

# How and Why to Raise a Multilingual Child

# Introduction

- A typical Hispanic background in the USA
  - Born Nashville, TN 1970
  - Raised in Marietta, OH 1970 – 1992
  - Lived in Nashville, TN 1992 – 1999
  - Married Italian-German-Irish-Dutch student of French and Russian 1995
  - Lived in Dayton area 1999 - present

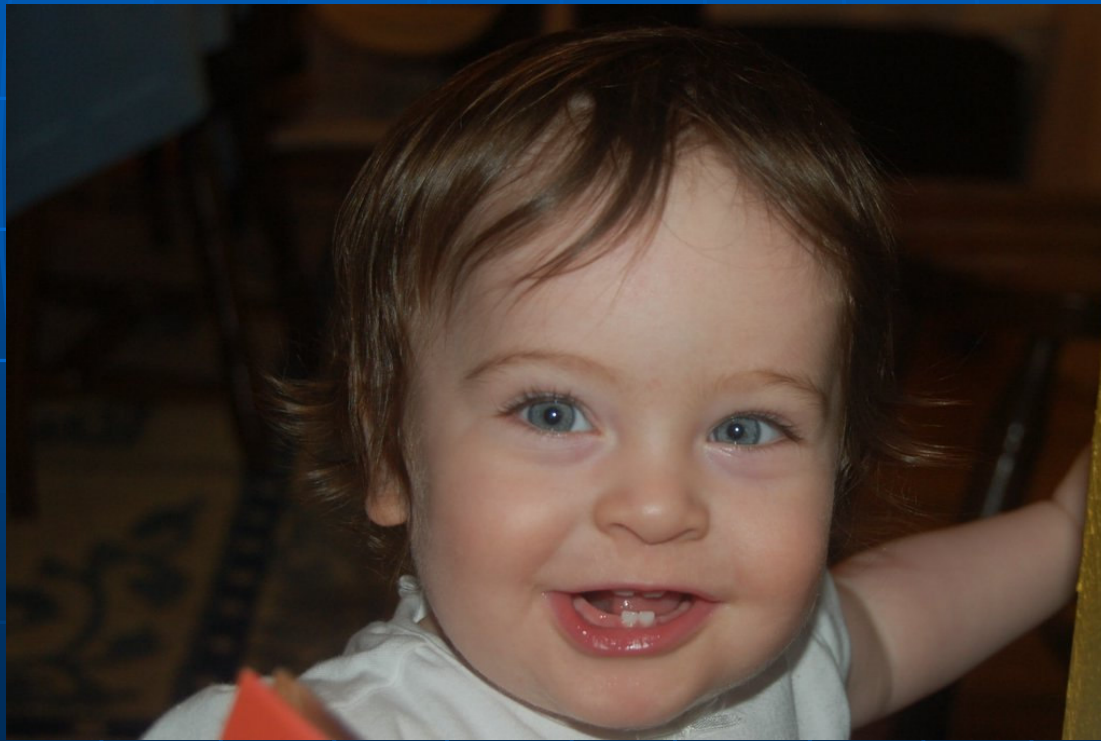
# Introduction

## ■ Other experience

- Both parents, Álvaro Víctor and Sherol (Moncrief) González professor and teacher of Spanish respectively
- Studied Spanish Literature in Madrid Summer 1988, 1989 and SY 1990 - 1991
- Graduate Student and Teaching Assistant in Department of Spanish and Portuguese Vanderbilt University 1992 - 1999
- Faculty member in Department of Foreign Languages Wittenberg University 1999 - 2003
- Desire to pay bills leads to escape from academia August 2003 - work at Time Warner Cable

# Introduction

- Return to teaching languages June 2005 - present



# Introduction

- Academic training in Language Education and Acquisition Theory
- Experience from growing up multilingual
- Observation of converging or “flattening” world
- Dream that I have for my beautiful daughter Ana and the beautiful sons and daughters of everyone else

# Fundamental Ideas of Second Language Acquisition

## Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

1. There is a useful distinction to be made between the Acquisition and the Learning of a second language
2. A language is acquired through the process of assimilation of communicative input ( $I + 1$ )
3. The emotional context in which communication (the assimilation of communicative input) takes place is a significant factor influencing success in language acquisition.

# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- 1. Consistency
- 2. Persistence
- 3. Naturalness
- 4. Will become more difficult as the child grows older or as goals for proficiency progress from speaking and listening to reading and writing

# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- 1. OPOL – One Parent One Language
  - Ideally suited to a situation where parents each have a different native language
- 2. Minority Language at Home
  - Either both parents are native speakers of the second language or both are fluent
- 3. “Media-Rich” Environment

Resources on 1 and 2 available at <http://www.bilingualfamiliesconnect.com/approaches.html> among other places. The “Media-Rich” Environment is a term on my own invention.



# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- The “Media-Rich” environment
- 1. Music
  - There is a definite cultural value in rhythms valued by cultures
  - In sung music vowel and consonant sounds are important precursor blocks to the formation of words
  - Entertaining repetition
- 2. Books
  - Bilingual “Vocabulary” books
  - Stories

# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- The “Media-Rich” environment
- A common trap to avoid – Mediation
  - *Árbol* does not “mean” *tree*

- *Árbol* =



# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- The “Media-Rich” environment
- 3. Games
  - For older children, non-threatening “practice”
  - Either games specifically language-oriented (bingo with images, for example) or number games like Dominos, etc
- 4. Television
  - PBS or other “learning” programs such as Dora the Explorer or Perro y gato on HBO
  - The amount of “immersion” or “native” foreign language programming now available via cable or satellite is stunning compared to three years ago

# Approaches to Raising a Multilingual Child

- The “Media-Rich” environment
- 5. The Internet
  - To find resources that are not always easy to find (or for Less-Commonly-Taught Languages (LTL))
  - To maintain and broaden connection to the broader culture that is at root of the second language
  - Streaming media for radio, music, television – can be great asset to both children and parents

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

- Competency in a second language has a number of intrinsic benefits
  - If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail
  - Better understanding of the world around us
  - Citizens of the World

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

- The World is Flat – Thomas Friedman
  - Through technology, increasingly everywhere is “here”
  - Global competition threatens the economic wellbeing of those not prepared to face and embrace globalization
  - The key to future wellbeing lies not only in “hard” math or science skills and knowledge but in creativity and problem-solving skills

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

- Opportunities for both professional advancement and personal fulfillment
  - US Air Force
  - NCR Corporation
  - Lexis Nexis
  - Proctor & Gamble
  - Chiquita Banana
  - Dole

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

- There is a need
  - In the wake of 9/11 – Intelligence
  - In diplomacy
  - In healthcare system
    - Anecdotal evidence of how it is hard
    - Empirical evidence that documents clear differences in outcomes based on language proficiency
  - In law enforcement
  - In education



# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

## Change in Hispanic Population 2000 - 2005

	Population		% of 2005 total	Change 2000-2005	% change
	2000	2005			
Montgomery County	7,108.00	8,542.00	1.6%	1,434.00	20.2%
Greene County	1,860.00	2,444.00	1.6%	584.00	31.4%
Miami County	738.00	1,125.00	1.1%	387.00	52.4%
Preble County	202.00	267.00	0.6%	65.00	32.2%
<b>Dayton Metro Statistical Area Subtotal</b>	<b>9,908.00</b>	<b>12,378.00</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>2,470.00</b>	<b>24.9%</b>
Warren County	1,679.00	2,981.00	1.5%	1,302.00	77.5%
Butler County	4,808.00	7,492.00	2.1%	2,684.00	55.8%
Hamilton County	9,527.00	11,772.00	1.5%	2,245.00	23.6%
Clermont County	1,568.00	2,102.00	1.1%	534.00	34.1%
Southwest Ohio eight county total	27,490.00	36,725.00	1.5%	9,235.00	33.6%
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>219,261.00</b>	<b>260,677.00</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>41,416.00</b>	<b>18.9%</b>
<b>US</b>	<b>35,648,188.00</b>	<b>42,687,224.00</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>7,039,036.00</b>	<b>19.7%</b>

Dayton Daily News Wednesday August 16, 2006 page A6

Source: US Census Bureau population estimates

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?

- It is a gift to be able to communicate with more of the world than less of it
- Even incomplete or partial competence gained as a child will improve efficiency of learning more about the same language later
- Competence in more than one language increases efficiency in learning another language after that

# Why Raise a Multilingual Child?



# Resources

- Bilingual Babies - <http://www.bilingualbabies.org/modules/news/>
- Bilingual Families Connect - <http://www.bilingualfamiliesconnect.com/index.html>
- Radio-Locator.com - <http://www.radio-locator.com/>
- Catalog of "all" mass-media sites on the Internet - <http://www.mediosmedios.com.ar/agenda.htm>
- Expanded materials will (eventually) be posted at [www.alvarorgonzalez.com](http://www.alvarorgonzalez.com)