Methodologies in Foreign Language Teaching:

"Any given method is only as effective as its implementation."

1. *Grammar-Translation Method (1890s-1930s):* Around the turn-of-the-century, language students often translated cumbersome volumes from Classical Greek or Latin into English vía this approach. It consisted mainly of exhaustive use of dictionaries, explanations of grammatical rules (in English), some sample sentences, and exercise drills to practice the new structures. Little opportunity for real second-language acquisition existed then.

2. *Cognitive Approach (1940s-1950s):* This approach introduced the four principle language skills for the first time: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Oral communicative competence became the focus. Comprehensible auditory input became important and speaking in the target language began to occur. Learning *about* the language was overemphasized.

3. *Audio-Lingüal Method (1950s-1960s):* With the advent and popularity of audio tapes, this approach ushered in the first recordings wherein the language learner could actually hear and mimic native speakers on reel-to-reel audio tapes, often used with earphones in a language lab setting. Lessons often began with a sample dialogue to be recited and memorized. This was followed up with substitution pattern and saturation drills in which the grammatical structure previously introduced was reinforced, with emphasis given to rapid fire student response. Repetition, substitution, transformation, and translation became the order of the day. This method was strongly influenced by B.F. Skinner's behaviorist view toward learning favoring habit-forming drill techniques. Unfortunately, most students couldn't transfer these dialogues into their own real-life experiences.

4. *The Direct Method (1970s):* This method presented discussion in the target language as the major priority. Reference to English equivalents became discouraged. Grammar learning became inductive in nature without overt explanations given the pupil. Teacher/student interaction became fuller, guessing of context or content, completing fill-ins, and doing "cloze" exercises were the order of the day. Accuracy in pronunciation and oral expression became vital. Examples to be followed became the main intention.

5. *The Natural/Communicative Approach (1960s-2000s):* Originally developed by Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen, this acquisition-focused approach sees communicative competence progressing through three stages: **(a)** aural comprehension, **(b)** early speech production, and **(c)** speech activities, all fostering "natural" language acquisition, much as a child would learn his/her native tongue. Following an initial "silent period", comprehension should precede production in speech, as the latter should be allowed to emerge in natural stages or progressions. Lowering of the Affective Filter is of paramount importance. Only the target language is used in class now, introducing the "total immersion" concept for the very first time, with auditory input for the student becoming

paramount. Errors in speech are not corrected aloud. Now enters the era of glossy textbooks, replete with cultural vignettes, glossaries, vocabulary lists, and glazed photographs. A deliberate, conscious approach to the study of grammar is considered to have only modest value in the language learning process. Pairing off of students into small groups to practice newly acquired structures becomes the major focus. Visualization activities that often times make use of a picture file, slide presentations, word games, dialogues, contests, recreational activities, empirical utterances, and *realia* provide situations with problem-solving tasks which might include the use of charts, maps, graphs, and advertisements, all to be performed on the spot in class. Now the classroom becomes more student-centered with the teacher allowing for students to output the language more often on their own. Formal sequencing of grammatical concepts is kept to a minimum.

6. ***Total Physical Response/TPR*** *(1960s-2000s):* This approach, also known as TPR, was founded by James Asher. In this method, both language and body movement are synchronized through action responses and use of the imperative (direct commands). TPR may be used in conjunction with some other methods involving *psychoneuro kinetic* techniques wherein the teacher gives a host of commands with the students responding by "acting out" the command: "Stand up", "Go to the door", "Sit down", etc. Kinetic movement of the hands and arms is incorporated in lieu of rote memorization. Student speech is delayed until they feel comfortable enough to give other students commands too. TPR is very effective in teaching temporal states, personal pronouns, and other deep grammatical structures.

7. ***The Silent Way*** *(1960s-2000s):* Dr.Caleb Gattegno, originally out of Alexandria, Egypt, introduced this classroom technique wherein the teacher remains silent while pupils output the language on cue through perpetual prompting. This is the *production before meaning* school of thought and practice. A color-coded phonics (sound) chart called a *fidel*, with both vowel and consonant clusters on it, is projected onto a screen to be used simultaneously with a pointer, thus permitting the pupil to produce orally on a continuous basis in the target language, vía a sequence of phonemes or sound units. Brightly colored Cuisenaire rods, which are also used in Mathematics, are integrated into this method (used as manipulatives) for pupils to learn spatial relationships, prepositions, colors, gender and number concepts, and to create multiple artificial settings through their physical placement. Lines or slashes on a chalkboard represent syllables, devoid of letters in them, for a subliminal, collective memory experience in recall for the students. Students are encouraged to self-correct their pronunciation errors through manual gesticulation on the part of the instructor. Modeling of correct pronunciation for students is discouraged. The greatest strength of this method lies in its ability to draw students out orally, while the teacher "takes a back seat". This method works most effectively with round tables being used to promote small group discussion and for ample student rotation. In general, reliance on and the use of a structured textbook or an outlined syllabus is much discouraged during the initial phases of learning. The Silent Way truly gives students a *spoken facility*.

8. ***Suggestopedia*** *(1960s-2000s):* This extremely esoteric, avant-garde method is subconsciously subliminal in texture. It is based on the pioneering efforts in 1967

of Bulgarian medical doctor, hypnotist, and psychology professor Georgi Lozanov and on his techniques into *superlearning*. Classes are small and intensive, with a low-stress focus. Material is presented in an especially melodic and artistic way. By activating the right "creative side" of the brain, a much larger portion of the intellectual potential can be tapped, thus drawing out long-term memory. This innovative approach to language pedagogy maximizes the learners' natural holistic talents. Background classical or baroque chamber music, oftentimes accompanied with soft lights, pillows or cushions on the floor for relaxation, accentuate active and passive meditations, séances, yoga, breathing exercises leading into the "alpha state", songs for memorization purposes, therapy sessions and stream-of-consciousness catharsis in the target language with little reliance on English. Little emphasis on grammar is given. Such non-verbal communication as kinesics, paralanguage, environmental proxemics, and oculesics can be incorporated into the method, along with Robert Rosenthal's Pygmalia used in the classroom. Soviet Hypnopedia (sleep-learning) which was developed by such researchers as A.M. Syvadoshch in Leningrad and by L.A. Bliznitchenko in Kiev, Sophrology (a memory training system), the Tomatis Approach, Schultz-Luthe's autogenic therapy, Suggestology, and the Suzuki Method of learning music are considered to be closely related to this Bulgarian approach. This method has sprung two offshoots or derivatives which include Donald Schuster's Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (or **SALT**) and Lynn Dhority's Acquisition through Creative Teaching (or **ACT**). Like other "modern" approaches, language is perceived *globally* (in chunks or blocks), while attention to fine tuning or to detail comes later.

9. *Community Language Learning/CLL: (1960s-2000s):* This creative, dynamic, and non-directive approach to language learning was first elaborated by Charles Curran. It is designed to ease the learner into gradual independence and self-confidence in the target language. This is also known as the *Counseling-Learning method*. Curran's approach is beyond simply a methodical pedagogy, but is rather a veritable philosophy of learning which provides profound, even quasi-theological reflections on humankind! It encourages holistic learning, personal growth, and self-development. Learning a language is not viewed necessarily as an individual accomplishment, but rather as a collective experience, something to be disseminated out into the community at large at a later stage in the second-language acquisition process. Its basic premise can be found in the acronym **SARD**: **S** stands for *security* (to foster the student's self-confidence), **A** represents *attention* or *aggression* (the former an indication of the learner's involvement, the latter their frustration level), **R** equals *retention* and *reflection* (what is retained is internalized and ultimately reflected upon), and **D** denotes *discrimination* (the learner can now discriminate through classifying a body of material, seeing how one concept interrelates to another previously presented structure). Student "participants" are thus allowed to register abstracted grammar both peripherally and semi-consciously.

10. *"total immersion technique":* This generalized technique in foreign language pedagogy "immerses" or "submerges" the student directly and immediately into the target language from the first opening day or hour of class. There are basically

two (2) types of total immersion approaches: (a) *effective* and (b) *ineffective*. An *effective total immersion* environment begins in hour one wherein the teacher speaks the foreign language slowly, clearly, and uses easily understandable and comprehensible cognates, at least to the best of his or her ability as a foreign language professional educator. These closely and oftentimes immediately recognizable related words may differ only slightly in pronunciation or spelling from the student's native language. Hand gesticulation, appropriate modeling, various *realia* (such as picture files or photos), and sometimes TPR can facilitate such effectiveness. An *ineffective total immersion* approach occurs when the teacher opens class by speaking rapidly at native speed as if the students were residing within the target culture, as if they were inputting the attempted language on an hourly, daily basis. In essence, the student is being treated as if they were living in the country where the foreign language is predominant. Thus, the intended language "goes over the heads" of the students from the very first day of class, thus creating a distancing and ultimate loss of the student's attention and cognitive awareness of just what is being communicated in class. Either type of immersion oftentimes overlaps any or all of the above-mentioned methods in second-language (L-2) acquisition.

"The superior teacher has regularly gotten superior results regardless of the method."

from William E. Bull's *Spanish for Teachers: Applied Linguistics*, c. 1965