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READING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A PEDAGOGICAL REPORT ON SOCIOCULTURAL STRATEGIES FOR READING TEXTS IN THE ELEMENTARY FRENCH CLASSROOM

A Thesis Presented

by

KIMBERLY BUESCHER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2009

French and Francophone Studies
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

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ABSTRACT

READING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: A PEDAGOGICAL REPORT ON SOCIOCULTURAL STRATEGIES FOR READING TEXTS IN THE ELEMENTARY FRENCH CLASSROOM

MAY 2009

KIMBERLY DAWN BUESCHER, B.A., UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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Directed by: Dianne Sears and Eduardo Negueruela

This thesis focuses on reading in a second language (L2) classroom and specifically on Sociocultural strategies for reading texts in the elementary French classroom. This pedagogical report first outlines the theoretical basis of the two pedagogical experiences presented which include Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory of learning and development (SCT), specifically Cole's (2003) Question-Asking-Reading (QAR) approach, traditional reading approaches and a literacy approach to teaching reading. The key concepts of SCT that influenced these pedagogical experiences include the zone of proximal development (ZPD), mediation, the shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal, prolepsis, and shared activities based on a specific division of labor. Cole's QAR approach focused on teaching reading to students who struggled with reading in their first language (L1) and included a clear structure, specific roles, an interesting text, goal talk, and a scaffolding plan. Traditional reading approaches focus on the integration of bottom-up and top-down processing. A literacy approach focuses on meaning, the integration of language, context and content and the use of authentic texts. For the two pedagogical experiences outlined in this thesis, Cole's QAR approach was

adapted for university students in a second semester French class, who were learning to read in an L2. These experiences also included a clear structure, specific roles, an interesting text and a scaffolding plan. The structure included four main steps: (1) read one section aloud – alternating readers, (2) silent reading/preparing role, (3) talk as a group – fulfill roles, (4) change roles and return to step (1). The roles included the person who leads the discussion on: (1) hard-to-pronounce words, (2) hard-to-understand words or expressions, (3) main idea, (4) what will happen next, and (5) hard-to-understand grammatical structures. The text was a French fairy tale, "Roman d'amour d'une patate" by Pierre Gripari. The roles represent the different steps in the reading process and by dividing this process into roles, the group shares in the process of reading. As students learn the tools needed in this group process and internalize the tools needed for reading, they should be able to take on more of the responsibility themselves.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Second language teachers have long sought meaningful and effective ways to incorporate reading activities into the beginner language classroom. As a French teacher who has taught both beginner and intermediate learners at the high school level and beginner learners at the university level, I have often wondered what the best approach is to teach students to read in French. Most students are able to read successfully in their first language, but I was not sure how this affects reading in a second language (L2).

Many other questions arose concerning L2 reading for beginner language students. When are students capable of reading a longer authentic text for meaning? Do students need a certain amount of the L2 in order read such a text or could specific aids or activities compensate for their limited L2 knowledge? What tools would students need in order to read for meaning? What are the most effective forms of aid or mediation from a sociocultural point of view (see chapter 2) that could reasonably be provided for thirty university students in an L2 classroom? If it is possible to provide appropriate and effective mediation, what are the benefits of being able to read such a text as a beginner L2 student? How would the mediation change with the students' growing knowledge? How long would it take students to internalize the tools needed and no longer need mediation in order to read for meaning? Would students enjoy this challenge and find it useful in their L2 studies?

Taking into consideration all of these questions concerning L2 reading and creating an approach that would help students to read for meaning successfully is a challenge. I remember that during my first experiences trying to read in French, I either

looked up an endless number of words in the dictionary or tried to figure out too many using contextual clues, both of which caused me to lose the meaning of the text completely. In this thesis, I explore the development of a meaningful approach to incorporate whole texts and reading activities into a French elementary and intermediate classroom in order to answer some of these questions.

In order to learn more about language learning and reading, I began reading about Lev Vygotsky and the Sociocultural theory of learning and development (SCT) (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Kozulin, 1998; Newman & Holzman, 1993) in the Spring of 2006. I was intrigued to learn how this theory could be applied to language learning and specifically to reading. Some of this theory's concepts that I find particularly important to reading in an L2 are the zone of proximal development, mediation, the shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal, prolepsis and shared activities or the division of labor (see chapter 2). Shortly thereafter, still in the spring semester of 2006, I read Cole's (2003) study of Question – Asking – Reading (QAR) which applied many of the concepts of SCT to teaching students to read. Cole (2003) focused on helping students to read successfully in their first language (L1) who had struggled in their earlier reading attempts and were also clinically labeled learning disabled. Even though differences abound between Cole's study and what I was interested in studying, I believed that with appropriate changes, university-level learners of French may benefit from this approach.

I designed a pedagogical experience to find out whether university-level students in a second-semester French course, with little previous experience reading in an L2, could read successfully using a modified QAR approach. I kept the spirit of Cole's approach but adapted it to be better suited for an L2 classroom (see chapter 3). I hoped

that my students would learn to read successfully in French, enjoy reading authentic L2 texts, experience French culture through these texts, understand the importance of reading French texts in their L2 learning, and realize that they are able to read authentic French texts even as beginners. The first pedagogical experience took place during the spring semester of 2006; although students were successfully able to read the authentic text, I still wanted to learn more about the process of reading specifically in an L2, the application of SCT to reading approaches, traditional reading approaches, literacy approaches, and the benefits of using authentic texts.

In order to learn more, I began researching traditional reading approaches including bottom-up and top-down strategies,(Coady, 1997; Combs, 1996; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Laufer, 1997; Nuttall, 1982), SCT applied to reading,(Ashton, 1996; Bruner, 1984; Campione, Brown, Ferrara, & Bryant, 1984; Dixon-Krauss, 1996a; Greenfield, 1984; Jennings & Di, 1996; Kragler, 1996; Matthews, 1996; McMahon, 1996; Rogoff & Gardner, 1984; Wertsch, Minick, & Arns, 1984) and literacy approaches to reading using authentic texts (Hall, 2001; Maxim, 2002; Maxim, 2006; J. K. Swaffar, 1988; J. Swaffar & Arens, 2005). This research along with the first pedagogical experience's implications and limitations helped to refine this reading approach. The second pedagogical experience took place during the spring semester of 2009.

Since this thesis is a qualitative, descriptive pedagogical report, I, as the teacher, am part of the pedagogical experience. Because my teaching background and teaching philosophy may have an impact on the results, I will briefly outline each of these.

I have taught French for four years at the high school level from French I to French V AP and have been a Teaching Assistant for two years teaching the first and

second semester introductory French courses each year. My undergraduate degree is in the Teaching of French and my Master's coursework included both French and Education courses. I have tutored students in French and have lived with and taught French to an American family in France. I spent two years between the first and second year of my Master's coursework teaching English at a French University. I believe that learning French includes learning the language and the culture, but also learning a new way to think and developing a new perspective on the world. Students not only need a firm foundation in the language but also to be inspired to continue learning by being able to use the language in authentic contexts. One way I believe that this may be possible is through reading authentic texts which is why these pedagogical experiences were designed. By being able to read in another language, I believe that students will not only learn vocabulary and grammar, for example, but that they will enjoy being able to participate in and learn about other cultures and world views through a text.

In chapter 2, I will review the literature on SCT, Cole's QAR approach, traditional reading strategies and literacy approaches to reading – the theories that guided my research. In chapter 3, I will present both pedagogical experiences that I developed and implemented in two second semester French courses at the university level. In chapter 4, I will present the results of the group reading process and of the questionnaires. In chapter 5, I will conclude the thesis by presenting the implications of these pedagogical experiences, discussing the limitations and the changes to make for future pedagogical experiences as well as the direction of future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory of learning and development

Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory of learning and development (SCT) has many key concepts. I will discuss only the ones that are the most applicable to this pedagogical experience in relation to their impact on learning to read for meaning in a second language classroom. These concepts include the zone of proximal development (ZPD), mediation, the shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal, prolepsis, and shared activities or division of labor. In SCT, each of these ideas is intricately intertwined with the next.

Vygotsky proposes that it is best to aim instruction at the learner's ZPD which can be defined as "encompassing the gap between the child's level of *actual development* determined by independent problem solving and her level of *potential development* determined by problem solving supported by an adult or through collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Dixon-Krauss, 1996a pp. 14-15). Dynamic Assessment (DA) is the assessment of a learner's ZPD using a form of assisted performance or a mediator to measure not what a student's current skill level is, but what his or her development may be (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Cole, 2003; Kozulin, 1998). In focusing instruction and assessment within the learner's ZPD, the teacher is able to determine where the learner's future independent development may lie because he or she is able to perform the task with assistance before he or she is competent in this skill by him or herself (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Cole, 2003; Kozulin, 1998).

Assistance can be found in many forms of mediation such as the use of a culturally influenced psychological tool, artifact or sign, in social interaction with a

teacher who is providing scaffolding, in collaboration with a learner's peers or any combination thereof. A psychological tool could be laminated cards reminding the student what his or her role is for example, but the most fundamental psychological tools we use are linguistic signs. According to Davydov & Radzikhouskii (1985), "For Vygotsky, a *sign* is a symbol with a definite meaning that has evolved in the history of a culture" (54 as cited in Ashton, 1996 p. 114). Language is the most fundamental sign system.

The source of psychological development is social interaction.

> From a Vygotskian perspective on ontogenesis there are two ways in which activity may be social, and these two ways are typically combined or co-ordinated in the child's experience. On the one hand, activity is social in the sense that it is socioculturally defined. On the other hand, the child's experience involves social activity in the sense that he or she participates in 'localized collectives,' that is, concrete social interactional settings involving one or more other persons. (Wertsch et al., 1984 p. 157)

One example of a localized collective is a learner and a teacher who is providing scaffolding for him or her. Scaffolding in this sense is similar to the idea of scaffolding used in constructing a building. This type of scaffolding is a support mechanism used to be able to complete a job successfully. In the educational sense, a teacher may have to use more scaffolding or bear a greater responsibility in the activity the further the task is in a learner's ZPD in order to compensate for the, as of yet, undeveloped skills. As a learner's development improves, the amount of scaffolding needed for the same activity decreases until a learner is able to complete the activity independently. The level of difficulty of the task stays the same throughout the activity; it is only the amount of assistance that changes (Greenfield, 1984). In most schools, there are many more

learners than teachers. Having a teacher as the only person qualified to provide scaffolding may seem like an unrealistic option.

Another example of a localized collective is a group of peers working in collaboration and in cooperation while providing scaffolding to each other in a variety of ways, one of which will be outlined in the two pedagogical experiences. Typically in American schools, independent work is valued over cooperative work and, in some cases, collaborative work is even considered cheating (Greenfield, 1984). Perhaps collaboration should be accepted not only in teaching and learning but also in assessments. This will give teachers not only information about what students' current development is and what they are able to do independently today, as traditional assessments do, but also what students' potential development will be and what they will be able to do independently in the future.

As the amount of mediation needed decreases with the learner's development, there is a shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal interaction. What it was once necessary to share in collaboration changes to occurring within the individual. "Any function in the child's cultural development appears on the stage twice, on two planes, first on the social plane and then on the psychological, first among people as an intermental category and then within the child as an intramental category." (Vygotsky, 1966:44 as cited in Greenfield, 1984 p. 117). This is true independent of the learner's background as long as the activity in question falls within the learner's ZPD (Greenfield, 1984). This shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal also correlates with a shift from public speech to private speech to inner speech to verbal thinking. For example, when a child is first learning to read in his or her first language, the parent/teacher is the one

reading the words on the page. The child's participation starts with listening, then following along with his or her finger, then saying some words, being able to read the story, all the way to being able to read silently without any aid from the adult. "The printed language becomes a psychological tool for structuring thought" (Dixon-Krauss, 1996a p. 11)

When DA is used to assess a learner's ZPD, it measures prolepsis, which can be described as performance preceding competence (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Cole, 2003). In other words, prolepsis is concerned with this shifting of responsibility within a social interaction, the decreasing need for mediation, the shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal and the shift in a learner's ZPD. According to Rogoff & Gardner (1984), "a crucial feature of proleptic instruction is the transfer of responsibility for the management of their joint problem-solving from the expert to the novice" (p. 107). They go on to explain how this responsibility is transferred:

> Proleptic teaching contrasts both with explanation, where the adult talks about a task rather than guiding the child through the task, and with demonstration, where the teacher carries out the task rather than involving the child in action. Proleptic instruction integrates explanation and demonstration with an emphasis on the learner's participation in the instructional activity (Rogoff & Gardner, 1984 pp. 101-102).

With each new learning activity within the learner's ZPD, prolepsis is the goal.

Shared activities or the division of labor can be defined as a joint problem-solving activity or collaboration between a teacher and student or among peers. According to Jennings and Di, "the interactions require a holistic and meaningful search for knowledge in which everyone has a part" (Jennings & Di, 1996 p. 78). Wertsch (1984) further explains that:

> Rather than simply asserting that joint functioning somehow leads to individual functioning, Vygotsky argued that the two forms of functioning are tied together in an essential way. Namely, the very processes or relationships that are involved in social interaction are eventually taken over and internalized by the child to form individual cognitive processes. (pp. 157-158)

This proleptic process during which there is a shift from interpersonal to intrapersonal occurs during shared or joint activities or a division of labor while the responsibility shifts from expert to novice (Rogoff & Gardner, 1984). "Cooperation or collaboration, to a large extent, makes up the backbone of Vygotsky's theory. Taking the human social context into consideration, Vygotsky highlights the significance of this element in teaching and learning." (Jennings & Di, 1996 p. 77) Shared activities using a division of labor and taking into account the ZPD of the learners, are one of the best ways in which higher mental functions develop in a learner's mind (Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Cole, 2003; Kozulin, 1998).

2.2 Overview of Michael Cole's (2003) Question – Asking – Reading study

The backbone for the current pedagogical experiences was Michael Cole's (2003) Question –Asking – Reading (QAR) study as part of Field College, an after-school program designed to improve the reading of students who were clinically labeled learning disabled and who struggled with reading. His study, in development, was based on the belief that "reading instruction must emphasize both decoding and comprehension in a single, integrated activity" or in other words bottom-up and top-down processes (Cole, 2003 p. 272). Other beliefs that influenced Cole's study were that reading acquisition is a joint activity and that reading requires coordination between the text, the reader, and the world (Cole, 2003).

In Cole's study, there were two objectives: (1) to improve students' reading abilities, (2) to make the process as interesting as possible. The main components of Cole's study include a clear structure, specific roles, an interesting text, goal talk, and a scaffolding plan. The structure included, in this order: (1) goal talk, (2) distribution of roles, (3) silent reading, (4) fulfillment of roles, (5) creation of questions, continual repetition of steps 2–5, (6) quiz, (7) scores, and (8) criticism. The roles included (1) the person who asks about words that are hard to say (2) the person who asks about words that are hard to understand (3) the person who asks a question about the main idea of the passage (4) the person who picks the person to answer questions asked by others and (5) the person who asks about what is going to happen next (Cole, 2003). "Each role corresponds to a different hypothetical part of the whole act of reading" and by dividing up the act of reading into these roles, the group shares the process of reading (Cole, 2003 p. 277). In other words, a division of labor was instituted so that at the beginning, students would only bear a small amount of responsibility while participating in the entire act of reading and gaining the whole understanding. As students learn this process, have a chance to participate in each of the roles, and improve their ability to perform each of these roles which helps to improve their ability to read, they should be able to take on more of the responsibility themselves.

Cole's study took into consideration many key components of Vygotsky's SCT such as the ZPD, Mediation, the Shift from Interpersonal to Intrapersonal, Prolepsis and Shared Activities or Division of Labor. Cole (2003) believed that "a cultural medium for reading" must be created by using "artifacts (most notably, but not only, the text), it must be proleptic, and it must orchestrate social relations to coordinate the child with the to-be-

acquired system of mediation in an effective way" (p. 273). These artifacts, tools or mediators include the role card, the story, the outlined structure and paper and pencils used to take notes or fulfill the role. According to Cole (2003), "all of these artifacts represent tools to be used by the adults to create a structured medium for the development of reading and by the children to support their participation, even before they know how to read" (p. 277). He believed that the students' ZPD had to be taken into account, a scaffolding plan must be incorporated, and a division of labor had to be created in order to solve the task.

Through this proleptic and shared activity, the students would be able to perform at a higher level with the help of their peers and the adult than they would have been able to do individually, and then shift the act of reading from an interpersonal activity to an intrapersonal one (Cole, 2003). "QAR allows the children to participate in the whole act of reading-as-comprehending, where initially the adults and the artifacts bear a large part of the load, but where children come to be fuller participants (that is, competent readers) over time." (Cole, 2003 p. 279) As students become more comfortable with the roles and structure, and are able to understand more of the reading, we know that their ZPD is shifting because they are able to take on more of the responsibility of the task themselves. They become able to do a task individually in which previously they would have only been able to do with the assistance of the group. Students who previously struggled with gaining literacy were able to read and understand a text because they had internalized the process for creating meaning from reading.

Figure 1 below from Cole (2003) demonstrates the connection between the adult, child, text, and world and the shift that takes place throughout the process outlined in this

study (p. 276). The red line represents the adult's current connection with the world and the text, while the green line represents the established connection between the child, the world, and the adult. With the QAR approach, the adult attempts to connect the child, the world, and the text, as shown by the blue dotted line. This study demonstrates the importance of shared activity and socially constructed meaning as Cole (2003) concludes:

> Reading…is an emergent process of meaning making that occurs when information topicalized by the text is synthesized with prior knowledge as part of a general process of mediated interaction with the world. The acquisition of reading provides an excellent example of the social nature of developmental change (p. 284)

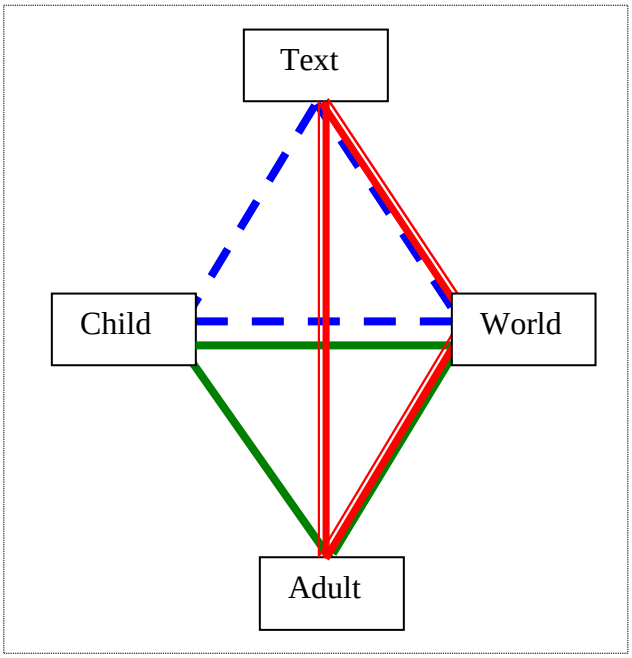

Figure 1: Adult, Child, World, Text Connection

Cole's (2003) study succeeded in creating a joint reading activity which helped the teacher, through mediation and roles, discover what each child struggled with in the act of reading, to help students who previously "failed" in the act of reading to read, and to make it an enjoyable and interesting process. King (1988) replicated Cole's QAR

small group reading study including a no-treatment control group and a procedural facilitation group along with the QAR treatment group. The procedural facilitation group of students read individually while completing all of the role card tasks individually in written form in a workbook. The approaches used in both the QAR treatment group and the procedural facilitation group improved reading performance, but students in the QAR group:

> retained significantly more material from the training passages than did those in the procedural facilitation group. The students in the QAR group also spent more total time actively engaged with the task and demonstrated a greater interest in the content of the readings, indicating an intimate link between the motivational, social-interactional, and cognitive aspects of activity-in-context. (King, 1988 as cited in Cole, 2003 p. 284)

Helping students to read successfully especially after having struggled to read is essential, but helping students to enjoy the act of reading is a life-long gift and will have a significant impact on their life. See Figure 2 below from Cole (2003) which graphically captures the interconnectedness of the key components of the QAR study (p. 284).

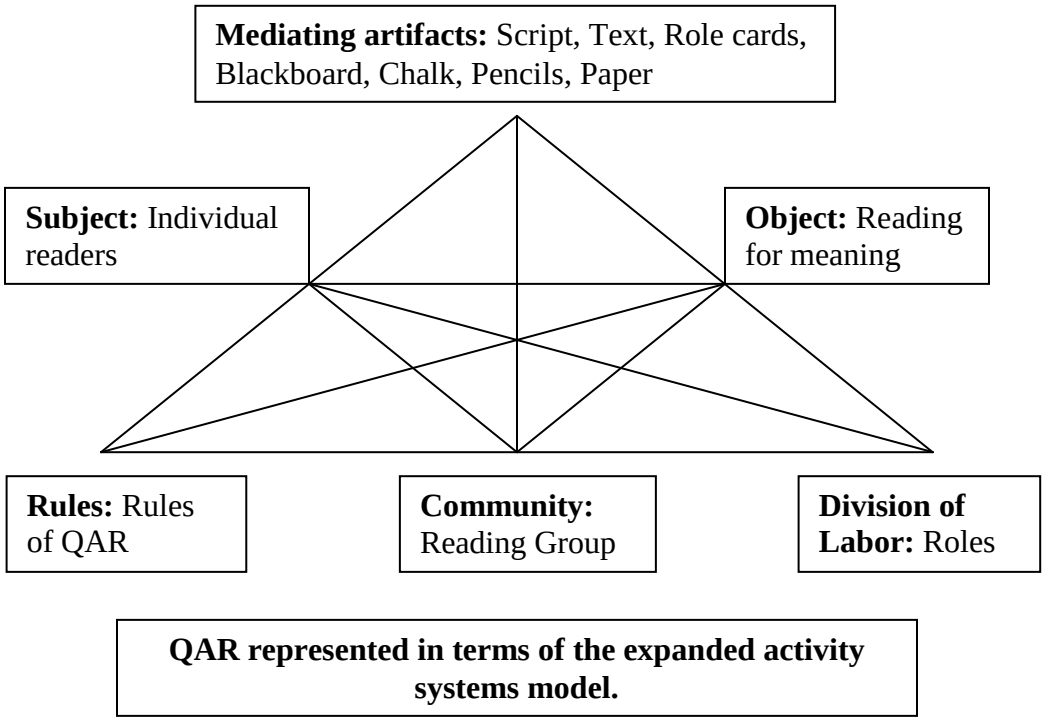

Figure 2: Key Components of Cole's (2003) QAR Study

2.3 Overview of Traditional Reading Approaches

Within the singular act of reading, as stated in the previous section, there are two main components or processes that help lead students to understand a text. Bottom-up processing refers to the decoding of the words starting with the letters and moving up to the word, phrase, and then sentence. How these words sound and how the combination of letters influences the word are essential for bottom-up processing; understanding of a text proceeds from the parts to the whole. Top-down processing refers to the comprehension of the text which includes the incorporation of outside knowledge into the understanding of the text. Guessing the meaning from context, understanding the main idea and predicting what will happen next are all top-down processes. Although most researchers agree that these two processes are important to learning to read, they disagree

about how best to help children use them in order to read successfully. Cole (2003) says, "theorists differ on the questions of how to sequence instruction (whether to emphasize code or meaning first) and how best to help children 'break the code' (by teaching phonetic analysis or by teaching whole words)." (p. 271) Cole (2003) goes on to say that although the understanding of these two processes for non-beginner readers is well-understood, the process of reading acquisition is still up for debate.

Most traditional L1 reading approaches have focused on one of these processes as the key to reading acquisition. For example, they have used phonics as the approach if they believe that bottom-up processing leads to reading successfully or for top-down processing, the whole word approach has been used. Another common approach is to teach reading as a skill; therefore students must first master individual skills (either L2 skills or individual skills from bottom-up or top-down processes) independent of reading. Once they have, they will be able to automatically incorporate all of these skills in the act of reading.

According to Swaffar & Arens (2005) L2 professionals no longer believe that students will be able to master the L2 by learning individual skills because "skills are not components of language use that can be taught" (p. 15). Hall (2001) states that, "In contrast to this narrow view, current research has revealed that reading and listening in another language are complicated, multidimensional processes involving a complex interplay of a number of factors. To derive meaning from any kind of text, either oral or written, we use bottom-up and top-down processes." (p. 169). Rumelhart (1977) and Schank (1982) take this one step further by indicating that "reading comprehension

results from interactive variables that operate simultaneously rather than sequentially" (as cited in J. K. Swaffar, 1988 p. 123)

A traditional belief in L2 learning is that students cannot read until they have acquired a certain amount of the L2 whether measured in amount of time, exposure to grammatical components, or vocabulary acquisition. Laufer (1997) argues that "no text comprehension is possible, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary" (p. 20) She does acknowledge that understanding the vocabulary is not synonymous with understanding the reading and that this is not the only influence on learning to read. Even if it is possible to know the single most important influence on learning to read, we cannot simply focus on succeeding in this one area as reading is a combination of processes that lead to reading for meaning. Some of the other factors that she states can affect reading comprehension include "textually relevant background knowledge and the application of general reading strategies, such as predicting the content of the text, guessing unknown words in context, making inferences, recognizing the type and text structure, and grasping the main idea of a paragraph" but that syntactic complexity does not have an influence on reading (p. 20).

Laufer (1997) goes on to define many components of vocabulary comprehension and possible impact that difficulty with each of these components can have on reading comprehension. One of her conclusions is that "the turning point of vocabulary size for reading comprehension is about 3,000 word families" or 5,000 lexical items (p. 23). By quoting a specific figure for the amount of vocabulary a student must acquire for reading comprehension, she raises many questions. What does the 'turning point' mean? Is this the stage at which reading comprehension can be considered successful? What does a

reading activity look like before this threshold is reached? Does this suggest then that L2 teachers ought to wait to have their students read until they have surpassed this threshold? How does one measure an L2 students' vocabulary size? In the case study by Grabe & Stoller (1997), they measured vocabulary knowledge by asking for a synonym for each word and reading comprehension by a translation test (105). Perhaps a student may know what the word means but is unable to produce a synonym for the word; perhaps a student is able to read for meaning without being able to translate the same passage. Each of these questions suggests that more research needs to be done on the process of reading acquisition including defining terms, incorporating the possible influences or processes that affect reading in an approach that helps students to read for meaning, and designing tests that measure success in reading.

In many beginning language textbooks, at the end of each section or lesson, there are short texts which are generally unrelated to the grammar or vocabulary presented at the end of the chapter. Students may or may not be assigned to read them, meaning the only reading they may have done in the chapter is the very brief vocabulary stories that were created to introduce the chapter. If they are assigned the end of the chapter texts, they may also be assigned to answer multiple choice recall questions (J. Swaffar & Arens, 2005). According to Maxim (2002), the "dominant paradigm of reading research – individual students reading one or more short texts and being asked to recall, summarize, or provide multiple choice or cloze answers – both reflects and influences standard L2 classroom reading practices". (p. 21)

Many teachers intuitively believe that students cannot read successfully until they reach a certain level of proficiency in the language. The only texts that most students

come into contact with in their first two years of L2 study are sometimes as short as several sentences, not terribly interesting, created for the language textbook and therefore void of authentic culture, or simplified versions of an authentic text. Only once they have learned enough L2 will they be given longer, more interesting, or authentic texts. The importance of using authentic texts early in L2 study is becoming more well-known, but it is still not the norm in the classroom. Many teachers who do use authentic texts in a beginner class use short texts, perhaps because they believe that it is not possible for students to read longer texts or that it may be overwhelming. "A closer examination of L2 reading research, however, reveals that the infeasibility of reading longer authentic texts with beginning adult students is more presumed than proven." (Maxim, 2002 p. 21)

In many universities, the first two years of study in the L2 focus on learning the basic grammatical structures and vocabulary of the language. The following two years generally focus on literature, history, business or other content courses in the L2. In many large universities, most of the language courses (in the first two years) are taught by Teaching Assistants (TAs) or junior faculty with professors or specialists teaching the advanced classes in the last two years. Most students who have to take a language requirement generally do not take courses beyond the first two years. Students who stop after their required classes may not have ever really experienced the C2 through a text and those who do continue taking classes in the L2 are often unprepared for analyzing literature in advanced courses. Swaffar & Arens (2005) outline the separation existing between language and advanced courses:

> At one end of the spectrum, language dominates. Instructors teach language in a normative fashion, as a corpus of data to be learned 'correctly'. That assumed standard for communication relies on tasks such as reading texts for information alone, memorizing individual words

> in lists, and writing sentences outside a particular communicative context. Related classroom practices generally place teachers in an authority role; the learner is evaluated against the correctness rather than on originality or content control. The underlying assumption of such a position is that language forms must be acquired before students can use the language to engage in intellectually challenging activities, such as reading its literature or investigating ideas in periodicals or on the Web, at a cognitive level commensurate with work in other college courses. Students are not presumed to be able to think about issues that they cannot yet speak or write about. (p. 17)

Despite research on a literacy approach to reading (see next section) in L2 learning, teachers and even some researchers seem reluctant to embrace this new approach. One of the most commonly cited reasons is that a certain proficiency level is needed before being able to successfully read in an L2. According to Laufer (1997):

> The current view is that since reading in L2 is both a reading problem and a language problem, 'some sort of threshold or competence ceiling has to be attained before existing abilities in the first language can begin to transfer' (Alderson, 1984, p.20). In other words, even if a reader has good metacognitive strategies, which he or she uses in L1, these will not be of much help in L2 before a solid language base has been reached (p. 21).

She then goes on to say that there is a level "at which reading in L2 can be expected to start resembling reading in L1" (Laufer, 1997 p. 21).

Perhaps the most important question is whether students should be expected to read equally well in their L2 as in L1 when they first start reading in the L2. Why is there a perception of little to no worth in reading before students are able to read equally well in their L2 as in their L1? Are there forms of mediation that can fill in the perceived gaps in comprehension in the meantime? Maxim (2002) argues that "despite efforts to integrate all levels of foreign language instruction, reading remains on the periphery of beginning language study" (p. 20).

2.4 Overview of a Literacy Approach to Teaching Reading

A literacy approach to teaching reading incorporates authentic texts into the classroom with the focus on meaning and the "systematic integration of language form with content and context" (J. Swaffar & Arens, 2005 p. 16). According to Ashton (1996), literacy "must be thought of as a dynamic process, shaped by the social context, and only understandable in relation to the context. In instruction, the focus must be on the purpose of the literacy activity – on its meaning for the participants." (p. 120). While most traditional approaches believe that learners can understand the meaning in a text only after they understand the language in a text, Swaffar & Arens (2005) disagree. They see this not as a dichotomy but as a "concomitant, interrelated activity in which language and ideas are mutually constructing" (p. 13). They also believe that students benefit from a more integrative approach which includes "the value of supersentential writing; of the use of longer texts; and of exercises that mix modalities, have practical applications, and allow multiple solutions" versus what they consider to be a more fragmented traditional approach (p. 15). In addition, instead of using short, edited, or created texts, Swaffar & Arens (2005) argue that students actually need challenging reading tasks which will help them not only to understand the language being used but also the content and they give examples of each. One example of a traditional question which is only concerned with the content will ask the students the age of a character. A question that is used to understand the language and content would be to ask the students what expression is used in the text to express someone's age. The second question will not only be able to answer the first question but will also help the learner understand how ages are expressed in a specific L2 and C2. Using questions like this helps to move beyond the traditional right

or wrong questions (used to make sure that a student has read) and to engage the learner in creating an understanding not only of the language but also a personal meaning of the text.

Authentic materials or texts are a key component of a literacy approach to teaching reading. Swaffar and Arens (2005) define authentic materials as "texts written for, viewed by, or spoken to native speakers of that language" (p. 18) versus "materials written only to teach language" (Maxim, 2002 p. 20). According to Swaffar and Arens (2005):

> Authentic materials lead learners not only to new language but also to new textual messages and new ideas expressed in language unfamiliar to them; these texts also expose them to new discourse situations that need to be controlled – to language learning in the context of a culture's ideas, values, and practices, as all teachable within the context of language acquisition (p. 18).

At first glance, authentic texts may seem more difficult for a beginner L2 learner to comprehend given that the vocabulary, grammar and cultural references have not been edited or simplified to aid in comprehension, but they are not necessarily out of reach for these students. Authentic materials, by their very nature, tend to provide a redundancy that edited texts may not which helps facilitate students' comprehension (J. Swaffar & Arens, 2005).

Maxim's (2002) study challenged commonly held beliefs that students cannot read in the L2 until they have achieved a certain level of proficiency. He decided to investigate whether students could read an extensive authentic text (a novel) in groups during class time in a first semester German class (Maxim, 2002). His research questions included whether students would be able to read this text, what they would understand from reading on their own or in a group, whether they would be at a disadvantage on

traditional department exams and conversely, would they be at an advantage in a reading activity compared to the control group – a traditional first semester German class (Maxim, 2002 p. 21). Maxim's (2002) study included a systematic approach to reading which increased in cognitive difficulty from identification to analysis, a framework for understanding the story, and in-class group reading which aided in comprehension, in speaking in the L2, and in sharing reading strategies. In addition, the students were instructed to focus on key events and information. Students had a hefty reading schedule of about one thousand words a day and completed appropriate post-reading activities. All of these components guided students towards comprehension of this text without requiring word-for-word comprehension (Maxim, 2002). Maxim's (2002) findings negate many commonly held beliefs about a necessary pre-reading L2 proficiency level as "the students' limited linguistic competence did not short-circuit their ability to read authentic texts in class with the support of their classmates and instructor" (p. 29).

A literacy approach to teaching reading would logically promote reading acquisition and comprehension, but it also improves traditional components of L2 acquisition. As stated above, L2 vocabulary knowledge can have an impact on L2 reading ability, but in fact they both positively affect the other; the more one's reading improves, the more one's vocabulary improves and the more one's vocabulary improves, the more one's reading improves (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). Grabe & Stoller (1997) note that listening comprehension improves with extensive reading and their "case study argues that an effective way to develop language abilities over time is through extensive reading" (p. 119). Grabe (1991) summed up twenty-five years of research on reading by stating that extensive reading can "build vocabulary and structural awareness, develop

automaticity, enhance background knowledge, improve comprehension skills, and promote confidence and motivation" (as quoted in Maxim, 2002 p. 21). In Maxim's (2002) study, students in a first semester language course could read an extensive, authentic text, and he cites the "potential for this reading to serve as the basis for developing students' skills in all areas of language learning" (p. 30). Some implications on L2 curriculum in Maxim's (2002) study include that if the separation of language and content courses continues as is, students' reading abilities could ease the transition into these more advanced classes. Even more importantly, these content courses could be incorporated possibly sooner than previously thought. Finally, as his study was so easily implemented into a first semester course, it suggests that an L2 department curriculum does not need to be completely overhauled in order to incorporate reading into a beginning L2 course. Maxim (2002) sums up the benefits that his study suggests by stating that "ultimately, the L2 curriculum will provide a richer, more rewarding experience if students are allowed to follow a coherent and systematic approach to language learning that allows for smooth transition from level to level and that develops their ability to use language to learn" (Maxim, 2002 p. 33).

As much as Maxim's (2002) study seems to suggest great strides in L2 reading acquisition as well as other improvements in L2 acquisition, there are many questions his study raises. Students in his study performed at a similar level on department exams as the traditional sections not only on traditional L2 components but also in reading comprehension. Given all of the benefits of extensive reading, why was it not more successful especially in reading comprehension given that they had read for twenty minutes each class and finished an entire novel? At the very least, students did not spend

this time specifically working on material from the chapters that was tested on the department exams (as the students from the control group did) and still did as well. This "suggests that some implicit learning and skill transfer must have taken place within the treatment group" which is noteworthy in itself (Maxim, 2002 p. 31).

He goes on to say that students from both groups, the traditional approach and the extensive reading approach, appear to have been well-served but should not the extensive reading group have been able to outperform the control group on all tasks and especially on the reading comprehension tasks (Maxim, 2002)? Perhaps these results did not appear because of the type of test used to measure reading comprehension. Perhaps the impact of extensive reading will appear only in later semesters. Perhaps these students will be more likely to continue on in their language studies compared to students in the more traditional course. Perhaps these students in the extensive reading group will have an easier transition into the upper-level literature courses, for example.

Some of the implications for future research as stated by Maxim (2002) include studying the effects of reading in a group for fifteen minutes each class compared to thirty minutes, doing a longitudinal study to discover the effects in later semesters, studying to what extent reading can be considered a motivating factor, and finally studying the group reading interaction of beginner students instead of focusing on their oral interaction as the original study did. Certainly, it is clear that much more research still needs to done in order to understand reading better, by looking at both short-term and long-term effects and using a variety of different approaches.

From the research on SCT, Cole's (2003) study, traditional reading approaches and literacy approaches to teaching reading, the current pedagogical experiences were

created, shaped, refined and implemented. In the next chapter, I will outline how Cole's (2003) QAR approach was adapted for both of the current pedagogical experiences. Throughout the description of each pedagogical experience, the key concepts of SCT will play a central role along with insights from traditional and literacy approaches to teaching reading.

CHAPTER 3

APPLICATION OF COLE'S QAR APPROACH TO MY CLASSROOM

3.1 Introduction

The backbone of my first and second pedagogical experience was Cole's (2003) study using the QAR approach with students who had previously had difficulty learning to read, who were taking part in an optional afterschool program, and who were learning to read in their first language. As I read his study, I wondered whether this idea, with some changes, would help university students, who had very little reading experience, learn to read in an L2. Some of the important components such as the structure and roles would have to be adapted to take into consideration the difference in the students and the task, but many of them still seemed valid. One of the questions the current pedagogical experiences seeks to answer is whether this approach can be adapted to suit university students studying an L2 who do not struggle with reading in their first language. If it is able to be adapted for current circumstances, would this approach help students read for meaning in an L2? Would this approach help them read longer or more difficult material compared to what is offered in the traditional L2 textbook? As this QAR approach uses a division of labor, would this structured group activity be enough to compensate for their beginning L2 knowledge by allowing the students to understand a text that they would not have been able to read on their own in the same time frame? The hope is that it would change the students' ZPD, encourage prolepsis and move the act of reading from interpersonal to intrapersonal. In this way, they would be able to read materials in an L2 by having internalized the approach used within their group. The hope is that this joint activity filled with artifacts, tools and mediators would help students read in an L2 even if

the circumstances of Cole's study and current pedagogical experiences are different. In order to begin trying to answer the above questions, two pedagogical experiences were implemented. The first pedagogical experience was implemented in the Spring of 2006 in a second semester university level French classroom, a French 120 class at the University of Massachusetts and the second in the Spring of 2009 again in a French 120 class.

Most students need to study a language to fulfill their language requirement for graduation. The first four French courses (elementary and intermediate) include French 110, 120, 230 and 240. Students who choose to take French and have had no previous French experience start with French 110. As there is no placement test for students, some French 110 students may have taken French before. In addition, a more fast-paced version of 110 and 120 is French 126, which covers both courses in one semester. For French 110 and 120, the main focus is on learning vocabulary and grammatical concepts through practice with many communicative activities. One example of this is students interviewing their classmates to find out information on their daily habits and comparing them to a French person's daily habits. In addition, students write three compositions over the course of the semester. The courses are taught mostly in French with English used on occasion. One example of when English might be used is to clarify students' understanding of a grammatical concept. While listening comprehension tests are given, no French speaking exams are given nor is reading emphasized in the textbook or in many classes.

This thesis is a qualitative and descriptive pedagogical report because during both pedagogical experiences, normal classroom activities were implemented and assessed by

their regular instructor. In the next sections, I will outline the first pedagogical experience, then further influences on the second pedagogical experience followed by an outline of the second pedagogical experience.

3.2 Pedagogical experience 1: Spring 2006

In the first pedagogical experience, the components included a structure, a set of roles, an interesting and authentic French fairy tale, and a scaffolding plan. A fairy tale was chosen because the students had to compose their own fairy tale in French as their third and final composition topic. The French fairy tale chosen was "Roman d'amour d'une patate"[1] by Pierre Gripari because it is an authentic French fairy tale written for L1 French speakers and not for the classroom. The level is challenging enough without being outside of the collective ZPD because the complexity of the reading is adequate for a second semester elementary French classroom, especially if we consider the length of this tale. It is long enough that the students could take advantage of the natural, authentic redundancy in the story, and to see the change in their reading ability throughout the process but short enough to fit into an already full department syllabus for this course. The story is nearly two thousand words long and has two illustrations, by Puig Rosado, to help students access the text, therefore helping to make it a more readable text according to Swaffar & Arens (2005). Finally, the story raises important questions relevant to today's society. Most important of all, it captures and maintains students' interest.

This fairy tale is about a potato and a guitar that meet and become fast friends while exchanging tales about how they came to be in the dump. A hobo overhears them and decides to try making money on a talking potato and guitar. As they refuse to

[1] See Appendix A

demonstrate their talent for the circus director, he kicks the hobo out for wasting his time. In the end, they are found out and become stars in the circus. A rich sultan hears about this amazing potato and comes to take her back to his land. The sultan succeeds but not before he has paid a hefty sum. In the end, the sultan and potato marry, the guitar does not leave her friend's side and the happy couple is the talk of the town…well, for a short while anyway.

3.2.1 Structure

Before beginning with the first pedagogical experience, I had the students read stories[2] from the French 120 textbook, Voilà, which introduce the vocabulary and grammatical concepts for the chapter, so that students would be able to become comfortable with the group process, structure and roles. Based on their feedback, each of these would be refined for reading the fairy tale if needed. The structure[3] for this first introduction or pre-reading activity part included, in this order: (1) Read first two pages aloud (p. 386, 387), (2) Silent reading to fulfill role, (3) Talk as a group – fulfill role 1, 2, 3 etc…, (4) Change roles, (5) Read next two pages aloud, (6) Repeat steps 2-4, (7) Read next two pages aloud, repeat steps 2-4.

For the first pedagogical experience, the following structure was implemented: (1) reading individually at home, (2) completion of pre-group work part of the questionnaire, (3) distribution of roles within each group, (4) reading a section of the text aloud taking turns within the group, (5) individual reading/preparing role, (6) fulfillment of roles, (7) continual repetition of numbers 3 – 6 each day in class, (8) completion of the post-group

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[2] See Appendix D
[3] See Appendix B

work part of the questionnaire, (9) repetition of numbers 1 – 8 for each of three class periods, (10) creation of quiz questions, (11) discussion of key components of a traditional fairy tale, (12) discussion of how the story read could be considered a fairy tale, and (13) quiz. The daily class structure during this project was simplified on an overhead[4] for student to refer to as needed and included: (1) Read one page aloud – alternating readers for each paragraph or two different people for dialogues, (2) Silent reading/preparing for role, (3) Talk as a group (fulfill one's role), (4) Change roles, read next page, continue with new roles.

3.2.2 Roles

As stated above, a set of roles[5] was implemented for the pre-reading activity and then was refined for the first pedagogical experience. The roles in this pre-reading activity part of the process include: (a) the reader of two pages (only two paragraphs at the most per page) aloud for the group, (b) the French language guru, (c) the person who picks the answerer, and (1) the person who asks about hard-to-pronounce words, (2) the person who asks about hard-to-understand words, (3) the person who asks about the main idea, (4) the person who asks about what will happen next, and (5) the person who asks about difficult-to-understand grammatical structures. During this part of the pedagogical experience, students were in groups of five, and they had the possibility of receiving one of the (a), (b), or (c) roles as well as one of the (1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) roles. The (a), (b), and (c) roles were separated because they did not interfere with completion of the (1) – (5) roles. After working with these roles during this trial run, students were encouraged

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[4] See Appendix C
[5] See Appendix B

to give feedback on the process. The following changes were made due to student feedback: (1) take turns reading the story by paragraph so that more people have the opportunity to read, (2) eliminate some confusion by only having one role per person for example sharing the role of French language guru and eliminating the role (c) person who picks the answerer because everyone was naturally taking turns answering. The revised roles included the person who leads the discussion on (1) Hard-to-pronounce words, (2) Hard-to-understand words/phrases/expressions, (3) Main idea, (4) What will happen next, and (5) Difficult-to-understand grammatical structures. The roles were placed in this order because role 1 and 2 were used to clear up any confusion before discussion about the meaning could take place. Role 3 and 4 were next because they concentrated on the meaning, and role 5 is last because it concerns grammatical structures, a bottom-up component to reading, which do not necessarily affect the understanding of the story to the same degree as vocabulary does. The QAR approach's main focus is on reading for meaning therefore this pedagogical experience tried to maintain this focus. The overhead[6] mentioned above outlining the roles in addition to the structure, was left on for each class period so that students could refer back to it. Many students took advantage of this as they were becoming accustomed to the procedure.

3.2.3 Key details

Before this reading project, in the first two-thirds of French 120, students had read the introductory vocabulary stories along with a couple of short readings, generally one page long, from the textbook. Most students in the 120 course were students in my 110 course, first semester elementary university French course at UMass, but others may have

[6] See Appendix C

been in other 110 sections or may not have had French since high school, at least seven months earlier. Therefore, it is not clear how much reading background outside of the material in the textbook they may have had. This fairy tale, at ten pages long in the original form, was most likely the first authentic story longer than one page that most students had read in their introductory French courses thus far. Before the first day of in-class application of the modified QAR approach using the French fairy tale, students were asked to read at home the first three pages that they would be working on with their groups the following day. The idea was to see what techniques they used on their own without having had much experience reading in an L2. It would also be interesting to see if students started incorporating the techniques from this approach into their reading at home once they were comfortable with them. Students were instructed that they could stop reading when they had spent one hour reading at home each night. This was used to limit possible frustration with reading this text, if the approach they used in order to read for meaning on their own was not that helpful, until they learned this modified QAR approach.

3.2.4 Day 1

On Day 1 in class, students were first asked to complete the pre-group part of the questionnaire[7] asking them to reflect on their at-home reading, how far they were able to read in one hour, how their first attempt at reading at home was, and finally to outline what was happening in the story thus far as a comprehension check. Students then worked together in their group using the structure and the roles to read and understand this story. At the end of their first attempt at the group reading activity, they completed

[7] See Appendix E

the post-group work part of the same questionnaire[8]. One reason for asking these questions was to receive feedback on the process so that adjustments could be made if necessary. In addition, it is important for students to reflect on their learning in order to help them to internalize the tools needed for this process as well as the tools needed to read for meaning on their own. Specifically the questions asked include how far they were able to read, whether the groups should be changed, whether the roles should be changed, and their thoughts on the process and the story thus far. To prepare for the next class, students were assigned to read three more pages or for one hour, whichever was completed first.

3.2.5 Day 2

On the second day, students first completed the pre-group work part of the questionnaire[9] for day two which was slightly modified from the first questionnaire. They were again asked how far they had read, what has happened in the second part, and how their second attempt was. This time though, the questionnaire included questions asking what techniques the students used the first and second time to read and if students changed techniques, the reasoning behind their change. After completion of the questionnaire, students worked in a new group even though the results[10] of the first day's questionnaire indicate that about half of the students did not want to switch groups. Switching groups was an executive decision made at this time so that students would experience working with another group at least once. At the end of the class, student

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[8] See Appendix E
[9] See Appendix E
[10] See Appendix F

completed the post-group work part of the same questionnaire[11] for day 2 which asked them to reflect on the group process, any differences from their first group reading experience, whether the groups should stay the same, what they thought about the story, what impact their work at home had on their in-class group work, and any changes that they would like to make. Whether or not they would like to make changes was an important question as this may have indicated whether students had started to internalize the structure and the roles and no longer needed them. According to their responses[12] to the post-group work part of the questionnaire, only two students indicated that the roles should be dropped. This is one more student than on the first questionnaire in which a student on his or her own requested that the roles be dropped without being asked if any changes should be made.

3.2.6 Day 3

At the start of the third day, students completed the pre-group work part of the third day's questionnaire[13] asking about their at-home reading for the final pages of the story. These questions were quite similar to the questions on the second day. One difference is that they were asked the reason why they had or had not made changes to how they read at home from the second to the third attempt. Following this, a democratic process took place in the classroom in order to discuss and reach consensus on two important topics. The first concerned whether the groups should be kept from the second day or changed again. All students responded that the same groups should be kept. Although this question was important, it was used as a warm-up to the democratic

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[11] See Appendix E
[12] See Appendix F
[13] See Appendix E

process for the second and more important question. After the quick consensus was reached on the first question, the second question of whether the roles should be kept or dropped was asked. In anticipation of the internalization process, I expected only a few students to say that the roles should be dropped including the two students who offered this as a change on the previous day's questionnaire. To my amazement, a resounding 'drop the roles' was the response by all of the students as if they had already reflected on this question.

Students then read the final pages of the story in a group and completed the second half of the questionnaire asking them to reflect on their third attempt at the group reading activity. They were asked to qualify their third attempt in comparison to the first two attempts and explain their reasoning. The next question was concerned with how closely they followed the structure and the roles during each group reading attempt. Students had to indicate when they had not followed the process and why they had made changes. Finally students were asked about the story itself or its use as a class reading. After the students completed the questionnaire, the class discussed how this story can be considered a fairy tale. This discussion on what makes a story a fairy tale would be needed as students had to write their own fairy tales for the third composition.

3.3 Further influences

Between the first and second pedagogical experiences, two years passed and I read more research on L2 reading. Some of this new research helps to support and confirm ideas in the first pedagogical experience; some helped to refine parts for the second pedagogical experience. I will outline these influences concerning joint activity

in general, on the specific elements of the group process and finally on the teacher's role during the activity. I will then outline the second pedagogical experience in detail.

3.3.1 Joint activity in general

In this section on joint activity, the research cited below helped to confirm my thoughts on this aspect of the first pedagogical experience. As mentioned in chapter two, joint or shared activities involving a division of labor are beneficial in the classroom for a variety of purposes. Jennings & Di (1996) outline how a joint activity such as reading together can help to bring about internalization for each individual through shared inquiry, reading for meaning, sharing and supporting their opinions with information from the reading. They also say that the process of thinking out loud helps students to clarify their thoughts not only about the story but also about how to think about the story, to be understood, and to come to a common understanding; their thinking shifts from interpersonal to intrapersonal (Dixon-Krauss, 1996a; Jennings & Di, 1996).

By participating in a joint activity which is beyond the individual ZPD of each student but within the group ZPD, students can not only accomplish an activity that they would not be able to do on their own but it also indicates what they will be able to do on their own in the future. Jennings & Di (1996) argue that groups of students, who work collaboratively to read good literature, enhance their creative thinking and that these group reading activities, according to Vygotsky (1962), "could be the fate of a child's total mental development" (as cited in Jennings & Di, 1996 p. 82).

Matthews (1996) argues that peers are very important in a learner-centered classroom and that *all* students can be considered capable peers even if they are not the 'smartest' student in the class. In Laufer's (1997) article, one of her arguments (for a

minimum vocabulary in order to read successfully) is based on the idea that students can cognitively manipulate only a certain amount of information at one time. One other solution besides waiting until a student has a large enough vocabulary in order to read on his or her own is to share the cognitive work load among a group of students. By this I mean that if each student is able to cognitively manipulate enough information to complete one part of the act of reading, and then shares his or her findings with others in the group who have done the same, this seems to solve the problem of having a student wait to be able to cognitively manipulate the entire act of reading on his or her own. Slavin (1983) sums up the benefits of joint activity by writing that "Social interaction leads to more advanced cognitive development in the area of academic achievement" because Vygotsky's research indicates that speaking is used not only to communicate but also as a tool to help mediate our thinking (as cited in Jennings & Di, 1996 p. 79).

3.3.2 Specific elements of the group process

This section focuses on the specific elements of the group process including giving background information, becoming comfortable with the process, using the dictionary, a common framework, pronunciation, leading the discussion, prediction, and the order of the roles. Depending on the text and on the ZPD of the students, varying amounts of pre-reading tasks will help to make the text more accessible. Combs (1996) presents several options, but the ones that specifically influenced this pedagogical experience were giving background information on the author, including how he or she used certain literary elements in story development, and outlining a strategy that would help students to interact with the text and make meaning.

For the second pedagogical experience, I gave students more detailed background information on the author and specifically on how he used certain literary elements in his story development. Because Cole (2003) indicated that the QAR process took some time to become comfortable with, in both pedagogical experiences, I allowed time to practice with the roles and structure briefly before we started on this specific story. To prepare for the first pedagogical experience, students read vocabulary stories from the textbook, but to prepare for the second pedagogical experience, students used two authentic texts. The time to become comfortable with the structure and roles could have been built into this story as well, but given the short time frame involved, I wanted to focus on a possible progression away from the roles during this story. Cole also made sure to note that everyone in his QAR study had a chance to play all of the roles. This is crucial to this group reading activity, because if each student is in charge of the same role every time, he or she will internalize this role but will still be dependent on their other team members for the other roles. If they each have a chance to play all of the roles, they should be able to internalize each of them and therefore should be ready to take on the sole responsibility of reading for meaning much sooner. In both pedagogical experiences, students had the chance to perform each of the roles.

In L2 articles on reading, the use of dictionaries and the extent to which they are beneficial during reading is a much discussed topic. Reasons that it is important to use a dictionary according to Grabe & Stoller (1997) are that dictionary use helps with vocabulary understanding and acquisition. They also say that, in general, nouns and verbs are the most commonly looked up words because they help to provide more meaning than a preposition or adverb generally does. Focusing on looking up nouns and

verbs may help to limit the number of words that a student would generally look up. This may be helpful because using a dictionary too much can slow down the reading process. One question concerning this is whether students would naturally choose to look up nouns and verbs in a dictionary more often than other parts of speech. They also point out that using a dictionary for some words which have multiple meanings can be confusing and some words may need to be looked up several times before the student remembers the meaning of the word in this context on his or her own. One benefit to working in collaboration with other students is that even if one student cannot remember what a word means, another student may.

Swaffar & Arens (2005) provide some ways to deal with the contradictory nature of needing to use a dictionary without becoming too bogged down. They indicate that "providing clues to a limited number (usually about five) key nouns or verbs will overcome learner difficulty in identifying cultural references, as such clues signal unexpected shifts of topic or solidify a reading hypothesis about the content" (J. Swaffar & Arens, 2005 p. 62). What they mean by 'providing clues' is important. Should a teacher provide these, and how explicit or implicit should the clues be? Would it also work to limit students to being able to only look up five words from each section of the text? This may encourage them to use as many contextual clues as possible, choose the words that they think will help them understand the most, and keep them from trying to translate word for word. In the second pedagogical experience, students were encouraged to look up only a limited number of words in the dictionary per section of the text. In additional, they were encouraged to choose nouns and verbs first. Swaffar & Arens (2005) also said that making sure that the students know the who, what, where and when

of a story is key not only to understanding the story but also to orienting future uses of the dictionary. In the second pedagogical experience, at the beginning of the second attempt at the group reading activity, students were able to identify each of these elements of the story.

Some scholars and teachers believe that providing a gloss for beginning readers is a better option than having them use a dictionary, especially for words with multiple meanings. The trouble with glosses, according to Swaffar & Arens (2005), is that many times they do not exist for a text, thereby creating a lot of work for the teacher. Or, if they do exist, they provide too much or not enough assistance and tempt students to translate word for word. They suggest making a text readable or providing assistance in other ways such as a support system versus simply using a dictionary or a gloss. Students in both pedagogical experiences were not given a gloss and the support system for each pedagogical experience was provided by their peers and teacher mediation.

Another aspect of the structure of the group reading activity is how students carry out their assigned roles. Rogoff & Gardner (1984) point out that "people who are concerned with jointly accomplishing a cognitive performance must possess or create a common framework for the coordination of information" (p. 97). In other words, for a group to be productive, a structure or framework must guide the students not only through the steps in the process but also through the process of sharing information with the other members. A structure of this nature was provided to students in both pedagogical experiences. Dixon-Krauss (1996) indicates that when beginning students are focused on seeking meaning through reading meaningful texts versus on learning skills, pronunciation may initially take on a subordinate role and the teacher may tolerate

more ‘errors’. This helped to confirm the use of the first step in the process – having students take turns reading the section of the text out loud. McMahon (1996) indicates that as most students are used to teacher-centered classrooms, they may have difficulty at first with having the authority to lead the discussion within the group. In the second pedagogical experience, I was more aware of this issue and understood that this may be one reason that students may be reluctant to use the roles at first.

Finally, the roles and their order within the group process seem to be critical for the learning process. Dixon-Krauss (1996) specifically highlights the importance of predicting what will happen next in the text and says that one benefit is that it “can help to develop readers’ knowledge of story structural elements” (p. 55). Kragler (1996) highlights strategies that students can use to read for meaning such as summarizing, clarifying, asking questions and making predications. These help to confirm the choice of the roles used such as Role 3 – Main Idea, Role 4 – Predict what will happen next as well as the group process itself where questions are asked and clarifications are made.

The order of the roles used was confirmed by the following two ideas. Laufer (1997) states that in order to understand the main idea of the paragraph, it is necessary to understand the paragraph itself to be able to determine what elements are key and which elements are not. Grabe & Stoller (1997) indicate that a detailed understanding of the grammatical structure of the L2 was less helpful for reading for meaning than vocabulary was. Therefore in each pedagogical experience, the difficult vocabulary is sorted out first, then the main idea, and finally the difficult grammatical elements.

3.3.3 Teacher's role in the group process

In Cole's (2003) study, the teacher was able to play a part in the reading group itself because of the small number of students participating. Given that the current two pedagogical experiences were implemented in a class of thirty students, I was not able to play the same kind of role in each of the reading groups. Although the students were beginner French students, they were all adults and therefore may have needed different kinds and levels of mediation than perhaps the students in Cole's (2003) study. They brought much more outside information to the story than a younger student would and were generally able to count on their fellow students more when reading for meaning. In this section, the specific elements of the teacher's role in this group process are outlined including comprehension checks, peer assistance, teacher mediation, and a democratic process.

As mentioned before in the Grabe & Stoller (1997) case study, the reading comprehension test was a translation test, but they later indicated that a better test of comprehension would test recognition versus production and that a multiple choice test could serve this function. This was taken into consideration when checking students' comprehension during the second pedagogical experience. As mentioned above, a comprehension check to make sure that students know who, what, when and where is important to make sure that students have the basic skeleton of the story which they can use to guide them through the rest of the story.

Although contradictory to Matthews above, McMahon (1996) states that sometimes peers are not the most helpful and may even be a detriment. This could be due to their ZPD being too low to provide appropriate feedback or assistance to their

peer. One solution is to place students in peer groups according to their ZPD. Usually in a group this is less of a problem than if only two students are working together. According to Jennings & Di (1996), students in a heterogeneous group will have different and varying abilities, and a more capable student would be able to help mediate for another student. Also, one student's ZPD may be low in one area but higher for another type of activity or process within the activity and would be able to provide mediation at this time. In the second pedagogical experience, groups were not organized by their ZPD in order to test Jennings & Di's argument. In addition, although I was not able to play a role in each group at the same time, I did check in with each group several times during the group reading activity each class.

Ashton (1996) gives several examples of mediation on different levels and in different forms and states that the teacher can determine what is needed by "observing and analyzing the social interaction that unfolds while the student is performing the learning task" (p. 129). If the group needed help then I provided assistance in the form of mediation or scaffolding which took on a variety of forms depending on what kind and how much assistance the group needed. During the reading process, a democratic process was used in order to determine whether the students have internalized the reading process and can take on more of the responsibility themselves as "Dewey (1910, 1916) claimed that students can only learn to live in a democratic society if their education provides them with actual experiences of democratic decision making and problem solving" (as cited in Jennings & Di, 1996 p. 82).

3.4 Pedagogical experience 2: Spring 2009

Some of the main components of the first pedagogical experience were carried over to the second pedagogical experience while others were refined or eliminated due to the influences stated above or to a variety of reasons that will be discussed below. One major change was that this pedagogical experience took place at the start of the second semester instead of near the end during the first pedagogical experience. The same French fairy tale[14] was used, "Roman d'amour d'une patate" by Pierre Gripari for the same reasons stated in the description of the first pedagogical experience. One change was that I typed out the text in order to put more white space on the page, and to have each page end in an ideal spot to predict what would happen next. The white space on the page was needed so that students would be able to write down notes about their role or about the story in general.

Two texts were used to become comfortable with the group reading process, structure and roles but this time one was an excerpt[15] from the play La Cantatrice Chauve by Eugène Ionesco found in the Voilà textbook and the second was an authentic short story[16] by Bernard Friot entitled "Texte Libre". The overall structure was slightly altered for the second pedagogical experience. There was no assigned reading individually at home this time except for some students finishing part of the last page of the story. The pedagogical experience did not take place over three full class days but instead during approximately nine twenty-minute reading sessions, which, in terms of total amount of

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[14] See Appendix A
[15] See Appendix I
[16] See Appendix I

time, is only approximately thirty minutes more than during the first pedagogical experience.

This relatively insignificant time difference between pedagogical experiences is remarkable for three reasons. In the second pedagogical experience, students did not do any preparation at home, they read this story at the beginning of the semester versus the end with less L2 knowledge, and they took time on nine days (versus three) to gather their materials and become situated within their group. The students did not complete questionnaires each time they read but did complete several questionnaires over the course of the pedagogical experience due to the way it was organized. As far as the daily reading structure within the group, there were no major changes made for the second pedagogical experience. Each group started with a paper[17] listing the language of communication, the language of understanding, the steps and a list of roles instead of using an overhead. The steps included (1) Read one section aloud – alternating readers, (2) Silent reading/preparing role, (3) Talk as a group – fulfill roles, (4) Change roles and return to Step 1. The roles also stayed the same as the refined ones used for the first pedagogical experience with slight changes to the wording. They include: the person who leads the discussion on: (1) Hard-to-pronounce words, (2) Hard-to-understand words or expressions, (3) Main idea, (4) What will happen next, and (5) Hard-to-understand grammatical structures. This time, the role cards[18] for each group were laminated in order to be more user-friendly over many class periods. At the start of each reading session, one student from each group would come to the front desk to pick up a copy of the structure, the role cards and a dictionary.

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[17] See Appendix G
[18] See Appendix H

Students in this section of French 120 came from a variety of backgrounds. Sixteen students had been in my French 110 class and four came from other French 110 sections. The other ten students had not had French at the university level but did have high school French at least seven months earlier if not more. Some of these students had no prior language experience before French 110 and some had studied other languages. Before students started this pedagogical experience, they were given a reading questionnaire[19] about their understanding of how they learned to read in their first language, if they have read in an L2, how to read in an L2, and what kinds of L2 texts that they would be interested in reading. This questionnaire led to a lively discussion in English on how they learned to read in their L1, and their experiences in reading in an L2. They were very enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts on the subject of reading and their hypotheses about reading as well as the prospect of being able to read something in French.

Before the groups began to read the story, I gave some background information on the author, Pierre Gripari, including when he lived, his family background, his writing and publishing background, information on how this story was created and written, some personal information that may have played a role in his writing and his philosophy about life, stories and writing. Each of these was carefully chosen as it not only presented them with information on who the author was but also potentially had an influence on their understanding of the story. The information on how this story was created and written specifically helped the students to understand Gripari's use of literary elements in story development.

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[19] See Appendix J

Each student was randomly assigned to one of six different reading groups spread around the classroom. One student from each group picked up the role cards, structure page and a dictionary. In English, we reviewed the common framework for the coordination of information within the group and reviewed how to use the tools provided to read for meaning. Specifically, we discussed choosing the length of the first section, taking turns reading aloud, limiting the words looked up in the dictionary to the five words they believed would help them to understand the story the most, preparing their roles, leading the discussion on their assigned role in the order of their role card numbers, and changing roles after each section. I walked around to assist any groups that needed help as they began the group reading activity. As they were still becoming comfortable with the process, as they did not know each other very well yet, and as the beginning of the story is quite difficult, most groups were able to read between half of a page and one page during this first reading session.

At the start of the next reading period, I put up an overhead with comprehension questions about the first page of the story as part of the first questionnaire[20]. This was done not only to find out what they had understood from their first reading period and to confirm how far they were able to read, but also to help them solidify the basis of the story and to help them understand my expectations for the level of understanding needed. Students also completed some questions on the group reading process which included how the groups did with the roles and the process during their first attempt, if they wanted to change groups or not, what they thought of the story so far, and if there were any changes that they would like to make. Students' responses were anonymous as they

[20] See Appendix J

were not being used for grading purposes. As a class, the students then outlined the who, what, where and when of the story to make sure that everyone understood the basic story elements.

During the next several reading periods, the students would come to pick up what they needed from the front table (structure, role cards and dictionaries available) and begin reading with their groups. Sometimes, groups stayed the same and sometimes the groups were changed. Groups remained the same at times to allow the groups to find a rhythm, to spend less time catching up on where each of the students left off with their previous group, and to become better acquainted with each other. Groups were switched in order for students to become acquainted with other class members, to keep everyone in general at about the same place in the story, to account for absences, and to see if they were able to use this structure with a variety of different groups.

As I walked around to each of the different groups during the reading sessions, I would listen and provide mediation when requested or needed. The form of mediation ranged from giving implicit or explicit help depending on what that group needed. This included helping students use the dictionary, asking guiding questions, helping to explain grammatical concepts that they had not yet learned, or guiding their pronunciation upon request or implicitly while providing mediation for their group. In some cases, the framework was reviewed including the roles and the structure to make sure that students understood how to interact with the text instead of relying on previous methods such as translating.

Before or after some of the reading sessions, the class came together to discuss difficult to understand sections and to answer comprehension questions. One class

discussion centered on understanding the nature of how the guitar found herself at the dump as this part of the story is one of the more difficult ones to understand. One reason for this is that the guitar tells a complicated story about her past friendship with a boy, his betrayal of her with another guitar (electric) and her arrival in the dump. The story was told not only from the guitar's point of view but also the guitar was personified which therefore made this section potentially difficult for the students to understand. At the end of this section, the students discover that in fact the guitar was lying about how she ended up in the dump in order to protect her pride. As each group reached certain points in the story, I would ask comprehension questions to the students in this group.

For the second questionnaire, students completed a variety of questions. First, students who had read before were asked about their previous reading experience. Students were then asked what their thoughts were on many components of the group reading process at the beginning of this story including the steps, roles, story, understanding of the story, reading in French, working in a group, and using the dictionary. Next they gave their current thoughts on the same components, and finally they listed any changes that they would make. Based on their feedback, the reading period was changed to the beginning of the class and the groups were kept the same until the end. Near the end of this story, a democratic discussion and vote took place to decide whether the roles should be kept. Students were first asked if they were able to eliminate one role what the first one would be. They answered that it should be Role 1 (hard to pronounce words) as they felt that this did not help their understanding of the story as much as the other roles did. They were asked if they were able to eliminate a second role what the second would be. They chose Role 4 (what will happen next) as they did not

think that this was helpful given that what they predicted did not necessarily help them to understand what happened next in the story. I explained that by voting to remove any roles that the group size would reflect the number of roles that they wanted to keep. I let them discuss their choices and in the end, they decided that they preferred to keep the group size the same but to eliminate all of the roles. They felt that they knew what they needed to do after reading each section without specifically assigning each student a role. They did want to keep the group size the same at this point as they did not feel ready yet for a smaller group size.

On the second-to-last day of the group reading activity, some groups had finished and some had not since the groups had not changed in the past few reading sessions. Those that were not finished were assigned to read the rest (the last half of a page at the most) for homework. During the following reading session one member of each group that had finished joined a couple of members from each of the groups that had not finished in order to review what had been read at home. As groups finished, I instructed the students to begin thinking about the themes in this story although some groups naturally started doing this after they had finished. When all of the groups had finished, one student gave a summary of the story. We then discussed whether this story was 'just' a children's story meant for entertainment or whether there were social messages/themes present and what they may be. We discussed whether these messages or themes were still current today despite the fact that this story was originally published in 1967. We also talked about whether the circus director treated the hobo and sultan differently, and why he might have done so. We discussed the background information given about Gripari before reading the story including his philosophy, how these stories were created,

and how this contributed to the story's development. We discussed what makes a fairy tale and whether this story could be classified as one. Finally, I asked them if they thought that they would have been able to read this story on their own.

Finally, during the next class, students completed the final questionnaire[21] for this group reading activity. The questions pertained to their final thoughts on the group process including each of the components listed on the previous questionnaire. They were also asked for their thoughts on the story, whether they would have been able to read this story on their own in the same amount of time, and how well they would have understood it. Students were asked what they would do in order to understand something they read in French on their own. They were then asked if they were to read something of similar difficulty on their own, in groups of two or if they would they need the full group. Finally students were asked what they learned during this process/story.

For each pedagogical experience, students read the fairy tale "Roman d'amour d'une patate" in groups using the structure and the roles. Students had access to a dictionary, and mediation was provided as needed by their peers and by the teacher. They were asked comprehension questions and completed questionnaires about the reading, many components of the group process, and reading in general. In the next chapter, I will outline the results of the group process and of the questionnaires for each pedagogical experience.

[21] See Appendix J

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the first and second pedagogical experience including the results of the group process and of the questionnaires given during each pedagogical experience. A detailed report outlining all of the questionnaire responses for the first pedagogical experience may be found in Appendix E and in Appendix J for the second pedagogical experience. This report is a qualitative descriptive pedagogical report and therefore the results will be outlined from the start to the end of each group reading process. For the first pedagogical experience, the results for each day include the group reading process and the questionnaire. This pedagogical experience's final results will be outlined at the end of the section concerning the first pedagogical experience. For the second pedagogical experience, the results of the questionnaires will be interspersed with the results of the group reading process according to the way this pedagogical experience was organized. It is important to note that as thirty students participated in each pedagogical experience, this means that there are thirty different backgrounds, levels, and interests among other characteristics to coordinate. In many cases, this means that there are also thirty different stories unfolding over the course of each pedagogical experience.

4.2 Pedagogical experience 1: Spring 2006

4.2.1 Day 1

According to results of the pre-group work part of the first day's questionnaire[22], many students (16 out of 24) thought that reading the first three pages on their own at home was difficult. Almost all (21 out of 22) were able to name the main characters in the story. Some (6 out of 24) were able to outline the basic plot of the three assigned pages, although most students (18 out of 24) did not know or did not demonstrate a clear understanding of this first section besides knowing the main characters. Possible explanations include that it was outside of their individual ZPD, that they did not yet have the tools to know how to read and understand a story in French or that they were not able to produce the information. When students were asked how their first attempt at reading at-home went, the following responses were given:

- It was difficult to read a story. It became even more clear how much different the sentence structure in French is when compared to English.
- I was very disappointed. I thought given what I know about French that I could glean a lot of the unknown words and phrases. Unfortunately, however, I struggled to get even a general idea of what was going on in this story
- It's fun to see and recognize certain structures and forms in a context where they are used to tell a story. It helps to put everything together. Also, it's good to see unfamiliar parts, too, if just for exposure.
- I think there were alot [sic] of words I didn't understand, but I was able to pick up on verb tenses and some of the nouns.

[22] See Appendix F

Students then began their first attempt at the group reading process. By the end of the first reading day, most students no longer needed to refer to the overhead in order to follow the steps in the process. They had internalized this tool quite quickly.

According to the post-group work part of the first day's questionnaire[23], all students had completed the three pages within their groups and almost half (10 out of 24) had continued past this point. Most students (16 out of 24) indicated that they did not want to switch groups although some (5 out of 24) wanted to while three students did not mind. The main reason given to keep the same group was that they were at the same spot in the story and other groups may have ended at a different spot. One student mentioned the following reason for switching groups, "Group did not have anyone who was very strong in their French." Perhaps this group could have benefited from having a student with a higher ZPD in order to provide more mediation for the group. When asked whether the students wanted to switch roles, many students did (15 out of 24) although four students did not answer this question. Some reasons given were:

- I like switching the roles because it keeps me thinking about everything
- I think we should switch rolls [sic] because it keeps us on our feet because all of us need to pay attention to what's happening in the story as a whole.
- I think switching is very important so everyone gets to talk about a certain aspect of the story

This question was asked to gauge whether they understood the importance of having the opportunity to try each role. The student responses outlined above all correspond to the reason the roles are switched. When asked what role they would keep if given the choice,

[23] See Appendix F

Role three, the main idea, was cited the most often (6 out of 24) but there was no overwhelming favorite. This is helpful to know because it shows that the students saw the importance of each of the roles and there was not a role that they believed to be unnecessary. They were asked what they thought of the group reading activity so far and most students (17 out of 24) indicated that they liked it for a variety of reasons. Some of those reasons include:

- I liked this activity a lot! It was very good practice for me.
- The process helped me because I could consult with other people if I didn't understand something.
- This process is more helpful than reading alone.
- I liked doing it – it was helpful & the other group members added understanding to phrases & words I didn't understand.

A couple of the students did have the following concerns:

- We found more success reading the passage together and figuring out what it meant collectively.
- I think that this is alot[sic] harder than what we usually do.

Finally, when asked about the story, students responded that it was weird, interesting or cute and some students indicated that they liked the story so far. Some sample student reactions to the story include:

- I love the story!!

- The story was pretty challenging to understand, and absurd enough to keep everyone interested in what bizarre turn of events would overtake the transfigured potato next.
- I dug it.

Students seemed to be having some success with this process and some of the tools were beginning to be internalized, but more progress lay ahead.

4.2.2 Day 2

After their second attempt at reading individually at home, many students (17 out of 26) noted on the pre-group part of the second day's questionnaire[24] that they were able to complete all of the assigned reading. However, many (19 out of 26) were not able to demonstrate that they had a complete understanding of this section of the text. This may be due to the fact that for the comprehension question, they were asked to produce what was happening and not to recognize what was happening. When asked how their second attempt at reading at home was, many (15 out of 26) indicated that it went better or easier the second time than the first and this time only two students indicated that it was hard compared to fourteen the first time. Students then answered what techniques they had used at home to read the first time and the second time. Overwhelmingly, students indicated that they had used a dictionary both times. Other techniques mentioned for the first attempt include, in this order: using contextual clues; translating; reading for the gist; rereading; skimming; summarizing; skipping unfamiliar words; and using an online translator. One student who indicated that he/she was "translating in my head as I read,

[24] See Appendix F

underlining words I did not know" gave an incorrect response for what was happening in this part of the story. This may help the student to understand that translating may not be an effective technique. The techniques used for their second attempt include, in this order: using a dictionary; using contextual clues; rereading; skipping unfamiliar words; translating; reading for the gist; reading aloud; relying on the dictionary less; taking notes; and focusing more on the details. Many students (10 out of 26) indicated that they did not change techniques between the first and second attempt. For those students who did change techniques, they gave the following reasons:

- Reading aloud helped a lot.
- I was able to understand better if I did not directly translate.
- Because it took to [sic] long, was frustrating, and I didn't know enough grammar to read in detail.

After the second attempt at using the group reading process and in different groups than during the first attempt, results from the post-group work part of the second day's questionnaire[25] indicate that students were split about whether to keep the groups or to change. Groups were switched for a variety of reasons, such as: making sure students understood the steps and could use them with a new group; helping to keep the students at about the same spot in the story; and allowing the students to become acquainted with other students. The fact that fewer students were as eager to change groups this time compared to the first time may indicate that they were starting to understand that their understanding depended more on the process than on a particular group of students. Overwhelmingly, students indicated that their second attempt at reading in a group was a

[25] See Appendix F

positive one (good, better, or easier). When asked what was different between the first and second group reading attempt, some students indicated that:

- It went quicker [sic] because everyone knew the different jobs.
- I think that everyone is more comfortable w/ [with] the group reading structure.

Students were more comfortable with the structure, and some indicated that they now understood more of the story. A few (4 out of 26) students indicated that the difference between their first and second group reading attempt was due to having certain people in their group which may mean that these particular students had a higher ZPD and may have been able to provide more mediation. One student also indicated that it was, "Better, had the help of the dictionary". During the first class, unfortunately, each group did not have access to a dictionary.

When asked about the story, most students (19 out of 26) again found the story odd, funny or interesting and three students indicated that they loved the story. When asked what the impact their work at home had on the group process, the responses were varied. Some students (7 out of 26) indicated that it was helpful, six indicated that their group worked better, and five responded that knowing more about the story helped. Five students were less convinced of the impact that reading at home had on the group work. Some of the student responses included the following:

- It helps me better understand what we are learning in class
- Little, I think it's actually more beneficial to do the reading in class with other people.
- Easier to read in class.

Finally students were asked if there were any changes that they would like to make in the process and overwhelmingly students said no or wrote nothing. Only two students indicated that they would like to drop the roles because as one student stated, “I don’t think the ‘roles’ are necessary”. This is one more student than on the first questionnaire where a student requested this without being asked to list changes that they would like to make. Perhaps these students had prior reading experience and/or a higher ZPD and had already internalized this tool.

4.2.3 Day 3

After students completed the pre-group work part of the third day’s questionnaire, a democratic process took place as indicated in Chapter three. The first question asked students if they wanted to keep or change groups and students responded quickly that they wanted to keep the same groups. They were then asked if they would like to keep or drop the roles. The reason that I asked this question was because as students become more comfortable with the reading process and have internalized the tools, they should feel that the roles are no longer necessary and that they can handle more of the process on their own. Given that two students had offered this as a possible change on the second questionnaire, I expected these two students and perhaps a few others to indicate that the roles should be dropped as more students internalized this tool. Surprisingly, all of the students quickly responded that the roles should be dropped as if they had reflected on this question. Perhaps the reason that only two students indicated this on the previous day’s questionnaire while the class quickly voted for this on the third day is that students had started to internalize this tool but were unable to verbalize this on the questionnaire. Perhaps they were only became aware of the internalization once they were asked a direct

question or perhaps reading at home for the third time helped them to become aware that they had internalized the roles.

On the pre-group part of the questionnaire[26], almost all of the students (19 out of 22) indicated that they had read to the end of the story which was assigned. More students (12 vs. 6, 7) knew the main story details than during either of the first two attempts. When asked about their third attempt at reading on their own at home, all but two students indicated that it went better or that it was fine. Two sample student responses include:

- Sooo [sic] much better than the 1st.
- I feel like I got better w/ [with] each reading, but it was hard to understand all the words and understand the story's meaning.

Regarding the techniques that they used, the top three were using the dictionary, rereading and using the context of the story. Two students offered the following responses on this question:

- Breaking down the gramitical [sic] structures
- The same – read thru [sic] to get main idea, then went back to get specifics

There were very few student responses for the question asking if they had changed techniques for the third attempt and if so, why. A few (4 out of 22) indicated that they changed because they needed to understand more, that they had had trouble so they wanted to try something new or that they tried to use the context more instead of the dictionary. Perhaps there were so few responses because students were not able to

[26] See Appendix F

verbalize any changes that they had made, or they did not realize that they had changed techniques since the first day. One other issue is that as all of the questionnaires were anonymous, it was difficult to follow each student's progression individually to see if they had in fact changed techniques.

At the end of the group reading process on the final day, students once again completed the post-group work part of the questionnaire[27]. When asked about this third attempt, all students had a positive response. Two students indicated that it was:

- Fun and helpful
- Faster. We skimmed more – less literal translation.

When asked to compare this attempt to the first two attempts, almost all students (20 out of 22) indicated that it was better or at least just as helpful. Only two students indicated that it was less helpful. Two students indicated that the reason it was better was due to no longer having the roles and many students (13 out of 22) indicated that they were more used to the story and the process, and that the people in the groups worked well together. Students were then asked how closely they followed the procedure and the roles and there were a variety of responses. Half of the students indicated that they did not use the roles but did not indicate whether this was just for the final attempt (as they had voted for this) or for previous attempts as well. When asked why, students indicated that they found it easier and more helpful to share the roles and discuss them as a group. Three student responses explaining this include:

[27] See Appendix F

- Having one person responsible for a specific task didn't always work, especially if the one person was confused. We were most efficient doing all the tasks as a group.
- We understood what was most important to go over.
- Thought it was easier and most helpful for us all to contribute.

Finally, they were asked about the story. This time they were also asked what they thought about its use as a reading for the class. Only two negative responses were received; the rest indicated that it was strange (as it is a strange story!), good for their first reading attempt, interesting, fun, cute, and good for vocabulary and comprehension. Four students indicated that they liked the story. Some of the most enthusiastic responses include:

- group work = très bon
- Loved it!
- I really liked doing this!
- It was a good story for our 1st attempt at reading a story in French

4.2.4 Final Results

Overall, students were completely absorbed in their group work each class and students rarely needed to call me over because they could not figure out something within their group. During the final discussion of the story, students felt very comfortable discussing the story and how it could be considered a fairy tale. Based on evidence of the questions that each group created for the quiz, and their answers on the final quiz version (which included some of the students' questions and some of the teacher's), I concluded

that the students had grasped the key concepts in the story and were able to demonstrate that they had successfully been able to read for meaning. Not only were they able to read this story, understand it, participate in a lively discussion, respond correctly to quiz questions, but they also enjoyed reading this story and working with their group to understand it.

4.3 Pedagogical experience 2: Spring 2009

4.3.1 Reading questionnaire

Before the second pedagogical experience began, students completed a reading questionnaire[28]. This was used to find out more about their experience reading in their L1, if they had any experience reading in an L2, how to read in an L2, and what kinds of texts they would be interested in reading in an L2. The first question asked students if they remember how they learned to read as a child in their first language and many (13 out of 30) did, although some (7 out of 30) did not and a handful (5 out of 30) were unsure. For those who did remember, they were asked what they did to be able to read and understand a story. There were a wide variety of answers provided; the top three responses included reading books previously read with someone else, sounding out the words, and using the pictures to guide them. Students were then asked if they could read in an L2 and if so, in which L2. The majority (24 out of 30) responded that they could not read in an L2 or that they could read in French. When asked what students had read in an L2, twelve students answered that they had read class work. Therefore, it should be noted that for some of the twelve students who answered that they could read in French for the previous answer, the only French that they may have read was from the textbook

[28] See Appendix K

and was potentially no longer than several sentences or a paragraph at a time. Other than having read class work, there were a variety of answers provided from reading classics to menus and from Le Petit Prince to emails. When asked if they consider their L2 reading to have been successful, there was almost an even number of responses for yes, no and not sure, although students responded yes slightly more often. Some of the reasons that they considered their reading to be successful or not include:

- Yes, I think my reading has been very successful because most of the things, words, pronunciations [sic], etc sticks [sic] with me and I am able to recognize most easily.
- Yes b/c [because] I knew the story plot so even if I didn't understand every word, I could figure out what was going on.
- It has been successful because I usually can pull clues from the surrounding context in order to understand.
- Somewhat so far, it has been successful because it has been assigned in a class where we review the reading after completion.
- Yes and no. I can read X language perfectly well, but I don't understand a lot of it and so I don't think its [sic] successful in that respect.
- Not so much, mostly I find myself running to a dictionary to translate words I don't know.
- Not particularly because I see so many words and grammar rules beyond my education that I easily get discouraged and stop reading.

The next two questions on the questionnaire were quite similar in nature: what do you think that you need to do to be able to read and understand a story in a second language,

and do you think that there is anything that you must be able to do before being able to read in another language. These two questions therefore received similar responses. Students indicated that they would need to be knowledgeable in many different areas of an L2 before being able to read and understand a story. For both questions, knowing vocabulary was cited as the most important component to being able to read which corresponds to some of the research on L2 reading. Grammar was cited next, which does not correspond to the research nor to the reality of the current pedagogical experiences. Several student responses include:

- I think being able to understand <u>what</u> is being talked about will allow me to understand <u>how</u> it is being talked about.
- Having a better grasp of the vocabulary will allow me to sort out the rules of grammar etc.
- It's really hard! I still don't understand everything in X language but have studied it forever.
- Be patient! It may not come to you easily. You have to do a lot of practice.

The next most cited response was that students would need to know the L2 first before being able to read, but what this entails exactly is unclear. How proficient in an L2 does a student have to be in order to 'know' the L2? How much of an L2 do students believe that they need before being able to read for meaning? How much L2 does one actually need to be able to read for meaning? As stated in Chapter two, needing to 'know' the L2 before being able to read is a common misconception. As these two pedagogical experiences show, students are able to read for meaning sooner than many of them would have believed was possible. Finally students were asked what kinds of texts they would

be interested in reading; once again, it is clear that thirty different students have thirty different ideas. Some of the ideas include children's books, poetry, newspapers, sociology texts, fairy tales, sports, fashion and history. Choosing a text that will suit everyone is not necessarily possible with such a wide variety of interests.

4.3.2 Questionnaire 1

At the beginning of the second attempt at the group process, students completed comprehension questions about the first page of the story, "Roman d'amour d'une patate" by Pierre Gripari, and questions about the group process for the first questionnaire[29]. During the first group reading process, each group was able to finish differing amounts of the first page and therefore some students were not able to answer the final comprehension question or two. Of the questions that the students were able to answer based on where they left off, almost every answer was correct. This is significantly better than during the first pedagogical experience. In this pedagogical experience, the questions were only on the first page and they were more precise even though they still required production instead of recognition. These questions were used to know if students understood the story at this point and also to inform them of the level of understanding that I was expecting. This was important because as I walked around during the first group reading attempt, one group in particular and several students throughout the other groups were attempting to write down a translation for each sentence as they discussed the story. I asked students why they were translating, and told them what level of understanding I expected them to have and that translating was not necessary in order to read for meaning. Students indicated that this is the only way that

[29] See Appendix K

they have ever known how to read in an L2 and that even though it takes longer, they will eventually understand everything. I encouraged them to try out the group reading process and to let them know that they did not need to understand every word in order to understand the story. For three students, this was a very difficult pattern to break. Many students eventually stopped trying to translate and relied on the group process once they became comfortable with it. With the prevalence of online translators available with the click of a mouse, many students are more tempted than ever to rely on a quick technological response and do not take the time to evaluate whether online translators are accurate or whether they are helping them to learn or to understand the L2 better. As students try to use online translators to complete other work in an L2 class, many believe that this is the only way to compensate for not having learned 'enough' L2 yet.

The students also completed questions about the group process after their first attempt. When asked how the group did with the roles and the process, there was a variety of responses. Many (13 out of 22) felt that it went well or just fine although four tried to translate and said that they did the roles as a group, and some (6 out of 22) thought it was slow, confusing or overwhelming. As students in the first pedagogical experience had an entire class period to become comfortable with this process and to read more of the story, the responses were not that surprising for this pedagogical experience. In addition, as students believed that they would need to 'know' an L2 before being able to read and many had only had one semester of French, they may have been overwhelmed by the task at first. Several students' thoughts on this question are:

- Pretty well, we got a little overwhelmed by the length but once we started, it went well.

- We sort of forgot how the reading process actually went. So we would read the paragraph then go around our roles then circulate the roles. *(which is precisely the process)*
- Everyone was too shy – couldn't hear readers – self concious [sic] maybe?
- We did well, we finished the first page. (*could answer all comprehension questions correctly in French)*
- We did okay. Some of the words were hard to understand but we got the main idea.

Students were then asked whether they would like to keep or change the groups and more than half (13 out of 22) wanted to keep the same groups. This was a very similar response as the students in the first pedagogical experience who were then more open to changing groups once they had to after the first attempt. The groups were changed this time as well so that they would learn that it was the process that was helpful and not be as reliant on any one group of students. Some of the reasons students had for keeping or changing the groups included:

- I think keeping the same groups would be best because we are all at the same place in the story.
- We should change groups but not every time we have class. It's good to get to know the other classmates but being with the same group for at least 2 days (class days) is good too.
- Same groups are good to build comfort and communication.

Students also responded similarly to students in the first pedagogical experience when asked what they thought about the story. Most found it to be a quirky story, which it is, but they also found it humorous, cute, and interesting. Some students indicated that they were curious to find out how the story ends. Even though as a teacher it is hard to find one text that each student will like, having them become interested in the story and curious to read more is the goal. A sample of the students' responses includes:

- The story is kind of bizarre but quirky at the same time – I like it.
- Ridiculous, surreal, childish, and spectacularly entertaining.
- Funny story that opens us up to new words in French.
- From what I've read, the story is funny & easy enough to translate, but complicated enough that one may feel accomplished when one suceeds [sic].

Once again, the word 'translate' is used when the word 'read' is meant. Changing students' mindset who are used to thinking that translation and reading for meaning are synonymous terms and that the latter is required in order to achieve the former is difficult. When asked if there are any changes that the students would like to make, most students (14 out of 22) said that nothing needed to change, although some students already wanted to make changes to the roles. This was significantly different from the first pedagogical experience and may be due to the fact that they did not yet have a long enough time to become comfortable with the process, that there were more advanced students in this class than during the previous pedagogical experience, or that the roles were not yet properly understood. Students' comments on this question are:

- I like this process and I think its [sic] working well with the different roles and switching off.

- Rather than specific roles just all work together doing the roles because we all point out the same things anyway and our roles then overlap.

Finally, already on the second attempt at reading, some groups stopped picking up the sheet of paper which outlined the steps which means that they had already internalized this tool and did not need it any more.

4.3.3 Intermediate results

For the next few group reading attempts, students continued to read, groups were changed from time to time, more comprehension questions were asked in each of the groups, and mediation was provided from me as needed and concerned the vocabulary, grammar or using the roles. After the second attempt at reading, all groups no longer needed the tool outlining the structure of the group process. During the non-reading portion of the classes at this time, students began learning about the *imparfait* tense and then learned when to use *passé composé* and *imparfait* as is required on the 120 syllabus. As students were working though one of the exercises in the textbook with a partner, one student made the comment that it was much easier to understand when to use these tenses in the story we were reading than in this paragraph in the textbook. Although this is only one student talking, this is certainly one of the reasons that reading authentic texts at the elementary level is helpful for the students and in understanding the L2. As the language and culture of the L2 cannot be separated, it is important for students, who are cultural beings, to learn the L2 in authentic historical contexts.

4.3.4 Questionnaire 2

After several group reading sessions, another questionnaire[30] (questionnaire 2) was given to students in order to find out what they thought and how they felt about the group reading process. The first question concerned those students with previous reading experience (PRE) in French not including in the textbook. As they may have a higher ZPD, they may not need the same level or type of mediation as other students and therefore they may not need the roles and be less willing to try the group process. I wanted to know whether they would respond differently on certain questions compared to other students who may not have had previous reading experience.

On the detailed results section for this questionnaire[31], there are (PRE) labels when I think that their response may be due to their previous reading experience. For example, on this question, these students indicated that some of them (5 out of 12) in their previous reading experiences had read and gone over the story as a class. Other responses are that the stories had a gloss or that they were simplified. They then indicated both explicitly (one change that they would make is to have a gloss) and implicitly (more likely to request that the roles should be dropped or that they could read it on their own in the same amount of time) on later responses on the questionnaire that they tended to want to use the same approach as in their previous reading experiences or that they may not have needed the same level of mediation. Unfortunately I did not gather the same information for the first pedagogical experience.

All students were then asked what they thought about the group process when they first started using it. Students could respond to any of the following components:

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30 See Appendix J

31 See Appendix K

steps, roles, story, understanding of the story, reading in French, working in a group and using the dictionary. Four students felt that the process in general was working well, while two students thought that it was confusing at the beginning. About half of the students (12 out of 23) either felt that the role cards were confusing, that they were not convinced, or that they did not like them while five students thought that they were helpful. Some of the comments were:

- At first, I didn't like the roles, but I'm getting more used to them.
- All the role cards effected [sic] each other & if one person didn't know their card it threw the whole group off.
- The steps and cards seemed a little childish, but I can understand why they might be an effective tool to get us to think about and try to understand the material.
- In the beginning, I enjoyed looking up hard to understand words. I still like that today because it helps expand your French vocabulary.

Student responses for the story are similar to their responses on previous questionnaires. Only a few responded about their understanding of the story. At the beginning of this process, four students felt that the story was hard, confusing or that they did not understand it. As far as reading in French, this was interpreted by some students to be reading aloud in French and by others as simply reading a French text. Of the five students who responded to this component, three indicated that at the beginning of the group reading activity they were daunted by the process, thought it was hard, or were shy. One student responded that he/she hated reading French while another student thought that it was a good challenge. Many students responded to the component 'working in a

group' and with the exception of the PRE students, two-thirds of the students (12 out of 18) stated that it was helpful. Some of the reasons stated were:

- I like working in a group because if I don't know something, someone else might.
- Reading in a group was helpful to pool knowledge and discuss difficulties encountered and to elucidate or even divine meaning through the discussion.
- You can get to know your fellow classmates. This helps when you need help or want to ask your classmate a question.

Not only did many students find the groups helpful in this reading activity, but they were able to become better acquainted with each other which was beneficial for the reading activity as well as for the non-reading class time. One difference between this pedagogical experience and the first pedagogical experience is that this time students did not have time to become acquainted with each other before we began the group process. The final component was 'using the dictionary'. Of the students who responded to this component, all but one thought that the dictionary was helpful. The one who did not think that it was helpful thought that the dictionary was not needed as contextual clues were enough. This is interesting to note because this answer came from a PRE student and therefore this story may have been within his or her ZPD and he or she may not have needed any mediation in order to read this story for meaning.

Next, students were asked what they currently thought about the group reading activity and could respond once again to each of the components listed above. Concerning the role cards, many students (8 out of 13) no longer needed the role cards as a tool because they had internalized it, but the rest felt that it was helpful for them. Some sample student responses include:

- The cards etc, were a good start but we should be able to handle the process ourselves.
- I like the role cards because that way everyone has to participate.
- I see how each person picking out a few points of interest from the story helps make the whole thing easier.
- The group reading is still difficult at times but as long as everyone sticks with their roles the process seems to work well. Nothing has changed, *(answer to #2: the steps and the roles worked good. Very interesting story. I could understand most of it. The groups help the process and the dictionary is helpful)* it has helped my understanding of French.
- They [the roles] add structure while still facilitate discussion. Following them helped to keep our discussion going the right way but weren't too restricting. The story seems a lot easier to understand now… I don't know why but the vocab [sic] or grammer [sic] just seem easier.

Concerning their thoughts on the story, most students (7 out of 9) indicated that they liked the story and found it interesting but that it was a challenge. Seven students indicated that they were beginning to understand more of the story, that reading in French was becoming easier and three students were gaining confidence. Student responses concerning these components included:

- I like the story know [sic] and I'm getting better at figuring out what's going on. I still like working in a group.
- The story is challenging but I find that there are enough context clues to be able to understand what's happening.

- Now, I feel more confident in my ability to comprehend the story, as well as the entire process. It is much easier to let little, unimportant unknown words slide and focus on tackling the idea as a whole and only decipher words that are vital to understanding the story.
- As I've continued to read, I feel that I've been able to understand more and able to rely on the book as a reference to understand the text.
- Reading stories like this definitely help you understand French better, but the story itself introduced a lot of conjugations (i.e. passé composé + imparfait) that confused me. However working in groups helped us solve these problems.
- I find reading in french [sic] <u>much</u> easier than speaking in french [sic].

One student still struggled with the group reading activity and said, "I still wouldn't be able to go back & repeat what any of the words mean. I still hate reading in French." This student might be one who was so reluctant to stop trying to translate the story. At some point in this class or in a future French class, this student may be pleasantly surprised to discover that he or she would know the meanings of many of the words by the end of the text. Hopefully by the end of this story, this student's opinion on what it means to read for meaning will have changed. However, changing attitudes about reading is not instantaneous, and it may take more than a pedagogical experience to change his or her attitudes. As far as working in a group, students still found this helpful at this stage of the process and two students indicated that:

- The group definitely still helps A LOT! Its [sic] good to have other people to help you figure out what you don't understand & vice versa.

- The group experience has been good…all the different groups I've been part of so far were efficient and showed interest in the story.

Finally students were asked if there were any changes that they would like to make. The two most requested changes were keeping the groups the same and sharing the roles within the group. Four students did not request any changes and two students even requested to have more class time to read. Some student responses include:

- All the time more people are starting to follow the system; once people believe in it, they will see how it works.
- The process, now that its [sic] in full swing, doesn't really need too much tweaking.
- I would like to spend more time on the readings then [sic] we do, it helps to immerse your self [sic] in the language.

Finally, as a change, one of the PRE students again requested similar forms of mediation as he/she had used in his/her previous reading experiences. He/she responded to the question of change by writing, "Class read as a whole, the hints I talked about *(gloss)* – all the stories I've read had them".

4.3.5 Final results

For the final group reading attempts, the groups stayed the same. As more students internalized the role cards as a tool, some of the groups stopped handing them out and instead proceeded to share the roles without using the explicit tool. During this time as well, one student contacted me by email to ask if I had more for her to read in French as she was enjoying it so much. It should be noted that this student had no prior

reading experience and no prior L2 experience before taking French 110 the previous semester. It should also be noted that on most Fridays throughout this semester, I handed out a one or two page supplementary reading on a variety of topics. This student was asking for more readings in addition to the supplementary readings. She indicated that she was interested because "they're really helping my comprehension in French become much better" and that she "wanted to keep working on this even more than what we're doing in class". I gave her some authentic L2 books to read and within a week the student returned one of the books and was very excited to tell me how she was able to read it and how much vocabulary she had learned. This student also indicated that she was "able to read and understand it without looking up all [of] the words that I didn't know" and that it "feels good to be able to read something in a different language!" She was interested in finding out more about reading in French. Perhaps this student's interest in French and in reading L2 texts would not have been piqued if it were not for this group reading activity.

As stated in chapter three, a democratic process took place in order to determine whether students had internalized the roles and no longer needed them. It was also used to determine if students still needed the same group size or if they needed less mediation from their fellow peers. Students decided together that the roles were no longer needed, that they knew what they needed to do within their group, that they would work together to accomplish this and that they still wanted five members for their group. After all of the students completed the story, one student gave a summary of the story. With the exception of one detail, it was accurate despite all of the twists and turns of the story. Students decided that it was not 'just' a children's story meant for entertainment but that

there were also social messages/themes present. For example, students discussed why the circus director treated the hobo differently from the sultan and cited examples of the director's words and actions to support their reasoning.

Not all students agreed with each theme presented by their fellow students but more importantly, the class discussion was lively. The class then discussed whether these messages or themes were still current today despite the fact that this story was originally published in 1967. They agreed that they were. We reviewed the background information provided about Gripari before the story including his philosophy, how the stories were created and how this contributed to the story's development. This was helpful as some students did not remember this and it seemed to cement their understanding of the story. Students also discussed what makes a fairy tale and whether they would classify this story as one. They said that although it is quite quirky, it could still be considered a fairy tale. Finally, when I asked the students if they thought that they would have been able to read this story on their own instead of with their groups, students quickly responded by shaking their heads and saying no.

4.3.6 Questionnaire 3

During the next class, students completed the final questionnaire[32] (questionnaire 3). I wanted students to reflect on the same components as in the previous questionnaire to see if there were any changes and to answer some new questions. For this questionnaire, the questions were printed on a piece of paper which most likely led students to write down their thoughts for each of the components. As the previous questionnaire was given orally and students responded on a piece of paper, they may

[32] See Appendix K

have addressed only the components about which they had something to say one way or another.

Concerning the steps, many students (11 out of 18) found them to be useful while only two students found them restrictive. Sample student responses include:

- The steps were helpful because it took you step by step through the reading which really helped to focus our reading and comprehension.
- The steps were good for practicing pronunciation as well as making sure the whole group was involved with the process.
- I liked the steps of everyone reading then discussing what was said in each paragraph – I also liked that we split up the days instead of just reading the story in one class period.

By the end of the process, most students (14 out of 18) felt that it was better to share the roles but that they were useful.

- I thought the roles were a good guide for reading – they allowed us to know what to look for while reading, however I thought it was more effective when we did all the roles together.
- The roles all seemed to work well to give a fuller understanding of the story, however some roles (hard to understand grammatical structures, what will happen next) seem like they aren't as intese [sic] & could be combined.
- I would have been overwhelmed if I had to do it all alone.
- Steps [Roles] are good b/c [because] split up the discussion and easier to dissect the story.

Overwhelmingly, students felt that the group process significantly impacted their understanding of the story. Students wrote the following:

- Through the steps I had a pretty complete understanding of the story
- I get it now! It was wild and at times a little confusing; but I feel like I knew what was happening at all times
- With the help of the group I was able to understand parts of the story I normally wouldn't have been able to.
- The group definitely helped my understanding! We could bounce ideas off each other to figure it out.
- Reading the story w/ [with] a group really helped to understand the plot – it would've taken me much longer to understand it by myself.

As far as reading in French, many (13 out of 18) found it to be helpful, good practice, that it got easier as the process continued and that it helped them to understand French. They indicated that:

- The reading went well, since there was ample time to read aloud & work through tricky parts.
- It was difficult at first but once I did it over & over again, it was easier to …understand what each sentence meant – even w/ [with] conjugation [sic] I hadn't seen before.
- Hard! But was noticeably easier between first and last day.
- Reading in French <u>definitely</u> helps you understand how to write it better and understand it.
- Always important to get the language to stick with you.

Once again, students overwhelmingly thought that working in a group was helpful and that they needed this group process in order to understand the text. Student responses for this question include:

- Helpful because we combined our different strengths.
- This activity would have been much more difficult not in groups.
- Good! I got to know more people & everyone had their strengths & weaknesses. No single one of us could have gotten through it alone.
- I would not have been able to understand this story without working with a group and our joint efforts.

The final component question asked about using the dictionary and most students (14 out of 18) thought that it was not only helpful but necessary. Two sample student responses include:

- It helped because there were so many new words!
- Even though we could look up only a limited number, choosing key words helped to find out what was going on.

The next six questions were concerned with their final thoughts on the story, their thoughts on reading on their own in a variety of contexts and what they learned from this process and story. First, students were asked for their thoughts on the story or on its use as a reading for the class. Almost everyone (16 out of 18) thought that the story was great for a variety of purposes and they indicated that:

- The story was great – it was a good exercise for the imparfait.

- Liked the story – interesting, original, and the twists made for interesting comprehension.
- It was a crazy story but it was interesting and kept me wanting to read more.
- It is a funny story that holds your attention, and brings humor to learning French.

Even though there were thirty different students with thirty different ideas about what kinds of texts that they would be interested in reading, this story held their interest and kept them wanting to read more. Students were then asked if they thought that they would have been able to read this story on their own in the same amount of time. Although the stipulation, in the same amount of time, was written, seven students responded that yes they could have but then added the caveat that it would have taken them longer. Nine students indicated that they would not have been able to, while two indicated that they would have been able to do it in the same amount of time or maybe even less. These two students may have been ones with previous reading experience. Some of the responses by students who said that they would not have been able to do this on their own in the same amount of time answered:

- No!!!
- No, different people helped figure out different parts of the story.
- I think I would have struggled more alone.

Students were then asked how well they thought that they would have understood this story if they had read it on their own. Most students (13 out of 18) indicated that they would have understood less with three responding that they would have worked until they understood it the same and two responding that they would have understood it more

because they could have taken more time to read the story. These students may have had a lower ZPD and may not have let their group know that they needed more mediation in order to understand more of the story. Two student responses representing the group who would have understood it less if they read it on their own include:

- Probably less would have been understood, the group really helps with comprehension when one gets stuck.
- I wouldn't have understood a single thing if it wasn't for the group.

Students were then asked what they would do to be able to understand a story if they were to read one on their own. Most (12 out of 18) indicated that they would use a dictionary and many students indicated that they would use the context. Three students did respond that they would use an online translator or would translate it. This could be from the students who were reluctant to give up on translating and who may still believe that this was the only way that they would be able to read in an L2 and understand it. It could also indicate that they felt that they would need to rely on this if they had to read on their own whereas with a group there were other forms of mediation provided. Students then responded to whether they would be able to read something of similar difficulty on their own now, or whether they would need two other people or a full group. It was fairly evenly split between the three options with slightly fewer students needing the full group.

Finally, students were asked what they learned during this process/story. I have included many student responses as I find their answers to be quite compelling:

- The tools to be able to read in French easier.
- My reading skills have definitely improved.
- Much of french [sic] syntax and grammatical structure.

- I learned that you don't need to know every single word to get the gist of the story.
- How to breakdown sentences and understand them, as well as being able to gather the overall meaning w/o [without] understanding all the words.
- I learned a better way of reading and comprehending French stories.
- I learned better reading habits & better ways to interact in a group.
- How to read in French and not just translate every word – I learned to comprehend the sentences, not just one word at a time.

These student responses indicate that students were not only able to read in French and understand it but that they learned the tools to read better in French. By the end of the process, they understood how to read for meaning even with limited L2 knowledge while continually learning more of the L2 throughout the story. These pedagogical experiences sought to answer whether students would be able to read and understand an authentic French story with limited L2 knowledge using a group process and learn the tools to read and understand future French texts. Students in this pedagogical experience were not only able to do that but they also learned more French, they understood grammatical concepts by using the story, they became better acquainted with their classmates, they enjoyed learning French and accomplishing something that they did not think was possible at the beginning, and at least one was inspired to read more in French already.

Even though differences existed between both pedagogical experiences, the results were quite similar. I hope that this process continues to influence the students' French learning positively and that being able to read in French provides many opportunities for them to use the language in authentic contexts.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Implications

Based on my observations and the results of both pedagogical experiences, students were able to read an approximately 2,000 word authentic French story during the second semester of their L2 studies by using a group reading process based on an adaptation of Cole's (2003) QAR approach. Students were able to understand the process, use the tools, and work in an organized manner in groups with their classmates. Students discovered different components needed in order to read for meaning in an L2. By working together and becoming better acquainted with their classmates, students were able to create a community of learners. They were able to understand and practice using a dictionary in order to learn the meaning of L2 vocabulary. They each were able to practice their French pronunciation by reading parts of the text aloud.

By the end of the group reading process for the story, "Roman d'amour d'une patate", students learned to appreciate the importance of grammatical concepts such as usage of the *imparfait* and the *passé composé* in an authentic text as well as new vocabulary words through the context of the story. Learners began to understand that reading in an L2 would help them understand other components of the L2 besides just understanding the text. Students potentially internalized not only the tools needed for this group reading process but many fully internalized the tools needed to read for meaning in an L2 on their own. This should be the focus of further investigation. For others, they are part of the way through this proleptic process and perhaps will need a smaller group for a period of time before being able to read on their own. Many students realize that

they do not need to understand every word in order to read for meaning and no longer rely on translating every word in order to understand a text. Students were able to enjoy reading in French and may be inspired to read more.

5.2 Limitations and changes for the future:

Despite the positive and potential implications from these two pedagogical experiences, and the evidence that I presented in chapter 3 and 4 from my own pedagogical observations and the answers that students provided to different questionnaires and assignments, it is important to outline possible limitations from each of these pedagogical experiences and how they could be changed or improved upon in future research.

5.2.1 Pedagogical experience 1

Three possible limitations including the effect of at-home reading, the effect of the pre and post-group work part of the questionnaire being on the same page, the comprehension question used and the availability of dictionaries are proposed from the first pedagogical experience as well as how they were addressed in the second pedagogical experience. It is difficult to know what effect the at-home reading had in comparison with the group reading process on the students' understanding of the story. For the second pedagogical experience, students only used the group reading process in order to understand the reading therefore eliminating this issue.

During the first pedagogical experience, after students completed the pre-group work part of the questionnaire, they kept the paper until the end of the class period in order to complete the post-group work part of the questionnaire. If students did not

understand the assigned homework pages because they did not read or because they found it too difficult, perhaps they just completed the comprehension question after they had read with their group. For example, on day three, one student indicated that he/she had read pages 35-38 even though they were assigned to read until page 40 which is the last page of the story. Even though the student supposedly did not read the end of the story, he/she was able to write down what had happened at the end of the story. This could have been remedied during the first pedagogical experience by having the pre and post-group work questions on two separate pieces of paper. For the second pedagogical experience, as students were not assigned to read at home, this was no longer an issue.

As stated previously, the comprehension question may have been too broad in addition to requiring students to produce an answer instead of recognizing the correct answer in a multiple choice question. For the second pedagogical experience, the comprehension questions were more precise although they still required production instead of recognition. Finally, for the first pedagogical experience, there were no dictionaries available during the first day of the group process. For the next two reading days, students brought in their own dictionaries or used the dictionaries that I made available. Their understanding of this story may have been better if they had had access to a dictionary during this part of the group process. For the second pedagogical experience, one dictionary was given to each group to use during each group reading time.

5.2.2 Pedagogical experience 2

Possible limitations from the second pedagogical experience include the use of a literacy approach, attendance issues, and the timing of the pedagogical experience during

the semester. A literacy approach similar to Maxim's (2002) study was implemented because it was easier to fit into the traditional syllabus for the course. Students read for part of many classes instead of reading for entire class periods and therefore the second pedagogical experience took longer to complete. This may be due to the time it took each day for the students to become situated within their groups, to pick up the tools that they needed, and to refresh their memory about where they left off in the story. Although there were many benefits to using this type of approach, the time it took for the students to become situated within their group each day does need to be taken into consideration and perhaps a more efficient way to start each group reading activity would be helpful. Given that classes were cancelled twice due to the weather, time had to be taken away from the reading in order to keep up the course syllabus as well.

Attendance in this class was also a limitation as several times it affected the organization of the groups. Groups had to change more often than I would have chosen in order for each group to have five members and from time to time, some groups only had four. For the first pedagogical experience, this was not as much of an issue as the story was read over fewer days and the students could also rely on their at-home reading if they were absent. Groups were potentially switched too often as well in order to keep them at about the same place in the text. Given that this pedagogical experience only happened during class time (no at-home reading) and for part of many classes, it was better not to have some groups finish much earlier than other groups. Also, in order to keep up students' interest level and curiosity about the story, it was important that no group be much further ahead so that they did not tell the other students what was going to happen.

The second pedagogical experience took place at the beginning of the semester whereas the first pedagogical experience took place near the end of the semester. Because of this, students in the second pedagogical experience had studied the L2 for a shorter length of time and did not know the other students as well. As stated in the results, having studied the L2 for a shorter length of time did not seem to affect the students' understanding of the story. It may have taken students in the second pedagogical experience longer to read the story, but this could be due instead to the time it took for students to become situated within their group each day as stated above. It may have taken the students from the second pedagogical experience longer to feel comfortable with each other which may have had an impact at the beginning of the group reading process.

Perhaps more activities for the students to become better acquainted and more comfortable with each other could have been implemented before the reading process began. Students were able to become better acquainted with each other through this process though and perhaps it is enough just to take this into consideration. In addition, as the students from the first pedagogical experience had already been taught *passé composé*, *imparfait* and the uses of these tenses in a story, and knew that they would be writing their own fairy tale for the third composition topic, they may have understood the relevance of this reading more overtly than students from the second pedagogical experience. Perhaps for future pedagogical experiences, the benefits of being able to read in an L2 and especially on reading's impact on learning an L2 would need to be discussed.

5.2.3 Both pedagogical experiences

Several limitations affected both pedagogical experiences and changes in further research may help to resolve them. In both cases, I would have liked to have been able to check in more often with each group, to be more available for mediation for each group if needed, to take down more notes on their progress while keeping it as natural of an experience as possible in order to learn more about how this group reading process works. Given that there are thirty students, this was not always possible and this may have affected the results of both pedagogical experiences. As everything was kept anonymous for both experiences, it was not possible to follow each individual student's progression, internalization, and understanding. Therefore I had to rely on noticing trends as a class instead. If students' questionnaires were coded, perhaps individual students' progression, internalization, and understanding could be followed while keeping the questionnaires anonymous. In addition, because no placement test is given for students wanting to take French, some students may have had more than the equivalent of one semester of university level French which may have had an effect on each of the pedagogical experiences. Finally, how and when the students were asked whether they would like to drop any role(s) may have impacted their response. Perhaps the students chose to eliminate or keep the roles because they thought that the group process was less work than reading on their own or they thought that there was a 'right' decision to make. Although no overt indication was given to the students to influence their decision, perhaps by the way the question was asked or when it was asked, it influenced their choices.

5.3 Direction for future research

For future research, one area that may need refinement involves the roles. Taking into consideration all of the student feedback on the roles would hopefully provide insight. Perhaps more explanation is needed about the importance of each role and the reason for the order. Students should be reminded that the student with Role 1, for example, is the leader of the discussion for that role but that certainly others may contribute. Practice with the roles at the beginning of the reading with more teacher mediation may be needed. Perhaps this would help students to understand and use the full group structure more from the beginning.

In order to learn more about reading in an L2, more background on gathering and analyzing data would be needed. More research on L2 reading in general as well on the different components of L2 reading is needed in order to better understand and refine the group reading process. In addition, it may be important for future research to focus on one component at a time during the group reading process in order to understand better each of them and the kind of impact that they each have on the group reading process.

After refining the roles and doing more L2 research on reading, the pedagogical experience should be refined and implemented for further study in a classroom setting. It is important for the group process to be able to work well in a classroom setting as most teachers do not have the luxury of working only with a small group of students. A longitudinal study would be needed to understand the full spectrum of students' progression from having had no previous reading experience to being able to read for meaning on their own. In addition, more research is needed on how to incorporate better students with previous reading experience or higher ZPD's into the group reading

process. Possibilities include researching the best way for these students to provide mediation to their classmates or having these students read in smaller groups or on their own depending on their ZPD. A dynamic assessment would be required in order to understand each student's ZPD.

5.4 Final thoughts

Although there is still much research to be done on group reading activities in an L2, I would encourage high school or university L2 teachers to incorporate this modified QAR approach into the beginner classroom. Even with so much yet to be learned, I found that the students had many positive reactions to learning to read for meaning while using this group reading approach. Some of my goals as a teacher are to help students enjoy participating in authentic L2 contexts, learn more about the L2 while creating a community of learners and to inspire them to learn more by helping them to internalize the needed tools. I find that this approach helps me move one step closer to these goals.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ROMAN D'AMOUR D'UNE PATATE

By Pierre Gripari

Il était une fois une patate – une vulgaire patate, comme nous en voyons tous les jours – mais dévorée d'ambition. Le rêve de sa vie était de devenir une frite. Et c'est probablement ce qui lui serait arrivé, si le petit garçon de la maison ne l'avait volée dans la cuisine.

Une fois retiré dans sa chambre avec le fruit de son larcin, le petit garçon tira un couteau de sa poche, et se mit à sculpter la patate. Il commença par lui faire deux yeux, et la patate pouvait voir. Après quoi il lui fit deux oreilles, et la patate pouvait entendre. Enfin, il lui fit une bouche, et la patate pouvait parler. Puis il la fit se regarder dans une glace en lui disant :

- Regarde comme tu es belle !

- Quelle horreur ! répondit la patate, je ne suis pas belle du tout ! Je ressemble à un homme ! J'étais bien mieux avant !

- Oh bon ! Ça va ! dit le petit garçon vexé. Puisque tu le prends comme ça…

Et il la jeta dans la poubelle.

Au petit matin, la poubelle fut vidée, et le jour même la patate se retrouvait dans un grand tas d'ordures, en pleine campagne.

- Joli pays, dit elle, et fort bien fréquenté ! Il y a ici des tas de gens intéressants…Tiens ! Qui est cette personne qui ressemble à une poêle à frire ?

C'était une vieille guitare, à demi fendue, qui n'avait plus que deux cordes.

- Bonjour, Madame, dit la patate. Il me semble, à vous voir, que vous êtes

quelqu'un de très distingué, car vous ressemblez tout à fait à une poêle à frire !

- Vous êtes bien aimable, dit la guitare. Je ne sais pas ce que c'est qu'une poêle à frire, mais je vous remercie quand même. C'est vrai, que je ne suis pas n'importe qui. Je m'appelle guitare. Et vous ?

- Eh bien, moi, je m'appelle pomme de terre. Mais vous pouvez m'appeler patate, car je vous considère, dès aujourd'hui, comme une amie intime. J'avais été choisie, à cause de ma beauté, pour devenir frite, et je le serais devenue si par malheur le petit garçon de la maison ne m'avait pas volée, le sacripant m'a complètement défigurée en me faisant deux yeux, deux oreilles et une bouche…

Et la patate se mit à larmoyer.

- Allons, ne pleurez pas, dit la guitare. Vous êtes encore très bien. Et puis, cela vous permet de parler…

- Ça, c'est vrai, reconnut la patate. C'est une grande consolation. Enfin, pour en finir, lorsque j'ai vu ce que le petit monstre avait fait de moi, je me suis mise en colère, je lui ai pris son couteau des mains, je lui ai coupé le nez et je me suis enfuie.

- Vous avez très bien fait, répondit la guitare.

- N'est-ce pas ? dit la patate. Mais vous, au fait, comment êtes-vous venue ici ?

- Eh bien, moi, répondit la guitare, pendant de longues années, j'ai été la meilleure amie d'un jeune et beau garçon qui m'aimait tendrement. Il se penchait sur moi, me prenait dans ses bras, me caressait, me tapotait, il me grattait le ventre en me chantant de si jolies chansons…

La guitare soupira, puis sa voix se fit aigre et elle poursuivit :

- Un jour, il est revenu avec une étrangère. Une guitare aussi, mais en métal, et

lourde, et vulgaire, et si bête ! Elle m'a pris mon ami, elle l'a ensorcelé ! Je suis sûre qu'il ne l'aimait pas ! Quand il la prenait, elle, ce n'était pas pour lui chanter des chansons tendres, non ! Il se mettait à la gratter avec fureur, en poussant des hurlements sauvages, il se roulait par terre avec elle, on aurait dit qu'ils se battaient ! D'ailleurs il n'avait pas confiance en elle ! La meilleure preuve, c'est qu'il la tenait attachée avec une laisse !

En vérité, le jeune et beau garçon avait acheté une guitare électrique, et ce que la guitare avait pris pour une laisse, c'était le fil qui la reliait à la prise de courant.

- Enfin, toujours est-il qu'elle me l'a volé. Au bout de quelques jours, il ne voyait plus qu'elle, il n'avait plus un regard pour moi. Et moi, quand je l'ai vu ça, eh bien, j'ai préféré partir…

La guitare mentait. Elle n'était pas partie d'elle-même : c'était son maître qui l'avait jetée. Mais cela, elle ne l'aurait jamais avoué.

De toute façon, la patate n'avait rien compris.

- Comme c'est beau ! dit-elle. Comme c'est touchant ! Votre histoire me bouleverse ! Je savais bien que nous étions faites pour nous comprendre ! D'ailleurs, plus je vous regarde, et plus je trouve que vous ressemblez à une poêle à frire !

Mais pendant qu'elles parlaient ainsi, un chemineau qui passait sur la route les entendit, s'arrêta et les écouta.

- Ça, ce n'est pas ordinaire ! pensa-t-il. Une vieille guitare qui raconte sa vie à une vieille patate, et la patate qui répond ! Se je sais m'y prendre, ma fortune est faite !

Il pénétra dans le terrain vague, prit la patate, la mit dans sa poche, puis se saisit de la guitare et s'en fut à la ville prochaine.

Dans cette ville il y avait une grande place, et sur cette place il y avait un cirque. Le chemineau alla frapper à la porte du directeur :

- M'sieu l'Directeur ! M'sieu l'Directeur !

- Hein ? Quoi ? Entrez ! Qu'est-ce que vous voulez ?

Le chemineau entra dans la roulotte.

- M'sieu l'Directeur, j'ai une guitare qui parle !

- Hein ? Quoi ? Guitare qui parle ?

- Oui, oui, M'sieu l'Directeur ! Et une patate qui répond !

- Hein ? Quoi ? Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette histoire ? Vous êtes soûl, mon ami ?

- Non, non ! Je ne suis pas soûl ! Ecoutez seulement !

Le chemineau posa la guitare sur la table, puis il sortit la patate de sa poche et la mit près d'elle.

- Allez-y, maintenant. Parlez, toutes les deux !

Silence.

- Ben, quoi, vous avez bien quelque chose à vous dire ?

Silence.

- Mais parlez, que je vous dis !

Toujours silence. Le directeur devint tout rouge.

- Dites-moi, mon ami, vous êtes venu ici pour vous payer ma tête ?

- Mais non, M'sieu l'Directeur ! Je vous assure, elles parlent, toutes les deux ! En ce moment, elles font leur mauvaise tête, exprès pour m'embêter, mais…

- Sortez !

- Mais quand elles sont toutes seules…

- Sortez, je vous dis !

- Mais, M'sieu l'Directeur…

- Hein ? Quoi ? Vous n'êtes pas encore sorti ? C'est bon : je vais vous sortir moi-même !

Le directeur prit le chemineau par le fond de sa culotte et Vjjjit ! il l'envoya dehors. Mais à ce moment-là, il entendit derrière lui un grand éclat de rire. C'était la patate qui, n'y tenant plus, disait à la guitare :

- Hein ? Crois-tu qu'on l'a eu ? Hihihi !

- Et comment, qu'on l'a eu ! répondait la guitare. Hahaha !

Le directeur se retourna :

- Alors, comme ça, c'était donc vrai ! Vous parlez, toutes les deux !

Silence.

- Allez, reprit le directeur, inutile de vous taire, maintenant. Cela ne sert plus à rien : je vous ai entendues !

Silence.

- Dommage ! dit le directeur d'un air rusé. J'avais pourtant une belle proposition à vous faire. Une proposition artistique !

- Artistique ? dit la guitare.

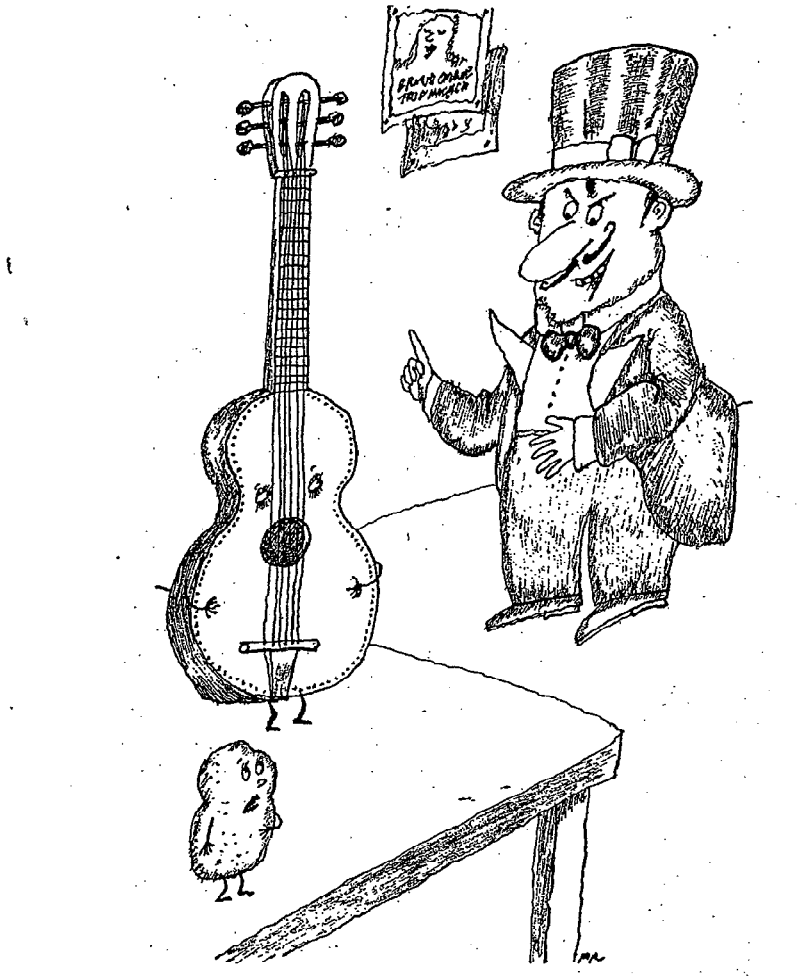
- Tais-toi donc ! souffla la patate.

- Mais l'Art, ça m'intéresse, moi !

- A la bonne heure ! dit le directeur. Je vois que vous êtes raisonnables. Eh bien oui, vous allez travailler, toutes les deux. Vous allez devenir vedettes.

- J’aimerais mieux devenir frite, objecta la patate.

- Frite, vous ? Avec votre talent ? Mais ce serait un crime ! Vous préférez être mangée plutôt que devenir vedette ?



- Pourquoi mangée ? Ça se mange donc, les frites ? demanda la patate.

- Un petit peu, que ça se mange ! Pourquoi donc croyez-vous qu’on les fasse ?

- Ah ? Je ne savais pas ! dit la patate. Eh bien, si c’est comme ça, d’accord. J’aime mieux devenir vedette.

Huit jours plus tard, dans toute la ville, on pouvait voir de grandes affiches jaunes, sur lesquelles il était écrit :

GRAND CIRQUE TRUC-MACHIN

Ses clowns ! Ses acrobates !

Ses écuyères ! Ses équilibristes !

Ses tigres, ses chevaux, ses éléphants, ses puces !

Et, en grande première mondiale :

NOEMIE, la patate savante

et AGATHE, la guitare qui joue toute seule !

Le soir de la première, il y eut beaucoup de monde, car personne, dans le pays, n'avait encore vu une chose pareille.

Quand leur tour vint d'entrer en piste, la patate et la guitare s'avancèrent gaillardement pendant que l'orchestre jouait une marche militaire. Pour commencer, la patate elle-même annonça le numéro. Puis la guitare joua toute seule un morceau difficile. Puis la patate chanta, accompagnée de la guitare qui chantait une deuxième voix tout en jouant d'elle-même. Ensuite, la patate fit semblant de chanter faux, et la guitare fit semblant de la reprendre. La patate fit semblant de se fâcher, et toutes les deux firent semblant de se disputer, à la grande joie du public. Enfin, elles firent semblant de se réconcilier et chantèrent ensemble le dernier morceau.

Ce fut un énorme succès. Le numéro fut enregistré pour la radio et la télévision, de sorte qu'on en parla dans le monde entier. Le sultan de Pétaouschnock, qui le vit aux actualités, prit le jour même son avion personnel et s'en fut voir le directeur du cirque.

- Bonjour, monsieur le Directeur.
- Bonjour, monsieur le Sultan. Qu'y a-t-il pour votre service ?

- Je veux épouser la patate.
- La patate ? Mais voyons, ce n’est pas une personne !
- Alors, je vous l’achète.
- Mais ce n’est pas une chose non plus…Elle parle, elle chante...
- Alors, je vous l’enlève !
- Mais vous n’avez pas le droit… !
- J’ai le droit de tout, car j’ai beaucoup d’argent !

Le directeur comprit qu’il valait mieux ruser.

- Vous me faites beaucoup de peine, dit-il en larmoyant. Cette patate, je l’aime, je m’y suis attaché…
- Comme je vous comprends ! dit le sultan, légèrement ironique. Eh bien, en ce cas, je vous l’achète un wagon de diamants !
- Un seul ? demanda le directeur.
- Deux, si vous voulez !

Le directeur essuya une larme, se moucha bruyamment, puis ajouta d’une voix tremblante :

- Je sens que, si vous alliez jusqu’à trois…
- Eh bien, trois donc, et n’en parlons plus !

Le lendemain, le sultan repartait pour son sultanat en emmenant la patate, et aussi la guitare, car les deux vieilles amies ne voulaient plus se quitter. Cette semaine-là, un grand hebdomadaire parisien publia la photo du nouveau couple avec ce gros titre :

NOUS NOUS AIMONS

Au cours des semaines suivantes, le même hebdomadaire publia d'autres photographies, avec des titres légèrement différents. Ce furent, successivement :

LE PARLEMENT OSERA-T-IL EMPÊCHER ?

VA-T-IL BRISER LE CŒUR DE LA PATATE ?

LA PATATE NOUS DIT EN PLEURANT : CELA NE PEUT PLUS DURER !

LA GUITARE NOUS DIT : JE PRÉFÈRE M'EN ALLER !

ET CEPENDANT ILS S'AIMENT !

L'AMOUR PLUS FORT QUE TOUT.

Avec ce dernier titre étaient publiées les photos du mariage. La semaine d'après, les journaux parlaient d'autre chose, et aujourd'hui tout le monde l'a oublié.

Gripari, P., Puig Rosado, F., Biet, C., & Pilorget, B. (1997). Le Roman d'amour d'une patate. *Le gentil petit diable: Et autres contes de la rue Broca.* (pp. 30-40). Collection Folio junior, 451. [Paris]: La Table Ronde.

APPENDIX B

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 1 – PRE-READING OVERHEAD

Language for communicating: French

Language for understanding: English

Structure:

1) Read first 2 pages aloud (p. 386, 387)

2) Silent reading to fulfill role

3) Talk as a group – fulfill role 1, 2, 3 etc…

4) Change roles

5) Read next 2 pages aloud

6) Repeat steps 2-4

7) Read next 2 pages aloud, repeat steps 2-4

Roles:

a) Reader of 2 pages aloud for the group

b) French language guru

c) Person who picks the answerer

1) Person who asks about hard-to-pronounce words

2) Person who asks about hard-to-understand words

3) Person who asks about the main idea

4) Person who asks about what will happen next

5) Person who asks about difficult-to-understand grammatical structures.

APPENDIX C

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 1 – OVERHEAD

Language for communicating: French

Language for understanding: English

Structure:

1) Read 1st page aloud – alternating readers for each paragraph or have 2 different people for dialogues.
2) Silent reading/preparing for role
3) Talk as a group (fulfill your role)
4) Change roles, read next page, continue with new roles

Roles:

Person who leads the discussion on:

1) Hard-to-pronounce words
2) Hard-to-understand words/phrases/expressions
3) Main idea
4) What will happen next
5) Difficult-to-understand grammatical structures

APPENDIX D

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 1 – PRE-READING STORIES

p. 386
A. Un jour d'été à Marrakech

Valérie Tremblay, 30 ans, est une journaliste qui vient de Montréal mais qui habite toute seule à Paris à cause de son travail. Elle est en vacances au Club Med à Marrakech, au Maroc.

Christophe Delcourt, 27 ans, est un médecin qui habite à Lyon avec ses parents et ses trois sœurs. Lui aussi est en vacances au Club Med à Marrakech.

p. 387
B. La rencontre

C'est dans la rue qu'ils se rencontrent pour la première fois. Elle se promène pour prendre des photos pendent que lui, il cherche un tapis pour ses parents. Et qu'est-ce qui se passe ? Ils se voient, ils s'arrêtent, ils se regardent et… c'est le coup de foudre ; ils tombent amoureux !

- Pardon, euh… Je ne vous ai pas vue au Club Med ?
- C'est possible, oui… Vous aussi, vous êtes au Club Med ?

p. 388
C. Une soirée à la Mamounia

Ce soir, ils sortent ensemble à la Mamounia, l'hôtel célèbre de Marrakech. Ils se parlent pendant des heures et se racontent leur vie. Ils sont amoureux, ils s'entendent bien… La vie est belle ! Mais ils ont seulement un jour ensemble : Christophe vient d'arriver et c'est le dernier jour de vacances de Valérie. Demain, elle doit rentrer à Paris.

D. La fin des vacances de Valérie

Ils doivent se séparer, mais ils ne veulent pas se quitter. Il la serre dans ses bras, ils s'embrassent longtemps, ils se disent qu'ils s'aiment et qu'ils vont se retrouver un jour. Mais maintenant, Valérie doit se dépêcher…

p. 389
E. Le mariage

C'est le grand amour ! En automne, ils se retrouvent souvent à Paris ou à Lyon. En décembre, ils se fiancent. À Noël, Valérie emmène son fiancé à Montréal, où il rencontre sa famille. Et en juin, ils se marient.

F. La vie de couple

Ils veulent fonder une famille et en octobre, Valérie est enceinte. Ils attendent le bébé avec impatience et ils ont un petit garçon en juillet. Tous les deux adorent l'enfant. Mais Valérie s'ennuie à la maison et elle commence à penser à son travail. Et puis, elle déteste le ménage et c'est toujours elle qui prépare les repas, qui passe l'aspirateur, qui fait la lessive, qui repasse… Elle n'a jamais le temps de se reposer. Christophe a bon caractère, c'est un homme sérieux et honnête, mais il ne fait rien à la maison et il n'a jamais le temps de s'occuper de l'enfant. Si seulement il pouvait aider Valérie ! Elle est deçue de sa vie et n'a plus de courage… Pourtant, elle se souvient aussi de Marrakech, de leur amour, de leur mariage, de leur première année ensemble… Est-elle heureuse ? Parfois elle pense que oui, parfois elle pense que non… Elle ne sait pas quoi penser !

p. 390
G. La crise

Après un an, Valérie n'a plus de patience. Elle veut faire quelque chose d'autre dans la vie et elle a décidé de retourner travailler, mais Christophe n'est pas d'accord. Ils sont en crise et ils se disputent souvent :

- Oh là là, qu'est-ce que tu as mauvais caractère ! Tu n'es jamais contente !
- Et tu es surpris ? Tu voudrais, toi, rester à la maison toute la journée ? Hein ? Tu ne comprends pas ! Tu ne comprends jamais rien !
- Mais si, je comprends, mais le petit a encore besoin de toi et je gagne assez d'argent pour deux. Dans deux ou trois ans, oui, d'accord, mais pas maintenant… Aie un peu de patience !
- Être patiente ? Non, moi, je ne peux plus… J'en ai assez, tu m'entends !
- C'est à cause de moi, dis ?

p. 391

- Non, ce n'est pas à cause de toi. J'ai besoin de travailler, c'est tout !
- Valérie, il y a autre chose, non ? Tu me caches quelque chose ! Tu as rencontré quelqu'un, c'est ça ?
- Mais ça ne va pas ?!
- Je me demande si tu m'es fidèle, moi… Tu me trompes, n'est-ce pas ?
- Écoute-moi bien, Christophe : il n'y a personne d'autre dans ma vie, tu m'entends ? Personne ! Mais fais attention… Moi, je n'aime pas les hommes jaloux ! Si tu es jaloux, je te quitte. C'est compris ?

Heilenman, L. K., Kaplan, I., & Tournier, C. T. (2006). In Boardman P. J. (Ed.), *Voilà: An introduction to French* (Fifth ed.). Boston, MA: Thomason Heinle.

APPENDIX E

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 1 – BLANK QUESTIONNAIRES

Roman d'amour d'une patate

(day 1)

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour?

2) What is happening in the first part?

3) How was your first attempt at reading at home?

Post-group work questions:

1) How far did your group progress in class today?

2) Do you think that we should change groups?

3) Do you think that we should switch roles? Yes or no? If yes, which role would you like to keep?

4) What do you think of the process so far?

5) What do you think of the story so far?

Roman d'amour d'une patate

(day 2)

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour?

2) What is happening in the second part?

3) How was your second attempt at reading at home?

4) What techniques did you use at home?

1st time?

2nd time?

5) If you changed techniques, why?

Post-group work questions:

1) After working with a second group, do you think that we should change groups? Why or why not?

2) How was your second attempt at reading together in a group?

3) What was different from your first group reading attempt to your second group reading attempt?

4) What do you think about the story?

5) What impact does your work at home have on your performance in your group?

6) Are there any changes you would like to make?

Roman d'amour d'une patate

(day 3)

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour?

2) What is happening in the third part?

3) How was your third attempt at reading at home?

4) What techniques did you use at home? 3rd time?

5) If you changed techniques, why?

If you didn't change techniques, why?

Post-group work questions:

1) How was your third attempt at this group process?

2) Was your third attempt at reading in a group the *same*, *easier*, *harder*, *better*, *worse*, *just as helpful*, *less helpful* than the first two attempts?

Why?

3) How closely did you follow the procedure and roles the first time, second time, and third time?

If you didn't follow the procedure, what caused you to change and when did you change?

4) Final thoughts on the story itself or on its use as a reading for class?

5) How can this story be considered a fairy tale?

APPENDIX F

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Roman d'amour d'une patate (Day 1) - **Responses**

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour? (3 *pages assigned – p. 30-32)*
   1 page (p. 30) – 0
   2 pages (p. 30, 31) – 6
   3 pages (p. 30-32) – 13
   4 pages (p. 30-33) – 1

2) What is happening in the first part?
   Student knows:
   Some story details - 8
   Characters only - 7
   Main story details - 6
   No information written or do not know – 3

3) How was your first attempt at reading at home?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Hard- 14
   Have the general idea but not the details – 8
   Confusing – 2
   Not bad nor hard – 1
   Frustrated with dictionary – 1

Post-group work questions:

1) How far did your group progress in class today?
   1 page (p. 30) – 0
   2 pages (p. 30, 31) – 0
   3 pages (p. 30-32) – 14
   4 pages (p. 30-33) – 10

2) Do you think that we should change groups?
   No – 16 *(could also include those who said they like their group but did not say 'yes' or 'no' to this question)*
   Yes - 5
   Do not mind – 3

   Reasons included:

The group works well together – they all participate
They are all at the same spot
Group makes no difference – it is the material that determines how well they do as a group

3) Do you think that we should switch roles? Yes or no? If yes, which role would you like to keep?
Yes – 15
Did not answer – 4
No – 3
They all shared the roles – 2

Main idea – 6
Hard to pronounce words – 3 (because it is the easiest)
What will happen next – 3
Hard to understand words – 2
Read – 1
Not grammar – 1 (it is too hard)
Hate them all – 1

4) What do you think of the process so far?
+
More helpful than alone – 7
Liked it a lot – good practice – 5
Went well, good class exercise – 3
Process is easier as you become more comfortable with it – 1
Group work is effective – 1

–
Better on own – process is slow – 1
Harder than a normal class – 1
Organization unnecessary – worked collectively – 1
A lot we do not understand – 1
Need more help – do as whole class – 1

5) What do you think of the story so far?
Odd/weird story – 5
I love the story – 2
Cute – 1
Very interesting - 1
Challenging but interesting – 1
Excellent – 1
Confusing – 1

24 total responses

Roman d'amour d'une patate (Day 2) - **Responses**

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour?
   (assigned to the end of page 37)
   1 page (p. 33) – 2
   2 pages (p. 33, 34) – 3
   3 pages (p. 33 - 35) – 4
   4 pages (p. 30 - 37) – 17

2) What is happening in the second part?
   Student knows:
   No information written or do not know – 9
   Main story details - 7
   Some story details - 5
   Gave very limited information - 5

3) How was your second attempt at reading at home?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Better – 10
   Fine – 4
   Easier – 3
   Same - 2
   Read more quickly and understood more – 2
   Hard – 2
   Not bad - 1
   Main idea but not details – 1
   Good but the group is better – 1

4) What techniques did you use at home?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)

   1st time:
   Used a dictionary – 13
   Used contextual clues – 3
   Used dictionary in textbook - 2
   Translated – 2
   Read for the gist – 2
   Read it twice – 2
   Skimmed – 2
   Summarized – 1
   Skipped unfamiliar words – 1
   Used Google translator – 1

   2nd time:
   Used a dictionary – 12

Used contextual clues – 6
Read it twice – 2
Skipped unfamiliar words – 1
Translated – 1
Read for the gist – 1
Read aloud – 1
Did not use dictionary as much – 1
Took notes – 1
Focused more on details – 1

5) If you changed techniques, why?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)

Did not change – 10
Try to understand more – 2
More to read – 1
Easier – 1
No need for translator as I understood story better – 1
Better if I did not translate – 1
Too frustrated to read for every detail – 1
Faster – 1
Reading aloud helped – 1
In order to remember better – 1
Dictionary helps – 1
Did not understand much 1st time – 1
1st time was hard – 1

<u>Post-group work questions:</u>

1) After working with a second group, do you think that we should change groups? Why or why not?
Do not change – 11
Change groups – 9
Liked 2nd group – 3
Do not mind – 2
Hit or miss – 1

2) How was your second attempt at reading together in a group?
Good/Great – 9
Better – 9
Easier – 2
Slower - 2
Better understand story – 1
Faster but less details – 1
Same – 1
Harder – 1

3) What was different from your first group reading attempt to your second group reading attempt?
More comfortable with structure – 5
People – 4
Faster and understood more – 3
People more prepared – 2
More concentration – 2
Nothing – 2
More in depth – 1
Read more – 1
Not as many good French readers – 1

4) What do you think about the story?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
Wacky – 9
Funny – 7
I love the story – 3
More interesting – 3
Good level – 1
Entertaining – 1
Cute – 1
Creative – 1
Fine – 1
Hard to understand – 1

5) What impact does your work at home have on your performance in your group?
Helpful - 6
Having background on story helps – 5
More work at home = better in group – 4
Not much – 3
Little, better to do in class with other people – 2
Helps to better understand what we do in class – 1
Lots – 1
Moves things faster in group – 1
Knowing vocabulary helps – 1
Cannot participate if not prepared – 1

6) Are there any changes you would like to make?
None or nothing listed: 22
Drop roles – 2
Keep roles – 1
Take notes – 1

26 total responses

Roman d'amour d'une patate (Day 3) - **Responses**

Pre-group work questions:

1) How far were you able to read in 1 hour?
   (assigned to the end of the story – page 40)
   1 page (p. 38) – 2
   2 pages (p. 38, 39) – 1
   3 pages (p. 38 - 40) – 19

2) What is happening in the third part?
   Student knows:
   main story details - 12
   no information written or do not know – 5
   gave very limited information - 3
   some story details - 2

3) How was your third attempt at reading at home?
   Better – 12
   Fine – 6
   Understood more of story and vocab – 2
   Went well – 1
   More difficult – 1
   Hard to do it all – 1

4) What techniques did you use at home? 3rd time?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Dictionary – 11
   Rereading – 4
   Used context – 3
   Took notes – 2
   Same as 2nd (?) – 2
   Read aloud – 1
   Skipped unfamiliar words – 1
   Slower – 1
   Broke down grammatical structure – 1

5) If you changed techniques, why?
   Tried to understand more – 2
   Used context more vs. dictionary – 1
   Had trouble so tried something new – 1

   If you didn't change techniques, why?
   It worked: 8
   Understood it – 4
   2nd way worked – 2

Post-group work questions:

1) How was your third attempt at this group process?
   Very good/good – 14
   Better – 4
   Fun and helpful – 1
   Fine – 2
   Faster, less translation – 1
   Shared knowledge – 1

2) Was your third attempt at reading in a group the *same*, *easier*, *harder*, *better*, *worse*, *just as helpful*, *less helpful* than the first two attempts? Why?
   Just as helpful/same – 10
   Easier - 7
   Better - 3
   Less helpful - 2

   Reasons given:
   Understood better – 4
   Used to group – 3
   Work well together – 3
   No roles – 2
   More input from group – 1
   Dictionary – 1
   More experienced – 1
   Less group input – 1
   Friday class – 1
   Share knowledge – 1

3) How closely did you follow the procedure and roles the first time, second time, and third time?
   Did not use roles – worked well together – 11
   Less each time - 4
   1st time and 2nd but not third – 3
   1st time, but not 2nd and 3rd – 2
   Not 1st but 2nd and 3rd – 2

   If you didn't follow the procedure, what caused you to change and when did you change?
   Found it easier, more helpful to share the roles; discussed as a group – 18
   Hard to implement - 1

4) Final thoughts on the story itself or on its use as a reading for class?
   +
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Weird – 6

Good story for 1st attempt – 4
Interesting – 4
Liked it – 4
Good – 2
Fun – 2
Cute – 2
Good for vocabulary and comprehension – 1

–
Stupid story – 1
Confusing - 1

5) How can this story be considered a fairy tale?

22 total responses

APPENDIX G

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 2 – STRUCTURE HANDOUT

Language for communicating: French

Language for understanding: English

STEPS:

1) Read 1 section aloud – alternating readers
2) Silent reading/preparing Role
3) Talk as a group – fulfill Roles
4) Change roles and return to Step 1

ROLES: person who leads discussion on:

1) Hard to pronounce words
2) Hard to understand words or expressions
3) Main idea
4) What will happen next
5) Hard to understand grammatical structures

APPENDIX H

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 2 – ROLE CARDS

Role 1 Hard to pronounce words	**Role 1** Hard to pronounce words	**Role 1** Hard to pronounce words
Role 2 Hard to understand words or expressions	**Role 2** Hard to understand words or expressions	**Role 2** Hard to understand words or expressions
Role 3 Main Idea	**Role 3** Main Idea	**Role 3** Main Idea
Role 4 What will happen next	**Role 4** What will happen next	**Role 4** What will happen next
Role 5 Hard to understand grammatical structures	**Role 5** Hard to understand grammatical structures	**Role 5** Hard to understand grammatical structures

APPENDIX I

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 2 – PRE-READING TEXTS

« Un dîner littéraire » – excerpt from Eugène Ionesco, *La cantatrice chauve*

Intérieur bourgeois, anglais, avec des fauteuils anglais. Soirée anglaise. M. Smith, Anglais, dans son fauteuil et ses pantoufles anglaises, fume sa pipe et lit un journal anglais, près d'un feu anglais. Il a des lunettes anglaises, une petite moustache grise anglaise. À côté de lui, dans un autre fauteuil anglais, Mme Smith, Anglaise raccommode des chaussettes anglaises. Un long moment de silence anglais. La pendule anglaise frappe dix-sept coups anglais.

Mme Smith
Tiens, il est neuf heures. Nous avons mangé de la soupe, du poisson, des pommes de terre au lard, de la salade anglaise. Les enfants ont bu de l'eau anglaise. Nous avons bien mangé, ce soir. C'est parce que nous habitons dans les environs de Londres et que notre nom est Smith.

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Mme Smith
Les pommes de terre sont très bonnes avec le lard, l'huile de la salade n'était pas rance. L'huile de l'épicier d'en face, elle est même meilleure que l'huile de l'épicier du bas de la côte. Mais je ne veux pas dire que leur huile à eux soit mauvaise.

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Mme Smith
Pourtant, c'est toujours l'huile de l'épicier du coin qui est meilleure.

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Mme Smith
Mary a bien cuit les pommes de terre, cette fois-ci. La dernière fois, elle ne les avait pas bien fait cuire. Je ne les aime que lorsqu'elles sont bien cuites.

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Mme Smith
Le poisson était frais… J'en ai pris deux fois. Non, trois fois. J'ai mieux mangé que toi, ce soir…

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Mme Smith
Cependant, la soupe était peut-être un peu trop salée. Elle avait plus de sel que toi. Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! Elle avait aussi trop de poireaux et pas assez d'oignons. […] Notre petit garçon aurait bien voulu boire de la bière. […] Mais moi j'ai versé dans son verre de l'eau de la carafe. Il avait soif et il l'a bue. Hélène me ressemble. Elle ne demande jamais à boire de la bière. C'est comme notre petite fille, elle ne boit que du lait et ne mange que de la bouillie. La tarte aux coings et aux haricots a été formidable. On aurait bien fait peut-être de prendre un petit verre de vin de Bourgogne australien mais je n'ai pas apporté le vin à table. Il faut apprendre aux enfants à être sobre et mesuré dans la vie.

M. Smith, continuant sa lecture, fait claquer sa langue.

Heilenman, L. K., Kaplan, I., & Tournier, C. T. (2006). In Boardman P. J. (Ed.), *Voilà: An introduction to French* (Fifth ed.). Boston, MA: Thomason Heinle.

« Texte Libre »

Dimanche, je suis allé chez mon tonton et ma tata. On a mangé du poulet avec des frites. Après on est allés au zoo et on a vu le tigre dans sa cage. Quelle belle journée !

Lundi, je suis allé chez le tigre. On a mangé mon tonton et ma tata avec des frites. Après, on est allés au zoo et on a vu le poulet dans sa cage. Quelle belle journée !

Mardi, je suis allé chez le poulet avec des frites. On a mangé le tigre. Après, on est allés au zoo et on a vu mon tonton et ma tata dans leur cage. Quelle belle journée !

Etc.

Friot, B. (1988). Texte libre. *Histoires pressées* (pp. 33). Toulouse: Editions Milan.

APPENDIX J

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 2 – BLANK QUESTIONNAIRES

Reading questionnaire

1) Do you remember how you learned to read as a child in your first language?

2) If so, what did you do to be able to read and understand a story?

3) Can you read in any language other than your first language? If so, in what language(s)?

4) Have you read anything in French? If so, what?

5) Do you consider that your reading in languages other than in English has been successful? Why or why not?

6) What do you think that you need to do to be able to read and understand a story in a second language?

7) Do you think that there is anything that you must be able to do before being able to read in another language? If so, what?

8) What kinds of 'texts' would you be interested in reading in another language? Why?

Questionnaire 1: Roman d'amour d'une patate

Page 1 - Questions de compréhension :

1) Qui sont les personnages principaux ?

2) De quoi est-ce que la patate rêve ?

3) Qui ressemble à une poêle à frire ?

4) Pourquoi est-ce que le rêve de la patate ne va jamais se réaliser ?

5) Patate est le surnom (*nickname)* de qui ?

Questions de groupe :

1) How did your group do with the roles and the reading process itself?

2) Do you think we should keep the same groups or change groups and why?

3) What do you think of the story itself so far?

4) Are there any changes to the process that you would like to make?

<u>Questionnaire 2: Roman d'amour d'une patate</u> *(given orally)*

1) If you have read anything in French before this semester, how was your reading experience?

   Did you understand what you read?

   What did you do to understand better?

2) Describe what you thought about the reading process when we started "Roman d'amour d'une patate" including the following parts:

   Steps:

   Roles:

   Story:

   Understanding of the story:

   Reading in French:

   Working in a group:

   Using the dictionary:

3) Describe what you think about the reading process now concerning the same parts:

   Steps:

   Roles:

   Story:

   Understanding of the story:

   Reading in French:

   Working in a group:

   Using the dictionary:

4) Are there any changes you would like to make on any part and why?

Questionnaire 3: Roman d'amour d'une patate

1) What do you think of the group process now that we have finished this story including the following parts:

   Steps:

   Roles:

   Understanding of the story:

   Reading in French:

   Working in a group:

   Using the dictionary:

2) What do you think about the story itself or its use as a reading for class?

3) Do you think that you would have been able to read this story on your own, in the same amount of time?

4) Do you think that you would have understood it more, less or about the same on your own versus with a group?

5) If you were to read something in French on your own, what would you do to be able to understand it?

6) Do you feel that you would be able to read something of similar difficulty on your own? Or would you need 2 other people? Or would you need a full group?

7) What did you learn during this process/story?

APPENDIX K

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE 2- QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Reading questionnaire

1) Do you remember how you learned to read as a child in your first language?
   Yes – 13
   No – 7
   Not sure - 5

2) If so, what did you do to be able to read and understand a story?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Following along while someone read/read books previously read to them – 8
   Sounding out words – 5
   Using pictures – 4
   Know the alphabet – 2
   Just read – 2
   Read simple books – 2
   Flashcards – 2
   Asked questions – 2
   Contextual clues – 1
   Find words you know – 1
   Out loud – 1
   Read books with hints – 1
   Knew sentence formation – 1
   Knew spelling of words – 1

3) Can you read in any language other than your first language? If so, in what language(s)?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   French – 12 *(includes students who have just read from the textbook)*
   None - 12
   Haitian Creole – 2
   English – 2
   Spanish – 4
   Latin – 1
   Hebrew – 1
   German – 1
   Music - 1

4) Have you read anything in French? If so, what?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Class work - 12

No - 5
Le Petit Prince – 5
Children's stories - 2
Menus/Realia – 2
Parts of Candide – 1
L'Étranger – 1
Classics – 1
French bible – 1
Grammar/Geography textbooks – 1
Hymn books – 1
Emails – 1
Magazines – 1
Product labels – 1
2 pages of book – 1
Technical information for work – 1
Cannot remember – 1

5) Do you consider that your reading in languages other than in English has been successful? Why or why not?
Yes – 11
No – 7
Somewhat - 7

Reasons:
Contextual clues – 2
Looked up lots of words – 2
Understood basic idea but not the details – 2
Read well but do not understand it – 1
Do not know enough L2 yet – 1
Must practice a lot – 1
Pictures – 1
Gloss – 1
Easy to decode – 1
Knew story plot - 1

6) What do you think that you need to do to be able to read and understand a story in a second language?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
Know vocabulary - 11
Know grammar/sentence structure (syntax) – 9
Learn the language first – 4
Understand context – 3
Use a dictionary – 3
Read out loud – 2
Pictures – 2
Know conjugation and tenses – 2

One person to read out loud – 2
Know culture – 2
Look for familiar words – 2
Know main idea – 2
Know pronunciation – 2
Be good at listening – 1
Know spelling – 1
Immersion – 1
Patience – 1
Translation – 1
Same as in L1 – 1
Desire – 1
Know plot – 1
Not sure - 1

7) Do you think that there is anything that you must be able to do before being able to read in another language? If so, what?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
Know vocabulary - 11
Know grammar/sentence structure (syntax) – 8
Learn the language/study more – 5
Speak language – 2
Know culture – 2
Write well in L2 – 2
Know tenses – 1
Know pronunciation – 1
Be open-minded – 1
Patience – 1
Practice – 1
In L2 class – 1
Live in area where L2 is spoken – 1
Read interesting material – 1
Know alphabet – 1
Have a good accent – 1
Know the context – 1

8) What kinds of 'texts' would you be interested in reading in another language? Why?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
Short stories – 4
Not sure – 4
Ones read in English already - 4
Children's books – 3
Newspapers – 3
Classics/Famous works – 3
Plays – 2

Magazines – 2
Novels – 2
Poetry – 2
Love stories – 1
About the area – 1
Interesting – 1
Sociology texts – 1
Fiction – 1
Comedy – 1
Narratives – 1
Comics – 1
Fairy tales – 1
Bible – 1
Sports – 1
History – 1
Fashion – 1
None – 1

30 total responses

Questionnaire 1: Roman d'amour d'une patate - Responses

Page 1 - Questions de compréhension :

1) Qui sont les personnages principaux ?
2) De quoi est-ce que la patate rêve ?
3) Qui ressemble à une poêle à frire ?
4) Pourquoi est-ce que le rêve de la patate ne va jamais se réaliser ?
5) Patate est le surnom (*nickname)* de qui ?

Questions de groupe :

1) How did your group do with the roles and the reading process itself?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Well – 7
   Fine – 6
   Did roles as a group/tried to translate – 4
   Slow – 3
   Overwhelmed by length – 1
   Worked well together – 1
   Slowly figured it out – 1
   Hard to understand but got main idea – 1
   Overwhelmed -1 *(but explained process exactly)*
   Did our best but did not understand a lot – 1
   Group – shy/self-conscious – 1

2) Do you think we should keep the same groups or change groups and why?
   Keep – 13
   Change – 5
   Do not mind – 4

   Reasons:
   Become better acquainted with people *(same people or new)* **– 4**
   Become more comfortable with the group *(for reading out loud)* **– 3**
   Shy – 3
   Worked well – 2
   At same place – 2
   Like group – 1
   Change every other day – 1
   Could be confusing – 1
   Hard to become situated within the group – 1

3) What do you think of the story itself so far?
   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Bizarre/quirky – 10
   Very humorous – 6

Cute – 6
Interesting, curious about ending – 4
Difficult – 2
Do not understand it – 2
I like it – 1
Intriguing – 1
Good – 1

4) Are there any changes to the process that you would like to make?
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
None – 11
All work together on roles – 7
I like this process/working well – 3
Slow and does not seem helpful – 1
Be able to look up more words – 1
Go over some vocabulary as a class – 1
Eliminate cards especially predicting what will happen next - 1

22 total responses

Questionnaire 2: Roman d'amour d'une patate - Responses

1) If you have read anything in French before this semester, how was your reading experience? *(more than 1 answer per person possible)*
   Read/went over in class together – 5
   Used a dictionary – 1
   Stories had a gloss – 1
   Read simplified stories on their own – 1
   Read technical reports and just looked for familiar words – 1
   Read magazines but could not understand them – 1
   Did you understand what you read?
   No - 1
   What did you do to understand better?
   Need to write it down to remember it – 1

2) Describe what you thought about the reading process when we started "Roman d'amour d'une patate" including the following parts: *(could respond to any and all parts that they wished)*

   (more than 1 answer per person possible)
   Good idea – 2
   Liked it – 1
   Unconventional – 1
   Organization confusing – 1
   Confusing at first – 1 (PRE)
   Not that difficult – 1 (PRE)
   Slow - 1

   Steps:
   Worked well – 1
   Fine – 1

   Roles:
   Confusing – 6
   Do not like cards – 3
   Not convinced about roles – 3
   Helpful to figure out vocab/grammar – 1
   Worked well – 1
   Like the roles so work is split – 1
   Could combine some roles – 1
   Fine – 1
   Work together on roles – 1
   Roles intertwined – 1
   Different people did roles differently – 1
   Childish but see point – 1

Story:
Weird – 4
Too complicated – 2
Love the story – 2
Awesome – 1
Very interesting – 1
Strange/abstract – difficult to predict, use contextual clues – 1

Understanding of the story:
Did not understand – 2
Could understand most of it – 1
Hard – 1
Confusing – 1

Reading in French:
Good challenge – 1
Hate reading in French – 1
Hard to pick up subtleties in French – 1
Shy about reading aloud – 1
Daunting/confusing – 1

Working in a group:
Groups help – 5
Like groups so if one person does not know, someone else will – 4
Like becoming better acquainted with classmates, helpful to be able to ask questions – 1
Good to meet new people – 1
Needed group – 1
Switching groups hard because at different places in story – 1
Changing groups is good – 1
Hard because of different reading levels – 1 (PRE)
A little much, on own with dictionary fine – 1 (PRE)
Do not like working in group – already knew everything – 1 (PRE)
Better as whole class – 1 (PRE)

Using the dictionary:
Dictionary helps – 3
Like learning new words with dictionary - 1
It is a pain, only need contextual clues – 1 (PRE)

3) Describe what you think about the reading process now concerning the same parts: *(could respond to any and all parts that they wished)*
(more than 1 answer per person possible)
Fun – 1
Spend more time reading – 1
Do not need formal structure – 1

Process easier – 1

Steps:
Steps help - 1

Roles:
Do not like roles – just work on them together as a group - 8
Like roles, useful and helped discussion – 3
Like switching and see how it helps – 1
Stick with roles and process works well – 1

Story:
Like story more – 2
Love story – 1
Like story – 1
Challenging but enough contextual clues to understand it – 1
Interesting but complicated – 1
Interesting – 1
Prefer more logical story – 1
Story too strange – 1

Understanding of the story:
Understand more – 6
Easier to understand once you know the story type - 1

Reading in French:
Reading in French is easier than speaking in French – 1
Has helped my understanding in French – 1
Like the challenge – 1
Can use book as reference – 1
Strange to read in French – 1
Shy to read out loud but not alone - 1

Working in a group:
Like working in group (people look at story differently) – 7
Keep groups – 1
Everyone on same page – 1

Using the dictionary:
Dictionary helps – 2
Need gloss – 1

4) Are there any changes you would like to make on any part and why?
Keep same groups (comfortable and at same place in story) – 6
No roles/share as a group – 6

No changes – 4
More time to read – 2
Go over story together afterwards – 2
More people to use the process – 1
No reading aloud – 1
More instruction about reading – 1
More logical or familiar story – 1
Read as a whole class – 1 (PRE)
Need a gloss – 1 (PRE)

23 total responses

Questionnaire 3: Roman d'amour d'une patate - Responses

1) What do you think of the group process now that we have finished this story including the following parts:

   Steps:
   Helpful/useful – 11
   Restrictive – 2
   Liked reading out loud – 1

   Roles:
   Better to share roles – 14
   Useful – 5
   Good to have practice on different parts – 1
   Fine – 1
   Confusing at first – 1

   Understanding of the story:
   Group helps/easier with group process – 11
   Became easier as story progressed – 3
   Pictures helped – 1
   Difficult story – 1

   Reading in French:
   Helpful/good practice – 5
   Got easier – 4
   Helps to understand French – 3
   Group helps – 3
   Shy – 2
   Hard – 2
   Went well – 1

   Working in a group:
   Helpful – 16
   More effective -1
   Got to know classmates – 1
   +/- – 1

   Using the dictionary:
   Necessary/helpful – 14
   +/- – 2
   Easier than thought – 1
   No problem - 1

2) What do you think about the story itself or its use as a reading for class?
   Great – 6

Strange – 6
Funny/fun – 4
At our level – 4
Entertaining which kept us interested – 3
Good for imparfait/passé composé – 3
Cute – 2
Relevent? – 2
Knowing background on story helped – 1
Better if less abstract – 2

3) Do you think that you would have been able to read this story on your own, in the same amount of time?
No – 9
Yes but it would take longer – 7
Yes – 1
Yes but it would take less time – 1

4) Do you think that you would have understood it more, less or about the same on your own versus with a group?
Less – 13
Same – 3
More – 2 (because they could have gone slower)

5) If you were to read something in French on your own, what would you do to be able to understand it?
Dictionary – 12
Context – 7
Online translator - 2
Background knowledge – 1
Time – 1
Rereading – 1
Know verb forms – 1
Ask friends – 1
Translate it – 1

6) Do you feel that you would be able to read something of similar difficulty on your own? Or would you need 2 other people? Or would you need a full group?
On own – 7
2 people – 7
5 people – 5

7) What did you learn during this process/story?
Learned the tools to be able to read in French easier – 6
Do not need to know every word to understand it – 2
Groups are good/helpful – 2
French syntax and grammar – 1

French story structure – 1
Vocabulary – 1
Met classmates – 1
Understood this story – 1
Need to completely master French to perfectly read French – 1
Potatoes can make you rich! – 1

18 total responses

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