

## Learner rights and language teaching<sup>1</sup>

Hector HAMMERLY  
Simon Fraser University, B. C., Canada

*ABSTRACT: Based, in part, on the work of earlier scholars, the paper discusses the issue of students' needs and rights in terms of language learning. These rights are regarded as inherent to human beings and include five categories: (1) The right to curricular choice (including the right to chose a language or language skill); (2) the right to the conditions that make success possible (including qualified teachers and programs); (3) the right to be fully helped during the program (including systematic guidance, adequate feedback and access to linguistic resources); (4) the right to enlightened, balanced teaching (based on intelligent eclecticism); (5) and the right to continuity for linguistic maintenance (avoiding interruptions in their studies).*

*RESUMO: Baseado, em parte, nas propostas de outros pesquisadores, este trabalho debate a questão das necessidades e direitos dos alunos à aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira. Esses direitos são vistos como inerentes ao ser humano e incluem cinco categorias: (1) direito a uma escolha curricular (incluindo o direito de escolher uma língua ou determinadas habilidades de uma língua); (2) direito às condições que levam ao sucesso (incluindo professores e programas qualificados); (3) direito a ser assistido durante o curso (incluindo orientação sistemática, avaliação adequada e acesso a recursos lingüísticos); (4) direito a um ensino equilibrado e esclarecido (baseado num ecleticismo inteligente); (5) e direito à continuidade para a manutenção da língua (evitando interrupções nos estudos).*

*KEY WORDS: learner rights; linguistic rights, foreign languages,*

---

<sup>1</sup> This text is based on a lecture given at the XIX World Congress of Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes, Recife, Brazil, Marc 1997.

## LEARNER RIGHTS

*teacher education, autonomy.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: direitos do aluno, direitos lingüísticos, línguas estrangeiras, formação de professores, autonomia.*

*Many years ago one of my students of Spanish as a foreign language decided that the best way to learn the language was to memorize a small dictionary. I tried to convince him that that wasn't a good idea, but he wouldn't listen. After days of memorization, he came back — and couldn't understand or say anything in Spanish. I told him he should work on learning little dialogues, doing certain exercises, and practicing Spanish sentences with other students.*

*But he didn't want to follow my directions. Off he went, again, two more times, to memorize his dictionary. And back he came, for the third time, unable to understand or speak any Spanish. But, my friends, did he know well the words ábaco, abad, and abajo!*

*I tell you this little story to illustrate the point that our students have many rights, but not all of them are helpful!*

Anyone here who knows the language of Shakespeare or even a little about my personal finances can easily tell that I wasn't "to the (English) manor born." Why, I wasn't even born to American apple pie, baseball, five-and-ten cent stores or jeans. You could call me a Buenos Aires export — three times over.

Anyway, something surprised me considerably — and disappointed me— when I *really* started to learn the English language in the United States at the age of 21. This was the propensity of English speakers to refer to human beings, ideas, and other non-objects in terms of dollars and cents, such as in the phrases "So-and-so *is worth \$200,000,*" "Let me put in my *two cents' worth...*," "...the *\$64,000 question...*" or "...a *million-dollar baby...*"

As I see it, a good idea is immeasurably valuable, to the point that some of them have changed the world. And, of course, the worth of any human being *cannot* be measured in dollars. His or her value is far, far more than a trillion trillion trillion dollars. All the combined billions of the Sultan of Brunei and Bill Gates cannot produce a single living cell

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

—please note I said “produce,” not “reproduce.”

Although the *contributions* that a person can make to society may vary greatly, his or her *worth* as a human being has nothing to do with money, age, beauty, intelligence, social skills, health, or a host of other factors that make us all different.

Of course, many people have always thought that all human beings are of infinite value and that their destruction can be justified only under dire circumstances.

Ask any practicing Jew about the value of human beings: Humans, unlike animals, were created by God *in His own image*. What can make people more valuable than that?

Ask any sincere Christian: God *became human and lived and died for the people He created*. He would have done that for a single human being if necessary. What does *that* do to the *real* self-esteem of boys, girls, men and women?

Ask any people-loving secular humanist: Humans are at the apex of billions of years of evolution and, through further natural selection, are getting ever higher. (Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be happening; but still, the idea that human beings are at the apex of nature should help give non-believers a sense of the value of each human life. The problem is that the notion of “the survival of the fittest” does not offer us any sense of the value of human life.)

This is just an introduction to the fact that each of our students is very, very valuable and that we must treat them always as such. This remains true even when, for their own good or the good of others, we must give them low marks, discipline them, or, in extreme cases, drop them from our programs.

Our students, as individual human beings, have *inherent rights* based on the *formerly* universal concept that human life is precious and deserves our care and respect. This idea, in turn, derives —as I have already noted— from fundamental beliefs. When such beliefs are cast aside, there is *no* solid foundation for human rights of any kind: It's everyone for himself, leading to the killing of the defenseless and the innocent, as we have seen it done, at least one hundred million times over, in our enlightened century.

When the fundamental beliefs that underlay a civilization are neglected, life becomes a cheap, vicious dog-eat-dog struggle for survival. In order to survive such carnage, people unite into various

## LEARNER RIGHTS

groups of “victims” that try to tear *no-longer-inherent* “rights” from the grasp of their supposed “victimizers.” May I suggest that people ought to behave like loving human beings who look after one another and respect one another rather than like packs of dogs trying to enlarge their turfs by force and government edict. *Whether we do one or the other depends, ultimately, on our philosophy of life.*

A further, very important idea bequeathed to us by earlier generations is that of maintaining a careful balance between the needs of the community and the power of choice of the individual. When that balance is lost, there is either imposed uniformity (“unity,” many so-called “leaders” like to call it) or chaos. But no human activity, including language teaching and learning, can succeed for long under either dictatorial or chaotic conditions. Imposed uniformity may seem efficient, but turning human beings into robots deprives them of their creativity and initiative, and breeds in them long-term resentment. On the other side of that imbalance, very few people can thrive on chaos.

So, balance between the needs of the community and the rights of the individual is essential. Specifically, in the language classroom, I believe long-term success depends on balance between the needs of an efficient and effective foreign language program and the rights and needs of the individual student. That doesn’t mean, of course, that we should give in to any and all student expectations or demands, for some things naïve language students want to do would be clearly harmful to their linguistic development.

What are, then, the needs and rights of language students? In arriving at this presentation, I have relied, in part, on work done by other scholars, especially the recent work by my esteemed friend and Brazilian applied linguist, Francisco Gomes de Matos.

I have decided to group these rights into five categories, with two or more rights in each, as follows:

### THE RIGHT TO CURRICULAR CHOICE

*Being able to decide whether to study a foreign language at all*

In many educational systems, all students are *required* to take one or more foreign languages, sometimes for many years. May I suggest

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

that, since learning a foreign language successfully involves a level of aptitude and motivation that not every student possesses, students should be allowed to decide for themselves whether or not they want to study a foreign language —after they are given a little taste of it.

Since this must be an informed decision on the prospective student's part, not one based on whim or fear, I believe *all students should be required to take one course* that would let them *sample* foreign language learning and determine whether they do have the necessary aptitude and motivation to succeed in attaining the difficult long-term goal of foreign language competence. This course should be offered in such a way that it would not affect their academic records —such as “pass/fail” or “no record.” This single required course would be on “Languages and Peoples of the World” and would offer short-term language-learning experiences in a variety of foreign languages, as well as interesting facts about foreign peoples, their customs, and so on. Such a course could be offered as early as during the first few grades of elementary school.

Then, those children or young people who are satisfied that they have adequate aptitude —and who have liked this initial exposure to foreign language learning enough that they are strongly motivated to learn one or more particular foreign languages— can undertake, in *those* languages, *the linguistic journey of a lifetime*. The alternative is classes in which many students have little aptitude or motivation and perform very poorly, to the detriment of everybody. (I taught one year under those conditions and, frankly, I cannot recommend them to anyone.)

### *Being able to choose the language skills they wish to concentrate on*

Not all foreign language students wish to learn all four intralingual skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Those who are interested in only some of these skills should have that option available to them. This choice should be preceded by some guidance, of course. For example, we have all known many students who can read a foreign language well but cannot speak it. So, prospective students should realize that if they choose to go that way, they may never become fluent speakers.

In practical terms, what this type of choice means is that a full-fledged foreign language program should offer, in addition to the main,

## LEARNER RIGHTS

full stream, smaller, shorter streams for those who choose to navigate them.

### THE RIGHT TO THE CONDITIONS THAT MAKE SUCCESS POSSIBLE

This depends on:

*Being able to enroll in a truly high-quality program*

In my experience and that of many language learners I have known, some programs with excellent reputations turn out, upon closer examination, to be from mediocre to poor. This includes, for example, the programs of certain commercial language schools as well as most immersion programs.

*Having a fully qualified teacher*

The diamond of teacher competence has many highly desirable facets, *which students are entitled to expect in their foreign language teachers*, such as:

- a friendly, empathetic personality and the desire to help students as they need and accept help;
- native or near-native proficiency in the language being taught

*as well as*

- adequate proficiency in the native language of the students, if they do have a native language in common.

*Also, a solid knowledge of*

- all the important linguistic characteristics of both languages and how to make comparisons across languages;
- the psychology of learning, personality and motivation;
- sound theories and principles of teaching —specifically, effective language teaching theories and approaches, methods, procedures and techniques;
- language testing ideas and procedures;
- language technology where effectively applicable;
- all the important aspects of both cultures; and

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

- enough statistics and experimental design to be able to conduct practical research in the classroom and then share their findings with their profession.

*To these I would add:*

- a commitment to their profession, which means reading professional publications and maybe writing for them, joining associations, participating in meetings — *as you are doing right here* — as often as possible, and so forth (it is sad but true that some of our colleagues don't do any of these things).

Foreign language teachers also need to have the patience of a caterpillar, the showmanship of a butterfly, the stealth of a fox, the courage of a mongoose, and the hide of a rhinoceros —the lack of any of which makes it difficult to survive for long in this profession.

*Seeing a commitment to excellence from everyone in the program:*

For administrators, this means making all decisions with excellence of results in mind. That includes the sense of fairness needed to reward most the teachers who pursue excellence and help and encourage those who fall short, and the strength of character to dismiss, if necessary, teachers who do not show such a commitment.

For teachers, it means the lifetime pursuit of knowledge and self-improvement, and consistently showing their students that excellence is expected of them. The latter is attainable only when a teacher, first, points students toward *ideals* but accepts their very best efforts that may fall short of ideals; second, when the teacher applies, fairly but firmly, a system of appropriate rewards and punishments; and third, when he or she corrects students, kindly but persistently, via effective, enlightened techniques.

(Students develop their own commitment to excellence through example, encouragement, the successful attainment of short-term goals, and having the various advantages of eventual overall success presented to them often.)

## LEARNER RIGHTS

### *Having open access to objective results*

How can students (*or teachers*) expect success if they are kept in the dark about the objective results of language programs? The language teaching profession, students, parents (in the case of young students) and taxpayers are *entitled* to know the results of foreign language programs down to the classroom level — the scores of individual students remaining confidential, of course. How can our profession improve its performance if we don't have reliable data on the results of various programs? Frankly, I find it very suspicious that some methodologists have promoted their approaches to classroom language teaching with great enthusiasm, indeed, with *hoopla*, but have not bothered to obtain or reveal objective data on their results. When it comes to any practical endeavor, such as language teaching, there is *only one question* to be asked about any proposed way of doing things: “Given usual conditions, *does it work?*“

(We must be careful, however, because “objective data” sometimes aren't objective at all. Objectivity can be lost by the way the data are collected, analyzed or presented. It can also be negated by the way questions are asked, or even by the choice of questions to be investigated. Much so-called research hides much more than it reveals!)

As to openness in making results public, the secrecy in our profession must come to an end. We must *demand* the open disclosure of all relevant facts. A few facts are worth more than 1,000 laudatory opinions. Otherwise, we will never be able to move from a shaky, fad-and-trend-led field of stumbling activity to a strong discipline with a solid foundation of agreed-upon knowledge. Let's acknowledge it publicly when we have made mistakes and realize that, for best results, some things should be done differently than we originally thought. All that's needed is sufficient honesty and courage to do so. For example, Tracy Terrell, the father of the Natural Approach, did just that near the end of his life. Unfortunately, many of his followers were by then such devoted believers in that approach that they did not pay much attention to Terrell's retractions —and they continue to promote the Natural Approach in its original, faulty form!

HECTOR HAMMERLY

*Understanding how to proceed*

Many students come to language programs with very naïve ideas about what learning a foreign language consists of. As I said earlier, one of my students wanted to memorize a small dictionary (he must have been, no doubt, a great-great-grandson of François Gouin). Other students tend to overemphasize grammar rule memorization, or reading and writing, etc. New students have a right to be fully informed, in some detail, of the nature of the program and how they can succeed in it. A 10-to-15 hour “*Introductory Minicourse*” can make clear to them many important things such as:

- first, the philosophy and general orientation of the program, its short- and long-term goals and the usual time frame for each, the commitment of time and effort required to attain success —and the reasons behind all of these (needless to say, students whose goals are very different from those of the program should either follow a separate, alternate track within the program, enroll in a different program, or rely primarily on self-instruction, so part of this first step involves the use of a good student background-and-motivation questionnaire to enable us to provide study-track guidance);
- how to study, that is, which language learning strategies are effective and which aren’t —and why— in trying to attain the stated goals;
- the need to apply themselves, step by step and assiduously, to the attainment of what is a long-term goal, an attainment that is frustrated by rushing to do anything prematurely;
- the nature and contents of tests;
- what their grades will be based on, as exactly as possible;
- how to use the learning materials;
- how to work in the learning laboratory or with individual equipment, including a demonstration;
- that, *as long as they apply themselves and do their best*, the teacher will help them anyway he or she can to attain each goal;
- that, within the program and class goals, their suggestions and initiative are always welcome (though not all may be implementable); and
- where and how they can obtain help between classes.

In addition to the above awareness, students can be introduced in

## LEARNER RIGHTS

this “Introductory Minicourse” to five aspects of the foreign language and culture, in short periods of about 5-10 minutes in alternation with what I have already mentioned. This will enable them to proceed with the rest of the program without frequent errors and misunderstandings:

- the sounds and basic intonation patterns of the foreign language — one or two at a time — that present a challenge to learners with their particular native language background (doing that at the beginning of the program will save the teacher countless interruptions in the months or years ahead);
- a very brief, general, *positive* overview of the foreign culture, the idea being to help them develop favorable attitudes toward the foreign culture and its members;
- a few very basic, simple grammatical rules;
- a few, very short, phonologically graded samples of the spoken language, usually in the form of little dialogues; and
- some very basic vocabulary —in meaningful context, of course.

## THE RIGHT TO BE FULLY HELPED DURING THE PROGRAM

This involves, in particular:

### *Being given systematic guidance and instruction*

Beginning foreign language students need step-by-step guidance, which can only gradually be phased out. The idea that you can place 25 to 30 learners — sometimes 50 students in Brazil — within four classroom walls and that they can “pick up” a foreign language well in a “natural” way is very unsound. Learning a foreign language in a classroom is an essentially *artificial* process that must be made to happen carefully and systematically. The poor results of immersion programs attest to that.

Teaching is largely “causing learning to happen.” Beyond early childhood, any complex learning cannot just “happen,” at least not *with good results*. Any complex learning after early childhood is greatly

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

enhanced by systematic, step-by-step instruction by a competent teacher. If foreign languages did not need to be *taught*, we might as well hang our hats and do something else, for there would be no more need for our profession!

### *Being given adequate feedback*

Foreign language students who do not know whether what they are saying or writing is correct or not have *no clear way* of telling how they *should* speak or write. Knowledge of whether what one is doing is right or wrong is absolutely essential to the development of foreign language competence —or to *any* learning. Of course, I am not talking about shouting: “*Past tense, you fool!*” Students must be corrected firmly and persistently, but also kindly and empathetically. And correction techniques must be such that the criteria for accurate linguistic output are gradually passed from the mind of the teacher to the mind of each of the students, since how anything is said or written is a process that starts in neural paths in the brain. (We are talking, in effect, about major surgery —some kind of linguistic brain transplant.)

Positive feedback is also essential. Students must be encouraged, and nothing encourages them more than the recognition of their small and big successes. It is quite true that “success breeds success.” When a weak student *finally* says something right, or when a good student says something particularly well, this calls for a *celebration*. They should be congratulated. Exclamations and even a little jig by the teacher would be in order.

### *Having access to language learning equipment and materials for individual study and practice*

This would take primarily the form of learning laboratories where students can use a great variety of audiovisual materials and software to facilitate their individual learning process. Furthermore, I believe that ideally each foreign language student should have 24-hour access to a small, portable audio cassette machine for frequent listening and directed speaking practice. Such machines are no longer expensive. If a language program cannot afford to purchase enough machines to lend to all students without charge, they could rent them for a small fee to those

## LEARNER RIGHTS

students who do not already have their own or cannot afford to purchase one.

*Being able to learn the language at the speed their ability allows*

There is no reason —other than administrative convenience— why students should all have to march together like soldiers. This almost universal practice means that the one-third of above-average students are “bored stiff” and the one-third of slow students are constantly rushing to catch up with the rest, only to keep falling behind again and again. Self-pace *is* possible within structured language programs with minimum-speed deadlines and high academic standards. Remediation and enrichment are only partial, imperfect answers to the fact that some students have far greater ability and motivation than others.

*Having access to the community’s linguistic resources facilitated*

Foreign language programs should maintain complete computerized lists of all the community residents and organizations that use any given foreign language, including, in particular, those who would be willing to interact with foreign language students. There are many persons like that —immigrants, refugees, their non-working wives and children, exchange students, and many more. Students should be enabled to interact at least occasionally with some such persons in the community, if necessary by having the program offer community participants a small fee to converse with students by telephone or in small groups.

*Having their work evaluated fairly and truthfully*

In addition to being made aware in advance of the format and general contents of tests, students have a right to expect that they will be tested and graded on what they have been learning, according to the stated goals of the program. Unfortunately, many programs that claim to emphasize the spoken language have a tendency to give only paper-and-pencil tests. This is not only unfair to the students but self-defeating for the program itself.

Students who are having problems should be helped to overcome

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

them, but they should not be told they are doing very well. That is deceitful and, in the long run, very disappointing to the students when they find out the truth.

### *Having their ideas seriously taken into account*

This includes not only suggestions the students may have and choices they may be allowed in class, but also the right to evaluate *anonymously*, at regular intervals, their teachers, the method used, the materials —in a few words, everyone and everything related to the program. There is no reason for us to be afraid of such evaluations. I know I have benefited greatly, as a language teacher and applied linguist, from them.

## THE RIGHT TO ENLIGHTENED, BALANCED TEACHING

Our profession tends to go from one extreme to another. It is as if a centipede switched back and forth from walking only on all its left legs to walking only on all its right legs. *That's not balance.*

### *Balance in language teaching is not*

- *Doing the latest*, which is not always the best.
- *Doing what "everybody" is doing*, for majorities are often wrong.
- *Giving equal attention to all language skills and components at the same time*, for some skills and components need to be emphasized at particular times, *after* prerequisite skills have been developed. Doing anything prematurely is not balanced but **un**balanced.
- *Asking beginning language students to behave like little bilinguals*. Attributing to the beginner the same behaviors as the excellent bilingual engages in, but on a smaller scale, is an error I call *retroprojection*. The beginner is *not* a small bilingual and should not, therefore, focus on meaning only. The successful bilingual had to develop a series of *prerequisite subskills before* he or she could reach a high level of foreign language competence. Among those subskills were many involving specific attention to elements in pronunciation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary; to the rules

## LEARNER RIGHTS

governing their use; and to their integration in communication. Learning a foreign language is not a matter of skipping joyfully from one cognitive peak to another but of building one's linguistic mountain boulder by boulder and thus being able to ski down higher and higher slopes until, *finally*, one puts the last rocks on the mountaintop and can enjoy the magnificent overall look.

### *Balance in language teaching is*

- *Paying adequate attention to everything — at the right time:* In many language programs, entire language components or skills are ignored. For example, many programs ignore pronunciation, as if all students could develop excellent pronunciation without help. Other programs ignore the foreign culture, which I believe should be an integral part of all programs. Still other programs take the position that spelling is an unimportant detail — with abysmal results, of course.

The question of timing is crucial. For example, it makes no sense to let students develop poor pronunciation or syntactic habits, only to have to deal with them *remedially* later. *It takes about four times as long to unlearn poor habits than to learn something well the first time around. We owe it to our students to help them learn everything well from the first time they encounter it.*

- *Not overemphasizing some major skills at the expense of other important skills:* The present fashion, in many parts of the world, is to concentrate almost exclusively on communication and neglect, almost totally, linguistic accuracy. Graduates of such programs can speak rapidly; however, what they speak is *not* the foreign language—it is, instead, a classroom “pidgin” composed of foreign language words put together according to native language rules. These “pidgins” (“portinglês,” “portuñol,” and so on) are clearly the result of such programs, as shown by both the spoken and written output of graduates of so-called immersion programs.

I say *so-called immersion* because “immersion” means being surrounded by something, such as a golf ball in a glass of water. But imagine a large glass bowl with 25-30 golf balls in it (50 in Brazil) and

## HECTOR HAMMERLY

then pour a little squirt of water on them (the teacher). When many learners can have linguistic contact with *only one* speaker of the foreign language, the learners are *not* surrounded by speakers of the language; that is, students' interactions are mostly with other faulty speakers who "butcher" the foreign language as badly as themselves — *so, how can this be called "immersion"?* This demonstration, and the poor linguistic results of immersion programs, speak for themselves.

The older fashion, still found in many programs around the world, is to emphasize reading, writing, and translation almost exclusively, at the expense of listening and speaking skills. The result is program graduates who may read a little but suffer from communicative "lockjaw."

Neither extreme is justified. Jumping from the excesses of the Grammar-Translation Method in the 19th Century to the excesses of the Communicative Approach at the end of the 20th Century is in no way progress. Progress is not made by switching from one extreme to the other, like a pendulum gone berserk. *While it is quite true that the eventual goal of foreign language programs is fluent communication, it is perfectly possible to develop both accuracy and fluency. All that's required is to put more emphasis on accurate form at first, and gradually shift to an emphasis on fluency and meaning, with habits of accurate form built in.*

- *Not forbidding, on doubtful philosophical grounds, any practice that is helpful:* Some methodologists reject memorization and systematic practice entirely. But some memorization is very useful, and students need considerable systematic practice in order to succeed in foreign language learning. The argument that practice —if properly conducted— bores students is just false. Only bored *teachers who don't put their students' needs first* hate it.

Other methodologists forbid any use of the students' native language in the classroom. (I suppose Paul Passy and Charles Berlitz must have had very large families, for their philosophical descendants seem to be everywhere.) However, limited, careful, judicious use of the native language makes things clearer much faster, something that — *without doing any harm if properly done* — saves a great deal of time. All that time saved through the judicious use of the native language can

## LEARNER RIGHTS

be used, of course, for realistic or real communication *in the foreign language*. Why waste classtime on students trying to guess —and often guessing wrong, at that? What virtue is there in half-understanding? What advantage in confusion?

### THE RIGHT TO CONTINUITY FOR LINGUISTIC MAINTENANCE

*Language students should not be hurt by long interruptions in their studies:*

Programs must offer continuity, including self-instructional activities during long breaks.

*Linguistic maintenance should be facilitated*

Having learned a foreign language, students should be offered continued access to a great variety of materials, community resources, and some facilities for the rest of their lives. It makes no sense for people to make a major effort to learn a language only to largely forget it through disuse, only because there is no way to use it frequently after the language program is completed.

(Incidentally, this applies to *any* linguistic resources a nation may have. In an increasingly interactive world, where relations and trade among nations benefit greatly from the linguistic capability of their citizens, why should the linguistic wealth of immigrant families, for example, be allowed to vanish? I don't know of any nation today that engages in pluralistic linguistic maintenance, other, perhaps, than certain bilingual education programs that may do more harm than good.)

### TO SUM UP

Language teaching is an interdisciplinary practical activity in which results are far more important than strict adherence to one theory or philosophy or another. We owe it to our students to respect their rights to study a foreign language in depth if they choose to do so, and to

#### HECTOR HAMMERLY

concentrate on the skills of their choice. If they decide to embark on a major effort to learn a foreign language, they are entitled to learning conditions that make success possible, such as a truly high-quality program with highly qualified teachers and administrators committed to excellence in objective results, ready to make clear to students how they need to proceed. Within the program, students are entitled to guidance and correction, to enlightened, systematic, balanced instruction, to adequate access to equipment and materials, the opportunity to progress at flexible speed, access to the community's linguistic resources, fair and truthful evaluation of their progress, and attention to their ideas and evaluations. While away from the program or after its completion, they have the right to continuity to facilitate linguistic maintenance. *I believe that if we do these things, we will succeed, and so will our students — he will be grateful for the rest of their lives, not just until they discover serious, terminal linguistic problems in their speech and writing.*

Let me conclude with the fitting words of Lord Chesterfield, which serve to introduce one of my books:

“Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.” (If you learn a language poorly first, you can rarely learn to use it well later.)