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GLOSS Lessons in the Virtual Classroom: Improving a Language Learning Tool and Empowering Learners

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Technology Integration, Education Technology and Development

This study explored the effectiveness of the language-learning tool Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS) in improving listening comprehension and its perceived benefits for learner autonomy. Ten participants were enrolled in a two-month Spanish to Brazilian Portuguese language conversion program. The researchers utilized a mixed-method approach to gather participant input. The results revealed an improvement in several linguistic aspects of the learners' diagnostic profiles and suggested that GLOSS contributes to learner autonomy and provides motivation to continue target language studies. This study produced lessons learned and implications for future actions and research.

Keywords: *GLOSS, online learning, listening comprehension, learner autonomy*

INTRODUCTION

Numerous research studies focus on the quality of online learning, online teaching, and online course design (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). Given the rapid growth of virtual teaching environments supported by emerging technologies, online courses are becoming an increasingly popular and viable option for many adult learners (Lee, 2016). Recent studies of learner perceptions suggest that virtual and blended (hybrid) courses are effective and valuable. Students enjoy both the convenience and self-paced environment that virtual courses offer (Enkin, 2017).

One such tool, an online language-learning product, Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS), was developed by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). GLOSS is an open-source repository of foreign language (FL) teaching materials, with over 8,600 online lessons in 41 languages, covering various final learning objective (FLO) topics. The lessons are available through the DLIFLC website under the eLearning section (www.dliflc.edu/elearning) or directly from the GLOSS website (www.gloss.dliflc.edu).

Purpose of the Study

Learners can study a language independently by choosing from an abundance of online FL learning resources. Yet anecdotal evidence suggests increased benefits (notably proficiency and autonomy) through the continuous use of GLOSS lessons as either independent, self-paced learning modules or as supplements to an ongoing curriculum. This FL online tool has been widely used since its inception 20 years ago. As a result of changes stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, GLOSS has taken a leading role among FL instructors and students as a free, ready-to-use, open-source, authentic FL and culture resource. It reaches over 4,000 online users each day. Recent empirical observations have revealed that FL instructors have used GLOSS lessons in various ways to sustain and enhance students' language skills in the classroom, for homework assignments and as part of individual self-directed study or practice. Despite the significant virtual visibility of GLOSS, demonstrated by the large number of users and its continued popularity over the last two decades, there has been little research on the effectiveness of this online tool.

To address this research gap, GLOSS content developers undertook an action research study to (a) investigate the impact of GLOSS lessons on FL learners' listening comprehension proficiency and (b) understand learners' perception of GLOSS in improving their autonomy. The GLOSS developers' goal is to use the results of this study to improve GLOSS lessons and make them more beneficial for the FL learning community.

Research Questions

The research questions (RI) addressed in this study are:

R1: What is the impact of GLOSS lessons on FL learners' listening comprehension?
R2: What are learners' perceptions of GLOSS lessons as a tool to improve their autonomy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign Language Online Learning

This action research sought to examine the effectiveness of a FL-learning online tool. In the last several years, online learning supported by emerging technologies has become a popular and viable option for adult learners (Lee, 2016), as many technological advancements, such as online environments and mobile applications, have emerged to assist learners (Nushi, Shirvani,

& Baharmi, 2021). In 2020, the relevance of online learning became even more significant as the global pandemic situation necessitated moving face-to-face classes to a virtual setting (Karanfil, 2021). Specifically, in the field of FL education, learners are exposed to a wealth of online resources, authentic materials (Godwin-Jones, 2015), and technological advancements.

Online environments and mobile applications have emerged to assist FL learners, leading to substantial changes in language teaching and learning (Nushi, Shirvani, & Baharmi, 2021). Godwin-Jones (2015) explored the need for language learners to develop competence in searching, evaluating, and collecting online materials, tools, and services, suggesting that language teachers' goal was to enable and encourage learners to gain the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to become autonomous, culturally responsible participants in local and online learning environments. Similarly, Tour (2015) examined both learners' and instructors' attitudes toward FL online learning and found that the participants' digital mindsets, including assumptions about the affordances of digital technologies, shaped how they used digital technologies within and beyond the FL classroom.

For almost two decades, GLOSS lessons have been a readily available online resource for independent learners worldwide in enhancing and advancing their language skills, as well as for FL educators as supplemental material in the DLIFLC classroom. GLOSS lessons have emerged as one of the resources widely used by service members and government organizations in acquiring and maintaining FL competency, developing learner autonomy, and becoming life-long language learners. In 2020, the pandemic made online learning even more significant and relevant, leading to a direct impact on the use of GLOSS lessons. Within the constraints placed on language instruction by the pandemic, teachers researched effective alternative tools for teaching virtually (Karanfil, 2021). This resulted in an increased interest in the use of GLOSS lessons by independent learners and as part of a hybrid classroom environment. Thus, the benefits of GLOSS lessons warrant a closer evaluation as one of the most used tools in online FL learning for service members.

Autonomy in Language Learning

To examine the effectiveness of GLOSS lessons, this action research focused in great part on users' level of autonomy and motivation. In the past several decades, the concept of autonomy has been a central point of discussion in language teaching and learning. Such an emphasis derives from findings indicating that autonomous learners have better success in language acquisition (Benson, 2013). The autonomous learner is responsible for their own learning, has an active role in its planning, and can reflect on it, identifying strengths and weaknesses (Holec, 1981). Autonomy in language learning consists of learners' ability to take charge of their own learning and to detach themselves, achieving critical reflection, decision-making, and independent acquisition (Little, 1991). In her research focusing on the correlation between autonomy and motivation in a computer-assisted language-learning platform, Lee (2016) concludes that learners' autonomy is directly related to their ability to improve or maintain their level of FL proficiency.

Studies have emphasized the importance of creating favorable learning conditions in virtual settings to cultivate learners' interest and autonomous learning (Lee, 2016). Even though GLOSS lessons have been successfully used in various resident DLIFLC programs as supplementary

material for classroom instruction, or as a part of a hybrid curriculum, the fundamental purpose of the GLOSS program is to serve independent, autonomous learners. Learners can choose lessons based on their topic of interest and areas that they need to improve while gaining confidence in becoming autonomous learners. Each interactive lesson uses authentic materials tailored to enhance users' listening or reading comprehension at a specific level and for a particular need. GLOSS lessons contain hints, notes, and feedback, making learners feel that a teacher is guiding them through the learning process while completing a lesson. Thus, the carefully designed tasks and the methodology used in developing GLOSS lessons are aimed at increasing users' autonomy in their FL learning process.

Little (2003) argues that learner autonomy is critical for at least three reasons. The first is that if students actively participate in their learning, they may be more efficient and effective. The second is that when students are actively engaged in learning, they become motivated to learn, enabling them to overcome the problems associated with a lack of motivation. The third is the nature of languages themselves: learning a language requires effective communication, which involves many complex skills, such as listening comprehension, only developed by actively using the language in natural communication. In addition to reading lessons, the GLOSS platform offers thousands of listening lessons in different languages and on various topics and levels of proficiency.

Listening Proficiency

This study focused on FL learners' listening comprehension skills. Listening comprehension lies at the heart of language learning but is undoubtedly the least understood and least researched language learning skill (Vandergrift, 2007). It is also the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most challenging skill to learn (Ghaderpanahi, 2012). According to Sejdiu (2017), listening comprehension is essential to second language (L2) learning because students who can demonstrate L2 listening skills are also able to demonstrate proficiency in other language skills. Language learning depends heavily on listening and listening tends to provide the foundation for all language acquisition/learning facets and plays a life-long role in the communication process. Sejdiu (2017) continues his assertion that the use of Computer-Assisted Language Learning programs has been heralded as an effective means of developing and enhancing language skills among L2 learners.

Online listening lessons have added a new layer of utility that contributes to learners' overall FL comprehension. A study by the National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan revealed that extended online thematic listening tasks might constitute a dynamic forum that fosters significant listening comprehension, test performance, and learning strategies (Sun, Chang, & Yang, 2011). The three most essential elements in online listening materials are the opportunity for learners to receive immediate feedback, their exposure to the same topic from multiple perspectives, and a chance to practice listening skills at the learner's own pace using technology that features user control over script delivery and speech speed (Sun, Chang, & Yang, 2011).

Researchers also agree that computers provide an excellent medium for balancing the analytic or form-focused study of language with a synthetic or content-focused learning environment (Ortenberg & Boussalhi, 2004, 2006). Computers combine auditory, visual, and textual information with interactivity. All of this allows GLOSS to recreate context, provide

conceptual support, and reduce stress by allowing students to work at their own pace. Additionally, the GLOSS methodology employs learning strategies and features that help learners develop their listening skills, for example providing slower, studio-recorded versions of relevant audio segments as well as audio hints in preparation for a listening task.

METHODOLOGY

This study followed a mixed-method design. Quantitatively, it measured learner proficiency by collecting and comparing Online Diagnostic Assessment (ODA) entry/exit listening comprehension scores, Diagnostic Profile parameters, and the results of a Likert scale questionnaire at the end of the course (Appendix A, Part A). The qualitative data consisted of information gathered through open-ended questionnaires in which the study participants answered questions targeting their perceptions of GLOSS (Appendix A, Part B, and Appendix B). Upon approval of the research proposal by DLIFLC's Scientific and Ethics Review Board, the researchers collected quantitative and qualitative data.

Participants

Ten participants enrolled in a two-month online Spanish to Brazilian Portuguese conversion course taught by a DLIFLC instructor. The course design focused on beginner Portuguese learners who tested at level 1 to 1+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale. Participation in the language program was voluntary and based on the learners' professional interest and personal availability. All 10 participants completed every step required for the action research, including providing their input for the study.

Program

During the two-month Spanish to Brazilian Portuguese conversion course, the participants interacted with the instructor, with 40 hours of synchronous class combined with 40 hours of tailored self-directed learning. In the synchronous part of the course, the participants had two 90-minute sessions per week with the instructor. For the 40 hours of asynchronous instruction, the participants used GLOSS lessons as customized homework assignments. The available GLOSS lessons were taken from a pool compiled by the instructor based on the participants' current proficiency levels and developmental needs. After completing each GLOSS lesson, the participants provided feedback to peers and the instructor during the synchronous sessions.

The course was learner-centered, with learning resources chosen by the participants in accordance with needs and interests. Each participant selected a project on which to work. Afterward, they provided a plan that included the suggested material (namely GLOSS lessons) for their projects.

Instruments

The study used three instruments to collect data: (a) the Online Diagnostic Assessment (ODA); (b) the Learner Questionnaire (Appendix A); and (c) the Instructor Observation Questionnaire (Appendix B).

Online Diagnostic Assessment

The ODA is a fully automated, adaptive, web-based diagnostic assessment tool developed and maintained by the DLIFLC. The assessment is formative and thus distinct from summative tests that usually measure outcomes at the end of the learning process. The primary outcome of the ODA system is the Diagnostic Profile, which provides a snapshot of an individual's demonstrated abilities and needs in a specific language modality or skill. The user's Diagnostic Profile provides feedback about tasks and subskills the individual can perform. More importantly, it shows what tasks and subskills are most difficult for the learner. ODA can be accessed through the DLIFLC website under the eLearning section (www.dliflc.edu/elearning) or directly through the ODA website (https://oda.dliflc.edu).

Learner Questionnaire

The learner questionnaire consisted of two parts: (a) Likert scale questions to indicate the degree of agreement/disagreement with statements addressing the learner's perceptions of GLOSS; and (b) text fields for responses to open-ended questions about the experience of using GLOSS.

Instructor Observation Questionnaire

The instructor observation questionnaire consisted of two parts: (a) Likert scale questions to indicate the degree of agreement/disagreement with statements addressing the perceived results of a learner using GLOSS; and (b) text fields for responses to open-ended questions about the experience of using GLOSS.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

R1: What is the impact of GLOSS lessons on FL learners' listening comprehension proficiency?

The study collected and analyzed the learners' Listening Comprehension ODA test scores and Diagnostic Profiles to measure learner progress quantitatively. The profiles revealed a noticeable improvement in listening comprehension skills in three different categories: (a) Content Questions, which measured the learner's ability to understand main and supporting ideas in an audio segment; (b) Linguistic Questions, which measured the learner's ability to

understand vocabulary, structure, and discourse; and (c) Speech Processing, which assessed the learner's ability to understand vocabulary and delivery.

Generally, there was an overall proficiency increase in all categories, as shown below:

- Content Questions: 100% of results showed an increase in the learners' ability to understand the main idea and supporting ideas in an audio segment.
- Linguistic Questions: 92% of results showed an increase in the learners' ability to understand the vocabulary, structure, and discourse in an audio segment.
- Speech Processing: 75% of results showed an increase in the learners' ability to understand delivery and vocabulary in an audio segment.

The learners' ability to understand the main idea and supporting ideas increased by 19%, from 64% to 73%. The area of Linguistic Questions saw the most significant improvement, with a 28% increase. The learners' ability to understand vocabulary, structure, and discourse improved from 64% to 92%. There was a noticeable increase in Speech Processing, where the learners' ability to understand delivery and vocabulary increased by 19.5%, going from 60.5% to 80% (see Table 1).

Table 1
Pre-/Post-ODA Profile Analysis (N=10)

Type of Tasks	*Pre-test Score*	*Post-test Score*
Content Questions	64%	73%
Main idea	66.0%	79.0%
Supporting idea	62.0%	68.0%
Linguistic Questions	64%	92%
Vocabulary	58.5%	88.5%
Structure	70.5%	88.3%
Discourse	66.7%	100%
Speech Processing	60.5%	80%
Delivery	63.5%	74.5%
Vocabulary	58.5%	86%

Research Question 2

R2: What are learners' perceptions of GLOSS lessons as a tool to improve learner autonomy?

Learner Questionnaire Results

The purpose of the learner questionnaire was to collect information about 1) the learners' perceived benefits of using GLOSS for independent study (homework assignments), and 2) how it affected their autonomy. At the end of the course, the learners completed a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, indicating the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with seven

statements (Appendix A, Part A); they then had the opportunity to answer two open-ended questions (Appendix A, Part B).

Perceived Benefits of GLOSS Lessons

According to the participants' perceptions (see Figure 1), GLOSS lessons' highest impact was on their motivation to continue target language (TL) studies (4.7). Other impacts included: an intent to continue using GLOSS for independent studies (4.6); increased confidence in using the TL and increased ability as autonomous learners (4.4); improvement in the ability to use appropriate learning strategies and in overall language proficiency (4.3); and an increased ability to understand the TL culture (4.1).

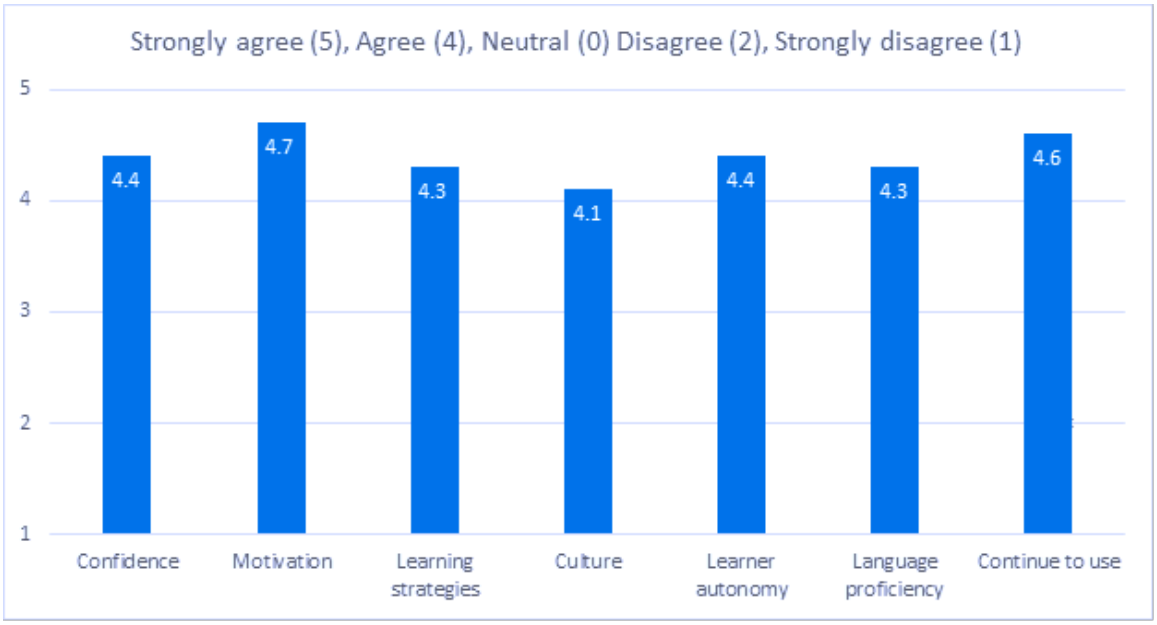

Figure 1

Learner Questionnaire about the Impact of GLOSS Lessons on FL Learners' Autonomy and Affective Factors

In addition, responses to the open-ended questions supported the benefits of using GLOSS lessons for independent study. Recurring feedback from the participants indicated that independent learners commonly used GLOSS to engage in self-paced study, analyzing learning material beyond the lexical and structural analysis. The flexibility, manageable length, and variety of GLOSS lessons' FLO topics provided the users an opportunity to learn, which made them more interested in learning. The participants found the audio components of the lessons and the Teacher's Note feature to be most beneficial. Both provide valuable information on the TL culture. Below is a summary of the participants' perception of the GLOSS lessons:

- Four learners mentioned the benefits of the Teacher's Notes, as they provide extra information and important cultural, historical, and grammatical insights for each lesson.

- Three learners noted the broad spectrum of varied topics available for independent studies.
- Two learners mentioned that the GLOSS lessons provide valuable information about the TL culture.
- Two learners noted that the audio components of the GLOSS lessons helped them better piece together lesson elements and comprehend lesson content in more manageable ways. They also mentioned that glossary components, which provide recordings of words and expressions, helped with pronunciation accuracy and broadened their vocabularies.
- Two learners mentioned the benefits of the flexibility to use GLOSS lessons anytime and anywhere, making the self-paced aspect of the program invaluable. One learner noted the manageable length of lessons, allowing the user to remain focused; this made GLOSS lessons easy to fit into a professional schedule.
- One learner noted that breaking down and dissecting an entire lesson from multiple angles on the GLOSS platform helped reinforce TL learning objectives.

As for the general benefits of GLOSS, one learner wrote, “Overall, I found GLOSS to be a very accessible and effective tool for my learning. I absolutely plan on using it to keep the skills I have sharp and learn new ones.” Another learner wrote, “I was very impressed with the GLOSS lessons. Amazing tool/resource for language sustainment.”

Perceived Areas of Improvement

On the questionnaires, the learners suggested the following improvements to GLOSS lessons:

- Add more lessons with videos at ILR levels 1 and 1+.
- Slow down some of the audio recordings for lower-level lessons so that users can hear word boundaries.
- Add more higher-level lessons (ILR levels 2+ and 3) for all topics, especially those related to the military.
- Provide more links/material in the Resources part of GLOSS lessons so that users can research additional information related to the lesson topic.
- Improve GLOSS website functionality on government systems, such as Non-Secure Internet Protocol Router (NIPR).

Instructor Observation Questionnaire Results

The purpose of the instructor observation questionnaire was to collect data about the instructor’s observations of the perceived benefits the learners may have gained by using GLOSS lessons for independent studies (homework assignments) and the extent to which that use affected learner autonomy. At the end of the course, the instructor completed a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. She indicated the degree to which she agreed or disagreed with six given statements and provided comments about her observations related to each statement.

According to the instructor's observations, GLOSS lessons for homework assignments had the highest effect on the learners' autonomy and motivation to use GLOSS lessons (5.0). The instructor further indicated that the learners' ability to use appropriate learning strategies and understand the TL culture and their overall language proficiency increased significantly (4.7). Lastly, the instructor observed increased learner confidence due to the use of GLOSS for independent studies (4.5).

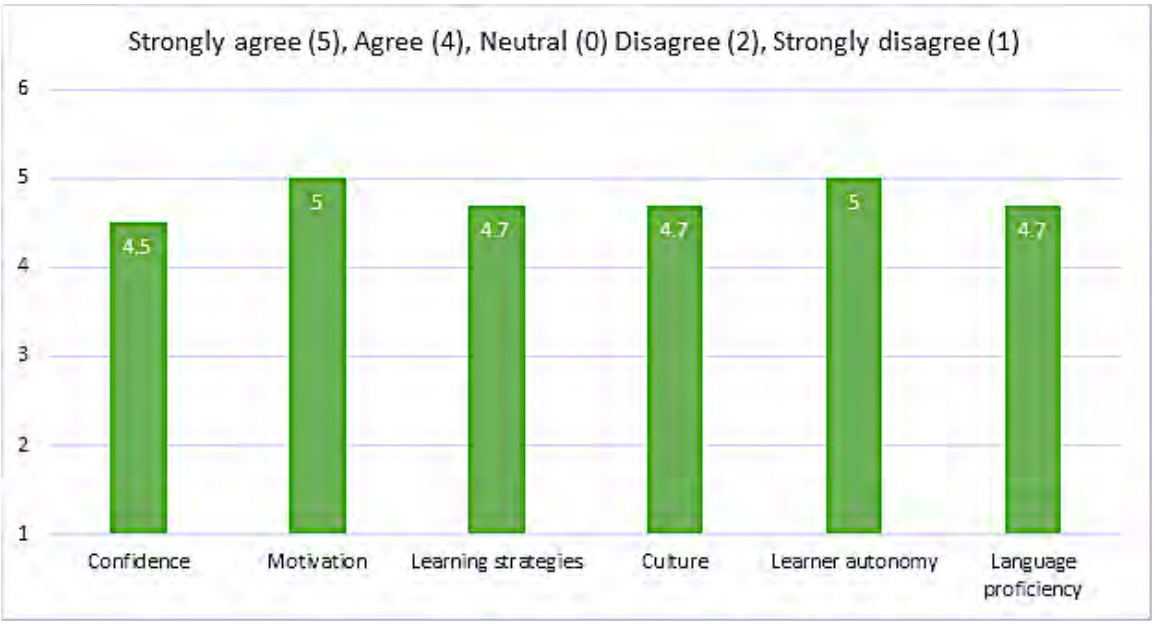

Figure 2

Instructor Observation Questionnaire about the Impact of GLOSS Lessons on FL Learners' Autonomy and Affective Factors

In the open-ended question section of the questionnaire, the instructor attested to the benefits the learners gained from using GLOSS lessons for their independent studies and the considerable extent to which those lessons increased the learners' overall language proficiency. According to the instructor, learner presentations at the end of the course were comprehensive and successful; this was primarily attributed to using GLOSS lessons as resources for special projects.

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

ODA results answer Research Question 1 affirmatively, corroborating the claim that when combined with other materials presented in class and synchronous instruction, GLOSS lessons increase learners' linguistic proficiency. One of the reasons for this claim is that GLOSS methodology focuses on three main linguistic features embedded in all lessons: lexicon, structure, and discourse. ODA measures these same linguistic features under the Linguistic Questions section. In addition, GLOSS lessons approach teaching listening comprehension from a

paralinguistic perspective, emphasizing content and the format of language delivery (Ortenberg, 2006). Finally, another important factor is that the lesson design pushes learners to their next level of proficiency by providing a contextualized sequence of listening comprehension strategies, which helps learners overcome challenges to improving their listening comprehension skills.

As fast delivery rates of speech samples tend to be one of the most significant obstacles that impede ILR level 2 comprehension, online listening materials have several advantages that can flatten the learning curve for language learners (Sun, Chang, & Yang, 2011). Listening comprehension strategies used in GLOSS lessons include audio hints, shortened segments, and various studio recordings designed for lower-level learners.

Research Question 2

To foster autonomy, teachers need to use affective strategies, such as reducing learner anxiety and encouraging learners to monitor their own stress and emotions (Lee, 2016).

The results of the participant questionnaires support the researchers' claim that the use of GLOSS lessons contributes to learner motivation and autonomy, two crucial factors for maintaining and improving FL proficiency. Both are instrumental in developing life-long, independent learners (Enkin, 2017; Lee, 2016; Little, 2017). This finding is also consistent with the consensus among scholars that motivation and autonomy are critical factors in the learning process (Lee, 2016). The instructor's observations correlate with the perceived benefits of using GLOSS lessons as reported in the participant questionnaires, thus further supporting the researchers' claim that GLOSS lessons may positively influence learner motivation and autonomy.

The findings coincide with recent studies on learner perception, suggesting that hybrid and online courses are effective, primarily due to the convenience and self-paced environment they offer (Enkin, 2017). Additionally, the findings match the notion that learners should be aware of their own learning through self-management and self-determination (Little, 2007). Language learners need to create stimulating learning conditions to cultivate interest and their ability to learn autonomously (Lee, 2016).

Lessons Learned

Increasingly, action research has become part of educational research and curriculum development projects (Feldman & Minstrell, 2000). From the perspective of the GLOSS content developers, the study's primary purpose was to examine the benefits of GLOSS lessons for independent language learners, with the goal of gaining valuable information for improving the effectiveness of GLOSS lessons for future users. In that context and based on the input provided by the participants in the study, the researchers identified the following areas for GLOSS developers to give focused attention to in their lesson design:

- Include as many explanations and as much supplementary information as feasible, targeting a broad range of learning styles and learner proficiencies.
- Provide appropriate sociocultural notes to minimize the need for users to seek information.

- Develop a wide variety of lesson levels, topics, and modalities, particularly those at higher ILR levels (2+ and 3).
- Offer alternative audio recordings for listening lessons as they provide additional resources for different user levels.
- Provide meaningful illustrations that help users cope with the unknown features of a lesson.
- Continue updating the GLOSS lesson bank with the most up-to-date and diverse FLO topics.

Limitations and Future Research

The study had several limitations. One was the small number of participants, as the study was limited to 10 learners from the two-month Spanish-Portuguese conversion course. According to Hatch and Farhady (1982), at least 30 participants are needed for a sample to have a reasonably normal distribution. Additionally, working with a longer-duration language course would have produced more robust results, especially related to Research Question 1.

The questionnaires used for collecting data were a mix of quantitative and qualitative instruments and are subject to several criticisms, including response bias. The research could have generated results with a higher level of reliability had interviews been used as a qualitative instrument to complement the questionnaires. Therefore, these study characteristics require significant attention when attempting to generalize beyond this sample of participants.

Future research might focus on several additional avenues of inquiry. The present study would inevitably benefit from examining a larger group of GLOSS users with varying proficiency levels in different languages. Future studies could also utilize more diverse instruments such as interviews with users, focused classroom observations, and users' pre- and post-Defense Language Proficiency Test results. Additionally, it is advisable to observe other groups of users such as more seasoned linguists, fully autonomous learners, DLIFLC basic course learners, or a combination of low-, mixed-, and high-level language proficiency users.

Lastly, as it is challenging to attribute proficiency improvements solely to GLOSS lessons, research design in future studies should include both an experimental group (learners exclusively using the GLOSS lessons for their task-based projects) and a control group (learners not using GLOSS lessons for their task-based projects). Moreover, to increase research validity, researchers should randomly select experimental and control group participants.

CONCLUSION

Online learning is increasingly becoming an established practice in FL education. As a significant player in adult FL education, the DLIFLC takes an active role in this direction with its GLOSS platform of online interactive lessons. This study focused on the impact of GLOSS lessons on FL learners' listening proficiency and the degree to which learners perceived GLOSS lessons as beneficial for autonomy. The study concluded that using GLOSS lessons as independent homework assignments and classroom instruction might positively impact learner listening

proficiency, mainly in vocabulary, language structure, and discourse. The results also showed that GLOSS lesson use may positively affect learner autonomy and motivation to study the language further.

The results of this study and their application in FL educational settings will be increasingly relevant due to the unmistakable rise of virtual learning and how it is shaping post-pandemic education.

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APPENDIX A

Learner Questionnaire

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to capture your perception of the improvement of your foreign language autonomy and proficiency as a result of using GLOSS lessons.

	A. Based on your experience using GLOSS lessons for homework assignments, please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements by placing an X under the corresponding choice.	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neutral*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
	As a result of using GLOSS lessons:					
1.	My **confidence** in using the target language has increased.					
2.	I am more **motivated** to continue my target language studies.					
3.	My ability to **use appropriate learning strategies** has improved.					
4.	My ability to **understand the target language culture** has increased.					
5.	My ability as an **autonomous learner** has increased.					
6.	My **overall language proficiency** has improved.					
7.	I am likely to continue using GLOSS for my **independent studies** in the future.					

B. Based on your experience using GLOSS lessons for homework assignments, please answer the questions below:

1. What aspect of GLOSS lessons was most valuable for your independent studies?

2. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about using GLOSS lessons?

APPENDIX B

Instructor Observation Questionnaire

The purpose of the following questionnaire is to capture your perception of the improvement of your students' foreign language autonomy and proficiency as a result of using GLOSS lessons.

	Based on your experience assigning GLOSS lessons for homework to FL students, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by placing an X under the corresponding choice.	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neutral*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
	As a result of using GLOSS lessons:					
1.	Student was **confident** in using GLOSS material.					
	Comment:					
2.	Student was **motivated** to use GLOSS material.					
	Comment:					
3.	Student's **ability to use appropriate learning strategies** has increased.					
	Comment:					
4.	Student's ability to **understand the target language culture** has increased.					
	Comment:					
5.	Student's **autonomy** has improved.					
	Comment:					
6.	Student's **overall language proficiency** has increased.					
	Comment:					

Digital Breakout Games for Virtual Language Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Games have long been incorporated into foreign language teaching to spice up students' learning. The advent of new technologies has afforded digital games common tools in language classrooms. According to Reinhardt and Sykes (Reinhardt & Sykes, 2012; Sykes & Reinhardt, 2012), there are three different types of digital games in language learning: *game-enhanced*, *game-based*, and *game-informed*. *Game-enhanced* uses games designed for entertainment purposes, also known as commercial off-of-the-shelf (COTS) games. For instance, the vernacular game *World of Warcraft* is utilized to enhance English language learning. *Game-based* involves the use of educational games, or serious games. A widely discussed example is the Spanish language game *Croquelandia*, simulating a study abroad experience, which was designed specifically to enhance learners' abilities in performing requests and apologies in Spanish. *Game-informed* integrates gameplay principles into instructional activities by adding gamification. For example, we can gamify a grammar lesson by adding levels, points, or challenges. Some online technology platforms such as *Quizlet* or *Kahoot!* are typically leveraged during this process.

With their dynamic, multimodal, playful, and immersive environment, digital games have been hailed as bringing greater pedagogical potentials (Reinders, 2016). Gee (2009) viewed digital games as "problem solving spaces that use continual learning and provide pathways to mastery through entertainment and pleasure" (p. 65). Some empirical studies have indicated that students' language development is positively correlated with digital game playing. One study reported that compared with non-game players, game players significantly increased their target language vocabulary knowledge and output by 40% (Rankin, Gold, & Gooch, 2016). Other studies proved that players showed a higher degree of lexical sophistication, lexical diversity, and syntactic complexity in their target language production (Peterson, 2011; Thorne, Fischer, & Lu, 2012), and that their intercultural competence was increased because of being exposed to the sociocultural context fabricated into the digital games (Piirannen-Marsh & Tainio, 2009; Zheng, Young, Wagner, & Brewer, 2009). Some empirical studies investigated the cognitive and affective benefits and found that digital games lowered students' anxieties, and served as a powerful catalyst driving students' motivation, engagement, and autonomy (Chik, 2014; Reinders & Wattana, 2016).

Despite the many learning benefits presented in literature, when it comes to the implementation of digital games in language teaching, especially in the context of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), there are some inevitable challenges and

limitations. The COTS games are hard to fit into our curriculum, considering their misalignment with our learning objectives and student learning needs. Serious games, on the other hand, can be tailored to specific learning and curricular needs, but they are rarely available because of high financial costs and other constraints. Whereas there are many online game platforms available to gamify language learning, their drawbacks are the limited functionalities restricting us to providing mostly basic-level vocabulary and grammar enhancement. Taking the predicament into consideration, this paper intends to (1) introduce and characterize a new type of digital games—digital breakout games—through various examples created in a virtual Chinese class; (2) explain how digital breakout games, by offsetting the limitations, can increase student engagement, promote critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities, and thus enrich and enhance game-based learning; (3) demonstrate how to design digital breakout games for students of varying levels with DLIFLC-licensed tech tools.

CHARACTERIZING DIGITAL BREAKOUT GAMES

Real-life escape room games, rooted in commercial adventure-style video games, challenge groups of players in a locked room to team together to find clues and solve puzzles to get out before time runs out. This type of game was introduced and popularized to education by Breakout Education[1] since 2015. Like escape room games, digital breakout games are set in a variety of digital venues from prisons to libraries to space stations and employ a myriad of themes or scenarios such as a zombie breakout (Kroski, 2019). In this paper, digital breakout games are used as an umbrella term to refer to games that can engage students in an immersive online experience and simulate a series of puzzles to be solved, challenges to be overcome, adventures to be taken, and escapades to be carried out in a digital space.

Prensky (2001) posited that most digital games involve rules, goals and objectives, outcome, feedback, conflict, competition, challenge and opposition, interaction, and the representation of a story. Likewise, a digital breakout game is composed of the following essential elements:

- *Theme*. The theme refers to the settings and scenarios that a particular digital breakout game encompasses; for example, it can be a treasure hunt game or a prison break. The theme determines the overall layout of the game, as well as the tasks or challenges going along with it.
- *Narrative*. It comprises the backstory that sets the scene and tone for the game, and the storytelling that immerses students in the scenarios and informs them of the structure of gameplay so that students know what to expect throughout the game. Short paragraphs, coupled with images and/or videos, can constitute the narrative.
- *Puzzles or challenges to be solved*. The puzzles or challenges can be task-oriented or content-based. Whichever they are, they need to be aligned with the learning objectives and student proficiency levels.
- *Locks and clues*. Just like a live escape room game, locks are set for each challenge or puzzle to simulate the real-life experience and increase excitement. For the sake of language learning, the locks can range from words and idioms to proverbs. It is necessary to leave clues to help students open the locks.

- *Incentives throughout the game*. They refer to victory signs saying "Congratulations" or "You are awesome" or tangible rewards such as a digital badge or trophy to award students when they successfully complete a challenge or solve a puzzle to enhance and sustain their motivation.

Table 1 demonstrates specific examples of digital breakout games with different themes that the author created for students with the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) levels 2^+ or 3 in reading and listening in a six-week online intermediate Chinese course.

Table 1
Examples of Different Digital Breakout Games in a Virtual Chinese Class[2]

	Game Description	***Learning Goals***	***FLO Topics***
#1 Treasure Hunt	Students uncover the treasure by successfully completing all the challenges along the route of their choice.	Expand students' linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge by exploring Chinese cities with rich history and culture that are less known to them.	Geography, Culture, History, Society
#2 Time Travel	Students travel back to an ancient Chinese dynasty of their choice to learn about the culture, society, customs, arts, and literature, and solve a series of problems.	Increase students' general understanding about ancient China.	Culture, Society, History, Literature
#3 The Grand Master	Students play the role of the grand master and apply their knowledge of ancient Chinese military tactics to win the warfare.	Familiarize students with ancient Chinese stratagems and enable them to apply in new situations.	Military, Politics, Economics, Culture
#4 The Detective	Students play the role of the detective in a crime scene and solve the crime.	Enhance students' problem-solving abilities through analyzing and evaluating information.	Society, Science & Technology, Culture
#5 Escape Query	Students escape from the digital space by answering questions correctly & solving problems.	Assess and consolidate students' learning from previous games.	All the above

It can be seen from the table that each digital breakout game has a different theme, focusing on specific learning goals and covering a multitude of FLO topics. *Treasure Hunt* and *Time Travel* are similar games, both involving students in simulated adventures. *The Grand Master* and *The Detective* are role-play games in different scenarios. The last game *Escape Query* is designed to assess and consolidate students' learning from the previous games. These five digital breakouts are more than stand-alone games. In fact, they are woven into a bigger complete game in narratives; after students successfully uncover the treasure (*Treasure Hunt*),

with the magic power of the treasure, they can choose to travel to an ancient Chinese dynasty, where they have opportunities to learn about ancient Chinese history, society, art, literature, and even learn from ancient military grand masters (*Time Travel*). Students need to apply the knowledge they gained from the grand masters to win the war and travel back to modern times (*The Grand Master*). Because of their excellent problem-solving skills demonstrated in the previous game, students are hired to investigate a crime scene, and hence *The Detective* game. After they help solve the criminal case, unfortunately they are framed by their antagonists and are locked up in a room where they need to escape (*Escape Query*). These digital breakouts progress gradually, learning in the previous game building the foundation for the continued learning in the next game. In this sense, they are level-up games.

Example: The *Treasure Hunt* Game

Taking *Treasure Hunt* as an example, the following illustrates the layout of the digital breakout created with the technology tool *WebQuest* in *BookWidgets*. This game engages students in locating the treasure in Tibet after successfully completing all the challenges in four different cities while traveling to Tibet. The game starts with a pitch inviting students to the treasure hunt journey, and a knowledge test about Tibet, where students need to get all the answers correct to obtain the password to unlock the journey (Figure 1). The knowledge test assesses students' sociocultural knowledge about Tibet they previously acquired in class.

Figure 1
Game Introduction

It is immediately followed by a detailed description of the rules and tasks in the game, and two different routes to Tibet for students to choose (Figure 2). In the Task Description, it tells students that on their long train journey to Tibet, they will have stopovers successively in four cities where they need to complete the challenges. When they successfully complete all the challenges in one city, they will be rewarded with a golden key and clues for the password to open the challenges in the next city. After they obtain four golden keys, they will be able to open

the treasure box when they arrive in Tibet. They can choose to go to Tibet between Route A presenting Chinese cities that literary and arty young people like to travel to and Route B featuring cities with a long history.

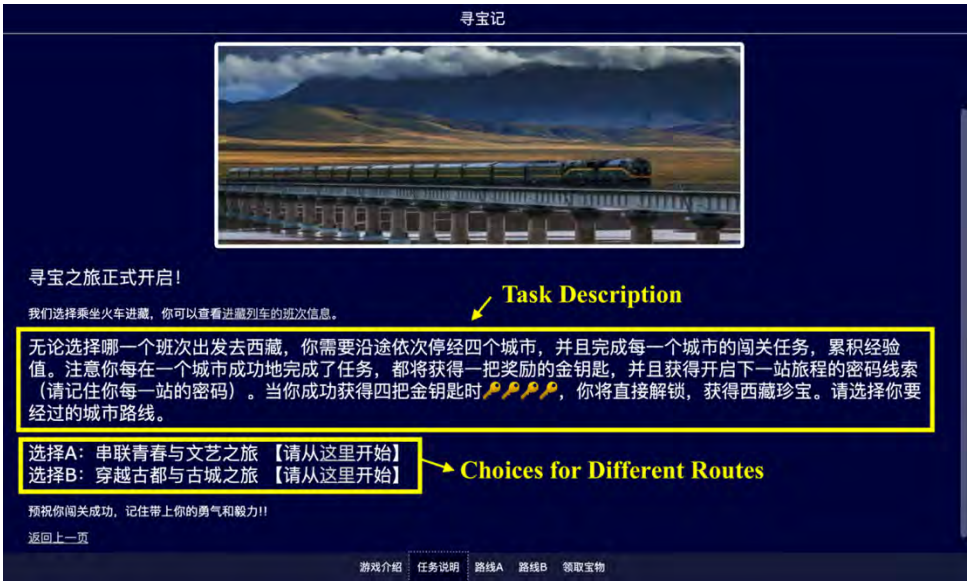

Figure 2
Task Description

Each route, after a brief introduction, four cities are listed in a sequence along with the map indications (see Figure 3 for an example of Route A). Students can click on the left sidebar to go to the four cities one after another, or they can click at the bottom of the page where it says “Click HERE to continue” to start with this route.

Figure 3
Route A Introduction

When students go to the individual city, they see a brief introduction of the city followed by a widget for challenges in the city (Figure 4). Students need the password from the knowledge test to open the widget for the challenges in the first city; after they overcome the challenges, they obtain a password for the second city. This continues until they reach the last city where they are given the password to open the treasure box.

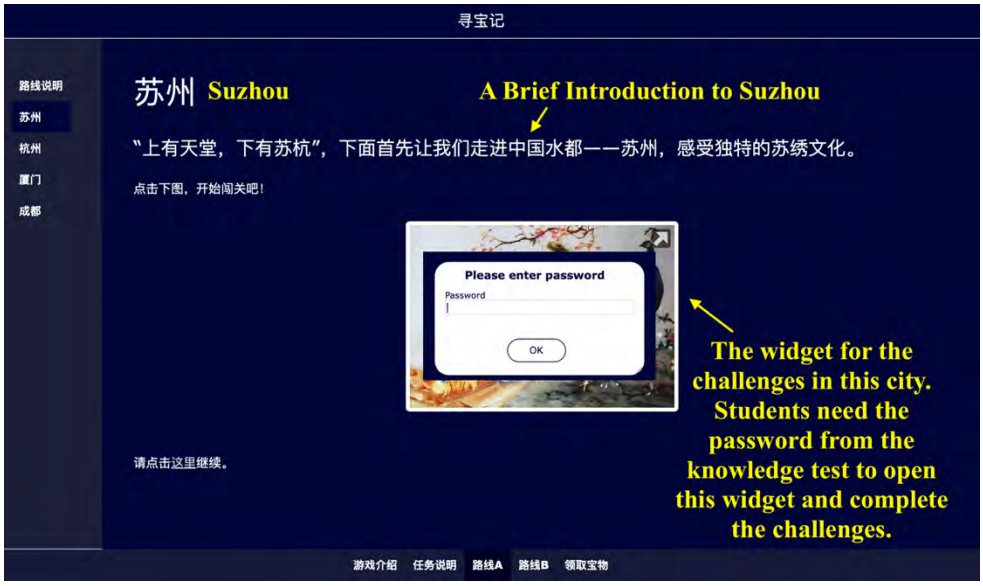

Figure 4

Suzhou City: Introduction and Widget for Challenges

Taking the challenges in Suzhou city as an example, students need to watch two short videos about the traditional *Su* embroidery and answer the questions accordingly. They get automated feedback immediately. If they answer all the questions correctly, as indicated in Figure 5, they receive victory signs as well as the clues for the password to open the challenges in the next city.

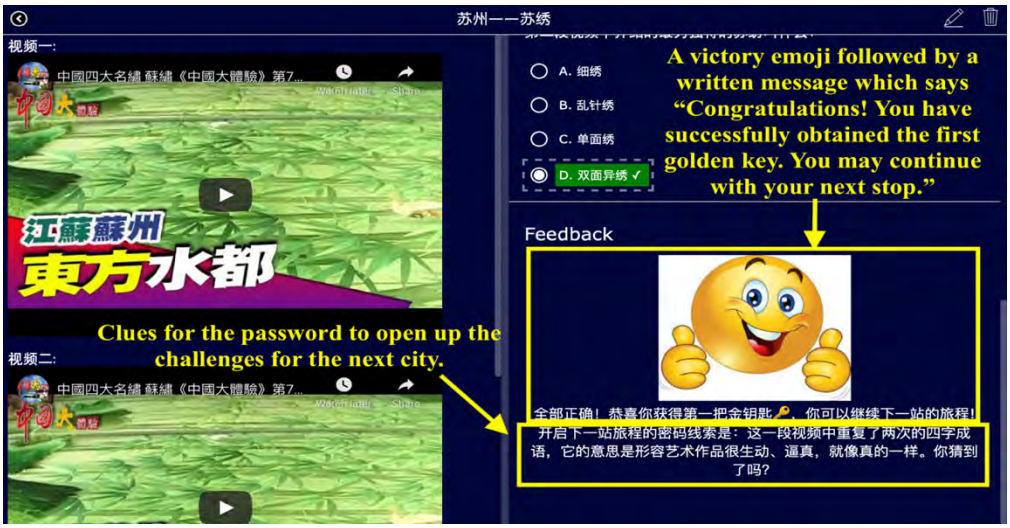

Figure 5

Automated Feedback for the Challenges

After successfully completing all the challenges in the four cities and obtaining four golden keys, students finally reach the destination page as indicated in Figure 6, where they will be awarded with a congratulatory sign and the privilege to use the password given in the last city of either route to open the treasure box. Students are also reminded that with the magic power of the treasure, they now can time travel and to continue with the next game.

Figure 6
Claim the Treasure

Benefits of Digital Breakout Games

These digital breakout games, though lacking the sophisticated look and feel of COTS games, provide pedagogical values in addition to fun and enjoyment for students. They can be customized for different learning purposes such as content mastery, content enrichment, or even as alternatives for assessment. They are easily accessible and are not bound by time and expense. With the rich gameplay design and features, they expose students to a variety of immersive and authentic situations calling for more than vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Adventure games weave puzzles and challenges into interactive stories requiring reasoning and problem-solving skills. Role-play games allow for scenario-based learning where critical thinking and decision-making skills are exercised. In *Escape Query*, a multitude of puzzles and questions are set up to test students' improvement in knowledge and skill. With these evident advantages, digital breakout games enrich and enhance game-based learning.

Additionally, digital breakout games accommodate the learning characteristics of our millennial and centennial students. Described as digital natives (Autry & Berge, 2011; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010), millennials and centennials, who were born into the world where technology is omnipresent, demonstrate the need and ability to consume information with technology. It is also notable that they are big gamers. Statistics indicate that one in three millennials in the United States play digital games every month (Team CGK, 2019). Digital breakout games, built with higher complexity, can captivate students with gaming experiences. Students are naturally drawn

to those playful games. Therefore, digital breakout games may contribute to student engagement and achievement.

From a theoretical point of view, digital breakout games are conceptualized and designed based on a social constructivist learning approach (Vygostsky, 1978). They involve learners in the knowledge construction process by engaging them in real-time experiences of advancing through challenges and solving problems. Students are called to apply the new knowledge gained in complex situations, and consciously think, analyze, and evaluate the information to break out. Their learning is constantly reinforced through the immediate feedback that they receive throughout the game. Students' zone of proximal development is also supported by interacting with their peers and getting scaffoldings from the teacher.

DESIGNING DIGITAL BREAKOUT GAMES

Design Process

The design of a digital breakout game involves the following steps, based on the author's experiences in creating the digital breakout games as shown above:

Step 1: Determine the goal. Digital breakout games can be exploited to introduce new learning content, support content mastery, expand the learning breadth and depth, or serve as alternatives for assessment. Deciding on the overall goal that a digital breakout game can fulfill helps the game developer to maximize its learning effectiveness and efficiency.

Step **2**: Formulate learning objectives and develop learning content. Once the goal is determined, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) learning objectives can be mapped out. The learning objectives, along with students' interests, needs, and proficiency levels can help select and design the learning content.

Step 3: Decide on the game genre and technology. A game genre is a specific category of games, and it is tied closely to gameplay characteristics. Different game genres can be used for various learning objectives. For example, an adventure game lets students interact with the learning content and unlock the game piece by piece, whereas a strategy game, like *The Detective*, requires students to evaluate the information and solve problems. After deciding on the specific game genre, it is essential to select the technology tool or platform to configure the game. During this process, understanding the technology affordances and limitations of that tool or platform is the key. Always be prepared to make compromises and come up with a plan B.

Step 4: Transform the learning content into games. Essential game elements need to be considered in carrying out this step. Butler's (2016) suggestions may shed some light on this. He put forward four essential game elements: *engagement, autonomy, mastery, and progression*.

- *Engagement* aims at connecting students with the content, and providing storytelling, narratives, and challenges. The storytelling and narratives need to be captivating to hook students' interests and be authentic and personal in a way to invite students to enter the virtual world.

- *Autonomy* is characterized by allowing students to make their own decisions in the gaming process, and to explore the virtual world at their own pace. This requires the game navigation to be relatively predictable, simple, and user-friendly.
- *Mastery* refers to the opportunities offered to students to practice, consolidate, and apply the newly gained knowledge. This can be incorporated into the design of challenges or puzzles.
- *Progression* is the reward given to students to keep them motivated until they reach the final goal. The reward can be integrated as part of the feedback.

Authoring Tools

The authoring of a digital breakout game centers around these aspects: (1) the overall layout, for instance, the pages or sections in a game, the navigation, etc.; (2) creation of the narrative and storyline; (3) configuration of challenges and password; (4) feedback provision. In Appendix, step-by-step instructions, with an emphasis on these four aspects, are provided to demonstrate how to leverage DLIFLC-licensed tools including *WebQuest*^{3} in *BookWidgets*, *Microsoft Teams*, and *Class Notebook* to design digital breakout games for students of varying levels. The *Treasure Hunt* game is used as an example to illustrate the steps.

CONCLUSION

Although various digital games have been incorporated into language education at the DLIFLC, there still exist challenges and limitations. This paper aims to resolve the challenges and offset the limitations by introducing digital breakout games. It first presents a definition of digital breakout games and summarizes their essential elements based on literature studies and the author's teaching practices. Then it discusses the benefits of digital breakout games and concludes that digital breakout games, with their evident advantages when compared with other digital games, align with the constructivist learning theory and the learner characteristics of our millennial and centennial students, focus on students' higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, and thus can help increase student engagement and enhance game-based learning. This paper also provides a practical four-step process in designing digital breakout games and introduces how to create digital breakout games for students of varying levels via DLIFLC-licensed tools including *WebQuest* in *BookWidgets*, *Microsoft Teams*, and *Class Notebook*.

NOTES

1. Breakout Education, founded in 2015, provides immersive Breakout kits in every subject area and grade level for K–9 subscribed teachers. The official website address is https://www.breakoutedu.com. It is noted that a free account does not have access to digital game packs, the digital game creator, or student accounts.

2. The digital breakouts listed in the table were primarily used as supplemental materials in addition to the core teaching materials to expand the breadth and depth of students' content learning. Students engaged in one game per week starting from Week Two.
3. For detailed step-by-step configuration of a digital breakout game with *WebQuest*, please check out the demo video created by the author: https://youtu.be/-sCA0XNYIZs.

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APPENDIX

Authoring Tools for Digital Breakout Games

The following are instructions on using DLIFLC-licensed tools, including *WebQuest* in *BookWidgets*, *Microsoft Teams*, and *Class Notebook,* to design digital breakout games.

WebQuest

WebQuest is one of the widget builders in the Test and Review category in *BookWidgets*. It allows for the insertion of texts, images, videos, website links, and other widgets created in *BookWidgets*. The Tabs function in *WebQuest* can be utilized to configure the general flow or layout of the game. Different digital pages can be created by adding new tabs. For example, as indicated in Figure A, four different tabs were created for the *Treasure Hunt* game. These tabs will automatically appear at the bottom of the homepage and students can click on any tab to go to a different page.

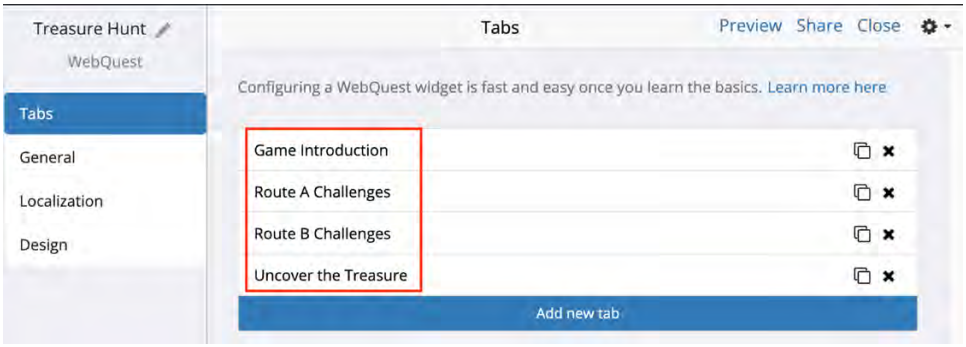

Figure A
Layout Configuration in WebQuest

Inside each tab, texts, images, videos, etc. can be inserted to create the narrative and storyline. Please refer to Figure 1 for an example of a combination of texts and images to set the scene for the *Treasure Hunt* game. To ensure smooth and easy navigation among different tabs, internal links can be built. This can be done by first selecting the text and then right click to choose

the pound sign (#) and a drop-down menu will appear for you to select the tab to relate to the text (see Figure B).

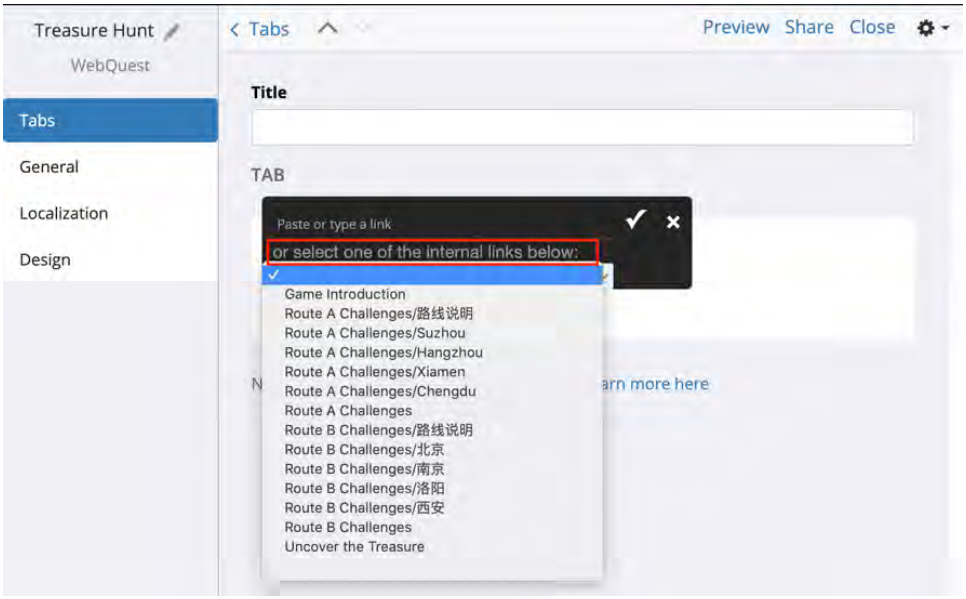

Figure B
Set up Internal Links in WebQuest

Challenges or puzzles can be designed with other widget builders such as Worksheet, Split Worksheet, Quiz, Split Whiteboard, etc. in *BookWidgets* and then be embedded in *WebQuest*. Some widgets like Split Worksheet can be created with a Startup Password so that students need to obtain the password before opening the challenges. To set up a startup password, when creating the widget, go to General on the left toolbar and click on “Startup password” to input the password and set the requirements (see Figure C).

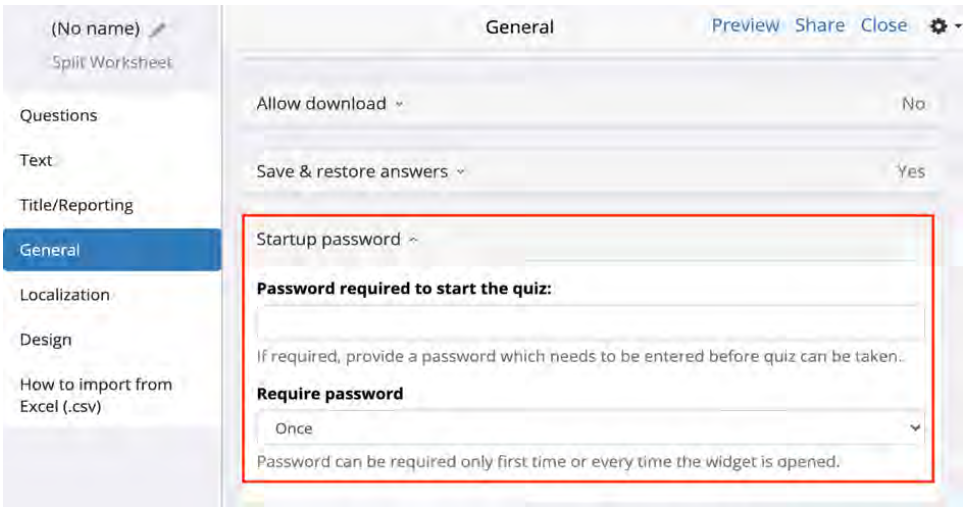

Figure C
Set Startup Password

Automatic instant feedback, rewards such as victory signs or sounds, and clues for the password can be configured within the widgets for students to see once they complete a challenge. As shown in Figure D, feedback can also be set up under the General setting. Specific and targeted feedback with texts, images, sounds and clues can be provided in the "Show feedback" based on the scores chosen.

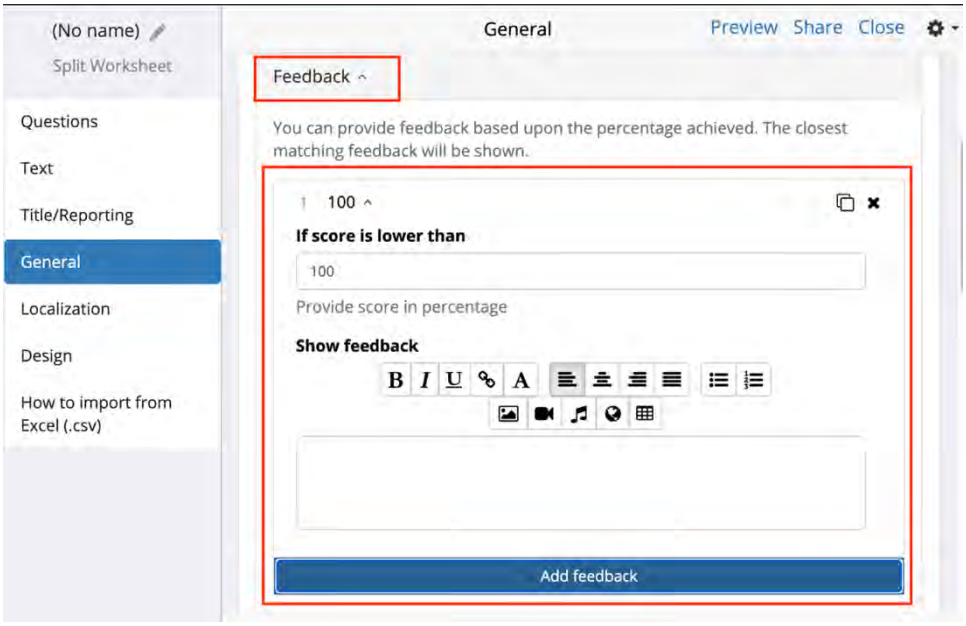

Figure D
Automatic Instant Feedback

Microsoft Teams and *Class Notebook*

Private channels in *Teams* and sections in *Class Notebook* can be employed to create the flow or layout of different digital breakout games. They serve the same purpose as the tabs in *WebQuest*. The following (Figure E) indicates how the *Treasure Hunt* game is configured in *Teams* and *Class Notebook*.

Figure E

Game Layout in MS Teams and Class Notebook

Like that in a widget configuration, a password can be set up for each private channel or section, enabling students to first find the password before opening the challenges. As shown in Figure F, to set up a password for a channel in *Teams*, select Private in Privacy setting when adding a channel; and similarly, go to Password Protection under View in *Class Notebook* to create a password. It is noted that any digital breakout game configured through *Microsoft Teams* require the teacher's help during the gaming process, specifically, the teacher needs to add students to the private channel, whereas in *Class Notebook* or *WebQuest*, students can navigate the game on their own.

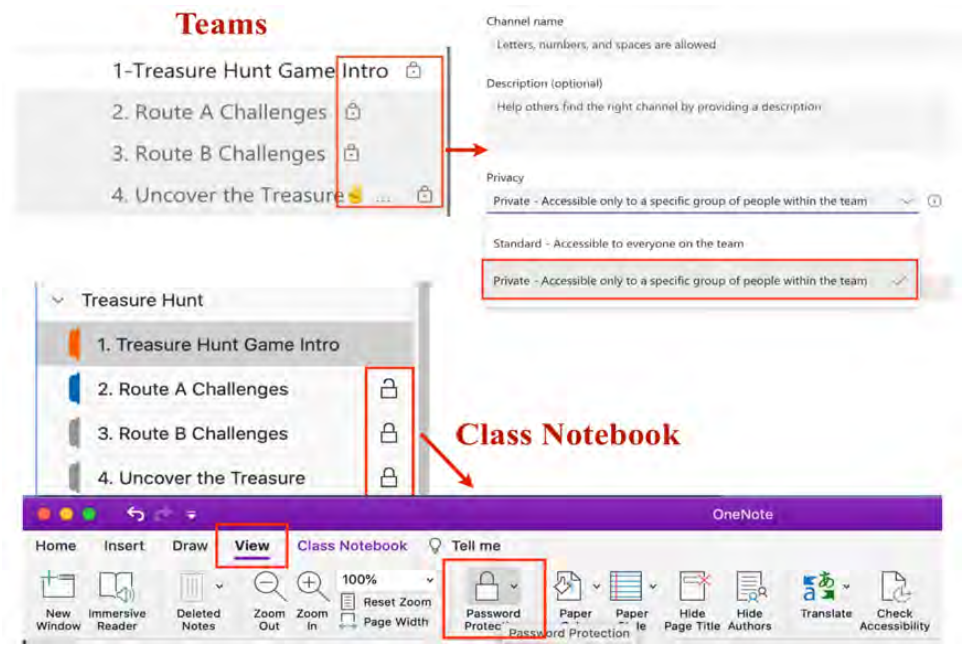

Figure F

Layout Configuration and Password Setup in Teams & Class Notebook

The narrative, storyline, and challenges can be laid out within the private channel in *Teams* or in different Pages included in the Sections. If a challenge is created via a widget, the link of that widget can be added in *MS Teams* or it may be inserted in the Page in *Class Notebook*. The challenge questions can also have the option of being directly created in the Page in *Class Notebook* without configuring into a widget. Instant automatic feedback and rewards can be given to students when a challenge is designed via a widget; otherwise, the teacher must manually provide feedback and rewards to students.

Designing Effective Syllabi and Flexible Curricula for Post-basic Courses

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Linguist Next

A refresher course at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center is a short-term language training session that prepares post-basic course students who seek improved scores on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT 5). Accordingly, it requires an effective syllabus (Scope and Sequence) and a flexible curriculum to maximize their chances to succeed. It must be adaptable to meet the needs of learners. This action research explores the effectiveness of instructional materials and a syllabus designed for a refresher course for a Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) post-basic class, conducted from 3 January to 8 February 2019. The study's sample consisted of a four-student class. Prior to the course, a baseline assessment was conducted to ascertain the students' pre-intervention language proficiency levels. Based on the results of the assessment, a six-week intervention training was conducted using tailored instructional materials with a syllabus. The intervention was effective because the four students obtained significantly higher DLPT 5 scores in listening and reading than they had on prior attempts.

Keywords: *syllabus, effective, flexible, assessment, intervention, instructional materials, design*

INTRODUCTION

The goal of a refresher course for post-basic course students at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) is to prepare them to pass the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT 5) with improved scores. The course is six-weeks in length of approximately 170 instructional hours and commences with a pre-course test of listening and reading. A course designer or an instructor designs the syllabus and selects instructional materials to meet the course's final learning objectives (FLOs). Smith and Ragan (2005) define the FLO as "what learners should be able to do when they have completed a segment of instruction" (p. 96). According to them, three aspects of learning outcomes are involved: 1) terminal behavior—the actions that learners perform to demonstrate understanding; 2) demonstration conditions—the tools or information that learners are given when they demonstrate learning; and 3) the

standards or criteria that demonstrate the extent to which the learner performs to be considered proficient.

A curriculum is multifaceted, including needs analysis, goals, objectives, desired outcomes, implementation, procedures, resources, and assessment. It is a schematic of educational experiences for learning in and out of the classroom. A syllabus, in comparison, as Andreou (2008) has posited, is a particularization of the core of an instructional course, listing the topics that are instructed and tested. In other words, it is an integral aspect of a precise and thorough procedure. Berardo (2007) defines a syllabus as a subdivision of a curriculum that involves scope, purpose, particularity, planned application, specification of instructional materials, the designer, and the group of learners. This paper intends to explore two questions: 1) How may one design an effective syllabus and a flexible curriculum? and 2) What are the contents of an effective syllabus and a flexible curriculum?

LITERATURE REVIEW

To answer the questions, this study starts with definitions of effective syllabi and flexible curricula. Jonker, März, and Voogt (2020) define a flexible curriculum as an adaptable and accessible instructional program that adapts to learners with various needs, processes, choices, preferences, and abilities. Leaver, Davidson, and Campbell (2021) refer to it as an open architecture curriculum (OAC), a basic principle of the transformative language learning and teaching (TLLT) model, which they initiated to attain advanced degrees of proficiency. It includes tailored and authentic materials to be used as early as possible, an immersive learning setting, personal transformation, and formative assessments. The central goals of the TLLT model "are personal transformation that results in bilingual and bicultural competence and learner autonomy" (p. 43). As a subcomponent of the open architecture curriculum, an effective syllabus is theme-oriented and problem-based, in terms of specification, authenticity, selection, and tailoring of the instructional material.

In the framework for materials writing principles, Jolly and Bolitho (2011) argue that "materials writing is at its most effective when it is turned to the needs of a particular group of learners" (p.128). In this sense, a material developer conducts a needs assessment to determine the type of instructional materials that the learners need to meet the goals of the final learning objectives. Ragan and Smith (2005) suggest the adoption of one of the two needs-analysis models, the *problem-based* or the *innovation-based*, or both. The problem-based model determines the existence of a real problem as the first step. The second step determines "whether the cause of the problem is related to employees' performance in training environments or to learners' achievement in educational environments" (p. 45). The model then decides if training for these learning goals is currently provided. By contrast, Ragan and Smith's (2005) innovation-based model establishes the nature of the innovative change as well as the learning goals that go with such innovation. Accordingly, the model assesses whether these goals are relevant and a top priority within the learning structure.

Aladdin (2016) argues that a course designer must conduct needs analysis to decide the specific final learning objectives. Considering the subjective needs of learners is essential, i.e., to determine their interests, desires, presuppositions, and inclinations. The learners' needs enable

the course designer to make decisions about the goals and content of the language course. Even after the pre-course development, Aladdin (2016) believes that needs analysis remains as an "on-going process" to improve and develop a language training program.

Similarly, the outcome of needs analysis determines the type of intervention. Batsche, Castillo, Dixon, and Forde (2008) state that the first step of intervention starts with identification of the problem. As linking the assessment and intervention is critical, the process of implementing "effective interventions" requires a significant amount of training, skill development, and supervised practice" (p. 191). One of the key components of intervention is using effective instructional materials.

Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) argues that the most effective instructional materials are those that are based on a thorough understanding of the needs of the target learners, such as "their individual language challenges, learning objectives, and preferred learning styles" (p. 163). These variables should be considered when developing instructional materials.

In practice, instructors are often involved in material development. Becoming responsive to learners' needs fosters learner-centered settings, making instructors capable material developers and researchers. Supporting this, Parsaiyan, Ghajar, and Sohrabi (2020), state that designing instructional materials offers instructors the possibility to reflect on, innovate, and create better instructional and learning settings. Moreover, developing instructional materials gives instructors professional growth, strength, and experience. Material development, as Graves (2000) argues, "means creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities so that students can achieve the objectives that will help them achieve the goals of the course" (p. 150). Graves (2000) asserts that 15 aspects must be considered to ensure the effectiveness of language-learning materials.

Table 1

*Aspects of Ensuring the Effectiveness of the Materials Developed for a Language Course**

Learners	***Learning***
1. Make relevant to their experience and background. 2. Make relevant to their target needs (Outside class). 3. Make relevant to their affective needs.	4. Engage in discovery, problem solving, analysis. 5. Develop specific skills and strategies.
Language	***Social Context***
6. Target relevant aspects (grammar, functions, vocabulary, etc.). 7. Integrate four skills, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. 8. Use/understand authentic texts.	9. Provide intercultural focus. 10. Develop critical social awareness.
Activity/Task Type	***Materials***
11. Aim for authentic tasks. 12. Vary roles and groupings. 13. Vary activities and purposes.	14. Authentic (texts, realia). 15. Varied (print, visuals, audio, etc.).

*Adapted from **(**Graves 2000, p. 156)

Accordingly, Graves (2000) asserts that a critical aspect of developing materials depends on making superior choices. In other words, a developer cannot include everything in the course; therefore, appropriate choices should be made in selecting the materials in accordance with what the learners must learn to achieve the course goals and the final learning objectives.

Arguing in this regard, Howard and Major (2004) state, "it is impossible for teachers to teach their learners all the language they need to know in the short time that they are in the classroom" (p. 53). To maximize the effect of instructional materials, Howard and Major (2004) assert, besides the necessary language skills, the materials should provide the learners with learning strategies, assisting them to make use of the existing opportunities for language learning outside of the classroom. They suggest that the materials should explicitly link what is known to the learners' native language and culture, and, more importantly, alert learners to remarkable cultural difference. Moreover, the instructional materials should "be contextualized to topics and themes that provide meaningful, purposeful uses for the target language" (p. 51). In addition, the selection of materials should be based on "their relevance and appropriateness for the intended learners, to ensure personal engagement and to provide motivation for dipping further into the materials" (Howard & Major, 2004, p. 51).

Beyond relevance and appropriateness, Manurung (2017) argues that the authenticity of instructional materials assists learners to use the language authentically. Effective and quality authentic instructional materials, based on needs analysis, offer engaging learning settings by addressing learners' needs and motivating them to learn. Designing high quality instructional materials involves meaningful, interactive, and attractive activities that create an interesting and engaging learning environment in which "thinking, application, problem solving, and knowledge and skills construction" take place (p.118). The goal, according to Seyyedrezaie and Barani (2018), is to exhibit real-life language application in the way native speakers produce the language, and to assist learners in constructing the language within their own learning settings, based on their goals and the needs imposed by the specific circumstantial context.

METHODOLOGY

Taking the above literature into consideration, we conducted action research by tailoring instructional materials and designing a syllabus for a post-basic Modern Standard Arabic course that ran from January 3 to February 8, 2019. This is a qualitative study that examines the effectiveness of the syllabus and instructional materials. A qualitative study, as Williams (2007) states, is to purposefully describe, demonstrate, and analyze the collected data in an effective model appearing in a natural context that allows the experimenter to establish a volume of detail by being highly engaged in the existent background. The framework of the study is based on the problem, the setting, the concerns, as well as the acquired information (Williams, 2007). We generated data from direct contact with and observations of the participants. The procedure includes a pre-course assessment, intervention, and a post-course assessment applied. The aim is to generate evidence that answers the two questions posed earlier in the paper.

Sampling Method

Based on Moser and Korstjens's (2017) assertion, sampling represents the procedure of selecting a case, context, and setting of participants who offer useful data about the target phenomenon. In qualitative research, the sample is selected deliberately rather than randomly. Accordingly, the sample of this study was selected deliberately from an MSA post-basic-course class that consisted of four students who graduated from the Sudanese Basic Course in 2016 and intended to take the Modern Standard Arabic DLPT 5 Test (Listening and Reading) in 2019. The placement of the participants in this class was based on their most recent DLPT scores.

Their pre-course language proficiency in MSA was assessed as level 2 in listening and reading, according to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scales. The students' pre-course proficiency level and their linguistic background play a vital role in determining the type of instructional materials appropriate for their improvement to the next proficiency level. Based on this determination, instructional materials were designed to address the needs of this target group. Such a process supports Jolly and Bolitho's (2011) materials writing principles, i.e., instructional materials development is more effective if it is tailored to what the target learners need.

Measures

To collect student language proficiency data, a pre-course diagnostic assessment was conducted in listening and reading skills. The diagnostic assessment, according to Jimola and Ofodu (2019), is a mechanism used to determine the appropriate time and method for applying remedial instruction to learners through tailored and additional instructional materials. There are different assessment techniques to probe learners' skills prior to instruction, such as "observations, performance-based assessments, pre-tests, and interview-based assessments" (p. 36). Accordingly, this study conducted an online diagnostic assessment as a pre-instruction test to pinpoint the learner strengths and weaknesses.

The online diagnostic assessment (ODA) is a web-based system developed by the DLIFLC to assess learners' foreign language proficiency. The ODA scores showed that the four students were at level 2 in both reading and listening. In other words, the students demonstrated sufficient ability to comprehend authentic listening and reading texts for routine social demands, limited job requirements, and familiar topics; but they did not have sufficient linguistic experience in drawing inferences and grasping technical and unfamiliar topics because of inadequate active vocabulary and syntactical knowledge. Once the gap of insufficient linguistic knowledge was identified, the type of intervention was determined, i.e., tailored instruction and instructional materials.

Intervention

The intervention was six weeks of instruction, estimated at 170 instructional hours, focusing on listening and reading skills, which took place between January 3 and February 8, 2019. Batsche et al. (2008) state that the process of implementing effective interventions needs a

remarkable volume of training, skill improvement, and monitored practice. In our practice, intensive interventive training was offered every instructional day. The instructional day had six instructional hours that focused on one FLO topic, such as politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, or geography. For instance, the FLO topic for January 7 was military and security, whereas for January 8 it was society and culture.

The learner-centered instruction integrated speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in the first four hours, as the four primary skills are related. Aydogan (2014) observes that the style of communication, whether spoken or written, and the orientation of communication, whether receptive or productive, are two characteristics that relate to the four major language skills. Students' listening abilities improve when they listen to an audio or audio-visual segment and discuss the content orally, transcribe it, or take notes in the target language. Similarly, they improve reading skills when reading a text, taking notes in the target language, or filling in the blanks with information.

Having integrated skills is a basic element of proficiency enhancement, whether in task-based or content-based instruction. In the post-basic course, students discussed differentiated activities and tasks related to current news relevant to the FLO topic in the first instructional hour. In the remaining three hours, students were given listening and reading passages, then activities and tasks including comprehension questions, transcription, and translation. The complexity of the FLO topic determined the levels of the passages, ranging from levels 1+ to 3. The fifth hour was for self-study, during which students reviewed and reinforced the task-critical vocabulary and other information. In the sixth hour, students answered mock DLPT 5 Test questions, reviewed the homework of the previous day, and received new homework—more practice of mock DLPT 5 Test questions. At the end of every week, students received a performance report and discussed plans for improvement with the instructor if required. Additionally, students were given an opportunity to evaluate the instruction and the instructional materials in a written survey, reviewed and addressed by both the instructor and the management.

The syllabus of the course and the weekly schedules were given to the students at the beginning of every week (for details of the syllabus, see Appendixes A, B, C, D, E, F and G). As the syllabus shows, the course was divided into six weeks. The first week only had two days; the first was for the reception and orientation and the second for diagnostic assessment. The remaining five weeks were jam-packed with instruction, each day containing six hours of instruction. Whereas the format of the syllabus and schedule looked the same for the five days, the content was different—each day a new FLO topic was introduced with relevant activities and tasks.

Take Monday, January 7, 2019, as an example. The FLO topic was Military and Security. The first part, covered in one hour, was reading and listening passages on Israel's airstrike on Syria because of Hezbollah and Iran's activities against Israel from the Syrian territories. The second part took three hours, including tasks and activities. The first four hours of instruction were reflected in that day's lesson plan (see Appendix H), which included objectives, topics, materials, assessment, and instructional strategies. The activities and tasks focused on comprehension of the content, including open-ended and multiple-choice questions, filling in the blanks, filling information in a graphic organizer, translation, and speaking (see Appendixes I, J, K, L, M and N). The fifth and sixth hours were for self-study, homework review, and new homework assignment.

The FLO topics, the syllabus, and the lesson plan reflected the importance of making appropriate selection and prioritization of the learning content based on students' needs (Howard & Major, 2004; Graves, 2000). When learning new language and content, students were able to think about and improve their learning strategies. Moreover, the relevant and level-appropriate activities and tasks, characterized by contextualization, meaningfulness, and purposefulness in representing the intended language, motivate and engage students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the intervention, the students were given a mock DLPT 5 Test as an end-of-course exam. All four students scored an A in listening and reading. Several days later, they took the DLPT 5 Test.

Comparing the pre- and post-course assessment scores, the study suggests that the syllabus and instructional materials applied in the intervention plan were effective to help students achieve the goals and final learning objectives of the refresher course. The intervention plan began with accurate identification of the reality, nature, and cause of the problem and addressed it by providing a noteworthy amount of instruction, skill improvement, and practice. Similarly, the intervention plan made an appropriate decision in the creation, choices, adaptation, and organization of the instructional materials and activities that assisted the students to improve their proficiency.

Likewise, the intervention plan provided instructional materials tailored to the needs of the target group. These materials were topically and conceptually contextualized to offer meaningful, purposeful utilization of the language. More importantly, the material selection was based on the applicability and suitability for the target learners, to ensure personal involvement and to boost motivation for immersing deeply into the materials. As a result, post-course DLPT 5's listening and reading scores (2+/2+, 2+/2+, 2+/3, and 3/3) were higher than the pre-course scores (2/2, 2/2, 2/2, and 2/2), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Comparison of Pre- and Post-Course DLPT 5 Test Results

Student	***Skill***			
	Post-Course DLPT 5 Test Results		***Pre-Course Assessment Results***	
	Listening	***Reading***	***Listening***	***Reading***
1	3	3	2	2
2	2+	3	2	2
3	2+	2+	2	2
4	2+	2+	2	2

Limitations of the Study

Given the information shown thus far, it is reasonable to conclude that the syllabus of the refresher course, instructional materials, and intervention plan were successful. However, there are some limitations to this study. The sample size was limited and confined, which could have

biased findings and generalization. Second, the study concentrated on addressing issues rather than evaluating fresh teaching techniques and themes. Finally, the implementation of the intervention faced challenges because of limitation in time.

CONCLUSION

As the refresher course is a short-term training intended to prepare post-basic course students to perform better on the DLPT 5 Test, it requires an effective syllabus and a flexible curriculum that addresses the needs of the learners. Subsequently, a needs assessment was conducted to determine the type of instructional materials and syllabus that would help learners to meet the goals of the final learning objectives. Once the needs were determined, the course developer selected the FLO topics and proficiency levels for the materials and determined the appropriate tasks and activities. This selection was derived from what the learners need to learn and the focus and goals of the syllabus. Moreover, besides addressing the needs for language skills, the instructional materials and the syllabus should motivate the learners and provide the learning strategies that assist the learners to learn. As a result, MSA post-basic course class scored (2+/2+), (2+/2+), (2+/3), and (3/3) in the DLPT 5 listening and reading test, which shows that flexibility of the curriculum and the syllabus helped the learners to reach higher levels of language proficiency.

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APPENDIX A

Course Syllabus: Course Description, Objectives, Resources and Grading

Instructor:
Language: Modern Standard Arabic
Course Type: Refresher
Course Length: 6 Weeks
Course Duration: 01/03/2019-02/08/2019
Number of students: 4

Course Description:
This six-week refresher course is designed for post-basic course students aiming to improve their proficiency in the scope of reading, writing, listening, speaking, discussion, and reflection. The basic components of listening reading instructions facilitate strategies that enhance learners' critical thinking abilities, and vocabulary building. Through reading and listening to authentic materials in the form of current news and post-basic course curriculum, learners will practice and promote listening and reading strategies that improve their comprehension skills. The final learning objectives topics covered by these materials are politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, and geography and environment.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the course:
1. Students will be able to develop conceptual knowledge on politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, and geography and environment in the Middle East at level (2~2+) and above.
2. Students will be able to identify the problem (concrete) and propose some potential solutions and produce concrete language appropriate for (L2~2+) in describing the problem.
3. Learners will be able to discuss higher-order language topics of ILR Level 2 and 2+ engaging in variety of discussion topics related to politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, and geography and environment issues in the Middle East that satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often acceptable and effective.
4. Students will get acquainted with the necessary vocabulary related to politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, and geography and environment.
5. Students will use the new vocabulary in a communicative language to talk about politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, geography, and environment issues in the Middle East.
6. Students will enhance their performance skills in transcription, translation, and through notetaking about politics and economy, military and security, society and culture, science and technology, and geography and environment issues in the Middle East.
7. Students will increase their grammatical competence by reviewing variety of grammatical topics.
8. Students will be able to score higher grades in DLPT 5, reading and listening.

Course Resources:
1. Modern Standard Arabic Post-Basic Course Curriculum
2. Instructor Prepared Internet-based materials from Arab periodicals and satellite channels

End of Course Test Grading:

Letter Scale	Percentage	Grades Distribution	
A	93% and above	Test	75%
A -	90-92%	Homework	15%
B +	88-89%	Participation	10%
B	83-87%		
B -	80-82%		
C +	78-89%		
C	73-77%		
C -	70-72%		
D +	68-69%		
D -	60-67%		
F	59-50%		

APPENDIX B

Week 1: Course Outline and Schedule

	Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
01/03/2019 to	Thursday الخميس Friday الجمعة			Reception and Orientation استقبال وتوجيهات Online Diagnostic Assessment تقييم تشخيصي عبر الإنترنت		
	Skills			Listening and Reading		

APPENDIX C

Week 2: Course Outline and Schedule

	Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
01/07/2019 to 01/11/2019	Monday الاثنين	Military and Security عسكرية وأمن	Israeli bombing on Damascus. قصف إسرائيلي على دمشق. Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Hezbollah حزب الله Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 6	Self-study: Vocabulary and Phrases Review دراسة ذاتية: مراجعة مفردات وعبارات	Mock DLPT 5 Test Questions: Previous Homework Review and New Homework Assignment أسئلة امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع: مراجعة الواجب المنزلي السابق. وتحديد الواجب المنزلي الجديد.
	Tuesday الثلاثاء	Society and Culture مجتمع وثقافة	Full pay for Egyptian private sector employees on Christmas رواتب كاملة لموظفي القطاع الخاص في مصر في عيد الميلاد Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Celebrating (Eid-ul-Fitr) الاحتفال بعيد الفطر Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 1		
	Wednesday الأربعاء	Politics and Economy سياسة واقتصاد	Arab Development Summit in Beirut القمة العربية التنموية في بيروت Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Economic Projects in Some Arab Countries المشاريع الاقتصادية في بعض الدول العربية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 2 Unit 4		
	Thursday الخميس	Geography and Environment جغرافية وبيئة	Bahraini weather report for January 2019 تقرير حالة الطقس في البحرين لشهر يناير 2019 Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Desertification and Environmental Deterioration Issues قضايا التصحر وتدهور البيئة Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 2 Unit 9		
	Friday الجمعة	Science and Technology	Electronic War الحرب الإلكترونية Reading and Listening	Information and Communication Revolution		

			علوم وتكنولوجيا	قراءة واستماع Internet-based	ثورة المعلومات والاتصالات Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 2 Unit 6	
	Skills	Integrated: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing				

APPENDIX D

Week 3: Course Outline and Schedule

	Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
01/14/2019 to 01/18/2019	Monday الاثنين	Military and Security عسكرية وأمن	Assassination attempt against the Prime Minister and the mayor of Jerusalem محاولة اغتيال رئيس الوزراء ورئيس بلدية القدس Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Suicide Bombings and Other Terrorist Acts العمليات الانتحارية والأعمال الإرهابية الأخرى Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 2	Self-study: Vocabulary and Phrases Review دراسة ذاتية: مراجعة مفردات وعبارات	Mock DLPT 5 Test Questions: Previous Homework Review and New Homework Assignment أسئلة امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع: مراجعة الواجب المنزلي السابق وتحديد الواجب المنزلي الجديد
	Tuesday الثلاثاء	Geography and Environment جغرافية وبيئة	Weather news in the Arab World أخبار الطقس في الوطن العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Thirst in the Arab World العطش في الوطن العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 6 Unit 4		
	Wednesday الأربعاء	Politics and Economy سياسة واقتصاد	U.S. presidential elections الانتخابات الرئاسية في الولايات المتحدة Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Elections in the Arab World الانتخابات في العالم العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 10		
	Thursday الخميس	Science and Technology علوم وتكنولوجيا	The secret behind the birth of twins السر وراء ولادة التوائم Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Sextuplets, Septuplets, Octuplets—What's Next? ستة وسبعة وثمانية توائم--وماذا بعد؟ Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 5 Unit 5		
	Friday الجمعة			Field Trip رحلة ميدانية		
	Skills	Integrated: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing				

APPENDIX E

Week 4: Course Outline and Schedule

		Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
01/21/2019 to 01/24/2019		Monday الاثنين	Politics and Economy سياسة واقتصاد	Arab food security الأمن الغذائي العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Islamic Banking المصارف الإسلامية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 6 Unit 3		
		Tuesday الثلاثاء	Science and Technology علوم وتكنولوجيا	Cyber-attack on Saudi Arabia هجوم إلكتروني على السعودية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Science Fiction: A Literature Form or Scientific Need? الخيال العلمي: شكل أدبي أم حاجة علمية؟ Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 8 Unit 5	Self-study: Vocabulary and Phrases Review دراسة ذاتية: مراجعة مفردات وعبارات	Mock DLPT 5 Test Questions: Previous Homework Review and New Homework Assignment أسئلة امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع: مراجعة الواجب المنزلي السابق وتحديد الواجب المنزلي الجديد
		Wednesday الأربعاء	Society and Culture مجتمع وثقافة	Egyptian wins the Arab Theater Award مصر تفوز بجائز المسرح العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Theater in the Arab World المسرح في العالم العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 7		
		Thursday الخميس	Military and Security عسكرية وأمن	ISIS Attacks on northeastern Nigeria هجمات داعش على شمال شرق نيجيريا Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	The Mahdi Army جيش المهدي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 2 Unit 8		
		Friday الجمعة	Geography and Environment جغرافية وبيئة	Drought crisis in California, State أزمة الجفاف في ولاية كاليفورنيا Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	The Water Problem in the Arab World مشكلة المياه في العالم العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 8		
	Skills			Integrated: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing			

APPENDIX F

Week 5: Course Outline and Schedule

	Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
01/28/2019 to 02/01/2019	Monday الاثنين	Geography and Environment جغرافية وبيئة	Ahwaz: Geography and History الأحواز: الجغرافيا والتاريخ Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Yemen and the Horn of Africa Countries اليمن ودول القرن الإفريقي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 12	Self-study: Vocabulary and Phrases Review دراسة ذاتية: مراجعة مفردات وعبارات	Mock DLPT 5 Test Questions: Previous Homework Review and New Homework Assignment أسئلة امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع: مراجعة الواجب المنزلي السابق وتحديد الواجب المنزلي الجديد
	Tuesday الثلاثاء	Society and Culture مجتمع وثقافة	Minors' marriage in Saudi Arabia زواج القاصرات في السعودية 1 Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Marriage in 21st Century Arab Societies الزواج في المجتمعات العربية في القرن الحادي والعشرين Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع		
	Wednesday الأربعاء	Politics and Economy سياسة واقتصاد	Calls for President Bashir to step down نداءات مطالبة بتنحي الرئيس البشير Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Course 3 Unit 6 Chaos in the Sudan: Darfur and Other Challenges الفوضى في السودان: دارفور والتحديات الأخرى Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع		
	Thursday الخميس	Science and Technology علوم وتكنولوجيا	Medicine considering the digital revolution الطب في ظل الثورة الرقمية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Course 5 Unit 2 The future of politics and society considering the digital revolution مستقبل السياسة والمجتمع في ضوء ثورة التكنولوجيا الرقمية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع		
	Friday الجمعة	Military and Security عسكرية وأمن	Operation Decisive Storm عاصفة الحزم Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Internet-based Facing Terror مواجهة الإرهاب Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 5 Unit 6		
Skills			Integrated: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing			

APPENDIX G

Week 6: Course Outline and Schedule

02/04/2019 to 02/08/2019

Day	FLO Topic	Hour 1	Hour 2-4	Hour 5	Hour 6
Monday الاثنين	Science and Technology علوم وتكنولوجيا	Contagious Diseases الأمراض المعدية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Genetic Illnesses الأمراض الوراثية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based		Mock DLPT 5 Test Questions: Previous Homework Review and New Homework Assignment أسئلة امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع: مراجعة الواجب المنزلي السابق وتحديد الواجب المنزلي الجديد
Tuesday الثلاثاء	Military and Security عسكرية وأمن	U.S-led Coalition Jets attacks on ISIS in Syria هجمات طائرات التحالف بقيادة الولايات المتحدة على داعش في سوريا Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Joint-Combined Military Exercises in the Middle East التدريبات العسكرية المشتركة في الشرق الأوسط Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 2 Unit 2	Self-study: Vocabulary and Phrases Review دراسة ذاتية: مراجعة مفردات وعبارات	
Wednesday الأربعاء	Politics and Economy سياسة واقتصاد	The International Economic Forum in Switzerland المنتدى الاقتصادي العالمي بسويسرا Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Modernity and Globalization الحداثة والعولمة Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 4 Unit 6		
Thursday الخميس	Society and Culture مجتمع وثقافة	Divorce Rates in the Arab World معدلات الطلاق في العالم العربي Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Internet-based	Early Marriage in Some Arab Countries الزواج المبكر في بعض البلدان العربية Reading and Listening قراءة واستماع Course 1 Unit 4		
Skills	Integrated: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing				
Friday الجمعة	End of Course Mock DLPT 5 Test Listening and Reading امتحان تجريبي لإجادة لغة الدفاع لنهاية الدورة في الاستماع والقراءة			Graduation Ceremony مراسيم التخريج	

APPENDIX H

Lesson Plan for (1st-4th hour) Monday, January 7, 2019, Day 1 of Week Two

Instructor:
School:
Date: 01/14/2019
Language: Arabic
Lesson Title: Hezbollah
Time: 200 Minutes
Week of Instruction: 2
Topic: Military and Security
Subject Area: Terrorism
Number of students: 4
Skills Covered: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing (Integrated)
Source: Arabic Post-Basic Course, Course One, Unit 06 and www.france24.com

Learning Objectives:

General:

Learners will be able to discuss higher-order language topics of ILR Level 2 and 2+ engaging in variety of discussion topics related to military and security issues and terrorism in the Middle East that satisfy most work requirements with language usage that is often acceptable and effective.

Specific:

1. Students will be able to develop conceptual knowledge on military and security issues and terrorism in the Middle East. (L2)
2. Students will be able to identify the problem (concrete) and propose some potential solutions. (L2~2+)
3. Students will be able to produce concrete language appropriate for L2 in describing the problem.
4. Students will be able to participate in a debate that requires high L2/2+ in giving their opinion and trying to support it.
5. Students will be able to analyze the cause and impact of the consistent military and security issues and Hezbollah terrorism in the Middle East.
6. Students will get acquainted with the necessary vocabulary related to military and security issues and terrorism, to include that pertaining to Hezbollah.
7. Students will use the new vocabulary in a communicative language to talk about military and security issues and terrorism in the Middle East.
8. Students will enhance their performance skills in transcription, translation, and through notetaking about the topic of Hezbollah and other armed militias in Lebanon.
9. Students will increase their grammatical competence by reviewing the superlative forms, past and present tense in Arabic.

Major Vocabulary Words/phrases:

Arabic:

اخترق، نقلا عن، مرصد، تصدّى، شنَّ، جماعة شيعية، إسلامي شعوبي، حرب عصابات، متطرف، الأقلية الشيعية المحرومة، المفجرين الانتحاريين، إذعان، تفكيك الميليشيا، نزع السلاح، أدان، التكتيكات الإرهابية، أفلح، هجمات مزدوجة، وقت متزامن، الانبعاث الإسلامي، إلحاق أذى، أضرار فادحة، عمل خسيس، حصار

English:

Infiltrated, citing, observatory, confronted, launched, Shiite group, populist Islamist, guerrilla war, an extremist, the disadvantaged Shiite minority, suicide bombers, acquiescence, dismantling the militia, disarming, condemned, terrorist tactics, succeeded, double attacks, simultaneous time, Islamic revival, do harm, great damage, despicable action, siege

Major Grammar Points:

Arabic:

١. الفعل الماضي 2. الفعل المضارع ٣. المصدر ٤. صيغ التفضيل

English:

1. Present Simple Tense 2. Past Simple Tense 3. Verbal Nouns 4. Superlative Forms

Time	Strategy	Action	Instructional Aids and Materials Used
		1st Hour	
5 Minutes	Deploy attention to Lesson	**Lead-in: Warm-Up/ Brainstorming** (Pre-Reading and Listening Activities) Show a short authentic video clip related to Hezbollah maneuvers to brainstorm the class on the topic.	Computerized Board, Markers Post-basic Course Instructional Materials Tailored Instructional Materials
5 Minutes	Establish instructional purpose	**Presentation:** (Introduction of new material/content, input for learning) 1. Instructor introduces a news article and a news video clip to the class as a current event related to the FLO topic. 2. Instructor divides the classroom into two groups, Group (A) listens to the news video clip and Group (B) reads the news article.	Visual: news article Audio-visual: video clip
20 Minutes	Arouse interest and motivation	**Practice:** (Learner-centered practice, task-based activities, skill integration) 3. Students in both groups skim the texts for the main idea and scan for the main points. Then they answer the comprehension questions. **Information-Gap:** One student from each group goes to the other group and then the reshuffled groups fill out a graphic organizer by sharing their newly acquired knowledge.	
15 Minutes		**Production:** (Follow up: an opportunity to communicate and speak the target language freely) **4. Pair Work:** Based on the information acquired from the news article and video, students pair up to discuss and speak about Israel's attack on Syria explaining the reasons for the attack and the threats coming to Israel from Syria.	
5 Minutes		**Feedback:** 2. Instructor takes notes while the students are speaking and gives them feedback correcting the errors they made during speaking.	

		2^{nd}-4^{th} Hour	
10 Minutes	Deploy attention to Lesson	**Lead in: Warm-Up/ Brainstorming** (Pre-Reading and Listening Activities) Show a short video clip related to Hezbollah-Israel war in 2006 to brainstorm the class on the topic.	Visual: news article Audio-visual: video clip
10 Minutes	Establish instructional purpose	**Presentation:** (Introduction of new material/content, input for learning) 1. Instructor introduces FLO topic-related reading text and video clip to the class. 2. Instructor divides the classroom into two groups, Group (A) reads a reading text on Hezbollah and Group (B) listens to an audio clip on Hezbollah.	
80 Minutes	Arouse interest and motivation	**Practice:** (Learner-centered practice, task-based activities, skill integration) 3. Students in both groups skim the texts for the main idea and then scan it for the main points, and then answer the remaining comprehension questions.	
20 Minutes		**Information-Gap:** One student from each group goes to the other group and then the reshuffled groups fill out a graphic organizer by sharing their newly acquired knowledge.	
20 Minutes		**Production:** (Follow up, personalization, opportunity to communicate and speak the target language freely) **4. Pair Work:** Students pair up to discuss and speak about Hezbollah's threat to Israel, the roots of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict and the United States' policy towards the conflict. In Arabic, talk about the roots of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict, and how the conflict shapes the United States' policy towards Hezbollah and Iran. Upon completion, each pair writes and short paragraph on what they discussed orally.	
20 Minutes		**Feedback:** 2. Instructor's feedback and assessment.	

Assessment tools/strategies:

Content Questions - Guessing Meaning – Comparison - Discussion

Differentiated instruction strategies:

Content: Instructor prepared authentic materials listening and reading at levels 2, 2+, 3 from Arab media.
Process: Grouping students according to their learning strategies, personality, weakness, and strength.
Product: Producing a spoken language through group and pair discussion and speaking.

APPENDIX I

Sample Multiple-choice Questions

Draw a circle round the letter of the correct answer. Compare your answers with those of a classmate.

1. In addition to the military role that Hezbollah plays in Lebanon, it has a role in the ----------, ----------, and ---------- life.
A. Political
B. Social
D. Media
C. All the above are correct

2. Hezbollah never hides its ideological ---------- to the Islamic Republic of Iran regime and vilayet-e faqih.
A. Dispute
B. Linkage
D. Relationship
c. knowledge

ضع دائرة حول حرف الإجابة الصحيحة. قارن إجاباتك بإجابات زميلك.

١. الإضافة إلى الدور العسكري الذي يلعبه حزب الله في لبنان، له دور في الحياة --- و--- و---.
أ. السياسية
ب. الاجتماعية
د. الإعلامية
ج. كلما سبق ذكره صحيح

٢. لا يخفي حزب الله أبدًا --- الأيديولوجي لنظام الجمهورية الإسلامية الإيرانية ولولاية الفقيه.
أ. خلافه
ب. ارتباطه
د. علاقته
ج. معرفته

APPENDIX J

Sample Open-ended Questions

Answer the following questions. Compare your answers with those of a classmate.

1. What does the word 'militia' or 'militias' mean?
2. Have you heard about any militias in the news? Which Arab countries currently have militias?
3. In your opinion, how and why are militias created?

أجب عن الأسئلة الآتية. قارن إجاباتك بإجابات زميلك.

١. ما معنى كلمة 'ميليشيا/ميليشيات'؟
٢. هل سمعت عن أي "ميليشيات" في الأخبار؟ أيّ من الدول العربية لديها ميليشيات في الوقت الحاضر؟
٣. في رأيك، كيف ولماذا يتم تشكيل الميليشيات؟

APPENDIX K

Sample Fill in the Blanks Questions

Fill in the blanks with the following vocabulary. Compare your answers with those of a classmate.

املأ الفراغات بالكلمات التالية. قارن إجاباتك بإجابات زميلك.

هاجمت، خلايا، ترتبط، الأمين العام، اغتالت، خطف، معادية، دعم

تعتبر منظمة 'حزب الله' _____ لإسرائيل، و_____ ارتباطاً وثيقاً بإيران. يؤكد البعض أن منظمة 'حزب الله' كان لها دور في _____ بعض الأمريكيين وأخذهم كرهائن في لبنان، وأنها قد _____ السفارة الأرجنتينية في 1992. وفي إطار تعزيز مركزها، أسست منظمة 'حزب الله' _____ لها في مختلف أنحاء العالم (أوروبا وأفريقيا وأمريكا اللاتينية والشمالية)، ومن المعروف أنها تتلقى _____ ومساندة مادية ومعنوية من إيران. يشغل حسن نصر الله منصب _____ للمنظمة، وقد تولى قيادة 'حزب الله' بعد ما _____ إسرائيل قائد المنظمة عام ١٩٩٢.

Translation

attacked, cells, linked, secretary general, Assassinated, kidnapping, hostile, support

Hezbollah is considered _____ to Israel and is closely _____ to Iran. Some experts assert that the 'Hezbollah' organization played a role in _____ some Americans and taking them as hostage in Lebanon, and that it _____ the Argentine embassy in 1992. In the context of strengthening its position, the 'Hezbollah' organization established _____ in various parts of the world (Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the North), and it is known that it receives financial and moral _____ from Iran. Hassan Nasrallah holds the position of _____ of the organization, and he took over the leadership of 'Hezbollah' after Israel had _____ the leader of the organization in 1992.

APPENDIX L

Sample Translation (English-Arabic) Question

Translate this paragraph into Arabic. Compare your translation with that of a classmate.

ترجم الفقرة التالية إلى العربية. قارن ترجمتك بترجمة زميلك

The **2006 Lebanon War,** known in Lebanon as the **July War** and in Israel as the **Second Lebanon War,** was a 34-day military conflict in Lebanon and northern Israel. The principal parties were Hezbollah forces and the Israeli military. The conflict started on 12 July 2006 and continued until a United Nations-brokered ceasefire went into effect on the morning of August 14th, 2006, though it formally ended on September 8th, 2006, when Israel lifted its naval blockade of Lebanon.

APPENDIX M

Sample Translation (Arabic-English) Question

Translate this paragraph into English. Compare your translation with that of a classmate.

ترجم الفقرة التالية إلى الإنجليزية. قارن ترجمتك بترجمة زميلك.

في عام ١٩٩٢ اغتالت إسرائيل أمين عام حزب الله عباس الموسوي، فتم انتخاب حسن نصر الله أمينًا عامًا للحزب بالرغم من أن سنه كان صغيراً على تولي هذه المسؤولية، ولكن يبدو أن صفات نصر الله القيادية وتأثيره الكبير على صفوف حزب الله لعبت دورًا مؤثرًا في هذا الاتجاه وبالفعل فإن انتخابه كان له الأثر الأبرز في تثبيت وحدة الحزب بعد الضربة القاسية التي تلقّاها. وفي ذلك العام وبعد أشهر قليلة من اغتيال الأمين العام السابق الموسوي فإن حزب الله اختار الدخول إلى المعترك السياسي فشارك في الانتخابات النيابية التي جرت ذلك العام وحصد عددًا من المقاعد النيابية.

Translation

In 1992, Israel assassinated Hezbollah's Secretary-General Abbas al-Moussawi, so Hassan Nasrallah was elected Secretary-General of the party, although he was too young to take on this responsibility. Nonetheless, it seems that Nasrallah's leadership qualities and his great influence on the ranks of Hezbollah played an influential role in this direction. Indeed, his election had the most prominent effect in consolidating the party's unity after the severe blow it had received. In that year, a few months after the assassination of the former Secretary-General al-Moussawi, Hezbollah chose to enter the political arena, so it participated in the parliamentary elections that took place that year and won several parliamentary seats.

The translation passage comes from an authentic article (written in English), can be found here: https://worldhistoryproject.org/2006/7/12/2006-lebanon-war

APPENDIX N

Sample Speaking Question

In Arabic, talk with your classmate about the roots of the Hezbollah-Israel conflict, and how does the conflict shape the United States' policy towards Hezbollah and Iran.

بالعربية، تحدث مع زميلك عن جذور الصراع بين حزب الله وإسرائيل، وكيف يشكل الصراع سياسة الولايات المتحدة تجاه حزب الله وإيران.

FACULTY FORUM

Three Tips for Teachers, Presenters, and Facilitators: Simple Techniques to Enhance Learning and Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on, and an expansion of, a presentation that the authors conducted at the Language Learning and Teaching Conference (LLTC) sponsored by the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) Academic Senate on 23 September 2020 (Singh & Long, 2020). The practice of metacognitive activities, or reflective practice, leads to deeper learning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). The authors present herein three simple and easy-to-implement techniques that promote metacognition thereby enhancing the learning and teaching experience both for the target audience as well as the teachers, presenters, and workshop facilitators. Henceforth, these three terms "teacher," "presenter," and "facilitator," will be used interchangeably, but specific examples are provided in context with one or another term. Although the techniques themselves, and their implementation, are "simple", the authors have found them to have learning impact beyond their surface simplicity. Moreover, the authors have received positive feedback from teachers or audience who had never considered their use. Therefore, the authors decided to share these tips in the form of the 2020 presentation and now in this paper.

Background

Both authors worked in Faculty Development and facilitated the Instructor Certification Course (ICC) for several years. They have taught students, conducted workshops for faculty, gave presentations, and supervised teachers. Along the way, they gleaned teaching, presentation, and facilitation techniques that have proven helpful in not only conveying information, but also making learning deeper and more motivating and energizing for all involved.

Definition of Terms

Metacognition: Meta is the Greek word for "above"; cognition is from the Greek word for "thinking". Putting "meta" and "cognition" together means thinking above one's level of thinking. If cognition means thinking, then metacognition, being one layer above cognition, means thinking about one's own thinking (Anderson, 2008). More precisely, metacognition is the ability of learners to control their thoughts and to regulate their own learning (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Applied to the DLIFLC context, metacognition entails active observation and analysis of one's own thinking processes to weed out language learning strategies that are not working and searching for and adopting those practices that do work. Examples of metacognitive strategies employed for second language learning include activities such as planning for language tasks, directing attention and focus, monitoring, and adjusting strategy use, applying background knowledge, and setting expectations. A simple model to represent the metacognitive cycle is planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

TIP 1: PRESENTING LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO PROMOTE METACOGNITION

Teachers are aware of the common practice of presenting learning objectives at the beginning of a lesson. However, not all teachers are aware of the benefits of reviewing the objectives at the conclusion of their lesson. When Dr. Donald Fischer was Provost of the DLIFLC, he established the practice that teachers post their lesson objectives during class for students to see. Some teachers wrote them in a corner of the white board; some posted them on flip chart paper; and with the rising popularity of Smart Notebook and PowerPoint, many teachers included them at or near the beginning of their lesson slides.

However, very rarely did the teachers observe the practice of revisiting objectives at the end of the lesson or session. In an older version of the ICC, there was an activity on the last day in which the original course objectives presented on day one were re-distributed to the participants, several objectives were assigned to each group, and each group must gather evidence to show that their set of objectives were met. In the workshop setting, the evidence often consisted of flip chart paper posted on walls, handouts provided, or participants' own work products such as lesson plans. Similarly, in the classroom setting, the objectives posted can be reviewed as the lesson progresses. Anytime conducting a presentation using PowerPoint, we insert a copy of the objectives slide from the beginning of the slide deck near the end of the slide deck for a review activity.

The benefits of this type of reflection activity are numerous. For the learners, it forces them to review what was covered during the learning event, whether it is class, presentation, or workshop, thereby promoting metacognition and deep learning. For presenters, it not only involves monitoring and evaluating processes, but also includes planning; it provides an on-the-spot assessment—Did we cover the material intended? Did the audience understand what was intended? If not, a quick review or triage can be performed. If so, the audience will feel gratified that the session was a good use of time, and a positive evaluation should be in the offing. Finally, the technique is so easy to use, that it can be incorporated into daily teaching, presentation, and workshop facilitation, while still providing valuable feedback and input for the presenter, thereby

having a positive washback effect. When displaying objectives at the end of the session, we draw the audience's attention; when drawing attention, we raise awareness; when raising awareness, we afford the opportunity for metacognition, which increases the possibility for deep learning.

Other simple classroom activities that promote metacognition include giving periodic surveys regarding single lessons, weekly schedules, or course in general ("What did you like/dislike about this lesson," "In what ways did it facilitate new learning," "In what ways did the lesson hinder learning," "What types of strategies do you use that work/don't work?") (Davidson, 2014). Weekly journals in which students reflect on their learning and plan for the next week's study is another metacognitive tool at the teaching team's disposal. Additional ideas include self-evaluated speech samples, groupwork evaluation forms, think aloud protocols, and post-task self-assessments (Anderson, 2008). Learning plans and portfolios have also been used at the DLIFLC to track student progress and have students reflect on their past progress and make plans for future progress, both of which are metacognitive acts. Any classroom or homework activity, can be spiraled further by asking the audience "Why did we do this activity?" This type of question can further the reflective process and engage the audience even more deeply in the learning/teaching process. Whereas four out of the five "Wh-questions" refer to the essential elements of information (EEIs) of a news story, "Why" is the only one that promotes higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and metacognition.

TIP 2: PROVIDING HANDOUTS

Handouts can assist in the learning process. Otherwise, why have handouts been used since the beginning of modern education? There are several types of handouts: graphic organizers can be used to help students organize information as they progress through a text; summary or key-point organizers may be provided as a takeaway for future reference; presenters might provide a copy of their PowerPoint slides including a bibliography, or even provide the handout in the three-slides-per-page format so that the audience can take notes on the right-hand side as the presentation proceeds.

There are different ways to utilize handouts depending on the purpose for which they are being used. A handout could be used as input for the activity—students must read a text which is printed on a handout. Accompanying that reading handout could be a note-taking device, perhaps space to jot down EEIs, keywords, unknown words, gist, etc. Another type of handout, such as a graphic organizer can be provided showing relationships within the text, such as sequence of events, cause and effect, pros, and cons, and so on. This type of graphic organizer is used to help guide the learner through the text. Going beyond these graphic organizers, metacognitive note-taking devices can be provided which can urge learners to predict, plan, monitor, reflect on, and evaluate the content of a text, and in addition, can also train them to become aware of and monitor their own learning process (see, for example, Appendix I). A presenter might provide a copy of the PowerPoint slides in the three slide-per page format that displays the slides down the left-hand side and space for notes on the right-hand side. This allows the audience to follow along the slides as the presenter presents and to jot down key points or new learnings in the space on the right-hand side. Finally, some handouts may be given as take-

aways at the end of the session which may contain slides, bibliography, or a summary of content, keywords, or contact information.

Benefits of the use of handouts are numerous. Some learners are visual or tactile, so providing a handout, a graphic organizer, or a PowerPoint including a bibliography, can help the learner follow along with the learning event. Providing a graphic organizer helps the learner organize new information and causes him/her to reflect on and organize thoughts. Participants appreciate a tangible takeaway which serves as an artifact of a communal learning event. They leave the event with a handout on which they have captured notes of the new material presented and made it their own through their own sense-making process. Some expect a tangible take-away, and a well-organized handout can fulfill this expectation. In addition to the excellent collection of interactive graphic organizers created by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (Customizable graphic organizer templates, n.d.), the authors have several examples of and sources for excellent handouts that can be shared, adapted, used, and re-used (see, for example, Appendixes I & II).

TIP 3: IMPLEMENTING LOOP INPUT

Loop input is a teaching technique in which the content that is being presented to the audience is conducted by the very process that the content is concerned with (Woodward, 1988). Consider for example how jigsaw reading has been presented in the ICC. Participants are divided into groups. Each group is given a different portion of an article that describes the implementation of a jigsaw activity. After processing the article in the first group, the participants are then re-grouped so that the second set of groups have members from each original group. Then they piece the article together, share information, and thereby, by the end of the two-part activity, each participant has learned about the whole article through a jigsaw reading activity. The content was jigsaw reading as provided in the handouts, and the activity used to process the content was itself a jigsaw activity. Woodward (1988) says that “loop-input” entails mirroring the content of training sessions in the process of these sessions.

Loop input can be considered another metacognitive activity, especially when the process is debriefed by the teacher and reflected on by the students. The very nature of this type of activity deepens learning by allowing participants to carry out the activity that is being described in the text, letting them reflect on the content and the process, which they internalize. By going through the activity that is presented in the content, participants not only learn the content, but by means of the jigsaw reading activity, they learn the process of presenting the content. Moreover, they learn yet a new teaching concept and technique—loop input. During the debriefing process, or post-activity discussion, the authors observed participants experiencing the “ah-ha” moment when they discovered that they went through the same process that they were reading about.

CONCLUSION

On the surface, these tips may appear rather simple and common. The authors have found that these tools are not universally known, utilized, or fully appreciated. The purpose

behind their use is to strengthen and deepen learning by promoting metacognitive activity. Reviewing objectives at the end of a learning event causes reflection among the audience, deepening and consolidating the material covered in the event. Likewise, providing a graphic organizer helps learners organize new information and causes them to reflect on and organize new thoughts. Participants appreciate a tangible takeaway which serves as an artifact of a communal learning event. Finally, incorporating loop input activities promotes metacognition and allows participants to experience and internalize a rich teaching technique that they can then adapt and implement in their own teaching. By the end of a session that incorporates any one, a combination of two, or even all three techniques, audience members realize that the session was time well spent, i.e., the objectives were covered, they have a handout on which they have captured notes of the new material presented and made it their own, and they have new activities, materials, and tools to use in their own learning/teaching settings. All these consequences of the simple tips presented in this paper enhance the learning process and promote motivation.

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APPENDIX I: EXAMPLES OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Handout for EEIs

Text				
Who?	What?	When?	Where?	Why?
Summary				
Key Words		Unknown Words		Notes

Handout for Sequence of Events

Text			
Summary			
Timeline	Events		
Key Words		Unknown Words	Notes

Handout for Cause and Effect

Text		
Summary		
Result/consequence Cause 1 Cause 2 Cause 3		
Key Words	Unknown Words	Notes

Handout for Pros and Cons

Text	
Summary	
Pros	Cons
Key Words	Unknown Words	Notes

Handout for Comparison

Text		
Summary		
A	Both A&B	B
Notes		

Metacognitive Notetaking Device

Before Reading
Predict from title
During Reading
Main Ideas
Cultural and historical references
Rhetorical devices
Diction
Inferences
Text structure
Author's stance
Author's tone
Intended audience
After Reading
Evaluate and reflect

APPENDIX II: EXAMPLE OF NOTE-TAKING DEVICE FOR PRESENTATION

Three Tips for Teachers, Presenters, and Workshop Facilitators: Incorporating Reflective Activities For Deeper Learning

LLTC 2020

Presentation Objectives

1) To share tips for implementing metacognition in 3 different learning environments
2) To discuss benefits of implementing reflective activities, both for students and for teacher
3) To explore commonalities between instruction, presentation, and workshop facilitation

Questions to consider as we go through the presentation:

- How do teachers and facilitators know the effectiveness of their instruction and facilitation at the end of the session?
- How do students and participants know the effectiveness of their learning?
- What do classroom teaching, presentation and workshop facilitation have in common?

Space to jot down your ideas and notes:

- Analyze the Lesson Plan.
- Determine the constituent parts.
- How would you improve it?

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Chair, Multi-Language Dept. A, Asian I
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Objectives:

---Why are they important?

---How do you know students learned what you set out to teach?

Techniques for Checking Learning

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

List commonalities between teaching, presenting, and facilitating workshops—

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Collaborative Inquiry Projects: Promoting Community, Collaboration, and Competence in Language Learning

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Community, collaboration, and competence constitute the hallmarks of effective language learning. This paper examines collaborative inquiry projects (CIPs), which can be implemented in instructional settings ranging from virtual classrooms to hybrid classrooms to post-COVID-19 face-to-face classrooms, to promote community, collaboration, and competence. It first delineates CIPs, their theoretical underpinnings, and their roles in building community, collaboration, and competence. It is followed by concrete project examples that are integrated into the curricula of the Arabic and Chinese language courses in the Extension Programs of the Continuing Education Directorate. After addressing the topic of the technological tools available for conducting successful CIPs, the paper concludes with lessons learned from implementing CIPs.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally believed that learning involves interaction and cooperation and that it is a communal activity (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sarason, 1974). A learning community is a group of participants who share experiences, beliefs, and values, and co-construct knowledge through robust and engaged interactions and collaboration (Garrison, 2016; Rovai, 2002). Fostering a learning community and collaboration has been underscored not only in traditional face-to-face learning but also in online learning (Fischer & Baird, 2005; Liu, Magjuka, Bonk, & Lee, 2007). Studies have proven that a learning environment characterized by community and collaboration is effective in addressing issues like retention and attrition, lowering affective filters, building trust and connection, achieving higher academic performance, and enhancing overall learning experience (Dillenbourg, 1999; Lee, 2010; Shea, Li, Swan, & Pickett, 2002; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we teach and learn. With continued social distancing and limited access and participation, it remains a formidable challenge for language instructors at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) to foster learning community and collaboration and improve linguistic and sociocultural competence in various instructional settings, including virtual classrooms, hybrid classrooms, and post-COVID-19 face-to-face classrooms. This paper presents collaborative inquiry projects (CIPs) that may be implemented in various instructional settings to promote community, collaboration, and

competence. It starts by delineating the CIPs, their theoretical underpinnings, and their roles in building community, collaboration, and competence, the hallmarks of effective language learning. It follows with a showcase of concrete project examples that are integrated into the curricula of the Arabic and Chinese language courses in the Extension Programs of the Continuing Education department. The paper then addresses the technological tools available for conducting successful CIPs, and then concludes with lessons learned while implementing CIPs.

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECTS

The CIPs illustrated in this paper are grounded in inquiry-based learning and project-based learning. Inquiry-based learning, rooted in social constructivist theory (Vygostky, 1978), is a learner-centered approach to engage students in constructing their own knowledge and meaning through questioning, seeking, analyzing, and problem solving (Lee, 2004; Savery & Duffy, 1995). In this approach, inquiry as a pedagogical tool can be wielded at different levels: structured, controlled, guided, and free (Mackenzie, 2016). In structured or controlled inquiry, students follow the lead of the teacher, whereas free inquiry allows students to explore a topic with no imposed structure or plan. Guided inquiry provides some direction but gives students free rein to organize, synthesize, and draw conclusions.

Project-based learning orchestrates learning through projects of various scopes that can accommodate students' learning interests, provoke serious thinking, and provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge in new situations (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2016). In project-based learning, students are required to demonstrate their learning through tangible products. Compared to traditional approaches, project-based learning can improve students' cognitive skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities (David, 2008). According to Krajcik and Blumenfeld (2016), project-based learning is one of the most successful approaches in implementing inquiry-based learning, wherein students adopt an inquiry mindset in addressing epistemic issues and completing projects with relatively open-ended answers.

Drawing on inquiry-based and project-based learning, CIPs enable students to work in pairs or groups to explore in-depth culture-related themes or problems. The exploration process is driven by student controlled, guided, or free inquiries, which eventually culminate in oral presentations and/or written products. Collaboration is emphasized in conducting these projects because it fosters engagement and motivation and maximizes learning effectiveness through peer sharing and peer teaching. The key features of CIPs are 1) a series of structured and meaningful in-class and after-class projects as catalysts to strengthen skills and increase knowledge progressively; 2) student engagement in the cognitive learning driven by controlled, guided, or free inquiries; 3) student collaboration throughout the process, from formulation of inquiries to project development and completion; and 4) timely scaffoldings and feedback provided by the teacher to facilitate the learning process.

CIPs can be leveraged to promote competence, community, and collaboration in virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face classrooms. Collaborative inquiry projects put active learning at the center of instruction. Students become active agents in identifying what and how they need to know, searching for information, critically analyzing information, developing evidence-based explanations, and articulating ideas. The inquiry-based learning process allows students to

associate existing knowledge with new experiences, modify and refine previously held concepts, and create new knowledge. The collaboration also enables them to bring in diversified perspectives, thoughts, and beliefs and support one another's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, in a way, CIPs help hone students' linguistic skills in the target language, increase subject matter knowledge, and deepen sociocultural understandings. Engagement in these self-regulated learning activities also prepares students to become lifelong autonomous learners.

Additionally, CIPs contribute to fostering a sense of community, especially the cognitive and social presence in virtual and hybrid learning environments. Cognitive presence and social presence are part of the Community of Inquiry model developed by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) to support an online learning community. Cognitive presence is the extent to which learners can construct knowledge and meaning through interaction and communication, whereas social presence refers to students' ability to project themselves and perceive others as real people. The nature of CIPs, where students actively engage in cognitive and discovery learning, promotes the cognitive presence among students. The collaboration element in CIPs facilitates interpersonal relations and communication, thus providing students the social presence. Interaction and collaboration also help lower anxieties and loneliness and build support, trust, and sense of belonging, exerting a positive impact on collaborative learning.

COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY PROJECT EXAMPLES

Weekly Collaborative Writing Project

The Weekly Collaborative Writing Project was implemented in an intermediate-advanced Chinese course for students at Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 2+ or 3 in reading and listening at the Hawaii Language Training Detachment (LTD). The project was designed to build on students' existing knowledge of Chinese writings and enhance their target language writing skills and linguistic and sociocultural knowledge through collaborative and creative writing activities. Before the project, students have learned about Chinese writings of different genres through authentic readings, such as contemporary prose, editorials, fiction, and poetry. The Weekly Collaborative Writing Project is carried out in the following steps:

Figure 1

Process for the Weekly Collaborative Writing Project

Students are divided into groups and each group is provided with writing prompts, from which they start with writing ideas. The prompts may be visual or auditory, with, for example, an image of peach blossoms or a piece of classical Chinese music.

To ensure that creative writings are culturally appropriate and acceptable in the target language, students must engage in self-directed research and exploration of the prompts and come to their own findings. They may need to determine the associated and symbolic meanings of the peach blossoms in the Chinese culture, the theme conveyed in the classical Chinese music, and the emotional appeals. This step helps students decide what and how to write.

What follows is collaborative writing. Collaboration provides an opportunity for students to discuss their writing, helping them to understand writing as a process by which they sharpen writing skills. Students are tasked with writing in various genres:

- For descriptive and narrative prose writing, each group is given a visual image as the writing prompt, which is different from, and unknown by, the other groups. After completing the essay as a group, students swap work for peer review. For a description of a picture, students are also tasked to draw a picture based on the work they review. Then they compare the picture with the original image. This is called Scribble and Doodle.
- For the commentary writing, students are prompted with a news event, pool their ideas in the group, and develop three major arguments on which to focus. Each member of that group can write one or two paragraphs based on the arguments and put together the work as a group. That is how Shared Commentary Writing works.
- Regarding short story writing, each group has one student go to one of the four stations set up by the teacher, namely, Conflicts, Character Traits, Setting, and Themes. In group, students report what they have got from the station and brainstorm ideas for a fictional story by jotting down key words. Each group can select one character trait, one conflict, one setting, and one theme from each station and develop a short story. This is known as Tapestry Short Story Writing.
- As for poetry composing, which is demanding for students, each student in a group can write out one or two lines, and then they need to patch their work together to make a complete poem, or a patchwork poem.

After the collaborative writing activities, groups evaluate each other's work according to the rubrics for writings different genres (see Appendix A as an example) and engage in critical reflection on their learning for future improvement in writing.

Students have demonstrated these improvements through the Weekly Collaborative Writing Project when they 1) are able to consciously exploit the inquiry process in their research and learning, which deepens their understanding of the target language and culture; 2) are able to integrate sociocultural knowledge into thinking, analysis, and writing; 3) acquire skills such as critical thinking and problem solving are also enhanced.

Case Study Project

Like Hawaii LTD's CIP experience, Georgia LTD has implemented the case study project. The aim is to engage learners in a long-term linguistic and cultural analysis of the target language. The project, designed for those at ILR level of 2+ or 3 in reading and listening, provided students with an opportunity to enhance all four language skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) as well as cultural competence.

Puri (2020) argues that the case study is an instructional method that allows students to learn by evaluating and analyzing a problem and offering various solutions. It helps students improve their thinking skills, have a better understanding of problems, and come up with better solutions. This method has been used in many disciplines, including medicine, law, and psychology, but it is only recently that it has been used in language classrooms. Jabbarova (2020) mentions the significance of the case study method in language acquisition because it provides a real-life problem and information in various models such as graphs, documents, interviews, and data. It provides language learners with a learning experience that is tailored to their specific needs, interests, and abilities (Jabbarova, 2020). Furthermore, it raises learners' awareness of the events around them and contributes to long-term and high-level learning (Çakmak & Akgün, 2018).

The case study project at Georgia LTD was designed to fit the time frame of the four-week annual refresher courses. Students work collaboratively in small groups answering an inquiry-driven question raised by the instructor, such as "What would amplify the impact of the Arab Spring on corrupt political systems in the region?" "What role may intellectual freedom play in helping Arab women achieve equality in their societies?" and "Which demands should protesters focus on to increase the likelihood of changing Arab political regimes?" Every day, students in groups spend an hour completing weekly learning activities that are relevant to the case study project. The phases for the case study project are shown in Figure 2.

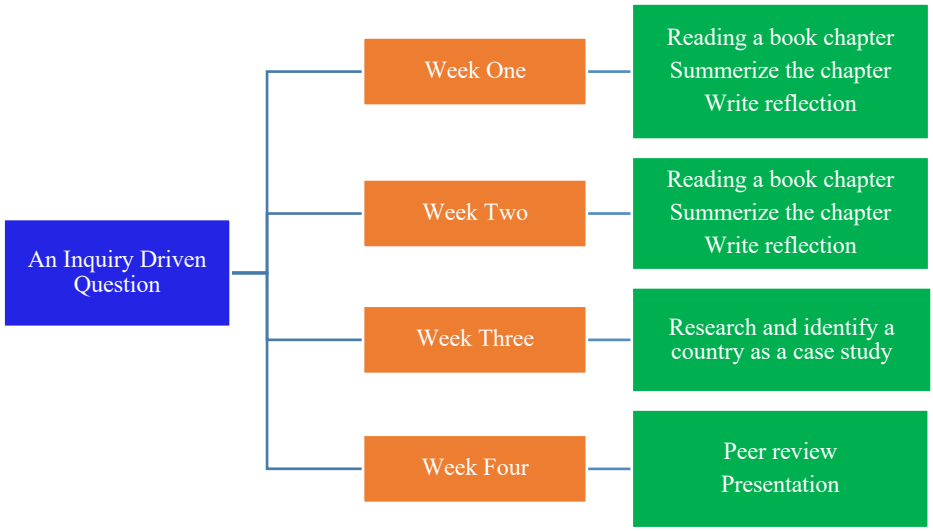

Figure 2
Phases of the Case Study Project

During Weeks One and Two, students investigate the topic by reading authentic text from a book assigned by the teacher, which provides them with essential information on the inquiry question. Authentic reading helps students to develop conceptual patterns of the text. Unlike edited texts, authentic texts offer readers features of repetition, redundancy, and discourse markers that reveal the author's style and the cultural patterns (Swaffar, 1985).

Students begin their research after the teacher confirms that they have achieved the learning objectives for Weeks One and Two. In Week Three, students choose a country relevant to the topic. Week Three aims to enhance students' listening and transcription skills. Once the students have chosen the country, they are tasked to provide an authentic video or audio containing speech of a native speaker of the selected country. Students are also asked to summarize the speech, transcribe a portion of the video/audio, and write reflections on the topic.

To conclude the project, students evaluate peer's work using an evaluation rubric (see Appendix B). Unlike teacher evaluations that focus on the project outcome, peer evaluations focus on the organization of the tasks that the project is based on and student coordinating efforts to complete the project, a critical component that teachers do not have insider information (Gardner, 2019; Lee and Lim, 2012). The peer evaluation, by looking into the components of the project, helps students gain greater understanding of the topic. After the peer evaluation, on the last day of the course, students present their findings and participate in a class discussion facilitated by the teacher to determine the best answers to the inquiry question.

Choosing productive activities for each week is an important part of the case study project. The students' progress in each week should ensure them to complete the project. In Weeks One and Two, teachers may assign work based on reading, such as completing a comprehension list, writing a summary, and writing reflections. In Week Three, have students transcribe the video or audio and write a reflective statement. These activities will allow students to complete the project by the end of Week Four (details of the case study project are provided in Appendix B).

TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR CONDUCTING SUCCESSFUL CIPS

Today there are many technological tools that facilitate learning in face-to-face or virtual classrooms. Technology gives students the power to collaborate, coordinate, and conduct learning. The available technology at the DLIFLC, such as Microsoft 365, provides a web-based inquiry tool that can host collaborative activities. Whether using Microsoft SharePoint, One Note, Teams, or Yammer, students may engage in individual and collaborative learning activities. Microsoft applications allow students to communicate, share documents, post media, exchange ideas and opinions, and create a community of self-directed language learners.

The exchange of knowledge through collaborative inquiry projects facilitated by effective technology enables students to appreciate alternative point of views, broaden their perspectives, and deepen their understanding of the issues (Goh & Lim, 2004). Wu, Hsieh, and Yang (2017) confirm that completing constructive, collaborative, contextual, and self -directed activities using effective technology increase language learners' engagement with materials and the ability of applying the acquired knowledge in authentic settings.

Microsoft SharePoint

The Media Content Analysis project, conducted by students in an advance Iraqi course at Georgia LTD, illustrates the use of *Microsoft SharePoint* (see Figure 3), which fosters collaboration among students who share files, news, and resources. Instructor can customize the site to make it easier for students to organize, coordinate, and collaborate.

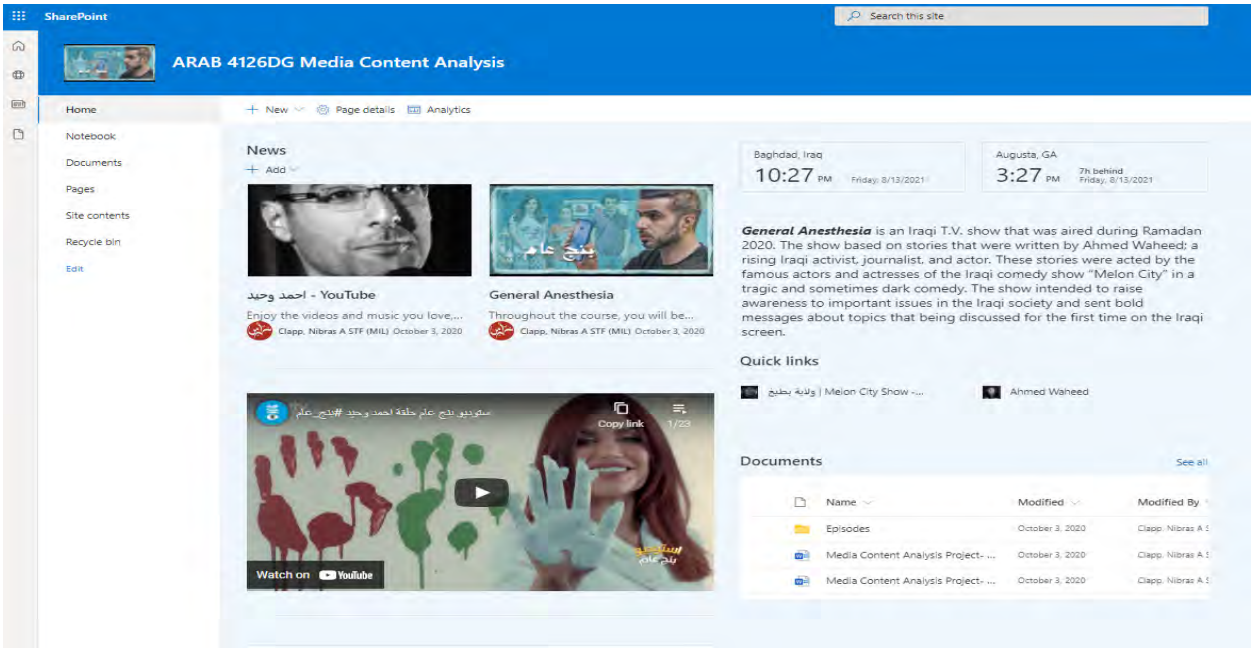

Figure 3
Iraqi-Arabic CIP Using Microsoft SharePoint

Microsoft OneNote

The case study project highlighted in this paper utilized *Microsoft OneNote* Class Notebook to host the collaboration efforts of students in an intermediate Modern Standard Arabic course at Georgia LTD. In addition to the personal space and content library that *OneNote* Class Notebook offers, collaboration space is available where the teacher can post activities. The collaboration space also allows the students to add and share files of various types (See figure 4).

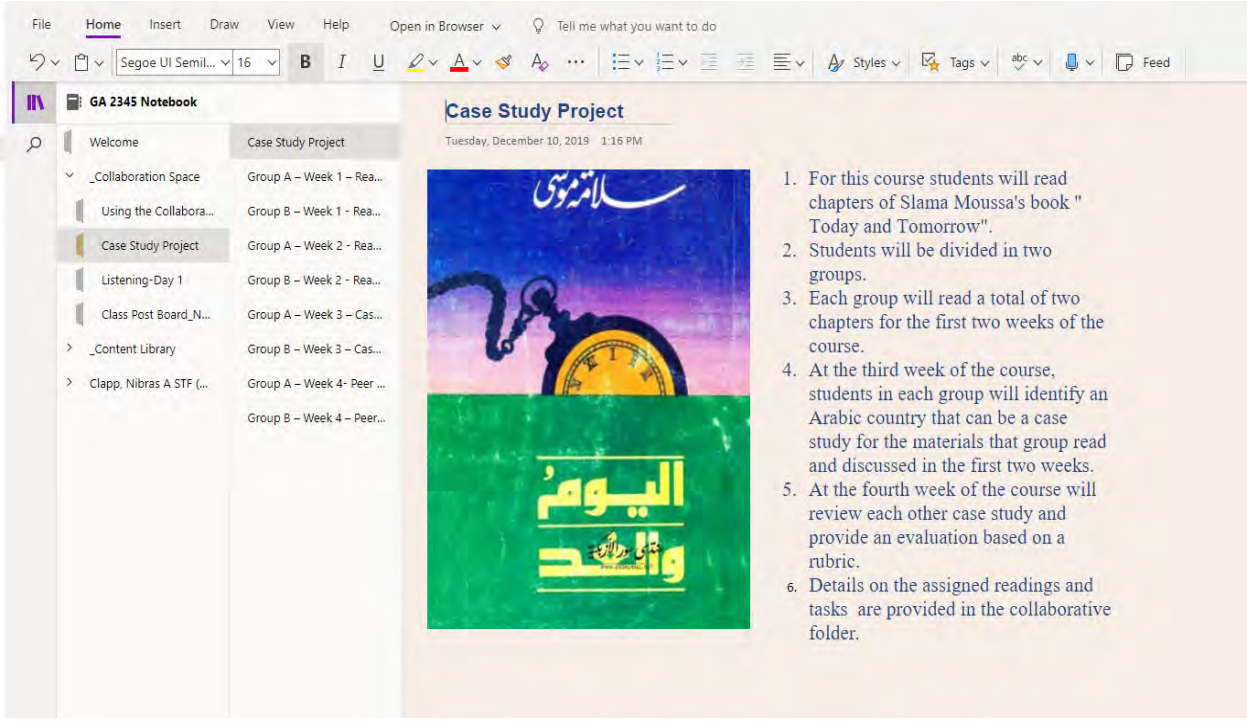

Figure 4
Modern Standard Arabic CIP Using Microsoft OneNote

Microsoft Yammer

Numerous videos and articles about the recent protests are posted on Iraqi media and social media sites. The videos and articles address various topics in the Iraqi society. To help learners gain regional expertise, the Georgia LTD has created a CIP where students emulate the Iraqi protests. The site uses *Microsoft Yammer*, which provides students a place to gather ideas, stay informed, and form a learning community (See Figure 5)

Figure 5
Arabic CIP Using Microsoft Yammer

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented CIPs that promote community, collaboration, and competence in various instructional settings. In order to develop effective collaborative inquiry experiences at Hawaii and Georgia LTDs, we identified the core principles for the projects. Regardless of the students' proficiency levels or language orientation, we found out that an effective CIP must incorporate the following:

- Topics connected to the course objectives, which expand students' knowledge of the topics, increase their involvement, and allow them to take ownership of their learning.

- Tasks and activities appropriate for the students' proficiency level and skills, which offer opportunities for them to acquire and improve their skills.
- Technology that enhances the learning experience while keeping students focused on the project's objectives.
- Collaboration requirement that maximizes the learning experience and assist the students in achieving the course goal and objectives.

In CIPs, collaboration is emphasized where students should work in teams, not only to complete the projects, but also to construct new knowledge collectively. Our experience tells us that effective collaboration takes strategic planning especially for students lacking initiative and self-efficacy. First, the groupings should consider students' language proficiency levels, strengths and weaknesses, interests, and personality types, ensuring that each group consists of a mixture of students to maintain the group dynamics. Second, different roles such as team leader, facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, etc. should be assigned to members in the group. These roles can help hold students accountable, keep them stay on track, and facilitate communication. Third, clear guidelines let students expect what to come and plan during the project. It is important for the teacher to develop projects with components that need to be completed by individuals along with tasks that require group efforts.

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APPENDIX A

Writing Rubric for Commentary Writing

	5 points	*3 points*	*1 point*	*Subtotal*
Ideas & Content • Opinion • Reasons • Evidence	Exceptionally clear, focused, opinion that is engaging with relevant, strong reasons and evidence.	Opinion is evident with some support, reasons and evidence may be general or limited.	Opinion may be cloudy because reasons and evidence are unclear, irrelevant, too general or off-topic.	
Organization • Structure • Introduction • Transition • Conclusion	Effectively organized in a logical and creative manner using transitional words. Thesis statement and topic sentences are clear and engaging.	Organization is appropriate and, in most instances, follows a logical progression. Thesis statement and topic sentences are somewhat clear and engaging.	Poorly organized and in several instances does not follow a logical progression. Thesis statement and topic sentences are not well developed and lack clarity and creativity.	
Tone • Personality • Sense of audience	Expressive, engaging, and sincere to maintain reader interest.	Evident commitment to the topic. Appropriate to audience and purpose.	Writing may seem mechanical. Tone may be inappropriate.	
Language Usage • Precision • Effectiveness • Appropriateness	Precise, carefully chosen, and effective words that are stylistically appropriate to the genre. Very few or no error in grammar.	Language is functional and appropriate. A limited number of word choices that are stylistically inappropriate.	Words may be correct but are not effective or stylistically appropriate. Frequent errors in grammar.	
			Total Score	

APPENDIX B

Case Study Project

Purpose: Throughout the course, you will work collaboratively on reading chapters of a book selected by the instructor and complete tasks that guide you to develop a case study project. This case study project will help you engage in the objectives of the course.

Inquiry-driven question provided by the instructor: "How can intellectual freedom be revived in the Arab world in the midst of the current political and religious control?"

Guidelines

- For this course you will read chapters of Slama Moussa's book Today and Tomorrow.
- You will be divided into two groups. Instructor will assign you to a group.
- Each group will read a total of two chapters for each of the first two weeks of the course.
- In the third week, your group will identify an Arab country that can be a case study for the materials read and discussed in the first two weeks.
- In the fourth week of the course, you will review each other's case studies and provide evaluations based on a rubric.
- All tasks and summarizations must be in the target language whether it is written, or audio recorded.

Weekly Schedule

Week One
Group A
Activities to be completed

- Read الحرية الفكرية chapter (pages 17 – 20) as a group.
- Divide the chapter evenly.
- Summarize your reading and post it here (text or audio).
- How does this chapter relate to the research question? "How can intellectual freedom be revived in the Arab world in the midst of the current political and religious control?"

Group B
Activities to be completed

- Read التقليد في الانسان والحيوان chapter (page 21 – 24) as a group.
- Divide the chapter evenly.
- Summarize your reading and post it here (text or audio).
- How does this chapter relate to the research question? "How can intellectual freedom be revived in the Arab world in the midst of the current political and religious control?"

Week Two

Group A

Activities to be completed

- Read الدين والتطور وحرية الفكر بينهما chapter (pp. 51 – 54) as a group.
- Divide the chapter evenly.
- Summarize your reading and post it here (text or audio).
- What conclusions do you draw from the author's correlation of intellectual freedom to religion and evolution?

Group B

Activities to be completed

- Read الشباب وناموس التحول chapter (page 69 – 71) as a group.
- Divide the chapter evenly.
- Summarize your reading and post it here (text or audio).
- How does the evolution of intellectual freedom in the Arab world differ from that of other regions?

Week Three

Group A

Activities to be completed

- Identify an Arab country that can be the case study for Intellectual Freedom based on the assigned reading for the past two weeks.
- Write a paragraph describing your country and why intellectual freedom is important for it (Minimum 100 words).
- Provide a video of an interview, or a statement by a speaker (of the country you chose) explains the intellectual freedom in his/her country. You must provide a brief summary of the video and one minute of transcription to any portion of the video.
- Respond to the following question "What are some possible solutions for reviving intellectual freedom in your chosen country?" Write a statement that justifies your answer based on your readings and research.
- Write a paragraph answering the following questions:
    - How did your preparation for this assignment help with your understanding of intellectual freedom in the selected country?
    - What language (reading, listening, writing, speaking, cultural competency) skills did you use most? Did the assignment help you improve these skills?
    - What did you do to contribute to the quality of the learning experience (teamwork, confidence, creativity, commitment, flexibility, and/or professional experiences?).

Group B

Activities to completed

- Identify an Arab country that can be the case study for the Transformation in Youth relying on the assigned reading for the past two weeks.
- Write a paragraph describing your country and why intellectual freedom is important for it (Minimum 100 words).

- Provide a video of an interview, or statement by a speaker (of the country you chose) explains the intellectual freedom in his/her country. You must provide a brief summary of the video and one minute of transcription to any portion of the video.
- Respond to the following question "How can the current generation of youth in the selected country restore intellectual freedom?" Write a statement that justifies your answer based on your readings and research.
- Write a paragraph answering the following questions:
    - How did your preparation for this assignment help with your understanding of intellectual freedom in the selected country?
    - What language (reading, listening, writing, speaking, cultural competency) skills did you use most? Did the assignment help you improve these skills?
    - What did you do to contribute to the quality of the learning experience (teamwork, confidence, creativity, commitment, flexibility, and/or professional experiences?).

Week Four

Part 1

Both groups (A and B) review the other group's case study using the attached rubric adapted from (Gardner, 2019).

- Your review and rating will be used to grade the group case study project. You may choose to provide feedback (written or audio) on each week by adding it directly to the group's OneNote page.
- Remember the acronym SPARK when you provide your feedback. For feedback to be useful, it should meet as many of these criteria as possible:

Specific	Comments are linked to a discrete word, phrase, or sentence.
Prescriptive	Like a medical prescription that aims to solve an ailment, prescriptive feedback offers a solution or strategy to improve the work, including possible revisions or links to helpful resources or examples.
Actionable	When the feedback is read, it leaves the peer knowing what steps to take for improvement
Referenced	The feedback directly references the task criteria, requirements, or target skills.
Kind	It is mandatory that all comments be framed in a kind, supportive way.

Case Study Grading Rubric

Each item is rated on the following rubric.

1= Limited 2 = Underdeveloped 3 = Adequate 4 = Good 5 = Excellent

Item	Score				
1. Evidence of preparation (organized presentation, topics flew well, participants did their homework)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Content (presented accurate and relevant information, appeared knowledgeable about the topic of the case study).	1	2	3	4	5
3. Video selection (selected appropriate video, minimum two minutes in length, accurate narrative and relevant to the topic, accurate transcription of the selected cut).	1	2	3	4	5
4. Delivery (presented clearly and logically, effective description of the country, evident creativity, transition between key elements, utilization of visual aids).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Writing (focused on topic, presented thoughtful ideas with details, used complete sentences of varying lengths, very few or no grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors)	1	2	3	4	5

Total Scores: _____ (the sum of Items 1-5)
Total Scores x 4: _____ (to make the assignment 100 points)

Part 2

The instructor guides classroom discussions with the following questions:

- How do you define intellectual freedom in the Arab world? How does it differ from yours?
- How does the current transformation among youth in the Arab world occur? What factors influence this transformation?
- What are some of the obstacles that hinder the achievement of intellectual freedom in the Arab world?
- What are possible actions that citizens of Arab world, particularly youth, can take to achieve intellectual freedom?

Recommended Technology

MS Notebook – Class Notebook- Collaboration Space. You will be using Microsoft Notebook to create and build your blog:

- Go to MS Teams – Class Notebook.
- Login in using your DLIFLC credentials.
- All materials must be in the target language.

Using Role-playing Games to Improve Second Language Competence

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INTRODUCTION

Improving language competence is a serious concern for second language educators. From the perspective of cognitive psychology, language competence is a type of cognitive competence. Cognitive competence is defined as creative thinking and critical thinking skills which include various creative thinking styles, such as making inferences and coordinating multiple views (Sun & Hui, 2006). Recent studies have shown that video gaming may affect cognitive competence **(**Denilson, Rui, & Ryuta, 2019; Gong, Yao, Gan, Peng, Ma, & Yao, 2019; Palaus, Marron, Viejo-Sobera, & Redolar-Ripoll, 2017). Chang (2019) has demonstrated that video games can teach players the gist of key ecological concepts of scale, entropy, and collapse. Chotipaktanasook and Rinders (2018) indicate that digital games are now such a large part of our students' lives that finding pedagogically sound ways of incorporating them into the classroom may be a much-needed challenge for the language teaching profession to tackle.

Encouraged by these findings, I looked for video games suitable for second languages (L2) learning and recommended them to students. There are many types of video games, such as Action games, Action-adventure games, Adventure games, Role-playing games (RPGs), Simulation games, Strategy games, Sports games, Puzzle games, and Idle games. The characteristics of various types of games are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
*Different Types of Video Games**

Genre	*Characteristics*
Action games	Emphasizing physical challenges, including hand–eye coordination and reaction-time.
Action-adventure games	Combining core elements from both the action game and adventure game.
Adventure games	(Players) assuming the role of a protagonist in an interactive story driven by exploration and/or puzzle-solving.
Role-playing games	(Players) assuming the roles of characters in a fictional setting and taking responsibility for acting out these roles within a narrative, either through literal acting or through a process of structured decision-making regarding character development.

Simulation games	A diverse super-category of video games, simulating real world activities.
Strategy games	Using players' uncoerced, and often autonomous, decision-making skills to determine the game outcome.
Sports games	Simulating the practice of sports, including team sports, track and field, extreme sports, and combat sports.
Puzzle games	Testing many problem-solving skills including logic, pattern recognition, sequence solving, spatial recognition, and word completion.
Idle games	Performing simple actions (such as clicking on the screen) repeatedly to gain rewards.

*Table contents are from Wikipedia.

According to Wikipedia, in a Role-playing game players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting, act out these roles in line with a description, either through literal acting or through a process of structured decision-making regarding character development. Studies also suggest that RPGs in the target language may have a positive effect on language learning because of its affordance of interaction—learners must frequently retrieve appropriate vocabulary; continuously and rapidly read the game-embedded texts (Bytheway, 2014; Huang & Yang, 2014; Kongmee, Strachan, Pickard, & Montgomery, 2012; Lai & Wen, 2012; Peterson, 2010, 2012; Rankin, Mcneal, Shute, & Gooch, 2008).

Two important concepts prevail in the use of playing games to learn a language. One is gamification, and the other is game-based learning. Gamification is the strategic attempt to enhance systems, services, organizations, and activities to create similar experiences to those that have experienced when playing games to motivate and engage users (Hamari, 2019). On the other hand, *game-based learning* describes an approach to teaching, where students explore relevant aspect of games in a learning context. Teachers and students collaborate to add depth and perspective to the experience of playing the game (EdTechReview, 2013). Using role-playing games in teaching belongs to the conceptual category of game-based learning.

TEACHING WITH ROLE-PLAYING GAMES (RPGS)

Inspired by the research results and supported by the teaching practices in the Continuing Education (CE) courses, I spent more than 120 hours, trying out approximately 60 free RPGs in the Chinese language and selecting the suitable games for students. Table 2 lists some of the Chinese RPGs. The list was created based on my exploration. The games have two major themes: 1) the Chinese martial arts world and 2) the historical story of the Three Kingdoms. The Three Kingdoms were from 220 to 280 AD, when China was divided into three states of Wei, Shu, and Wu. The Three-Kingdom period was one of the bloodiest periods in Chinese history. Both themes allow students to understand the Chinese chivalrous spirit and historical background. The character relationship in the game also helps students to improve their vocabulary and comprehension ability. All the RPGs on the list are single-player games, with no need to cooperate with other players on the Internet.

Table 2
List of Free Chinese Role-playing Games

Free RPGs in Apple App Store	*Free RPGs on Steam* (Steam is a video game digital distribution service by Valve)
所谓江湖 The So-called Jianghu	阿达三国志 2019 Three Kingdoms 2019
英雄群侠传 II The Legend of Heroes II	胸怀三国 OL Embrace the Three Kingdoms OL
永生劫 Eternal Inexorable Doom	三国古战略 Three Kingdoms: Ancient Battlefield
汉家江湖 Jianghu of the Han Dynasty	御龙在天-平衡国战版 Dragon in the Sky - Balanced State War Edition
天剑诀-前传 Heavenly Sword Skill - Prequel	炎黄战纪之三国烽烟 The Three Kingdoms Beacon of the Warring Chronicles of Yanhuang
叫我锦衣卫 Call me Jin Yi Wei	隆中策 Longzhong Plan
叫我铸造师 Call me the Foundry	中华三国志-DP 版 The Three Kingdoms of China-DP Edition
江湖群侠传 OL The Legend of the Swordsmen of Jianghu OL	中华三国志-丝路山水版 The Three Kingdoms of China - Silk Road Landscape Edition
乱世曹操传 The Legend of Cao Cao in the World of Chaos	中华三国志-情怀版 The Three Kingdoms of China - Sentimental Edition

The selected role-playing games were used in my teaching at the Hawaii Learning Center (HLC) during August 2019 and November 2020, when I taught Chinese courses: CHIN3950, CHIN3253, and CHIN4364. CHIN 3950 is a 19-week intermediate-level course, aiming for students to achieve and sustain language proficiency at Level 2+ or beyond in listening and reading, and Level 2 or beyond in speaking and writing on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale; CHIN3253 is a 6-week course designed to increase students' global language proficiency, particularly in reading and listening, from a threshold 2+ to a solid 2+ or higher; and CHIN4364 is a 4-week course training students to handle Level 3/3+ texts, such as editorials. The goal of CHIN4364 is to enable students to read between the lines, understand the writer's intent, point of view, and tone, analyze the text structure, and provide details to justify their analysis.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Twenty students participated in the above-mentioned courses. For each course, the entry requirement was 2/2 and the exit requirement was 2+/2+ in reading and listening on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT).

In this article, I will illustrate the experiment of using Chinese RPGs in the 19-week course of CHIN3950. I followed the teaching schedule (see Appendix A) and made appropriate adjustments based on students' situations during the experiment. The experiment included four stages.

1. **Start**. At the beginning of the CHIN3950 course, I introduced the procedure, schedule, and the list of RPGs to students. As I had tried all the games listed in Table 2 and was familiar with each game's content and features, I answered students' questions and helped them decide on the suitable Chinese RPGs. Students were given four weeks to explore and experience the RPG of their choice. They were reminded to manage their time by playing the RPG after completing regular course work. Our teaching team also asked students to take notes of the new vocabulary, new cultural knowledge, and the problems they had solved when playing the game.
2. **Game Forum 1**. By the end of the first month, I held a student forum for sharing gaming information, learning outcomes, and planning. Students also shared their thoughts on the effectiveness of the games on learning. Adjustment was made according to students' discussion and feedback. For example, I helped a student change to a more suitable game. I also reminded students to pay more attention to the background information of the RPGs. Following this, students were given another four weeks to explore the RPG of their choice. They were again asked to write down the new vocabulary, new cultural knowledge, and the problems they had solved.
3. **Game Forum 2**. After the midterm, students had an RPG competition when they played designated Chinese RPGs in the classroom. They showed great interest and excitement. In the discussion following the competition, students reported that they had made some progress in the target language, including increase in vocabulary, knowledge of Chinese culture, and ability to solve problems. I explained vocabulary, idioms, proverbs, and other culturally loaded expressions. Students shared examples of problem-solving scenarios, progress made since the first game forum, and evidence of improved socio-cultural knowledge. Our teaching team then gave students another four weeks to explore the RPGs of their choice. They were again asked to write down the new vocabulary, new cultural knowledge, and the problems they had solved.
4. **Game Forum 3**. Students and I evaluated the effectiveness of this experiment by discussing two topics: 1) the pros and cons of using the RPGs and 2) the effect of the RPGs on culture-based language learning. Moreover, the list of Chinese RPGs available to future students was expanded. The expansion was achieved with students sharing the Chinese RPGs that they had discovered.

Students showed their love of learning the Chinese language through RPGs. Our teaching team decided to continue the exploration of new Chinese RPGs and the documentation of the vocabulary and cultural knowledge that students learned and the problems that students solved during the game playing.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

By the end of the first iteration of CHIN3950, students had spent more than 100 hours playing RPGs. I asked the students to write down their experiences with the RPGs in English on Liniot, a virtual bulletin board. Five students provided feedback, and I took a screenshot of the feedback, which are shown in APPENDIX B. Presented here are the highlights of students' feedback.

Student 1: The benefit of playing video games in Chinese is that, once you find an interesting one, it will incentivize using the language when you otherwise would not. The exposure to this type of language along with exercising guessing from context is good practice (Feedback from Student 1, November 2019).

Student 2: This game affords the user the opportunity to not only take part in an adventure, but also learn about Chinese medicine, martial arts, Taoism, and some aspects of the Chinese classics, like the Water Margin. Game play also uses colloquial expressions and conversations, so it isn't overly challenging to make progress on quests (Feedback from Student 2, November 2019).

Student 3: RPGs are all about story-telling and immersive elements, I think these characteristics are very helpful in language learning. As a player it feels as though I am playing out a novel, developing my character with the world (Feedback from Student 3, November 2019).

Student 4: Language learning through video games has many benefits. Because you're playing something that you're interested in, your willingness to "study" is better. You can fill in your knowledge gap with words not in textbooks or daily life. Not only do you learn new words, but you also can learn about culture (Feedback from Student 4, November 2019).

Student 5: I think that playing video games in Chinese is a very good idea because it enables you to use the language in a different form and context, so it doesn't feel like work. It enables you to be very interactive with the language, which is hard to do on your own, especially outside of a classroom setting (Feedback from Student 5, November 2019).

RESULTS

It is worth noting that the proper utilization of RPG may be one of the contributing factors to CHIN3950 students' achievement of Level 3 on their DLPT reading, which was the first time that all students in the CHIN3950 course of the HLC were able to reach that level. The instruction of this iteration of CHIN3950 was the same as the previous iterations in terms of instructional materials, content, and hours. Moreover, students enrolled in this iteration had similar language background and proficiency of Level 2 or above. The comparison between this and previous iterations indicates that RPG may have had a positive effect on students' engagement with learning.

After completing CHIN3950, all students still had at least one Chinese RPG on their iPad, iPhone, or a mobile device that they planned to play after leaving the HLC, as they had noticed the benefits of playing RPGs for their language study.

An exciting result worth mentioning is that students shared RPGs they had found based on the RPG list. This shows that students deem the RPCs helpful for learning Chinese and want

to share their learning experience and discoveries with peers; in other words, students became more engaged in the learning process.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As it was the first attempt to incorporate RPGs in a language course at HLC, some issues are worthy of further discussion, so that refinement can be made. For example, this experiment was carried out in post-basic Continuing Education courses for a particular group of learners. The specific steps described in this paper were designed for a 19-week course. This means that the steps may not be suitable for a course with a different length.

RPGs were also tried in 6-week courses such as CHIN2990, CHIN3253, CHIN4344 and CHIN4364. Teachers also introduced the Chinese RPGs list at the beginning of the course and helped students choose the proper RPG. Students played the selected games in their free time. At the end of the course, teachers gave students a list of other interesting and complicated Chinese RPGs for further practicing.

The RPGs are recommended for students at Level 2 or above. Teachers who plan to try RPGs should introduce the games at the beginning of the course, giving students the time to play the games independently and choose an appropriate game from the RPG list. Interested teachers may refer to Appendix A, where details are provided on how to use RPGs in a 19-week course, such as CHIN3990 and CHIN3950.

My experience shows that it is worthwhile to search for newly developed RPGs. Some new games may improve students' reading and listening skills simultaneously, instead of just reading skills. For example, I discovered a new game—*Sword Art World 2* in *Apple Store* in April 2021. This free game is unlike any other RPGs mentioned in the paper; it contains not only Chinese subtitles, but also dialogues in Chinese. It would be beneficial for students to improve their listening skills while playing the game. Subsequently, I recommended the game to students in the CHIN 3990 course, who graduated in May 2021.

The purpose of the paper is to share the finding that RPGs are a valuable learning resource and may help students in practicing and acquiring language skills. I discussed its benefits, challenges, and the lessons I learned from this experience. One student suggested it would be beneficial to find games students are familiar with and have them play the Chinese version. This option might have saved students the time to learn the game format, allowing them to engage in the games faster.

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APPENDIX A

The RPG Teaching Schedule in CHIN3950

Start	Week 1 (1 hr.)	Chinese RPGs Introduction Chinese RPGs Selection • Provide the list of games • Demonstrate a sample game • Help student select the appropriate game from the list of games
Game Forum 1	By the end of the 1st month (3 hrs.)	In-class discussion, sharing feedback and thoughts: • Explore Chinese RPGs • Evaluate the effectiveness through game competitions • Select an RPG for Forum 2 • Make necessary adjustments according to students' discussion and feedback. For example, helping a student switch to a more suitable game
Game Forum 2	After Midterm (3hrs.)	Presentation • On categories and examples of vocabulary, idioms, proverbs, and other culturally loaded expressions • On research conducted to support the understanding of the game content • On examples of various cultural and content issues encountered in playing the game and solutions.
Game Forum 3	The Final stage (3 hrs.)	Presentation • On the pros & cons of RPGs as a learning method • On the effect of the RPGs in culture-based language acquisition • On plans of incorporating games to optimize the learning experience Elicit classroom discussions • What role do the Chinese RPGs play in fostering life-long learning? • How do Chinese RPGs improve your ability to solve real-life problems?

APPENDIX B

CHIN3950 STUDENTS FEEDBACK (November 2019)

Student 1:

I feel the benefit of playing video games in Chinese is that, once you find an interesting one, it will incentivize using the language when you otherwise would not. With an interesting video game to play, it will be much easier for me to start studying. Most of the games I've tried have been based in ancient/fantasy scenes. And because of this I've seen a lot of classical expressions and vocabulary. Good deals of them were not even in Pleco so I've had to guess the meaning using context. I feel like the exposure to this type of language along with exercising guessing from context is good practice.

Student 2:

江湖群俠傳 – The Heroic Story of the Rivers and Lakes

"Rivers and Lakes" could be described as a piece of historical fiction incorporating contemporary elements. The player is from our time, but through high-tech gadgetry is transported back in time to ancient China where they have the privilege of being the gaming company's first player in a new totally immersive VR world.

Like most RPGs, you must accomplish a series of quests to win or complete the game and in this game, the player must complete these quests to return to the real world. There are many similarities to other RPGs, character creation, an evolving storyline, turn-based fighting. What makes this game challenging is the number of references to the Chinese classics. There are also many references to Taoism, Chinese medicine, and martial arts in general. While these topics may be familiar to many native Chinese, you get a sense that it will also be a learning experience for them after going through the opening sequence and hearing the "host" berate the player for not taking the time to read the instructions and understand the game world.

This game affords the user the opportunity to not only take part in an adventure but also learn about Chinese medicine, martial arts, Taoism, and some aspects of the Chinese classics, like the Water Margin. Game play also uses colloquial expressions and conversations, so it isn't overly challenging to make progress on quests.

Student 3:

魔獸世界 - World of Warcraft 中文版本 (Chinese Vision)

One of the most popular RPGs ever created, with a lot of support and updated content for not only the English version, but other versions as well (including the Chinese version). It has a vast story spanning over 15 years. With professionally translated comics, and professionally voiced cinematic videos. Other games created around the same universe:

魔獸爭霸 1, 2, 3.

爐石戰記 - 電子大牌遊戲 –Hearthstone

RPGs are all about story-telling and immersive elements, I think these characteristics are very helpful in language learning. As a player it feels as though I am playing out a novel, developing my character with the world.

Student 4:

Within the modern world, language learning has become easier than before. Language learning through video games has many benefits. Because you're playing something that you're interested in, your willingness to "study" is better. You can fill in your knowledge gap with words not in textbooks or daily life. Not only do you learn new words, but you also can learn about culture.

Student 5:

I think that playing video games in Chinese is a very good idea because it enables you to use the language in a different form and context, so it doesn't feel like work. It enables you to be very interactive with the language, which is hard to do on your own, especially outside of a classroom setting.

I think the key to this type of learning is to find the right game. I tried a few of the story-based games and although I think those probably use the most language, this isn't usually the type of game I would reach for. I think, if possible, finding games that students recognize and have played before - but using the Chinese version could be very beneficial.

When choosing a book to read in Chinese I tend to select a book I am very familiar with in English already so that even when I don't recognize the Chinese characters, I still know what's going on so I can attach the English meaning to the writing and am already one step closer to learning the words. Playing Pokemon Go or older versions with emulators using Chinese is something I want to try in the upcoming weeks, or even after class is over.

Storytelling and Scaffolding

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The institute-wide, achievement-oriented approach toward the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 2+/2+/2 at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) is exciting, especially in how it facilitates students in reaching Level 2 speaking. The commonly used method is to help students build their portfolio with all the required Level 2 Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) speaking tasks. With deliberate practice and drill, most students can reach the target proficiency benchmarks.

"Boring," a straight A student complained when I asked him to report current events as we usually did in our one-on-one sessions. "Can't we practice something besides OPI drills again? Let's have some creative tasks!"

"What would you like to create?" I asked.

"I want to create a song with lyrics" was his enthusiastic response, and he proceeded to share his story with me, which triggered a memory of an OPI certification workshop.

During that workshop, I learned that ILR Level 2 learners are accomplished storytellers who have grasped high-frequency vocabulary and the grammar needed to describe and narrate. In other words, students can stop at any time but are still able to complete their narration (story) with confidence and minimal errors. When learners create stories or dialogs, they not only demonstrate linguistic competence but also a grasp of the target culture. "Storytelling is a means of sustaining cultural activities and beliefs." (Beed & Shipp, 2005, p. 1). Ribeiro (2015) advocates the storytelling process because it not only helps learners understand the language and culture, but also evokes humor and logical thinking. In my experience, the most important element is creativity, which inspires language learners to develop a passion for learning the target language.

The Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) Method

The Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS) is a method initiated in 1990 by Blaine Ray, a Spanish teacher, to develop abilities in using language to narrate and describe people, events, buildings, etc. Teaching Proficiency and Reading Through Storytelling originated from Total Physical Response (TPR) storytelling, which focused on kinetic movement to enhance learning; it then became "Teaching Proficiency and Reading Through Storytelling" to reflect the integration of skills. The philosophy of TPRS is that storytelling is an effective tool for language acquisition (Teaching Proficiency and Reading Through Storytelling, n.d.). The TPRS lesson can be taught within 50 minutes by familiarizing students with high frequency vocabulary, sentence structures, concrete locations (settings), gestures, and games for better comprehension prior to the introduction of stories. The typical sequence of TPRS classroom activities is 1) presenting new vocabulary with the English translation by asking questions, 2) introducing the

story by acting out events and using new words and grammatical structures repeatedly, and 3) reading and translating the story.

My experience showed that the traditional TPRS instructional method is inadequate to cultivate learners' ability to create paragraph-level text types as solid Level 2 speakers because this method focuses only on comprehension and lacks production-skill training. Thus, I modified the TPRS steps the student should take into three parts for DLIFLC-specific classroom teaching as follows:

Part one:

- Discuss key vocabulary and grammar structures used in context to clarify definition and word usage through personalized and story-related questions with repeated target structures (e.g., What does a word mean? How can I use it?).
- Read the story (or part of the story) for the main idea and details.
- Listen to a paragraph in an audio file (if available) for target vocabulary.

Part Two:

- Use the target vocabulary and grammar structures to narrate or retell the story verbally. Teachers can provide hints with gestures, prompting, images, or other means to help students remember the story's sequence.
- To comprehend challenging vocabulary, have students break difficult words apart and associate them with words they've already learned and personalized mnemonic methods.

Part three:

- Create stories with the keywords and learned sentence structures. Less creative students can insert their names as the main character and replace other characters with family members to personalize the story.
- Exchange keywords with synonyms/antonyms and replace action verbs in new contexts.
- Finally, the class shares its stories; optionally, students can vote for the most creative writer(s).

PILOTING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

Before conducting the TPRS method in a regular classroom, it was piloted during the daily Special Assistant hour with a student for OPI preparation. The objectives were a) correcting enunciation, b) creating narrative stories, and c) applying four modalities (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). My student, Tim, who was having problems enunciating specific vocabulary and elaborating on events in detail, volunteered to participate in the piloting. During our first session, I asked him to bring a list of words that he had difficulty enunciating; he then imitated my pronunciation and practiced a few times. From there, using target vocabulary and grammatic structures, we transitioned to a narration of what he did over the weekend. Using photos of Monterey, he described as many objects as he could, and I took notes on his incorrect pronunciation and grammar usage. Then, I demonstrated the correct enunciation, using the correct grammatical structures in context. He saved what we practiced in a document for his daily review.

His assignment was to describe his weekend activities through objects, dialogs, buildings, people, and feelings. This assignment served to enhance Tim's procedural memory by remembering and applying as many words, phrases, and grammatic structures as possible. I specifically asked that he include his feelings and emotions in creating his story because retrieving memories helps students retain and gain a better grasp of vocabulary. According to Marx and Gilon (2020), our minds integrate emotions and memory during the cognitive process and use language to describe images with recalled vocabulary and grammar.

As it was crucial for Tim to narrate his emotions, I tasked him to a) write as freely as possible without worrying about grammar or word choice; he could "feel" a statement as many times as possible, b) edit what he wrote and correct any errors, and c) verbally record what he wrote two times, first at his "normal" speed and then enunciating each word clearly the second time.

When we next met, I asked Tim to play the files and describe the difference between the recordings. He explained his difficulty in pronouncing certain words, so we worked on these until he had mastered them. He continued to practice and enunciate clearly during our next session. The fun part turned out to be reading his story together—I collaborated with him as an editor and asked him to explain and describe in detail. We then reconstructed and rewrote his sentences together. When it was too difficult for him to narrate (i.e., "hitting his ceiling"), to ease the tension I gave Tim a variety of options in describing an event, action, or relationship. If he could not articulate suitable descriptions of his surroundings or buildings, he drew them on paper instead. I then asked questions about his drawings, such as directions and objects. These 50-minute sessions were always fun for us both and never felt quite long enough.

After a few practice sessions, Tim was motivated to create more stories and would also like to read a few famous novels in the target language with vivid descriptions of events, surroundings, buildings, and people. I flipped through a few pages of books he eventually chose and found the language level to be approximately at 2 to 2+. He began our sessions by summarizing the story and reading his favorite parts aloud. I encouraged him to decide what he wanted to learn and applied the TPRS method to help him improve his reading comprehension. Ultimately, I was only able to complete one piloting session and plan to explore more.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Reflection on *Thinking Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching Critical Thinking to All Students*

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Thinking Like a Lawyer: A Framework for Teaching Critical Thinking to All Students (Seale, 2020) will challenge your views on critical thinking and how to approach it as an educator. From his experience, the author contends that struggling students have the potential to achieve outstanding academic success. These students may have already developed the skills needed for independent learning but the way they process information may be quite different from other students. If teachers do not address this difference, struggling students may have to teach themselves how to learn. Moreover, Seale adds, even if students are metacognitive, they would be unable to realize their potential when educators do not believe they are capable of excellence. The message, repeated several times throughout the book, is that students are not reaching their potential because teachers lack trust in students' abilities. That makes us reflect on how often we fail our students when we do not see their real potential or when we do not believe in them. We cannot expect only the top performers to think critically because all students should be able to think critically.

Teachers' Perceptions and Actions

There is a rich body of research on the linkage between teacher perceptions and actions. Teachers' perceptions of their students' characteristics influence the strategies that teachers use and the efforts they make in their classrooms (Wenglinski, 2000). Teachers' beliefs in students and their causal attributions to students' performance have significant implications for teaching

and learning effectiveness (Rose & Medway, 1981; Pajares, 2003). Tollefson and Chen (1988) have speculated that when teachers attribute student failure to a low level of effort, for example, they may refuse to give help to students, affecting student beliefs and behavior.

There are two types of causes for success and failure. Overall, internal causes, unstable and controllable, are the healthiest and the most promising attributions, whereas the external causes, stable and uncontrollable, are debilitative and should be modified or redirected (Graham & Folkes, 1990; Weiner, 2000; Dornyei, 2005). For example, teachers who believe causes of failure are not under their control are more susceptible to display signs of helplessness syndrome. In other words, teachers who tend to attribute failure to institute supervision and, to a lesser extent, to students' effort are vulnerable to feelings of despair and inefficiency, making them reluctant to alter or modify a situation (Ghonsooly, Ghanizadeh, Ghazanfari, & Ghabanchi, 2015).

Similarly, teachers' attribution to their own effort and teaching competency (internal attributions) signifies lower levels of teacher stress, greater motivation, and higher student achievement because teachers focusing on internal attributions are more likely to have classes of higher achieving students than those focusing on external attributions (Murray & Staebler, 1974; Rose & Medway, 1981). Norton (1997) has also noted that teachers with internal tendencies in explaining their instructional outcomes are more reflective in that they are more responsive to the educational and affective needs of individual student, and constantly review and appraise the instructional goals and aims.

Teachers' perceived attributions can give rise to mixed teacher reactions toward students, including anger, pity, praise, blame, help, or neglect. For instance, anger is aroused when students' unsatisfactory outcome is attributed to causes within the students' control such as lack of effort. Following this, the student uses the teacher's reaction to infer the corresponding attribution. This inferred attribution of the teacher builds self-perception of ability or effort influencing subsequent expectancy and achievement. Studying these attributions should be a compelling priority given that they are critical in teachers' perception of their own responsibility for students' performances and their subsequent behavior towards the students (Tollefson, 2000).

FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL THINKING

We highly recommend this book to colleagues because it explores concrete ways on how to develop students' critical thinking processes. The author created a critical thinking framework —thinkLaw, which can be used to analyze issues from multiple perspectives so that arguments are explored systematically. The components of the thinkLaw framework may be remembered with the acronym DRAAW+C, which stands for: 1) Decision (who should win); 2) Rule (what is the rule for the case, what generally happens); 3) Argument from one side; 4) Argument from the other side; 5) World (look at the larger picture to decide how one side of the argument is more solid than the other); 6) Conclusion (rewrite the decision considering all arguments). The book describes in detail several instances of how the framework is used, from circumstances where it can be effective in the classroom to test preparation and class management.

We believe the framework could be effectively used by DLIFLC students and especially third semester students when preparing to engage in negotiations, debates, and discussions with

teammates where they consider each other's point of view. The author explains the importance of the "wait time". When asked a question, mull it over for 10 seconds before responding because this "wait time" is the essence of deep-thinking in this framework. Another recommendation is "anticipating mistakes." When preparing for classes teachers generally know the types of mistakes students may make. The author suggests that we do not stop anticipating the mistakes students may make but that we plan further by identifying "why" they make the mistakes and "how" to prevent the mistakes from happening. This notion of "wait time" resonates strongly with us.

Most researchers agree that critical thinking refers to the use of cognitive skills and strategies that can be taught (Fuiks & Clark, 2002). However, what is not widely agreed upon is the skill that makes a person a critical thinker. The consensus seems to be that critical thinking includes mental processes and skills like interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation (Alsaleh, 2020). The thinkLaw framework concedes that such skills are vital for developing critical thinkers.

Seale (2020) suggests that teachers upend the pyramid of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). Bloom's pyramid may lead instructors to believe that learners can only reach higher levels of thinking skills when they have built a solid base of remembering and understanding. Thus, in teaching, teachers should focus on the basic understanding of the text. Seale (2020) also points out that this is not always the case. Students may be able to synthesize and evaluate without understanding every aspect of the text. Seale (2020) recommends the use of higher-level probing questions to motivate learners to master lower-level skills. Bowker (2010) confirms that when teachers rely on question-centered pedagogies and adopt a question-posing and problem-making learning environment, students are more likely to engage in the course material and become independent and critical thinkers. Moreover, the framework helps students focus on logical possibilities while addressing questions that challenge them at the metacognitive level. Figure 1 juxtaposes Bloom's original taxonomy pyramid with Seale's flipped taxonomy pyramid.

Figure 1
The Original and Flipped Versions of Bloom's Taxonomy: A Comparison

Language learners, including the DLIFLC students, rely on background knowledge and critical thinking to achieve higher proficiency levels. For this paper, critical thinking assumes its broad meaning as the analysis of facts to form an opinion. Although educators realize the

importance of critical thinking in acquiring higher language proficiency, the teaching of language and critical thinking skills is approached as two distinct processes. In that regard, Pica (2000) states that the integration of teaching language and thinking skills has been neglected. Students fail to think creatively and critically in the target language even when communicative language teaching methods.

Villa (2017) adds that a vital aspect of higher proficiency is to develop motivated self-learners that know how to analyze the syntax of their native language as well as that of the target language. As students become more skilled in understanding how language works, they can internalize the new language and make it their own. Additionally, students who think critically tend to use metacognitive strategies frequently. This understanding is key and can only be achieved when students analyze language in a broader context, that goes beyond classroom teachings. With that in mind, teachers provide strategies to develop self-motivated learners who solve problems using critical thinking skills and reflection. To foster successful learners, critical thinking must be incorporated into the curriculum content and practiced daily in all forms of communication—speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Alsaleh, 2020).

However, promoting critical thinking skills is a challenging task because learners are exposed to many sources of information, easily available via the internet (Wale & Bishaw, 2020), and neglect to question the value and accuracy of the input. The same students acknowledge the importance of learning to think critically because they realize that critical thinking skills can help them make good decisions in their personal and work environment. Hence, a well-thought-out critical thinking framework will support both students and teachers.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed the book's emphasis on the importance of teaching critical thinking to language learners and shared how much this book has contributed to our understanding of the implications for learners' growth. Examining the elements of critical thinking has provided insights into how essential we, as teachers, must analyze our own perceptions and actions. Only when we believe in our students' ability to succeed, will we be able to help them achieve their potential.

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Using Neurolinguistic Programming in the DLIFLC Classroom

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Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) was created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder at the University of California in 1970 (BBC, n.d.). Neurolinguistic Programming, rooted in the fields

of both psychology and neurology, deals with "the way the brain works and how the brain can be trained for the purpose of betterment" (BBC, n.d.). NLP is a growth-oriented approach that relies heavily on the notion that language and behavior can be modeled or copied to acquire new skills. It also emphasizes on personal change and development and assumes that people are inherently creative and capable**.** NLP analyses activities like thinking, remembering, and learning and "proposes skills, strategies and techniques […] and helps to develop [...] self-learning and self-motivation" (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018, p. 625).

Below are some of the Neurolinguistic Programming techniques that can be applied in the Defense Language Institute (DLI) classrooms.

Anchoring

Anchoring is the process associating external triggers (audio, video, etc.) with internal responses (emotions, feelings, reactions, etc.) (Silva, 2017). Anchoring can be used for different purposes such as providing meaningful work to the students when they are done with assigned task, connecting content and instruction to help students master the concepts without feeling anxious. Some examples of anchoring activities are journal writing, providing an excerpt of article to students and asking them to replace some words with synonyms, and responding to the quote or idiom of the day. These activities can be posted in the classroom for continuous and easy access and assigned to students individually or in groups. Teachers should also consider providing rubrics or guidelines for anchoring activities in advance to make the expectations clear, which will help students' accountability. The anchoring technique has been proven to decrease "stress, fear and anxiety" (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018, p. 628).

Modelling

Modelling allows students to learn by observing a new concept demonstrated to them (BBC, n.d.). This technique can be used to improve students' pronunciation. For instance, students can "listen to the speech of a native speaker and try to imitate them" (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018, p. 628). Students at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) can use Network Pronunciation Feedback (NetProF) to practice their pronunciation in the target language. Delbio and Ilankumaran (2018) explain that this technique is practical, "so it is easy to adopt [to] improve [students'] fluency" (p. 628).

Mirroring

Mirroring is a technique in which students analyze and re-create verbal and non-verbal communication (BBC, n.d.). For example, teachers can ask students to self-correct their mistakes from an audio recorded earlier in the semester. This self-correction will enhance students' sense of self-efficacy by analyzing their own oral language abilities. Otherwise, students might fossilize these mistakes despite repeated correction by the teacher.

Mnemonic

Mnemonic is a tool that supports students' retention of information which would otherwise be difficult to recall (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018). For instance, in the name mnemonic technique, "the first letter of each word is used as a name" (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018, p. 626). In English, the seven coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so; learners often use the word FANBOYS to remember them. Another option is for learners to "make a song out of information to recall the important ideas" (Delbio & Ilankumaran, 2018, p. 626), because hearing music improves the left temporal lobe that is involved in verbal memory.

There are many advantages of NLP as it impacts personal growth along with academic success. It instills positive learning attitudes among students and promotes self-motivation and self-awareness. By using NLP, teachers can help students "identify their own motivations in the learning process. [Also] pedagogical contents based on Neurolinguistic Programming techniques guide the teacher in a better understanding on how students learn more efficiently in the classroom." (Silva, 2017). NLP uses different techniques to help students master the language without getting frustrated and it provides a positive learning environment. The awareness of various techniques helps teachers to overcome many challenges when implementing NLP.

Neurolinguistic Programming primarily reflects a systematic theory focused on a mind-body system and makes connections between internal experience (neuro), language (linguistic) and behavior (programming). NLP techniques provide "very effective techniques, strategies, and solutions to the problems of teaching and learning, motivating and engaging students" (Lashkarian & Sayadian, 2015). Learners and teachers can apply these tools to virtually any aspect of learning and teaching, such as presentation skills, use of language for precise communication, study skills, and teaching design.

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MEET A TEAM

CURRICULUM SUPPORT, EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

An Interview with Dr. Natalia Barley, Director of Curriculum Support (CS) in the Educational Technology and Development (ETD) Directorate

Editor*:* Dr. Barley, could you tell the readers what Curriculum Support is about?

Dr. Barley: Curriculum Support (CS) is one of the divisions within the Educational Technology and Development Directorate. The CS core mission is to provide guidance and support to language programs and faculty at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in developing optimized and adaptive curricula geared toward higher-level foreign-language proficiency.

We provide several of the following core services:

- *Training*: we offer tailored on-demand orientations and workshops to current and future curriculum developers covering a range of topics, such as curriculum and assessment development and implementation, scope and sequence development, and objectives writing.
- *Advising*: CS specialists work collaboratively with curriculum and assessment developers in the schools to support the design, development, and implementation of new curricula as well as the improvement of existing curricula and test materials to meet the 2+/2+ goals.
- *Production Services*: The primary function of CS Production Services is to support the development of instructional materials and prepare them for use in the classroom. The production team ensures that materials are error-free, stylistically consistent (i.e., colors, fonts, design, etc.), and professionally formatted (i.e., flow and organization of material including audio and video content). Additionally, upon request, the team can develop a variety of multimedia, web and print graphics, and other design solutions to support the needs of the DLIFLC curricula.

Editor: Apart from the wide range of academic and technical support to curriculum developers, does CS provide direct support to the DLIFLC faculty and other organizations?

Dr. Barley: Definitely. The resources and services that CS offers to the DLIFLC community include the following:

- *Resources*: CS has been creating and compiling numerous resources to assist faculty with curriculum development efforts. We have curriculum development and test development handbooks, Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), activity templates, and many other resources.
- *Editing*: We offer English editing of instructional materials, publications, and other documents ranging from standard copyediting that focuses on improving the accuracy, format, and style of the text (e.g., consistency in wording, proper grammar, and punctuation) to developmental editing that involves significant of the manuscript.
- *UCAT*: The Universal Curriculum and Assessment Tool (UCAT) is a DLIFLC designed and owned courseware repository, authoring tool, and delivery application. It is a role-based tool by which course developers, managers, and teachers can develop, deliver, store, and access learning materials. Virtually all undergraduate programs currently deliver their unit tests via UCAT. The platform is maintained and regularly updated by the contracted software development team. In turn, our CS team provides regular UCAT training for both novice and experienced UCAT users, as well as efficient and robust troubleshooting support.

Editor: Regarding the editing services, I can attest to the quality and efficiency of the CS English editors. They have provided copy editing for the two academic journals published by the DLIFLC—*Applied Language Learning* and *Dialog on Language Instruction*.
Now, could you share your organization's major achievements in curriculum development with the readers?

Dr. Barley: During the past several years, CS has been instrumental in coordinating several curriculum initiatives. Among these were the following:

- *UCAT Assessment*: At the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, DLIFLC needed to quickly find an alternative delivery mechanism for paper-and-pencil unit tests that would allow to administer assessments online safely and efficiently. CS worked with the Undergraduate Education (UGE), Deputy Chief of Staff for Information Technology (DCSIT), and the UCAT contractor team and was able to successfully implement UCAT as assessment delivery platform for the UGE language programs. To accomplish that goal, UCAT implemented part of single sign on solution and met all cyber security requirements necessary for off network access.
- *Military Studies*: CS took this initiative in partnership with the military and UGE to update the Military Studies course content and ensure that students learn to use the target language as a military linguist through an introduction to specific job-related skills. CS worked with target language experts and military instructors in UGE schools to develop Operational Skills Practice (OSP) modules and Operational Skills Tests (OST) for the following languages: Persian Farsi (PF), Mandarin Chinese (CM), Modern Standard Arabic

(AD), Egyptian Arabic (AE), Levantine Arabic (AP), Iraqi (DG), Korean (KP), Russian (RU), and French (FR). The courses emphasize critical thinking skills, such as logical thought, evaluation, and precise expression in the target language.

- *Area Studies*: CS is currently working with the Area Studies (AS) Task Force in each UGE school to update the AS course materials and assessment for the AS 140, 240, 340 courses in all Basic Course Programs. These materials are designed to meet the Final Learning Objectives (FLOs), and to build and enhance students' regional and cultural expertise.

Editor: These accomplishments are impressive. Do you anticipate any upcoming challenges?

Dr. Barley: As we have seen in recent years, the educational landscape has undergone rapid changes with technology playing a more prominent role than ever. The ongoing challenge lies in staying ahead of the curve and capitalizing on the potential of technology to support sound pedagogy. For CS specifically, there is an urgent need to support the development of digital curriculum that is not simply transferred from print to electronic format, but which is co-constructed within the digital realm. Such a curriculum is multimodal, interactive and provides learning analytics and data about student progress in real time.

Editor: As the director, what do you see for CS in the future?

Dr. Barley: I feel that CS is uniquely positioned to provide support to stakeholders in developing and maintaining language learning curricula grounded in sound pedagogy. Now that many UGE programs are completing curriculum development and revision projects, CS efforts will be directed toward the evaluation of the effectiveness of the new curricula. Along with those efforts, CS is exploring ways to implement digital curricula that can deliver an interactive learning experience and provide faculty with learning analytics that support informed instructional decisions. I hope that that these efforts will enhance language learner experience and streamline the teaching process.

REVIEW

Learning to Collaborate, Collaborating to Learn: Engaging Students in the Classroom and Online

(2019) By Salmons, Janet: Stylus Publishing LLC. Pp189

Reviewed by **Mishkat Al Moumin**
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Learning to Collaborate, Collaborating to Learning: Engaging Students in the Classroom and Online brings educators and learners together around a reflective discussion to explore collaboration as a learning strategy. Whereas the book is geared towards learners, it includes strategies for educators and curriculum designers seeking to facilitate or assess collaborative learning. The author argues that learning occurs only when the educator promotes collaboration among learners. Morever, the book maintains that the educator evolves through collaboration.

Therefore, *Learning to Collaborate, Collaborating to Learn* assigns the educator the task of designing activities that promote collaboration as a strategy to acquire new skills. Whether online or in a face-to-face classroom, the educator should encourage collaboration. To aid educators in their mission, the author, Dr. Salmons, who worked at Walden University and Capella University, outlines a collaborative taxonomy. The taxonomy is a step-by-step guide to generating collaboration in online and in-person settings.

The author considers reflection the first step to achieving collaboration, followed by dialogue, and then review as the process that leads to parallel or sequential collaboration, and to the highest level of collaboration—synergistic collaboration. The book also matches collaboration to technology. Technology enhances collaboration, depending on the level of collaboration that the educator is seeking. Therefore, the author approaches collaboration methodically to epitomize different levels of collaboration in activities and tasks. Similarly, educators can use the collaborative taxonomy as a professional development tool to encourage growth among learners throughout the various levels of collaboration.

The Structure of the Book

Exploring collaboration from different angles, the book consists of three parts, each of which comprises two or three chapters. To foster meaningful engagement with the book, each chapter starts with three to four objectives, and ends with key questions to prompt discussion and reflection. In a way, the author encourages educators and learners to take collaborative

actions after reading each chapter, even if it is as simple as raising a question or engaging in a discussion. Furthermore, the author connects collaboration with reflection and applies it as a learning strategy to acquire knowledge.

Chapter Review

The author takes the readers on a journey on which they think about collaboration, as indicated in Part One, which consists of two chapters. Chapter One explores the first step to utilizing collaboration, i.e., to think about it. Indeed, thinking provokes reflection, an aspect deeply rooted in learning. To the author, collaborative learning is a system of thinking. Therefore, collaborative learning goes beyond distinguishing between individual and collective work. Individual reflection and sense-making are the first steps in collaboration within an educational context. It is noted that successful collaboration requires planning. Additionally, in an online collaborative learning experience, partners need to agree on technologies and strategies that promote synchronous or asynchronous work. Thus, in Chapter Two, the author argues that e-social constructivism, i.e., promoting human interaction online as a learning strategy, is better suited to guide online classes than a simple student-centered approach. In an online class, e-social constructivism provides the needed structure, guidance, and purpose to foster collaboration to acquire knowledge. In a way, Part One identifies the meaning of collaborative learning by reflecting on its application in classrooms, whether educators conduct classes in-person or online.

In Part Two, the author guides the readers to explore collaboration and its connection to building trust among learners and encouraging them to communicate using different technology tools. According to Chapter Three, trust is an essential element of the collaborative process, and educators are entrusted with promoting it in online classes. To help educators in their mission of establishing trust online, the author distinguishes among different types of trust. For example, personal trust, which refers to team members' willingness to open themselves and rely on one another's ability to complete a collaborative project. In contrast, strategic trust is learners' trust in the strategy used in the activity and the educator's ability to facilitate it. Trust can also be experienced at the organizational level, referring to students' trust in the institutional and curricular systems. Consequently, the author argues that without trust, communication and dialogue, the basis of collaboration, cannot take place.

Trust exists at varying levels. Low trust activities may require participants to reflect on their knowledge, simply engage in a dialogue, and review their work to exchange mutual critique. In contrast, high trust activities include parallel collaboration so that participants can complete a component of a project. Engaging learners in sequential collaboration means that they build on each other's contributions. The highest level of trust is a synergistic collaboration that requires students to synthesize their ideas and blend them to complete a project. Additionally, a collaborative learning activity indicates the level of trust shared among a group of learners. As the activity designer, the educator can promote trust among learners by increasing collaboration.

In today's classrooms, communication utilizes some sort of technology. Therefore, even in-person classes depend on technology to facilitate communication. To promote collaboration, the author explores four types of communication technologies, including:

1) text-based limited to typed words,
2) social networking sites offering visual and written communications tools,
3) web conferences applying audio, video, text, slides, and shared screen options, and
4) video conferences providing audio, video, text messaging, with file-sharing capacity.

Online collaborative activities may require additional consideration to examine the type of communication expected to occur based on the trust level shared among learners. Chapter Four, in Part Two, also explores the concept of collaborative work design and encourages partners to make a strategic decision using the collaboration taxonomy to organize their work. Collaborative work design guides the students to complete a simple collaborative activity or a complex project.

The journey to develop a collaboration taxonomy starts from exploring Bloom's taxonomy, which provides a hierarchical ordering of cognitive skills to achieve learning objectives. Accordingly, the author develops a classification of collaboration among learners and educators, demonstrating the parallels between both taxonomies. For example, Bloom's taxonomy includes six categories of cognitive skills. Similarly, the collaboration taxonomy has six levels of collaboration, with the addition of visual aids, a measurement for the level of trust, and detailed verbiage. Whether applying the taxonomy to exchange or create knowledge, learners collaboratively design their work, develop goals, reach an agreement on how to complete the assignment, and generate new knowledge.

Part Three explores the planning and assessing collaborative learning. Chapter Five guides the reader to apply the concepts in Part One and Part Two. Chapter Five encourages the online instructor to provide more guidance and help than what usually occurs in a student-centered in-person setting. Building trust online as a prerequisite to achieving collaboration requires students to reach an agreement. Thus, the instructions provide a cognitive and social presence to support students' collaborative work. For example, after dividing the students into three groups, like any student-driven class, the online collaborative teacher needs to assign a group leader so that each group can agree on responsibilities and the leadership styles, making every student understand requirements and expectations. Because collaborative activities include interdependencies among members, the culture of an organization plays a vital role in accommodating collaborative work.

Chapter Six provides a guided approach on how to assess collaborative work. Students fear that the teacher may not evaluate individuals fairly because they work collaboratively. Educators can assess students' work individually or collectively. For example, to assess a student during the dialogue phase of a collaborative activity, the teacher can develop a rubric to include an individualized set of questions, such as "Does the student participate in a timely, reciprocal, and respectful fashion?" and "Does the student make appropriate use of technology tools?" The teacher can also assess the group to see if they achieve their goals, including a workable plan and task allocation.

Book Critique

The book provides much-needed guidance on creating collaboration in an online setting. Online classes are adaptive to teacher-centeredness and lecture mode. Therefore, establishing a taxonomy for online collaboration is a game-changer. The collaboration taxonomy is versatile and comprehensive. Now, teachers and educators have a tool to apply when they plan a class online or in-person. The taxonomy also provides clear guidance on assessing collaboration. The assessment includes evaluating how well a student works with peers and their use of technology. One weakness is that the assessment could have used more input from the students who undergo the collaboration journey. The author shares her experience using the collaboration taxonomy and the assessment tools. Yet, the students' reaction, the partners on this collaboration journey, was not pronounced enough through the book.

Learning to Collaborate, Collaborating to Learn: Engaging Students in the Classroom and Online is a scholar-practitioner product intended to guide faculty members and curriculum designers who seek to create collaborative activities for learners. The book examines the nexus between collaboration and instructional technology. Therefore, online teaching becomes an opportunity to engage learning partners who may or may not co-locate.

QUICK TIPS

Quick Tips for the Semester Project Using Movies

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Movies have been frequently used as authentic materials in foreign language classes to enhance learners' background knowledge on the target language culture and their learning motivation. This paper describes two ideas that can be introduced to students as a semester project. The details are as follows.

1. SEMESTER I PROJECT: MAKING A KOREAN MOVIE BLOG WITH *PADLET*

For the first semester students, movies with conventional storylines are recommended over those with archaic vocabulary or strong regional accents. This project should be assigned to students after they have learned the vocabulary of moviegoing in the textbook.

1) Week 1 (Selecting movies): Students receive several official movie posters or preview clips selected by the teacher and speculate the character/genre of each movie in groups. Each student selects one movie for the project. Students with the same choice are assigned to one group.
2) Week 2 (Watching the movie): Each student watches the movie of their choice on laptop through apps like *Teleparty.* Students can watch the movie in the same room without disturbing other groups, because they can use a chat function on the app to discuss with their group members.
3) Week 3 (Presentation): Students give a presentation in the target language to the class through *Padlet*. Each presentation includes information of the title, genre, director, main characters (e.g., age, gender, job, etc.), temporal/locational settings, mood, and plot.
4) Week 4 (Rating): Each student rates the movie providing more than two reasons in writing. Teachers should give instructions to students on the length requirement of the writing (the number of sentences or paragraphs).

2. SEMESTERS II OR III PROJECT: MAKING AN E-PORTFOLIO OF A MOVIE WITH *MS ONENOTE*

Teachers select several genres of movies containing as many characteristics listed below as possible. Each student selects one movie and makes a *OneNote* book for their portfolio of the movie. There is no specific order for the following activities, but it is recommended that the teacher provide the follow-up activities according to the topic sequence in the curriculum and students' proficiency level. These activities help students review the vocabulary that they have learned in class and expand their vocabulary for each topic through movies.

1. Creating a character tree: After learning the vocabulary about personality, kinship, or company hierarchy, students draw a character tree displaying characters' relationships with pictures and make a presentation of each character.
2. Physical/Spatial description: (1) Students compare two characters with distinctive physical appearances; (2) explain how the same characters' appearances have changed over time in the movie; (3) describe the characters' houses or offices. Teachers can provide supplementary materials like pictures through *ThingLink* to raise students' interest.
3. Cultural information: The teacher selects a scene displaying the target language culture and asks students to first transcribe several phrases or sentences, helping them identify the cultural element. For their writing or recording homework, students compare this cultural element with their first language culture or their individual/family tradition (e.g., specific foods for certain events or holidays).
4. Find the same character: Students describes one of their acquaintances/friends who reminds them of one of the characters in the movie.
5. Become a witness: Students impersonate a witness of any accidents or crimes in the movie and leave a voice message to the police.
6. Become a reporter: Students impersonate a newspaper or TV news reporter and create one news article or script with the essential elements of information (EEI).
7. Personal response to the movie: The teacher shares a director or main actor's interview clip with students, telling students which scene impresses the teacher most and why. Students also pick scenes that impress them with explanation/justification.
8. Research on the important economic/political event: In the case that the major conflict between characters is related to an economic or political event in the target language country, ask students to research the event.
9. Mock trial: If there is a villain character in the movie, students can perform a skit for a mock trial and video-record it.
10. Alternative ending: Students write an alternative ending or storyline for the movie.

Creating a blog and an e-portfolio would be a worthwhile semester project. Such projects elevate students' performance and motivation through collaboration and allow them to experience learning progress. Moreover, each student's e-portfolio can be incorporated into the curriculum as a formative assessment.

Producing a Film for an Area Studies Course: Our Experience

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Producing a film is an innovative way to teach Russian as a foreign language. Our project involved creative language use in preparing, filming, editing, and subsequent viewing. We did not use ready-made films as teaching aids, but guided students as they produced their own films, all stages of which featured the Russian language. This paper describes the scope and procedure of the film project.

SCOPE

In the third semester, students of the Russian Basic course at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) take RU340 *Customs and Conventions of Russian-Speaking Countries*, in which students research cultural topics, educational systems, social institutions, group affiliations, and views of global issues that are influenced by customs and cultures. The course is taken concurrently with RU301 *Advanced Russian I*, and RU302 *Advanced Russian II*. For the film project, students must choose one of the autonomous (administrative-geographical) regions of Russia, research the culture of the region and make a film about it. In terms of the preservation of languages and cultures, the autonomous republics in Russia are unique in the world. Here, along with the Russian language, a small republic preserves and develops the language of the indigenous people.

In our practice, the main provisions of student-centered learning were implemented in the film project. By participating in group work, each student was important, not only by acting in the film, but also by undertaking other tasks, among which were script writing, directing, filming, editing, and dubbing. This project cultivated attention span, memory, and critical thinking, thereby stimulating an interest in learning Russian. While expanding and improving vocabulary, grammatical and phonetic skills, students embellished communicative skills as well.

Students collaborated on a small-group film project where group member contributed to each phase by choosing a topic and partners, designing the structure of the film, choosing the topic, selecting lexical and grammatical content, developing a script, shooting the film, and sound recording. The film showcased their communicative skills and mastery of the grammar and vocabulary learned during the course. Instructors evaluated the final production in accordance with the following criteria: cultural awareness, structure, vocabulary usage, grammar, and communicative competence.

SEQUENCE

The tasks were accomplished in the following sequence:

1) **Recruiting the working group**. This was a lengthy process because it was not easy to decide with whom each student would work. It was necessary to go dispense with personal preferences and the ties of established relationships when choosing actors, directors, a camera operator, screenwriters, editors, and technical specialists.
2) **Writing the script**. This entailed composition of scripts wherein students answered questions about topics, tailored demonstrations to specific audiences, and presented the films' contents. They also had to reach consensus about genres, storylines, and characters, and only then could they commence to write a script. The script included: a) plot (for viewers to grasp the circumstances and the relationships among characters); b) exposition (i.e., sequence of events, the relationships among/between characters, and pace of the narrative); c) culmination (the salient event in the film); and d) denouement (the final episode where problems were solved, conclusions drawn, and assessments made to justify or not justify the film's title).
3) **Preparing for shooting**. Students planned what was to be filmed (usually by cell phone), and determined where (locations), when, under what circumstances, and who. Before shooting, they had a rehearsal or several rehearsals without the camera. This reduced the chances of making mistakes, thus reducing the number of takes and saving time.
4) **Shooting the film**. The students shot several takes, as would be the case in any film production.
5) **Editing**. This was the final stage of the film's production, and the students used *Microsoft Windows Movie Maker* for cutting or merging scenes, entering titles and credits, inserting photos and composing a musical score, etc.
6) **Reviewing**. The students reviewed the film from beginning to end, noting errors and shortcomings. After correcting them, they conducted a final review.
7) **Presentation**. The height of the film project was to present the film. During the presentation, students were excited and nervous until they received positive assessment remarks from the teachers.

The students will organize a film festival, and their teachers, acting as judges, will evaluate the productions by a variety of criteria and award prizes to the winners.

APPENDIX

Films produced by the students may be viewed at
https://dliflc01-my.sharepoint.com/personal/irina poliakova dliflc edu/layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Firina%5Fpoliakova%5Fdliflc%5Fedu%2FDocuments%2FProject%20340%20Student%20work

TECHNOLOGY

Pandemic Order 2022: Helping Students Improve Language Proficiency with *Flipgrid*

Yaniv Oded, *Educational Technology & Development*
Ilknur Oded, *Multilanguage School, Undergraduate Education*

This paper addresses the benefits of using *Flipgrid*. Tereda (2020) believes that educators need to seek new technologies because they may have a positive impact on students' performance and engagement. This is even more true when we need to help our students improve their language proficiency despite the face masks that have become part of our lives. One way of helping students improve language proficiency is by using *Flipgrid*, which allows teachers to create "grids" of brief, discussion-style questions to which students respond in recorded videos.

Flipgrid offers a mobile app version available for iOS and Android devices, and teachers and students can login into their video grids online from any browser. Teachers can pose a question or a prompt about any topic (e.g., students' learning experience or their reflection on a book or a film) or ask students to weigh in on an abstract topic in the target language.

The following are the steps for accessing *Flipgrid:*

Step 1: Go to https://info.flipgrid.com/ and sign up as an "**Educator."**
Step 2: Create a topic and a prompt or question for the students. You may also record a video or upload a video, audio, document, or link to your prompt, as shown in the Figure 1:

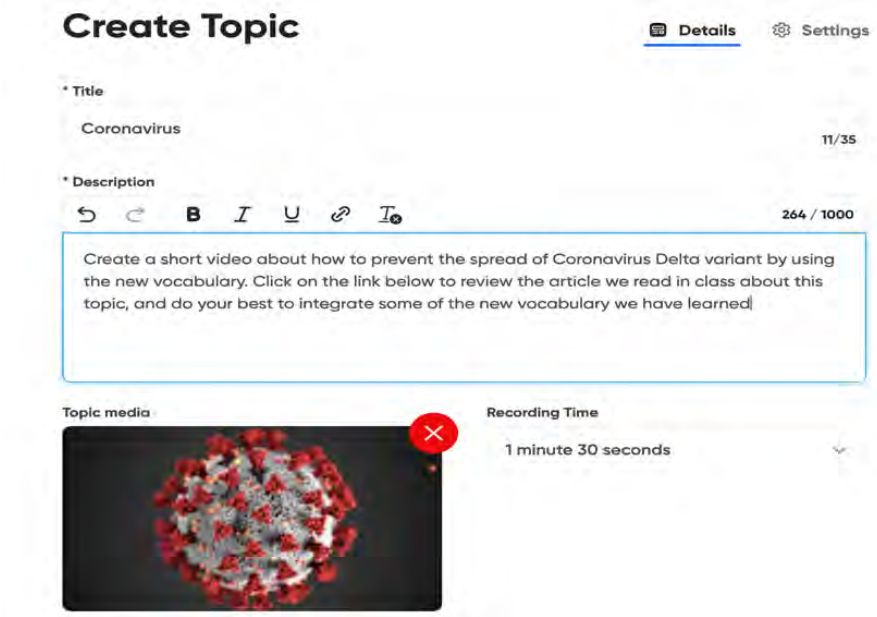

Figure 1
Creating a Topic

Step 3: Set the access control to *Private* and the email extension that your students will be using (i.e., dliflc.edu).

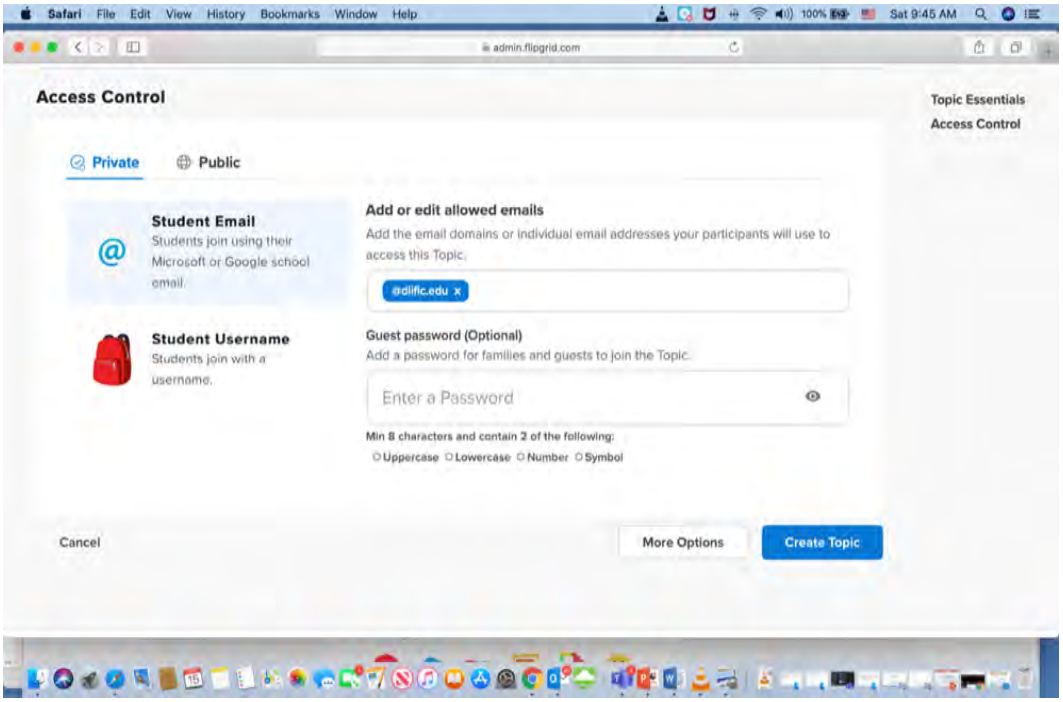

Figure 2
Setting Access Control

Step 4: Set the topic status as *Active*.

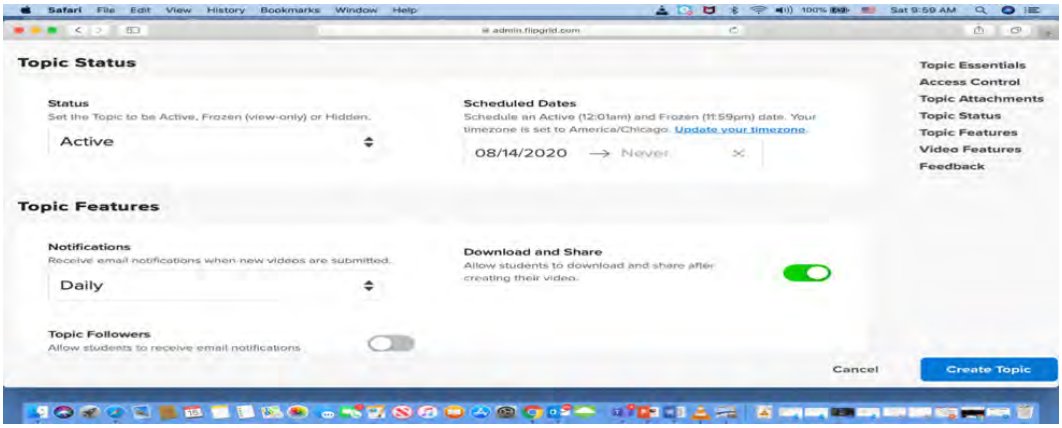

Figure 3
Activating the Topic

Step 5: Share your grid. Click *Share* to copy the link and send it to your students.

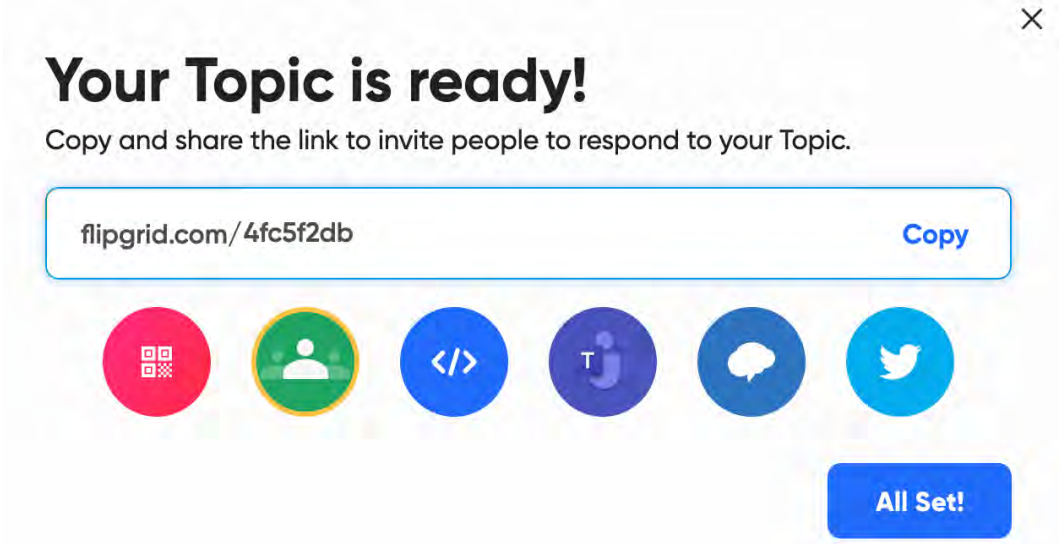

Figure 4
Sharing Your Topic

The students may then respond to your prompt with a 90-second video recording in the target language which will appear in a tiled "grid" display. Once students finish their recording, they can leave responses to other students' videos. Each grid can hold an unlimited number of responses, and all grids are private by default unless someone has the link to the grid.

There are numerous tutorials for *Flipgrid* for online use; among these are https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aZ523-HHBg, which readers may access to examine *Flipgrid* further.

Flipgrid is a user-friendly and engaging tool that helps learners improve language proficiency by bringing their own voice via brief video responses. It is also useful for creating flipped classroom materials to guide learning outside the classroom.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

VENUES FOR ACADEMIC PUBLICATION

Distribution and/or publication of events, or listings of links to foreign language professional organizations are for informational purposes only and does not constitute endorsement by the US Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, or the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.

Academic Journals on Language Education and Language Studies: Guidelines for Authors

ADFL Bulletin

(Published by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages, a subsidiary of the Modern Language Association of America) http://www.adfl.mla.org/ADFL-Bulletin

Al-'Arabiyya

(Published by the Georgetown University Press on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic)
http://press.georgetown.edu/languages/our-authors/guidelines

American Journal of Evaluation

(Published by Sage Publishing on behalf of the American Evaluation Association)
http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/american-journal-of-evaluation/journal 201729#submission-guidelines

Applied Linguistics

(Published by the Oxford Academic)
http://academic.oup.com/applij/pages/General_Instructions

Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice

(Published by Routledge)
http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

Brain and Language

(Published by Elsevier)
http://www.journals.elsevier.com/brain-and-language

CALICO Journal

(Published by the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium)
http://journals.equinoxpub.com/CALICO/about/submissions

Canadian Modern Language Review

(Published by the University of Toronto Press)
http://utorontopress.com/ca/canadian-modern-language-review

Chinese as a Second Language

(Published by the Chinese Language Teachers Association, USA)
http://clta-us.org/publications/

Cognitive Linguistic Studies

(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Co.)
http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions

Computer Assisted Language Learning

(Published by Routledge)
http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

Connections

(Published by the Foreign Language Association of Northern California)
http://www. https://flanc.net

Educational and Psychological Measurement

(Published by Sage Publishing)
http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/educational-and-psychological-measurement#submission-guidelines

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http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis

(Published by Sage Publishing)
http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/educational-evaluation-and-policy-analysis#submission-guidelines

Educational Technology Research and Development

(Published by Springer)
http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11423?detailsPage=pltci_2543550

Foreign Language Annals

(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/19449720/homepage/forauthors.html

Hispania

(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese) http://www.aatsp.org/page/hispaniasubmissions

International Journal of Applied Linguistics

(Published by John Wiley & Sons) http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14734192/homepage/forauthors.html

International Journal of Testing

(Published by Routledge) http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

Japanese Language and Literature

(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Japanese) http://www.aatj.org/journal

Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education

(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company) http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions

Language

(Published by the Linguistic Society of America) http://www.linguisticsociety.org/lsa-publications/language

Language & Communication

(Published by Elsevier) http://www.journals.elsevier.com/language-and-communication

Language Learning

(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the University of Michigan) http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14679922/homepage/forauthors.html

Language Sciences

(Published by Elsevier) http://www.journals.elsevier.com/language-sciences

Language Teaching: Surveys and Studies

(Published by Cambridge University) http://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/information/ instructions-contributors

Language Testing

(Published by Sage Publishing)
http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/language-testing#submission-guidelines

Linguistics and Education

(Published by Elsevier)
http://www.journals.elsevier.com/linguistics-and-education

PMLA

(Published by the Modern Language Association of America)
http://www.mla.org/Publications/Journals/PMLA/Submitting-Manuscripts-to-PMLA

Profession

(Published by the Modern Language Association of America) http://profession.mla.org/

RELC Journal

(Published by Sage Publications on behalf of the Regional Language Center of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization) http://journals.sagepub.com/home/rel

Review of Cognitive Linguistics

(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company)
http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions

Russian Language Journal

(Published by the American Council of Teachers of Russian) http://rlj.americancouncils.org/

Second Language Research

(Published by Sage Publishing)
http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/second-language-research# submission-guidelines

Slavic and East European Journal

(Published by the Ohio State University on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages)
http://u.osu.edu/seej/

Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics

(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company)
http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions

Studies in Second Language Acquisition

(Published by the Cambridge University Press)
http://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/studies-in-second-language-acquisition/information/instructions-contributors

System

(Published by Elsevier)
http://www.journals.elsevier.com/system

The American Journal of Distance Learning

(Published by Routledge)
http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

The French Review

(Published by the American Association of Teachers of French)
http://frenchreview.frenchteachers.org/GuideForAuthors.html

The International Journal of Listening

(Published by Routledge)
http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/

The Korean Language in America

(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Korea) http://www.aatk.org/

The Language Educator

(Published by the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages)
http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/author-guidelines

The Modern Language Journal

(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the National Federation of Modern Language Association)
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15404781/homepage/forauthors.html

TESOL Quarterly

(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the TESOL International Association)
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15457249/homepage/forauthors.html

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Submission

Dialog on Language Instruction publishes only original works that have not been previously published elsewhere and that are not under consideration by other publications. Reprints may be considered, under special circumstances, with the consent of the author(s) and/or publisher.

Send all submissions electronically to the Editor.

2. Aims and Scope

The publication of this internal academic journal is to increase and share professional knowledge and information among Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) faculty and staff, as well as to promote professional communication within the Defense Language Program.

Dialog on Language Instruction is a refereed journal devoted to applied research into all aspects of innovation in language learning and teaching. It publishes research articles, review articles, and book/materials reviews. The community-oriented columns – Faculty Forum, News and Views, Quick Tips, and Resources – provide a platform for faculty and staff to exchange professional information, ideas, and views. Dialog on Language Instruction prefers its contributors to provide articles that have a sound theoretical base with a visible practical application which can be generalized.

3. Review Process

Manuscripts will be acknowledged by the editor upon receipt and subsequently screened and sent out for peer review. Authors will be informed about the status of the article once the peer reviews have been received and processed. Reviewer comments will be shared with the authors.

Accepted Manuscripts: Once an article has been accepted for publication, the author will receive further instructions regarding the submission of the final copy.

Rejected Manuscripts: Manuscripts may be rejected for the following reasons:

- Inappropriate/unsuitable topic for DLIFLC.
- Lack of purpose or significance.
- Lack of originality and novelty.
- Flaws in study/research design/methods.
- Irrelevance to contemporary research/dialogs in the foreign language education profession.

- Poor organization of material.
- Deficiencies in writing.
- Inadequate manuscript preparation.

Once the editor notifies the author that the manuscript is unacceptable, that ends the review process.

In some cases, an author whose manuscript has been rejected may decide to revise it and resubmit. However, as the quality of the revision is unpredictable, no promise may be made by this publication pursuant to reconsideration.

4. Correspondence

Contact the Editor.

GUIDELINES FOR MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

PLANNING:
DECIDE ON THE TYPE OF PAPER

First, decide for which column you would write: Research Articles, Review Articles, Reviews, Faculty Forum, News and Reports, Quick Tips, or Resources. Refer to the following pages for the specific requirement of each type of article.

1. Research Articles

Divide your manuscript into the following sections, and in this order:

1. Title and Author Information
2. Abstract
3. Body of the text, including:
    - Acknowledgements (optional)
    - Notes (optional)
    - References
    - Tables and figures (optional)
    - Appendixes (optional)

Ensure that your article has the following structure:

Cover Page	Type the title of the article and the author's name, position, school/department/office, contact information on a separate page to ensure anonymity in the review process. See the example below: Foster Learner Autonomy in Project-based Learning JANE, DOE Assistant Professor Persian-Farsi School, UGE jane.doe@dliflc.edu 831-242-3333
Abstract	Briefly state the purpose of the study, the principal results, and major conclusions in a concise and factual abstract of no more than 300 words.
Introduction	State the objectives, hypothesis, and research design. Provide adequate background information but avoid a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.
Literature Review	Discuss the work that has had a direct impact on your study. Cite only research pertinent to a specific issue and avoid references with only tangential or general significance. Emphasize pertinent findings and relevant methodological issues. Provide the logical continuity between previous and present work.
Method	State the hypothesis of your study. Describe how you conducted the study. Give a brief synopsis of the methodology. Provide sufficient detail to allow the work to be replicated. You may develop the subsections pertaining to the participants, the materials, and the procedure. Participants. Identify the number and type of participants. Indicate how they were selected. Provide major demographic characteristics. Materials. Briefly describe the materials used and their function in the experiment. Procedure. Describe each step in conducting the research, including the instructions to the participants, the formation of the groups, and the specific experimental manipulations.
Results	State the results and describe them to justify the findings. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to the hypothesis.
Discussion	Explore the significance of the results of the work, but do not repeat them. A combined Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.
Conclusion	Describe the contribution of the study to the field. Identify conclusions and theoretical implications that can be drawn from your study. Do not simply repeat earlier sections.
Acknowledgments	Identify those colleagues who may have contributed to the study and assisted you in preparing the manuscript.

Notes	Use sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article. They should be listed on a separate page, which is to be entitled Notes.
References	Submit on a separate page with the heading: References. References should be arranged first alphabetically, and then sorted chronologically if necessary. More than one reference from the same author(s) in the same year must be identified by the letter 'a', 'b', 'c', etc., placed after the year of publication.
Appendix	Place detailed information (such as a sample of a questionnaire, a table, or a list) that would be distracting to read in the main body of the article.

2. Review Articles

It should describe, discuss, and evaluate several publications that fall into a topical category in foreign language education. The relative significance of the publications in the context of teaching realms should be pointed out. A review article should not exceed 6,000 words.

3. Reviews

Reviews of books, textbooks, scholarly works, dictionaries, tests, computer software, audio-visual materials, and other print or non-print materials on foreign language education will be considered for publication. Give a clear but brief statement of the work's content and a critical assessment of its contribution to the profession. State both positive and negative aspects of the work(s). Keep quotations short. Do not send reviews that are merely descriptive. Reviews should not exceed 2,000 words.

4. Faculty Forum

This section provides an opportunity for faculty, through brief articles, to share ideas and exchange views on innovative foreign language education practices, or to comment on articles in previous issues or on matters of general academic interest. Forum articles should not exceed 2,000 words.

5. Fresh Ideas

Reports, summaries, and reviews of new and innovative ideas and practices in language education. Fresh Ideas articles should not exceed 2,000 words.

6. News and Events

Reports on conferences, official trips, official visitors, special events, new instructional techniques, training opportunities, news items, etc. Reports should not exceed 1,000 words.

7. Quick Tips

Previously unpublished, original or innovative, easy to follow ideas for use in the language classroom or in any aspect of foreign language learning and teaching, such as technology tips, useful classroom activities, learner training tips, etc. (Examples include: Five strategies for a positive learning environment; Using iPad to develop instructional video; Four effective strategies for improving listening – tips that your colleagues can easily adapt to their classrooms). Tips should not exceed 800 words.

8. Resources

Brief write-ups on resources related to the foreign language education field, such as books, audio/video materials, tests, research reports, websites, computer and mobile apps, etc. Write-ups should not exceed 800 words.

WRITING:
FOLLOW THE SPECIFICATIONS FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Prepare the manuscripts in accordance with the following requirements:

- Follow the APA style (the 6th Edition) – the style set by the American Psychological Association;
- Do not exceed 6,000 words for research articles (not including reference, appendix, etc.); for other types of paper, see the section above for instructions;
- Use double spacing, with margins of one inch on four sides;
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12.
- Number pages consecutively.
- Text in black and white only.
- Create graphics and tables in a Microsoft Office application (Word, PowerPoint, Excel).
- Provide graphics and tables no more than 6.5” in width.
- Do not use the footnotes and endnotes function in MS Word. Insert a number formatted in superscript following a punctuation mark. Type notes on a separate page. Center the word “Notes” at the top of the page. Indent five spaces on the first line of each sequentially numbered note.
- Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Dialog on Language Instruction is an occasional, internal publication of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) and part of its professional development program. It provides a forum for faculty and staff at DLIFLC to exchange professional information. *Dialog* encourages submission of articles, reviews, forum articles, articles on best teaching practices, brief news items, quick tips, and resources.

Deadline: Submissions are welcome at any point. Manuscripts received by 31 January will be considered for the spring issue and by 31 July for the fall issue.

For guidelines in the preparation of your manuscript, please refer to the previous section—Information for Contributors.

THANK YOU, REVIEWERS

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