

“Jamming on the Job” Episode 3: Language Teacher

[PBS KIDS music]

PBS KIDS Announcer: From your friends at PBS KIDS.

[A tour bus zooming down the open road.]

Andrés: Vamos amigos, it's time to go.

Christina: Get ready BoomBox, we have a show.

[Music: Jamming on the Job theme song]

Christina, Andrés, and BoomBox: (singing)

Jamming on the Job

Ja, Jamming

Jamming on the Job

Wooh Ooh

I'm Christina,

Y yo soy Andrés

And we play music

All over the states

We jam and learn

With people who

Work in jobs

They love to do!

If we get stuck

Or something goes wrong

An expert helps us

And we write a song!

[BoomBox beats]

Hey...Go BoomBox...¡Vamos!

Jamming on the Job

Ja, Jamming

Jamming on the Job

Wooh Ooh

Andrés: Hey Jam Fam!

Christina: Jam Fam!! Welcome to the West Coast everybody!

¡Bienvenidos a Los Angeles, California!

BoomBox: LA LA LA LA LA LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA!

Andrés: Specifically, the Boyle Heights neighborhood in East Los Angeles. Los Angeles is full of so many neighborhoods, and each neighborhood is full of so many kinds of people.

[Sounds of local music, people in the neighborhood talking]

Christina: That's right! For the last 100 years, this area has been known for being home to immigrants from around the world! Families from Russia, Japan, Italy, China, Korea, Poland and more have lived here. For many years, Boyle Heights was home to a large Jewish community. Later it was home to mostly Japanese-American families, and now, it has one of the largest Mexican-American populations in the city!

[Tour bus comes to a stop.]

Christina: Ah! Here we are! This is where we're performing today...

[Sound of school bell, kids playing]

Christina: ...at an elementary school! Our first school performance of the season!

Andrés: I'm so excited to play a show at a dual immersion school!

Christina: Exactamente. At this school, the students are taught in two languages. In this case, the students are taught in English and Mandarin! Mandarin is the most commonly spoken dialect of Chinese, and it is also the official language of China. And did you know: Mandarin, Spanish and English are the most commonly spoken languages in the world?

Andrés: Wow!

Christina: Let's get our stuff unloaded. We're performing in the cafetorium!

Andrés: The cafe-what??

[Door opens as they walk into the cafetorium.]

Christina: The cafetorium! It's a combination cafeteria and auditorium!

BoomBox: TAKE A CAFETERIA AND AN AUDITORIUM AND WHAT YOU'VE GOT IS A CAFETORIUM. TAKE A CAFETERIA AND AN AUDITORIUM AND MIX IT. IT'S A CAFETORIUM. AH...

Andrés: Oooh I like the sound of that, BoomBox!

Christina: Let's set up for the performance! Hit it!

[BoomBox drops a beat.]

Andrés: ¡Atención, Jam Fam! Ready Christina?

Christina: ¡Dale!

Andrés: Reach down to your toes.

[rattle sound]

Christina: Now jump up and down.

[cartoon stretch sound]

Andrés: Run in place.

[Ding!]

Christina: Let's get ready for the show!

Andrés: Whoo!

[Sound of school announcement system.]

School announcement: (speaking in Mandarin) 学校广播(普通话, 由黄老师配音): 同学们早上好! 今天下午我们将举办一场特别的音乐表演! 我们邀请了Christina 和 Andrés 来为我们演奏!

Andrés: Whoa! The announcements at this school are in Mandarin! The students also speak English, ¿verdad?

Christina: Yes! I think? You know what? We should ask someone.

Andrés: Hmm, hey! ¡Mira! That looks like a teacher walking with students. I bet he'll know!

Christina: Hi! Um, excuse me!

Huang laoshi: (In Mandarin) 黄老师:(普通话) Kenna, 跟紧队列! 谢谢!
(In English) Yes? Oh! Christina and Andrés! We're so excited for your performance today!

Christina: We are too! But we have some questions. Do you have time to chat with us?

Huang laoshi: Definitely. Let me get this group of students to their next classroom, I'll be back in a few! (In Mandarin) 黄老师:(普通话) 大家跟我来!

[Door opening and closing]

Christina: Did you hear how he spoke English to us and Mandarin to the students?!

Andrés: ¡Sí! Kinda like us! Sometimes we speak in English y a veces hablamos en Español! Pero... nosotros nunca hablamos en Mandarin.

Christina: That's right, we don't speak Mandarin because we don't know any words in that language – yet!

Andrés: Hmmmm. Sometimes we sing in English and Spanish with kids who speak both languages, and it feels really special because they all feel included.

Christina: Good point. How can we make sure all the students here feel included during the performance? What's it like from their point of view?

BoomBox: WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW?
VIEW-WOO-WOO! WHAT'S IT LIKE? WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR
POINT OF VIEW?

Andrés: We should add some Mandarin to our show!

Christina: But how?! The show is *today* and we don't know any Mandarin!

BoomBox: WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW? ASK A QUESTION AND THEN WE'LL GROW. WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE DON'T KNOW? WE ASK A QUESTION AND THEN WE'LL GROW. LA LA LA LA LA...

[BoomBox samples and loops Christina's question: "But how?! The show is *today* and we don't know any Mandarin!"]

Huang laoshi: Hi there! Thanks for waiting! I'm Huang, but my students call me Huang laoshi! It translates to Teacher Huang in Mandarin. I'm a kindergarten teacher here.

Andrés: I'm Andrés!

Christina: And I'm Christina!

Andrés: And *this* is BoomBox, our magical music machine! Say "Hey" BoomBox!

BoomBox: HEY BOOMBOX!

Huang laoshi: Wow, I've never met a magical musical machine before!
¡Encantado de conocerte!

Andrés: Oh! ¿¡Hablas español!?

Huang laoshi: ¡Sí!

Christina: That's three languages, which makes you... trilingual?!

Huang laoshi: (laughing) Yes! But mostly I speak English and Mandarin.

Christina: Wow! And do you teach your students in both English and Mandarin?

Huang laoshi: I do! The way this dual immersion school works is that the preschoolers spend their whole day being taught in Mandarin, the kindergarteners spend *most* of the day being taught in Mandarin, and after that, it's about a half-and-half split.

Andrés: Hmm. Our performance is in English and Spanish, but we don't have any songs in Mandarin. Is that okay?

Huang laoshi: So, most of the students here speak English at home with their families. Some students, though not all, have a Chinese-American identity, and that's why they want to learn Mandarin. [Andrés: Huh.] Maybe their grandparents or great-grandparents were born in China. It's part of their heritage! So we call these "heritage language learners."

BoomBox: HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Christina: Heritage language learners... 'cause it's part of their Chinese-American heritage!

Huang laoshi: Yes! And then, some students moved here to Los Angeles from China with their families. They learned a little bit of English at school back in China, but they aren't fluent yet. That means they're working on their English. [Christina: Huh.] I started learning English in school in China too, actually. But I didn't become fluent until I was here in LA, constantly surrounded by English speakers. What about the two of you? What's your point of view?

BoomBox: WHAT'S YOUR POINT OF VIEW?

Andrés: I'm kind of like you, Huang laoshi! I learned Spanish first because I grew up in Colombia, where people speak mostly Spanish. But my dad was always curious about learning English, and his curiosity rubbed off on me.

Christina: I grew up in the United States, but my parents are immigrants from Colombia, and they always spoke to me in Spanish, so I learned Spanish first. And lately, Andrés and I have been learning another language: ASL, or American Sign Language.

Huang laoshi: Oh, very cool!

Christina: Mmhmm. So *everybody* is learning something new here!

Huang laoshi: It's true! Most of the students *will* understand if you're speaking English, but it would be really, really cool if some of your lyrics were in Mandarin!

Andrés: We think so too!

Christina: Do you think you could help us add some Mandarin to our performance?

Huang laoshi: Definitely! Why don't we walk down to my classroom? I can show you how I help my students learn a new language!

Christina: You hear that, Jam Fam?! We're gonna hear more about how Huang laoshi teaches his students. We've got a job to jam on!

BoomBox: WE'VE GOT A JOB TO JAM ON!

[Sounds of the school hallway.]

Andrés: Wow, look at those cool red banners with the black ink!

Huang laoshi: Yes! That's Mandarin! [Andrés and Christina: Huh!] The written form of Mandarin is made up of characters. They're kind of like pictures. This character rén is of a person. It looks like a person walking! My classroom is right here. My students are at lunch. It's the quietest it'll ever be!

Christina: (laughing) So Huang laoshi, what exactly is your job?

Huang laoshi: I'm a language teacher! Right now I teach kindergarten, but I've taught almost every age, even adults!

Andrés: Wow. So how do you teach kindergarteners how to speak a new language? Is it lots of worksheets?

Huang laoshi: Ha ha! Not really, actually! The way I teach Mandarin is immersive, that means we do almost everything in Mandarin. We read, we tell stories, we play games, all in Mandarin. [Andrés: Mmm.] The students are learning to speak Mandarin, but they're also learning about Chinese culture. And my students learn by *doing*.

Christina: But, what if a student doesn't understand what you're saying?

Huang laoshi: One important thing about being a language teacher is that I have to pay close attention to every single student and notice how they are feeling. [Andrés: Uh-huh...] When I was a kid growing up in Bei Hai, China, I spent a lot of time away from my parents and my siblings because I went to middle school in another town. Sometimes I felt like I didn't fit in. I had one teacher who always went out of her way to check in on me and it made me feel safe, like I belonged. [Andrés: Mmm.] I want to make sure all my students feel like they belong.

Christina: Wow. So you spend a lot of time noticing your students' perspective.

Huang laoshi: Precisely. I'm always asking myself: "What's each student's perspective? What's it like from their point of view?"

BoomBox: WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW?
VIEW-WOO-WOO! WHAT'S IT LIKE? WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR
POINT OF VIEW?

Andrés: So what types of ways do your students like to learn?

Huang laoshi: Actually, they love learning through music. We sing lots of traditional Chinese songs, and sometimes we even make up our own!

Christina: You write songs too?!

Huang laoshi: I do! Like I said, a big part of my job involves recognizing how my students are feeling, and so I wrote a song that uses some feelings words in Mandarin. Do you want to hear it?

Christina: Yes! Is it okay if BoomBox records some of what you're singing? When we meet someone with a cool new job we try to record as many sounds as we can.

Huang laoshi: Definitely! BoomBox, you can record whatever you want!

BoomBox: I CAN RECORD WHATEVER I WANT. I CAN RECORD WHATEVER I WANT.

[BoomBox samples and loops Huang laoshi's voice.]

Huang Laoshi: Okay, here goes!

(singing)

It's okay to say

How you feel today

I'm sad

(In Mandarin) 我很伤心 (Wǒ hěn shāngxīn)

I'm happy

(In Mandarin) 我很高兴 (Wǒ hěn gāoxìng)

(speaking) And then I tell my students... (in Mandarin) 你真棒 (ni zhen bang)! That literally means “you are really great”. We use it to say “good job” in the classroom!

Christina and Andrés: (in Mandarin) 你真棒 (ni zhen bang)!

Huang laoshi: Yep!

Christina: Hey Andrés... do you think we can sing Huang laoshi's song in Spanish?

Andrés: That's a *great* idea!

Christina and Andrés: (singing)

It's okay to say
How you feel today

Andrés: (singing) I'm sad

Christina: Estoy triste.

Andrés: (singing) I'm happy

Christina: Estoy feliz.

Huang laoshi: ¡Muy bien!

They all laugh!

Huang laoshi: Can I tell you one of my other favorite things about being a language teacher?

Christina and Andrés: Yes!

Huang laoshi: One time, I was on a field trip, and one of my kindergarteners turned to her dad and started speaking to him in Mandarin. Both of them suddenly looked shocked, and he couldn't understand her, but also, she had totally surprised herself. She didn't even realize she was speaking Mandarin! [Christina and Andrés: Huh.] It made me feel like I'm helping them and their families open a door to a whole new world!

BoomBox: THINK IN A NEW LANGUAGE. OPEN A WHOLE NEW WORLD, A WHOLE NEW WORLD! A WHOLE NEW WORLD! A WHOLE NEW WORLD! LANGUAGE CAN OPEN A WHOLE NEW WORLD!

Andrés: Well that settles it: we want to open all the doors! To all the rooms! With all the languages! Today! Forever! We will sing in Mandarin!

Christina: (laughing) Yes Andrés, I think we might actually be able to write a song that combines English, Spanish, and Mandarin!

Huang laoshi: I think you can, too. And if you need help translating anything into Mandarin, let me know!

Christina: Thanks so much for the offer Huang laoshi, I think we will take you up on it. And now, we're gonna head back to the cafetorium and work on this. We'll see you later at the show!

[Transitional music. Students talking in the cafetorium. School bell ringing. Christina tapping microphone, feedback.]

Christina: Hello students! Thank you so much for having us at your school! For our first song, we wanted to have some words in Mandarin. So to help us, please welcome language teacher, and our new friend, Huang laoshi!

Andrés: Come on down Huang laoshi!

[Students applauding.]

Huang laoshi: (Welcoming everyone in Mandarin) 黄老师: (普通话) 首先, 感谢各位的到场支持, 也很荣幸能够见到我们的特邀嘉宾。众所周知, 他们都是非常优秀的人才。让我们有请Christina和Andrés, 欢迎你们来到咖啡厅舞台!

Andrés: Hit it BoomBox!

BoomBox: (singing)

It's time for school

Let's learn Mandarin

To unlock different cultures

And speak with my friends

It's time for school

Our language teacher's here today

So open up your ears

And learn a language with me

Let's learn Mandarin!

Huang Laoshi: “Hi, how are you?”: 你好 (Nǐ hǎo)

Your turn!

Students: 你好 (Nǐ hǎo), 你好 (Nǐ hǎo).

Huang laoshi: Good job!

Huang laoshi: “Friend”: 朋友 (Péngyǒu)

You try!

Students: 朋友 (Péngyǒu), 朋友 (Péngyǒu).

Huang laoshi: That's it!

“Thank you”: 谢谢 (Xièxiè)

Now you!

Students: 谢谢 (Xièxiè), 谢谢 (Xièxiè).

Huang laoshi: You got it!

BoomBox: (singing)

La la la la la

It's time for school
Let's learn Español
Unlocking different cultures
It never gets old

It's time for school
Our language teacher's here today
So open up your ears
And learn a language with me

Let's learn Español!

Andrés: "How are you?": ¿Cómo estás?
You try!

Students: ¿Cómo estás? ¿Cómo estás?

Andrés: Good job!
"Friend": Amigo
Your turn!

Students: Amigo. Amigo.

Andrés: Good job!
"Thank you!": ¡Gracias!
Now you!

Students: ¡Gracias! ¡Gracias!

Andrés: Excellent!

BoomBox: (singing)

I'm so proud of you

Now you have some tools

To communicate with others

Learn about their point of view

[Applause.]

Christina: Yeah! Thank you so much for singing with us! And thank you Huang laoshi for helping us understand everything it takes to teach and learn new languages. It's so valuable to keep asking, "What's it like from their point of view?"

BoomBox: WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW? VIEW WOO-WOO! WHAT'S IT LIKE? WHAT'S IT LIKE FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW?

Andrés: Hey Jam Fam, do you remember 你真棒 (ni zhen bang)? It means "great job" in Mandarin! Let's all say it together. One, two, three!

Christina: Go!

BoomBox, Andrés and Christina: 你真棒 (ni zhen bang)!

Huang laoshi: 你真棒 (ni zhen bang)! Well done everyone! This was so much fun today. I loved meeting you all. And BoomBox, it was great meeting you too!

[BoomBox whistles.]

Andrés: We learned new words in Mandarin today and even taught the kids at this school some Spanish!

Christina: I'm glad we found a way to share our music with the students in a way that felt familiar to them!

Andrés: Me too! Thanks Jam Fam for your help clapping along!

Christina: Alright gang, we gotta head out to the next town! Jam on, Jammers!

Christina, Andrés, and BoomBox: (singing)

Jamming on the Job

Ja, Jamming

Jamming on the Job

Wooh Ooh

BoomBox/Pierce Freelon: (rapping)

Jamming on the Job is hosted by Andrés Salguero, Christina Sanabria and me

Pierce Freelon. I play BoomBox, yeah it's true

The three of us wrote the original song too

And Tony Chen played Huang laoshi

With Carly Ciarrochi on the writing and

Terence Bernardo on sound designing & mix with

Daniel Rinaldi with Aaron Keane rounding out the audio team

It's like a dream

With producer Isaac Klein

David Huppert EP

We produced this podcast outta Durham NC

And that's our show

Thank you for listening

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[Music fades]

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