a second language the same way an infant learns his or her first: first aurally, then orally, then in writing. I’m getting my students comfortable communicating in the language, and later on in their studies they will learn the intricacies and rules of the language.

As a final note, I used “es” too often. At best, it was unnecessary and at worst it was damaging to the student’s learning. I didn’t realize that this might throw the students off until introducing the word “escopeta.” Because it starts with “es,” I realized that many of the students wouldn’t distinguish whether “es” was a part of the word itself or whether they were two separate words. In the next few lessons, I have to remember to just give the word itself without any defining verbs surrounding it that will only confuse the students.
Appendix C
Lesson Plan 3 (implemented March 26, 2012)

Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL)
1.5 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
1.6 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Objectives
● Teacher will introduce students to new vocabulary through pictures, orally presenting it to the students, and movement
● Students will participate in activity by moving as the teacher does, and expressing ideas on what different vocabulary heard from the teacher and seen in pictures through movement
● Students will repeat words and motions after the teacher, using the language both physically and orally
● Students will draw a picture to represent what they believe was discussed in Spanish

Materials
● Passport Folders
● Potato stamp (wolf head)
● Crayons/Pencils
● Promethean Board
● Computer
● Picture PowerPoint (TPRS Day 1)
● Video Camera
● Props:
  o Little Red Riding Hood cape
  o Basket
  o Story

Procedure
14. Review with students how the method works and what we talked about in the story. Have students raise their hands and give any words they remember from previous lessons and the movement that goes along with them (English).
15. From here, only use Spanish. Review words with the students on the Smartboard from the previous lessons. Ask the students what the movement is for words on the board. Encourage them to participate orally and with movement. No student should be expected to produce oral language on their own but all are expected to participate orally by repeating after the teacher. Review the words in the context of the story.
16. While reviewing, pause and allow the students to fill in the blanks of the story with the words that fit. All of the students should be participating in some way (orally producing the word, producing the motion of word, or following along with their peers). Pause mainly for words from day one where the students seem most comfortable to help them build their confidence.

17. Introduce students to the new vocabulary words for the day (avisar, conocía, atajos, esconder/Escondido, buscó, tejido, feliz, marchar, desobedecer, valiente) orally and in the context of the story. Let the students pick between an old movement used for another word and a new movement that represents the new vocabulary word.

18. When students seem ready, have them come up with movements for new vocabulary words.

19. Practice with the words by giving students two movement options and having them pick which represents the given word, and by asking yes/no questions about whether or not movements represent given words.

20. Tell the story through part 2, and have the students participate orally and physically by repeating movements and words after the teacher. Pause often, depending on how comfortable the students are with certain words, to let them fill in the story orally as well as with their movements.

21. Have students return to their seats and draw a picture of what happened in today’s story on “Día Tres” in their passport folders. Encourage them to write down any words and label what they can in their pictures phonemically. As they draw, stamp their passport folders.

**Reflection**

Today went wonderfully! The students have made so much progress. They were a little more hyper than usual and I think much of it stemmed from seeing how successful they were. The beginning of my lesson started much like the second lesson, reviewing words and motions from previous lessons. Many of the students were able to produce the words with little to no prompting, unlike previous lessons, especially ones from the first lesson (mamá, hijo, casa, tío, enfermo, medicina). They said these words loudly and with confidence whenever they’d come up in the story (video Sections 1 and 2). We went through the words from lessons one and two, putting the words into story context and after the first 3 or so words, I realized how little input the students needed from me. I started giving them the motions rather than the oral words when the next picture would show, and many could say the word (video Section 4). For some parts, the students were even able to add in appropriate articles between their words, such as “vaya a la casa” (italicized words are the vocabulary words taught with picture and motion), or “la casa en el bosque.”

In certain sections of the story, I found that even if students didn’t remember the word right away, they remembered the picture, the motion, and how to fit it into the story (video Section 3). For certain ones of these words, mostly lesson 2 words but a few from lesson 1, the students would use the English word that they knew was correct and incorporate the movement, even if they couldn’t produce the Spanish. The students were far more comfortable with movement than they have been in the past lessons, and understood what was expected of them with both new words, picking between options, and using the correct word verbally when given the motion.
They looked both to me and to each other for confirmation, often timid with words at first but ready to say them or act them out when their peers were doing the same thing.

One thing I noticed in this lesson was how the students repeated everything (video Section 7). When I would ask a question and embed it within a sentence, it would throw them off— they wouldn’t understand that it was a question and would repeat the question word. They repeat any tone, inflection, and accent that I would put into the words as well; when my voice would raise, their voices would raise and they would stress the same parts of the words that I would.

I love teaching with this method because the kids are excited and having fun, really seem to be remembering the vocabulary, and do well when they learn the words in context. However, some issues could come up in this method, like students learning only one form of certain verbs and only one form of different words. So that they could use their movement, I tried to repeat certain verbs as often as possible in the same form and tense of the verb. However, I’m not sure how this works as students get more advanced. Even in my one story, I wanted to use the same verb in a hundred different ways but when I’d try the different forms, the students wouldn’t know that the different forms all revolved around the same word, meaning, and motion. The same is true for nouns in plural or singular form (see video Sections 10-12). Because the first time in the story we used the plural form of hunters (cazadores), the students would use that form when the singular form was necessary, even after I had used the singular form multiple times.

Finally, something I definitely need to keep in mind is that just because the children showed initial success doesn’t mean I should stop with the support methods I used in previous lessons. Because the students were so great with word production from earlier lessons, I expected too much of them too soon compared to how they learned words before. They were better able to come up with their own motions during this lesson but I expected production rather than repetition sooner than they were ready. I have to remember during lessons that the reason they know and can produce words now, during lesson three, is because we went slowly with lots of repetition during lessons one and two.
Appendix D
Lesson Plan 4 (implemented March 30, 2012)

Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL)
1.7 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
1.8 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Objectives
• Students will demonstrate their ability to understand the vocabulary words studied in this unit through body movements.
• Students will be able to fill out a worksheet, matching pictures looked at in class to the correct word, either in Spanish or in English.
• Two pairs of students will retell the story, using words and/or motions, to their peers.

Materials
• Passport Folders
• Assessment worksheet
• What Did You Think? worksheet
• Crayons/Pencils
• Promethean Board
• Computer
• Picture PowerPoint (TPRS Day 1)
• Video Camera
• Props:
  o Little Red Riding Hood cape
  o Basket
  o Story

Procedure
- Ask students to recall what happened in the previous lesson as a warm up.
- Quickly move through the TPRS pictures on the Promethean board, leading the students through the vocabulary words and movements as a warm up.
- Have one pair of students come to the front and act out the story as I read using only motions.
- Have another pair of students come to the board and tell the story using movement and words.
- Read through the story with the movements, having students fill in words when they can, repeating when they can.
Go through the story again with all of the students- tell the story and have them participate in it actively without the pictures. I’ll read without movements, they will use movement whenever they hear a familiar word.

Have all students return to their seats- half of the class will have the control test, a worksheet where they match the pictures we’ve practiced with to English words, while the other half will match the same pictures to Spanish words.

As they finish, students should fill the “Day 4” page in their passport folders. Students should first write what they think of Total Physical Response Storytelling and our classes together, then on the back or in any extra space they can decorate with pictures and words from the story.

Reflection

Today was great, but I was sad to end the project. I wanted to do one day with no new words, and just review and assess what the kids had learned. We started by having them tell me a few words that they knew, and then I went through the PowerPoint, using the words in their context of the story. I started by only doing the movements and letting the kids fill in the word orally, as well as repeating the movement that I did. They sounded confident and sure of themselves for the first group of words. As soon as I put a picture on the SmartBoard, the students would start doing the motion for the word, even before I did. Some of the words, especially words from later lessons, gave the kids a little bit of trouble and I found that verbs were much more difficult for them to remember, even if they knew the motion. Another problem, which I noticed in an earlier lesson, was that the students had trouble with plural and singular. Today I said the word for hunter a few times and had them repeat it each time. However, even when repeating after me a few used the plural instead of the singular. Even with words they are very familiar with, that we use repeatedly throughout the story like the word for wolf, gave the students trouble. They would say the plural when it wasn’t necessary (video Sections 10-12). A few times, when the students had difficulty filling in a blank or remembering a particular word, I would repeat it a few times and then say “Una qué?” and almost all were able to tell me what the word was. This showed me that they’re finally beginning to understand questioning; before they would repeat my question instead of answering. They’re still picking up on my tone, which is great. Even questions that I had never asked them before, using vocabulary they didn’t know (like the word for who) they were able to answer. I used the name Caperucita Roja and asked them who it was in Spanish, and showed them a Little Red Riding Hood cape. Because they saw me hold up the cape and because they heard the pitch change indicating a question, they knew exactly what I was asking and were able to answer me correctly. Any intonations or accent that I use while speaking, they are able to use the same.

Much of today’s lesson was spent on assessment, which is discussed in Appendix L.
Appendix E
Main story, divided into the three sections taught as mini stories. Adapted from “La Abuelita de Caperucita Roja,” by Violeta Monreal and Fernando Lalana

Érase una vez una familia de lobos que vivía en una casa en el bosque. Mamá Loba dijo a su hijo:

“Lobico, hijo mío, Tu tío, el Lobo Feroz, está enfermo. Quiero que vayas a su casa y le lleves esta medicina.”
“Sí, mami,” dijo Lobico.
“No hables con desconocidos y cuidado con los cazadores!”

Lobico andó por el bosque con la medicina para su tío. Al poco rato se encontró con una abuela en el bosque.

“Hola, guapo,” le dijo la abuela. “Cómo te llamas?
Aunque mamá Loba le había dicho que no hablase con desconocidos, Lobico dijo a la abuela:
“Me llamo Lobico. Y usted?”
“Yo me llamo Marie Roja y soy la abuela de Caperucita Roja.”
“Mucho gusto,” dijo Lobico.
“Y adónde vas?” Le preguntó la abuela.
“Voy a ver a mi tío, el Lobo Feroz. Le llevo medicina porque está enfermo y no puede salir de casa.”

Entonces ocurrió algo terrible: Lobico vio que la abuela tiene una escopeta grande! La abuela de Caperucita Roja era una abuela cazadora!
“Por fin voy a cazar a ese Lobo Feroz! Ahora que está enfermo no podrá escapar! Ja, ja, ja!”

Y la abuela de Caperucita Roja andó a la casa de tío Lobo Feroz con su grande escopeta de cazador.

“Tengo que avisar a mi tío!” dice Lobico. Lobico conocía todos los atajos a la casa de su tío.
“Hola, Lobico! Me has traído el medicina?”
“Déjate de medicina, tío Feroz. La abuela de Caperucita Roja viene hacia aquí con su escopeta. Tenemos que escondernos!”
Cuando llegó, la abuela de Caperucita Roja buscó en todo de la casa pero no encontró al Lobico ni su tío Lobo Feroz Por fin, la abuela de Caperucita Roja por vencida y se marchó. Lobico y su tío, que se habían escondido al tejado de la casa, y eran muy felices al verla marchar.
“Es terrible a desobedecer a tu mama, Lobico,” le dijo su tío, “Pero has sido muy valiente al venir a avisarme.”
“Gracias, tío Feroz,” dijo Lobico.
Y así fue. Al entrar en la casa del Lobo, la abuela de Caperucita Roja se contagió la enfermedad. Se puso muy enferma y Caperucita Roja fue a visitar su abuela y encontró el Lobo Feroz…
Appendix F

Main story, divided into the three sections taught as mini stories translated to English. Adapted from “La Abuelita de Caperucita Roja,” by Violeta Monreal and Fernando Lalana

Once upon a time a family of wolves lived in the middle of the woods. One morning, Mother Wolf said to her son,

“Lobico, my son, you’re uncle, the Ferocious Wolf, is sick. I want you to go to his house and bring him this medicine.”

“Yes, Mother,” said Lobico.

“Don’t talk to strangers and be careful of the hunters!”

Lobico walked through the woods with the medicine for his uncle. Soon he met a grandmother in the woods.

“Hello, handsome,” said the grandmother. “What’s your name?”

Although Mother Wolf had said not to talk to strangers, Lobico said to the grandmother,

“My name is Lobico. And you?”

“My name is Maria Roja and I’m Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother.

“Pleased to meet you,” said Lobico.

“And where are you going?” asked the grandmother.

“I’m going to see my uncle, the Ferocious Wolf. I’m bringing him medicine because he’s sick and can’t leave his house.”

Then something terrible happened. Lobico saw that the grandmother had a huge rifle!

Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother was a hunter grandmother!

“Finally I’m going to hunt this Ferocious Wolf! Now that he is sick he won’t be able to escape! Ha ha ha!” And Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother walked to Uncle Ferocious Wolf’s house with her huge hunting rifle.

“I have to warn my uncle!” said Lobico. Lobico knew all of the shortcuts to his uncle’s house.

“Hi Lobico! Have you brought me the medicine?”

“Forget about the medicine, Uncle Ferocious! Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother is coming here now with her rifle! We need to hide!”

When she arrived, Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother searched the whole house but didn’t find Lobico or his uncle. Finally, Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother admitted defeat and left. Lobico and his uncle, who had hid on the roof of the house, were very happy to see her leave.

“It’s terrible to disobey your mother, Lobico,” said his uncle, “but you were very brave to come and warn me.”

“Thank you, Uncle Ferocious,” said Lobico.

And so it went. By entering Wolf’s house, Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother caught his sickness. She became very sick and when Little Red Riding Hood went to visit her grandmother she met the Ferocious Wolf…
### Appendix G

List of words taught through pictures and motions with how many times they were used throughout the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Libro (0)</td>
<td>Anduvo (2)</td>
<td>Avisar (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movimiento (0)</td>
<td>Encontró (3)</td>
<td>Conocía (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia (1)</td>
<td>Abuela (14)</td>
<td>Atajo (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobo (8)</td>
<td>Hola (2)</td>
<td>Esconder/Escondido (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa (8)</td>
<td>¿Cómo te llamas? (1)</td>
<td>Buscó (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosque (3)</td>
<td>Habla (2)</td>
<td>Tejado (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamá (4)</td>
<td>Me llamo (2)</td>
<td>Félices (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijo (2)</td>
<td>¿Adónde vas? (1)</td>
<td>Marchar (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tío (11)</td>
<td>Ver (2)</td>
<td>Desobedecer (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfermo (4)</td>
<td>Terrible (2)</td>
<td>Valiente (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayas (1)</td>
<td>Escopeta (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicina (5)</td>
<td>Cazar (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desconocidos (2)</td>
<td>Escapar (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cazador (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H
This was a final assessment given on Day 4

vaya

enfermo

medicina

ver

tío

bosque

familia

habla

casa

lobo
Appendix I
This was a control for the final assessment given on Day 4

go
sick
medicine
see
uncle
forest
family
speak
house
Wolf
Appendix J

This was given to the students on Day 4 for their input on the TPRS method.

What Do You Think?

What did you like about our lessons these last few weeks?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

What didn’t you like about these lessons?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Would you like to do more of these lessons? Why or why not?
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

On a scale of 1-10, how well do you think you know the words we learned? _____________

Any other comments:
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Appendix K
Reflection on Student Evaluations and Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Ability</td>
<td>Students individual abilities are not observable</td>
<td>Some individual student abilities can be observed</td>
<td>Students individual abilities are clearly observable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>It is unclear whether or not the students understand</td>
<td>It can be seen whether or not student understand</td>
<td>It is very clear whether or not the students comprehend what is said or written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Skills</td>
<td>Students don't use any oral skills, or it is unclear whether they are able to use them</td>
<td>Students use oral skills and their abilities are observable as a group</td>
<td>Students individual oral abilities are observable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary Improvement</td>
<td>It is unclear where students or lessons need to improve</td>
<td>It can be observed where students or lessons need improvement</td>
<td>It is very clear where improvement is necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Story
Individual Ability (1), Comprehension (3), Oral Skills (2), Necessary Improvement (3)

I did a number of assessments with the students during our final lesson, the first being simply going through the story at a pace quicker than usual, without as many comprehension pauses. The students did very well, especially at the beginning. I noticed that children who weren’t sure of themselves, particularly a few of the girls, were very shy about following along with the movements. This surprised me because we had been doing them for a number of weeks, and they didn’t need to be able to produce the movements, only follow along. A problem we ran into was that the motion for “hello” and the motion for “warn” were very similar. I imagine if our motions were similar when we had only 4 lessons of words that if this was a regular part of the class this would get overwhelming. Overall, the students remembered more of the words than I had expected. I knew they had words from earlier lessons down, but many remembered even later lesson verbs. As an assessment strategy, this was very effective. Whether the students understood what I was saying or not was clear, as well as my ability to assess their oral skills. However, it was more effective in judging the group as a whole than individual students. When one student or did a motion incorrectly, I was able to tell that that student did not understand the word. When all of the students faltered, I knew that my own instruction needed to change for that word, and that we needed to go back and review it more, so where improvement was necessary was very observable. However, the students were able to rely on each other in using movements, and I could not assess individual oral abilities in this assessment.
Small Group Comprehension
Individual Ability (3), Comprehension (3), Oral Skills (1), Necessary Improvement (3)

My second assessment was to use a group of three students and have them do the movements (they didn’t need to use any oral language) as I read the story aloud. For some parts of the story, they knew what was coming or that certain words went together (such as bring the medicine), which can be seen in video Section 16, and would do the next movement right away, before I even said the word. For a few words, they looked to each other and because there were only three, they were sometimes reluctant to do a movement they were unsure of. All of the words from lesson 1 they were very comfortable with. In some parts, they were even able to pick up on different verb tenses. For example, the command form of ‘bring’ (lleves) was the word associated with the motion, but when I used the verb in first person (llevo), they still used the correct motion (see video Section 17). Other verbs, such as the infinitive and the past tense of ‘to see’ weren’t as easy for the students to connect and they only used the motion for the particular tense we had learned. During certain parts of the story, I found myself incorporating movement to clarify and narrate the story in parts where the students hadn’t learned the vocabulary words. For example, when the mother wolf would say “Lobico, my son,” I would put my hand on my heart for my, even though it wasn’t a part of our vocabulary words. When the son would tell his uncle “Forget about the medicine,” I would use a dismissive gesture for ‘forget about.’ In both cases, one of the three students repeated my gesture even though it wasn’t something they had learned (see video Sections 13 and 14). They’re so observant! Towards the end of the story, the students forgot a few words. They mixed up a few words from the last day of instruction, particularly the words for roof (tejado) and shortcut (atajo). They missed a few motions they knew well, such as the word for grandmother, which they had been able to do many other times throughout the story. I believe that because it was towards the end, they were starting to get nervous and antsy. In this assessment, I was allowed to see the children’s comprehension abilities individually; because they were in a small group they couldn’t rely on the entire group and I could concentrate on each person, but they also had the comfort of not being by themselves in the assessment. I was able to see where they had issues and where they were very knowledgeable. In this assessment, I had them only use motion so it was unclear what their oral skills were. However, I could alter the assessment easily and have the students say the words verbally in the same setting.

Small Group Retell
Individual Ability (2), Comprehension (3), Oral Skills (3), Necessary Improvement (3)

I had a group of girls who had volunteered to retell the story use the motions and the spoken words the best they could. Some filler words could be in English, but they had to use as many Spanish words as they could. Every time the girls used the word for wolf, they would use the plural form, and when they did not understand syntax, saying “tío’s casa” instead of “la casa del tío,” even though we had used it correctly in the story many times (see video Section 11). They used a couple words in English that we had learned in Spanish. Some words from later lessons (desobedecer and tejado- the girls used tejodada) gave them trouble as well However, they did pick up on some parts of sentence formation that we hadn’t specifically learned, such as using the correct words for “in the” to connect house and woods (video Section 5). The fact that they forgot a few vocabulary words and didn’t use the correct possessive and singular forms of the words, however, did not impede their understanding of the story. When trying to remember certain words, they would talk to each other in English and remind each other of the context the
word was in to try and spark each other’s memories. In this situation, I was able to tell clearly who understood the story because in the few parts that they were confused they were able to ask specific questions to each other and give each other reminders in English (video Section 15). I could tell individually who understood and who was able to remember what words, but one dominant student in the group also hindered their the apparentness of their individual ability. This student was often correct and was very outspoken so the others would follow her lead, even when she made errors. The parts of the story where they had had issues was also clear, and it was this assessment that made it clear to me that the students would benefit from some explicit instruction in terms of grammar.

Individual Retell
Individual Ability (3), Comprehension (3), Oral Skills (3), Necessary Improvement (3)

The next boy who volunteered to retell the story did well- he knew the story and tried very hard to not use any English. However, because he hadn’t picked up all of the filler words, he had some trouble telling the story and in the end mostly listed words. This student knew almost all of the nouns, but forgot many of the verbs. The verbs he did use were many of those that other students had had trouble with, like the verb for hide. He was able to use the correct form (singular) of hunter, unlike many of the other students (his correct use of lobo can be seen in video Section 12). Even though he had trouble retelling the story without the pictures, he used the words in an order that makes it clear that he was telling the story in his head. At times, he would do the motion for the word as he tried to remember the word. This student did a great job, and his individual ability and comprehension of the story was clear, as well his oral skills. By individually assessing each student, his or her ability with the language is very observable. However, though this student had the option of looking at the pictures from the story, he chose against using them. In future assessments I might make it mandatory, at least the first few times. His main issue was that he would get nervous and seem to just rattle off words that he remembered, and that he was just trying to remember what words we had used in class rather than the words in the context of the story. Another issue in a future classroom with this assessment would be the time commitment that would be necessary to assess each student. Because it would be a very clear view of individual student ability, I would use this assessment in a rotation, having a few students retell individually each unit while the rest retold in small groups, altering who told individually with each unit.

Written Assessment
Individual Ability (3), Comprehension (3), Oral Skills (1), Necessary Improvement (2)

I also used a written assessment with the students, where they drew a line connecting pictures to words. There were 10 words on each sheet (3 verbs, 6 nouns, and 1 adjective). 9 students connected pictures we had looked at in class to English words from the story as a control, while 13 students connected the same pictures to the vocabulary words in Spanish. All 9 students with English words connected words to pictures correctly, showing that they knew what the pictures were meant to be of. Of the 13 students with Spanish word sheets, 9 correctly connected all 10 of the words. Two girls connected 3 incorrectly; one had all three verbs incorrect, one had two verbs and a noun incorrect. Surprisingly, the noun one had labeled incorrectly was one of the first words we had learned and one of the words we learned most often throughout the story. The remaining two students each left 1 word blank- they had already connected all of the other words correctly, but left the verb ‘speak’ (habla) blank. In this
assessment, I could tell what each student remembered in terms of vocabulary, and what he or she comprehended of the words that we used. It was quick and easy, and made it clear to me where students may have been having issues and showed me who was having trouble who may not have shown that in a group setting. It also showed me that even though they had never seen the words in written form, because they had spoken them so often they were able to read them. The only issue here was that we didn’t use any of our oral skills or movements that had been predominant in the other lessons and that some students were thrown off by how different it was.

**What Do You Think?**

**Individual Ability (2), Comprehension (1), Oral Skills (1), Necessary Improvement (3)**

My final assessment of the students was actually more of an evaluation of what they thought of the TPRS method, what they liked, didn’t like, and how much they thought they learned. In how well they thought they knew the words, on a scale of 1-10, the average student said they were at about an 8 with their answers ranging from 4 to 10. Most of the children really enjoyed the lessons, saying they were happy to be learning a second language so that they could use it in the future. Many thought the lessons were fun, loved using motion, liked saying the words out loud, drawing pictures, seeing pictures, and not having to write. The students thought they were fun, and for many the lessons were easier than expected. However, a few students didn’t like standing up and doing the motions. Some said that the lessons were too long, and one that she didn’t like foreign language. A few said that they wished we had done more worksheets and taken notes, and some wished we had learned the English translation of the words. One made a very good point in that by learning story words, we weren’t learning words that were very usable in conversation. They wanted to be able to talk to someone about something more common than wolves and medicine. One of the girls made me so happy on her evaluation, saying that she learned better when she could take notes, so she wrote down the words in English on her paper and translated them when she got home. I was so glad that she took that initiative! Anyways, this showed that there is no perfect way to learn. Everyone is comfortable in different situations and learns in different ways. The majority of students really liked the lessons and said that they learned a lot, but a few brought up ideas on how they could learn better.

One girl in particular was interesting to me. She said she only knew the words at a “4,” which was the lowest in the class. She said she disliked standing up, didn’t like foreign language, and thought the lessons were no fun (and that she didn’t want to hurt my feelings but knew I wanted honest opinions). This girl was also the student who got 2 verbs and 1 noun wrong on her quiz. She is one of my students who, at a fifth grade level, is also feeling the social pressure common during puberty. She was shy about doing motions, and was uncomfortable answering questions. Starting foreign language for her at this age was a problem- she was too uncomfortable to take risks with the language or put herself out there, and it impacted her learning negatively.

This was more of a student evaluation of the method than an assessment. Because I wasn’t able to see their abilities, their comprehension, or their oral abilities, it is hard to deem it an official assessment of the students’ abilities. However, the students mentioned what they wished we had done more of, what they thought was easy, interesting, or fun, where they thought they excelled, etc. Less enthusiastic students would be easy to reach out to and help. Because a few wished they had learned more conversational phrases, picking the next unit’s story would be easier. Because one student rated her abilities at a 4/10, she would be a student to seek out and
work further with. In combination with other assessments, this would be effective to see where students were and what needed to occur next in the classroom.
Appendix L

Slides displayed to students when they were told each vocabulary word
Appendix M

Examples of student drawings that were used as a daily comprehension assessment
Appendix N

List of sections that can be found in the TPRS video at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btK3aHEyfkA

Section 1: Enthusiasm and Production
Section 2: Enthusiasm Due to Success
Section 3: Physical Before Oral Production, Questioning
Section 4: Complete Oral Production (Motion Prompts)
Section 5: Untaught Phrases
Section 6: Ability to Respond to Unknown Language
Section 7: Difficulty with Questioning
Section 8: Questioning with Body Language
Section 9: Questioning with Options
Section 10: Plural v. Singular, With Modeling
Section 11: Plural vs. Singular, without Modeling (Incorrect)
Section 12: Correct Plural vs. Singular Usage
Section 13: Natural Movement Repetitions
Section 14: Natural Movement Repetitions (2)
Section 15: Movement and Plot as Memory Aid
Section 16: Comprehension- Associating Words
Section 17: Comprehension with Unknown Verb Tense
Section 18: Difficulty with Syntax
Section 19: Correct Syntax
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