

## LTANT Rejuvenate, Rebuild, Review 2020 Conference Reflections

Darwin, December 11, 2020

### **Reflection by Kevin Northcote**

I attended the LTANT PD Rejuvenate, Rebuild & Review on Friday 11 December 2020.

The welcome to country was interesting. The presenter talked about not wanting to share her language. I was surprised by this statement but realised later that there were two reasons for this. The first being the misuse or interpretation of meanings. The second was political and related to native title and people claiming to be members of Larakia.

Language Acquisition theory by Paola gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own teaching. I believe that most teachers use a hybrid of approaches. The TPRS was intriguing and the video did simulate some thought. As it was presented, I do not think it would work in an adolescent Australian setting. However, I spoke to Paola after her presentation and discussed a method that I use that I call the wipe of text. Students guided by the teacher create a simple daily routine story about a class mate. This is transcribed on the board. Then each student in the class reads aloud one word each of the story. The teacher then erases random words, they can be verbs to start with. Again students read the story again trying to remember what was the erased word. If they miss the word they have to stand up. This is done multiply times with different words erased. Students have to pay attention. Eventually there is no story left on the board. The teacher then gets students to write the story into their books. It is an engaging activity and student end up learning from it whilst having fun.

The most useful session of the PD was from Yumiko Shaw. I can see so much potential from using MS Forms. If I have time I would like to explore this some more.

The session by Tanith about her time in Taiwan was fascinating particularly the cultural information, ie rather than say Nihao Ma – they say, have you eaten. I needed this kind of information before I travelled there. Anyway, the stories were good, but I found it difficult to relate with and was not sure how it would influence my teaching and learning.

## **Reflection – Diyah Christie**

After completing LTANT PD on the 11 Dec, I learnt the history of Larrakeyah that I never know before. The importance of learning language for future career is so clear presented from Alice Springs representative which will be very useful for students to know the importance of learning languages.

After listening to Language Acquisition presentation, I was reminded again that there are so many factors that can help the students in learning new languages especially lots of repetition. I need to make sure I apply what I learn next year.

I thought that the Microsoft form and EP session was very useful. My stage 2 needs online assessments as their stage 2 exam is online. After PD, I was able to share it with my teachers at my school.

The last session on LTANT made me think that we can make progress with languages if everyone works together. It is important for us to work shoulder to shoulder to achieve big thing for languages in NT. So many ideas during this session which was amazing.

This PD is very beneficial for LOTE teachers. I hope more similar PD can be organised every year.

## **Brenda Austen – Alice Springs Language Centre**

Thanks to LTANT, four Language Teachers from Alice Springs were able to travel to Darwin to attend the conference. Being able to participate in events such as this, whereby we can network and share ideas and experiences with other Language Teachers outside of Alice Springs, but still within the NT, is of enormous value to us. It is helpful to hear of the challenges and successes of other Language teachers working in a similar cultural context to those of us in Alice Springs. The importance of differentiation in our learning contexts came up frequently. I was inspired to think about how we can program and practice differentiation in our language teaching pedagogy more effectively. I think this is a role LTANT could play in future Professional Development events, to

support language teachers in the NT to understand and implement “differentiation” in Language teaching, more effectively.

Although I studied Language Acquisition theories at University a long time ago, in my day to day work as a Language teacher, I have little time to “review and rebuild” my knowledge of these important theories. While Language Acquisition theories do inform and underpin my pedagogy, having the opportunity to refresh my knowledge of the detail was indeed “rejuvenating” – almost a luxury! I was inspired to reflect on my own practice, and was reassured that the theories Paola talked about do indeed inform the sequence and delivery of my programs. So good to have the time to revisit essential intellectual theories.

The “Online assessments” session, prompted me to realise, that the use of IT not only helps motivate and engage students and can make our work as teachers more efficient, but this will be the medium that future exams and assessments will be conducted in. I realized that the use of IT is no longer *optional* and that need to get my head around it!

Tanith Margetson’s session not only made enormous sense, but was hugely motivating. Her personal experiences as a second language learner regarding what does and does not work was very relatable. I thought it would be helpful to consult her further in relation to our Chinese program in Alice Springs, which has been experiencing problems since its inception. I was able to catch up with Tanith afterward to make that connection.

The final session, which focused on what LTANT can do for Language teachers in the NT, stimulated passionate discussion at our table about the role of broad advocacy for the teaching of languages in schools and in the community. For many years I have tried to instigate more cross-curricular units of study or other events, but have found this worthwhile endeavor, fraught with difficulty. I think an approach to languages teaching that incorporates opportunities for cross-curricular activities is one way of promoting languages teaching in schools and provides some of the meaningful context that is so important in motivating students. In term 3, my Japanese classes from year 8 to 11, joined with science and history teachers to deliver a unit of work that focused on the use of atomic weapons in WW2 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This “holistic” approach to language study besides the obvious benefits, promoted the value and raised the status of the Japanese program in the school. After the

discussion, about advocacy, I thought it would be worthwhile for LTANT to consider providing some professional development in the area of cross-curricular projects within our schools, as one strategy in the advocacy of Language teaching.

Finally, my gratitude to all of the LTANT committee members for their efforts in hosting this event, and especially for making us teachers from Alice Springs feel so welcome. The learnings and experiences I take away will be transferred to my students and colleagues.

I certainly feel “rejuvenated” and inspired for 2021!

### **David Moore**

The trip to Darwin with three colleagues from Alice Springs enabled me to attend an event organized by the Language Teachers of the Northern Territory (LTANT) of which I have recently become a member. Our travel was funded by LTANT which accessed grants from the Professional Teachers Association of the Northern Territory (PTANT).

Larrakia elder Lorraine Williams welcomed the group to country and discussed some of the challenges for Larrakia First Nations people in Darwin and the issue of how Larrakia is acknowledged and accepted in the Darwin region. My presentation ‘Building Tracks to Language Work in Central Australia’ focused upon Certificate courses and traineeships which are offered by the Alice Springs Language Centre: explaining the development of the courses and future pathways for students who speak Aboriginal languages of Central Australia, particularly language teaching.

Paola Fischer presented an overview of Language Acquisition theories and how those theories have influenced approaches to language teaching and classroom practice. She concluded that an eclectic approach was probably best.

I attended the session about using Google documents for online assessments, which I found useful as we have been using Google Classroom for Certificate II and Stage 2 courses at Centralian Senior College this year and need to gain more proficiency in this area.

Taneth Margetson discussed ways in which she has taught Mandarin through realistic and engaging practices in the classroom.

Charles Darwin University lecturers discussed the language courses which are offered at CDU in Mandarin, Indonesian and Greek.

The event concluded with a discussion about how LTANT can serve language teachers in the Northern Territory. Our table agreed that continued meetings of language teachers in Alice Springs would be valuable, a process initiated by Alice Springs teacher Yuta Masuda. We also agreed that there needs to be advocacy for all language teaching across the schools.

The participation of Alice Springs language teachers at LTANT events is critical in making the LTANT a Territory-wide organization. The Professional Development Day was useful for helping us to work together to reflect on our practice and to achieve our common goals.

### **Kiyo Goble**

LTANT "Rejuvenate Rebuild Review" began with an acknowledgement by Lorraine William. Lorraine is currently working with elders in the Belyuen Community assisting with the facilitation of a cultural program within the school. She presented her family photos with her family history and community relationship and indigenous languages throughout the top end of the NT.

Our session was divided into 3 parts.

Session 1 Paula Fischer presented Language Acquisition Theories and their application in the classroom. She forwarded 5 hypotheses about second language learning. (Stephen.D. Krashen)

1. Critique
2. Monitor hypothesis: Knowledge of rules and focus on grammatical form
3. 3 nature order hypothesis: Language learners acquire language rules in predictive order
4. The input hypothesis: Understand message and comprehensible input
5. Affective hypothesis: The language environment plays a critical role in language acquisition

I selected session 2 by Yumiko Show about online assessment using Microsoft Forms and Education Perfect. I learnt the benefit of using Microsoft Forms that shows students' progress easily and conveniently collects data and timely analysis.

Education Perfect can connect to Google Forms so students can keep a study record by themselves.

The SACE said “The e-exam questions are designed to assess critical reading and writing it should test digital literacy or typing speed”. This statement made me think on further exam text style and how to lead student’s critical thinking. Session 3 “The building Blocks of Language Acquisition” was interesting. Paola Fischer presented practical examples for language lessons for primary school from beginning to end. She mentioned the importance of TPR learning such as including cultural activities and music. She also mentioned how students naturally acquire different languages step by step. Teach system and pattern then teach story of characters. She shared her teaching experience in China with photos that showed different classroom setting and student’s behavior from Australia, it was interesting.

Lastly the future of LTANT object and purpose. The association will try to get grants from other sponsors and may organize professional learning for both remote area language teachers and local Darwin teachers. Today’s workshop beneficial in that I could attend from Alice Springs and I could meet many language teachers in Darwin and we could learn together. Thank you to LTANT and committees for your generous organization and to involve us in your language workshop.

### **Yuta Masuda**

What I enjoyed most of participating 2020 LTANT conference was the real connection with other language teachers. In daily teaching life, I am the only one LOTE teacher at my campus, and time often passes by without seeing any other LOTE teacher for the entire term. This is even worse than teachers from Alice Springs Language Center because they, at least, have some other colleagues to share and counsel.

I came to the conference to resolve 3 daily struggles.

- 1: How do I teach language and culture together to engage students more.
- 2: What is the best way to give the end of year exam?
- 3: How do I give speaking test efficiently? Which is better open topic (EX: tell me about your weekend) or target phrases?

“Assessment with Google Form” session answered 2 and 3, while “Building blocks with language acquisition” gave me a hint with 1.

In addition, “Lunch by Language” was the best to follow up with presenters and other Japanese teachers. I have exchanged emails with 3 Japanese teachers from Darwin area that I will be in touch with.

Last but not least, it was very nice to finally see other LTANT committee member as a regional officers. Zoom and email help, but nothing is better than meeting with them in person, at least once. I surely hope to be a better liaison for teachers in Alice Springs for the upcoming years. Teaching at a remote school is harder than you think, and I thank LTANT and PTANT for having provided this wonderful grant.