

Testimonials to the CI/TPRS Methodology of Language

Acquisition - Mrs. Maria Cochrane's former students

- Addendum to the NCAIS Conference - 27 October 2017 -

Impacting Your World Language Students

Katelyn Fitzgerald - about her 4 years - 19 May 2017

1. What were you able to do after 4 years of high school French?

- Scored over a 600 on the French subject SAT
- Carried on conversations with locals in Paris to learn more about the culture
- Lead my classmates around the city during free time because of my ability to ask for directions
- Able to look at a menu in a French restaurant and know exactly what I'm ordering

2. What have you done with French since high school?

- Due to my SAT score, I was immediately placed into a junior level 3000 level French class (3105-grammar) my first semester at college

- Anytime my native French professor would ask a vocabulary question I could always answer; notably talented over my peers

-I studied abroad in Morocco and served as translator to my peers for many presentations by non-profit and governmental leaders

-Again with culture, had deep conversations with locals because of my expansive vocabulary

-I conducted an independent study, undergraduate research project in French and was selected to present at a research conference

-Read 3 books in French of the post-apocalyptic science fiction genre from 3 different time periods (again my vocabulary, how else would I have understood science fiction space terms like laser beam?)

-Analyzed this literature to draw conclusions about how the French science fiction genre differed from the American science fiction genre and what it implied about views on society and community

- Wrote a 12 page research paper in both French and English

3. How do you see your skill and experience in French helping you in the future?

Now, I will be able to work my dream career in the UN because I know their second official language of French. I can also serve as a project manager in international development in francophone countries of Africa with women in agriculture because I speak their language.

Anecdotal response to my first inquiry in May:

Thank you so much for reaching out! Indeed I did continue to use my French quite a bit. Thanks to your teaching style, I was able to place very high on the French subject SAT which landed me immediately into a 3000 level French course my freshman year of college. I was so advanced I was able to fit in French as a double major along with my primary major of International Studies. I would have even gotten a second bachelor's degree had I taken one more semester. I conducted French undergraduate research for an independent study for extra credits where I was able to read three different post-apocalyptic science fiction novels, in French, from several different centuries. I conducted a literary analysis of them and compared the French science fiction genre to the American science fiction genre. I was selected to present my research at VT's Undergrad Research Conference and was published in our College of Liberal Arts Journal of research. My French further aided me when I studied abroad in Morocco where I was able to experience the culture more richly by talking to the natives in French. This is where comprehensible input helped me the most. As Arabic is the primary language of the citizens there, their French grammar was not always the same as the European French that I learned. What really helped us communicate was my expansive vocabulary. I can't express to you enough how many opportunities French opened up for me! I am hoping to continue to use it in my international development career as I work with nonprofits in African Francophone countries

Others' Testimonials

Caitlin Montgomery - Sept 2017

(Currently in Seminary in Atlanta)

In high school, I had the blessing of learning French primarily through conversation with my teacher and fellow classmates. I still recall my first French class with Mrs. Cochrane in 9th grade. Surely, I thought, this class would be entirely in English with a few French words thrown in for starters. I was wrong! The first class began almost entirely in French, yet I was surprised at how much I comprehended. My teacher's hand gestures and body language helped me to understand the meaning of these new words. Throughout my four years with her, I was able to converse with fluidity in French. We made up stories and shared about our weekends in French. Class often felt more like conversation time than class time, but we were learning all along! I have found this model of teaching language to be incredibly effective. My time learning French in high school encouraged me to take several (four) more French classes in college and to study abroad in Belgium. I found that I was prepared to speak with people as a

result of these French classes. The beauty of this method is that grammar instructions are contained in learning to speak conversationally—it's not like we had to be taught grammar as babies before we learned English! Learning grammar through speaking helped me to put the language skill to use immediately. I highly recommend this method of teaching. It's the most natural way to learn a language!

Emmy Sych - July 2017

Currently working for CBN in Virginia Beach

I feel like I tell people everywhere about the benefits of that particular learning method, because it is such a powerful way to learn any language. For me personally, the first thing that comes

to mind was my first time speaking French in France, I was mistaken for a native by a French train conductor while explaining an issue with my group's train tickets, which for me was such a compliment! Especially for really having minimal to no experience speaking French outside of the classroom before that time. That for me just goes to show how effective that method of training was!

In general, I can tell you from a student's perspective that French class was something cherished by all students. When we get together, many other students even besides Audrey, Elsa, and I still talk about how fun French class was and still maintain interest in the French language even if they are not speaking it regularly. Kathleen specifically still maintains interest in the French language, and seventh grade was the last time she was really in a true French class. I think the fact that the students enjoyed it so much and truly fell in love with the language at such

a young age sings high praises of that method of learning! French class left an imprint on us all that has yet to disappear, and I believe never will.

Mackenzie Carlson - skipped French 1 & 2, switching from Spanish

21 Sep 2017

(Currently in year 2 of a graduate program at James Madison University)

What was it like jumping in to French 3 after two shaky years of Spanish? Scary. I was aware that my classmates who had been taking French knew far more than I did in Spanish, and I knew they were already able to speak full sentences and converse with Mrs. Cochrane. Meanwhile, I could barely conjugate "comer" ("eat" in Spanish) and only knew a few related food words. How could I hope to become as proficient as my French 3 peers?

My first French experience started in July, before the new school year began. Mrs. Cochrane had my sister and I over to her house a few times for a "crash course" on beginning French. Most of what I remember from those sessions was confusion. How on earth could a word spelled "mais" be pronounced "may"?!? Why was "cheveux" masculine but "chaise" feminine? And why were neither of those words pronounced the way that normal people would pronounce them?? It was aggravating.

The first few weeks of French 3 went pretty much the same way. Sometime during the first semester, though, things started to click. I was getting the pronunciation right more often than not,

and I started stringing words together to make sentences. The way Mrs. Cochrane taught, through stories and songs and news videos and conversations, made French a real, living language. We interacted with the language as we made up silly stories and learned how to share the Gospel ("Au commencement, Dieu a créé le monde..."). We "played" with verbs and adjectives as we wrote our own sentences and then compared them among the class. We explored new language as we ate authentic home-cooked French bread and listened to Yannick Noah ("Aux arbres citoyens" is still one of my favorite mantras). We struggled through "Le Petit Prince" and read news stories about using pigs to find truffles. We made mistakes, of course, but that was part of the process and we knew Mrs. Cochrane both expected and incorporated those mistakes into meaningful learning experiences.

By the time I graduated, I had a solid handle on the French language. It was a beautiful, living thing, and I knew my time with it was far from over. I scored in the 300 level as a freshman on my college placement test and jumped into a French 320 class ("Exploration of French Cuisine"). I finished that course with an A and a full stomach. A few years later, I spent a summer abroad studying French and interning at a church in Nice, France. I've been back to France multiple times and have used my French in other countries such as Belgium, Haiti, and Scotland.

My love for this language and my ability to speak it are a direct result of Mrs. Cochrane's teaching methods. The way in which we interacted with French and the wide range of materials we used brought the language to life. French is not just a class I took in high school or a language somebody probably speaks somewhere in the world. It is a means of communication, an entryway into a

flourishing culture, and evidence of the beauty and diversity so prevalent in this world.