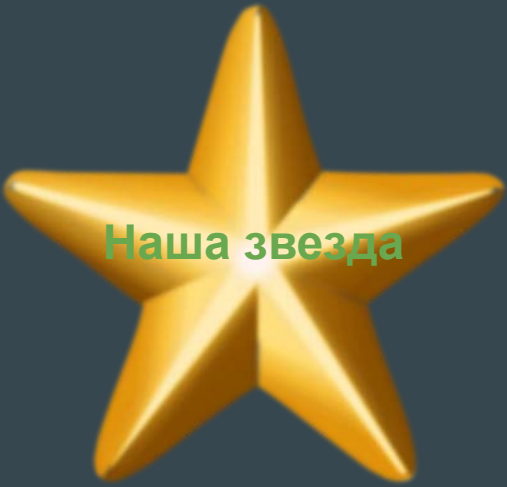


The Flexible, Special Person Interview



Or: How to Talk with Students from day one

What is the Special Person Interview?



Star of the Day
Наша звезда

A [portal](#) for Comprehensible Input

Bryce Hedstrom

and so many others taught me:



It's an interview
in front of the class
(or not).

Students and teachers learn about one another,
while magically acquiring language.

The Star of the Day Interview uses CI: Comprehensible Input

Use ~~the Force~~ CI tools/skills

Use visuals and gestures to establish meaning.

- check comprehension, go **slowly** (point and pause)
- limit and repeat vocabulary by checking comprehension and comparing
- **Be interested!**




Keep it compelling:

- timing is critical
- collect the information and **use** it later

Milk it

- Talk with students, then compare them
- Write and read, play games ...



<h2>Steps of the Process</h2> <p>Each interview lasts only as long as the interest does. The interview is over when the mojo runs out, be it in the interviewee, the observing students or the teacher.</p>	<h2>Who?</h2>	<h2>Action</h2>	<h2>Grammar & Vocabulary</h2>	<h2>Teacher Behavior</h2>	<h2>Student Behavior</h2>
<h3>1. Interview</h3> <p><i>Interviewing Tips:</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each interview can last between 1 minute and 60 minutes—it all depends on the willingness of the interviewee. • Stop the interview when the mojo runs out. • Do not force engagement; invite it. • You are not trying to get through an agenda; you are focusing on a student and encouraging him/her to speak. • You can come back to interview a reluctant student later—their level of trust and language ability will grow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talks with student interviewee in front of the class • Interviewees may stay in their regular seats or move to a special place in the front of the room—whatever they are comfortable with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher asks questions to one student interviewee in the TL • Student answers in TL • Teacher encourages student to answer with complete sentences to model 1st person form. • Teacher occasionally asks differentiated questions (“Pop Up Grammar” style) to individual students in the class to be sure they are engaging on different levels. • Teacher “circles” the structures (TPRS term) that students do not know well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd person oral questions by teacher • 1st person oral answers by student interviewee • Stay “in bounds” with vocabulary as much as possible—use what they know • Teacher writes new vocabulary in TL & English on board. • Not all vocabulary needs to be translated. • Vocabulary will grow organically—with more trust and comfort, new and different topics will emerge. 	<p><u>Body Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, accepting • Pull in the rest of the class with your interest • Ignite attention with earnestness <p><u>Oral Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t push too hard • Set the hook • Ask follow up questions to show real interest <p><u>Written Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write new words in the TL and in English on the board 	<p><u>Body Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for the <i>lean in</i>—this shows the interviewee is engaged. <p><u>Oral Language</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student answers with sentences • “Facts” from interviewee do not have to be real—allow students to suspend reality • Student responds as long as comfortable—there is no set number of questions they have to answer
<h3>2. “Report Back” to Class</h3> <p><i>Reporting Back Tips:</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat steps 1 & 2 as often as the interest lasts, in the interviewee and in the class. • Stop when they seem bored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talks to class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher “reports back” to class after every 2-3 questions. • Teacher tells class what the student has just said to her. • Class responds appropriately to show understanding. 	<p>3rd person oral statements by teacher about interviewee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows change of perspective by changing location (<i>location #2</i>) when “reporting back” to the class • Return to original interview space (<i>location #1</i>) for more questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students listen • Students gesture “I don’t understand” if teacher is unclear • Teacher’s goal is to make the interview so engaging that the class <i>leans in</i>.
<h3>3. Verify Information</h3> <p><i>Verifying Tips:</i></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as if you do not remember and need help keeping the facts straight. • The order of the Verifying step and the Checking for Understanding step can be swapped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talks with the student interviewee again 	<p>Teacher checks with student to be sure she remembers what the student has said about himself.</p>	<p>2nd person oral statements by teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to yet another place (<i>location #3</i>) in the classroom to indicate another change in tone • Make informational “mistakes” (<i>not</i> grammatical mistakes) in some sentences you verify • Allow interviewed student and/or the class to correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students listen • Students correct the teacher’s informational “mistakes” • Teacher does not make grammatical mistakes to ensure quality input. • One designated super star student may begin to write information about the

A few tips

Almost every idea in this presentation has come from someone else at some point. I have credited the obvious and the most recent ones to come into my possession, but so many great teachers have been my mentors these years that I have to simply ask forgiveness for not mentioning all of them.

Terry Waltz, Laurie Clarcq, and Teacher's Discovery



Guide students to be kind

Interview strong, confident students first.

Set and model high expectations for respectful conversations.

- Supportive
- Positive
- Answers/truth not required

Set minds at ease.*

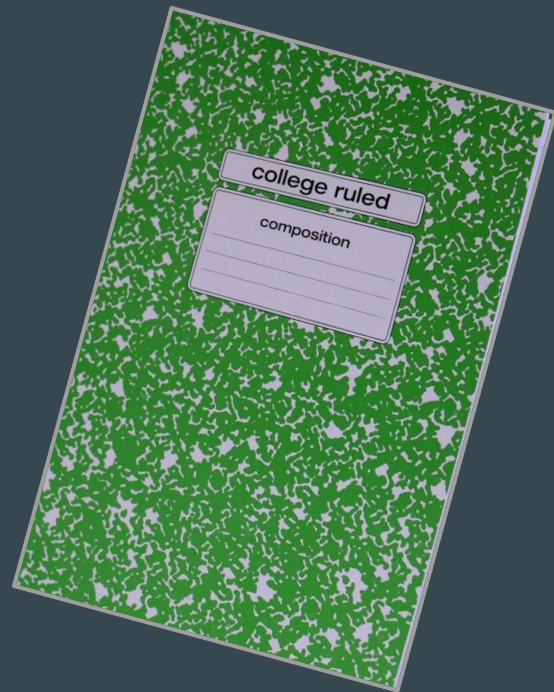
- No need to require complete sentences

***Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis** says that if students are not comfortable in a language classroom, their acquisition will slow down or stop.



Assign a record-keeper

- I keep one book for all classes, all language groups.
- Record-keepers date and label with class name.
- Interviews, quizzes, stories, etc. can all be in one place.



Engagement is everything

5 minutes

30 minutes

90 minutes

But timing is not.

Students are always special.

Erica Peplinski: brains light up with our favorite topics.



There is just one kind of class in which Our Star doesn't work for me.

Make it easy and special

- Language support
- Special chair/beanbag
- Lots of kudos
- Martina Bex certificate



THE COMPREHENSIBLE CLASSROOM

certifica que _____ ha sido

**LA ESTRELLA
DEL DÍA**

y que realmente es una persona muy especial



FECHA: _____

FIRMA: _____

Certificate shared with permission

Build community by finding common ground

Wow...s/he plays Mario Kart. Anyone else play Mario Kart?

But keep the focus on one--
unless you're mixing it up.



Teacher answers, too!

Model first person forms –

Give them someone to compare to –

Ask what they already know about you –



What questions should we use?

Anything, really...

...including text questions or APPL/other exam prep

It's effective, as long as you are genuinely interested in the responses.

Don't recreate the wheel.

I leaned heavily on prepared slide shows to learn to ask questions while teaching a new language.



¿Cómo prefieres
que te llamen?

what do you prefer to be called?

te llamas you call yourself

se llama he calls himself
she calls herself

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Amy Van Der Deen
w/permission

Elementary students

¿Cuál es tu deporte favorito?



¿Cómo estás hoy?



(How are you today?)

Estoy....
(I am...)

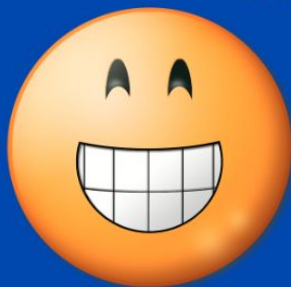
Está....
(S/he is...)

feliz

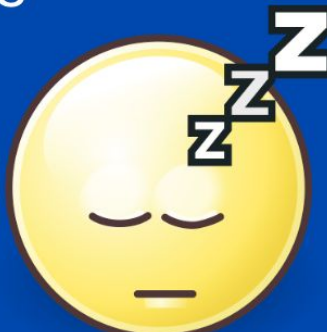


emocionado/a

más o menos



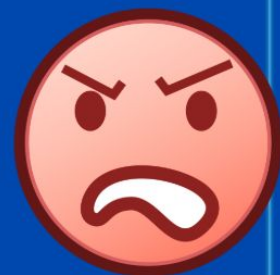
cansado/a



enojado/a



triste



Где вы работаете?

Where do you work?

Вы любите работу?

Do you love (your) work?



Я работаю в ... *(I work at...)*

Да, я люблю свою работу/нет, не люблю ...

(Yes, I love my work/no, I don't love it...)

___ работает в ... и любит/не любит свою работу. *(_____ works at ... and loves/doesn't love work.)*

French:

LA PERSONNE PRECIEUSE CLASSROOM POSTER IN FRENCH

Thanks to **Carrie Ely** from Lee, Massachusetts and **Anna Gilcher** in Cameroon for these.

Japanese:

SPECIAL PERSON QUESTIONS IN JAPANESE

Thanks to **Betsy Paskvan** from Anchorage, Alaska for these!

Russian:

"OUR STAR" PERSONAL INTERVIEW IN RUSSIAN

Thanks to **Michele Whaley** for the language, and **Don Read** for the formatting on this labor-intensive PowerPoint for the Russian classroom. Follow Michele's outstanding Comprehensible Input blog [here](#).

Latin:

Here is a link to the questions in Latin, the **DISCIPVLVS ILLVSTRIS**.

Thanks to **Lance Piantaggini** for the work here. Visit his website, magisterp.com, for more Latin C.I.

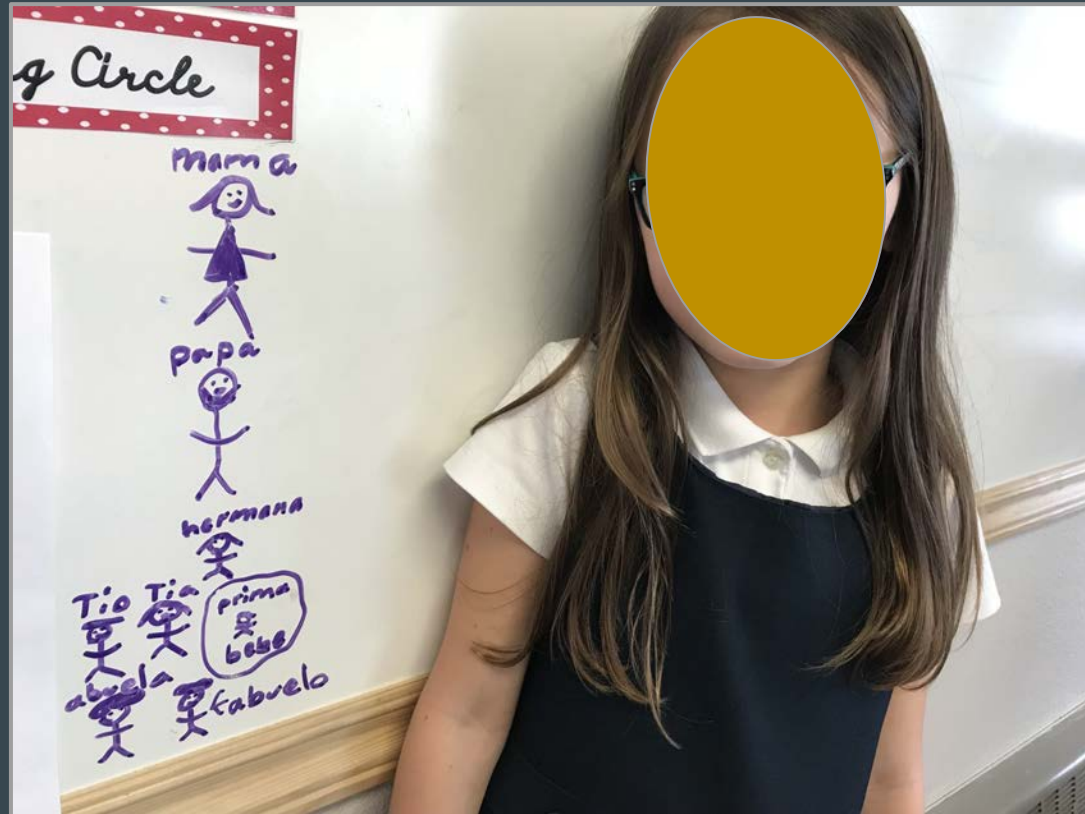
German:

Superstar – Eine spezielle Person German PowerPoint

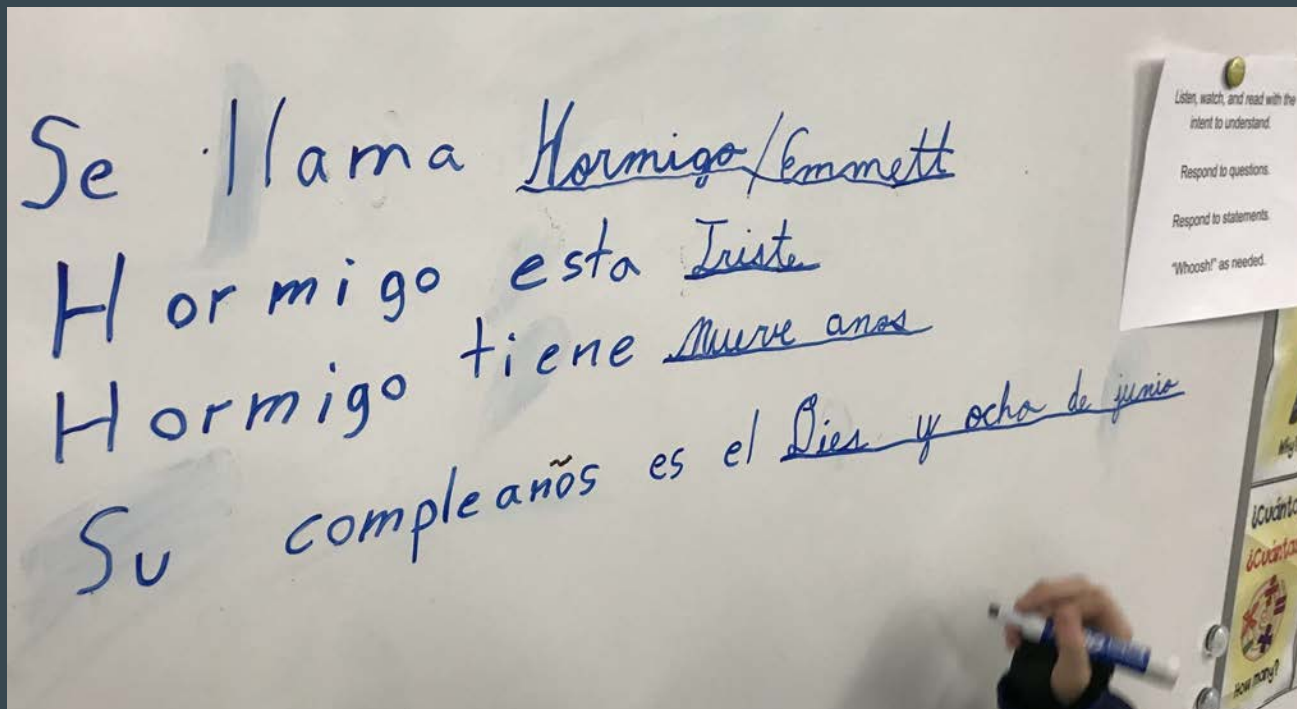
Superstar Interviewfragen-1 German

Bryce Hedstrom language [examples on his site.](#)

No slide show necessary.



No/low technology



Use what you already have

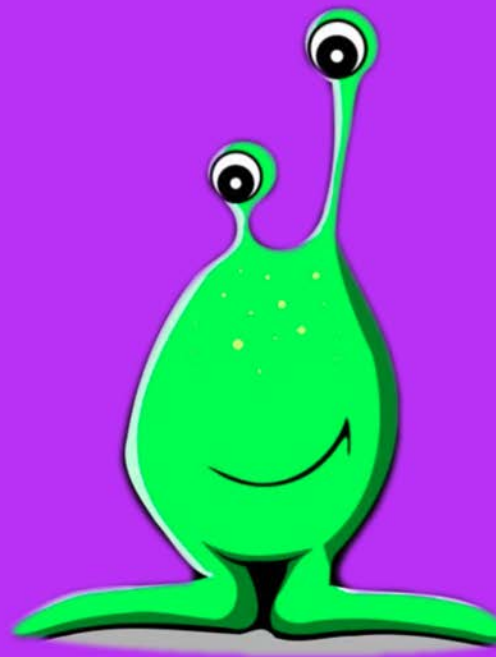
Do you think extraterrestrials really exist?

As a Russian teacher, I'm jealous.

This is an example posted by Kristy Placido on FB from Fluency Matters Prep 4 Success units

Used with permission.

¿Piensas que los extraterrestres realmente existen?



¿Tú te pareces a un familiar?

¿A quién?

Do you look like a relative? Which one?

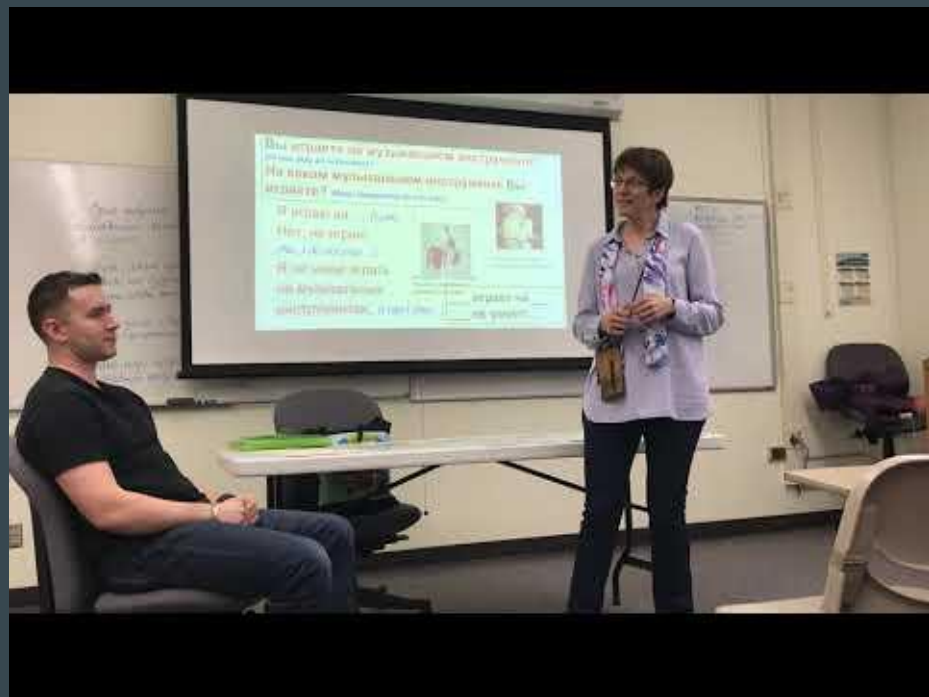


¿Tú te los
comerías o
los dejarías
en el plato?
¿Por qué?

Would you eat them, or leave
them on the plate?
Why?



Classroom



Mixing it up,
adapting for age,
varying the routine,
and going beyond.

Groups know one another well?

Interview the class and verify with the student.



Groups don't know one another?

You can still “interview the class” and verify with the student.

Allows for many repetitions of the same question.



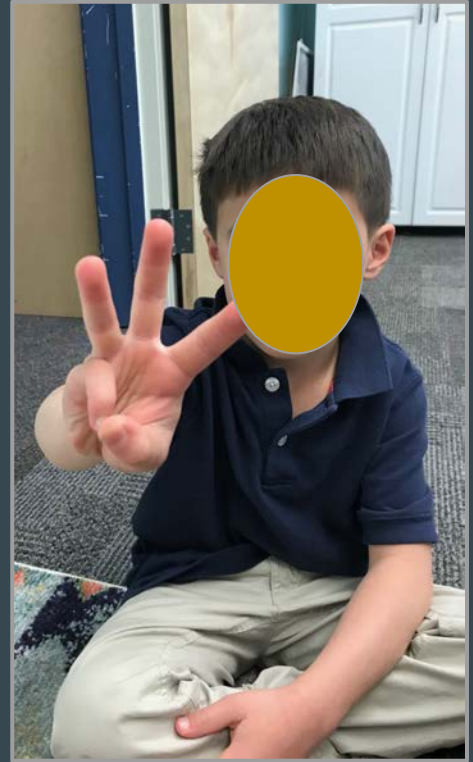
How many sisters does Olivia have?

She has three sisters?

Is that right, Olivia? Do you have three sisters?

Giorgio, Olivia doesn't have three sisters.

Students, what do you think? How many sisters does Olivia have?



Brand-new situation and don't even have the text?

Ask students to send you pictures of themselves doing something they love before the semester starts. (This was Skip Crosby's contribution.)

Combine technology, card talk, and the Special Person Interview in one smooth move.



Teach tag questions

Challenge: add five follow-ups after answers.

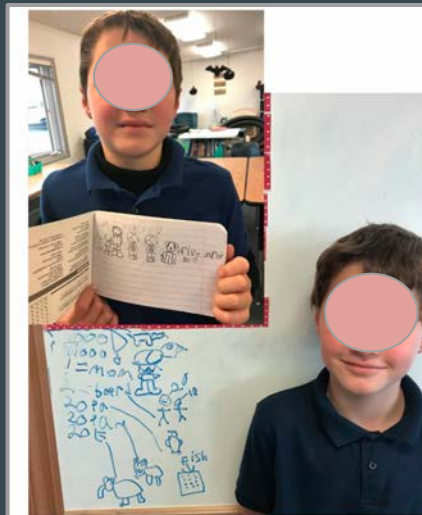


Sub Plans

More advanced students can be coached to interview.

Practice: limit to 2 minutes at first.

A slide show supports them.



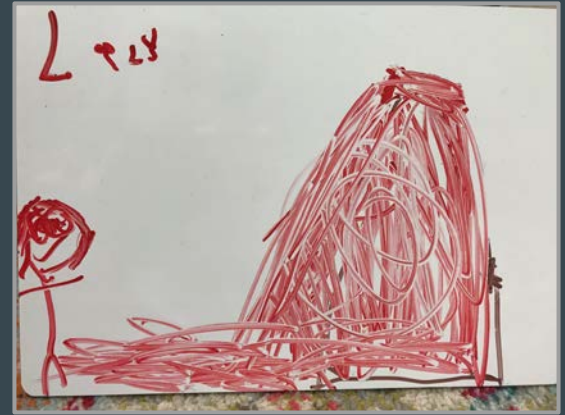
Este muchacho se llama Guapo. Él tiene una mamá, y muchos animales. En la casa hay veinte elefantes, veinte perros, muchos peces, veinte pingüinos, y dos mil cocodrilos. En la familia hay veinte hermanos y diez y ocho hermanas. Es una familia muy grande y interesante.

Students contribute

What do they want to know about one another?

Ask them to share their pictures.

Ask them for ideas.



More ways to mix it up

- Inside/outside circles for some questions
- Tally favorite songs, movies, etc, -- consider playing a song or showing pictures of a beloved animal or place
- Mondays: “What did you do this weekend?” (Fridays --)
- PQA can be part of interview material
- Interview a mascot or a character.*
- Andrea Schweitzer’s Game Show Twist/slides
- Use a “microphone”
- Use as support with visitors



*Jody Noble started this whole thing by comparing characters to students.

Feed your need

What animal/weather/song would you be?
(Steven Ordiano)

Where would you live if...

What would you do if...

When you saw/read/did X for the first time, ...

If you could have any pet, what would it be?
(Amy Van Der Deen)



Milk it: write with the class

- Project as you type or write on the board; students help recall information.
- Keep a running document that eventually includes every student.
- Make “class books” out of slide shows--to share with parents; for FVR libraries--
- Use random info in stories
- Quizzes, Kahoot, etc

¿Quién es Jamarío?



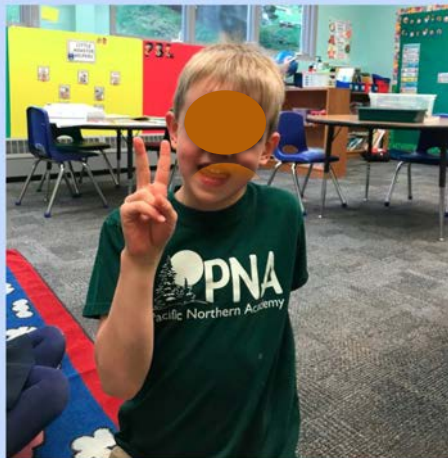
Jamarío es un estudiante nuevo en la clase de español. Él estudia en el grado cinco. Él tiene once años. Él nació en Anchorage, y él ha vivido en Anchorage toda su vida. A Jamarío le gusta el nombre Jamarío. A él le gustan muchos deportes. A Jamarío le gusta nadar y jugar al fútbol, baloncesto, béisbol y otros deportes. Jamarío es muy atlético.

Milk it: read with the class

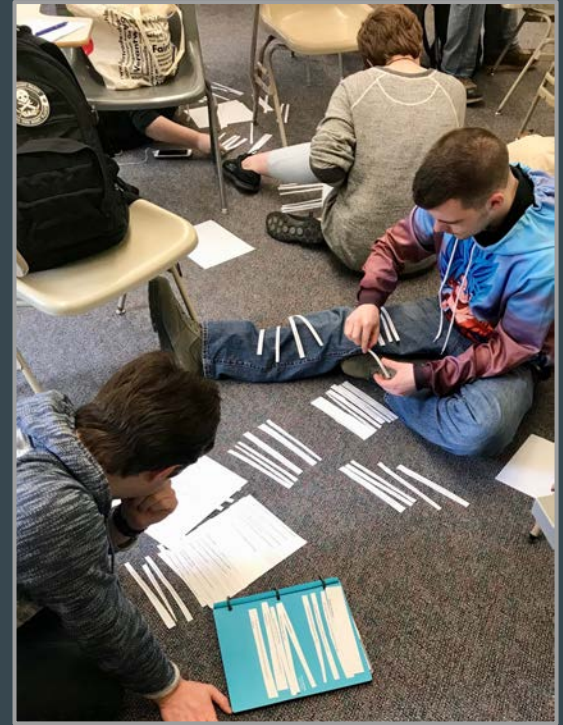
- the next day, and when you continue interviewing later in the semester
- when they know one another better and classmates can add details

¿Quién es?
Es Connor.

Connor tiene
diez conejos y
once peces.



There are more ways to do a Special Person Interview and to follow it up than there are teachers. Do you!



Discourse scramble a la BVP.

For more ideas –

Google “Special Person” on one of the CI FB pages.

The screenshot shows a Facebook search interface. The search bar at the top contains the text "iFLT/ NTPRS/ CI Teaching". The search results are displayed on the right side of the page. The first result is a post by Christy Lade, dated November 25, 2018, at 10:57 AM. The post text reads: "This is how I'm incorporating Special Person interviews and maximizing input in my middle school classes." Below the post, it says "Christy's Classroom's Post" and "This quarter in my middle school classes I have been incorporating special...". The post has 13 comments from Rebecca Moulton, Grant Boulanger, and 41 others. The second result is a comment by Jen Greene Moore asking, "Are the special person slides available to everyone?". Below this, it says "AnneMarie Chase commented on this". The third result is a post by Andrea Schweitzer, dated January 26 at 11:31 AM. The post text reads: "I tried a new 'game-show' twist for SPECIAL PERSON interviews last week... On Friday I wanted to mix it a up a little. We started class with Señor... See More". Below the post, it says "Persona Especial Slides.pptx" and "drive.google.com". The post has 21 comments from Rebecca Moulton, Erica Peplinski, and 95 others. To the right of the post is a blue square with a yellow star and the text "na especial del dia". The fourth result is a comment by Lake Mathison saying, "Love this. It seems to be a great way around the problem with special person interviews that I sometimes see mentioned regarding small schools: that the info isn't interesting, bc everyone already...See More".

Required Comprehensible Input skills

- **Establish meaning** with gestures, visuals, and first language.
- **Check** comprehension frequently.
- Go **slowly** (point and pause).
- **Repeat** by checking comprehension and comparing.
- **Be interested!**

Enjoy the interviews

- Build community
- Love your students
- Share yourself
- Be a star!

Write to me any time: michelejwhaley@gmail.com

