

So you want your students to  
speak the target language with  
confidence and joy!



## My migration

- from rule-based French teaching
- to acquisition-based French teaching



**12 years into the profession....**

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# What is the difference?

**Baby Acquisition vs.  
Classroom Acquisition**

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# Language Exposure

## Baby

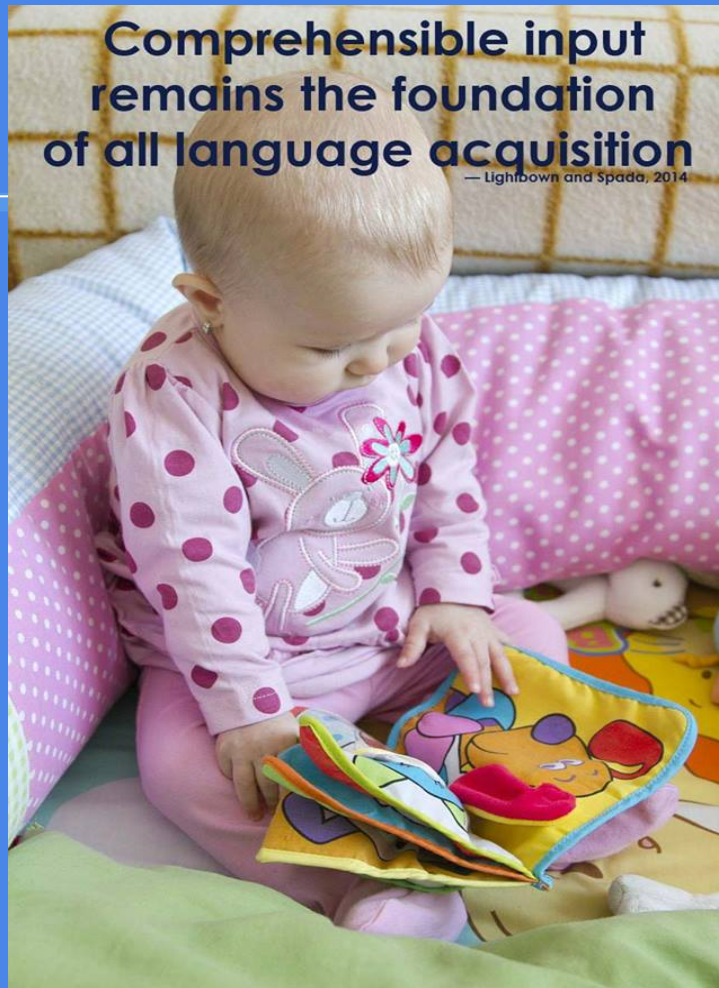
10 hrs/day = 3650 hrs/yr

X 3 years = **10,950 hrs**



**Comprehensible input  
remains the foundation  
of all language acquisition**

— Lightbown and Spada, 2014



# Language Exposure

## Students

35 min X 170 days = 100 hrs  
X 3 years Middle School =  
**300 hours**

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Make every  
minute  
COUNT!!!

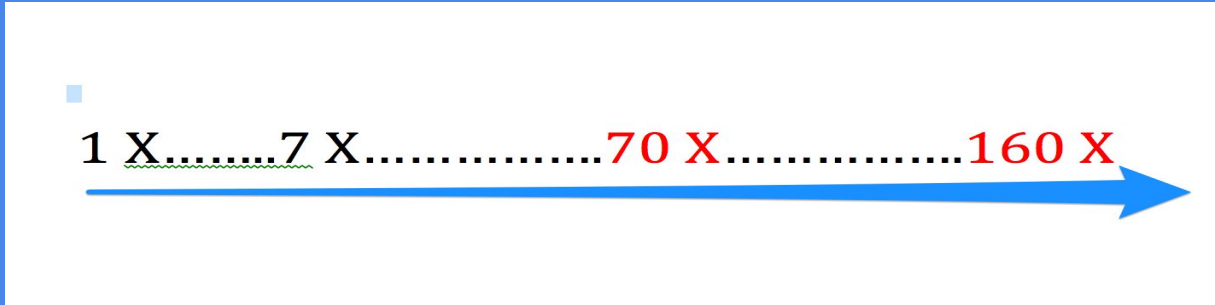
# Input precedes Output

Cotton

Candy

Versus

Oatmeal



Number of times one needs to hear and understand the message/meaning

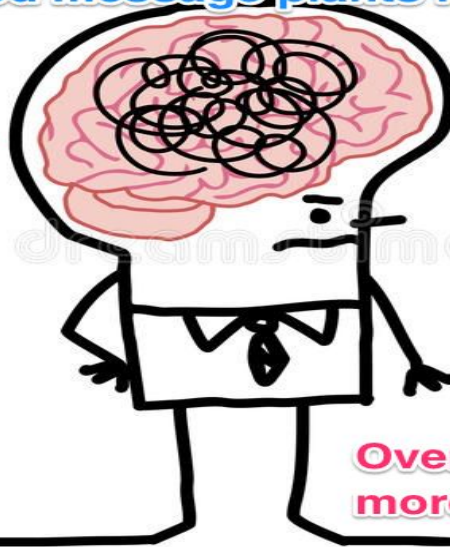


# Understanding the message

**The understood message plants itself in the brain**

**and is a confused jumble.....**

**At first!**



**So what comes out of the brain at FIRST is a replication of that confusion!**

**Over time and with more input.....**

# My role as teacher

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Input, input, input. In **interesting** ways.



Input **UNDERSTOOD** makes the 'mental representation' in the brain come **into focus**.

# Role of speaking?

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**We don't force speaking/output.**

**You learn to speak through input, with comprehension.**

**Speaking does build confidence, however.**

**A 'silent period' is normal!**

# Why a 3-year old speaks better...



than a 1-  
year old  
baby



**Input !!**

# When will I be able to speak French?

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Ça dépend!



10,000 hour 'rule'

# Language happens....



# Why focusing on rules is not as effective?

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- Most language is CAUGHT over time, not taught.
- For example, which sounds better?

I like to run VS I enjoy to run

How do you explain that? Did you have to know a rule in order to identify which was 'right'?

# So...what do I do?



50 years of research in L2  
acquisition show -

“Explicit rule teaching does not aid  
acquisition.”

Professor Bill Van Patten, Michigan State.



# Anything that is..... .....comprehensible

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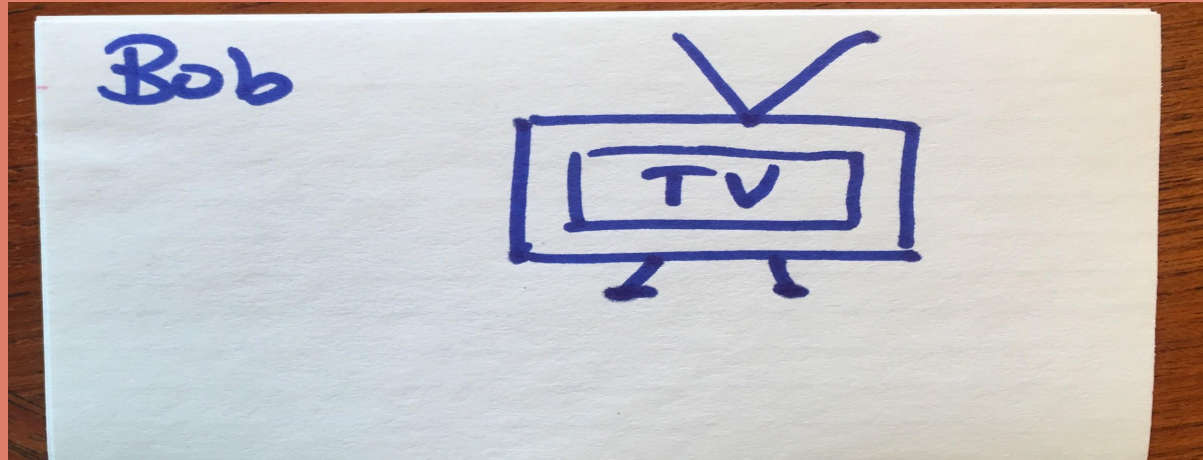
Our students are our main curriculum - their lives and interests, dreams and goals, challenges.

- True
- invented

Favorite activity, what you did on vacation, goals for the year, weekend plans, current events.

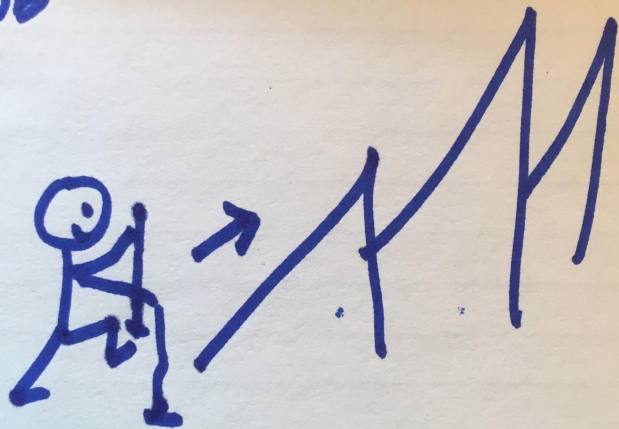
# How I start the year....

Year 1 -

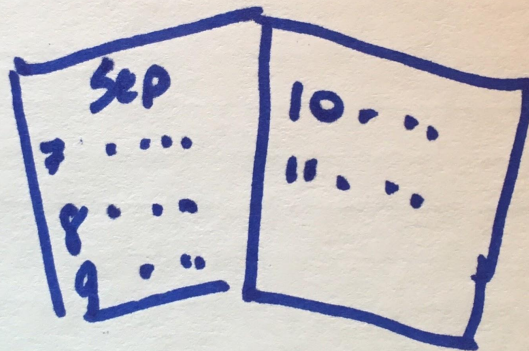


# 2nd year and 3rd year

Bob



Bob



# Variety



# Other activities

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- Historical figures - fact and fantasy
  - Concession - some left brain projects (not CI) that we use  
**IN stories**
1. **Create a menu...then a story about a mishap in a restaurant**
  2. **Create a room in Joséphine's chateau, then a made-up story - Joséphine has lost....**
  3. **Memorize a poem.....then we create the backstory of the main character**

# 3 most important guidelines

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Comprehensible input - first, second, third!

But how do I measure what they can do?

- Assess: a) comprehension b) spontaneous production
- **\*\*Planned and prepared output does not demonstrate what they have acquired\*\***

# Student Testimony

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- What she was able to do after 4 years of high school French
- What she did with French in college
- Future plans

# How I grade.....this year!

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- **40 %** practice (HW, practiced presentations, unannounced formative assessments - both speaking and comprehension)
- **40 %** what can you do - comprehension/production...unannounced
- **10 %** acquisition awareness short essays in English a 3 times a marking period. I give them a topic or a question for reflection



# Error Correction?

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- Noah - 'I goed to the zoo', ' Hold you'
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- Student:

"If you look at the sun without eclipse glasses, your eyes become broken" said the Chinese boy

"So, you'll damage your eyes if you look at the sun without eclipse glasses?"

# Contact info + Resources

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- [Madamecochrane.wordpress.com](https://madamecochrane.wordpress.com)
- [mcochrane@carolinaday.org](mailto:mcochrane@carolinaday.org)
- If you're headed to ACTFL in November - look for CI sessions, especially **Bill Van Patten** or **Stephen Krashen** (go early to get a seat!)