The acquisition of a second language is often described as the learning of rules. But what if rules in the classic sense did not exist? In this talk, we will explore this provocative topic, suggesting that language is not a collection of classic rules and bears little resemblance to the way in which language is presented in textbooks or is talked about by teachers and many professionals. Implications for the nature of language acquisition as well as language instruction will be discussed.

Workshop: Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 9-10 am in Danforth University Center 234

From “Pair Work” to Communication

Almost all language teachers use “pair work” to some degree or another. But how often do we stop and ask ourselves just what pair work does. In this workshop, we will analyze typical pair-work activities in textbooks and juxtapose them to what can be called “interactive tasks.” We will work toward an understanding of the nature of communication in a language classroom and how interactive tasks help us promote the very thing we hope happens in a language class: communication.

*The Washington University Foreign Language Learning Colloquium Speaker Series is sponsored by the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures; the Department of Psychology; the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures; the Department of Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures; the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the Department of Education, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.