Teaching Italian the 'Italian way'

Jenna Lo Bianco

Italian Services Institute of Australia Fellowship 2015

i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fellow, Jenna Lo Bianco has been teaching secondary Italian for only eight years, though has a wealth of diverse experiences and skills given her background in academic research, educational publishing and teaching Italian overseas. The Italian Services Institute Fellowship program with the International Specialised Skills Institute allowed this naturally curious and innovative educator the opportunity to study best practice in Italian language schools in Italy. Studying in-situ provided Lo Bianco the opportunity to analyse the pedagogical approaches and learning and teaching tools used by a range of educators who are trained to teach Italian to foreigners…in Italian.

Spanning three weeks, Lo Bianco's time in Italy involved attending three Italian language schools, Dilit International House (Rome), Istituto Venezia (Venice) and Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci (Florence). Her experiences in each context varied significantly, with her intention being to both fulfill the 'teacher as student' role as well as undertake pedagogical training. The teachers and administrative staff in all three schools gave generously of their time and attention, allowing Lo Bianco to not only observe lessons, interview the staff, but also collect resources and data to best determine which elements of the Italian classroom can be recontextualised for feasible use in the Australian context.

Lo Bianco was overwhelmed but not at all surprised by the complete professionalism and dedication to the craft displayed by the teachers she worked with. Each teacher had their own take on the pedagogical approach utilised by the three schools, which enabled a variety of classroom activities and ideas to be studied. Of significant importance was the time Lo Bianco spent with Luisa Guerrini, educator and teacher trainer at Dilit International House in Rome. Guerrini's passion and enthusiasm, coupled with her realistic view of classroom conditions provided Lo Bianco with tangible deconstructed ideas that she has since worked to be Australian-classroom 'friendly'.

Though her intention was to investigate best teaching practice in Italian language schools in Italy, Lo Bianco has taken far more than expected from this experience. In her own professional world as a practicing teacher, educational researcher, author and language education consultant, Lo Bianco is all too familiar with the challenges that teaching Italian in Australia poses educators. The Fellow saw firsthand the strategies and techniques that can be employed to overcome the obstacles that stand between Australian students and language learning.

Perhaps the most significant impact of this Fellowship is the role that inductive grammar instruction plays in the communicative language teaching approach. Lo Bianco watched in awe as teachers commanded classes completely in Italian to students with no knowledge of the language. Breaking down the preconceived idea of "We can't teach grammar in Italian – they won't understand us!", Lo Bianco often caught herself smiling during lesson observations. "This is it. This is the future. This is the revolution we have been waiting for," she gushed with school directors. Lo Bianco learned how to negotiate the *interlingua* of the student in order to facilitate meaningful and successful language acquisition, which has since had a positive impact on her day-to-day teaching practice.

Second to the in-classroom experiences Lo Bianco enjoyed during the course of her Fellowship in Italy, she also had the opportunity to meet with staff at the Accademia della Crusca, with whom she discussed the importance of international networking and the latest digital resources available to Italian teachers the world over. Similarly, during her time in Venice, Lo Bianco was invited to attend the conference *'Insegnare italiano con un approccio orientato all'azione: La didattica con i compiti comunicativi',* presented by Dr. Marilisa Birello of Universitat Autònomo de Barcelona and Casa delle Lingue publishing house. This proved to be a powerful networking opportunity, as well as providing further scope for her research. Again, the focus of the conference returned Lo Bianco's attention to the power of inductive grammar instruction and the importance of the communicative language teaching approach.

i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lo Bianco, as a direct result of the learning outcomes of this Fellowship, is ready to challenge the status quo in Australian schools as far as Italian language education is concerned. She poses some powerful questions to language teachers, industry and associations about updating common teaching practice in our schools and reflecting on stagnant approaches. Lo Bianco will be delivering a series of professional development sessions over the course of 2016 through language-based associations in Victoria as a means of disseminating her findings and up skilling her colleagues. Supplemented by the teacher-friendly strategies presented in the Appendices of this report, Lo Bianco is hoping the knowledge presented here will have the power to transcend Italian language education in Australia and impact on the delivery of wider literacy education and the teaching of other languages.

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ii. ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ADC	Accademia della Crusca
CEF	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CELI	Certificato della Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana
CILS	Certificazione di Italiano Come Lingua Straniera
CO.AS.IT.	Comitato Assistenza Italiani
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DIH	Dilit International House
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IV	Istituto Venezia
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MLTAV	Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria
PD	Professional Development
PLIDA	Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri
QCER	Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per la Conoscenza delle Lingue
SLDV	Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci
VATI	Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education

Cognitive grammar

A grammar teaching approach which places emphasis on visual teaching strategies (using symbol/image), kinaesthetic (motor coordination), categorisation and perception.

Communicative language teaching

A teaching approach which places emphasis on communication and interaction between learners, interaction with authentic texts and a keen focus on 'real-life' language use.

Deductive grammar approach

The process of explicitly explaining grammar rules, precedes analysis of the grammar used in-context, usually followed by examples and activities which drill the grammar.

Descriptive grammar

The process of describing how language and grammar rules are used through detailed explanation, which place great focus on real-life language used by native speakers.

Inductive grammar approach

A means of grammar instruction by first meeting grammatical/linguistic elements/features used meaningfully in-context, learners make sense of the grammar in their own words by 'noticing' patterns and rules, increasing learner agency and ownership of the language acquisition process.

***Interlingua*/interlanguage**

The linguistic system used by a language student whereby they use their existing L1 knowledge to inform the development and comprehension of their L2, this is often a subconscious latent process.

Input

Exposure to a text (written, aural, oral, visual, etc.), classroom material or resource interacted with by learners and teachers when undertaking comprehension tasks or when interacting with the L2, used as a means of generating grammar, stimulating discussion and leading tasks/activities.

Output

Student generated work, language, comprehension, grammar or specific tasks developed to meet specific learning outcomes in response to an 'input'.

Valency (of grammar)

A grammar teaching approach developed by French linguist Lucien Tesnière during the 19th Century, placing significant importance on the role that verbs have in the structure and function of phrases in any given language, linked to the metaphor of molecules and atoms, in which the verb is the 'nucleus'.

Jenna Lo Bianco thanks the following individuals and organisations that have generously given of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her through this Fellowship program.

Awarding Body – International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) is an independent, national organisation. In 2015 it is celebrating twenty-five (25) years working with Australian governments, industry education institutions and individuals to enable them to gain enhanced skills, knowledge and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

• Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions

• Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses

• Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

Over 300 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 25 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia's 'Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010'.

> *Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change. International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills and knowledge, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills and knowledge across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher-level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills and knowledge across a range of industries and occupations.*

In this context, the ISS Institute works with our Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills and knowledge in Australia that require enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows' overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional knowledge, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute's work.

For further information on our Fellows and our work see http://www.issinstitute.org.au.

Jenna Lo Biano also thanks the Bella Irlicht AM and staff (Ken Greenhill and Paul Sumner) of ISS Institute for their assistance in planning and development of the Fellowship and completion of this report.

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- Tania Gilio, student and pre-service teacher, l'Università Ca' Foscari, Venice
- Ferdinando Colarossi, President of Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian (VATI), and Manager CO.AS.IT, Melbourne

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- Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian (VATI), Melbourne
- Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria, Melbourne
- CO.AS.IT. Comitato Assistenza Italiani, Melbourne
- Emmanuel College, Melbourne

2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Name: Jenna Lo Bianco, MTeach, BCA, Dip ML (Ital) (Melb)

Roles: Secondary Teacher

Educational Author

Language Education Consultant

Researcher

Assistant Leader of Learning, Languages

Qualifications: Master of Teaching (Sec.), The University of Melbourne, 2011

Bachelor of Creative Arts, The University of Melbourne, 2009

Diploma in Modern Languages (Italian), The University of Melbourne, 2009

Publications: iCan Speak Italian, Macmillan Education Australia (2014)

iCan Speak Italian - Teacher Product, Macmillan Education Australia (2014)

Background:

Jenna Lo Bianco is an educational author, Italian language education consultant and practising Italian teacher with experience teaching Italian in both Australia and the UK. She is currently studying a Doctor of Philosophy (Education) at Monash University in the field of Italian second language education.

Lo Bianco's interest in the Italian language began at a young age as she negotiated the world through her bilingual context. She was always inquisitive about languages and grammar patterns, and Italian language and culture soon became her greatest passions in life. Lo Bianco followed her love of Italian though to tertiary level, studying Italian in the form of a Diploma in Modern Languages (Italian), soon followed by a Master of Teaching (Sec.) in which she specialised in teaching Italian, Drama and English.

Lo Bianco soon found her niche area of interest upon commencing teaching at the St. Paul's College campus of Emmanuel College; a Catholic boys' school in Melbourne's inner-west. Her daily dealings with the students led her to completing her Masters degree, writing her thesis entitled Investigating the impact of the classroom space in boys' Italian second language education, at secondary level.

In 2011 Lo Bianco was invited to join the creative team at Macmillan Education Australia, with whom she wrote the world's first fully-interactive digital Italian language course for beginners; iCan Speak Italian, of the iCan Speak Languages series.

Lo Bianco's teaching practice is grounded in the application of inductive grammar instruction, used as a means of fostering independence in the experience of Italian language acquisition. When she isn't teaching or writing, Lo Bianco works with schools and Italian language teachers, delivering practical hands-on PD workshops based upon her work in the field of inductive grammar instruction.

Her inquisitive nature and unceasing love of learning led her to this Fellowship, as she continues to ask questions about how people learn languages, and how best to challenge current teaching practice in Australian schools.

3. AIM OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Private language schools in Italy are able to equip students, many from non-English speaking contexts, with advanced language skills after short yet intensive study periods. Delivering a mixture of communicative language teaching (CLT) and inductive grammar instruction, these institutes are able to achieve learning outcomes currently unreachable in the Australian language classroom in the same timeframe. The scope of the Fellowship is to ascertain which conditions of the teaching practice in Italian language institutes are feasible for recontextualisation in the Australian language classroom. Areas of focus include teaching methodology and pedagogy, classroom activities and use of instructional language in the classroom.

"Photo of students engaging in a conversation class on the Dilit International House school grounds". Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

The aims of this Fellowship were to investigate:

- How teachers unpack grammar concepts in Italian, to non-Italian speakers?
- How non-Italian speaking students learn Italian in an Italian-only environment?
- Which activities are used to deliver teaching of the macro-skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing?
- What language and techniques teachers use to command, explain and correct students?
- What role does 'gesture' play in supporting student understanding in the Italian-only classroom environment?
- Which types of classroom activities do the teachers use?

4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Italian foreign language schools in Italy deliver a language learning experience that differs significantly from that of the Australian language classroom. Foreigners enrol in immersive weeklong and extended language courses, many with little to no prior knowledge of Italian. Incredibly, these foreigners emerge equipped with all the tools necessary to converse with confidence and travel independently.

These schools deliver inductive grammar instruction mostly through the application of CLT, exploiting the students' 'need to communicate'. This pedagogical approach to Italian language teaching is missing from our Australian classroom context.

Many Australian students become frustrated by their inability to communicate; some after more than ten years of study. The wider impact of this shift in self-efficacy is impacting upon the attrition rate and the general climate of Italian language teaching in Australia. Given Italian's place in the Australian National Curriculum for Languages, the challenges of relevance and attrition pose the greatest threat to the Italian language's future in Australia.

Most intriguing are the pedagogical approaches used in these communicative classrooms in Italy. Though conditions of these foreign language schools differ greatly from that of the Australian classroom (time allocation, class sizes, prolonged concentration of Italian in use), elements of these environments can be manipulated and replicated for feasible application in the Australian context, in order to attain similar learning outcomes.

The challenge when studying any foreign language is to learn the 'real-life' usages of the language, such as idiomatic expressions and figurative speech. Similarly, a language such as Italian, which contains many irregular constructs and patterns, challenges learners beyond the understanding of their first language. These complex and often nonsensical constructs are best-studied in-situ.

Italian language teachers are obligated to ensure that the language and content delivered is accurate and used in appropriate contexts. The influence of the Internet and pop-culture has contributed significantly to the changing face of the Italian language. Colloquial language, slang and borrowed vocabulary are making effective teaching of 'live' Italian evermore challenging.

It is the responsibility of all Italian language teachers to ensure that the delivery of language content in schools best reflects current language use in Italy. The days of Italian according to Dante Alighieri have well and truly come to an end.

The question educators are faced with is: How can my students best communicate in 'today's Italy'?

5. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

The focus of all ISS Institute Fellowships is on applied research and investigation overseas by Australians. The main objective is to enable enhancement and improvement in skills, knowledge and practice not currently available or implemented in Australia and the subsequent dissemination and sharing of those skills and recommendations throughout the relevant Australian industry, education, government bodies and the community.

The ISS Institute Fellowship provided the Fellow, Jenna Lo Bianco, with an opportunity to examine the varying approaches and methodologies used in Italy when teaching the Italian language.

The following three skill enhancement areas were identified:

1. Analyse best practice Italian language teaching approaches

Lo Bianco met with school directors, teachers and researchers of private Italian language schools and institutions to discuss best teaching practice in Italy today. Through this, Lo Bianco:

- compared and contrasted pedagogical approaches to teaching Italian to foreigners
- studied the use of inductive grammar instruction and communicative language teaching, including the techniques and activities that are used
- collated and referenced use of Italian used in class to command, question and instruct
- was able to determine the role realia has in the classroom to support learning
- ascertained what Italian practitioners/schools deem to be the most appropriate content taught in class to foreigners.

Action/Outcome: Analysed and compiled findings about best teaching practice in Italian language schools and institutions in Italy.

2. Explore Italian language teaching pedagogy, approaches and methodologies

Lo Bianco undertook rigorous pedagogical training at Dilit International House, Rome. Through this, Lo Bianco:

- studied differences in approaches and teaching methodologies
- compared the nature of classroom activities presented
- discussed the roles of ICT, realia and in-class resources to support learning
- used this knowledge to inform her subsequent time at Istituto Venezia and Scuola Leonardo da Vinci.

Action/Outcome: Using findings about best teaching practice in Italian language schools in Italy, Lo Bianco produced a collection of activities and teaching ideas specific to the needs of Italian teachers and the Australian classroom. The collection is an example-rich cluster of activities and tasks Australian students can undertake which replicate conditions of the Italian language classroom in Italy.

3. Identify and explore best practice Italian language teaching resources

Lo Bianco undertook rigorous grammar and language training in the form of intensive, advanced language courses at Dilit International House and Istituto Venezia. Through this:

- studying at two different language schools allowed Lo Bianco (in the role of 'student') to evaluate the success of each different approach

- the intensive language course allowed Lo Bianco to improve her own language skills

- Lo Bianco compiled a collection of in-class resources which have informed her teacher resource collection

- Lo Bianco transcribed lesson plans to establish trends in structure, content and pace.

Action/Outcome: *Lo Bianco has used the information and knowledge gathered during this phase of her in-country experience to inform the development of the teacher resource collection, outlined in Learning Enhancement Area 2.*

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The three schools visited as part of this Fellowship all follow the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), created by the Council of Europe. It is worth noting that in Italy the CEF is also referred to as '*Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per la conoscenza delle lingue*' (QCER). The framework allows language proficiency, student assessment and language teaching across Europe to be measured and delivered by a standardised common practice irrespective of language and country of delivery.

The six levels of proficiency are dictated within this framework:

A1 - A2 Basic user

B1 - B2 Independent user

C1 - C2 Proficient user

Students at level A1 are entry-level with no prior knowledge or formal language training in the specific language. In contrast, students at C2 level command the given language with native proficiency in a variety of formal and non-formal contexts.

"Diagram of how Dilit International House meets the standards as outlined by the Common European Framework". Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

Upon arrival at a language school, given the spread in abilities among new students, they will often sit a diagnostic test to best ascertain their level of proficiency. It is also common practice to engage in an informal discussion with a leading teacher to determine if strengths exist in the student's oral capacities that aren't best represented in a written test. Doing such initial testing takes into account heritage speakers with a strong oral/aural competency.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Language schools in Italy adhere to the CEF. Given the widespread familiarity with the CEF, most Italian language schools divide their class levels by the same name and offer certificates of 'completion of study hours' in each level. In order to obtain a formal acknowledgement of language proficiency students can sit exams for each of the above mentioned proficiency levels. The Università per Stranieri di Siena offers the Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera (CILS) exam, just as the Università per Stranieri di Perugia offers the Certificato della Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI). Facilitated by the Società Dante Alighieri, students can also complete a Progetto Lingua Italiana Dante Alighieri (PLIDA) diploma for the same level of proficiency recognition. The central examination center for the PLIDA diploma is in Rome, though some feeder institutions worldwide also facilitate this.

Lo Bianco worked with three very different Italian language schools as a part of the Fellowship, as well as attending a conference in Venice and interviewing staff at the Accademia della Crusca.

"Photo of the busy foyer of Dilit International House". Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

The purpose of each of the following 'International Experiences', undertaken as part of the Fellowship, presented Lo Bianco with a variety of opportunities and experiences.

Dilit International House, Rome:
- Teacher in student role
- Professional development workshops
- Lesson observations
- Teacher/practitioner interviews

Istituto Venezia, Venice:
- Teacher in student role
- Lesson observations
- Teacher/practitioner interviews

Conference presented by Dr. Marilisa Birello, '*Insegnare italiano con un approccio orientato all'azione: la didattica con i compiti communicativi*', Venice:

- Industry networking
- Professional development
- Resource development

Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, Florence:

- Lesson observations
- Teacher/practitioner interviews

L'Accademia della Crusca, Florence:

- Industry networking
- Professional development
- Teacher/practitioner interviews
- Resource development

6.1   Dilit International House – Rome

Context statement:

Established in 1974, Dilit International House (DIH) is an industry leader in Italian language education in Italy. 'Dilit', as it is most commonly called, offers a variety of language courses from basic language and conversation classes, to internships and business preparation programs. DIH is located a few hundred metres from Termini station making it accessible from all corners of the city. Spread across three floors of a pre-war palazzo, DIH offers technology-equipped classrooms, boasts interactive whiteboards and a range of digital facilities.

"Photo of Dilit International House, the external façade of the palazzo". Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

DIH's student body is the most varied of the three schools studied in this Fellowship, given Rome's international accessibility. DIH is also renowned for its formazione insegnanti (teacher training) programs

and professional development opportunities. In fact, DIH's contribution to this field is so strong it has a dedicated department and staff - Dipartimento Formazione Insegnanti e Ricerca. DIH also facilitates

From left to right - Luisa Guerrini, Christopher Humphris, Luigi Micarelli and Piero Catizone. Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

its own publishing house. Since its inception, DIH and its staff have consistently nourished the Italian language education field in Italy, publishing a diverse range of materials and resources, as well as hosting international conferences and gatherings.

Pedagogical approach:

DIH's pedagogical approach is layered and rich, leaving nothing to chance. The staff share a very strong passion for the school's teaching methodology, which permits a very high level of consistency in the quality and delivery of the teaching and learning process. The teachers at DIH are able to explain in explicit detail the motivations and pedagogical justifications behind every resource they offer and every activity they run in class. Students benefit from this consistency, as they are able to further develop their skills when undertaking particular types of activities. This in turn renders the language learning experience all the more powerful for the students.

During one particular lesson in a C1-C2 level class Lo Bianco was taken aback when a Swedish student approached her and said, "This is a typical DIH-style activity, you'll get better at them each time you do them". His comment demonstrated self-awareness in the learning process, as he understood the power of the activity he and the class were undertaking. Supported by the fact that after each task students are encouraged to provide feedback about how the experience was for them, the learning process is active for both parties and is thus reciprocal.

"Photo of the 'communication friendly' classroom set-up at Dilit International House, designed to promote maximum participation and student engagement". Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

The pedagogical approach used throughout the levels at DIH is without a doubt comunicativo, communicative. Perhaps the most significant factor, which sets DIH's approach apart from that of the other schools is the focus placed on the repetition of language input and cooperative learning. The teachers at DIH place a great importance on this process of language acquisition. In other words, they are more concerned with 'how' students come to learn the language, rather than the final product. Given this distinctive focus, a very clear set of teaching strategies is evident in their classroom practice across all levels. Their approach is process-based and highly scaffolded. DIH also seeks out authentic, rich and engaging texts to supplement the classroom practice. This makes the students' language encounters real to life, using *la lingua vera*, real life language.

See Appendix 1 for further information regarding Lo Bianco's practical experience at DIH.

6.2   Istituto Venezia - Venice

Context statement:

Istituto Venezia (IV), located in Dorsoduro, has a warm heart that drives the loving and supportive administration. The school is located on the upper-level of a traditional Venetian-style palazzo in the heart of buzzing Piazza Santa Margherita. The classrooms are welcoming and intimate; the perfect setting for concentrated learning and teaching experiences. Upon entering the entrance foyer visitors feel as if they are 'coming home', as the staff and teachers go out of their way to make newcomers feel welcome and appreciated.

"Photo of the teaching staff at Istituto Venezia, demonstrating their warm and relaxed nature. Second from the right is Leader of Learning, Maddalena Angelino". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice."

IV is well connected with foreign and Italian universities, offering a range of learning experiences and international partnerships. Similarly, partnerships with educational institutes such as l'Università Ca' Foscari enable Istituto Venezia to offer students internships and work placements.

The teachers at IV work from desks that line the sides of the main corridor. As a result, a stroll through the school allows one to hear the profound professional discussions the staff engages in. There is a wonderful sense of community, as teachers visibly exchange ideas, resources and touch base with their students. This open learning community encourages students to ask questions and build relationships with their teachers.

"Photo of the welcoming foyer of Istituto Venezia, leading to the teacher work stations and classrooms". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

The students enrolled during the time of Lo Bianco's visit were typically older by comparison to the students attending the other language schools studied. Lo Bianco also noted that many of the students she spoke with during her time at IV were returning students, having already studied there on previous occasions. This is testament to not only the positive learning experiences had by the students, but also to the consistency in the quality of teaching delivered.

A significant number of students who attend the school are of Germanic or Eastern European descent, given Venice's geographical proximity. This point is very well-considered by the teaching staff, who are well-versed in providing an educational experience tailored to the needs of the students, having understood the challenges of their L1.

IV does not use the CEF levels when naming the classes. Instead, the school has employed levels 1 – 5, denoting increase in language proficiency; Level 1 being entry-level and level 5 being proficient user. Students can attend the school for as long or short a period as desired. Those attending long term spend 80 hours (4 weeks) at each level before progressing to the next.

"Photo of one of the classrooms, Livello 3". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice."

Pedagogical approach:

Though IV does not produce a formal textbook or published curriculum course, it does however provide students with a grammar supplement complete with drilling activities at each class level. These grammar supplements are easy to follow and allow the more intrinsically motivated students a platform on which to build their own independent learning journey. These printed resources also double as revision supplements, ideal for students who present in class with specific questions and needs. During her time at IV, Lo Bianco witnessed many teachers directing students to previous booklets and pages in order to 'refresh' their knowledge.

The Beginner – Intermediate level courses (Levels 1-3) are delivered with strong influence of the inductive grammar approach to all instruction; by which the students explicitly study grammar forms after having first met them in-context, in an authentic text. Further to this, IV chooses not to inundate the students with intensive periods of explicit grammar instruction. The preferred method is to allow students to develop 'an ear' for the Italian language - '…*perché suona bene*' because it sounds right. IV believes this approach to be more effective in allowing students a safe entry into authentic language use.

A more deductive grammar instruction approach is used in the upper level language groups (Levels 4-5) during the phases of consolidation and practice. This assists in building upon the students' existing known language structures. This proves to be an effective way of impacting upon the self-efficacy of the learner. The students feel confident in their innate knowledge and seem extremely willing to 'have a go' and confront language head on.

"Photo of a class at work, engaging in a collaborative task while being guided by the teacher". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

Overall, the general pedagogical approach used by the school is comunicativo communicative, with a strong focus on developing active participation. The school's 'family/community' feel helps build student confidence in their ability to communicate freely and take risks. The lessons are conducted in Italian across all levels, and teachers strongly discourage students communicating between themselves in their L1. IV sees every chance to communicate as an opportunity to utilise the students' developing Italian language skills. All extra-curricular activities offered by the school are also delivered in Italian.

One of the distinctive features of the IV set-up is the split lesson. Students engage in three hours of lessons a morning, broken by a morning tea break. These two 1.5-hour sessions are taught by two different teachers and involve completely different activities and content. The benefit of this approach is that students are exposed to a variety of teaching styles and spoken Italian, as each teacher speaks Italian with a slightly different accent and pace.

Given the unique structure of two morning sessions facilitated by two different teachers, IV makes the most of the 1.5 hour lessons. A distinguishing feature of the school's approach is a series of short and highly scaffolded activities. The flow of learning is developed to guide students through stages of increasing difficulty.

Typically the lessons begin with a collaborative grammar-focussed task that leads to clarification and class discussion of the grammar. The next stage is a more traditional grammar handout or worksheet completed individually by students, then corrected as a whole class. This is followed by another collaborative task usually with a communicative focus, forcing students to speak Italian and negotiate the language independently. The closing task is usually designed to 'refine' the key grammar focus of the lesson.

"Photo of a group engaging in a grammar consolidation task". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

This structured approach enables the teacher to monitor student progress closely and purposefully, while also delivering a multi-faceted curriculum that caters to a variety of learning styles and student needs.

See Appendix 2 for further information regarding Lo Bianco's practical experience at IV.

6.3   Conference: 'Insegnare italiano con un approccio orientato all'azione: La didattica con i compiti comunicativi'.

Dr. Marilisa Birello (Universitat Autònomo de Barcelona and Casa delle Lingue), Venice, 15th January 2016

During her time in Venice Lo Bianco was invited by IV's Leader of Learning (Maddalena Angelino) to attend the conference '*Insegnare italiano con un approccio orientato all'azione: La didattica con i compiti comunicativi*', presented by Dr. Marilisa Birello of the Universitat Autònomo de Barcelona, representing Casa delle Lingue publishing house.

In attendance were more than 60 Italian teachers from all over Europe, proving to be a useful networking experience for Lo Bianco. The teachers present at the conference came from a range of contexts and teaching backgrounds. Most were native Italians, though others were non-natives and varied in age and teaching experience. The teachers present were from private language schools, universities, primary schools and secondary schools.

"Photo of Birello's conference". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

Lo Bianco also met with pre-service teachers currently training in pedagogy with Paolo Balboni at l'Università Ca' Foscari. One in particular, Tania Gilio, was of interest to Lo Bianco, as she shared her knowledge of Italian sign language with the Fellow. Gilio, a young and passionate teacher in the making, embodies the future of Italian language education in Italy. Their discussion focused on the applied use of technology and digital resources in the classroom, as well as evolving pedagogy.

The knowledge offered by Birello's conference was engaging and interactive. Departing from the context of Birello's latest Italian language textbook 'Bravissimo! 4' (B2 level), published by Casa delle

Lingue, the conference allowed attendees to feedback and ask questions. Essentially, Birello provided the teachers an effective mode of self-reflection in the role of teacher as student.

The conference focused on how teachers of Italian language design tasks and classroom activities in order to achieve specific learning outcomes.

"Photo of the conference participants engaging in the activities at hand". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

See Appendix 3 for further information regarding Lo Bianco's practical experience at Birello's conference.

6.4   Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci - Florence

Context statement:

Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci (SLDV), founded in 1978, is a large Italian language school located in the historical centre of Florence, a minute's walk from Piazza Duomo. Boasting 17 classrooms and a handful of larger workshop spaces, the school delivers a strong curriculum based on the CILS levels.

"Photo of an intimate lesson taking place, demonstrating the school's proximity to the Duomo". Courtesy of Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Florence.

The majority of students who attend SLDV today are from American, Latin American, Russian or Asian backgrounds. The significant presence of Spanish and Portuguese L1 speakers has moved the SLDV staff to a better understanding of the language roots from which many of the students come.

Lessons at SLDV are joyous and laughter-filled, though are also rigorous in their delivery. Students genuinely enjoy their time at the school, with many returning time and time again to refresh and continue their Italian language studies. There is a notable trend in the SLDV enrolment data, with a significant portion of students remaining at the school for extended periods of time, typically for a minimum of three months to one year.

"Photo of a lesson being delivered by the animated teacher". Courtesy of Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Florence.

The school is unique in its student catchment, as many students also study applied art, art history or design with other educational institutions in Florence in tandem with their language studies. Typically this trend leads to a younger student body, many being of post-high school or university age, which accounts for the long enrolment periods.

Pedagogical approach:

Leader of Learning, Guido Ristori, in collaboration with his SLDV colleagues, has produced a series of textbooks that guide students through the course levels. When developing these resources, Ristori studied similar texts in L1 English then L1 Spanish to best develop a methodology that would connect with the learners' L1 experiences. The school is driven by a keen focus on grammar instruction, as supported by the materials published by the school. Ristori states that the methodology utilised by the teaching staff is heavily comunicativo communicative, requiring the most active student participation possible.

Groups A1-B2 are driven primarily by the textbook curriculum to ensure that all grammar, language structures and necessary vocabulary are met in a logical and effective manner. This formula allows students to self-correct and engage with the content even in their own time.

In the C1-C2 levels, however, there is no strict handbook or textbook used, as the classroom content is focused on a 'student need' approach, whereby the students' collective needs and gaps in knowledge motivate the classroom content. Having said this, grammar remains as always the entry point for discussion and classroom content. C level classes are about polishing and perfecting the language, building upon previous knowledge through in-depth consolidation.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

"Photo of an interactive speaking task taking place". Courtesy of Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Florence.

Lo Bianco's time at SLDV was spent undertaking lesson observations in order to compare and contrast the learning and teaching strategies. She did not undertake professional development-specific training or study at SLDV.

See Appendix 4 for further information regarding Lo Bianco's practical experience at SLDV.

6.5   Accademia della Crusca - Florence

Lo Bianco, during her time in Florence, met with Valeria Saura and Ilaria Pecorini of the Accademia della Crusca (ADC). 'La Crusca', as it is more affectionately known, resides in a large Medici palazzo a short train ride from the centre of Florence. The community of educators, linguists and administrators at ADC seeks to promote and preserve the Italian language, and has a dedicated team of linguists and tech support staff waiting to assist anyone who might be in need of linguistic clarification, information or resources.

"Photo of the façade of palazzo, now occupied by the Accademia della Crusca (a short train ride from Florence)." Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

Alongside its significant contribution to the protection of the language and linguistic roots, ADC also facilitates education and training programs for teachers and language students. Students and linguists may also find the library collection of great value, which hosts significant original texts of the likes of Francesco Petrarca, and other Italian linguistic greats.

"Photos taken inside the Accademia della Crusca's library". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

A significant portion of the discussion between Lo Bianco, Saura and Pecorini was based upon classroom practice and resources. Both Saura and Pecorini are trained language teachers and have worked in a variety of teaching contexts. Their knowledge in the field of language education-specific pedagogy was plainly evident, as they spoke realistically of the challenges of the Italian language classroom today.

"Photo of Lo Bianco (centre) with Valeria Saura (left) and Ilaria Pecorini (right) during her visit to the Accademia della Crusca". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

See Appendix 5 for further information regarding Lo Bianco's practical experience at ADC.

7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

Teachers / Practitioners:

Lo Bianco has already implemented key findings of the research in her own professional practice at Emmanuel College and encourages other Italian teachers to follow suit.

Teachers should read through and reflect on the practices and justifications/explanations noted by Lo Bianco in the International Experience and associated Appendices sections, divided by school and institution. Lo Bianco acknowledges that not all the suggestions and knowledge will be feasible or applicable to all learning and teaching contexts, but urges teachers and language departments to consider implementing small changes or trialling the suggested activities.

Conversation is one of the most powerful tools teachers have at their disposal. Lo Bianco encourages teachers (of any language) to discuss the findings and suggestions for change in practice found within this research. These conversations should begin at school department level and can grow to involve curriculum or cross-domain leaders. This research has the potential to have widespread positive implications for languages and literacy education outside of the Italian context, so dissemination amongst colleagues and departments is key to change culture.

Similarly, an initial change is the addition of the language help posters, also located in the Appendices. The use of these posters will provide teachers and students with an immediate visual shift in culture, and should result in an increase in Italian language use in the classroom. Sometimes the smallest changes can in fact be the most powerful.

Building on the outcomes presented in this report, the next step for Italian teachers may in fact be to participate in overseas PD training in the language schools and institutes to see the practice in-situ. This is a tremendously powerful experience that can only build upon the stepping-stones laid by this report. Engaging in these kinds of overseas PD opportunities has a knock-on effect on the profile that Italian language education in Australia has overseas, and reinvigorates one's own teaching practice and skills.

Associations:

Lo Bianco will be presenting dissemination workshops at the '2016 Annual Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian (VATI) Congress' in April, which will provide an opportunity for practicing teachers to experience the ideas contained in this research first-hand. Through the workshops Lo Bianco will facilitate mock-lessons and walk teachers through the most crucial suggestions for change and implementation. This will also allow Lo Bianco to demonstrate variations of the suggested activities and tasks published in this report.

Lo Bianco will also provide the opportunity for non-Italian language teachers to connect with the outcomes of this research at the 'Annual Modern Language Teachers' Association of Victoria (MLTAV) Conference'. In this way, Lo Bianco can assist teachers not working within the Italian context best adopt the practices presented.

In a wider sense, language education based associations can support this research by disseminating the Fellowship report and encouraging networking of teachers and departments that are keen to implement the suggested teaching strategies. As the cliché suggests, there is power in numbers. The mass sharing of ideas possible from this would allow practitioners and departments to discuss their ideas, experiences and future suggestions which draw directly from the ideas presented in this paper; being both cross-language and cross-curricular.

7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

Industry / Government:

In the same vein of encouraging teachers to engage in PD opportunities in Italian language schools in Italy, Lo Bianco encourages an increase in funding and scholarship programs to enable a variety of Italian teachers from varying contexts to engage with this professional practice in-context.

Further to this, Lo Bianco believes that the outcomes of this report demonstrate a clear need for the formal establishment of a teacher exchange program, developed with the needs of Australian language teachers in mind. The program should enable teachers to be exposed to a variety of teaching styles and pedagogical approaches used in-situ, not simply a language program to improve teachers' linguistic capacity.

Lo Bianco would like to see industry and government support in assisting those exceptional teachers, who worked alongside her in Italy, to travel to Australia. This would enable them, in conjunction with Lo Bianco, to assist in developing PD programs designed to rigorously train teachers in both inductive grammar instruction and communicative teaching strategies. These programs could be facilitated through the language-based associations, such as VATI or the MLTAV, to reach the maximum number of candidates as possible.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for associations, industry and government are outlined in Section 7 (Knowledge Transfer: Applying the Outcomes).

The recommendations presented here are thus focused at the student, teacher and practitioner levels.

In order to best understand the key points presented here, Lo Bianco suggests that the reader first engages with the materials presented in the Appendices.

The Fellow recommends the use of the following points to implement key findings of this research in the classroom. She has developed acronyms as a means of recalling the steps and approaches. Furthermore, she has divided the recommendations in two separate processes; the student experience and the teacher experience.

The following steps are teacher-driven and are to be used to impact directly and immediately on student experience and student learning outcomes.

For the student experience:

R **repetition of input**

O **ownership of the learning process**

M **model spoken Italian**

A **authentic resources**

N **new grammar strategies and activities**

The following steps are also teacher-driven, though will impact directly and immediately on the teacher's own experience and skill-set. In turn, these steps indirectly impact on the student experience as a result.

For the teacher experience:

I **input is purposeful**

T **timing and repetition**

A **assess output in relation to input**

L **learning outcomes are clear**

I **inductive grammar instruction**

A **authentic language exposure**

N **network internationally**

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10. APPENDICES

Appendix 10.1: DIH, Rome (Key Findings Summary)

Practical experience:

The Fellow attended DIH for a week in three capacities: as a student, to observe lessons and as a teacher engaging in professional development. Lo Bianco was placed in the C1-C2 proficient user class that met every morning for 3 hours. The class time was divided into two sessions, each with a different focus but with the same teacher.

In the afternoons Lo Bianco took part in 1:1 professional development workshops with Luisa Guerrini, published educational author and respected teacher. Guerrini also facilitated the morning C1-C2 level language classes, which allowed Lo Bianco to directly reflect on the pedagogical processes at play with her teacher.

The afternoon professional development workshops were primarily focused on challenges that Lo Bianco had experienced both in her own teaching practice and had confronted in her role as a language education consultant. Having prepared a 'list of concerns' prior to arriving at DIH, Lo Bianco was intrigued by the fact that she had prefaced each concern with 'How do we…?'. Inherently, this line of questioning lead itself to discussions between Lo Bianco and Guerrini about 'processes' and 'approaches', rather than black and white answers. The 'we' in Lo Bianco's questions is the voice of the Italian teaching community, for whom this research is intended.

During her time at DIH Lo Bianco was fortunate enough to undertake lesson observations of an A2 level class. This experience allowed her a means of comparing a beginner level class to her experience in the C1-C2 class; the outcomes of which were discussed during the afternoon sessions with Guerrini.

Both Lo Bianco and Guerrini acknowledge the fact that the context and conditions of the Australian classroom are far from that of a private language school in Rome. Despite this, Lo Bianco and Guerrini were able to establish a core set of common challenges which both could relate to. Departing from this list, their workshops and discussions were developed. The conclusions and suggested pedagogical practices are as follows:

How do we facilitate a lesson completely in Italian to entry-level learners?

The obvious challenge when attempting to teach a lesson in Italian to non Italian-speakers, or A1-A2 equivalent level learners, is the language barrier. In order to avoid a sea of blank stares and perplexed facial expressions, Guerrini suggests departing from the students' own interlingua, or known language patterns, grammar and vocabulary. This is obviously much easier for those departing from a romance language base as opposed to other language bases. It's therefore important to know your learners and their language backgrounds. All students will know something from which you can stretch language growth.

In the case of working with students who have little to no Italian-language awareness, Guerrini insists that the teacher must equip the learners with the skills and resources to enable them to achieve small steps of success. The simplest form is to teach the students key phrases and questions they may use in moments of need.

The suggested list used by DIH:

Come si dice…? (How do you say…?)

Come scusa? (What was that, sorry?)

Non ho capito. (I haven't understood.)

Come si pronuncia questa parola? (How do you pronounce this word?)

Come si scrive…? (How do you write…?)

Che significa…? (What does 'X' mean?)

"Photos of the language help posters used in the classrooms of Dilit International House, Rome. The Italian, German and English versions are shown here". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

Lo Bianco had seen these phrases on coloured posters in the classrooms prior to the discussion with Guerrini, though hadn't given them much thought. Guerrini clarified, highlighting that the posters were printed in matching colour sets in the most common first languages of the students at DIH. The posters are printed in French, Spanish, English and German. This colour coding is a non-intrusive way for students to match their language queries with the Italian equivalent, providing them with a comfortable way of finding the language skills to make sense of their learning.

But what of the students of non-romance or Germanic language backgrounds? Guerrini stressed the importance of l'*aspetto fisico e gli strumenti visivi*, the physical element and visual instruments in aiding comprehension, alongside use of dictionaries and vocabulary resources.

Similarly, any language input (spoken dialogue, phrase used by the teacher or audio resource) must be repeated a number of occasions to ensure maximum comprehension by the student. This process is further explained below.

During their discussions, Lo Bianco and Guerrini returned to the central issue of *l'autonomia dello studente*, the autonomy of the student. Guerrini's suggestions and DIH's approaches in general are designed to develop resilience in autodisciplina, self-discipline of the student. These practices are most successful when the culture of learning has been established.

How do we most effectively facilitate listening and reading comprehension tasks?

The DIH approach is very clear when it comes to any kind of comprehension task. Repetition of the input language is key. By 'repetition', there's no set number of accepted playbacks or timed readings. Rather, students listen to and read the input over and over again once they feel they have understood the bulk of the content. Lo Bianco, departing from a context in which students are given two listens to an aural text or are timed when reading (i.e. VCE Italian Examination), was quite overwhelmed by the positive results evident in the student outcomes at DIH.

The process is very simple. Without influence of a dictionary or phrasebook, students approach the moment of language 'input' (aural or written text), making notes as they desire. The input is repeated by further listens or reads, again without the aid of external language resources. After each language input the student pairs and shares with a partner about what they have understood. During this time, students must justify their conclusions using their *interlingua* and metalinguistic knowledge.

In the DIH classrooms this process is undertaken in Italian across all levels A1-C2. Guerrini noted the fascination in watching students negotiate this process when they have very little Italian at their disposal (A1-B1 level classes). She noted how they mimic the teaching practices implemented by the teachers in order to convey meaning; through use of gesture, visual aids and mime.

Lo Bianco noted this process at play while observing one A2 lesson with teacher Roberto Aiello. The students were presented with a text-less image and asked to imagine the context of the newspaper article that accompanied the image. The A2 students responded to the task exactly as Guerrini had outlined. By use of gesture, mime and visual aids the students were able to assist their disjointed Italian. Their use of Italian was far from fluent and correct, yet demonstrated the power of DIH's approach; the need to communicate is key. Lo Bianco has provided a step-by-step guide to facilitating this activity (Activity 7), which can be found in Appendix 6.

Lo Bianco worked with a Brazilian student (early 20s) during this activity and encouraged her to use her own *interlingua* to assist her in communicating her ideas. In attempting to process her Italian, the student would mutter under her breath in Portuguese trying to find the right 'Italian sound' as she moved between the two languages.

"Questo ragazzo. Treno. Lui. Non avere biglietto. Lui poliziotto. Lui è piccolo. Cattivo. Non andare scuola. Treno a Roma. Per vedere mamma."

The student then cast her eyes across the room and located the Spanish 'help phrases', matched the colour with the Italian equivalent on the other side of the room and asked. *"Come si dice 'multa' in italiano?"* Lo Bianco answered, *"In italiano si dice multa."* The student reacted with joy upon learning that *multa* was shared by both Italian and Portuguese.

More fascinating about this process was the series of steps that this particular student took to arrive at that moment of language acquisition. She located a Spanish language poster using her Portuguese *interlingua* and asked in Italian how to say a Portuguese word. This is evidence of the close link Guerrini speaks of when she connects the need to communicate to the ability to connect with the students' extent *interlingua*.

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Guerrini stressed the importance of how the students are seated during the pair and share process. When comparing findings or are reading and writing together, students must sit side-by-side, able to interact fully with the materials. Moments of discussion and oral practice must be facilitated with students seated face-to-face in order to replicate a more 'natural' spoken relationship. Similarly, the face-to-face communication promotes student confidence and impacts positively on student self-efficacy. This approach was consistently used across all lessons and levels observed.

How do we correct students as they practice oral language skills?

During both her time as a student and during lesson observations Lo Bianco noted a distinct approach in correction of errors produced in the students' spoken Italian. The errors weren't being corrected. It seemed almost unnatural not to interject and pounce on the opportunity to correct the innocent errors made by the students. Lo Bianco, during one particular workshop with Guerrini, asked for clarification.

The DIH approach is very clear. It is more important for the students to speak confidently without fear of judgement and reprimand, therefore developing the students' willingness and readiness to speak off the cuff. Students at DIH are placed in situations from which they cannot escape without communicating orally, no matter how challenging or confronting. For this reason they are encouraged to produce whatever Italian they can in order to communicate. In moments of confusion or lack of knowledge students return to their help posters and ask for the words or phrases they lack. But again, their questions are asked in Italian, reinforcing their need to communicate. Communication between students in their first language is not permitted. Similarly, when using the question posters students are encouraged not to ask for the missing words in the L1. For example, "*Come si dice 'large' in Italiano?"* Instead, students must use their Italian to explain the word sought, supported by gesture, mime or visual aid. As one might imagine, students and teachers alike gesticulate wildly during this process, which is light-hearted and enjoyable. In turn, this helps develop student-teacher relationships.

"Photo of Dilit International House teacher, Piero Catizone engaging students in a speaking activity" Courtesy of Dilit International House, Rome.

There are indeed appropriate moments to correct students and offer alternative options. The first being when a help poster is used to ask a question about phrasing, vocabulary or syntax. In that moment the teacher answers the question, offering the answer, perhaps the spelling of that word, and it is also usually used in-context in a sentence or phrase. In the C1-C2 level, Guerrini also offered familiar synonyms of the word in order to assist the students with understanding the meaning of the new terms.

Corrections were also offered when the error was made on a number of occasions, or was repeated within a short amount of time. At times, students make unconscious errors in phrasing and vocabulary that they do not usually make. This may be due to the fact they are very focused on the 'speaking/ production' process, rather than the accuracy of their oral production.

In their discussion, Guerrini stressed to Lo Bianco that students would eventually be able to self-correct once they have been exposed to enough target language. An example of this was noted in Aiello's A2 class. A 20-year-old female English student introduced herself to Lo Bianco and made a pronunciation error.

"Ciao, mi chiamo (name). Piacere."

Her error concerned the pronunciation of the hard 'c' in *'chiamo'*. She pronounced a soft 'c', as in 'cheese'. Lo Bianco had heard the student make the same error earlier that morning in the school foyer, and then at the beginning of the lesson with a new student to the class. Following the DIH approach Lo Bianco did not directly correct the student. Instead, Lo Bianco simply introduced herself utilising the correct pronunciation. The student upon noting her own error apologised immediately.

"O, scusa! Mi chiamo… chiamo! Ch-, ch-," and self-corrected.

Guerrini states that the ability to recognise an error and self-correct is a moment far more significant in the language acquisition process than being corrected by the teacher.

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Appendix 10.2: IV, Venice (Key Findings Summary)

Practical experience:

Lo Bianco attended IV as a student, placed in the Level 5 proficient user stream, and also observed Level 1 and Level 3 lessons. These experiences allowed her to witness a variety of different teaching approaches and classroom activities in use. Unlike her time at DIH, Lo Bianco did not undertake pedagogical workshops at IV but did spend time discussing pedagogy with the teaching staff she worked with. The outcomes and themes of those discussions and findings are outlined below:

Correction of students' spoken Italian

Teacher Roberta Lazzaro chooses not to correct all errors made in student speech in order to allow free-flow of the language production in the Level 5 class. Instead, Lazzaro makes a note of key errors made by the students to deliver one correction at the end of the activity. The students appreciate this opportunity to reflect on their gaps of knowledge together, as feedback is presented to all at once in a non-judgemental way. This also allows other students to learn from the feedback being presented to their classmates. On occasion, Lo Bianco witnessed profound grammatical and lexical discussions evolve from the feedback provided to students.

During an observation of a Level 1 class Lo Bianco noted how the teacher, Silvia Iommi corrected the students with gestures to support necessary changes in responses. When providing corrections to pronunciation, Iommi focussed primarily on specific syllables and sounds, repeating them explicitly and clearly a number of times. The target students were asked to repeat the sounds to the best of their ability until their oral production improved. All efforts were reinforced and acknowledged with praise and affirmation in Italian: "*Bravo! Benissimo! Esatto!*" Well done! Very good! Exactly!

Cognitive grammar approach

Though the theory of cognitive grammar is rather complex, some simple elements of the approach were evident throughout the lessons at IV. Just as Guerrini at DIH stressed the importance of the 'visual aid' when supporting students learn Italian, teachers at IV also rely on this approach.

One element of the cognitive grammar theory is the use of symbol or visual representation in the explanation of grammar constructs. Teachers used image and illustrations to better convey the meaning of verbs and vocabulary to the class. This permits moments of clarity and understanding which transcend all L1 barriers.

"Photo of a moment of cognitive grammar instruction and vocabulary building taking place". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice."

Lo Bianco took part in one extra-curricular activity during her time at IV; this being a regional cooking class. The session, conducted in Italian, was a powerful example of how symbol, drawing and visual aids can help fill the gaps in student comprehension. The students that took part in the class were German, Russian and English L1 speakers from all language proficiency levels. The teacher utilised the whiteboard as a means of demonstrating not only necessary actions in the recipe's method, but also to distinguish geographical information of the recipes and ingredients.

Grammar and the inductive approach

As stated, IV adopts a strong inductive grammar approach; whereby students are exposed to grammar in-use prior to specific grammar explanation. IV achieves this through explicit use of texts and 'input'. These texts are chosen specifically for the grammar outcomes they offer students.

The general practice at IV is a shared reading experience, in which students take turns reading around the classroom or read in small groups and pairs. With support from the teacher all unknown vocabulary and thematic content is unpacked, leaving space for grammatical analysis. The teachers guide and direct the students to key grammar points by asking specific questions:

"Perché viene usata la forma impersonale in questa frase?" Why is the impersonal form used in this phrase?

"Perché usa il remoto e non il passato prossimo?" Why does he use the preterite tense and not the perfect tense?

These kinds of questions are intended to move students to analyse the grammar use from a particular perspective. The follow-on activities generally exploited the grammar skills met in the initial text analysis phase.

Appendix 10.3: Conference: 'Insegnare italiano con un approccio orientato all'azione: La didattica con i compiti comunicativi.' Dr. Marilisa Birello (Universitat Autònomo de Barcelona and Casa delle Lingue)

Key findings summary:

In order to best understand what Australian teachers of Italian can take away from Birello's conference, specific topic areas are discussed in detail:

The top-down approach

Birello talks about *la progressione dei contenuti in un approccio orientato all'azione*, progression of content in an approach toward action; by which she means the steps involved in developing tasks/ activities explicitly to achieve specific learning outcomes.

Teachers must ask themselves:

"What will the task look like?"

"What will it involve?"

Once the teacher has planned the task (the format, constituent features and necessary elements) they must work backwards and determine which L2 communication strategies will be employed to meet the task requirements. Again working in reverse, the teacher must identify linguistic resources and skills that the students will be required to utilise in order to successfully complete the task. From that point the teacher can successfully plan for moments of meaningful interaction between the students, moments of inductive grammar instruction and confrontation with chosen authentic texts. The entire process is purposeful and explicit.

La progressione dei contenuti in un approccio orientato all'azione:

compito finale > e scopi comunicativi > e risorse linguistiche

Similarly, Lo Bianco wonders if this approach shouldn't also be applied to longer learning sequences and topic studies that carry over multiple lessons.

"Photo from Birello's conference, as she explains the progressive structure of her theory on task development".
Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco."

What does *'compito comunicativo'* mean?

What does 'communicative outcome' really mean? Birello shared the following citation directly from the Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue (CEFR) documentation:

"Si parla di compito nella misura in cui le azioni sono realizzate da uno o più individui che usino strategicamente le proprie specifiche competenze per acquistare un dato risultato."
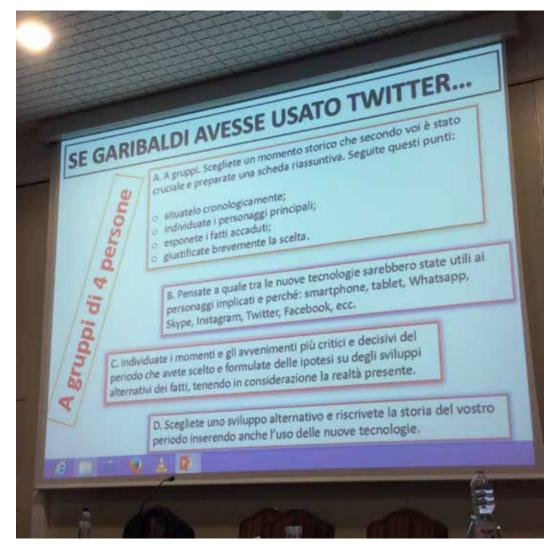
(QCER 2001, 15)

"We talk about the 'outcome' as a measure by which actions are achieved by one or more individuals, that strategically use their own specific knowledge to achieve a given result."

Therefore, teachers must consider the wider impact on student learning outcomes when designing tasks and classroom activities. Not only is content knowledge in a specific topic being measured, but

also the students' ability to negotiate the language hurdles placed in front of them.

Birello had the teachers quickly respond to a suggested task and brainstorm in groups how they would work to the stimulus phrase:

"Se Garibaldi avesse usato Twitter..." If Garibaldi had've used twitter...

"Photo from Birello's conference, as she poses the participants an amusing hypothetical question". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

Her task was divided into 4 phases, all which required collaborative oral work rather than a formal written outcome. At the end of the brainstorming phase Birello asked teachers, *"Quali risorse lessicali e grammaticali avete usato?"* What vocabulary and grammar resources did you use? Teachers offered their answers and suggestions for how they would complete the task, which Birello used to highlight her earlier point. Teachers must understand first-hand 'what' students will be required to use and produce before they can begin planning the 'how' process.

Input and output

"Il compito espone l'alunno ad attività input e output" The task exposes the student to activities of input and output. This is the wider purpose of all tasks teachers undertake in their lessons with students.

Birello states that in order to achieve 'output' (student work) that communicates in a 'real way' teachers must provide the following 'input' (tasks/texts):

Input mode: images, texts of varying lengths, both authentic and semi-authentic.

Input conditions: needs to be clear, stimulating, effective and open.

By providing input that replicates the above conditions, meaningful student output is possible.

Output mode: diverse, creative, individual or completed in groups/pairs, authentic, original.

Output conditions: intercultural, pragmatic, strategic, linguistic.

Inductive grammar instruction and metalinguistic reflection

Through explanation of the process of 'negotiation', the way in which students come to make sense of foreign language texts, Birello makes the teaching and learning process clear. This process is easily transferable in the Australian classroom context and worthy of consideration during assessment, task and curriculum development.

1. Students must begin with comprehension of the 'input'. They engage with the content, discuss, unpack and analyse the content.
2. Students engage in an inductive grammar experience, though which they create their own grammar by noticing patterns in the application and use of grammar constructs present in the input.
3. Metalinguistic reflection and awareness. Students are aware of the language acquisition process, their progress and how to use language.
4. Oral practice of the content and knowledge attained.

The scaffolded nature of this process enhances the language acquisition process, as the students are active and empowered throughout the entire experience. Secondly, this in turn has a positive impact on the self-efficacy of the students.

Birello offers, *"il compito migliora/aumenta la motivazione degli studenti e quindi potenzia l'apprendimento"*, the task improves/increases student motivation and therefore strengthens language acquisition.

Cognitive grammar

Birello took time during the conference to distinguish between the concepts of la grammatica cognitiva cognitive grammar and la grammatica descritta descriptive grammar.

Descriptive grammar, which uses description to focus on real-life use and application of grammar, is for the most part preoccupied with disseminating the 'norms' of correct language use. Cognitive grammar offers grammatical analysis through other modes of language learning; for example, through the application and use of categorisation, image/symbol, perception and motor coordination/kinaesthetic. When analysing these two approaches, the inductive nature of cognitive grammar becomes apparent.

Connecting to the visual nature of cognitive grammar, Birello stressed the importance of elementi figurativi representational elements when supporting student comprehension of new vocabulary or

grammatical constructs. Birello demonstrated the power of this process with adverbs of quantity: *troppo, molto, abbastanza, poco and niente.* Birello was able to do so using the symbolic representation of a series of mugs containing varying quantities of hot chocolate. Though simple this example was a powerful way of clarifying small yet effective ways that teachers can begin to integrate elements of cognitive grammar in their lessons with ease. The teachers and educators present met this particular example with much praise and admiration.

"Photo from Birello's conference, providing the participants a clear example of how cognitive grammar theory can be used symbolically to teach adverbs of quantity". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

Appendix 10.4: SLDV, Florence (Key Findings Summary)

Practical experience:

Lo Bianco spent time observing lessons across the proficiency levels, beginning her in-class time with an A1 level class during their very first lesson. This was of particular interest to Lo Bianco, who was keen to ascertain how to best start with a group of students from the beginning of their L2 journey.

The key to moving this lesson forward was for the teacher, Donatella Macinai to establish the students' existing knowledge of Italian. Macinai was able to do so by asking questions, such as:

"Chi parla italiano?" Who speaks Italian?

"Come ti chiami?" What's your name?

"Di dove sei?" Where are you from?

The responses were varied and humorous, proving to be an exceptional way to break the ice. When students communicated that they didn't speak Italian Macinai refused to accept that as an appropriate answer.

"Pizza…bella…gelato! Ma certo che parli italiano!" Pizza…beautiful…ice-cream! Of course you can speak Italian!

Her response, though intended in jest to liven the mood in fact proved Guerrini's point. All students have extent *interlingua* from which the teacher can assist them to build knowledge of the language. Students will always know something. That 'something' needs to be exploited and reinforced.

Students responded to Macinai's three key word suggestions with other words they were familiar with.

"Firenze. Italia. Scuola. Ragazzo. Americano." Florence. Italy. School. Boy. American.

Macinai continued to guide the students through the course of the lesson, working directly from the textbook.

"Photo of a typical grammar lesson at Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, using the textbook to generate discussion".
Courtesy of Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Florence.

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Textbook and the visual element

One of the strengths of the SLDV textbook series is the visual element. Ristori outlines that during the development phase SLDV employed a graphic designer specifically for the task of illustrating the series. A strength of this process is that the designer was in fact not a native Italian speaker, and therefore was able to better design the illustrations, symbols and graphics used throughout the series to assist second language learners seeking visual clues.
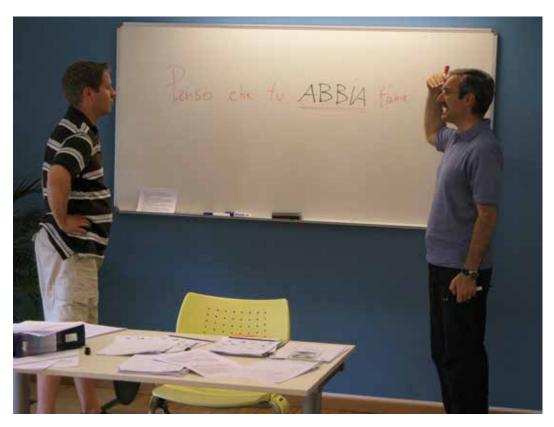
Grammar approach

The grammatical approach across the levels at SLDV is for the most part inductive, though some direct teaching does still take place. Teachers offer written explanations of grammatical concepts on the whiteboard, supported by context-based examples.

Lessons typically have a key grammar focus and teachers use both the textbook and other resources to supplement the classroom teaching. Classroom activities and worksheets are corrected as a class and general concerns or error trends are unpacked and discussed as a group.

General conversation

The teachers at SLDV understand the power and importance of general conversation in the language acquisition process. Lo Bianco witnessed moments throughout the observed lessons in which the teacher would engage in general discussion and 'chit-chat' with the students. They did not alter their pace, tone or rhythm in order to assist student learning, as to replicate the ordinary language standard met in the 'real world'. The conversation topics were usually connected to the lives and interests of the students, or to the area of focus of the lesson.

During the discussion students were called upon to share their ideas, opinions and personal experiences. In the instance where a student lacked vocabulary or key phrases, the teacher would interject and provide the language. Immediately the students would repeat the sentence or phrase, all the while being corrected until the accent and pronunciation are both correct.

"Photo of a speaking task in action at Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, as the student receives feedback". Courtesy of Scuola Leonardo Da Vinci, Florence.

Knowledge of the students

The staff at SLDV is well-versed in cultural awareness and sensitivity. Lo Bianco noted that students of Asian backgrounds tend to be the quietest in the classroom, and are least likely to ask a question or ask for assistance from the teacher. Noted for cultural reasons, the staff know how far they can 'push' a student in class while maintaining unconditional respect.

Departing from character languages, and usually with a simple command of English, Asian students are usually in need of the most support in the lower levels. Ristori acknowledges this phenomenon, identifying that they are quiet achievers and usually flourish in the intermediate levels.

Lo Bianco witnessed this in the A1 level observation. A female Chinese student was experiencing particular difficulty in pronouncing the words linked to basic self-introductions. Guided by her teacher, the student was still unable to produce the correct sounds after several attempts. The teacher, rather than harp on the point, simply encouraged the student to practice the sounds to herself until she became more confident and less self-conscious.

Phonetics and pronunciation

In order to strengthen student pronunciation, the teachers at SLDV build on the students' existing knowledge of sound and pronunciation patterns. When introducing la fonetica to an A1 level class, the teacher highlights familiar words with similar sound patterns. For example, when introducing the

concepts of *suono duro* hard sound and *suono dolce* soft sound, the teacher began with known, familiar words with similar sounds.

Suono dolce – cinema, cena, gelato, giro

Suono duro – casa, cosa, curva, gatto, gola, gusto

Interestingly, when introducing new vocabulary as a part of this demonstration the nouns were not translated or explained. The key purpose of the task was for the students to learn to identify the letter patterns attributed to particular sounds, rather than to develop vocabulary.

Appendix 10.5: Visit at l'Accademia della Crusca with Valeria Saura and Ilaria Pecorini, Florence (Key Findings Summary)

Practical experience:

Lo Bianco posed Saura and Pecorini the question:

Perché è importante promuovere e proteggere il lessico tradizionale e le strutture vere della grammatica italiana?

Why is it important to promote and protect traditional vocabulary and the true structures of Italian grammar?

Their response shocked Lo Bianco, who was expecting an impassioned case for protection of Italian's language heritage. Instead, Saura offered that ADC and its staff are not made up linguistic puritans, as much of the language community might expect. She continued offering that ADC understands that *la lingua è viva,* the language is alive and evolving.

A significant portion of the time Lo Bianco spent at ADC involved learning how to utilise the online repository of digital resources. The staff has spent a number of years digitising key texts and references for the scaffali digitali digital bookshelves. Through the scaffali digitali link on ADC's website, teachers and learners of Italian can connect to Vivit: Vivi italiano, Il portale dell'italiano nel mondo. Designed especially for foreigners engaging with the language, Vivit provides an easy to access resource point bursting with topic-based content on many of the most commonly studied topics. Saura urges Australian teachers to share this resource with their colleagues and students as a means of connecting with authentic, up-to-date content.

"Photo of the multimedia resources generously given to Lo Bianco by Saura on behalf of the Accademia della Crusca, designed to support the adoption of new grammar teaching strategies and techniques in the Italian language classroom". Courtesy of Jenna Lo Bianco.

Perhaps one of the most significant roles of ADC today is the opportunity for the public to directly connect with the team of linguists with language-based questions. Following the 'Lingua italiana' link on the homepage transports users to a virtual language community in which ADC's '*Consulenza linguistica*' services can be found. Users can pose questions to the linguistics team, read others' comments, and subsequent responses. No topics or questions are too difficult for the team of specialists who aim to not only provide answers and clarifications, but also context-based examples.

Useful to foreigners learning Italian is the '*Parole nuove'* section. Here one can find a portal that discusses and clarifies Italianisations of English and foreign words in vogue, as well as introduces the Italian speaking community to new Italian words. For examples, '*spoilerare*' – to spoil a plot line, '*taggare*' – to tag on social media, etc. The evolution of this resource is testament to Saura's comment

that the language is indeed alive, and ADC is working alongside the evolutions and changes of the language.

During Lo Bianco's visit, Saura and Pecorini also spoke with her about *grammatica valenziale*, an approach to grammatical analysis that departs from conditions of the verb in order to construct elements of phrases. The metaphor of verb 'valency' links metaphorically to scientific concepts of molecules and atoms in order to create perfect 'grammar combinations'. The education staff at ADC is particularly interested in the use of grammatica valenziale, given the concentrated work that former ADC President Francesco Sabatini (2000-2008) conducted in the field, co-authoring '*Conosco la mia lingua*' I Know my Language, in 2014 with Loescher Editore.

Saura believes that the grammatica valenziale approach may prove beneficial to Australian educators of Italian as it provides clear and logical explanations of sentence structures and phrasing. Lo Bianco and Saura discussed the significant difference between students knowing grammar constructs (tenses, nouns, pronouns, etc.) and being able to successfully apply them independently when writing.

Studying the forms of *grammatica valenziale* Lo Bianco noted the positive impact the visual aspect of the approach might have on learners. Best expressed through a series of annotated *schemi grafici* diagrams, the approach demonstrates how to scaffold phrasing through increasing complexity. Learners of the language use this approach to understand how subjects, direct and indirect objects and verbs are connected, how prepositions link the elements together. ADC runs education programs and professional development training to support teachers and students adopt the grammatical valenziale approach with great support and success.

Upon reflection of her time spent at ADC Lo Bianco believes that despite the practical knowledge attained, the most significant insight taken from the experience was the realisation that she belongs to a worldwide professional teaching community. All too often teachers remain enclosed in their local professional communities, either state-based or industry-based, and don't exploit and take advantage of the global resources and networks available. Lo Bianco's visit to ADC proves the importance of sharing resources, knowledge and ideas on a global scale to further strengthen Italian language teaching locally.

Interestingly enough, during their time browsing the digital content available free to the public on the ADC website, Lo Bianco and Saura came across many resources directly citing the Italo-Australian story and context. Just as the Italian story has had a significant impact on 'what' and 'how' the language is taught in Australia, Lo Bianco was moved to realise the significant impact that the Australian story has had on the Italian experience.

Appendix 10.6: Teaching Strategies and Lesson / Activity Ideas

Lo Bianco, having worked alongside teachers and school directors, and having observed a variety of lessons at various language levels, has produced the following list of teaching strategies and lesson/ activity ideas. This is by no means suggested as a 'teaching sequence of lessons'. Rather, Lo Bianco intends this collection as an opportunity to meet some of the teaching strategies employed by DIH that may be feasible in the teaching practice of the readers. Please note that these lessons were all conducted in Italian.

"Photo of an engaging grammar task used by teachers at Istituto Venezia to teach adjectives to learners". Courtesy of Istituto Venezia, Venice.

Lo Bianco's selection of materials outlines the context of the students and language levels observed, as well as crediting the language school and individual teacher who delivered the lesson/activity.

ACTIVITY 1

DIH, Luisa Guerrini, C1-2 Level, Ricostruzione della conversazione

1. The teacher has pre-prepared a dialogue, which remains hidden from the students.

2. The teacher makes a series of statements to open the discussion, *'Allora, ragazzi si parla di un amore terribile…'* Ok guys, we're talking about a terrible love…

3. The students ask questions about this love story and what happened/what went wrong.

4. The teacher guides the students to keywords in order to begin the first official line of the dialogue. Eventually, through a series of trial and error moments the class arrives at the opening line of the dialogue.

5. The teacher guides the students, again through a series of trial and error moments to establish the remaining lines of dialogue. Of great importance is the 'switching' between speakers and managing

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the correct subject pronouns and verb tenses.

6. As the dialogue is progressing, the teacher selects students at random to repeat and re-repeat key lines, building in length, depth and complexity.

7. Once the entire conversation has been developed, the students break into pairs to practice the dialogue together, all at the same time as a class.

Please note that at this point the teacher has not written the dialogue on the whiteboard, and the students haven't made notes. This process is drawing on their mental recall and short-term memory.

8. The students switch roles in the dialogue and re-deliver the lines from the opposing perspective.

9. The students return to their original lines and work on adding culturally appropriate gesture, intonation and tone.

10. The pairs show their polished dialogues to the class and then write the dialogue down.

ACTIVITY 2

DIH, Luisa Guerrini, all levels

1. The teacher presents the students with a spoken dialogue (either aural or a video clip).

2. The text is played a series of times, allowing students to transcribe the dialogue as a means of reconstructing the text.

3. The teacher repeats the input until they deem that the students have a sound command of the content, though has provided no clarifications or corrections.

4. Choosing two students to come to the front of the class, the teacher asks them to recreate the dialogue from memory, allocating the specific roles.

5. The teacher then chooses another pair to perform their 'version' of the same text.

6. As a class, the teacher then guides the class through a group correction of the text by allowing students to share their written versions on the whiteboard. Students can offer changes/suggestions if they disagree with the versions offered by the previous attempts.

ACTIVITY 3

DIH, Luisa Guerrini, C1-C2 Level

1. The teacher chooses a video clip or scene from a movie that exploits a particular grammar function. This activity works particularly well when working with verb tenses.

2. The students are exposed to the input (the clip) a series of times, all the while seeking to identify the occasions in which the grammar function is used. The students must write down either the specific grammar example, for example, *ho mangiato*, or *No, mamma, non ho ancora mangiato!* This particular activity allows for differentiated learning. The teacher may select specific students to record varying degrees of the grammar function.

3. Once the input has been repeated (approximately 5 times), the students pair and share their responses and findings in pairs, in Italian. They must justify any differences in responses from their partner.

4. The teacher then instructs the students to change partners and pair and share their responses a second time.

ACTIVITY 4

DIH, Luisa Guerrini, all levels, La gara delle frasi occasionali

1. This activity is similar to the initial phase of Activity 2 though is conducted in small student groups, rather than by individual students. The teacher presents the class with an aural text, which can also be a video clip or scene from a movie.

2. The student groups attempt to transcribe what they hear, word for word, through a series of plays of the text. They must negotiate in Italian their reasoning and justifications with each other.

3. The teacher moves between the groups offering 'clues' to assist students where necessary. For example, the teacher might underline all the correct parts of the texts, leaving the students to decipher the remainder.

4. Once a group has either correctly recreated the text or has arrived closest to perfection, the class writes the correct version as provided by the teacher.

5. The teacher then guides the class through grammatical analysis of key grammar features.

ACTIVITY 5

DIH, Luisa Guerrini, all levels

1. The objective of this inductive grammar instruction activity is to allow students to negotiate varying uses of grammar features. This works particularly well with prepositions and pronouns. The teacher must first determine the grammar function focus of the lesson and either develop or locate a text which provides varying uses of that function. Guerrini provides the example of the preposition da, which has connotations of both location and time (*luogo – andare/venire, tempo – "non ti vedo da tanto"*).

2. Students are to analyse the text through a series of readings, attempting to locate all occasions in which the grammar function is used, or used in varying forms. In the example of *da*, the students may also come across articulated forms of the preposition, being *dal, dalla, dai,* etc, which they will also need to note. It is suggested that they highlight their findings directly on the text.

3. The teacher then directs the students to categorise the uses of the grammar function to the best of their ability. The students whose inductive processing is better established will negotiate this task more readily than others.

4. The students pair and share their responses.

ACTIVITY 6

DIH, Roberto Aiello, A1-A2 Level

1. The focus of this activity is to promote off the cuff oral language production, though the teacher should not interject and correct the students.

2. The teacher pairs the students up. In the case of odd numbers, a trio is also appropriate for this activity.

3. One student in each pair is given a piece of paper on which the teacher has written the name of a celebrity, famous identity, character, etc. This remains secret from the other student. The teacher should aim to connect the identities to the world of Italian culture, and make them appropriate to the year level playing. For example, Mona Lisa, Enzo Ferrari, Luciano Pavarotti, Valentino Rossi, etc.

4. The student with the secret identity engages in a discussion with their partner, playing the role of

their secret identity. The 'guesser' must ask questions to guess the identity of the person, while the student in character must respond in the first person.

Some suggested questions:

Sei maschio o femmina? Are you a man or woman?

Sei morto/a o vivo/a? Are you dead or living?

Quanti anni hai? How old are you?

Che lavoro fai? What's your job?

Sei famoso/a? Are you famous?

Sei sposato/a? Are you married?

Per cosa sei diventato/a famoso/a? What made you famous?

5. Once the identities have been revealed or correctly guessed, the students swap roles and the teacher presents the pair with a new secret identity.

ACTIVITY 7

DIH, Roberto Aiello, A1-A2 Level

1. The teacher presents the students each with a copy of an image/illustration, which is completely text-less. Keeping in mind the language level of the learners, the image must be connected to an article or body of text. The teacher withholds the text for now, presenting only the image.

2. The students must reflect on the context of the image, unpack the content and guess the world of the image. They engage in a pair and share in Italian to express their ideas about what might be happening in the image. Any differences in opinions must be justified and explained.

3. The teacher then presents the students with the article (or connecting text) that accompanies the image. The students have 2mins 45secs to speed read the text, without use of dictionary, language resources and cannot use their pens. This is specifically reading time only.

4. The students then pair and share with their previous partner what they have understood from the text, rationalising and justifying in relation to the image.

5. The teacher directs the students to a 2nd read, again timed at 2mins 45secs. The pairs match up again and further discuss any new findings. This reinforces their understanding and allows for contrary perspectives.

6. The students engage in a 3rd read, again timed at 2mins 45secs. This time they pair and share with a new partner, compounding all their new knowledge and understanding. To this point they are yet to touch a dictionary or pen.

7. The teacher directs the students to a 4th and final read, which culminates in a pair and share with a new partner.

8. The students are invited to now use a pen to underline 5 words across the article for which they have doubts or are unsure of the meaning. They casually re-read (not timed) as they go. They may not consult a dictionary.

9. Once each student has selected 5 words they pair and share their key unknown content. If both students in the pair are unaware of the meaning or significance of the word, they may ask the teacher for assistance but only after first having provided their hypothesis in Italian. Therefore, students are encouraged to use the 'in-context' words and phrases for support.

10. At this point the students are very familiar with the meaning of the text and have been able to contextualise the image. The teacher can now extend the activity into a grammatical analysis task. For example, the teacher might direct the students to identify verbs in the text that have been conjugated in the *passato prossimo, imperfetto* and *trapassato prossimo.*

11. The students must then classify their finds in the form of a table, including the infinitive forms of the conjugated verbs. The teacher may choose to provide one example of each for student support.

    Teachers will note at this point that the students will tend toward one or more of the following methods.
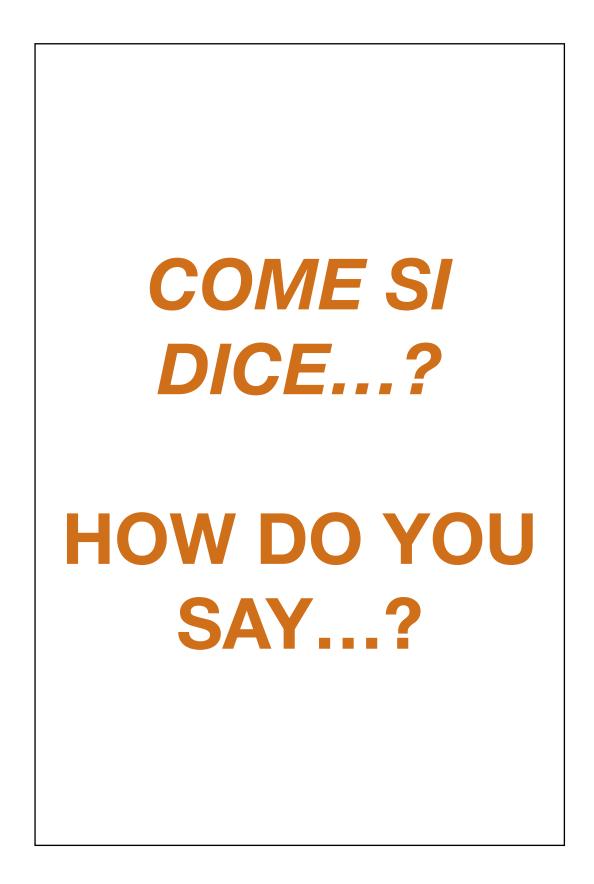
    » Some students will classify their findings by colour on the text itself, others may rework it completely

    » Some students will use grammar notes, charts, books, etc. for support

    » Some students will use dictionaries and translating apps.

12. The teacher breaks the students into fresh pairs, and sitting together, side-by-side they must analyse their answers and classifications in Italian.

13. The students swap partners again, engaging in a 2nd pair and share of their responses. The teacher at this point can move between the pairs to clarify any doubts the students may have, all the while first demanding an explanation or hypothesis in Italian.
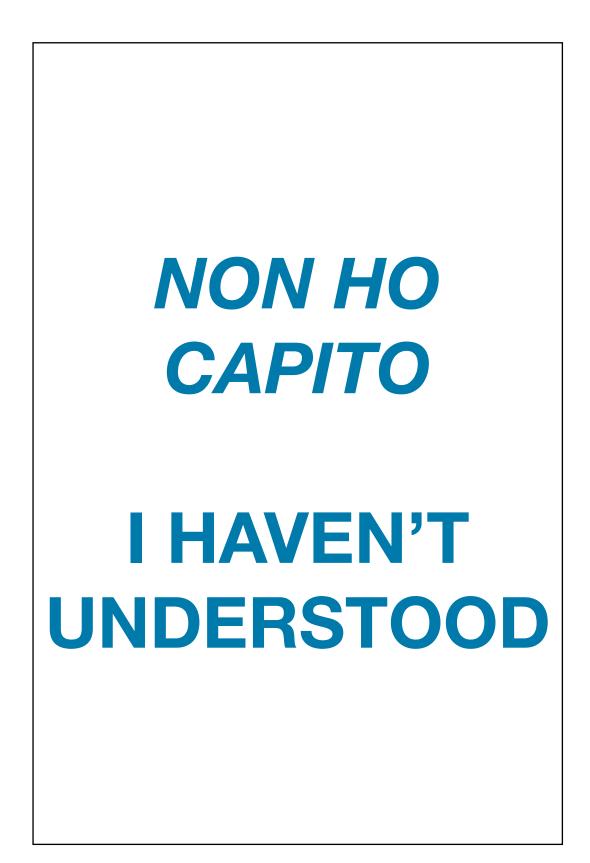
Appendix 10.7: Templates

Templates for in-class language assistance posters are found over the following pages. Note the colour pairing between the Italian and English versions to aid student translation and use. These can be left at A4 size, though are most effective at A3 to enable all students in the classroom visible access. Ensure that these are printed in colour and are made accessible to the students in the classroom. When preparing these posters for in-classroom use be sure to separate the Italian and English versions. The cognitive process of identifying the required poster based on colour is significant.
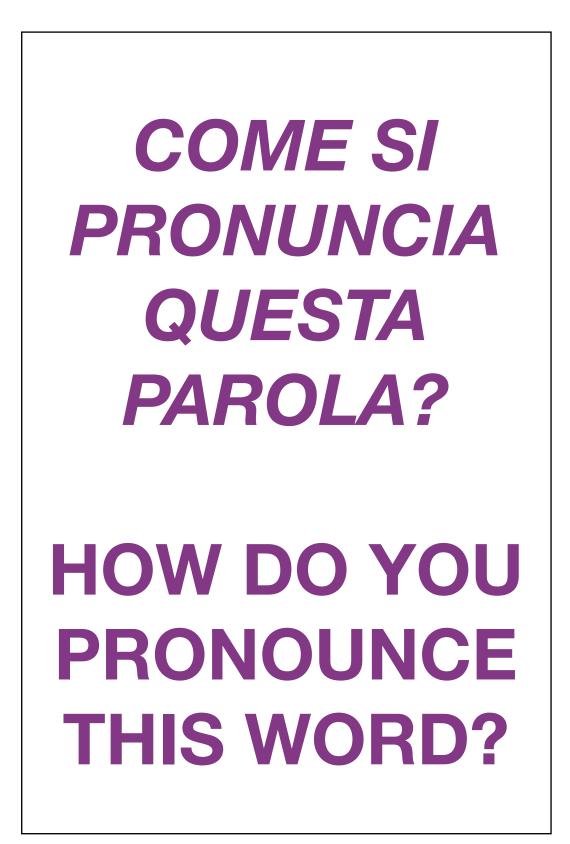
These templates are also provided in a smaller table that students can keep in their workbooks, folders, or cut out and use as quick reference cards with their peers.
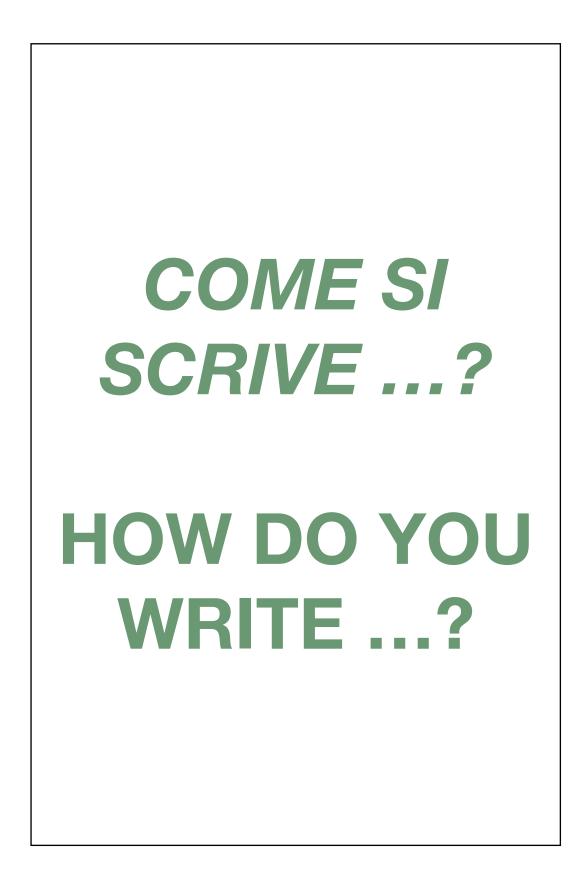
Please note that the formal register has been used in these templates to encourage students to use formal language in-context with their teachers. These templates differ slightly from those in use at DIH. The alterations and inclusion of new posters are designed to better suit the Australian classroom context.

COME SI DICE...?

HOW DO YOU SAY...?

COME, SCUSI?

WHAT WAS THAT, SORRY?

NON HO CAPITO

I HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD

COME SI PRONUNCIA QUESTA PAROLA?

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THIS WORD?

COME SI SCRIVE …?

HOW DO YOU WRITE …?

CHE SIGNIFICA …?

WHAT DOES … MEAN?

PUÒ RIPETERE, PER FAVORE?

CAN YOU PLEASE REPEAT THAT?

COME SI DICE…?	**HOW DO YOU SAY…?**
COME, SCUSI?	**WHAT WAS THAT, SORRY?**
NON HO CAPITO	**I HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD**
COME SI PRONUNCIA QUESTA PAROLA?	**HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THIS WORD?**
COME SI SCRIVE …?	**HOW DO YOU WRITE …?**
CHE SIGNIFICA …?	**WHAT DOES … MEAN?**
PUÒ RIPETERE, PER FAVORE?	**CAN YOU PLEASE REPEAT THAT?**