

Later, the students used the floorcloth map (a shower curtain liner with a map of Chile drawn on it with permanent markers), created by one group, to give each other commands such as *Camina a Concepción* [walk to Concepción], *Nada en el río Itata* [swim in the Itata River], *Sube las montañas* [climb the mountains]. Peggy placed signs around the room with the names of the other countries in South America written on them. She asked the students to go to the country by role playing different means of transportation including *maneja* [drive], *monta a caballo* [ride a horse], and *vuela* [fly].

Using the poster of the Chilean arpillera from *The Language of Folk Art* (Figure 5), the students discussed what they saw. They talked about the houses, the mountains, the trees, the people. They knew the word *pan* [bread] and Peggy pointed out that the *panadería* [bread shop] was where *pan* was sold. Later, the class discussed (in English) the two types of *arpilleras*, the original ones from the '70s with a political message and the more contemporary ones that depict daily life. For many women, making arpilleras has become their livelihood. Students also watched the movie *Missing* that illustrates life in Chile during the late '70s.

Integrating Language and Culture

Next the students learned the names of other stores in a town and the products they sold. To practice the new vocabulary they did a pair activity in which they asked each other what was sold in a certain store. Partner A asked, *¿Qué venden en la heladería?* [What do they sell in the ice cream store?] and Partner B answered, *(En la heladería venden) helado* [In the ice cream store they sell ice cream]. The following day the students played a progressive reading game. Each student had a card with a product from a store written on the top and a question written on the bottom (see Figure 6). They had to listen until they heard their product mentioned, answer the question, and then ask the new question printed on the bottom of the card. Peggy found that the students were attentive and interested in both activities and wanted to play the reading game again and again after switching cards.

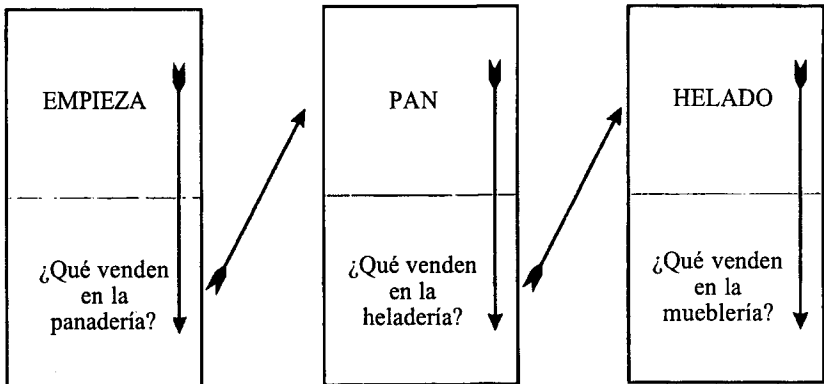


Figure 6. Example of progressive reading game cards (Haas, 1996, p. 211).

Once the students knew the relevant vocabulary, Peggy used masking tape to create a large town on the floor of the classroom (Curtain and Pesola, 1994, p. 350). She made a grid of the streets and the plazas and placed pictures of stores throughout the town map grid. Using TPR she introduced the vocabulary for getting around town and had the students stand up, turn to the right, turn to the left, go straight ahead, stop on the corner, cross the street, etc. Then she gave individual students a series of

commands to carry out on the map. When they arrived at the appropriate store, they identified where they were and what they were going to buy. The students continued by instructing their peers how to get to a certain store. Peggy's journal entry reflects how this activity gave the students an experience that allowed them to understand the directions right and left and what a plaza really was. She said,

I have found that this activity is great for the kinesthetic learners. They volunteer and want to participate...[During] this activity the others watch and comment if they [their peers] make a wrong turn. For whatever reason, [the Spanish words for] right and left are very hard to assimilate into their vocabulary.

Later the students wrote a series of commands on index cards for another student to choose and role-play on the town map. Peggy wrote similar cards and, as an evaluation, asked each student to select a card, read the commands, and carry them out. During the next activity the students wrote concrete poems about a store. They read a poem (see Figure 7) about *una zapatería* [a shoe store]. Several students then recited and role-played the poem.

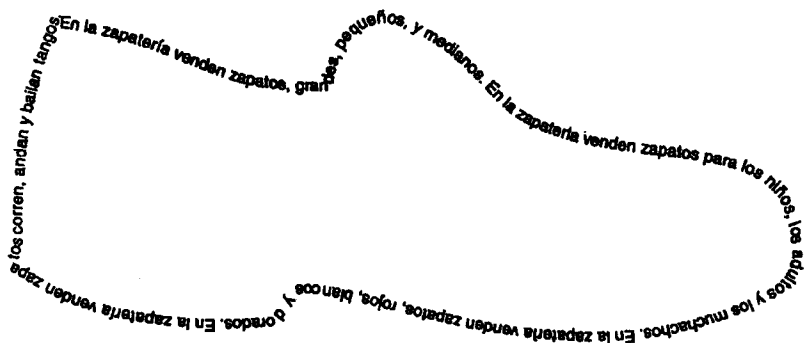


Figure 7. En la zapatería venden zapatos (Haas, 1996 p. 154).

Next, in preparation for writing a class poem, they created a web (Figure 8) about a *librería* on the board. Since many of the words were cognates they quickly assimilated the new vocabulary. Finally, they chose a store and wrote their own poems, first in pairs and then individually (see Figure 9).

Literature to Learn about Communities

During the next activity the students read a short passage about a small Chilean town called Melipilla. The passage was written by Angela Roa, a Spanish teacher at Bank Street School for Children in Manhattan. Through the eyes of a young girl named Rosita, Angela wrote about her experiences growing up in Melipilla. The students were already familiar with much of the vocabulary in the first paragraph that described the location of Melipilla. Peggy retold the beginning of the story several times to the students substituting vocabulary and verbs the students already knew. She also illustrated the story with magnetic board pictures of a river, mountains, a house, and people swimming in the river and used the chalkboard to illustrate words like *rodeado* [surrounded]. By the third recitation she used the exact words from the text and asked the students questions about the story.

After hearing it so many times, several students were already able to narrate the story in their own words, illustrating with the magnetic board pictures. Then, they read the first paragraph in *The Language of Folk Art Activity Book* and confirmed that Melipilla was 60 kilometers from Santiago toward the coast, surrounded by foothills, and near the Maipo River. Peggy repeated a similar sequence with each of the four paragraphs. In the second paragraph Angela wrote about Rosita's small house near *una panadería, una carnicería* and *unafarmacia* [a bakery, a butcher shop, a pharmacy]. Next the readers learned what her family did on Sundays: going to church in the plaza, meeting friends and buying *maní* [peanuts] from the *manicero* or *barquillos* [wafer tubes with a cream filling], listening to the band, or browsing at the craft fair on the edge of the plaza. On Sundays, Rosita's parents bought delicious things to eat like *empanadas* [meat-filled turnovers] and her mother made *pastel de choclo* [corn pie]. In September there were rodeos on the farms around Melipilla where the *huasos* [cowboys] roped cows and in the afternoon the people danced the *cueca*. The passage ends with a description of what Rosita did on rainy days. The students enjoyed reading the story and retelling it in their own words, often embellishing the story with details about the weather or a description of Rosita.

Interviewing a Guest from Chile

Mari invited Angela to visit Peggy's Spanish class. The students prepared interview questions to ask the author. For the first question, Diego

asked *¿Cómo se llama usted?* An interesting discussion ensued when Angela explained why her name was Angela Roa Pérez de Arce. The students knew that Pérez de Arce was her mother's name, but Angela explained that because Pérez was such a common last name the *de Arce* was added long ago to distinguish her family. The students found out the details of Angela's life including where she lives, what her apartment is like, how many brothers and sisters she has, and what her favorite color is. They also learned that her parents still live in Melipilla, eight kilometers from the town. When asked, *¿Cómo es Santiago?* she described Santiago for them as a large, sprawling city with lots of space and gardens. She added that it is five times as big as the city of Rome with four million people and now has lots of traffic. She said that it is special because it is surrounded by the Andes Mountains. When Cristina asked *¿Cómo es la ropa de Chile?*, Angela described the traditional clothing of *el huaso* [the cowboy], a small poncho, black pants, black boots, and spurs.

All the activities in the unit worked together to support each other. The students were able to build on their knowledge about Chile through the interview with Angela which also served to enrich their knowledge about communities in Chile and expand on the reading passage. The language-content-culture activities gave the students more of a context in which to place the additional knowledge they were learning about their keypals through the e-mail exchanges. A community of learners in Chile and New York was forming as the unit progressed. Although many students asked their interview questions with soft voices, they continued to raise their hands to ask yet another question. Some of the questions merited longer answers than others, but each student felt a sense of satisfaction when they asked a question of the classroom visitor and, in turn, received a response. The information they had been learning about Chile came to life for the students.

The Second Letters

When the second letters arrived (Figure 10), it seemed that the students had begun to form relationships. Questions were being answered, and more were posed. They shared information that was interesting to them and were excited to receive their letters. Some even consulted with Peggy during lunch or recess about their responses.

Date: Thu, 23 May 96 13:55:32

From: Alex Urrea <Coordinador@dsalas.plasca.plaza.ci>

To: Rena <poco@transit.nyser.net>

Subject: Respondiendo a Rena

Hola Rena resibi tu carta, veo que no sabes muy bien el idioma del castellano. Me gusto mucho que escribieras, porque asi puedo conocerte un poco. Me pides una foto de Luz, no la puedo mandar porque no tengo ninguna y tambien termine con ella hace una semana porque ella se cambio de casa y no puedo comunicarme con ella excepto llamarla por telefono. Lo siento mucho pero no podre mandartela a lo mejor la mia. Me gustaria que me mandaras una foto tuya. Amiga cuentame algo de tu vida en el colegio .

Se despide de ti y deseando que te vaya bien en todo lo que realices. Y que pronto me escribas nuevamente.

Tu amigo Alex.

Date: Wed, 22 May 96 15:06:45

From: Eider Saez

To: Chema <poco@transit.nyser.net>

Subject: Respondiendo a Chema

Hola Amiga CHema Couniotes

Me alegre mucho cuando recibi tu mensaje, oye amiga o amigo aclárame cual es tu sexo, Ahora te cuento de mi escuela:

Mi escuela es muy bonita. mi deporte favorito es futbol en octavo y sepimo año tambien se aprende frances e Ingles. mi materia favorita es matematica, la musica favorita es treno choni. la hora que entramos a clases es 8.15 y salimos a las 13.00 hrs, a veces salimos a la 1.30. Mi fruta favorita es la manzana y el platano. Me despido deseando estes bien, en compania de los tuyos.

Tu amigo Eider.

Responde prontooooooooo

Figure 10. Samples of the second letters.

¡Hola Alex!

Recibí tu carta. Lo siento sobre Luz. En mi escuela entramos a las ocho y es grande. Hay muchas clases y materias son matemáticas, estudios sociales, inglés, ciencias de la vida, banda, educación física, y español. Mi escuela es pública y ¿tu escuela? Mi escuela es de prekindergarten hasta el octavo. La escuela tiene cuatro deportes, volibol, fútbol, basquetbol con chicos y chicas y beisbol. Mi clase favorita es inglés porque es fácil y cómica y español es difícil y interesante. ¿Cuál es su clase favorita? ¿Cambias los salones de clases? ¿Tiene la misma profesora para todas sus clases? Toco la flauta en la banda y en educación física juego al beisbol. No me gusta matemáticas porque es aburrido. Hay noventa estudiantes en la escuela middle. Mi casa es mediana y tengo un patio mediano. Hay un parque cerca de la piscina. ¿Cuál es su cuarto favorito en su casa?

Adios amigo, Rena

.....
el 30 de mayo

Querido Karis,

Hola! ¿Cómo estás? Yo estoy así así. Gracias por tu carta. Es muy interesante. Te contaré sobre mi escuela.

Mi escuela se llama Pocantico Hills Central School. Es muy pequeña. Tiene un gimnasio grande, seis canchas de tenis, dos piscinas, el campo de fútbol y beisbol. La cafetería de mi escuela tiene la comida terrible. Tiene cuatro pisos. Tiene muchos carteles y retratos en las paredes de la clase de arte.

Yo tomo siete clases. Estudios Sociales, Inglés, Español, Música, Ciencia, Matemáticas, y la clase de educación física. La clase de educación física es muy divertida. Juegan todos los deportes. Mi profesora de la clase de educación física es chevere. El es muy atlético.

Yo juego al beisbol ahora para mi escuela. Mi equipo es terrible. Estamos 1-8.

Mis notas son buenas. Recibo muchos 90s. Yo estoy en la sociedad nacional de honor.

Escribe me por favor. Adios.

Figure 10 (cont'd.).

A Fieldtrip in the Community

The day to visit the Chilean bakery finally arrived. The students boarded the minibus for the short trip to town. Although Pocantico has a small percentage of Latino students, the majority of the students in Peggy's class did not know about the wonderful Chilean bakery located a mere five minutes from school. And, when Mari went to buy film at the store across the street, she found that the *bodega* was run by a family from the Dominican Republic. Besides being a valuable language learning and cultural experience as well as a culinary pleasure, the fieldtrip allowed the students and the teachers to learn more about their own multilingual community.

The students were greeted at the door of Los Andes Bakery by Francisco Mejías, who, with his wife Jessica, owns the store. Once everyone was inside, he pointed to his native city, Viña del Mar, on the map. The students understood him as he talked about the map and explained that Viña was located *cerca de Santiago* [near Santiago]. Then Francisco walked behind the glass case filled with goodies. He pointed to each pastry and told the students what they were called in Spanish: *merengues*, *pan de huevo* [egg bread rolls], *queque de frutas* [fruit cake], *pan dulce* [sweet rolls], *pastel* [cake], *empanadas de queso* [cheese turnovers], and *mantecados* [butter cookies sprinkled with powdered sugar]. He described the different breads displayed in baskets on the side of the case. Ready for the students to taste was a tray filled with warm *empanadas de queso*. Everyone was impressed by Francisco's warm welcome and generosity as he encouraged them to try an empanada saying, *sírvase*. Later, he took the group to the back of the bakery. He introduced them to the *panadero* [baker] and the *pastelero* [pastry chef] and pointed out the machines brought from Chile that are used to make the bread. The *pastelero* had trays of *repollos* [small round eclairs] for the students to dip into chocolate or brush with pineapple glaze. He explained and demonstrated the process. Then he asked for volunteers to whip the filling, *crema chantilly*. Diego wanted to try immediately. The filling was spooned into a pastry bag and several students helped fill the centers with cream. Of course, the best part was eating the delicious *repollos*.

As the visit came to an end, the students were able to buy pastries or bread to take home. They asked, *¿Cuánto vale?* [How much does it cost?], pointing to items in the case. Diego, who wanted to buy a baguette, said, *Quiero este pan largo* [I want this long bread]. Students left the store

saying *gracias* to Francisco. The experience was rich and exciting in many ways. The students listened to native speakers from Chile as they explained familiar concepts on the map and unfamiliar concepts about baking. Everything, though, was in the context of a here-and-now situation, and thus they had little trouble understanding the language. They enjoyed the experience of tasting the foods of Chile, the *empanadas de queso* and the *repollos*. The expressions, *¡Es delicioso!* and *¡Qué rico!* now have real meaning for the students. Several have even returned with a parent to purchase items at the bakery.

Endings: Culminating Activity

The third letters arrived from Chile just as the school year was coming to a close (Figure 11). The letters described points of interest around their town and region. But before the Pocantico students could write their replies describing their towns, Elena sent a message requesting that they write the third letter in English. The Chilean students wanted to know about points of interest in the United States including the Statue of Liberty, Disneyworld, and the White House. The Pocantico students were more than happy to comply with their request. Additionally, Peggy sent off a package to Chile (to reciprocate for a similar package received from Elena) that included pictures of the students and the school, information about New York State, and realia from Pocantico Hills School. Now each group had a visual idea of who their keypals were and where they lived.