

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2012**

## **It's all Italian to me**

I have been humbled to compare the "work" that I've been doing in Italian with the "work" that your PreK and kindergarten children have been engaged in. Yes in 7 short weeks I've progressed from a *simple* recitation of the alphabet, naming my colors, and counting to the more *challenging* work of simple addition and basic sentence structure (the work of a second grader). To illustrate my point...

An exercise Jordin (recall he is in 2nd grade) completed for homework last week:

1. black The is nice. cat
2. art have We Thursday. on

An exercise we completed in Italian yesterday:

1. Mario. cinema con andare Voglio al
2. di Queste le sono Maria. amiche

In both cases the task was to put the sentences in order.

My facility with the English language made it difficult for me to understand/appreciate the task in ways that my lack of facility with the Italian language made so obvious. For example I better understood the cognitive demands of the task as I became more aware of the tools (clues) that could help me complete the task successfully and the various elements of understanding (or misunderstanding) that would be evident in my errors.

Over and over again throughout your program you have been encouraged to "get into the mind" of the learners you are teaching and to "see" the subject matter through "their" eyes and to teach with this in mind. Having just finished a placement where most of the children had limited English proficiency I know that this has been front and center in your work.

Now that you are moving to a placement where language is not going to be such a present-everyday-in-your-face potential barrier to student learning I wonder how you expect the challenge of "getting into the mind" of the learners to change? What insights from your first placement do you expect you will draw on as you think about bringing the content and children you will be teaching into intersection with each other?

Posted by Amy Palmeri at **10:30 AM**