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Jiaying Howard

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From the Commandant

COL Deppert, the Commandant of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), sends the following chart, so that the faculty, staff, and cadre understand our priorities.

Priorities at DLIFLC

1) Start at the base - the steps of the structure. Everything you see there are the foundational aspects of our organization. Those are the things that we must do well all the time, and always pay attention to. Initially starting with standards and discipline, we move up through prevention of sexual assault and harassment, then through faculty recruitment and retention, and end up with a solid partnership between DLI and industry and academia. Beginning at the bottom and going to the top step, this foundation keeps us solid.
2) **Next go to the roof - our 2+/2+ plan.** We really have to look across all of DLI to ensure our priorities encompass all our efforts, so that our ultimate goal moves us through achieving 2+/2+ and pushes us toward attaining 3/3 and beyond, making sure we take into account the efforts at CE with linguist sustainment and improvement through all our programs.

3) **Finally, look at the pillars—our priorities.** The center pillar names *Student Development* as our #1 priority. *Faculty Development* is #2, and *Curriculum Development* is #3 priority in order. *Student Development* is our #1 priority and the center pillar, which is a conscious decision. *Student development* is the real reason for why we are here and why we exist as an organization.

Looking at the top of the chart, you will note that our whole organization and thus our priorities are all pointed at our ultimate shared goal of producing the best, culturally based, professional military linguist possible. That is what we are for. Our efforts, and all of DLI are supported by and operate within a dynamic and revolutionary learning environment. It is that environment that you all are helping to build and improve every day.

The next steps for the staff, with assistance by the faculty, will be to take our current 2+/2+ plan and the current version of our campaign plan, and revise and update those plans, taking into account our newly-shaped priorities. We will craft an updated campaign plan that puts greater detail into what *Student Development, Faculty Development,* and *Curriculum Development* really mean, and how we can achieve those goals.

Thanks to all who provided input to our priorities. I am proud to come to work every day and call each of you colleagues. You are the people that continue to make DLI such a success. Thank you all for what you do every day—you are the gold standard in education within the Department of Defense.

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**COL DEPPERT**

*Commandant*  
*Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center*
Welcome back to DLIFLC in 2016, and welcome to the newest issue of the \textit{Dialog on Language Instruction}. I think you will find some very interesting ideas within these covers to begin your new year.

I thank those faculty members who have taken the time to share their theory, practice, research, and experiences with their fellow faculty members. I hope to see more faculty members contributing in the future.

As for those who have contributed to this and previous issues, please consider taking the next step and developing your contribution into an article for one of the professional organizations’ journals. (Hint: The Publications Committee can help you do that.)

And to all—a happy, productive, energized, and exciting new year!

\textbf{BETTY L LEAVER}  
Provost
Academic Intervention Program Evaluation in a Foreign Language Course

HYE-YEON LIM
Multi-language School, Undergraduate Education

This project examined the impact of strategic academic interventions on student learning outcomes. Two groups of students in a foreign language course participated. One group (the intervention group) received a series of predetermined academic interventions. The other group (the non-intervention group) received no predetermined interventions unless specifically requested by the teachers or the students. The project included three types of academic interventions. The first was a series of learning strategy workshops offered at various points throughout the course; the second required the creation of a learner plan; the third involved mandatory academic advising for students whose weak performance based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) was judged to place them at risk of failure. The data collected included the number of students receiving an “unsatisfactory” score on unit tests (i.e., a letter grade of C- or lower), details of the learner plan, and the graduation rate of each group. The project revealed that interventions impacted student learning outcomes and attrition. Students in the intervention group had a higher success rate on unit tests through the end of the second semester, a higher rate of passing scores on the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT5) (67% vs. 53%), and a lower rate of academic attrition. The findings suggest that systematic early academic interventions can positively affect student success.
INTRODUCTION

Reducing attrition rates in schools, colleges, and universities has received significant attention (cf. Brawer, 1996; Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Okun, Benin, & Brandt-Williams, 1996). Studies have consistently shown that particular academic interventions at the institutional and individual levels reduce student attrition rates (Blustein, Judd, Krom, Viniar, Padilla, Wedemeyer, & Williams, 1986; Braxton, et al., 2004; Wild & Ebbers, 2002). The most important academic interventions related to retention in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges, are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1
Factors Related to Student Attrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Level</th>
<th>Student Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation programs</td>
<td>• Clarification of goals and plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong advising programs</td>
<td>• for study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tutoring and study assistance</td>
<td>• Strong study skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early intervention</td>
<td>• Adequate preparation for study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although specific adaptations vary, effective attrition reduction strategies share certain commonalities (cf. Arbona & Nora, 2007; Arnold 2000; Gabb, Milne, & Cao, 2006; Swail 2004; Tinto, 1975). One important factor is the nature and quality of orientation programs that help students integrate successfully into the institution and its learning environment (Brawer, 1996; Barefoot, 1993; Cuseo, 1997; Davis, 2013; St. Pierre, 2008). Another strategy that has helped reduce attrition and increase academic success is academic advising. Advising has consistently shown to be the most significant strategy for helping students set clear educational and career goals and relate the goals to their course of study (Dallas County Community College District, n.d.). Such sessions are particularly effective if they are given early in the course of study (Cuseo, n.d.; Vander Schee, 2011). A third strategy, a specific study plan, is another aid that contributes to student success and retention (Habley, et al., 2010; Swail, 2004) because such plans help students develop meta-cognitive abilities and assess their own performance. Finally, students who are taught useful study skills and strategies seem to do better because they may be more capable to process and organize information and compensate for any deficiencies in their academic backgrounds (Beckman, 2007).

Based on the theoretical principles and empirical work outlined above, the current study was designed to explore the effectiveness of several intervention strategies. The strategies included were similar to those that have been shown to have a positive impact on student outcomes in previous studies. In the sections below, each intervention activity will be discussed, including its relation to effective intervention strategies.
Two student classes assigned to a basic course participated in the project during a 47-week language course. Groups were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: treatment vs. non-treatment. One group (N=54) (hereafter referred to as the “intervention” group) was assigned to receive a series of academic interventions according to a predetermined schedule (Appendix A). The other group (N=50) (hereafter referred to as the “non-intervention” group) was not scheduled to receive systematic academic interventions.

**ACADEMIC INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

Three types of pre-determined academic interventions—workshop, learner plan, and academic advising—were offered to the intervention group.

**Workshop Interventions**

The first academic intervention involved five workshops targeted at specific learning strategies. The content and timing of the predetermined workshops conformed to the previously identified characteristics of successful interventions. The *Vocabulary Retention Strategies* and *Listening Comprehension Strategies* were offered in the first semester to assist students with meeting the challenges of memorizing foreign words and developing listening skills. In the second semester, *Strategies with Web Resources* and *Listening Skills for the DLPT5* were offered to help with autonomous learning and familiarity with the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT), which measures student’s proficiency levels in listening and reading. In the third semester, a *Critical Thinking Skills and Text Analysis for DLPT5* workshop was offered to ease students’ test-taking anxiety and develop critical thinking skills to process higher-level passages. A short description of each workshop is provided below.

1. *Vocabulary Retention Strategies*: This one-hour workshop provided various hands-on vocabulary learning strategies including association strategies, mnemonic devices, words in context, and so on. Students were provided specific compensation strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words and phrases.

2. *Listening Comprehension Strategies*: This one-hour workshop addressed effective listening comprehension strategies for foreign language learners. Students received hands-on experience dealing with listening tasks using strategies such as predicting, searching for the main idea, and summarizing. The workshop also included discussion regarding effective ways to approach listening to authentic materials, longer passages, and dialogs.

3. *Strategies with Web Resources*: This one-hour workshop offered an overview of how to target online materials to supplement class studies. The workshop included an overview of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) levels, the types of materials that students should look for on the Internet and strategies on how to use those resources.
4. **Listening Skills for DLPT 5**: This one-hour workshop presented an overview of the DLPT5 to familiarize students with the test format in order to reduce test-taking anxiety and develop time-management skills. Test-taking strategies include different approaches dealing with ILR levels 1 to 3. The workshop was geared for students to become familiar with metacognitive approaches to test taking, reading, and listening strategies.

5. **Critical Thinking and Text Analysis for DLPT5**: This two-hour workshop included a discussion of different passages at various ILR levels and how to develop critical thinking skills to process higher ILR level passages.

**Learner Plan Interventions**

Learner plan interventions have proved to be successful (Habley, et al., 2010; Swail, 2004). Learner plans help to provide greater clarification of the goals and plans for study; help orient students to the upcoming materials and tasks; and allow for early intervention in the identification of problematic areas for individual students. All students in the project were required to complete an initial learner plan in the first semester. For the intervention group, there were two follow-ups: the first occurred early in the second semester, and the second early in the third semester.

In the first follow-up, students attended a one-hour workshop where they discussed the importance of setting goals and learned the SMART principle of goal setting (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound). They developed a learning plan tailored for the semester. The workshop allowed students to reflect on their present strategy use and critically self-assess current progress. In response to student feedback requesting more time to work on the learner plans, students were asked to fill out the learner plan online (i.e., SAKAI) and received feedback through email for their third semester learning plan (the second follow-up).

**Academic Advising Interventions**

Providing underperforming or struggling students with academic advising, study assistance, and tutoring assistance have been shown to be one of the best ways to reduce student attrition (Habley, et al., 2010; Habley, 2005; Tinto, 2004). Student tutoring and study assistance are central to the efforts of reducing attrition. In this project, teaching teams in the intervention group identified students who were falling behind (i.e., those who received a letter grade of C- or lower). Students in the intervention group who failed a unit test in any language skill (listening, reading, or speaking) during the first semester were required to attend academic advising sessions conducted by trained academic advisors who did not belong to their teaching teams. These sessions were provided to students on Special Assistance/Probation throughout the course until they were back on track academically.

These one-on-one academic advising and ongoing follow-up sessions offered an opportunity for students to describe their area(s) of difficulty in
learning the target language and receive specific tips on study strategies. Advisors helped each student develop a tailored learning plan to implement study strategies throughout the course. Two months before the final exit tests (i.e., DLPT and OPI), advisors offered three walk-in advising sessions where students could drop in and ask about test preparation and test-taking strategies for the DLPT5 and OPI.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Data were collected about the number of students receiving “unsatisfactory” scores on each unit test (letter grade C- or lower), details of their learner plan, and the graduation rate of each group. Students were also asked to complete a feedback survey on a voluntary basis, immediately after each intervention (i.e., workshop, advising session, and learner plan session).

Workshop Interventions

Students in the intervention group were asked to evaluate each workshop they attended. Table 2 displays student responses to each specific workshop using a five-point Likert Scale with higher scores indicating more favorable perceptions (i.e., 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = fair, 2 = poor, 1 = unsatisfactory).

Table 2
Students’ Workshop Evaluation Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Workshop Content</th>
<th>Time of Offering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Retention (N=50)</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.76 (N=37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Comprehension (N=52)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>3.79 (N=43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies with Web Resources (N=48)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.50 (N=40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Skills for DLPT 5 (N=49)</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.23 (N=43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking &amp; Text Analysis for DLPT 5 (N=47)</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>4.19 (N=47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, students rated the workshops good (4.19) with the exception of the Strategies with Web Resources workshop, which received a rating of 3.8 (fair+). There are several plausible explanations for this score. This workshop took place one week before the academic break, which may have impacted its perceived utility. It is also possible that the nature of the materials and the level of the information need adjustment to suit student needs.

Several factors can affect the perceived effectiveness of workshops. Three of the most important are the facilitators, the content, and timing. Generally, students gave high marks to the facilitators (4.2 or higher). Feedback to the content was more mixed. The content of two more general strategies workshops (Vocabulary Retention and Strategies with Web Resources) received fair+ ratings, whereas the more targeted workshops (Listening Skills for DLPT 5 and Critical Thinking and Text Analysis for DLPT 5) received higher ratings. This suggests that focused workshops targeting specific skills related to DLPT5 are valued highly by the students. Another related factor is the timing of the offering. Those workshops that occurred closer to the tests were generally better received. When asked specifically about the timing of the workshops, most students agreed that they had been offered at the right time to help meet their goals (3.91 out of 5 where 5 = strongly agree, 3= neutral, and 1 = strongly disagree).

Also noteworthy is that the non-intervention group requested two workshops: Strategies with Web Resources and Critical Thinking and Text Analysis for DLPT 5. Although these students were not scheduled to receive these workshops, it would have been unethical to refuse the requests because these opportunities could positively affect their learning outcomes. The overall satisfaction score for the Web Strategies workshop (3.71) was about the same as that of the intervention group (3.8). The score for the DLPT5 Skills workshop (4.7) was higher than that of the intervention group (4.37). This further demonstrated that students reacted more positively to workshops that targeted on specific skills.

Learner Plan Interventions

In order to examine the effect of learner plans on student outcomes, each learner plan for the intervention group was scored on a scale of 1-20, with higher numbers indicating a stronger learner plan. The mean score for the first-semester learner plan was 8.8, indicating that learner plans were feasible but vague. In general, the learner plans were generic and could have been used for any task. The raters decided that a score around 15 was required to rate the plan as clear and applicable to the individual’s language study. Learner plan scores dropped somewhat in the second semester to 8.3, indicating that students did not improve their plans.

A correlational analysis between GPA and learner plan scores was run for each of the first two semesters (Appendix B). The Pearson correlation in the first semester was .195, which did not reach the standard level of statistical significance (p=.087). However, a review of the scatterplot (see the upper chart
in Figure 1) shows a tendency for GPA to increase as learner plan scores increase. In the second semester (see the lower chart), the correlation dropped to .007 ($p=.483$). The scatterplot does not show a relationship.

![Scatterplots between Learner Plans and GPAs (Semester 1- upper, Semester 2 - lower)](image)

Figure 1
Scatterplots between Learner Plans and GPAs (Semester 1- upper, Semester 2 - lower)
The fact that the first semester correlation was near the conventional level of statistical significance suggests that learner plans should not be completely abandoned. The failure to reach statistical significance could have been due, at least partially, to the fact that the quality of most of the learner plans was below a minimum standard to be practically useful. Based on this, we may conclude that the low-quality (poorly-written) learner plans are not related to GPA. However, if students were to develop stronger, more focused plans, the results might be different.

If we consider only the ten best and ten worst learner plans, we gain additional insight. In the first semester, the mean score for the ten learner plans that were rated highest was 13 out of 20. For the ten lowest rated plans, the mean was 5. In the second semester the highest and lowest mean scores were 12.2 and 5.6. There was little difference in the quality of learner plans between the two semesters. The lowest learner plans were very vague, restated the task, and contained only generic goals and strategies. Even the best learner plans fell below the benchmark of 15; although more focused, they lacked clarity. This suggests that students need more specific instruction and practice on how to develop an effective learner plan, how to revise it, and how to use it.

### Academic Advising Interventions

In the first semester, 27 advising sessions were conducted. All of the respondents \((N=23)\) rated the sessions good (13\%) or excellent (87\%). In the second semester, there were 23 advising sessions. Of the 17 evaluations submitted, all sessions were rated good (6\%) or excellent (94\%). In the third semester, 10 advising sessions were conducted and eight evaluations were received. All of the sessions were rated good (12.5\%) or excellent (87.5\%). Twelve students participated in walk-in advising sessions, but due to procedural issues evaluation surveys were not conducted.

As stated before, academic advising interventions were offered to students in the intervention group who failed a unit test in any language skill (listening, reading, or speaking) during the first semester. Table 3 shows a comparison between the failing rates between the non-intervention and the intervention groups.

**Semester One Results:** There were three unit tests in Semester One. As shown in Table 3, the percentage of students who failed the first unit test was approximately the same for both groups (10\% vs. 11\%). The failure rate was lower for the intervention group than the non-intervention group for each subsequent unit test after the intervention.
Table 3
*Failing Rate in Unit Tests (Non-intervention Group vs. Intervention Group)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-intervention Group</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Group</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Book 1</th>
<th>Book 2</th>
<th>Book 3</th>
<th>Book 4</th>
<th>Book 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-intervention Group</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Group</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 3</th>
<th>Unit 6</th>
<th>Unit 7</th>
<th>Unit 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-intervention Group</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Group</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Semester Two Results:* There were five unit/book tests in the second semester. Unlike the first semester, where the initial failure rates were approximately equal, failure rates in the intervention group were lower from the outset (20% vs. 29%). The intervention group consistently had fewer failing students and by the end of the second semester (Book 5), only 13% of students in the intervention group were failing compared to 27% in the non-intervention group.

*Semester Three Results:* The results of the third semester were varied. The unit test failure rates at the beginning of the term were approximately equal (26% vs. 27%). By the end of the semester, however, 7% fewer students in the intervention group failed.

Overall, the data show a trend suggesting that academic advising has a positive effect on improving outcomes on the unit tests. The data provide evidence that advising strategies increase student success rates on the unit tests. Whether or not the unit test performance is an indicator of how well students perform on the final exit tests, it is evident that students in the intervention group were able to perform better by developing their study strategies and, consequently, would have a higher probability of succeeding in the final exit tests (DLPT and OPI).
DLPT/OPI and Graduation Rates

Table 4 shows the final test results of the DLPT5 for listening and reading and the OPI for speaking. The intervention group had a 67% graduation rate compared to 53% for the non-intervention group. Although this represents an actual performance difference, it did not reach statistical significance ($p>.05$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-intervention Group (N=36)</th>
<th>Intervention Group (N=43)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening ILR Level 2</strong></td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading ILR Level 2</strong></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking ILR Level 1+</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation Rate (2/2/1+)</strong></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interventions also appear to affect student attrition due to academic failure. As shown in Table 5, the academic attrition rate for the intervention group was 14.8% vs. 20% for the non-intervention group. This suggests that interventions had a positive effect on decreasing overall academic attrition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-intervention Group (N=50)</th>
<th>Intervention Group (N=54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Attrition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Attrition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Attrition</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Attrition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semester 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Attrition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Attrition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Academic Attrition Rate</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

The current project supports findings of previous studies: well-designed interventions can help increase student performance and reduce attrition due to poor performance. The most successful interventions should be early and systematic, targeted and focused, helping students identify problematic areas and devise strategies to overcome the challenges. The academic interventions in the project emphasized systematic workshops on skills and strategies and targeted advising, all of which are in line with previously proven models of success. The descriptive data show students in the intervention group had higher unit test and graduation passing rates than those who did not receive systematic academic interventions. The interventions were successful in these two aspects.

Although the results are promising, they cannot be extended to other groups with scientific accuracy because the two classes participated in the project were a convenience rather than a random sample. These classes were available and the administration was willing to allow them to participate. Nevertheless, although this study did not establish a direct causal relationship between academic interventions and learning outcomes, the descriptive differences are large enough to warrant a continued examination of academic interventions. Whether future examinations should be done with entire classes, across all schools and language groups, or on a focused student population is debatable, provided that the administration seeks to effectively use the information obtained in the current project. In sum, the project has highlighted some measurable differences that indicate that the intervention group academically outperformed the non-intervention group.
NOTES


2. It should be noted that it is unethical to withhold any educational opportunities that may benefit students. The non-intervention group requested two workshops, which were delivered. Therefore, whereas the intervention group received five planned workshops, follow-up learner-plan sessions, and mandated advising for at-risk students, the non-intervention group received the two workshops they requested, but no other interventions.

3. Two independent raters with backgrounds in foreign language education, who have no relationship to the teaching teams, were assigned to rate each learner plan. After the individual rating, the raters discussed to agree on one score for each learner plan.

4. Data could not be reported for Semester Three because the learner plans were returned to the students and no copies were available for analysis.

5. The school’s definition of failing was a letter grade C- or lower.
REFERENCES


### APPENDIX A

#### Academic Intervention Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of Instruction</th>
<th>Intervention Program</th>
<th>Intervention Topic</th>
<th>Duration of Intervention</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>“Vocabulary Retention Strategies”</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>One-on-one academic advising for students in Special Assistance or Probation started after the 1st unit test and continued throughout the entire course of study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>(SILL survey)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Week 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>“Listening Comprehension Strategies”</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Week 18</td>
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<td>Week 19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 20</td>
<td>Portfolio Consultation with Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 21</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>&quot;Strategies with Web Resources&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 28</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>&quot;Listening Skills for DLPT 5&quot;</td>
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<td>Intervention Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 34</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 35</td>
<td>Learner Plan</td>
<td>“Self-Assessment &amp; Language Learning Plan”</td>
<td>On-line (Week 35-39)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 36</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>&quot;Critical Thinking and Text Analysis for DLPT-5&quot;</td>
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<td>Week 37</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 38</td>
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APPENDIX B

Learner Plan Data Analyses Results

Descriptive Analysis for Learner Plan and GPA for Semester 1:

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<th>Mean</th>
<th>min</th>
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<tbody>
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Correlational Analysis for Learner Plan and GPA Semester 1:

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<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
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<td>GPA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
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Descriptive Analysis for Learner Plan and GPA for Semester 2:

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Correlational Analysis for Learner Plan and GPA Semester 2:

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>LP Score</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LP Score</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>44.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (1-tailed)</td>
<td>.483</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>44</td>
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The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center’s (DLIFLC) mission—providing culturally based foreign language education, training, evaluation, and sustainment to enhance the security of the nation—calls for its students to take an active role as cryptologic linguists who need to know not only the basic level of what is said or written, but also the intended meaning. How context affects meaning is a key element of discourse analysis, which is defined as analyzing written or spoken material to obtain a deeper understanding of the speakers/writers and their intent.

Discourse, referring to the use of words to exchange thoughts and ideas, reveals the participants’ beliefs and expectations, the knowledge they share about one another and the world, and the situation in which they interact (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Discourse analysis helps learners view the language as a dynamic, social, and interactive phenomenon between speakers and listeners, writers and readers. It provides opportunities for learners to explore the texts, investigate language in socially situated conditions, and understand the social structures and ideologies of a culture.

Nicholas (1991) notes that exposing language learners to discussions about the use of the language enhances their performance, increases affinity for the language studied, and develops social and cultural tolerance. With discourse analysis, learners pay close attention to subtler meanings imparted through the use of grammar, lexicon, and syntax. They acquire not only new vocabulary, syntactical patterns, and phonology, but also discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and interactional competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Through reviews of several DLIFLC language programs’ textbooks, lesson plans and classroom observations, we find that teachers devote most class time to checking students’ comprehension by having them answer questions.
about the Essential Elements of Information (EEIs)—who, what, when, where, why. Rarely do they check if students understand the implications or intentions of target language writers or speakers.

The knowledge that native speakers of a language obtain from discourse elements is so subtle and implicit that many are unaware of its importance in the construction of meaning. But if students are to demonstrate a stronger grasp of the meaning behind what they hear and read in the target language, discourse elements must be explicitly addressed and analyzed. This paper focuses on how this type of explicit teaching can be done by expanding or adding to existing textbook tasks. Two examples of discourse analysis are presented, using Egyptian Arabic in the listening modality: one is a low-level dialog and the other several high-level speeches by a key Egyptian politician over time. The paper asserts that the inclusion of discourse analysis can augment other effective classroom teaching practices.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The topic of discourse analysis was first presented in the journal of *Applied Linguistics* in the 1970s. Since then, the definition of discourse and discourse analysis has evolved. Structuralistic tradition scholars such as Brown (1980), Stubbs (1983), Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985), Cook (1989), Hatch (1989), McCarthy (1991), and others contend that discourse is lexicon, grammar structure, cohesion, and pronunciation. A structural approach to discourse analysis deals with the way a text is divided into topics. It also examines how conjunctions and discourse markers hold the elements of the language together (e.g., *My first point is . . . I once believed, but now . . . An example is . . .*), and how argument develops through structure and function.

Other scholars such as Benwell and Stokoe (2006), and Gee (2014) see that discourse sets the way of talking, listening, reading, writing, acting, interacting, believing, and valuing. It creates social positions for writers/speakers as well as readers/listeners. The meaning of the utterance is constructed in a sociocultural context and created by many linguistic (alliteration, rhyme, poetic expression, metaphor, allegory…) and paralinguistic devices (body language, gestures, facial expressions, tones and pitches of voice, overlaps, interruptions…). To understand what is meant, a listener has to understand the sound, the lexicon, the clause, the sentence, the speaker’s intonation and body language and, most importantly, the background knowledge that the interlocutors share within a specific social function or sociocultural context. This approach to discourse analysis views language as a type of communicative function whereby the focus is on the specific meanings and communicative influences associated with a particular discourse type.

As such, discourse analysis investigates register, or how language use changes based on context. Doctors, lawyers, farmers and students speak differently. These differences reflect variations in social norms and status and provide clues about the identities of the speakers (Gee & Handford, 2012).
Discourse analysis examines the language in terms of intended actions such as thanking, blaming, condemning, and persuading; interprets texts from a social perspective, investigating how language use exposes, establishes, and reinforces societal power relations in certain cultures; analyzes how language is used in recurrent stages as it transits specific genres (i.e., TV interviews, radio shows, face-to-face conversations, public speeches, TV advertisements). Discourse analysis is important in understanding dialects because a dialect, or any form of vernacular, is rich with idiomatic expressions and figurative language, and affected by pragmatics and sociocultural factors.

Foreign language professionals and linguists agree that discourse analysis is required to gain a deeper understanding of the language. This need is further articulated in the 2008 version of the Final Learning Objectives (FLOSs) for Basic Language Programs, which lists enabling objectives such as developing text processing strategies to cope with novel input, and recognizing voice inflection, measures, word order, argumentatives and diminutives, and colloquialisms as carriers of meaning.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

Discourse analysis activities develop student awareness of how language signals a specific relationship, formal or informal. This awareness includes recognizing a speaker's assumed identity (president, citizen, religious authority, parental figure); level of education; level of responsibility; demonstrated respect and politeness; value of speech; and relevance to the issue discussed (Gee, 2014). The following are two examples of discourse analysis activities.

Activities for Lower ILR Levels (1-2)

At the lower levels of proficiency, students lack awareness of how discourse delivers intended messages, whether explicit or implicit. Therefore, it is essential that the teacher check students’ comprehension of the EEIs before conducting discourse analysis activities. The teacher supports and guides the students with clues or multiple options, keeping in mind their current level of foreign language development. Clues may take the form of keywords, forms of address, discourse markers, overlap between speakers, hesitation, or any utterance in the passage that helps them reach the correct answer. The teacher also determines the number of discourse analysis activities, based on the lesson objectives and characteristics of the passage such as genre, structure and/or discourse elements.

Examine the following dialog, which is presented in the Egyptian dialect textbooks as a vocabulary-in-context activity. Students are asked to listen to and read along with the transcript, and then guess the translations for eight specific words and phrases. For the purposes of this paper, a student was asked to translate the entire transcript of the dialog from Egyptian Arabic into English.
The student was in the 26th week (Semester II) of a 64-week course. The first part of the dialog and the student’s translation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Translation of an Egyptian Arabic Dialog (Sentences 1-4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Ayman:</strong> Peace be upon you, Pilgrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Mahmoud:</strong> Peace, grace and blessing be upon you. How are you, my Love?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Ayman:</strong> Thanks be to God. I am asking a favor from you, Pilgrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Mahmoud:</strong> Order me, my Love.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translation raises questions about the student’s awareness of the meanings of these words. The word حاج was literally translated as Haji (the word refers to a pilgrim who has made the Haj to Mecca or is an Islamic devotee), which means thatit is a term of respect. The word pilgrim was misleading in this dialog because, for an American, it might conjure up images of Thanksgiving Day and Plymouth Rock. The word حبيبي was literally translated as Habibi, which is a widely used term of endearment that has several English antecedents. A better translation might have been my dear friend rather than my love, which for an English speaker may imply a more intimate relationship.

To enrich this translation exercise, teachers can add questions (see Figure 1).

**Example 1**

1. What is the religion of Ayman and Mahmoud?
2. Use the continuia below to indicate the degree/strength of respect and cooperation between the two speakers:

   ![Respectful and Disrespectful Continuum]

   ![Cooperative and Uncooperative Continuum]

3. Which speaker is older?
These questions encourage students to think about the meaning and relationship of various forms of address. The teacher can lead students to the correct answer by explaining that the speakers’ religion is not explicitly indicated in the dialog and directing their attention to the speakers’ names, forms of address, or lexical cues. From the dialog, students will find the following:

- Mahmoud is a common name for a practitioner of Islam, whereas Ayman is a proper name given to both Muslim and Christian Egyptian men, which does not confirm his religion.
- Ayman’s initial greeting is used by Muslims or Christians trying to establish a stronger relationship with Muslims, particularly when expecting a favor. On the other hand, Mahmoud’s response to Ayman’s greeting is only used by Muslims.
- Ayman’s use of the address *Haji* indicates that the men respect each other.
- Both speakers are cooperative, but Mahmoud is more so than Ayman, as reflected in his spontaneous response to Ayman’s request in line three. He also uses the verb *order* (which means “I am willing to do whatever you ask of me”) and the address *my lover/friend*. Egyptian men use this form of address to indicate a strong relationship.
- It is likely that Mahmoud is older than Ayman because Ayman addresses him as *Haji*, and Mahmoud uses the term *Habibi* for Ayman, which is a diminutive and only used by the older person.

The second part of the dialog with the student’s translation is displayed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Translation of an Egyptian Arabic Dialog (Sentences 5-7)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ayman: A chance for work came to me, and I don’t know what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with my mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ماهر: يا سيدى مفيس مشكلة، توكئ على الله وما بهكمشى، ووالدتك في عينينا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mahmoud: My master, there is no problem. Trust in God and do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worry, your mother is in our eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ماهر: يا سيدي مفيس مشكلة، توكئ على الله وما بهكمشى، ووالدتك في عينينا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ayman: Really! God bless you, Pilgrim. From my side I will send you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money at the beginning of every month. I don’t want to command you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ماهر: يا سيدي مفيس مشكلة، توكئ على الله وما بهكمشى، ووالدتك في عينينا.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the preceding example, students may understand that Ayman has a job opportunity but may not know why his mother is mentioned. If teachers can provide the background cultural knowledge, students will know that it is common for Egyptians to go to the Gulf States to work and ask their neighbors.
to care for elderly relatives left behind. In Egyptian culture, big favors are requested indirectly. A statement of facts implies a request for assistance.

The speakers are most likely neighbors, not relatives, because the way they address each other reveals no familial relationship. The response from Mahmoud is odd, because the word يا سيدي (sidi) implies that Ayman has a higher social status than Mahmoud. The word sidi is a form of respectful address in several Arabic dialects. If strictly translated, Master is correct. But in this context a better translation would be Sir. This word is used to lower Ayman’s anxiety and put him at ease about requesting the favor.

Mahmoud also uses the idiom، والدتك في عينينا (your mother is in our eyes). Some students may interpret it as your mother is in our thoughts/prayers. Unless students have been taught the meaning, they would not understand that Mahmoud agrees to care for or “keep an eye on” Ayman’s mother. If students do not understand this part of the dialog, Ayman’s final response will not make much sense. Now that students know that Mahmoud will care for Ayman’s mother, they may assume that the money is a payment for his service. A teacher needs to provide cultural information: the money is intended to provide for Ayman’s mother. Good neighbors do not expect to be paid for taking care of their neighbors’ elderly relatives. They do so in good faith.

Ayman finishes the dialog with the phrase، أوصيك، which may be translated as Please, take care of my mother. The student’s translation does not express the correct meaning or intent. The word is derived from the Arabic root waSSa، which is a culturally loaded term, having several meanings that are determined by the context.

The major point here is that the student translation shows an inadequate understanding that can be addressed through discourse analysis activities. For this dialog, consider the questions in Figure 2, which demonstrate the discourse analysis explanations provided above.

```
Example 2

1. What is Ayman’s intent in line five? Explain.
   a) to apologize b) to request c) to thank d) to blame
2. What type of relationship do the speakers have?
3. Which speaker has higher status? What indicates this?
4. What are the underlying Egyptian sociocultural traditions that you can infer?
5. Why is money mentioned? For whom is it intended?

Figure 2
Example 2 of Questions for Discourse Analysis
```

Examining this dialog to this extent is to demonstrate the activities or questions that can help students understand and interpret the meaning of what they have heard. This is a lower-level dialog, but students can learn a great deal
from discourse analysis. The key is to move students beyond a word-for-word translation to produce an accurate “serviceable rendition” in a form of English that will be “readily understood” by an English reader unfamiliar with the language (FLOs, p. 19).

Various techniques may be used to draw students’ attention to discourse analysis even at lower levels. For example, after listening to dialogs wherein the speakers give a hint of a location (city, neighborhood, or province), students may be asked to indicate the location on a map. Teachers can direct student attention to various clues: directions such as “in the north”, landmarks such as “near the big arch”, or geographic features such as “10 kilometers from the lake” or “near the foot of the mountains.” Other techniques include the following:

- Have students compare the spoken features of the target language (intonation, pauses, repairs, turn-taking, over-lapping) with those of English. This helps them gain an understanding of the conversational conventions of the target language, which is instrumental in internalizing the language, honing listening skills, and building overall comprehension;
- Ask the students to research the significance of a social, historical or cultural reference in a text, and then report their findings to the class;
- Guide students to consider lexical or grammatical structures and their significance to the topic; and
- Have students compare a narration of a news item or current event to the same one presented in the media or even in English, to understand how different contexts affect the way a story is told or organized.

In an operational setting in which a linguist may not know the speakers, the language use offers important clues about the speakers’ identities, intentions, relationships, level of education, and socioeconomic status. Such understanding improves overall listening comprehension and builds important job skills. Cryptologic linguists often deal with incomplete messages or texts without the possibility of asking for clarification (FLOs, p. 32). They must draw conclusions from fragmentary information and linguistic clues and or recognize and annotate features not readily apparent in verbatim transcripts (FLOs, p. 32). Developers of dialect course materials at the DLIFLC have focused on the acquisition of grammar knowledge. Increasing emphasis has been placed on listening, translation, and transcription for students to apply to real-world tasks. As the FLOs’ document clearly states: “The objective is accuracy; an enabler is knowledge of structure” (FLOs, p. 34).

**Activities for Higher ILR Levels (2+/ 3)**

As students transition from ILR 2 to 2+/3, they gain greater lexical, structural, sociocultural, and linguistic competence. Starting at the end of Semester II, students should be encouraged to identify most forms of discourse, such as analysis, evaluation, persuasion, and negotiation; interpret tones; and
understand metaphors. Through recognizing contextualized meaning, they may enhance understanding of subtle differences among synonymous forms of discourse. This can be done using existing passages in the course material and focusing on: 1) Genre analysis to learn how language is used in its various recurrent stages in specific contexts such as TV talk shows, radio programs, religious and political speeches, political debates, stage plays, and movies; and 2) Conversational analysis to take a detailed approach to interactions between speakers by using higher-level conversations or interviews, excerpts of movies, plays, phone conversations, discussions between same gender and opposite gender speakers. Monologues or dialogs of speakers from different professions and socioeconomic status help students to differentiate how the meaning is delivered through certain formal or informal registers (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). The context in which the discourse takes place reflects the identities of the speakers, the relationship between the speakers, the target audience, the genre, the underlying sociocultural norm, traditions, and speakers’ beliefs, feelings, and individualized speaking style. The following activities, accordingly, are designed to improve students’ abilities in analyzing spoken discourse.

After listening to excerpts from a series of speeches made by a politician, students are asked to determine the identity or persona the politician tries to establish in each speech. Students need to detect changes in the message and determine why they have occurred. They can plot the changes on a graphic organizer and list the linguistic and paralinguistic clues that lead to their conclusions. These exercises may be conducted in pairs or small groups.

An example of this type of activity is found in three speeches given by the former President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, during the Egyptian Revolution in 2011. The speeches included a wide range of discourse elements by which he tried to fashion his image. A comparison of these speeches with those delivered before the Revolution showed a change in the construction and representation of Mubarak’s discourse, characterized by brevity, precision and avoidance of extreme metaphor use. In prior speeches he had commenced with Brothers and Sisters or Ladies and Gentlemen, whereas in the three later speeches, he used أأﯾﻳﮭﻬﺎااﻟﻠﻠﻤﻤﻮوائائﻁﻁﻨﻨﻮونﻥ (Dear fellow Citizens). In so doing, he attempted to establish a new social identity by speaking to the majority of protesters: the citizens.

Another change was marked by establishing self-reference through pronouns or pronouns attached to verbs. Mubarak referred to himself in the first person singular pronoun (I) and used singular verbs such as AtHadathu (I speak), although he had formerly used the first person plural (we). In a speech on January 28, 2011, he said: أأﺘﺘﺣﺣدﺩﺛﺛ أأیيککمم فف ظظظﻓﻓ ددﻗﻗ ﻦﻦ يي ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﻏﻉ ﺑﺏ ﻋﻉ ﺎا للاا ﮫﯼوو ﻣﻡ ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﻃﻁرﺭ ﺃأ ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﺛﺙ ﻒﻑ ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﻣﻡ ﻋﻉ ﻗﻕ ﺑﺏ ﻪﻪ ﻥﻥأﺃ إإ ﺑﺏ ﻟﻝ ﻛﻙ ﻢﻡ ﻓﻑ ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﺑﺏ ﻣﻡ ﻋﻉ ﻥﻥ ﺑﺏ ﻪﻪ ﻣﻡ ﻡﻡ ﻗﻕ ﺑﺏ ﻥﻥأﺃ ﻔﻑ ﻓﻑ ﻢﻡ ﻓﻑ ﻣﻡ ﻊﻊ ﻑﻑ ﻔﻑ ﺑﺏ ﻣﻡ ﻋﻉ ﻑﻑ ﻢﻡ ﻓﻑ ﻣﻡ ﻊﻊ ﻓﻑ ﻢﻡ 

(I speak to you today in a very critical situation that imposes on us all a serious stand/moment of serious reflection). Mubarak tried to appeal to the citizens’ emotions, to present himself as a member of the group, and to accept responsibility for the regime’s failure, which he had never done before. This is something that only a native speaker or a linguist would notice, and it reinforces the subtle, but important, role grammar plays in communication.
Further analysis of his speeches determined Mubarak’s identity as a farther, president, brother, and citizen and the type of power he had (individual or collective). To guide students through the analytical process, teachers may use questions and a graphic organizer (see Figure 3). Below are some sample questions:

1. How did Mubarak establish and communicate his identities in the speeches?
2. How and why did these identities change?
3. How were these changes lexically manifested?
4. How did Mubarak change his language use to alter his identity/social position?

Figure 3
Example of a Graphic Organizer (1)

In designing similar activities, teachers may use the numerous statements made by candidates running for elective office. It is common to hear other countries criticize, or even denounce, the United States, but the harsh words do not necessarily constitute a threat. The words they use, their lexical cues, and the way the ideas are presented often indicate that such rhetoric is more domestic propaganda than policy pronouncements. Students who understand this have developed an ability to differentiate between threats and bombast—a necessary skill for any competent linguist.

Graphic organizers allow students to break down long passages and understand the discourse organization. Here are examples of using graphic organizers:
• Students identify which speakers agree or disagree; which hold the most extreme views; what measures the speakers propose to solve a problem. This is particularly helpful when using the flipped classroom approach in which students do much of the preparation work at home, and then share what they have learned in class.
• Students summarize the commentaries or explain historical or linguistic references, and then offer opinions about the topic as part of a classroom debate or discussion. Ask students to answer the following questions: Why do you agree or disagree with the speakers? How would you resolve the problem differently?
• When listening to commentaries, students take notes by building on the graphic organizer (see Figure 4). Taking notes in the target language is a way of integrating writing into learning and strengthening transcription skill.

![Figure 4](example_of_a_graphic_organizer.png)

Figure 4
*Example of a Graphic Organizer (2)*

• After listening to 2+/3 passages where opinions are shared, students differentiate between facts and opinions by making a list of each; then they identify the facts that support the speaker’s opinion or argument.
Students identify persuasive techniques used by the speaker, differentiating between literal and figurative meanings. Their notes may be placed in a specifically designed graphic organizer (see Figure 5).

Figure 5
Example of a Graphic Organizer (3)

If the selected passage is long enough (1-2 minutes), cut it into smaller segments and play them randomly. Students must then arrange the segments in the correct order, using discourse clues such as connectors, logical lines of argument, and tones.

After listening to a level 2+/3 passage of 60-120 seconds in length, students answer two or three of the following questions:

- What knowledge do the speakers share?
- What must a listener know in order to understand the speakers?
- Are the speakers trying to minimize or exaggerate an issue?
- What lexical or rhetorical devices (analogy, metaphor, idiom, etc.) are used, and what are their functions? How do they contribute to the overall message or argument?
- Based on the conversational patterns, can you identify the significance of paralinguistic features (e.g., overlap, interruptions, and intonations) and the emotions or attitudes their use conveys?
- Did the speaker use a specific form (declarative, affirmative, negative, emphatic, conditional, imperative, etc.) and what message did the speaker attempt to send by using this form?

The key to developing discourse analysis activities is passage selection. Exposing students to a variety of speakers, media, and topics is essential to make the activities successful. Introducing passages that express humor and emotion is a good practice. Authentic passages from radio programs, TV shows, Internet video clips, and live feeds from police or military radio transmissions are valuable sources, provided copyright laws are observed. Helping students detect the types of passages (humor, propaganda, news reports), compare the same type of passage with different speakers, or contrast L1 and L2 text types build students’ discourse and communicative competencies.
BENEFITS OF TEACHING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Language has a magical property. When we speak, we craft what we have to say to fit the situation or context in which we are communicating and, thus, we contribute to the creation of the context. In other words, how we react to our environment influences our language.

Teaching discourse analysis and the critical thinking skills that go along with it will greatly appeal to American students because they are accustomed to these types of tasks. They want not only to be challenged, but also to be challenged in specific ways. Critical thinking has traditionally been the cornerstone of the American educational system, which does not encourage rote memorization and regurgitation. American students, from Kindergarten through college, are taught to question, argue, discuss, evaluate, and reason. Memorizing lengthy vocabulary lists may be an endurance test, but not necessarily a learning challenge. Learning challenges engage deep cognition that forces information into working memory so it is retained beyond the next test.

What is unacceptable in an American classroom is student passivity, long lectures, and “drill and kill” techniques. Keeping the American learner culture in mind as we teach is important to ensure student engagement and classroom management. The types of strategies described in this paper engage American students in the learning process and deepen interest in continuing to acquire knowledge and proficiency in the target language beyond studies at the DLIFLC.

NOTES

1. This document is currently being revised. The revised editions are not complete.
2. The speakers’ names are not provided in the dialog. They are known only because we are working with a script. If names are to be used as a carrier of meaning, course material developers should be sure that they are included in the script.
REFERENCES


Chinese, one of the critical foreign languages taught at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), has become a global language in recent decades. Because of the growing number of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) learners in the United States and the challenge of listening comprehension in Chinese, it is important to investigate the listening comprehension of native English speakers learning Chinese. Listening comprehension has gradually been recognized as a valuable skill in language acquisition. The awareness of language learners’ listening process helps educators understand the need for developing listening strategies. This study is a quantitative data analysis of 31 low-proficiency level listeners of Chinese. The findings show that low-proficiency level CFL listeners use neither bottom-up nor top-down processing more dominantly while listening. The findings suggest that low-proficiency level Chinese learners are possibly challenged at using bottom-up processing because of the difficulty of the tonal system in the language. This study reveals that CFL listeners may have to rely more on background knowledge, contextual information, and topic guessing than non-tonal language learners. The study suggests that DLIFLC Chinese teachers may emphasize planning and implementing integrated listening strategies in the early stage of Chinese learning; these help listeners practice such strategies and become self-regulated listeners.
INTRODUCTION

Listening is the first language skill developed by newborn babies in first language (L1) acquisition, i.e., newborns learn to listen first. According to a recent study by Moon, Lagercrantz, and Kuhl (2013), “The newborn has the capacity to learn and remember elementary sounds of their language from their mother during the last 10 weeks of pregnancy” (p.157). Thus, listening skill has often been taken for granted in second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) acquisition and neglected in L2 and FL language education. Today, however, educators and researchers have increasingly strengthened the focus on teaching listening comprehension and listening strategies. According to Vandergrift and Baker (2015), “Listening comprehension is a key component of language acquisition and an important foundation for success in language immersion programs; yet little is known about the listener characteristics that contribute to successful second language (L2) listening comprehension” (p. 390). Siegel (2014) notes that many educators overlook a learner’s dependency upon listening and its complexity, which contributes to this multi-faceted skill. Indeed, listening comprehension is a complex and crucial process in second language acquisition.

Most research regarding language-learning strategies has been devoted to reading, writing, and speaking. However, empirical studies in the past two decades began to attend to listening comprehension strategies in language acquisition. Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) and Vandergrift (1999) state that listening comprehension was previously considered a passive practice and was given little classroom attention. Vandergrift (1999) indicates that listening is anything but passive. Listening comprehension is an active process in which learners must distinguish the differences between sounds, vocabulary, grammar, intonation, stress, and context in order to interpret and respond to messages immediately. Earlier, Richard (1983) recognizes listening comprehension in second language acquisition as an active but implicit process involving complex problem solving skills. In the field of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL), CFL learners face more challenges in listening comprehension, not only because of the complexity and different cultural aspects of the language, but also because of the unique aspect of the tonal system in spoken language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have discussed different ways in which listeners can improve their comprehension competency by using cognitive strategies. Bacon (1992) is the first to explicitly point out that there are two significant processes of cognitive strategies: bottom-up processing and top-down processing. Building on this, Moskovsky, Jhang, Libert, and Fagan (2014) state that bottom-up processing is data-driven, working from phonemes and morphemes through lexemes and phrases to clauses and large chunks of text. Top-down processing is schemata-driven, working from overall message and text structure. Although studies have focused on listening strategies (bottom-up or top-down processing)
in different languages and listening texts, no study has yet examined which cognitive strategy (bottom-up or top-down processing) is predominantly used by Chinese learners during listening.

**Research in Bottom-up Processing**

Vandergrift (2011) states: “The bottom-up dimension of listening involves decoding of linguistic inputs” (p. 464). He explains this concept by referring to lexical segmentation and word recognition skill being significantly related to bottom-up processing (Vandergrift, 2004). Field (1999) specifically notes that bottom-up processing combines groups of features: phonemes into syllables, syllables into words, words into clauses, and clauses into sentences. This explanation makes bottom-up processing a step-by-step assembly process that deals with analyzing, identifying words and, finally, assembling sentences. Rost and Wilson (2013) declare: “Word identification is the essential operation in bottom-up processing.” Automatic bottom-up processing helps listeners recognize the differences in the listening passages (Lynch, 1998). Prosodic features, such as interpreting chunks of connected information, help listeners recognize words more effectively (Lynch, 1998). Field (2003) states that using syllable training also helps listeners be more successful in recognizing individual words out of clauses and phrases. Additionally, listeners use linguistic knowledge to emphasize grammatical or syntactic structures, and this helps students interpret the meaning of individual words and then synthesize chunks of words. Thus, lexical segmentation is an important aspect of bottom-up processing.

Some researchers who have studied the relationship between bottom-up processing and listening comprehension suggest that bottom-up processing is more important than top-down processing in listening performance. A study by Saglam (2014) assesses 73 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at three proficiency levels using multiple regression analysis. The results show that vocabulary knowledge is the strongest predictor of listening comprehension. The study further suggests that there should be a greater focus on lexical development with lower level students. Explicit vocabulary teaching can easily be integrated into existing curriculum. Students’ awareness of the role vocabulary plays in comprehension can be increased from the beginning of their language learning experience. Hansen and Jensen (1994), using two different kinds of academic lectures—a history and chemistry lecture—examined how listeners of different ability levels were able to answer global and local questions. Their study shows that low-proficiency level students rely heavily on bottom-up processing skills because they lack the ability to process and utilize implicit information. Another study by Shohamy and Ofra (1991) investigates the effects of texts and question types on a listening comprehension test completed by 150 EFL participants in their last year of secondary school. The results of the study indicate that participants have better scores when tested on local rather than global questions.
Osada (2001) also analyzes local and global questions, and idea unit. He studied whether 91 low-proficient EFL listeners from Tokyo tended to rely on bottom-up processing or top-down processing. By measuring recalled idea units and answers of local and global questions, Osada’s study show that EFL low-proficiency level Japanese learners tend to rely on bottom-up processing because they apparently have a lower tolerance of ambiguity. Vandergrift’s (2003) quantitative and qualitative analysis suggests that top-down processing may hinder listening comprehension. Vandergrift’s study examines how more-skilled and less-skilled listeners utilize a variety of strategies, and how less-skilled listeners distinguish the differences between strategies. The study concludes that less-skilled listeners use direct (word-for-word) translation for a chunk of text, either at the beginning or the end of a listening segment, paying little attention to connecting the ideas from one segment to another. Thus, less-skilled listeners mainly engage in bottom-up processing during listening and rarely apply top-down processing. Vandergrift further indicates that employing top-down processing may have actually prevented less-skilled listeners from developing conceptual frameworks and contractual meanings efficiently. Hulstijn (2001) also concludes that top-down processing does not provide adequate linguistic input for L2 listeners. He suggests that bottom-up processing must be developed in order for listeners to use the components of acoustic signals, such as stress and intonation, to create meaningful units.

Research in Top-down Processing

Vandergrift (2011) states: “The top-down dimension of listening involves the application of the listener knowledge resources to the decoding process. Listeners apply prior knowledge (world, linguistic, textual, pragmatic and cultural) as well as metacognitive knowledge about the listening process to the comprehension” (p. 465). While using bottom-up processing to achieve listening comprehension, listeners use top-down processing to draw conclusions based on broad, contextualized clues (Richards, 1983). Top-down processing provides listeners with abundant contextual cues to help with contextualization, such as familiar topics, predictable content, and/or cultural background, and bring the listening situation to life. Top-down processing consists of specific knowledge of content concerning real-life situations, procedures, and participants. Using real-life tasks and giving listeners an idea of the type of information to expect and what to do with it in advance may improve their listening comprehension. Additionally, listeners’ comprehension can improve by using old information and associations between interrelated segments of a new text. Background knowledge and familiar topics are dominant features of top-down processing.

Schmidt-Rinehart’s (1994) study finds that familiar topics affect recall scores when participants use their background knowledge in various ways. The participants in the study were required to recall the situations in two listening passages—one containing familiar and the other unfamiliar information. The findings of the study show that “less-proficient students relied more on
contextual cues” (p. 181). Schmidt-Rinehart’s study demonstrates the importance of recognizing listeners’ background knowledge and of listeners making connections to new information, which facilitate their comprehension capabilities. Tsui and Fullilove (1998) conducted an extensive investigation on top-down processing by observing the kind of processing skills that skilled and less-skilled EFL listeners used. They conclude that although listeners initially have the advantage with contextualized knowledge (i.e., background knowledge), they need bottom-up schematic knowledge to support decoding information. Another study suggests that listeners should focus on meaning first, when they are having a difficult time listening (Wolff, 1987). The study points out that there is a correlation between the degree of difficulty of texts and the cognitive processes used by listeners. Wolff (1987) concludes that listeners have a tendency to use top-down processing in more difficult tasks because bottom-up processing is constrained by language deficiencies (i.e., limited vocabulary).

**Bottom-up Processing and Top-down Processing**

Some studies state that the use of bottom-up and top-down processing occurs simultaneously for all listening skill levels. These strategies alone do not help listeners understand texts. Listeners increase their listening competency by using bottom-up processing for easier texts and top-down processing for difficult texts (Wolff, 1987). Further, Vandergrift (2003) finds that more-skilled listeners tend to approach both bottom-up and top-down processing simultaneously, whereas less-skilled listeners cannot keep up with the input, are unable to recognize relevant information, and rapidly forget previously comprehended knowledge. Other studies have discovered that listeners cannot switch from bottom-up processing to top-down processing when they are confused by syntax or have limited vocabulary (Stanvich, 1980; Lund, 1991). Listeners pay too much attention to translating or recalling the known or unknown vocabulary, so that they have no room to process more new information or the meaning behind the listening passages. Van Patten’s study (1989) finds that listeners have trouble paying attention to both content and form. Focusing on form interferes with listeners’ comprehension of content. Another Van Patten (1990) study indicates that low-proficiency listeners struggle with processing both grammar and meaning. Many low-proficiency listeners cannot accomplish these tasks simultaneously. A Vandergrift study (2003) indicates “less-skilled listeners tended to segment what they heard on a word-by-word basis, using almost exclusively a bottom-up approach” (p. 467).

The above studies show the relation between listening comprehension and listening strategies, namely top-down and bottom-up processing. However, no previous study has specifically investigated bottom-up and top-down processing in low-proficiency level Chinese as Foreign Language (CFL) listeners. Vandergrift (2003) states that for “L2 learners of different languages at different levels of language proficiency and on a variety of language tasks, a more fruitful methodology for tapping the more covert processes and strategies
involved in listening needs to be found” (p. 465). The current study focuses on the low-proficiency level CFL listener’s cognitive strategy use (bottom-up vs. top-down processing), which may help CFL educators further understand the development of learner listening comprehension through the use of cognitive strategies.

**Cognitive and Metacognitive Listening Strategies**

The use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies may facilitate learner listening comprehension. As Vandergrift and Goh (2012) state, “Metacognition refers to listener awareness of the cognitive processes involved in comprehension, and the capacity to oversee, regulate, and direct these processes” (p.23). Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari (2010) did a study to investigate the effect of a metacognitive, process-based approach to teaching second language (L2). The experimental group listened to a variety of texts with metacognitive processes (prediction, planning, monitoring, evaluating, and problem solving) and the control group listened to the same texts without metacognitive instructions. The results show that the experimental group outperforms the control group, and the less-skilled listeners make greater gains than the more-skilled listeners in the experimental group. The study indicates the importance of increasing the awareness of cognitive and metacognitive listening strategies. A summary of the listening strategies (Bacon, 1992) is displayed in Table 1, which shows that metacognitive strategies occur before, during, and after listening, whereas cognitive strategies include bottom-up and top-down processing.

**Table 1**  
*A Summary of Listening Comprehension Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Cognitive Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior to listening:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bottom-up Processing:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set one’s self up for the task; know what helps, make sure conditions are right.</td>
<td>Details- picture; linear processing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus attention: concentrate; clear mind.</td>
<td>Concentrate on text-based aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply an advance organizer. “You told me it was a product, so…”</td>
<td>Hear a word and repeat it. “I will hear a word…and I repeat it over and over.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go in with a plan: “I listen for words I know, key words, cognates…”</td>
<td>Relate to known words: “I try to think of any vocabulary I’ve learned.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vow to think/listen in Spanish “I learned a long time ago to make myself think only in Spanish.”</td>
<td>Listen for structure: “I listened for verbs, and then tried to fit them with nouns.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use intonation, pausing to segment words and phrases. “I listened for an entire phrase until there was a pause, then tries to understand that before it went on to the next phrase.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piece things together from the details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During listening:
Self-management: Get used to speed; keep up with speed. “Then I said to myself, ‘Well, I’ve got to listen to this. Try to keep up’.”
Monitor: “Am I getting this? No, that’s too small to be regular house.”
Express interest, motivation. “This is interesting.”
Express lack of interest, loss of focus. “So, once I figure it out, I tuned out.”
Aware of loss of attention. Refocus. “Well, I said I’ve got to concentrate.”

Post listening:
Know what helped understanding. “Once I heard ‘adapt’ I was o.k.”
Evaluate comprehension. “This one was easier. I made a story out of it.”

“Numbers, voltages, travel. He must be talking about a device to allow you to use your hairdryer, radio…”
Listen to each word one at a time.
“Look for the first word I know, then another one. See if I can put them together.”
Listen to sounds, rather than meaning.
“I kept hearing the ‘r’ word, remarkable? The accent is throwing me.”

Top-down Processing:
Picture-details, global processing.
Listen for topic, then details. “I started thinking about what could be electric.”
Have expectations; hypothesize I listened for things that would help me decide for sure if it was a motor home.”
Use schemata: “I just tried to figure out what the product was.”
Infer; guess from context, intonation” It sounds like a commercial with the music.”
Bypass English: “I’ve got a picture of it in my mind, as if I were really in it.”

* Adapted from Bacon (1992, p. 403).

Rahimi (2012) suggests that teachers introduce the concept of language-learning strategies to students and help students become familiar with their own learning strategies. When learners become self-regulated listeners, they will be able to accomplish various tasks with different levels of proficiency outside the classroom contexts. Siegel (2013) indicates that language learners express positive feedback concerning explicit listening strategy instruction. He further suggests using a process-oriented approach in teaching listening because it is recognized to have transferability beyond the second language classroom. Some researchers state that learners should consciously choose to improve their planning, focusing attention, monitoring, evaluating, inferencing, elaborating, collaborating, and reviewing (Vandergrift, 2011; Rost & Wilson, 2013). Learners who consciously apply strategies also demonstrate sustainable progress towards overall proficiency (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).
METHOD

The purpose of this study was to identify which cognitive strategy (bottom-up processing or top-down processing) low-proficiency level Chinese learners dominantly use when listening to short Chinese dialogues. The researcher studied 31 low-proficiency Chinese students from a university in the western United States. The participants were divided into three sublevels: novice-low (N=15), novice-mid (N=10), and novice-high (N=6). All participants listened to four listening passages from the textbook *Making Connections: Enhance Your Listening Comprehension in Chinese* (Spring, 2002). The researcher analyzed idea unit and global and local questions to examine which cognitive strategy (bottom-up or top-down processing) was dominantly used by the participants. After each listening passage was played twice, participants recalled as much as they could about the passage and wrote down their answers on the answer sheet. Idea unit analysis and local and global question analysis were scored on a scoring sheet.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 31 volunteers from three Chinese language classes at a university in the western United States, who were informed that no extra credit or any type of compensation would be given for their participation in the study. The students ranged in age from 18 to 30. Some had completed two or three semesters of formal Chinese instruction, whereas others had achieved equivalent language proficiency through their experiences as full-time Chinese-speaking missionaries. Because of the varied language backgrounds of the participants, their time spent studying Chinese ranged from one to five years. In order to determine participants’ listening proficiency level, all participants took the Chinese Computer Adaptive Listening Comprehension Test (CCALT) before the experiment. The testing results categorized the participants according to their proficiency levels. Table 2 shows the 31 CFL participants’ proficiency levels.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ Language Proficiency Levels (N=31)</th>
<th>Chinese class 1</th>
<th>Chinese class 2</th>
<th>Chinese class 3</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice-High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice-Mid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice-Low</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measurements

The CCALT is designed as a placement instrument based on measurement of proficiency language (Ke & Zhang, 2002). CCALT uses contextualized audio cues to present dialogs and monologs, accompanied by multiple-choice questions. When an examinee reaches a proficiency level, the test stops and reports the level attained. CCALT preserves the testing data for the instructor. When taking the CCALT, examinees listen to a test item and then answer the multiple-choice questions on the computer screen. Participants who have answered correctly are given a slightly harder test item, whereas those who have answered incorrectly are given an easier test item. Consequently, the CCALT quickly identifies a participant’s listening proficiency level. The CCALT takes approximately 30–50 minutes depending on the participants’ listening level. CCALT presents 400 test items calibrated according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines from Novice to Superior; each level, except for the superior, is further divided into three degrees: low, medium, and high. Based on the scores of the CCALT, the 31 CFL low-proficiency level participants of this study were categorized into novice-low, novice-medium, and novice-high.

The four listening passages are from Making Connections: Enhance Your Listening Comprehension in Chinese (Spring, 2002). The main characteristics of Making Connections include: 1) naturally paced and authentic Chinese conversation, 2) controlled grammar and syntactic structure, and 3) short and easily comprehended dialogues. The materials fit the purpose of this study: the cognitive strategies dominantly used by low-level proficiency CFL learners during listening.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was to test four hypotheses:

$H1$: As the level of proficiency decreases, the number of idea units recalled will decrease.

$H2$: As the level of proficiency decreases, low-level idea units will be recalled more than high-level idea units.

$H3$: The percentage of correct answers to the local questions will be higher than the percentage of correct answers to the global questions.

$H4$: As the level of proficiency decreases, the difference in the percentage of correct answers between local and global questions will be greater.

In the study, two research tools were used to identify learners’ cognitive processing while listening for comprehension. One was the idea-unit analysis by a free written recall method and the other was the analysis by local and global question types. The local questions indicated bottom-up processing and the global questions indicated top-down processing. Idea-unit analysis was used to measure the first two hypotheses and analysis of local/global questions to
measure the last two hypotheses. All questions and participants’ answers were in English.

**Idea Unit Analysis**

Participants were required to listen twice to passages A and B from *Making Connections* (Spring, 2002) and recall as much of the information as possible. According to Chafe (1980), idea units are defined in three ways: 1) using intonation to imply a complete thought and idea—idea units typically have a clause-final intonation pattern by a rising or a falling pitch. In a rising pitch, sentences are indicated with a comma, whereas in a falling pitch, sentences are indicated with a period; 2) using pausing to imply a completed idea—idea units are separated by a short pause. Every pause is different in length; 3) using syntax to represent a completed idea—an idea unit begins with a conjunction or a coordinating word, with the verb going along with its noun phrase. A group of idea units usually corresponds to the same topic and somewhat coheres with a larger idea unit.

The syntactic and semantic structure in Passage A was composed of 59 idea units and Passage B 61 idea units. After students listened to the passages twice, they were asked to recall everything they remembered on the answer sheet, in English. The recall were scored according to idea units. Each idea unit was counted one to three points based on the degree of importance to the overall content of the passage. These hierarchical points were given depending on what the participants recalled: minor details (one point), subtopics (two points), and main topics (three points). After each idea unit scores were calculated, they were totaled. A sample idea unit analysis is provided in Appendix A.

**Analysis by Local and Global Question**

The local and global question analysis used eight open-ended questions composed of four local questions and four global questions. Before listening to Passages C and D from *Making Connections*, the participants were given an answer sheet (see Appendix B). After listening, participants wrote their answers in English. Local questions focused on details: 1) understanding single vocabulary words that have contextual support and 2) recognizing facts. Global questions emphasized synthesized information, drawing conclusions and focusing on cause and effect relationships, as well as inferences. In short, when participants answered the local questions correctly, it was assumed that they used bottom-up processing. When they answered the global questions correctly, it was assumed that top-down processing was used.
Data Analysis of Idea Unit Recall Protocol

Participants listened to listening passages A and B with 59 and 61 idea units respectively. The value of each idea unit was numbered from one to three depending on the importance of the information to the listening passage. The data of this quantitative study show:

**H1: As the level of proficiency decreases, the number of idea units recalled will decrease.** The results show that the proficiency level does affect the number of idea units recalled. This is indicated by the p-value, 0.0014, which is lower than the typical significance value of 0.05, which supports **H1**. Figure 1 shows the average number of idea units recalled by each proficiency level.

![Average Number of Idea Units Recalled by Proficiency Level](image)

**Figure 1**
*An Average Number of Idea Units Recalled by Proficiency Level*

**H2: As the level of proficiency decreases, low-level idea units will be recalled more than high-level idea units.** The results show that the test was not significant. Because the p-value of 0.8036 is so high, the test is not significant. This implies that there is not enough evidence to support H2 (as the proficiency decreases more low-level idea units will be recalled than high-level). Figure 2 shows that within each proficiency level there is not much of a difference between idea unit levels in terms of the percent of idea units recalled. The proficiency level on the x-axis and the mean percentage on the y-axis in Figure 2 represent the average percent of idea units recalled for each proficiency level.
and idea unit level. The issue is not that this pattern exists but that this pattern was not strong enough to provide statistical significance.

![Bar chart showing the average percent of idea units recalled by proficiency level and idea unit level.]

**Figure 2**
*An Average Percent of Idea Units Recalled by Proficiency Level and Idea Unit Level*

**Data Analysis of Local and Global Questions**

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested by examining the percentage of local and global questions answered by each participant. There were eight open-ended questions (four global and four local); participants answered on the answer sheet based on listening passages C and D.

**H3**: The percentage of correct answers to the local questions will be higher than the percentage of correct answers to the global questions. The results show that there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis that the percentage of correct answers to the local questions will be higher than the percentage of correct answers to the global questions.
H4: As the level of proficiency decreases, the difference in the percentage of correct answers between local and global questions will be greater. The results below show that there is no significant evidence for the proficiency level to determine the correct answers merely based on the question type (see Figure 4).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results show that low-proficiency level CFL participants in this study used both bottom-up processing and top-down processing equally while listening to short audio passages. Analyses of idea units and of global and local question present similar results. The complexity of the Chinese tonal system
provides limited cognitive processing opportunities. Consequently, the number of recalled idea units decreased as the proficiency level decreased. Low-proficiency level listeners of Chinese relied on both bottom-up and top-down processing by focusing on words and global background knowledge to answer questions. The research findings indicate that the proficiency level is not a determining factor for low-proficiency level CFL learners to recall high-level and low-level idea units. The numbers of recalled high-level and low-level idea units are about the same. There is also no evidence that the percentage of correct answers to the local questions is higher than correct responses to the global questions. Because only one of the four hypotheses is supported by the statistical analysis, it is impossible to conclude that low-proficiency level CFL learners in this study used either bottom-up or top-down processing dominantly.

The scores of recalled idea units indicate that the use of both bottom-up and top-down processing has helped low-proficiency level CFL listeners understand and answer questions better. This study implies that low-proficiency level CFL listeners use both bottom-up and top-down processing to compensate for the lack of vocabulary or weakness in global knowledge. A possible reason for low-proficiency level CFL listeners not to rely solely on bottom-up processing is the complexity of the Chinese tonal system; learners may have difficulty recognizing the meaning of words. The uniqueness of the Chinese tonal system in the aural input may be confusing, causing listener anxiety. This, in turn, requires that low-proficiency Chinese listeners utilize their background knowledge and contextual clues to process the information.

Many educators believe that low-proficiency language learners mainly rely upon bottom-up processing at the early stage of language learning, thus requiring an expansion of vocabulary inventory (Rahimi, 2012). A recent study conducted by Moskovsky, Jiang, Libert and Fagan (2014) reveals that a group using the bottom-up approach slightly outperforms the top-down group in both vocabulary size and controlled productive knowledge. Their study further indicates that particular attention to vocabulary teaching leads to successful learning of a second language. However, the findings of this study show that low-proficiency level CFL learners use neither bottom-up nor top-down processing dominantly during listening. This may imply that low-proficiency level CLF learners use top-down strategy to compensate for the difficulties in decoding the sound of the Chinese tones. The tonal system, which does not exist in English or many other languages, may have had a major influence on the results of the study. Because of the tonal system and the traditional teaching method, many Chinese teachers tend to emphasize the bottom-up properties (sounds, vocabulary, syntax) in language instruction, instead of encouraging students to practice top-down listening strategies (prior knowledge, contextual clues, and prediction).

Anderson (2005) notes: “Strategies are the conscious actions that learners take to improve their language learning” (p.757). Therefore, teachers should help students recognize and apply cognitive strategies in L2 listening. It is critical that learners are familiar with cognitive strategies (top-down and bottom-up processing) to improve their listening comprehension.
CONCLUSION

The study’s finding that low-proficiency students rely on both bottom-up and top-down strategies in listening has two major implications in developing learner listening ability. One is not to neglect the bottom-up approach when students are building linguistic ability, particularly in the mastery of sounds, vocabulary, and syntax. The other is to integrate instruction and activities that utilize cognitive and metacognitive strategies in language learning. DLI teachers can train students to monitor and manage their own listening strategies through learning tasks in and out of the classroom, ultimately helping them become self-regulated listeners.

One limitation of this study is that the data and results only reflect a small group of participants. The researcher acknowledges that these participants may not accurately represent low-proficiency level CFL listeners at other universities or institutions. For example, some participants in this study had the unique opportunity of living and working in an authentic Chinese environment where they used Chinese for two years. Another limitation is the participants’ narrow range of proficiency levels. The participants were divided into three proficiency levels—novice-low, novice-mid, and novice-high—by their scores of CCALT. Their proficiency variances, all within the range of the novice level, may be not large enough to detect intergroup differences. The small range of proficiency levels may have affected the outcome of this study. The researcher suggests that future studies use a larger range of proficiency levels, such as advanced, intermediate, and novice level learners instead of novice-high, novice-mid, and novice-low listeners.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Example of Idea Units

Based on a listening passage from Making Connections. Passage (CD #1.16) was about seeing a doctor. It contains 355 characters and was delivered at an approximate rate of 264 words per minute over 1 minute and 40 seconds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Unit</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>小李, (Little Li)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>你回來啦! (You are back)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B:</td>
<td>對呀, (yes)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>我回來了. (I am back)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>我回來了已經好幾天了, (I have been back for several days)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>從中國回來的. (from China)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A:</td>
<td>怎麼你一下子瘦了這麼多呀 (how come you suddenly lost so much weight)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>B:</td>
<td>是嗎! (really)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A:</td>
<td>我看你是不是在國內玩得太累了 (I guess you had played too hard in China)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>B:</td>
<td>那倒不是, (Not really)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>在國內玩的挺開心. (I indeed had a great time in China)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>但是, (but)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>就是我病了一個多星期 (I got sick for more than a week)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A:</td>
<td>怎麼回事呀! (What happened!)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>B:</td>
<td>其實開始也沒什麼, (actually, at the beginning there was nothing serious)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>就是因為北京特別熱, (because Beijing was extremely hot)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>然後我家有冷氣. (and my house was air conditioned)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>一會兒冷, (One minute was cold)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>一會兒熱, (another minute was hot)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>我就感冒了. (I got a cold)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A:</td>
<td>一冷一熱就容易感冒. (One minute cold and one minute hot make it easy to catch a cold)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>那你看醫生了嗎? (so did you see a doctor)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>B:</td>
<td>沒有. (no)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
開始我沒有去, (I did not go at first) 2
我自己吃了一些感冒藥. (I took some cold medicine) 3
我覺得不是很嚴重, (I felt it was not serious) 2
所以我就在家待了. (so I stayed at home) 3
吃感冒藥. (took cold medicine) 2
吃了好幾天也不好. (I did not get better after a few days) ) 3
A: 是不是越來越重? (Was is getting more and more serious) 3
B: 對, (yes) 1
越來越嚴重, (more and more serious) 2
然後我又發燒,咳嗽. (then I had a cough and a fever) 3
我想不能不去醫院了, (I thought I’d better go to the hospital) 3
然後第二天我就去醫院看醫生. (then I went to see a doctor the next day) 3
A: 醫生怎麼說? (what did the doctor say) 1
B: 醫生說: (the doctor said) 1
很嚴重, (it’s serious) 2
讓我住醫院要打針. (wanted me to stay at the hospital and have some shots) 3
A: 要你住院了. (wanted you to stay at the hospital) 2
那肯定挺…(It must have be pretty…) 2
B: 對, (yes) 1
我住醫院. (I stayed at the hospital) 2
A: 住了幾天醫院? (how many days did you stay at the hospital) 2
B: 住了三,四天醫院, (three or four days) 3
然後在醫院躺了三,四天, (then I lay in the hospital for three or four days) 3
每天都打針. (had shots everyday) 3
然後來, (afterwards) 1
慢慢就好了. (got better and better) 2
A: 然後, (then) 1
怪不得, (no wonder) 2
你現在這麼瘦. (you are so skinny now) 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>53</th>
<th>B:</th>
<th>反正下次, (anyway, next time)</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>我就是一生病就得去看醫生 (once I get sick, I will see a doctor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>不能拖 (cannot wait)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td>越拖越嚴重 (the more you wait the worse it will get)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>A:</td>
<td>對對對 (yes, yes, yes)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td>對對對 (yes, yes, yes)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td>對對對 (yes, yes, yes)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 59 idea units

One point: 20
Two points: 19
Three points: 20
APPENDIX B

Answer Sheet 1

Passage (CD # 1.16): Seeing a doctor

- Please fill out the last four digits of your ID number and indicate your native language.
- After the second time playing, please write down everything you can recall in English.

ID number____________ Native language ________________

Recall:
Answer Sheet 2

Passage (CD # 1.1) Greeting:

• Please fill out the last four digits of your ID number and indicate your native language.
• After the second time playing, please answer the following questions in English.

ID number_________________ Native Language ____________________

1. What place was she looking for? (Local)

2. What did they do after they introduced each other? (Global)

3. Where did she come from? (Local)

4. What was the main idea in this conversation? (Global)

5. How long has she been in school? (Local)

6. Why does he know about her hometown? (Global)

7. How they did introduce themselves? (Global)

8. Where was he going to show her? (Local)
Faculty Forum welcomes readers’ contributions. We are interested in (but not limited to) your ideas and views about innovative foreign language education practices, as well as comments on matters of general academic interest and on articles in previous issues of this journal.

Integrating Nonstandard Language in the Basic Course Curriculum: A Model

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The purpose of this article is to present a model for integrating reading material consisting primarily of nonstandard language into the curricula for the Basic Courses at the Defense Language Institute (DLI). In this case, the model has been developed in Spanish.

RATIONALE

The goal for proficiency in Reading for students in the DLI’s Basic Courses is moving up to Level 2+ on the ILR scale—a level described as “Limited Working Proficiency, Plus.” Typically, the DLI students are taught the “standard” variety of the target language in an effort to achieve that goal. Nieto (2010) has described this standard variety as the “prestigious variety of language that will gain them [students] access to academic success and respect in the professional world” (p. 41).

However, the language of the “professional world” of DLI graduates—cryptologists in particular—is often a far cry from this standard variety. Many cryptologists graduating from the DLI’s Spanish program soon find themselves immersed in the world of drug traffickers, playing an important role in the War
on Drugs. The lexicon of this drug world is anything but standard. In fact, this nonstandard variety of the language is encountered so frequently by Spanish cryptologists that nonstandard language has actually become the “standard” language for their mission.

For this reason, the National Security Agency (NSA)—one of the main employers of the DLI’s graduates in Spanish—has requested that students be introduced to the nonstandard language of the drug milieu during the Spanish Basic Course (now moving from 26 to 36 weeks in duration). The curriculum model presented here was designed specifically to address this need, and is known as the NarcoLecturas Nonstandard Reading Project—the term narco is short for narcóticos (narcotics); lectura means reading.

NONSTANDARD LANGUAGE

In order to establish a common understanding of what nonstandard language is, let us first examine what we are referring to when we speak of “standard” varieties of language. “In any language, the ‘standard’ is the prestige variety which is normally taught in schools . . . [based on] ideas of formality and correctness” (Nieto, 2010, p. 43). This is the “mainstream” variety of a language—the variety typically taught to the DLI students. It is the language of the mainstream media and the language spoken by educated members of society in a wide range of settings.

Nonstandard language, by contrast, is akin to what Halliday (1985) describes as “the variety you speak because you ‘belong to’ (come from or have chosen to move into) a particular region, social class, caste, generation, age group, sex group, or other relevant grouping within the community” (p. 44). It is Mexico’s drug culture that makes up this “grouping within the community” that is the focus of the NarcoLecturas Nonstandard Reading Project.

The nonstandard language of the drug world has considerable overlap with broader varieties of Mexican nonstandard language, including the informal language of the street, colloquialisms, slang, and vulgarities. As defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.), a “colloquialism” is “a word or phrase that is used mostly in informal speech,” whereas “slang” is defined as “words that are not considered part of the standard vocabulary of a language and that are used very informally in speech especially by a particular group of people.” In addition to these broader categories of nonstandard language, there is also the specific jargon particular to the drug underworld. This language is primarily used in face-to-face conversation, but also appears in text messages, e-mails, on YouTube postings made by members of Mexican drug cartels, and on the narco-banners that the cartels post in public places to deliver threats or address communiqués to the public at large.

Depending on the target language and culture, the “grouping within the community” of interest to DLI graduates might be made up of religious extremists, human traffickers, cyber criminals, or any other target of NSA surveillance. Each of these groups has its own jargon, and it is often a nonstandard variety of the target language. The DLI faculty for each target
language—in conjunction with the NSA or other agencies that employ DLI graduates—could certainly identify the “groupings within the community,” which are of interest and whose nonstandard language could serve as the focus of other curricula. In fact, the Enhanced FLOs Activities (EFAs) are one effort already underway at DLI to incorporate “super authentic” language that includes slang and other nonstandard forms. The Spanish school has also begun using nonstandard listening materials with the Non-Standard Language project (developed by professors Juan Pablo Miramontes and Alex S. Vélez). This project addresses the nuances of casual conversations, including colloquialisms, vulgarity, and slang.

**NONSTANDARD LANGUAGE IN THE ILR DESCRIPTIONS**

The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale is designed to measure knowledge of the standard version of a target language. The skills covered include Speaking, Reading, and Listening. As the ILR Skill Level Descriptions move up the scale, descriptors typically reflect the performance of more highly educated individuals on more sophisticated material. The focus is rarely, if ever, on the language of the lower classes or criminal elements at the fringes of society. Yet, though it may seem counterintuitive, when our students learn the language of the street, they are actually working with language that corresponds to the higher ILR proficiency levels — beyond Level 2 and even Level 3. In fact, at Level 3+, a reader is “typically able to read with facility, understand, and appreciate contemporary expository, technical or literary texts which do not rely heavily on slang and unusual items” (ILR Reading Descriptions, Level 3+). The *NarcoLecturas* texts rely heavily on slang and unusual terms, however, and therefore correspond to the type of text that can be processed by readers at Level 4: “…recognizes all professionally relevant vocabulary known to the educated non-professional native, although may have some difficulty with slang” (ILR Reading Descriptions, Level 4). Note that even at Level 4, the professional linguist may still find it challenging to work with slang.

Although the *NarcoLecturas* consist of written texts, the texts are actually more similar to transcripts of spoken language than they are to typical written material. Because of the oral nature of this language, it is interesting to note that some of the ILR skill descriptors for Listening are also relevant to this material. For example, at Level 3+, a listener shows “increased ability to understand native speakers talking quickly, using nonstandard dialect or slang; however, comprehension is not complete” (ILR Listening Skill Descriptors). Because the *NarcoLecturas* exist as printed texts, the speed of the spoken language is no longer a factor affecting comprehension; instead, learners have time to process nonstandard, “oral-like” language, in print form.

At Level 4, the listener “understands language specifically tailored to different audiences; is able to understand the essentials of speech in some non-standard dialects; has difficulty in understanding extreme dialect and slang” (ILR Listening Skill Descriptors). This ability to process and comprehend the
different registers of tailored language corresponds to the Level 4 speaker’s ability to tailor language to a variety of situations.

The Skill Level Descriptions for Competence in Intercultural Communication (added to the ILR Skill Level Descriptions several years ago) also address familiarity with a range of registers. For example, at Level 3, a linguist should be able “to participate successfully in most social, practical, and professional interactions, including those that may require a range of formal and informal language and behavior,” whereas at Level 4, the linguist can participate successfully in “virtually all” of these interactions (ILR Skill Descriptions for Competence in Intercultural Communication, Levels 3 and 4).

Although some of the competencies acquired through work with the NarcoLecturas correspond to skills at ILR Levels 3+ and 4, this does not assume that learners will have a solid command of the competencies required above Level 2+. There are many skills that remain to be addressed in the “standard” curriculum in order to build solid competence above Level 2.

THE “NARCOLECTURAS” MODEL

In an effort to comply with the NSA’s mandate to introduce students in the Spanish Basic Course to the language of the Mexican drug underworld, a search for appropriate materials was undertaken, leading the authors to the Vice.com website. This site has editions in 18 languages, including Spanish (and many other languages taught at the DLI). It was here that the authors found a series of columns written by Mexican journalist and author Juan Carlos Reyna, presented in a collection titled El alfabeto del narco mexicano (An Alphabet of the Mexican Drug World).

The collection includes 28 articles, each corresponding to a letter of the alphabet, and featuring a “testimony”—a narrative presented orally to the author by someone from the drug underworld. Reyna’s informants include drug dealers, addicts, crooked lawyers working for the drug mafia, family members of those killed in Mexico’s “war on drugs,” and many others. Reyna wrote the “testimonies” just as they were recounted by his informants, so they are more similar to oral language than to a traditional text. Unlike the spoken language which our students typically hear on audio recordings, the NarcoLecturas contain “spoken” language, but with the advantage of having it in written form, making it easier for students to analyze. Each article also includes Reyna’s own commentary on the topic of the “testimony.” This is the material that is used in the NarcoLecturas lessons.

In order for students to successfully process these texts, it was essential to scaffold access to the nonstandard vocabulary. This was done by developing pre-reading activities (see Figure 1), which are completed by students before reading the core text. Pre-reading activities introduce nonstandard vocabulary through a variety of activity formats, including working with resources (such as an online dictionary recommended by the NSA) to research the meaning of nonstandard terms, identifying synonyms in standard Spanish that correspond to nonstandard words, translating terms into English, and completing cloze
sentences and paragraphs using nonstandard vocabulary. Depending on the topic of the main selection, pre-reading activities may also introduce unfamiliar cultural concepts. Such concepts are presented through reading material in the target language or via links to online videos, text, or images. For example, one of the NarcoLecturas features a traditional sorcerer who uses magic to identify the traitor among a drug lord’s lieutenants. In this case, it was important to build schema about traditional sorcery in Mexico.

Figure 1

Sample Pre-reading Activities Page
In the next part of the lesson, students read the core text, or “testimony” (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Sample Reading Selection

Here, it is left to the teacher’s discretion whether to have students read silently or aloud, or whether the teacher chooses to read the text aloud, emulating the style of nonstandard speakers. Once students complete the reading, they proceed to a series of post-reading activities (see Figure 3). The first of these are comprehension questions to ensure that students have grasped not only the main idea, but key details in the text as well. After students have consolidated their understanding of the text through these exercises, they are ready to undertake a deeper analysis.
The issues raised while working with the NarcoLecturas are thought-provoking, controversial, and complex. This material is intended to spark the analysis and critical thinking that demand higher order thinking skills (HOTS). In order to guide students in teasing out these issues, a discussion activity poses questions that require students to analyze information from the text in light of
background knowledge, from the author’s commentary included with each selection, or from information introduced from additional sources (video or text) to spark discussion. As students begin to interpret material and relate ideas, they develop the ability to think critically—a skill that is essential for moving beyond concrete material at Level 2 to L2+ and beyond.

After students have participated in the guided discussion, they complete the lesson with an activity titled *En tus propias palabras (In Your Own Words)*, where they are asked to write or make a short oral presentation about one of the central ideas related to the selection. Mind maps and other graphic organizers may be used to provide pre-writing support to help them structure information and analysis. This closing activity gives students another opportunity to use critical thinking skills.

Because of the challenging nature of this material, it is suggested that it is best implemented in the third semester— or Spanish (currently the last eight weeks of the course). One of the *NarcoLecturas* lessons can be presented each week, ideally in a two-hour block, much like the EFAs. In addition, the material can be used during the End of Training (EOT) course, offered to qualified students who have failed one of the skills on the DLPT.

If you have been inspired by the *NarcoLecturas* project, consider developing similar materials for the nonstandard language used in your own target language. We invite you to use these materials as a model for your own creative efforts.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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Intellectual Curiosity for Higher-level Proficiency

DOHEE KOO  
*Distance Learning, Continuing Education*

JEE EUN GAETZ  
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**INTRODUCTION**

An anecdote. Mark Goldblatt (2009), who was teaching English to college freshmen in New York, made an interesting observation of his students. He taught both a developmental class for those who failed the placement test and a class for honors-level students. Goldblatt found that 90% of the students in the developmental class did not know who Charles Lindbergh was, whereas most of the honors students knew that Lindbergh was a pilot who made a historic solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. According to Goldblatt, it is almost impossible not to encounter the name “Charles Lindbergh” growing up in America. He concluded that the students in the developmental class lacked *intellectual curiosity*; the students must have encountered “Charles Lindbergh” many times, but did not have enough curiosity to look up the name. Goldblatt finished his article with the assertion that such students are not “college material.”

The anecdote prompted us to ask a question: Does intellectual curiosity have any effect on a DLI student’s performance and potential to reach a higher level of proficiency? We did not find an empirical study on the relationship between intellectual curiosity and achievement in foreign language learning, but were able to locate a meta-analysis on the effect of curiosity on academic success in general, which we will introduce in the next section.

A meta-analysis. A meta-analysis in psychology (von Stumm, Hell, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011) sheds light on the importance of intellectual curiosity in a student’s academic success. The researchers hypothesized that intellectual curiosity is one of the three primary predictors of academic achievement, along with intelligence and effort, which other scholars have identified as having positive effects on student achievement (e.g., Deary, Strand, Smith, & Fernandes, 2007; Poropat, 2009). Von Stumm et al. (2011) analyzed 14 existing studies on intelligence (IQ), effort (*Conscientiousness*), and intellectual curiosity (*Typical Intellectual Engagement*, Goff & Ackerman, 1992) and found that intelligence has the greatest impact on academic performance, followed by the student’s effort and intellectual curiosity. Effort and intellectual curiosity were very closely related in terms of impact. Although there is a need for more research on intellectual curiosity, especially in foreign language learning, this finding seems to coincide with our observation: for students to
reach distinguished, advanced levels of proficiency, they must possess a desire to seek linguistic knowledge of the target language on their own, as well as explore the cultural, historical, and social references embedded in the higher-level passages they face. Von Stumm et al. suggested that teachers find ways to stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity by adopting a variety of strategies.

INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY AND HIGHER-LEVEL LEARNING

In what ways can intellectual curiosity help the DLI students in achieving higher levels of learning? First, curious students have a greater potential to accumulate worldly knowledge (or “content schemata”) than their not-so-curious peers because they explore a subject for the sake of learning and discovery (Bolander, 2011). Many foreign language teachers may have already observed that having worldly knowledge is critical in comprehension of higher-level passages. The more worldly knowledge a student possesses, the better he or she is poised to move toward a higher level. Second, intellectually curious students interact more with the item they are learning, which leads to deeper learning. For example, when curious students learn a new word, they may explore its synonyms, antonyms, usage, or connotations out of intellectual curiosity. If curious students learn a new grammar feature, they may ask how it differs from a similar feature previously learned. Such students interact with language items more than those who passively accept them with little interest in further exploration. Third, curious students are intrinsically motivated by the desire to increase their knowledge. Worldly knowledge, deeper comprehension of language features, and motivation are essential to push students toward a higher level in foreign language proficiency.

Can teachers train students to develop or increase intellectual curiosity? Hazel and Long (2014) believe so. They reported in a qualitative study that students’ curiosity increased by being engaged in a research project. Their findings indicate that intellectual curiosity can be stimulated through instructional techniques. We would like to share some strategies and tips that the DLI teachers can use to increase intellectual curiosity. We make suggestions in two areas: building worldly knowledge and building language.

BUILDING WORLDLY KNOWLEDGE

Raising awareness. During the first week of the course, when giving students an orientation to the program, tell them that intellectual curiosity is as important as schoolwork. During counseling sessions, remind them of the importance of intellectual curiosity and its relevance for linguistic competence.

Share your experiences. Many teachers at the DLI are intellectually curious. If not, they would not have pursued higher education. As an intellectually curious person, share your tips for pursuing knowledge. Do you read? How do you choose reading materials? How do you handle unfamiliar concepts or vocabulary while reading? These are some of the questions that help you reflect on your own quest for knowledge. Encourage students to seek
general knowledge about topics such as politics, economics, science and technology, and current events, etc.

Look-up lists. As soon as the class starts, give students a “look-up list.” At first, include simple topics or those to which they can easily relate. For example, the name of a famous singer or movie star, tourist spots, or national holidays of the target nation can be good starters. Music or trendy clothing in the target country is something that younger DLI students can relate to and become curious about. The key is not to include anything too complex in the beginning. The purpose is to stimulate curiosity about the target country and culture, and to reduce negativity toward it. Have students spend 1-2 hours per week investigating the items on the list. Encourage them to keep a log and take notes of interesting points so that they will do further research when they are ready to make a presentation or write in the target language. Once you have assigned topics, have them generate a list for themselves or for their classmates. There may be more web pages on any given topic written in English than in other languages, so have them read freely without limiting the language in which they gather the information.

Google Moment. Anybody who uses a smart phone can easily relate to this scenario at a restaurant: a bunch of friends are having a get-together, and motivated by a question raised by one of the party, they competitively take out their smart phones to “google” to find an answer. We have named this activity a “Google moment.” Encourage Google moments periodically in class, especially when they are lagging after extensive classroom time. Instruct them to seek answers to the questions by means of iPads or smart phones. Do not limit the topic to the target language or culture. You can ask them who won Best Actor at the 2015 Academy Awards or who is the prime minister of Japan, for example. We have found this rarely fails to generate curiosity, especially when the subject matter is of interest to them.

It is possible to plan activities and tasks to create a Google moment at any level. At lower levels, students can be asked to find information, for example, about the weather in their hometowns in real time, using Google or other search engines, and report their findings in simple target language to the class. At higher levels, students can be given a choice of questions in the target language, such as “Why do married people tend to live longer?” “Why is there no heart cancer?” “Have you ever wondered why the sun lightens the hair but darkens the skin?” or “Who tastes dog food to prove that it has ‘new and improved’ flavor?” (Tension Not, n.d.)

BUILDING LANGUAGE

Intellectual curiosity can be triggered even when students need to focus on linguistic aspects of the target language by having them probe into the use of grammar, vocabulary, the author’s intention, etc., and hence actively participate in the learning process.

Grammar and vocabulary instruction. Learners with higher-level proficiency have a better grasp of grammar. They can distinguish usage, context,
and/or different nuances of similar grammar features. For example, *because*, *as*, *for*, and *since* can all be used to express a reason, but they are not identical. Higher-level learners of English can distinguish them, whereas lower-level learners may struggle with accurate and appropriate use of them due to a paucity of knowledge.

The grammar feature explanations in textbooks tend to be simplified; the primary forms, meanings, and functions are introduced to meet the needs of basic-level learners. However, to push students to a higher level, teachers must address the distinctions between two different forms having similar meanings. In such cases, the inductive approach can stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity.

One thing teachers can do is to make a list of grammar features that are different in forms and usage but similar in meaning. For each feature, carefully craft 3-5 sample sentences so that the differences in usage are clearly shown. You can locate the sentences that include these features in websites for more authenticity. Pair up the students, ask them to figure out the differences of such items, give feedback, and have them create their own sentences by using the forms in the proper context. Like vocabulary, a grammar feature cannot be learned in a day. It takes awareness, repetition, and effort for students to master certain grammatical features. For on-going learning, have students continue to fine-tune the meanings and functions of the grammar feature that they explored by paying attention to the context in which the feature is being used while they are reading or listening to authentic passages.

Students often create incorrect sentences after learning a new grammar item. Use their errors for classroom discussion. Ask students why a sentence is incorrect and have them discover the reason themselves. In order to lead this type of discussion and give the final feedback, teachers should be equipped with a wide range of knowledge in grammar features, through investing time in deepening the grammatical knowledge of the target language and getting ready to give clear explanations during the feedback.

Teach vocabulary in a similar way. Synonyms can be used in different contexts and have different connotations. Have students explore the differences of synonyms through examples. Make the students curious about the different meanings, and allow them to interact with the words more.

The author’s intention. For higher-level listening or reading activities, for which students are required to read/listen between lines to make inferences and detect the stance of the author/speaker, ask students to figure out the intentions behind the writer/speaker’s choice of certain words and expressions. Such questions will lead students to higher reading proficiency by orienting them to think about these aspects of a text.

As seen in the example below, the author of this editorial deliberately chose to use “white lie,” “bacon,” and “papered over” instead of other neutral expressions to convey his sentiment and attitude toward the topic.
Supreme Court’s **White Lie** on Obamacare

The GOP-majority Supreme Court saved President Barack Obama’s **bacon** Thursday with a political ruling that **papered over** his signature Affordable Care Act. Writing for the majority in the 6-3 King v. Burwell decision, Chief Justice John Roberts noted that the 900-page law was written behind closed doors with little debate or amendment and thus was “inartfully” drafted… (Sanders, 2015)

Every text is created with a specific intent by the author. Discussing with students about what the author tries to accomplish by using particular words or expressions not only generates students’ curiosity, but also leads to deeper understanding of the text.

**CONCLUSION**

At the DLI, teachers meet students who have little worldly knowledge. If they are fresh out of high school, it may be expected. However, if a seasoned linguist who is back to the Continuing Education displays little worldly knowledge after years of work experiences, it may be partially because the student does not have enough intellectual curiosity. Teaching such students is challenging, because in addition to teaching language, teachers have to fill the huge gap of knowledge between what they know and what they need to know within a limited time to help them process higher-level target language. It is a daunting task.

Intellectually curious students have more potential to be successful both at and beyond the DLI. Teachers can train students as soon as they enter the basic programs to have the mindset and attitude of “being curious,” which they can carry for the rest of their lives. They will become effective learners and service members with a desire to seek knowledge wherever they will be working. Teachers must think about how to train students to become intellectually curious.
REFERENCES


Take Care of the Punctuation Marks

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“Punctuation marks – it’s like reading the notes.”
A.P. Chekhov

As a DA specialist, I often notice that ignorance of the punctuation mark can interfere with the comprehension process and may hinder full comprehension. This leads me to consider including punctuation in our teaching, as punctuation in reading helps facilitate the visual perception of the text to better interpret it and avoid any false perception of words, phrases, and sentences.

Punctuation marks appeared in written language much later than the letters. They were first used for the correct selection of intonation, for separation and isolation of parts of the text, or for emotional color. Their inclusion helps readers understand the right tone and the right emotions in a particular sentence. Bezuglov (2013) found that punctuation appeared in the Russian written language gradually; the period (.) and the colon (;) in the 11th century, the semicolon (;) in the 15th century, the comma (,) and the question mark (?) in the 16th century, the exclamation mark (!) and the dash (-) in the 17th century, and the ellipsis (...) in the 18th century. The Russian linguist Svetlova (2006) in her article “Once Again About the Punctuation Marks” talks about the ten most important punctuation marks in Russian, in addition to indents, footnotes, paragraph (§) signs, and slashes (/). In comparison, there are 14 punctuation marks that are commonly used in English (Punctuation, ND).

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUATION MARKS

Why do we need punctuation? Valgina (2004) says that punctuation is a social phenomenon because it has a clear purpose—to convey to readers the meaning as it was formed in the mind of the writer. The social function of the punctuations is to facilitate an identical or, at least, approximate understanding of the meaning by both the reader and the writer.

Punctuation contributes to the parsing of written text to facilitate understanding. Punctuation is also vital to disambiguate meaning in sentences. As an example, even a single comma may produce sharp differences in the meaning of the sentence.

For example, here is a famous Russian phrase consisting of three words, in which only one comma is used: Казнить нельзя помиловать (Execution no pardon). If you put the comma after the first word/verb (казнить), it will mean Execute, do not pardon!; but, if to put the comma after the second word (нельзя), it will mean Do not execute, pardon!
It is important that punctuation marks are noticed when reading. Sometimes students underestimate or ignore the role of punctuation, which may in turn affect their reading comprehension. This situation worsens when punctuation marks are combined.

The purpose of teaching punctuation is the emphasis in conveying meaning. Punctuation should be taught from the beginning of the course. The peculiarity of the Russian punctuation, for instance, is that the same mark may be used with different purposes because of its multi-functionality. Moreover, different marks may be used for the same purpose (synonymous punctuation) but it will be incorrect to assume that they can be used interchangeably. Far from it; absolute synonymous punctuation does not exist. The author searches for certain semantic, stylistic, intonation characteristics by choosing one or another punctuation mark when formulating a thought.

PUNCTUATION MARKS AND READING COMPREHENSION

Below are some examples of the punctuation marks in the reading modality, the functions of which are frequently neglected, ignored, or unknown to students.

Example 1. A combined use of the colon, the quotation mark, and the exclamation mark

An excerpt from a passage:
...Я воскликнул: «До ближайшего хутора рукой подать!» (I exclaimed: “The nearest farm is within a stone’s throw!”)

The questions for the passage are in English. One question asks students to translate the quoted sentence «До ближайшего хутора рукой подать!» Student translations are rarely accurate. Many students think that the narrator is sarcastic and the real meaning is The place they are going to is too far, because the sentence is quoted. In fact, students do not understand that one function of the quotation marks is to highlight direct speech, and not necessarily to convey sarcasm.

Example 2. A combined use of the quotation mark and the exclamation mark

An excerpt from a passage:
Хорошо «отдохнули!» (They had a good “rest”!)

The questions for the passage are in English. One question is “How did the friends spend their time?” Sometimes the answer is “They had a good rest.” When asked why the word “rest” is quoted, students will say the exclamation mark in this combination is to emphasize the real meaning. Because the sentence
ends with an exclamation mark, students assume that the sarcastic meaning would not be followed by an exclamation mark.

Example 3. The use of the parentheses

An excerpt from a passage:
Это был Пётр Герасимович (Нехлюдов никогда и не знал, и даже немного хвастал тем, что не знает его фамилии), бывший учитель детей его сестры. [It was Peter Gerasimovitch, a former teacher of his sister’s children (Nekhludoff never knew his surname, and even bragged a bit about this)].

The questions for the passage are in English. One question is “Who is Peter Gerasimovitch?” Usually the answer given is “Nekhludoff,” which is incorrect. According to students, the portion in parentheses contains additional information about the subject of the sentence. Not all students realize or understand that information in parentheses is often not directly related to the main topic.

Based on the above examples, it may be helpful to explain the following punctuation marks to students:

- Parentheses ( ) 1) amplify or explain word, phrase, or sentence inserted in a passage; and 2) include material that does not normally fit into the flow of the text.
  - Example 1
    - Thirty-five years after his death, Robert Frost (we remember him at Kennedy’s inauguration) remains America’s favorite poet.

- Quotation marks/Quotes “ ”(« » - Russian quotes) start the material that represent the quoted or spoken language, titles, irony or sarcasm, dual meaning, citation, and direct speech.
  - Example 2
    - My favorite poem is Robert Frost’s “Design”.

- Brackets [ ] include explanatory words or phrases within quoted language:
  - Example 3
    - Espinoza charged her former employer with “falsification of [her] coaching record.”

- Colon : is used before a list or an explanation that is preceded by a clause that can stand by itself or separates author’s words from the direct speech.
  - Example 3
    - The charter review committee now includes the following people:
      - the mayor
      - the chief of police
• the fire chief
• the chair of the town council

- Semi-colon: used to sort out or to separate two independent clauses
  - Example 4
    - We had four professors on our committee: Peter Wursthorn, Professor of Mathematics; Ronald Pepin, Professor of English; Cynthia Greenblatt, Professor of Education; and Nada Light, Professor of Nursing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to introduce you to a parable of “The Benefits of the Punctuation Marks” by Kanevski A. (n.d.).

A man lost a comma and was afraid to use sentences. He started using the simple phrases. Simple phrases expressed simple thoughts.

Then he lost the exclamation mark and started talking in the same tone. There was nothing in the world to rejoice and resent him, or make him show his emotions.

Then he lost the question mark and stopped asking questions. Not a single event could arouse his curiosity no matter wherever they happened—in space or on the Earth or even in his own apartment.

In a few years he lost the colon and stopped to explain to people his acts whatsoever.

By the end of his life he had only quotes. He did not express any ideas of his own. He always quoted somebody—so he really forgot how to think, and got to the full stop.

Take care of the punctuation marks!

REFERENCES

Developing Cultural Background Knowledge through a Learner-centered Project

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Introduction

Intermediate and advanced language learners often face the challenge of reading between or beyond the lines. Sentences embedded with cultural elements baffle language learners, even when they know the meaning of every word. Often this puzzlement occurs because students lack background knowledge of the target language country. Improving such knowledge can boost learners’ comprehension of higher-level materials that are laden with cultural intricacies.

To enhance students’ background knowledge, teachers in the intermediate and advanced Chinese language classes at the LTD Hawaii site assigned students a learner-centered project, engaging them in a broad search for relevant materials in the target language. Students were required to complete a series of assignments—extracting information from extensive reading, organizing the contents, writing a paper, creating PowerPoint slides, and giving an oral presentation. This article describes the project’s framework and identifies the areas that require teacher attention when undertaking such a project.

The Framework of the Project

The project was carried out in several phrases: preparation, topic selection, information collection, the writing of a paper, the creation of presentation slides, giving the presentation, a critique of the presentation, and the assessment.
Phase I—Preparation. Teachers informed students of the project requirements, including the timeframe, the details of each phase, and the final products—a written paper and an oral presentation with slides. The format and components of the final products were also specified. Teachers set requirements according to students’ levels and learning goals. Students received an assessment rubric (see Appendix), which clarified the grading criteria.

Phase II—Topic selection. Appropriate topics included those covered in previous classes, which students wanted to explore further. Students brainstormed a topic of interest, listed what they knew and did not know about the topic, identified key questions, possible resources for answers, and methods to collect information, and reported to teachers in writing. Teachers reviewed and commented on the viability of the topic, resources, and methods, offering tips for good target language resources.

Phase III—Information collection. To answer the key questions, students selected and collected relevant materials, and organized the information in sections by summarizing and categorizing the materials. A detailed outline for all sections and subsections was constructed in preparation for the written paper. Teachers critiqued the content, organization, and the language use by providing detailed oral or written feedback. After the teachers’ critiques, students revised the outline before writing the paper.

Phase IV—Paper composition. Based on the outline, students composed the first draft. Teachers pointed out areas in need of improvement, including the content, organization, and language use. Following teachers’ suggestions for revisions, students corrected their papers and handed in a second draft. Teachers provided thorough feedback on the second draft, focusing on syntax, semantics, pragmatics, coherence, structure, etc. Students then made further corrections and finalized their papers.

Phase V—PowerPoint slides creation. Students created PowerPoint slides. There was no specific requirement as to the number of slides, but the sequence of the slides had to follow the flow of the written paper. The use of charts, tables, pictures, and other ways to better illustrate ideas were encouraged. Students submitted a draft for teachers’ comments and revised the slides as recommended.

Phase VI—Presentation and critique. Each student delivered an oral presentation in class, with PowerPoint slides as the visual aid. A Question and Answer session followed the presentation. The presenter was given the opportunity to lead a class discussion on issues relevant to the content of the presentation. Peers and teachers provided oral or written feedback to each presenter, including strengths and/or weaknesses of the presentation, suggestions for improvement, validation or expansion of presentation content based on personal knowledge or experience, and any insights gained from the
presentation. Students then finalized the PowerPoint slides according to the comments from peers and teachers.

**Phase VII—Assessment.** In accordance with the assessment rubric, teachers graded the final version of the paper and the PowerPoint slides, and the oral presentation. Teachers also conducted individual, face-to-face evaluation sessions, reviewing each student’s overall performance on the project, and offering suggestions for future improvement.

**Findings and Discussion**

Students participating in this project responded positively to its effectiveness. They listed the areas of the project that had helped them, including background knowledge about the target language culture, reading speed, speaking fluency, topic-specific vocabulary retention, syntax, research techniques in the target language, and overall confidence in using the target language. Among these improved areas, most students identified enhanced background knowledge as the greatest benefit from this project. A majority of the students indicated they would recommend this project to other intermediate and advanced learners.

Students’ feedback and teachers’ experience have pointed to several areas that call for teacher’s attention if they are to conduct similar projects. These areas are discussed below.

**Clear instructions.** At the beginning of the project, explain all steps and criteria in detail, ensuring students clearly understand what they are to accomplish. Such instructions guide students to work toward a final product.

**Timeframe.** In our experiment, we dedicated one hour a day in the first month of the second semester to the project, completing the first three phases in the first two weeks and the remaining phases in the last two weeks. This can serve as a reference for teachers to design their projects. Teachers may adjust the timeframe to serve students’ learning needs.

**Topic selection.** Help students choose a topic that focuses on one specific area. For example, whereas covering all aspects of the Chinese education system is challenging, focusing on the influence of the college entrance examinations on Chinese students is more manageable. Teachers can guide students in narrowing the topic by identifying the issue, stakeholders, and key questions that need to be answered.

**Target-language resources.** Provide specific target language resources and tips in searching for authentic materials. For example, in combination with the search engine Google, students can use Baidu, a search engine that leads to abundant Chinese-language materials. Search tips, such as how to effectively use key words and advanced search functions, may also assist students.
addition to text, video, and audio resources, interviews with teachers from the target language culture help students collect useful information.

**Proper citation.** Stress the need for students to summarize and paraphrase in their own words when using target-language materials, instead of simply copying sentences or phrases. Summarizing and paraphrasing allow students to actively process the target language at a deeper level. Additionally, instruct students to include proper citation in the paper and the slides.

**Adequate feedback.** At each step throughout the project, teacher feedback is critical to student learning. As facilitators and counselors, teachers should supply adequate and meaningful feedback to students. This allows students to reflect on the learning progress and improve their work. The one-on-one assessment at the end of the project gives teachers the opportunity to suggest learning strategies for the enhancement of particular areas.

**Autonomous learning.** Grant freedom to learners by letting them choose the topic, content, and final product. Provide suggestions and assistance along the way, so that students can make corrections and revisions on their own. The self-reflection process not only helps students become aware of their language skills, learning strategies, and areas for improvement, but also promotes autonomous learning.

**Conclusion**

Cultural background knowledge is critical in understanding high-level materials. This learner-centered project provides students the opportunities to explore the target culture through reading extensively at an individual pace, and independently seeking, organizing, and presenting information. With appropriate adaptation and modification for specific learning goals, this project can be used in varying instructional settings to help students reach higher-levels of cultural and language competency.
## Appendix

### Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Topic/Question</th>
<th>Information Seeking/Selection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student posed a thoughtful question that engaged him/her in challenging/provocative research. The question contributes to knowledge in a focused, specific area.</td>
<td>Student gathered information from a variety of quality sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem.</td>
<td>Student carefully analyzed the collected data and drew appropriate conclusions supported by evidence. Student’s voice is evident.</td>
<td>Student organized, analyzed, and developed the thesis based on the study.</td>
<td>Student effectively conveyed research findings and analysis. Product displays creativity and originality, in an organized structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student posed a focused question involving him/her in challenging research.</td>
<td>Student gathered information from a variety of electronic and print sources.</td>
<td>Student’s product shows good effort was made in analyzing the evidence collected.</td>
<td>Student needs to organize and analyze the thesis in detail. Some sources are cited.</td>
<td>Student communicated the results of research somewhat effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Student constructed a question that lends itself to readily available answers.</td>
<td>Student gathered information from a limited range of sources and displayed effort in selection.</td>
<td>Student’s conclusions could be supported by stronger evidence. Level of analysis could be deeper.</td>
<td>Student needs to use greater care in organizing and documenting sources.</td>
<td>Student needs to work on communicating more effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Student relied on teacher-generated questions.</td>
<td>Student gathered information that lacked relevance, quality, depth and balance.</td>
<td>Student’s conclusions simply involved restating information and were not supported by evidence.</td>
<td>Student clearly plagiarized materials.</td>
<td>Student showed little evidence of thoughtful research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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BAITT: Blended Autonomous Instructor Technology Training

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Introduction

For many years Asian School I has been a pioneer in offering current-trend technology workshops while searching for effective approaches to promote technology proficiency among faculty. A blended approach is the key to successful instructor technology training, in tandem with increased self-motivation among attendees. Almost interchangeably with hybrid, Blended is a form of technology training that combines both online and in-person modules.

In short, an in-person hands-on workshop pinpoints basic skillsets that faculty need to accomplish administrative and daily teaching responsibilities at DLI. Workshops, offered in any brick-and-mortar locations in Asian School I, include topics—Smart Notebook, Sakai, etc.—that are commonly known or encountered by faculty. Most importantly, faculty members are also encouraged to search and complete training online based on their interests and needs by going to Atomic Learning, an online training site for DLI faculty and staff. This self-select option based on personal interests and needs increases the efficacy of autonomous technology learning among faculty. This is why this program is named Blended Autonomous Instructor Technology Training (BAITT).

Understand the Context

Before implementing the BAITT program, trainers researched the school’s needs and analyzed its unique environment. Starting from 2014, DLI has been pursuing higher proficiency levels—L2+ and R2+. Advanced technological tools have been purchased to ensure the maximum use of authentic materials and the promotion of autonomous learning. Students and teachers are using the same technological tools to achieve better learning outcomes. Every school has tried to introduce innovative language applications and software programs to faculty members, hoping that seamless technology integration will motivate the 21st century student, who often possess higher levels of digital literacy than their teachers (Eaton, 2011). Consequently, the 21st century teacher is expected to “learn new technologies” and “keep learning” (Palmer, 2015). Current, every DLI student and teacher has an iPad and a MacBook Pro with access to abundant online resources and information. At any time, they can try a variety of new tools to promote language learning and instruction. However, trainers have noticed that users have various technological
proficiency levels, which makes it more difficult to develop suitable workshops. Subsequently, the same kind of workshops is repeatedly offered to refresh faculty technical skills and ensure more instructors receive the training. Motivating instructors to learn new technologies has never been an easy task, as the amount of time invested in learning does not guarantee or quantify success. Thus, more action and training is needed to integrate technology into pedagogy and curriculum for higher proficiency levels.

A Two-tiered Approach

Sgreenla (2007) raised a question: Is technological proficiency a skill, or something bigger? Sgreenla’s question triggered us to incorporate the two-tiered approach (quantitative and qualitative) in the development of the BAITT. Skill training is fundamental and should not be overlooked. Cultivating quantitative proficiency (skills) with a list of basic and specific skill training is the first step. During the training process, trainers scaffold users to take charge of their technology proficiency and make technology training prevalent and achievable. Once the quantitative basic skills are obtained, trainers focus on qualitative proficiency supported by following up on the utilization of the skills on tasks and in classrooms, which has promoted instructors’ motivation and facilitated them to maximize technology integration of engaging and critical-thinking tasks in and out of classroom. To elicit and maintain faculty autonomy in technology integration, trainers have mobilized the technology-proficient instructors to help enhance faculty basic and specialized skills and establish standardized measurable outcomes. Furthermore, more focus is placed on mentoring instructors to identify achievable steps for integrating deep processing and memory enhancing tasks with technological assistance in the classroom.

BAITT Training (A Survey)

To evaluate the effectiveness of the BAITT program, a questionnaire was distributed to collect feedback. Voluntary participants were required to answer five simple questions.

1. What factors will motivate you most to learn how to use technology?
2. Does our Blended instructor technology training program encourage you to become an autonomous technology learner?
3. Which type of training will you prefer most: in-person workshop, online, or both?
4. Will you continue to use Atomic Learning to self-train in using technology?
5. Which technology workshops do you need most?

Even though only six provided feedback, the feedback gave a glimpse of the effectiveness of the BAITT program. The results showed that participants
have positive attitudes toward the *Blended* training program. In the first question, participants answered that the needs of daily teaching motivated them to learn technology. Other motivating factors included professional enrichment and the reward of certificates. In the second question, all participants agreed that the BAITT program encouraged them to become autonomous learners. Fifty percent of participants preferred combining the in-person workshops with the online training modules. Eighty percent of the participants would like to continue using Atomic Learning. An interesting finding in the last question was that participants requested training in Microsoft Office, especially the Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

**Future Actions**

For satisfactory outcomes, large-scale implementation of the BAITT program is required. The survey results indicate that it is necessary to 1) offer training that focuses on new technology integration to enhanced L2+/R2+ proficiency, 2) include workshops in Microsoft Office to help faculty with their daily teaching and administrative work, and 3) most importantly, provide tailored technology mentoring and follow-up to faculty. We believe one-on-one mentoring will not only maintain but also raise faculty technology literacy to keep pace with the fast development of new technology in this cyber era.

**References**

The abundance of proverbs is an aspect of the Chinese language that foreign language learners find difficult. This is in addition to the Chinese dual-form pictographic writing system, which separates the sound and writing, uncommon pronunciation, and vague grammar. Chinese proverbs are commonly encountered at all levels—even in kindergarten-level teaching materials. There are over 3,000 proverbs in use today, among which approximately 720 are commonly used. Some proverbs originate from historical stories, some from literature or fables, and others from ordinary people’s life experiences. Proverbs express ideas/feelings and describe situations/phenomena so precisely and vividly that they are an inseparable part of the Chinese culture—adding richness and color to the Chinese language. For learners, understanding proverbs is an unavoidable and necessary part of learning the Chinese language.

Learning Chinese proverbs is a challenging proposition; the sheer number of proverbs, universal and concise form of expression, and the allegorical nature of Chinese proverbs require a long-term study approach, even for native speakers. Besides the traditional ways of learning proverbs, such as looking them up in the dictionary and making sentences, the following are some other approaches that I have used in teaching adult learners.

**Categorizing by Content or Word**

With the huge quantity of proverbs from which to work, categorizing proverbs facilitates memorization. For example, the proverbs can be grouped by content relating to weather: 天寒地冻 (very cold, freezing), 风和日暖 (bright sunshine and gentle breeze); to emotions: 兴高采烈 (in high spirits), 垂头丧气 (lose one's spirit); and to appearance: 小巧玲珑 (cute and little), 亭亭玉立 (slim and graceful).

Proverbs may also be grouped by key words, such as the word 想 (to think), 胡思乱想 (ridiculous thoughts), 异想天开 (wishful thinking), 冥思苦想 (think hard, rack one's brains). By categorizing proverbs of similar or opposite meanings or common words, students can expand their knowledge of proverbs. When teaching a new proverb, I usually ask students to recall some similar or opposite proverbs. In this way, they not only learn a new proverb, but also review those previously learned.
Guessing the Meaning of Proverbs Through Analysis and Cross Reference

**Analysis of known words and contexts.** Due to their limited vocabulary, students often encounter unknown words in proverbs. Students are prompted to analyze known words first and guess the meaning of the proverb. For example, in the proverb 小心翼翼 (be extremely careful), although students may not know the last two characters 翼翼 (serious and cautious), they likely know 小心 (careful). Therefore, they are able to guess that the proverb may have something to do with being careful. Another example is the proverb 天罗地网 (an invisible net preventing all escapes). Most students know 天 and 地 (heaven and earth). Through the content and context of the article in which the proverb is used (the article is about how the drug enforcement agency workers investigate drug smuggling), students may be able to figure out the meaning of the proverb—there is no place for the drug dealers to hide from heaven to earth.

**Analysis of the radical.** Most Chinese characters incorporate two or more radicals. A radical is a graphical component of a Chinese character, which is often a semantic indicator of the character’s meaning. Students learn radicals at the beginning level. As a result, they may be able to guess the meaning of some proverbs through radicals. For example, in the proverb 朝思暮想 (thinking about someone/something day and night), students most likely know the word 思 (think) and 想 (think), but may not know 朝 (morning) and 晚 (evening). Teachers can have students analyze the radicals of the unknown words—which include sun and moon—and consider the contexts. They are likely to figure out the meaning of the proverb: think about someone/something from morning to night. In the proverb 愁眉苦脸 (frown, wear a troubled look), students may know 苦 (bitter) and 脸 (face). Through analyzing the radicals of 愁 (worry, sad)—秋 (autumn) in the upper part and 心 (heart) in the lower part (in Chinese culture, autumn often brings sad emotions) and the radical of 眉 (eyebrow) is 目 (eye), they may guess the meaning of the proverb: someone has a worried look due to sadness.

**Cross-reference.** Some Chinese proverbs have an equivalent expression in English, such as 一箭双雕 (killing two birds with one arrow, equivalent to killing two birds with one stone in English), 一见钟情 (fall in love at first sight). When students know the English translation of a Chinese proverb that is close to an English expression, it becomes easier to remember and use the Chinese proverbs.

**Learning Proverbs from Historical Stories**

A large percentage of Chinese proverbs originate from historical stories; some are quoted directly from classical works. Learning these types of proverbs not only leads to increased knowledge of Chinese culture and history, but also makes the proverbs easier to remember. For example, the proverb 贫贱真福 (misfortune may be an actual blessing; the literary translation is an old
man lost his horse, which was a blessing in disguise) is from a well-known Chinese literary work written more than 2,000 years ago. It tells a story that a wise old man lost his horse. When everyone consoled him, he said, “Why should I conclude that it was unfortunate?” Several months later, the horse came back, accompanied by another stallion. Everyone congratulated him, but he said, “Why should I conclude that it was fortunate?” His son loved riding the horse. One day he fell off the horse and broke his leg. Everyone consoled the father, but the father said, “Why should I conclude that it was unfortunate?” A year later, enemy invaded their land, all young men went to war, and many were killed. Because of the broken leg, the son was spared of this tragedy.

Interesting historical stories contain profound analogical and philosophical meaning, which helps students memorize the proverbs and enhances their historical and cultural knowledge. There are also hundreds of animated video clips depicting Chinese proverbs. Viewing them is a good way to help students understand the proverb clearly, while providing an opportunity for listening practice.

Memorizing and Utilizing Proverbs by Playing Games

Playing games also helps students memorize and use proverbs. For example, the game Pictionary is a fun, popular, and effective way to learn. Both sides (one draws the picture and the other guesses the proverb) need to know the meaning of the proverb before they can draw properly and guess correctly. Students love to play this game. By the end of the game, students are asked to create a short speech using as many proverbs encountered in the game as possible. The focus is for students to use the proverbs properly in a discourse.

Another game is called 接龙 (make a dragon), i.e., a student says a proverb, the second student needs to say another proverb which must include a key word in the previous one, then the next student will say another proverb which also includes the same key word, and so on. Since it is a competitive game, everyone tries hard not to be the one who fails to produce a proverb.

Caution of Using Proverbs

Although proverbs strengthen students’ understanding of the language, they need to be used with caution. The original meaning of some proverbs that are based on historical events and stories has changed over time, and other proverbs bear an inferred meaning. Improper use creates confusion and misunderstanding. I do not encourage students to use proverbs indiscriminately; instead, advise them to only use proverbs in situations in which they feel confident and comfortable. If there is some doubt, it is best to use some common words to express the thought, because the purpose of using a proverb is to enrich the expression, not to show off. Mastering Chinese proverbs is a long journey. Only practice and time on task will lead to successful learning.
Improving Vocabulary Retention and Listening through Story-telling

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The intensive language program at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) requires tremendous effort on the part of students and teachers; to meet the new graduation requirement of 2+, 2+, 2, teachers need to identify approaches to teaching more creatively. This article introduces story telling, one approach that the author has used to help students remember vocabulary and improve listening comprehension.

Stories are shared in every culture as a means of entertainment, education, and cultural preservation. Stories convey events, often through improvisation or embellishment. In a language classroom, story telling can be an instructional tool that helps students connect the textbook or other language-learning materials to real-world events or life experiences. Through stories, teachers help students review, retain, and expand what they have learned.

Advantages of Story-Telling

Due to the intensity of DLI’s language program, students must remember a large number of new words every day. The task of remembering new vocabulary becomes increasingly challenging as students progress from the beginning to the advanced level. Many factors affect vocabulary retention, such as exposure, the richness of contextual clues, and the learner’s interests (Laufer & Hadar, 1997). Researchers have discovered that “words which appeared over eight times in the text were more likely to be learned than words that were repeated less” (Gu, 2005, p 49). If teachers can expose students to various usages of new words and create more opportunities for listening, vocabulary retention may happen more quickly. As for the timing of repetition, “forgetting mostly occurs immediately after initial encounter, and that the rate of forgetting slows down afterwards” (Gu, 2005, p 60). Therefore, teachers should start exposing students to newly studied words as soon as these words are taught. Story telling can serve this purpose effectively.

There are many methods of teaching listening, such as using pre-recorded sound files and watching video clips, TV, and movies. However, it is sometimes difficult to find the perfect listening materials that help students remember the newly studied vocabulary and expand their language on a daily basis. Stories composed by teachers are purpose-driven, and their advantages include the following:

1. Stories are presumed to be interesting and fun. Therefore, students have less fear of failure when they listen to a story, i.e., student anxiety level is low.
A good story stimulates student’s curiosity and consequently motivates them and improves their comprehension.

2. Stories are composed with specific purposes, which may include helping students to remember new vocabulary, reviewing grammar patterns, and improving comprehension of longer passages. Stories can help to “cement the vocabulary into memory,” as commented on by one student.

3. Stories tend to create a learner-friendly and positive learning environment. After hearing a story, students often feel comfortable asking questions and participate in discussion in the target language without realizing they are speaking it. Therefore, story telling also enhances speaking.

**Principles of Stories-Composing**

When composing stories, various factors should be considered at different learning phases.

The objective of the first semester is to help students lay a solid foundation in their vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, it is important that stories contain both previously and newly learned vocabulary. The content and context of the stories should differ from that of the textbooks. Novelty, flexibility, humor, and creativity are equally important contextual factors that should also be considered.

In the second and third semesters, the content of the stories (assuming they are still referred to as “stories” in the curriculum) should be on any topics that students need to know, such as culture and history, world affairs, science and technology, security, environment, economic development, philosophy, etc.

For example, during a class in the third semester, the author asked her students if they knew how residential single family’ solar panels worked with the power company’s system, a topic area that few (if any) students had much knowledge of. The author then explained how the power company’s system operates in the target language. Students understood the introduction and found the information interesting.

Again, flexibility is the key. If students lack knowledge pertaining to the economy or world affairs, then teachers need to spend more time discussing these topics.

Stories told by teachers are meant to support the curriculum. This approach provides informal listening exercises. In other words, it is not necessary to write out the stories; a verbal presentation of the story is sufficient to serve its purpose quite nicely.
When and How to Tell Stories

The author usually starts a lesson with a story. After telling the story, she has students discuss it in the target language, which is Chinese. The story and discussion take about five minutes.

To enhance listening comprehension when telling stories, teachers need to be flexible with the speed of delivery. Students’ facial expressions are good indicators of their comprehension. Teachers can adjust the speed as needed. Moreover, when necessary, teachers can repeat, re-word, even “break the discourse down into natural segments, or phrases, and deliver them as ‘chunks’ of speech” (Lee & Van Patten, 1995, p 108). Flexibility is critical in story telling.

Since visual stimuli “can be a beneficial addition to any listening task, especially to beginning language learners” (Vogely, 1999, p 117), teachers should make good use of such stimuli, such as facial expressions, gestures, and photos.

Because there is only limited time for story telling, comprehension checks are typically conducted when students discuss the story. When students burst into raucous laughter, it is obvious they comprehend the story. For those who are struggling with listening, teachers can visually detect the situation and intervene as needed.

Below is a short story that the author told when students were studying Unit 3: 便宜就是贵 (cheap is expensive):

Hong-Ling is 20 years old. She enjoys shopping. She often buys things purely because they are cheap, not because she needs them. One day, she came home with a newly bought shirt that was XX large. Her mother took a look at the shirt, and then burst out laughing. Hong-Ling asked her mother why she was laughing. Her mother said, “Only Yao Ming (a famous Chinese basketball player, who is 7’6” tall) can wear this shirt.” She then asked Hong-Ling why she bought something she couldn’t even wear. Hong-Ling said, because it was cheap. Her mother said, “Yes, it was cheap. But if you can’t wear it, it’s a waste of money.” Therefore, cheap is expensive.

After the story, students discussed a few questions:

1. Will you buy something just because it is cheap?
2. Do you think Hong-Ling is wasting her money?
3. If you were Hong-Ling’s mother, what would you tell Hong-Ling?

The discussion of the story was conducted in Chinese. Although students had limited vocabulary at this point, they were nevertheless eager to express their opinions.
In summary, the author believes that story telling can help students retain vocabulary and enhance listening comprehension in a more relaxed way. If teachers are creative and innovative while composing stories, students are motivated and learn more quickly. When learning happens more quickly, the mission of DLI will be accomplished more effectively.

References


How do you help students reach higher levels?

Send best practices to

*Dialog on Language Instruction*

Reviewed by MARIA CUBAU
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Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action, the first monograph by Larry Vandergrift and Christine Goh, two highly accomplished educators and thinkers, offers a well executed approach to second language (L2) listening pedagogy seated in metacognition. The volume interfaces strongly between linguistic theories and experience, resulting in a reader-friendly text that advances a holistic model for developing learner listening with practical activities from inside the classroom and beyond. Vandergrift and Goh aim “to help teachers understand the process of listening, the role of metacognition in listening development, and how to teach listening more effectively” (p. xiii). And they hit their mark effectively. It is an ideal guide for foreign language teachers faced with the challenge of teaching L2 listening.

Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action takes concrete practices and extrapolates a theoretical model; once it encompasses the scope of the theory, still makes time for concrete, classroom applications. It pinballs between theory and practice with such alacrity and balance that the lines we usually imagine between concept and application blur until the relationship between the two is seamless.

In the Prologue, the authors make both a request and a prognosis; they ask the reader to take a moment to reflect on their practices in teaching second language listening, because in understanding our own “assumptions and beliefs—why we do what we do in the classroom—and critically examine the impact of our practices for learners”, we can “consider other perspectives that lead to new approaches and different outcomes” (p. xix). The authors make it clear that unless we become reflective teachers, capable of seeing beyond our own pedagogical expectations, we will be incapable of improving our methods and, simultaneously, our achievements. The segment includes ten statements
that summarize common perceptions about learning and teaching L2 listening for the reader to examine and recall as the book progresses with the fulfilled promise to revisit these statements in the Epilogue.

The book consists of three parts. Part I, including four chapters, introduces the authors’ metacognitive model against the backdrop of five decades of research in listening instruction and discussions on the foundational aspects of L2 listening comprehension. Part II, consisting of six chapters, examines the role of metacognition in learning to listen and highlights a process-based instruction accompanied with practical listening activities. Part III, concluding with two chapters, explores L2 listening in multimedia environments and the assessment of listening competence. All chapters open with a scenario and a pre-reading reflection that prime the mind for central issues in the chapter. Each chapter closes with a summary, some discussion questions and activities, and recommendations for further reading on the topics.

Chapter 1 argues that while learners are exposed to more listening activities in the classroom, they are still left without an approach to develop listening abilities on their own. The instructional gap in guiding students on how to self-direct and evaluate their efforts to improve their listening is exacerbated by the use of prevalent listening activities that are text-oriented and communication-oriented, and that tend to assess how well students can listen by having them record, repeat, or explain details of the passage. Here, the authors introduce the need to shift to a focus on lesson design and delivery for the learner that helps them improve their listening comprehension and manage their own learning.

Chapters 2-4 examine the cognitive processes and factors that operate during listening to determine how to teach listening effectively. In particular, Chapter 3 elaborates on Levelt’s descriptive model of listening comprehension (as cited in p. 38) to explain how these cognitive processes work together. The model is fleshed out across eight pages in a clear and succinct manner. Chapter 4, on the other hand, continues to build on the cognitive processing model by examining factors that affect listening success such as knowledge sources and affective factors, including anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation. In these chapters, the authors introduce metacognition and assert that the degree to which listeners are able to consciously control the processes involved in metacognition (i.e., planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating), the more effectively they are able to engage with the audio and guide their listening development. In later sections, most prominently in Chapter 5, the notion and function of metacognition is expounded in abundant detail.

The slow build to Chapter 5 is nonetheless climactic, where the full-fledged role of metacognition in listening comprehension is revealed. Metacognition lies at the heart of learner-oriented listening instruction and aims to develop “self-regulated learners, who are aware of their own learning process and the demands of their learning tasks [and who] have also developed key listening skills and a range of strategies to meet their listening needs in various contexts” (p. 83). The metacognitive framework for listening, adopted here, draws on three components: experience, knowledge, and strategy. Of the three,
experience is an immutable quality whose response is involuntary, while the other two can be developed through instruction and can improve learning effectiveness. The exposition of this framework is crisp, flowing with lucid clarity. The notion of “metacognition in action” (p. 92) is introduced in this chapter, and the next five chapters are applications of this phenomenon. The authors explain that metacognition in action is observed when “learners show awareness of gaps in comprehension and take immediate action, such as orchestrating the use of selected strategies to bridge the gap.” The metacognitive pedagogical approach in this book is based on the constructive nature of learning and emphasizes individual cognitive processes as well as social ones by delivering pedagogical sequences that center on individual efforts, peer dialog, and cooperation. This chapter clearly serves as a hinge, opening the door for a new direction in the book, focused on pedagogy. Appreciatively, the authors do not scrimp on graphic aids, providing numerous tables, graphs, and other tools to enhance the reading experience such as the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire.

Chapter 6 delivers a “metacognitive pedagogical sequence” (p. 104) consisting of five stages for instruction that encourage students to activate the processes of real-life listening through planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. Chapters 7-10 offer an arsenal of guides, lesson plans, exercises (to develop perception and word segmentation skills), task-based projects, and projects for extensive listening that model the integration of these stages. I usually dislike readings that leave me suspended in a web of theory, yearning for practical applications. So, in summarizing the last four chapters in a couple of sentences, I risk underemphasizing their richness. The thoroughness with which Vandergrift and Goh handle each activity is what gives Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action its true thrust and lift. At this point, the authors pour out their broad scope of experience, generously, sharing their best teaching practices, and rarely a page goes by without offering something useful to take and adopt as one’s own.

The final two chapters, 11 and 12, provide readers with timely information on the potential of technology for teaching L2 listening in various multimedia environments, followed by a discussion on the value of assessment—formative and summative—to determine the effectiveness of the listening practices and student progress.

Vandergrift and Goh have designed this book thoughtfully. In the expression to train the trainer, one understands the need to break information down into its fundamental components before passing it on to others. No one understands a teacher quite like a teacher. Vandergrift and Goh deftly unpack and deliver these complicated ideas, attesting to the ability of two skilled educators and thinkers who effectively write for an audience of their peers. Is this book worth it? Read it and find out. Given the topic of the text, it may be difficult for language teachers who need to cover a number of listening activities within a short period of time to adopt this book, as the listening instruction may be too specialized. Despite this caveat, Vandergrift and Goh traveled a great
distance in writing *Teaching and Learning Second Language Listening: Metacognition in Action* and the vehicle that brought them there—equal parts expertise and openness—fires on all cylinders.
An interview with Dr. Gerd Brendel, Chief of the Review and Education (RE) Division in the Language Proficiency Assessment Directorate (LPAD)

Editor: Dr. Brendel, would you tell our readers about your organization—who you are and what you do?

Dr. Brendel: My short description of who we are and what we do in the Test Review and Education Division (RE) as part of the Language Proficiency Assessment Directorate is as much a professional tribute to the team as it is an overview of our work in ensuring that all DLPT5 listening and reading passages and corresponding language tasks align with the skill level descriptions of the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). This alignment is key to our claim that we use the same proficiency level standard for all languages. For example, if we assign a level 2+ to a particular test item in language X, the same ILR criteria are used in determining the ILR skill level in language Y.

The primary mission of the small group of language testing experts that I have the privilege of guiding and supervising is the review of DLPT5 listening and reading passages and corresponding test questions. The ultimate goal of the RE review process is to support the Assessment Use Argument that Very Low Range, Lower Range, and Upper Range DLPT5 tests accurately reflect test takers abilities to read and listen in the target language with a level of proficiency as indicated in the skill level descriptions of the US Government Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) skill level descriptions. Very Low Range DLPT5s test reading and listening comprehension at ILR skill levels 0+, 1, and 1+. Lower Range DLPT5s test reading and listening abilities at skill levels 0+ to 3 including sublevels 1+ and 2+. Upper Range DLPT5s test ILR skill levels 3+ and 4.
**Editor:** It is difficult to make each test item reflect each test taker’s language ability. It seems that knowledge and understanding of the ILR skill levels are crucial in your work. How do your team members develop this expertise?

**Dr. Brendel:** The Interagency Language Roundtable Skill Level descriptions play a pivotal role in rank-ordering 11 levels of language abilities, ranging from no functional ability to the highest level in comprehending listening and reading texts and producing spoken and written discourse. Every instructor at the Defense Language Institute is familiar with the ILR scale whose descriptions of language abilities at the various skill levels state the criteria for graduating students from the basic, intermediate, and advanced language programs.

After all, graduation requirements at the DLIFLC are expressed in terms of the ILR skill levels. There is probably not a single language teacher among the large faculty at DLI who is unaware of the current graduation requirements of $2+/2+/2$ of the various Basic Course programs.

I am mentioning the close relationship of the DLIFLC faculty and their knowledge of the ILR skill level descriptions because all of the nine current team members of the Test Review and Education Division and I came to the division with substantial teaching experience at the DLI in teaching the Basic Courses in Arabic, Chinese, German, Korean, Pashto, Spanish, and Urdu, respectively. These teaching experiences have placed the members of the RE team in the unique position of having experienced their students’ progression from no functional ability to a level where they could comprehend written and spoken texts not only at a literal level, but draw inferences based on information presented in the listening and reading texts.

These unique classroom-based observations of what students can or cannot do at various critical points like the end of a semester in their learning and acquisition process are often underestimated in influencing RE team members’ ratings of a listening or reading passage. These classroom experiences provide an experiential background for RE members in applying the abstract rating criteria of the ILR. Given these experiences of having observed the ILR skill levels in action, as it were, RE members apply the ILR criteria with more knowledge, or in more quantitative parlance, with more data points.

**Editor:** Teaching experience contributes to a better understanding of the nuances of the ILR scale, particularly in what the learner “can do” at various learning stages, but this knowledge alone is inadequate to ensure that test items align with the ILR skill levels. Would you elaborate on the application of the ILR in test review?

**Dr. Brendel:** To be sure, the DLI teaching experience alone does not suffice in making verifiable ILR skill level determinations of the DLPT5 test items. As a matter of fact, without an accurate measure of self-awareness and powers of self-reflection, the ILR skill level assignments made on the basis of classroom experience alone will in all likelihood not stand up to rigorous review of the ILR...
standards and will fail as a reliable alignment of test item and the criteria that can be supported by statistical analysis.

Moreover, the ILR scale is not a developmental scale that reflects second language acquisition processes. It is an ordinal scale describing language abilities in ascending order of functional language control, ranging from very limited comprehension of listening and reading at level 0+ to virtually unlimited comprehension at level 5. Therefore, the ILR ratings should be based on the skill level descriptions of the ILR document.

A thorough understanding of the ILR and related documents is the cornerstone of our rating of test passages and associated language tasks. As the ILR is a universal scale intended to include all languages and cultures, it does not address language and culture specific factors like syntax, vocabulary, discourse organization, cultural references and embeddings. For these essential language and culture specific factors we turn to target language experts who work with us and provide in-depth knowledge of the target language and culture. Interpersonal skills in working with these experts from outside DLIFLC are very important in getting the requisite information and make the ILR rating decisions that reflect the reality of language use and usage in the target language region.

**Editor:** Thank you for taking the time to introduce our readers to the Review and Education (RE) Division. Do you have anything to add?

**Dr. Brendel:** To sum up, a full understanding of the ILR, language teaching and testing experience, interpersonal skills in dealing with various languages and cultures, and above all, extensive experience in providing text level ratings that are validated internally by group consensus and externally by statistical analysis of actual test results—these are a few of the characteristics of the Test Review and Education team that lead to success.
NEWS AND EVENTS

News and Events welcomes readers’ contributions. We are interested in (but not limited to) reports about conferences, official trips, official visitors, special events, training opportunities, and news items.

The ISO-Immersion Showcase: Best Practices in Language Immersion Programs

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On August 27, 2015, DLIFLC sponsored the institute-wide Isolation Immersion (ISO-Immersion) Showcase, organized by the Curriculum Support Division (CSD) and the Immersion Language Office (ILO). The goal of this DLI-wide event was to provide a venue for language schools to share successful immersion practices.

The new 2+2+2 proficiency goal has prompted an enhanced interest in ISO-Immersion. These experiences, in addition to several other key areas of language teaching, are considered critical for reaching higher levels of language proficiency. To maximize the effectiveness of ISO-Immersions, CSD was asked to review and standardize UGE immersion programs. Curriculum advisors observed immersion events and conducted a thorough review of immersion scenarios from each UGE school. During the review process, it was discovered that language programs could benefit from a venue whereby they shared successful Semester II and III immersion practices. That finding inspired the idea of organizing the DLI-wide ISO-Immersion Showcase.

During the event, ten language programs conducted poster-session presentations. All immersion scenarios reflected rigorous quality standards, as follows:
• Real-world scenarios (events) were used as the starting point.
• The scenarios were appropriate for the immersion context.
• Instructors assumed the roles of native speakers in the scenarios.
• Students had ample opportunities to interact one-on-one with native speakers.
• Production skills were emphasized.
• The immersions raised the students' cultural awareness about issues and topics currently in-country.
• Immersion practice was flexible (optional stations/activities to accommodate fluctuating student-teacher ratios).

A variety of realistic and engaging themes were featured. Among these were resolving cultural misunderstandings, investigating a casino bombing, assisting in hostage negotiations, and conducting job fairs. CSD and ILO also conducted presentations that highlighted their efforts to support the ISO-Immersion programs in the UGE.

The event was well attended and received by the senior leadership and faculty. The attendees picked up ideas for original and creative immersion scenarios. Many presentations sparked lively discussions about the role of immersions in reaching higher levels of language proficiency.

The ISO-Immersion Showcase demonstrated that language programs are committed to the DLI mission by implementing quality immersion programs. CSD and ILO will continue supporting the UGE by providing guidance and collaboratively exploring ways to establish new immersion programs and to update existing ones.

Engage
Innovate
Apply
Reflect
Discuss

... Dialog on Language Instruction
TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Technology Resources welcomes readers’ contributions. We are interested in brief write-ups on resources related to the foreign language education field, including hardware and software, websites, computer and mobile apps, on-line training, etc.

DropVox Application – Download and Voice-Record with Ease!

ALEKSANDRA CHURINOV
Hurlburt Field LTD, Continuing Education

DropVox

DropVox is an application for mobile devices, streamlined to record and upload voice memos to Dropbox. For those who are big fans of the audio note-to-self but would like more flexibility than the iPhone’s default Voice Memos app, DropVox may offer a better approach. It is a simple audio-recording app that uploads recordings directly to an existing Dropbox account. There is no need to name files or choose where to send them. DropVox is now compatible with iPad, iPad mini, iPhone, and iPod touch. After downloading, the app is linked to a Dropbox account; it automatically uploads the recordings. By default, recordings go to a folder in the root of the Dropbox account, but the setting can be changed to have recordings downloaded to any other Dropbox folder.

Ways of Using DropVox for Language Learning

Students can quickly capture and record ideas when working on their speaking or reading assignments. They can process these ideas when needed and share the folder with peers or instructors. For instance, part of students’ daily study routine may involve listening to the recordings of classroom discussions, comments, and speech samples, reflecting on the content and language, and providing constructive feedback to one another. The feedback can be provided
verbally via shared folder on Dropbox. Activities as such encourage students to develop self-monitoring and self-correction skills, thus promoting learner autonomy. Listening to audio reveals the emotion and energy behind a thought, which are lost if they are simply typed into a note. Sharing an audio file via Dropbox can be a much easier and more effective way of communication than sending an email.

**Downloading and Using the DropVox Application**

You will need:
- An active i-Tunes account (to download from the App store)
- A computer (PC or Mac)
- Internet connection
- i-Phone, i-Pod touch, or i-Pad, connected to the Internet
- Your voice and imagination

**Step 1:** Dropbox application on PC or Mac

If you already have a Dropbox account, proceed to Step 2. If you are not familiar with features of the Dropbox application, check the video icon at https://www.dropbox.com/

Press the download icon below the video to download Dropbox to your computer. You will be prompted to create a Dropbox account. Save your login and password information for later use.

**Step 2:** Dropbox application on mobile device

If you already have a Dropbox application on your Apple device, proceed to Step 3. To download the Dropbox onto your mobile device, open the App Store, search for Dropbox, and install the application. After installing and opening the application, provide your Dropbox login information. Your Dropbox files will be synchronized with your mobile device.

**Step 3:** DropVox application on mobile device

After open DropVox, select a specific folder where you wish to upload your audio recordings; otherwise the DropVox folder will be automatically generated in your Dropbox.

**Step 4:** DropVox audio recording

After open the DropVox application, press the red button to record your speech. When you finish the recording, press the button again. The program will automatically upload your recording to Dropbox. Close the application.
Step 5: Access your audio files

After opening the Dropbox application on your computer or mobile device, open the DropVox folder. You will see your recording, which shows the date and the format of the file.

Additional Resources

1. Dropbox video: https://www.dropbox.com/
3. Dropbox download: https://www.dropbox.com/install
5. DropVox developers’ website: http://www.irradiatedsoftware.com/dropvox/
Many educators and school administrators understand that in today’s digital age, a paperless classroom is bound to emerge. They argue that a paperless classroom fosters a more structured and accurate setting in tune with the real world outside the classroom (Edudemic, 2014). “We need technology in every classroom and in every student’s and teacher’s hand, because it is the pen and paper of our time” (Warlick, as cited in Edudemic, 2014).

Web-Based Tools for the Course Management System

Increasing classroom productivity and managing class time effectively are key objectives for a teacher. Course Management Systems (CMS), such as Sakai© and Blackboard©, provide a web-based learning platform that enables educators to be better prepared to achieve these objectives. The CMS creates virtual classrooms that allow students to interact with teachers and peers; it also offers access to learning materials 24/7 to enhance classroom efficiency. The CMS provides the framework for an online learning community, as well as for classroom-based courses. It allows instructors to track access and usage of the entire course site (Monolescu, Schifter, & Greenwood, 2004). It also offers more flexibility by allowing students to browse various websites simultaneously, without requiring a teacher to spend class time reading or writing website addresses for students (Weis & Efaw, 2004). The advantages of the CMS were showcased in a course via Blackboard© organized by Blann and Hantula (2004). The course “capitalize[d] on the unique advantages of the Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) while using the Internet to overcome some of its noted administrative drawbacks” (p. 286). Over time, incorporating a CMS into the classroom did have “as major an impact on modern schooling as any technology, but it was an evolutionary adaptation of the individual slate—it did not attempt to wipe the slate clean” (Wilen-Daugenti, 2009, p. 134).

Blackboard© was considered an “improvement upon the small, individual tablets that students and teachers had been using” (Wilen-Daugenti, 2009, p. 134). Today most higher education institutions have some form of CMS; in a survey, 80% of university students report using CMS (Wilen-Daugenti, 2009).
Blackboard© was first introduced to the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) in 2007. In 2012 DLIFLC changed the CMS to Sakai©. In recent years, DLIFLC has created a “more technology-equipped foreign language learning environment” (Hur, 2012, p. 24). Various technological tools are used in classrooms, such as Sakai©, SMART Boards, MacBook, iPad, Podcasting, Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS), Joint Language University, to name a few.

Electronic Apple devices and Sakai© have been increasingly integrated into classroom instruction and activities, leading to a paperless learning environment, enabling learning to take place anytime and anywhere. Sakai© has multiple benefits for instructors and students: it allows teachers to provide handouts, syllabi, quizzes, and discussions online 24/7 and to tailor authentic materials to individual student’s learning needs and styles. Moreover, Sakai© allows students to construct their own learning and monitor their learning outcomes—accessing learning materials, doing group work, exchanging ideas, and communicating with peers and teachers anytime and anywhere in the world. Last, but not least, going paperless benefits DLIFLC students in many practical ways—it has eliminated the need to carry loads of paper and reduced the possibilities of losing work between home and school.

Sakai©: Building a Collaborative Learning Environment

Sakai© helps to create a collaborative learning environment, in which students are active learners and contributors, whereas instructors are facilitators. This setting transforms the learner from a passive recipient of information to an active participant, empowering the learner to better pursue the Level 2+ proficiency objectives outlined in the DLIFLC’s mission.

As teachers adapt to the latest technological innovations in education, paperless classrooms continue to redefine teaching methodologies and create endless opportunities for future education (Edudemic.edu, 2014). Using technology has expanded the possibilities for teachers to enhance pedagogical practices. Cultivating and reinforcing student skills in language, critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration are what DLIFLC teachers are doing to help students move beyond Level 2 proficiency.
References


## UP COMING EVENTS 2016

### JANUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 7-10</td>
<td>Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention, Austin, TX. Information: <a href="http://www.mla.org/convention">www.mla.org/convention</a></td>
<td>Austin, TX.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 7-10</td>
<td>American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), Austin, TX. Information: <a href="http://www.aatseel.org">www.aatseel.org</a></td>
<td>Austin, TX.</td>
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<td>January 21-24</td>
<td>5th International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence, Tucson, AZ. Information: cercll.arizona.edu/development/conferences/2016_icc</td>
<td>Tucson, AZ.</td>
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### FEBRUARY

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<tr>
<td>February 18-20</td>
<td>Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT), Charlotte, NC. Information: <a href="http://www.scolt.org">www.scolt.org</a></td>
<td>Charlotte, NC.</td>
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### MARCH

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 10-12</td>
<td>Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL), Columbus, OH. Information: <a href="http://www.csctfl.org">www.csctfl.org</a></td>
<td>Columbus, OH.</td>
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</table>
### APRIL

**April 5-8** Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Convention, Baltimore, MD. Information: www.tesol.org  
**April 9-12** American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Orlando, FL. Information: www.aaal.org

### MAY

**May 10-14** Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) annual conference. Michigan State University, East Lancing, MI. Information: calico.org  
**May 29-June 3** NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference and Expo, Denver, CO. Information: www.nafsa.org

### JUNE


### JULY

**July 3-6** American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) 2016 conference, Austin, TX. Information: www.frenchteachers.org

### NOVEMBER

**November 17-20** Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, Boston, MA. Information: mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html  
**November 18-20** American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention (ACTFL), Boston, MA. Information: www.actfl.org  
**November 18-20** Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) Annual Conference, Boston, MA. Information: clta-us.org  
**November 18-20** American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) Annual Conference, Boston, MA. Information: www.aatg.org.  
**November 18-20** American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Fall Conference, Boston, MA. Information: www.aatj.org
INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Submission Information

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.

Specifications for Manuscripts

Prepare the manuscripts in accordance with the following requirements:

- Follow 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.);
- Use double spacing, with margins of one inch on four sides;
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12;
- Number pages consecutively;
- In black and white only, including tables and graphics;
- Create graphics and tables in a Microsoft Office application (Word, PowerPoint, Excel);
- Provide graphics and tables no more than 4.5” 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; and
- Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible.
Submission Requirement

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: jiaying.howard@dliflc.edu.

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; and
- 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.

Correspondence

Send all inquiries and editorial correspondence by email to the Editor: jiaying.howard@dliflc.edu.
**Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation**

First, decide for which column you would like to 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.

**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cover Page</strong></th>
<th>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:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foster Learner Autonomy in Project-based Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JANE, DOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persian-Farsi School, UGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jane.doe@dliflc.edu">jane.doe@dliflc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>831-242-3333</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Abstract</strong></th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th>State the objectives, hypothesis, and research design. Provide adequate background information, but avoid a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| **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.

**Acknowledgements**

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. See examples below:


**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.
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.

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.
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, brief news items, quick tips, or 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 (pp. 107-112): *Information for Contributors.*
THANK YOU

Dialog on Language Instruction relies on peer expert review for quality and suitability to the journal’s aims and scope. Special thanks go to the colleagues listed below, who volunteered their time and expertise to serve as reviewers and consultants of the current issue. The publication of Dialog on Language Instruction was made possible with their generous support.

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Tanya De Hoyos          Paulina De Santis
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Rubee Fuller            Liwei Gao
Michael Gelbman         Mica Hall
Don Holman              Jamal Hosseini
HyunSoo Hur             Mirtha Kaufman
Hanan Khaled            Jisook Kim
Kang Liao               Ruiqi Ma
Edgar Roca              Inna Sabia
Jose Sanchez            Sarita Silverman
Ravinder Singh          Hanwei Tan
Daniel Wang             Xiaoqi Wu
Heping Xu               George Yousef
Jihua Zhou              Jie Zhu