

TIME. And time again.

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SPEAQ* 1985

ESL: Time to teach

*Québec English Teachers Association

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Time and Learning

John Carroll: learning time is positively correlated with learning success

–In general education:

A Model of School Learning (1963)

–In L2:

The Teaching of French as a Foreign Language in Eight Countries (1975)

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Carroll's "mathematical formula"

Degree of Learning = $\frac{\text{Time spent learning}}{\text{Time needed to learn}^*}$

*See Carroll's definition of "aptitude"

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"[Carroll] always cautioned that time as such is not what counts, but what happens during that time."

(1989, p. 27)

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Time for L2 Learning

- How much time is needed?
- How much time is usually available?
- How can we increase learning time?
- What is the time that matters?
- How do we make the best use of the time we have?

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How much time is needed?

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Home language(s)

– Birth to 6 15,000-20,000 hours

School language(s) at school

– K-12 13,000-17,000 hours*

* *in principle for full school days*

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How much time is needed?

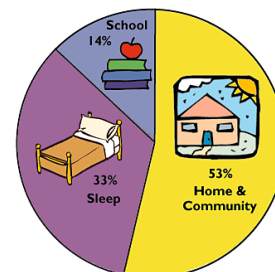
- Far more than most people think
- *Thousands*, not hundreds, of hours
- More than anyone gets in a classroom

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How much time is available?

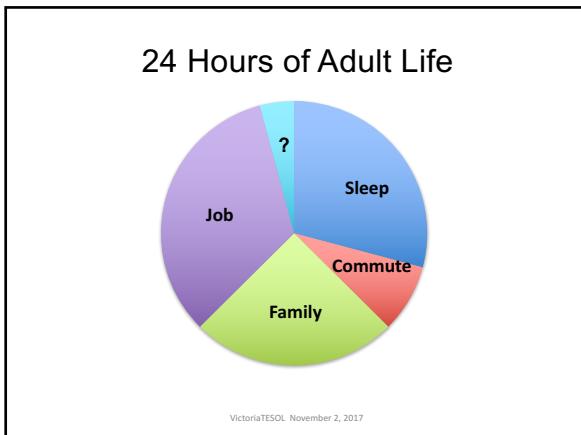
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24 Hours of Adolescent Life



From Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000, p. 26

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How much time is available?

Classroom L2 learning
 1 hour/day = 180 – 200 hours/year

CLIL
 2 hours/day = 260-400 hours/year

L2 “Immersion”
 3-5 hours/day = 540 – 900 hours/year

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Take away?

Facts:
 Language learning takes *thousands* of hours.
 Classroom time is scarce & precious.

Questions:
 How can we increase learning time?
 How should we use the time we have?

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How can we increase learning time?

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To increase learning time

Every classroom hour should prepare students to keep learning outside the classroom.

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To increase learning time

- Shift from “teaching language” to “teaching *through* language”
 - Teach/learn new language **and** something interesting and appropriate

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To increase learning time

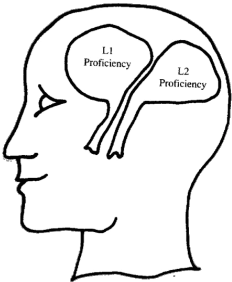
- Immersion, CLIL, Sheltered content instruction, and other versions of content-based language teaching have improved learning outcomes

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To increase learning time

- Limit use of L1 and use only L2 in content-based approaches?

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Cummins: The notion of “competing” languages

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What the research shows

Additive L2 learning can **enhance** L1 development.

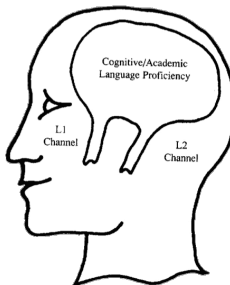
L1 development can **contribute positively** to L2 proficiency.

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It's not a “zero sum game”

Both L1 and L2 contribute to a **common underlying language proficiency.**

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Cummins: Common underlying proficiency (linguistic interdependence)

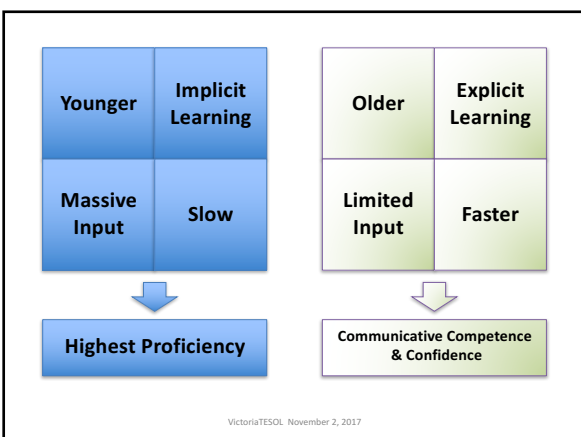
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- Bialystok: Bilingualism is a lifetime benefit
 - Cummins: IF languages are developed to a certain “threshold”
 - Wong-Fillmore: Loss of L1 can have cognitive, social, & emotional consequences
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- L2 learning can build on L1 knowledge—especially through literacy
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- ### Best time to start L2?
- As early as possible?
 - After L1 literacy is established?
 - When learners have cognitive skill & metalinguistic awareness?
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- ### To increase learning time
- Start as early as possible?
 - “Younger learners are better learners”?
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Younger learners are **not BETTER** learners; they’re **DIFFERENT** learners.

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For L2 learning at school, quality
of input and instruction are more
important than starting **age**.
Older students have skills and
knowledge that they can build on.

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What is the time that matters?

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The time that matters is the time spent
learning and **using language**.

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- Allocated time
 - Hours in the classroom
- Time on task
 - Time set for activities
- Learning time
 - When students are actively engaged

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Time as quantity/frequency

- How much language do students actually hear, read, understand in a class hour?
- How many times do students produce meaningful language in a class hour?

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How much time “per student”?

- How many opportunities to repeat a model just heard?
- How many opportunities to create new sentences?
- How many opportunities to negotiate for meaning in interaction?
- How much individual feedback on error?

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How do we make the best use of the time we have?

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Paul Nation's
"Four Strands" for Language Teaching

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Meaning-Focused Input



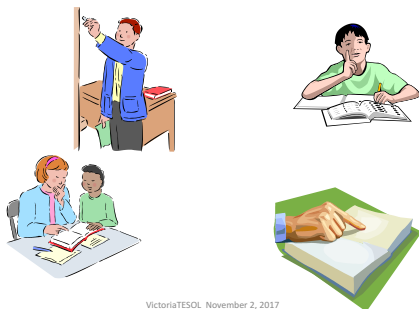
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Meaning-Focused Output



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Language-Focused Learning



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Fluency Development



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- We more easily retrieve what we learned if the retrieval context and processes resemble the learning context and processes

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The *type* of processing -- not merely the amount of processing -- contributes differentially to successful learning and retrieval of what we have learned.

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We get better at what we practice.

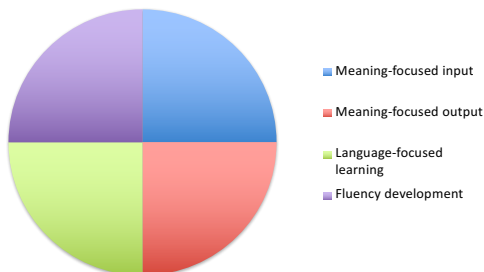
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Ideal learning conditions?

The greatest *amount of time* in the greatest *variety of contexts* using the greatest *variety of processing types*

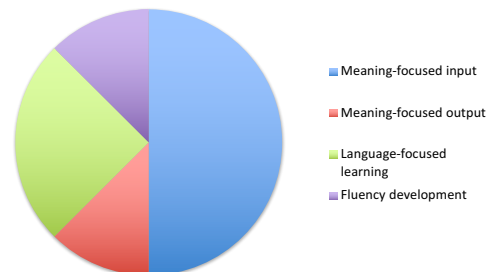
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Ideal learning conditions?



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The reality?



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Hallmarks of a classroom where time is put to best use

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Classroom routines are familiar.

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Silence is not golden.

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The target language is used for “normal” communication, not just for “instruction”.

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Students work together on well planned activities that have both content and language objectives.

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There is a bank of activities students can engage in when they are not “busy”.

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Content learned in one language is reinforced in the other language.

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Classroom experiences prepare students to keep learning outside class time.

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There is “a sense of urgency”

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