

## Major Project: Prototyping

By Donna Davis

### Introduction:

Here is some background information about this assignment to help you understand the provided prototype. I discussed the challenges of learning a foreign language, and two of my classmates, Chaley and Kym, offered suggestions for addressing this issue. Below is an overview of the problem, along with Chaley and Kym's proposed solutions, followed by a prototype I designed based on their ideas.

#### **Problem:**

*Adult learners of intermediate-level foreign languages need help to achieve real-world conversational fluency due to limited exposure to authentic language use in current courses.*

*The target learners are adult learners who aim for practical fluency in a language program.*

*Their fundamental needs are immersive, interactive experiences with native speakers that mimic real-life foreign language interactions and provide adaptive feedback for building language proficiency.*

*This problem is human-centered, broad enough to allow creative solutions, and specific enough to be actionable.*

#### **Chaley's Suggestions:**

*Hey Donna! I'm honored that you've asked to tap into my knowledge as a Public Speaking teacher for this design problem! I don't know if I will be able to help a ton but I will give it my best shot! SO! Here are a few things that I do with my students to keep them engaged and "fluent" with public speaking:*

- *All the practicing, all the time! In addition to our 5 speech assignments during the semester, we also prepare and present at least one micro speech during non-speech days.
  - *I like to keep the Communication Cycles in mind as we practice to make sure that they can practice (and identify) each cycle and their parts. See attached.*
  - *The four scenarios of PRCA-24 (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension) are also helpful. Letting them practice (and identify) each: Group, Meetings, PS, Interpersonal
    - *Here is the test if you want to look at it or take it for yourself: <https://acrossculturesweb.com/unit1/prca.html>Links to an external site.***
- *Exposure Therapy! This is exercised in many ways:
  - *Working on visualization techniques, practicing gestures/facial expressions/movements, working on vocal variety, etc.*
  - *Watching other's speak (usually videos) and going through the process of talking about the good/bad/ugly and what they would change.**
- *Real-work speaking! It's not always feasible but when possible I like to take the students to an organization or bring a group or professionals (connected to speech topics) into the classroom for their final (capstone) speech.*

- *This group can watch the students and provide comment/feedback, simulating a real-world speaking scenario.*
- *The students have members of the audience that are new/unfamiliar, triggering them to adjust their speech as needed to their new audience.*

*Although these are PS-specific, I think they can be applied to your classroom as well!*

- *Practice the language as often as possible, in as many scenarios as possible (PS, group, meetings, dyads, etc).*
- *Let them watch, critique, and reflect as much language-specific content as possible.*
- *If possible, take them to or bring in some native speakers to provide additional feedback/critique on their speaking.*

*I'm sure you've already tried most of these tricks but perhaps with some added perspective. When all else fails, I find that taking the time to work with students one-on-one helps the most. Let me know if you have any questions, need clarification, etc. I would be happy to chat further about this!*

*Chaley*

### **Kym's Suggestions:**

*Hi Donna, I would love to contribute! The first thing that comes to mind is if you are able to coordinate with another discipline or multiple other disciplines in order to give students real-life opportunities. If your school offers any medical programming (nursing, dental hygiene, etc.), I would invite them in to practice their medical intakes on the students. If you have an interpersonal communication course offering at your school, I would recommend inviting them in for some practice. I think that the key is really practice in real-life situations.*

*As a complete side note on this, I moved to Mexico as an adult and did not know anything beyond basic words in Spanish (I pretty much failed high school Spanish and never took it in college). I am now fluent in Spanish because I was forced to learn through immersion. I mainly got my immersion through daily interactions (the store, the coffee shop, etc.). I watched a lot of television in Spanish: Sponge Bob, dubbed over Rambo and Rocky, and LOTS of novelas! Soap operas were the best because they naturally speak very slowly. Then there was the immersion from the radio and just being out in public.*

*I'm curious if you could have your students engaged in AI conversations a certain amount of times per week that would simulate a regular conversation between individuals as a matter of gaining more immersive practice?*

## **Title:**

# **Enhancing Conversational Fluency Through Immersive Language Practice**

## **Brief Description of the Problem**

**Problem Statement:** Adult learners of intermediate-level foreign languages must achieve real-world conversational fluency due to limited exposure to authentic language use in their courses.

The target learners are adult language learners aiming for practical fluency in real-world interactions.

The learners need Immersive, interactive experiences with native speakers and adaptive feedback mechanisms that build language proficiency.

## Prototyping Activities

This prototype focuses on low-to-medium fidelity approaches to outline a scalable and engaging language-learning solution.

### Prototype Solution:

## Movie-Based Role-Playing for Language Fluency

### Overview

The movie-based role-playing activity leverages popular target language films and series to immerse learners in conversational scenarios without the need for expensive technology like virtual reality (VR). This method offers a highly engaging, cost-effective, enabling learners to experience immersive language practice through acting, improvisation, and real-world interactions. Unlike VR, it eliminates technical limitations, such as accessibility, hardware costs, and setup complexities, while retaining the benefits of situational immersion and adaptive learning.

### How It Works

#### 1- Movie Scene Selection

- The facilitator selects a scene from a movie or series in the target language. Scenes should represent practical, everyday interactions (e.g., visiting a store or attending a party) or culturally significant moments.
- Learners may vote on their preferred movie for greater engagement.

#### 2- Character Assignment

- Each learner is assigned a character from the chosen scene, along with their lines and situational context.
- It is possible to introduce other characters from other movies to add an element of surprise and complexity.

#### 3- Improvisation and Adaptation

- Learners act out the scene with dialogue from the script but are encouraged to improvise and adapt to spontaneous changes introduced by the facilitator or peers.
- For example, a scene in a coffee shop might include a surprise guest (instructor) asking for directions or making an unusual request, requiring learners to think and respond creatively.

#### **4- Feedback and Reflection**

- Facilitators or peers provide real-time feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and cultural nuances.
- Sessions are recorded so learners can review their performance and reflect on their language use and interaction skills.

#### **5- Cultural Learning**

- After the activity, learners discuss cultural elements in the scene, such as gestures, idioms, and conversational norms, deepening their understanding of the target language culture.

#### ***Why This Method Is a Great VR Alternative***

##### **1. Immersive Experience Without High Costs**

- *Unlike VR, which requires expensive hardware and software, movie-based role-playing uses accessible tools like scripts, videos, and props.*
- *This method is scalable for any classroom or online environment without financial or technical barriers.*

##### **2. No Technical Limitations**

- *VR systems can be prone to glitches, require significant technical expertise and bandwidth, and may not be accessible to all learners.*
- *Movie-based role-playing avoids these issues while maintaining an immersive and engaging experience.*

##### **3. Enhanced Interaction and Creativity**

- *Acting and improvisation provide a level of human-to-human interaction that VR simulations often lack.*
- *Learners can adapt and create dialogue in real time, fostering more profound language proficiency.*

## Key Benefits

### 1- Cost-Effective and Accessible:

- It doesn't need expensive equipment or software.
- It can be implemented in any classroom or online platform.

### 2- Highly Interactive and Engaging:

- Allows learners to explore real-world scenarios while improvising and adapting language use.
- It encourages collaboration and teamwork.

### 3- Cultural and Contextual Learning:

- It Deepens learners' cultural understanding through authentic, situational practice.

## Next Steps

**1- Pilot Program:** Conduct initial testing with learners to refine the activity structure and identify potential improvements.

**2- Scene Library Development:** Create a collection of culturally relevant scenes across multiple languages and proficiency levels.

**3- Feedback Integration:** Incorporate learner feedback to improve the activity's effectiveness and engagement.

## Conclusion:

This method provides immersion and adaptability often associated with Virtual Reality without technical and financial drawbacks, making it an excellent option for fostering real-world conversational fluency in language learners.