

Imagine you are a 14-year-old English learner just arriving from a small, far away country. Today is your first day of 9th grade and you only know how to say “Good morning” and “thank you” in English. You have been dropped off at your new school that is so big, it feels to you like a small city to you. All of the buildings look the same and you cannot make out the meaning on any of the signs. There are students zooming by in every direction. They laugh and hug each other as they race by you. They are loud and happy; and they know where they are going. An adult spots you in the chaos, gestures for your schedule, and walks you to a freezing cold classroom where you enter and find an empty seat among the group. There are twice as many students here than you are used to. You know no one else speaks your language. They probably have never even heard of your country before. One boy points at you and whispers to his friend. You have never felt so alone. And your teacher begins . . .

This week we will discuss the theory of the brain’s natural learning systems and relate what we read to our students and our instruction.