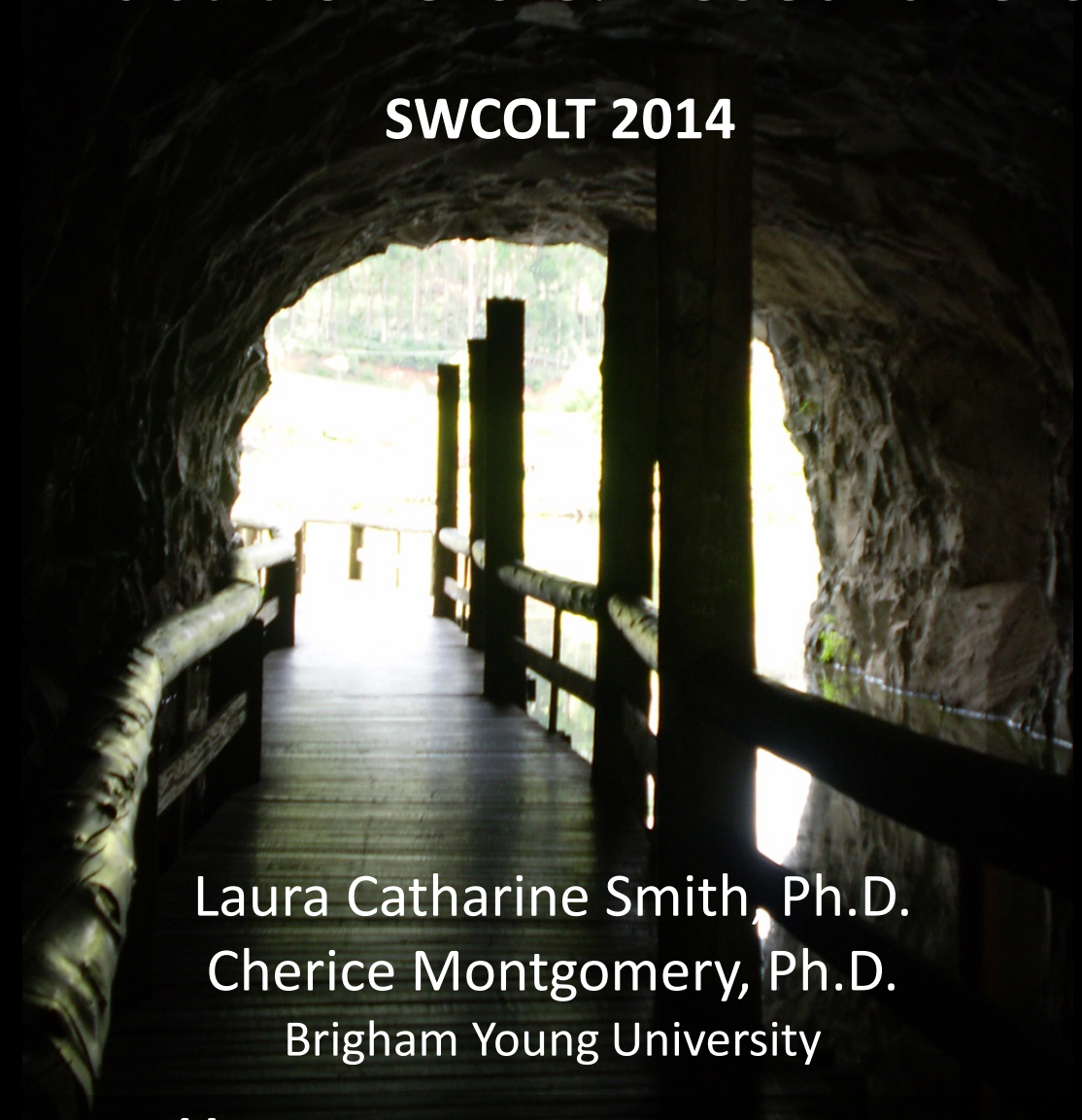




Bridging the Gap Between Practitioners & Researchers

SWCOLT 2014



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<http://flteacherresearch.wikispaces.com>



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Who are we?



Stand if the statement applies to you.





Session Objectives

- 1) I can locate research-based information that helps students learn better.
- 2) I can turn my questions about teaching and learning world languages into tools for inquiry.
- 3) I can overcome potential barriers to my research with help from colleagues, online resources, and partnerships with other institutions.
- 4) I can use technology to share what I learn from my research to help others.

A wooden bridge with a railing spans across a calm lake. The bridge is made of dark wood and has a simple, functional design. The water is still, reflecting the bridge and the surrounding greenery. In the background, a dense forest of tall, thin evergreen trees stretches across the horizon under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

How do we know...

Think, Pair, Share

...if an activity is good or bad? (Kids loved it?)

...if an activity has promoted *student learning* (not just engagement)?

...which pedagogical strategies are the “best” ones to use?

Formulating Research Questions

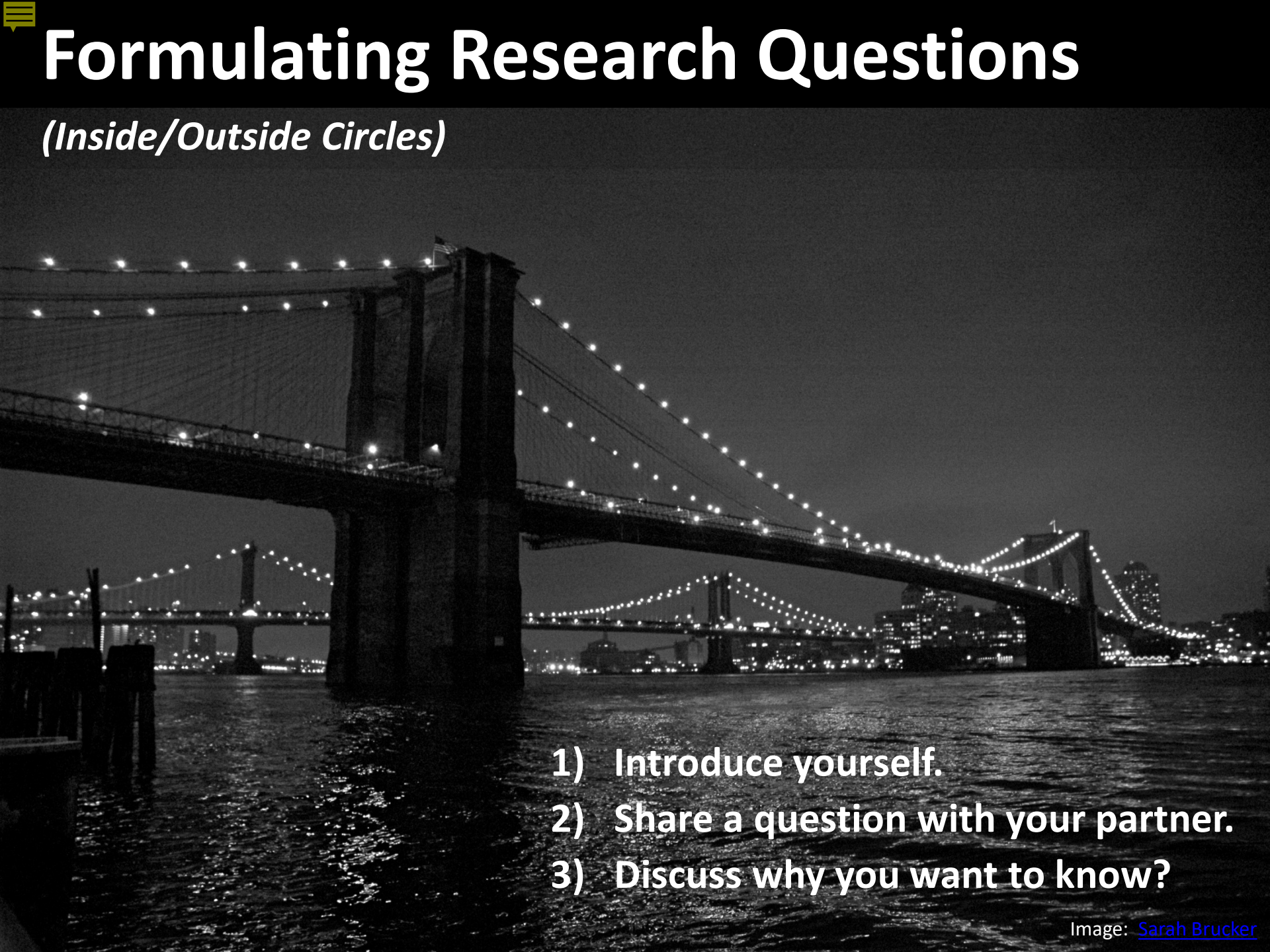
(Quick Write – 2 minutes)

What do you want to know?



Formulating Research Questions

(Inside/Outside Circles)

- 
- 1) Introduce yourself.
 - 2) Share a question with your partner.
 - 3) Discuss why you want to know?



**What pieces of information
are you missing?**

A photograph of a desert landscape featuring a prominent natural rock archway. The arch is made of reddish-brown sandstone and frames a view of a sandy valley. A person is walking across the sand in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

Planning Action Research

to bridge the

G.A.P.S.



Goal

Why do you need the answers to these questions?

Audience

Who is the target audience for your answers? (Who do you need to convince?)

Process

What process will you follow to get your answers?

Strategies for Sharing

Where and how would it make the most sense to share the answers you find?



GOAL

Why do you need answers to these questions?

A nighttime photograph of a city skyline reflected in water. In the foreground, a walkway is lined with rows of spherical bollards. To the left, there are modern, illuminated streetlights and architectural structures. The city buildings in the background are lit up, with a prominent skyscraper featuring a green top. The sky is dark and overcast.

AUDIENCE

**Who is the target audience
for your answers?**



Process


- **Permissions (District/IRB)**
- **Informed Consent**
- **Research ?s**
- **Research Design/Process**

Professional Inquiry Project Template

- **Issue:** *The issue we decided to investigate was . . .*
 - . . . *finding* a way to increase students' target language proficiency.
- **Audience:** *People who would benefit from knowing about this include . . .*
 - *Colleagues*
- **Background of the Problem:** *The context for our interest in this issue is . . .*
 - *Our German students have consistently been failing to achieve the same level of oral proficiency as students enrolled in other language courses in the College of Humanities*
- **Rationale:** *We decided to investigate this because . . .*
 - *...there appears to be a mismatch between what students want (language skill) and the skills with which they are leaving our program*
 - *...the mismatch seems to be impacting students' perceptions and German enrollments (students believe German is harder than French or Spanish)*
 - *...low proficiency ratings decrease the number of students who can qualify to become German teachers, which also endangers our program*
 - *...this raises questions about the quality of what we're doing*
- **Research Question(s):** *We wanted to know . . .*
 - *...if exposing students to the types of tasks they will be asked to perform during the oral and written proficiency tests (i.e., descriptions, narrations, talking about unreal events) leads to improved language skills?*
- **Research Process/Data Collection Tools:** *The three different sources of information we consulted were . . .*
 - *...students take a written pre-test with 3 questions (one focused on descriptions, one focused on narrations, and one focused on unreal situations)*
 - *...students complete weekly assignments that focus on description, narration, and unreal situations*

Professional Inquiry Project Template

- *Students walk around with a recorder and describe what they see for at least 10 minutes per day (during a study abroad program)*
- *Students transcribe the first minute or two of their descriptions each Monday and the last two minutes of their descriptions from Friday of each week*
 - *...students use logs to record weekly language use*
 - *...students take a written post-test with 3 questions similar to the pre-test*
- **Methods of Data Analysis:** *We made sense of our data by . . .*
 - *...having another German teacher score the pre- and post-tests based on the ACTFL scale*
 - *...scoring the pre-test and post-test using measures of complexity (unique words, word count, clause length)*
 - *...asking a native speaker to evaluate pre- and post-tests*
 - *...comparing pre- and post-test data to see if there have been any improvements*
- **Findings:** *What we learned was . . .*
 - *...even though no grammatical feedback was given, the quality and complexity of some students' language improved simply from focused practice with specific task types*
- **Interpretations/Implications for Teaching:** *What we will do differently now that we know this is . . .*
 - *...we are training them in the language, but not in task types, so students can't apply their language to the real world tasks*
 - *...the oral proficiency interviews and the written proficiency tests are just as important in terms of process as they are for assessment*
- **Discussion:** *What we learned about schools, teaching, learning, and inquiry was . . .*



How does the research question translate into practical terms?

- Are we investigating a teaching methodology?
- Teaching materials?
- Differences between students?
- Connection between proficiency and test scores?

Students will complete weekly assignments designed to develop skills in describing objects/scenery, narrating events, and hypothesizing about issues during a 12-week study abroad. Do these assignments help?



Written Assignment

Function: Narration in the Past

- 1) Write for 2 minutes about: ***Tell about something happy that happened in your childhood.***

- 2) **Count** the following items:
 - a) # of **sentences**
 - b) # of **clauses** in each sentence (e.g., there are 3 clauses in the following sentence: [I am going to save my money]₁ [because I want to go on a big trip to Europe]₂, [so I can improve my French]₃).
 - c) **Average # of clauses**
 - d) # of **words in each sentence and clause**. Then calculate the average words per sentence and clause
 - e) # of **unique words**, e.g., if you use “thing” or “big” more than once, only count it once

- 3) In 5-10 minutes, increase the **complexity** of your description.
 - a) Use only **words you know** (no dictionaries)!
 - b) **Recombine** your sentences to make longer ones.
 - c) Use “connector” words, relative clauses, etc., *and* embellish your description.
 - d) You may include more technical terms, add more adjectives, etc.

- 4) What words or grammar did you want to use, but did not know? List these and look them up.

- 5) Rewrite your description one last time by **adding in the words and grammar you looked up** and listed under #4, then perform the counts again.

What information do you need to answer your research question?

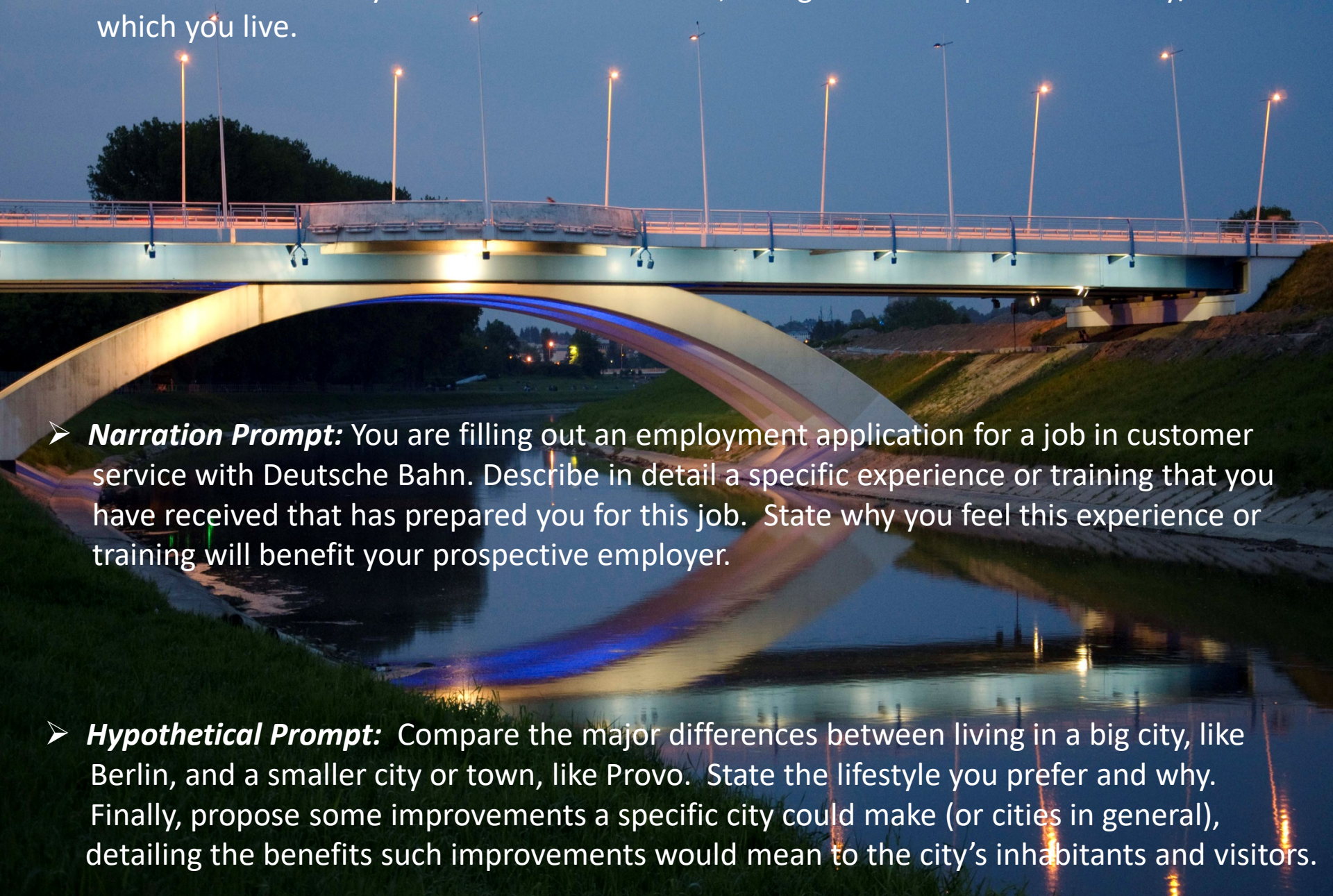
Data: Surveys about language learning backgrounds, OPI scores, pre- vs. post-tests writing samples, speech samples (description, narration, and hypothesizing), language logs/journals about how much students are using the target language number of students who sign up for your course the next year, grades, etc.

(Sample assignment for descriptions)

- *Get a recorder*
- *Daily: Describe what you see for at least 10 minutes*
- *Mondays: Transcribe the first minute or two of your descriptions today*
- *Fridays: Transcribe the last two minutes of your descriptions from today*
- *Count # of sentences, total words, words/sentence, unique words, etc.*



- **Description Prompt:** Write an email to a friend describing your room, apartment, or house in as much detail as you can. In the same note, also give a description of the city/town in which you live.



- **Narration Prompt:** You are filling out an employment application for a job in customer service with Deutsche Bahn. Describe in detail a specific experience or training that you have received that has prepared you for this job. State why you feel this experience or training will benefit your prospective employer.
- **Hypothetical Prompt:** Compare the major differences between living in a big city, like Berlin, and a smaller city or town, like Provo. State the lifestyle you prefer and why. Finally, propose some improvements a specific city could make (or cities in general), detailing the benefits such improvements would mean to the city's inhabitants and visitors.



Data Analysis

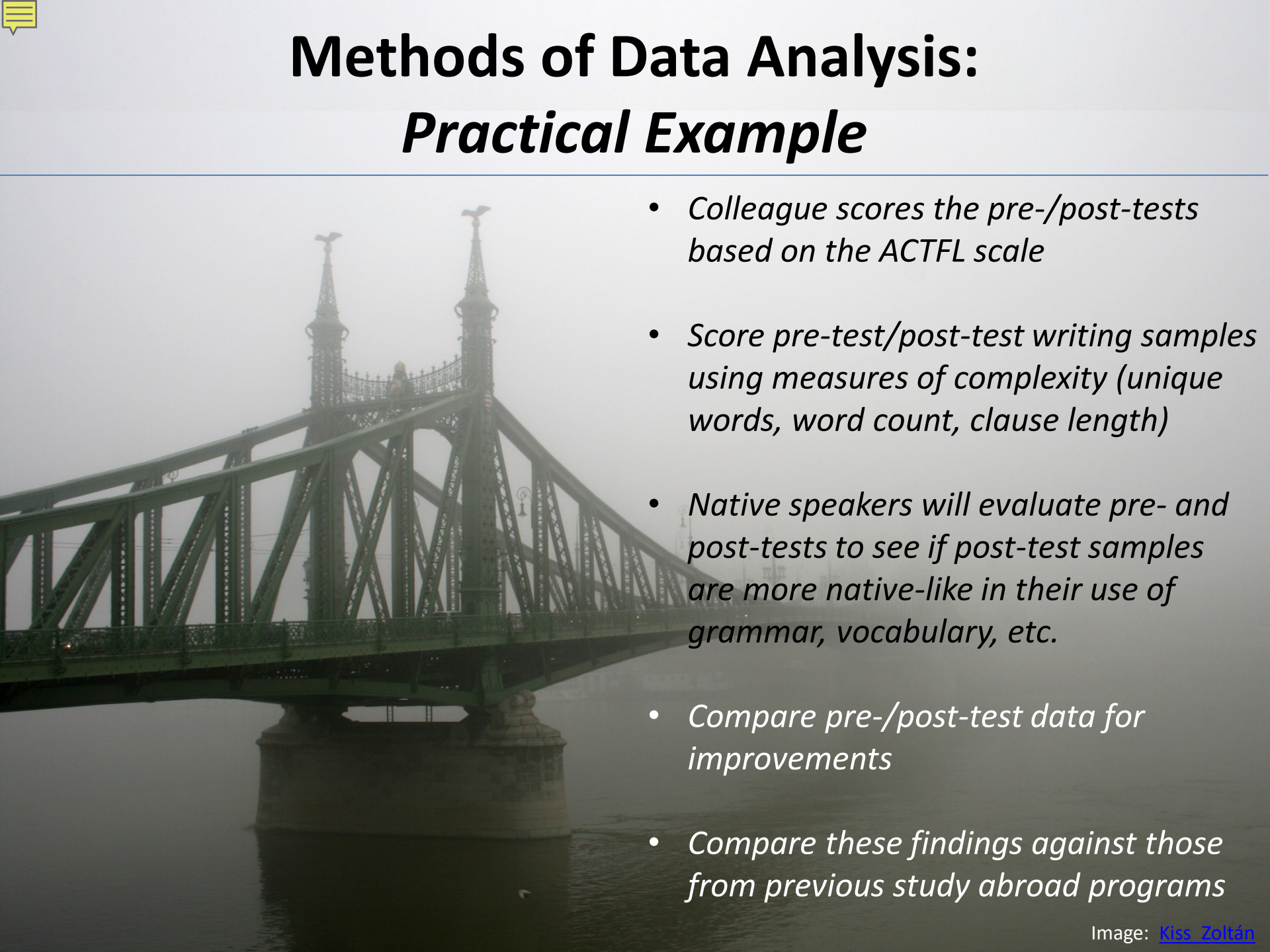
We made sense of our data by...

- Will you compare against natives?
- Will you rate the writing or speech samples?
- Will you measure accuracy?
- Word count



Methods of Data Analysis:

Practical Example

- 
- *Colleague scores the pre-/post-tests based on the ACTFL scale*
 - *Score pre-test/post-test writing samples using measures of complexity (unique words, word count, clause length)*
 - *Native speakers will evaluate pre- and post-tests to see if post-test samples are more native-like in their use of grammar, vocabulary, etc.*
 - *Compare pre-/post-test data for improvements*
 - *Compare these findings against those from previous study abroad programs*

Oral Response to Description/Narration Prompt

PROMPT: What is something you enjoy doing? Briefly describe what this is, why you enjoy it, and tell us about an experience when you did your activity. (Description/Narration)

PRE-TEST:

Um, J'aime bien jouer au foot. J'ai commencé quand j'avais 4 ans. C'était mon premier amour. J'ai joué au football pour l'équipe de BYU pour quatre ans. Nous avons voyagé tous dans les États-Unis contre l'équipe différents. Le voyage qui j'ai préféré était contre l'Université d'Hawaii. C'était très amusant.

POST-TEST:

J'aime bien jouer au football parce c'est le sport que je préfère et il me donne beaucoup de joie. Malheureusement, j'ai fini avec ma profession de football alors je suis très triste maintenant. Um, j'aime bien jouer au foot avec une grande audience qui chantant mon nom. Je me souviens une fois quand j'étais dans un match contre l'Université d'Utah et j'ai cassé mon coccyx. Pendant ce match j'ai beaucoup de peine.

➤ *Still a lot of grammatical errors and incorrect word choices, but using more complex and expressive language*

Measure	Pre-test	Post-test
# Sentences	7	5
# Clauses	7	12
# Words	48	72
Words Per Sentence	6.86	14.4
Words Per Clause	6.86	6
Clauses Per Sentence	1	2.4

Response to Hypothetical Prompt

PROMPT: If you could change one thing in your community, state or country, what would you change? Why do you think it needs to be changed? What are the issues requiring the change? What would need to be done to institute the change? How would the change impact the lives of others? Would there be potential difficulties that people would encounter with the change? Or would it be a positive change overall?

PRE-TEST:

La vie en Provo, Utah est très bien mais je voudrais changé la lois au sujet de la conduit. Je pense que la limite de vitesse um en Provo, Utah est trop lente. C'est dangereux pour les habitants. Je propose que la limite de vitesse être plus que 25 mph dans la campus de BYU.


- Provides proposal at end but avoids conditional except for in first sentence
- Similar sentence/clause/word ratios
- Able to express more by the post-test

Measure	Pre-test	Post-test
# Sentences	4	5
# Clauses	7	9
# Words	55	68
Words Per Sentence	13.75	13.6
Words Per Clause	7.86	7.56
Clauses Per Sentence	1.75	1.8

POST-TEST:

J'aime bien la ville de Provo, Utah où j'attend la Université. C'est une ville très belle avec des montagnes grands et magnifique. Il y a un grand problème avec la ville où j'habite maintenant pourtant. La limite de vitesse est trop lente pour moi et c'est très dangereux pour les habitants ! **Si j'étais le maire de la ville de Provo, je voudrais augmenter la limite de vitesse.**

- **Appropriate use of conditional**
- **Builds argument before providing solution (expressed by conditional)**



Do you have to do this alone?

Making it Manageable Through Collaboration

#1 Teacher Concern: I don't have the skills or resources!

Partnerships with University Faculty (or their colleagues/grad students)

Colleagues: Common questions?

State teachers' associations

Image: [Alexander Krio](#)

Some organisations/districts will provide resources for testing methodologies, materials, etc.

Eliciting Data in Second Language Research: Challenge and Innovation



*Emma Marsden (York)
Alison Mackey (Georgetown)*

<http://www.iris-database.org>


What is IRIS?

Instruments for Research Into Second Languages

- A freely accessible, digital repository
- Holding a wide range of **data collection instruments**:
 - e.g. language tests (GJTs, oral production, gap fill, cloze), questionnaires, observation & interview schedules, word lists, sound & video files, pictures, experimental teaching methods... and more!
- Up- and downloadable
- **Searchable** across a wide range of parameters
 - e.g. instrument type; research area; participant characteristics (incl. teachers, learners, trainees); L1; L2; language feature(s); proficiency



How will you SHARE what you learn?

- 
- Informally
 - Community Events
 - Department Meetings
 - Faculty Meetings
 - School Events
 - District Meetings
 - PTA Meetings
 - Professional Conferences
 - Blog Post
 - Conference Presentation
 - Display
 - Magazine Article
 - Newspaper Editorial
 - Online



Research in Action



**OUR ACTION RESEARCH
PROJECT
NOTEBOOK...**



**Y DALIA DÍAZ
MÓNICA ORJUELA**

slideshare

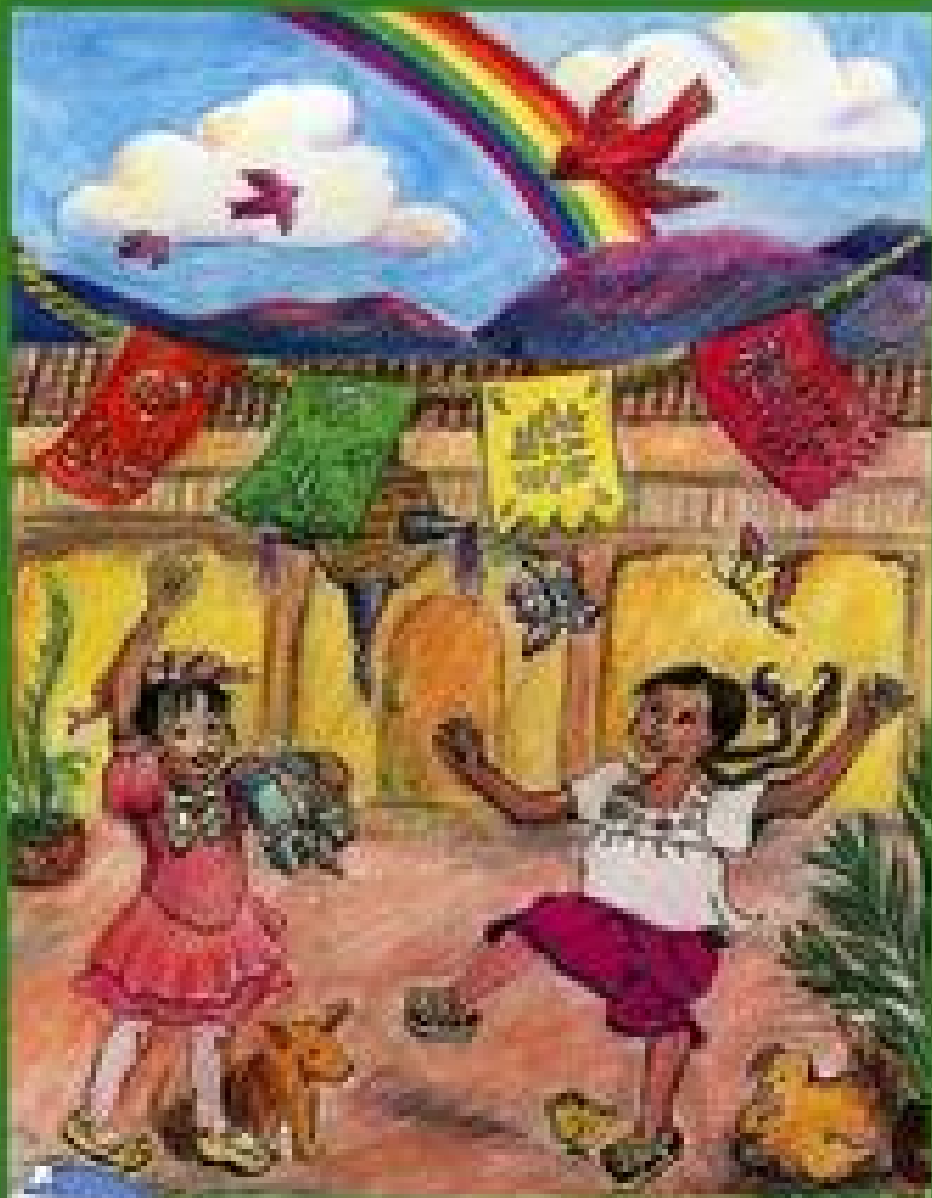


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[Arp Implementation And Data Collection Report](#) from [monicaorma](#)

Pre-K Vocab. Acquisition

- Shared as a Slideshare presentation



A Thematic Unit:
Fiestas de Yucatán

Dialogue Journals in 2nd Grade Spanish FLES

- Shared as a thematic unit
- Published in *Learning Languages*

Giving Kids a Can Do Attitude

BY NADINE JACOBSEN

The question going into this action research was, “How can a language teacher encourage more positive attitudes toward language learning while building a learning community?” After incorporating “I Can” statements into the curriculum, more than 100 third grade students were surveyed. The survey asked what they thought they could do in Spanish. Following the survey, 30 students were randomly chosen to be interviewed assessing what they could do. A comparison was made between what they could do and what they thought they could do. The results of this survey will be discussed along with a review of literature related to studies of self-efficacy, motivation and other factors that can either build or tear down a learning community.

After Audrey L. Heining-Boynton (2007) surveyed a large number of boys and girls attending schools with FLES programs, the study revealed a decline in interest for both boys and girls. One student mentioned only using what he learned in a Mexican restaurant. Expanding the learning community gave learners more opportunities than the local semi-authentic restaurant.

Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) argue that, “We are neglecting the sort of practical and creative abilities that allow people to deal with real-life problems and unforeseen challenges” (p. 80). Creating a learning environment with more opportunities in school to use the language will encourage learners to speak within a larger learning community.

According to Gorsuch (2009), “practice and language use opportunities probably require more attention within divisions in order for students to develop higher levels of self-efficacy and thus persistence in learning” (p.534). By promoting self-efficacy and cultivating a larger learning community, learners will have positive memories of the World Language program and seek more opportunities to communicate in the target language.

As Grundstad and Watzke (1996) found, students who participated in a World Language program prior to secondary school were more likely to continue their World Language

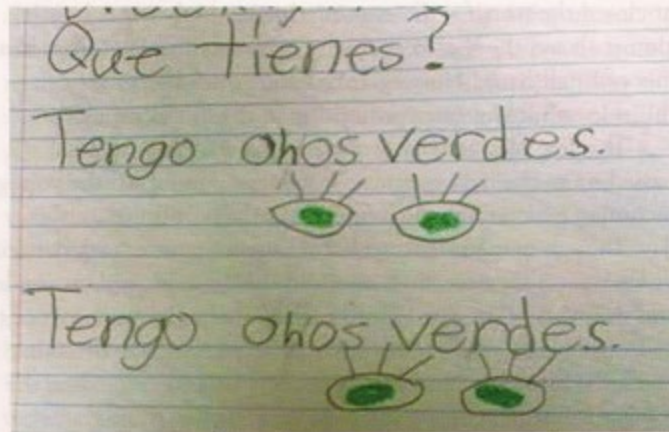


Figure 1: Student and parent demonstration of knowledge

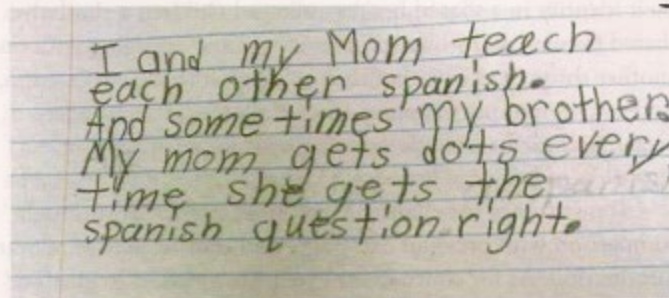


Figure 2: Student testimony

logging both of their responses as seen in Figure 1. She then shared her learning/teaching experience with the class. (Figure 2)

By focusing on the positive and what we can do, we are much more motivated to do more in order to experience more success and even share the success. This behavior is known as achievement motivation, when the anticipation of success motivates the learner to work harder. More often if a learner expects failure, they are less likely to be motivated to participate. Cohen (2001) reports on self-actualization, which can be compared to achievement motivation:
Self-actualization is the drive to actualize potential and

**Can Do
Statements in
3rd Grade
Spanish as a
Tool for
Motivation &
Building
Classroom
Community**

- Published in *Learning Languages*

Collaborative Online Learning in Japan & US

a Slideshare
Presentation

Providing Individualized Feedback in High School Spanish

Shared as a 2-page
summary on a
district website

Content Area & Reading Fluency in Middle School Spanish

Shared as a class
wiki

Culture Through Spanish Webquests

Shared on a high school teacher's website

Using Facebook as a Language Learning
Tool: Building Language Learning
Communities among Students.

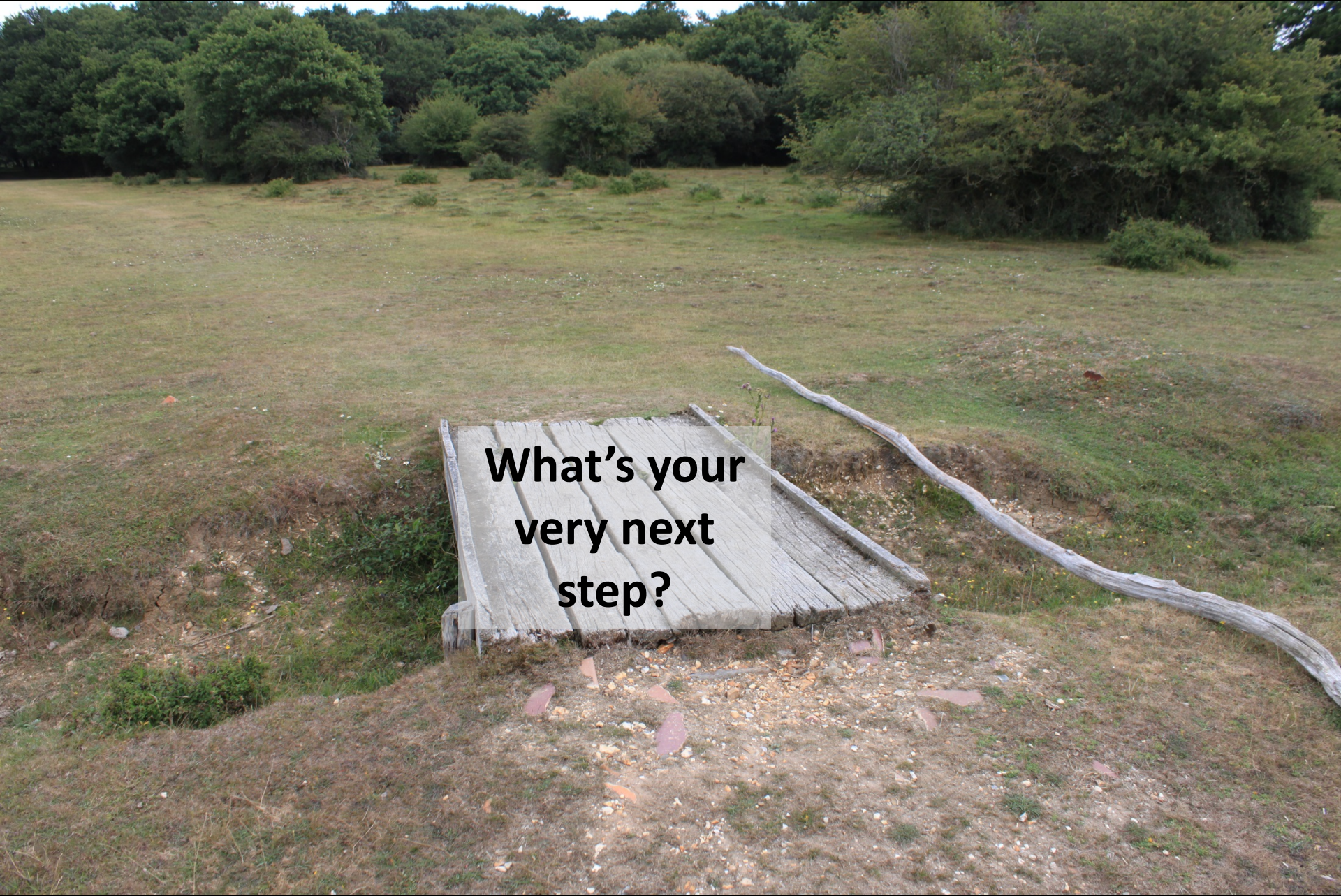
Using Wordles to Teach Writing

Published in *LLT*



Why become involved with research?

- **Advocacy**
- **Belong to the conversation**
- **Collect data**
- **Determine direction and shape of research**
- **Evaluate claims re: latest trends**



**What's your
very next
step?**



Questions?



Bridging the Gap Between Practitioners & Researchers

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Photo: [Helena Ruiz](#)

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