Dialog on Language Instruction
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Editor
Jiaying Howard

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The Relative Contribution of Learners’ Knowledge of L2 Words and Phrases to L2 Listening Comprehension

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Asian School II, Undergraduate Education

This study investigated two learner variables—their auditory knowledge of L2 words (smaller idea units) and phrases (larger idea units)—and their relative contribution to L2 listening comprehension. A total of 11 students from an intact class, who were learning Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL), participated in the study. Correlational analysis demonstrated that L2 learners’ knowledge of phrases showed a significant positive correlation with their L2 listening comprehension measured by listening recall, whereas their knowledge of words did not show this correlation at the early stage of learning. Multiple regression analysis indicated that more than 80% of variance in L2 listening comprehension was accounted for by learners’ auditory knowledge of L2 phrases (adjusted $R^2 = .801$, significant at $p<.01$), whereas auditory knowledge of L2 words did not make any significant contribution to their listening comprehension.

**Key words:** auditory knowledge of words, auditory knowledge of phrases, L2 listening comprehension

**INTRODUCTION**

Listening is one of the most difficult skills for second or foreign language learners to acquire (Bang & Hiver 2016), but it is a most fundamental skill for language communication, a key component in language acquisition (Vandergrift & Baker 2015). Most adult second language (L2) learners in a foreign language learning context, where most learning takes place in a classroom setting, start learning with vocabulary and grammar of the target language. In the early stages, many learners tend to perform better and feel more confident with reading than listening. Despite the fact that L2 learners now have
easier access to target languages, cultures, and authentic learning resources, with the development of the Internet and computer technology, many still consider listening to be the most difficult skill.

For this reason, researchers try to find crucial variables that contribute to successful L2 listening comprehension (Mecartty, 2000; Nation, 2006; Vandergrift, 2007; Kim, 2008; Staehr, 2009). Yet, little is known about the listener characteristics that influence L2 listening proficiency. It has long been recognized that vocabulary knowledge is a reliable predictor of learners’ proficiency in a second or foreign language (Staehr, 2009). Most researchers focus on reading, not listening, and particularly the role of vocabulary knowledge in gaining listening skills. To uncover the important role of vocabulary knowledge in L2 listening comprehension, this study investigates the relationship between L2 learners’ vocabulary knowledge and their listening comprehension scores. It also examines the extent to which the vocabulary knowledge contributes to, or predicts, listening comprehension.

In most research of the effect of learners’ vocabulary knowledge, the term *vocabulary knowledge* refers to the knowledge of the words as an input in a written form, excluding the knowledge of the words as an input in a spoken form. As for the assessment of learners’ vocabulary knowledge, most studies used *Vocabulary Levels Test*, in which learners identify a stimulus word through reading by selecting the synonyms or antonyms or correct definitions. The present study distinguished between learners’ visual vocabulary knowledge and auditory vocabulary knowledge and categorized the vocabulary knowledge investigated in most other L2 listening research as visual vocabulary knowledge. We define visual vocabulary knowledge as learners’ knowledge of the words as a written form through reading by eyes, and auditory vocabulary knowledge as learners’ knowledge of the words as a spoken form through listening by ears. Hereafter, the word vocabulary knowledge used in this study only means auditory vocabulary knowledge.

Given that L2 learners’ knowledge of words (smaller idea units) is related to listening comprehension, the present study sought to obtain empirical evidence of the impact of learners’ knowledge of phrases (larger idea units) on listening comprehension, investigating the degree to which knowledge of larger idea units predicts learner listening comprehension. Listening is a dynamic and complex process, which involves many variables and demands attention and memory. With the assumption that the knowledge of larger idea units (phrases) would have more impact on listening comprehension than the knowledge of smaller idea units (words), the present study investigated the correlation of the two independent variables (learners’ knowledge of words and that of phrases) to the dependent variable (listening comprehension).
LITERATURE REVIEW

Lexical Knowledge in L2 Listening

Much research has investigated the role of vocabulary knowledge as a major contributor to and a strong predictor of L2 listening comprehension (Mecartty, 2000; Nation, 2006; Vandergrift, 2006; Kim, 2008; Staehr, 2009; Talyor & Geranpayeh, 2011; van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013), but few studies have focused on the L2 listening comprehension with regards to vocabulary knowledge until 2000. Mecartty (2000), in a study examining the relative contributions of vocabulary and grammar knowledge to L2 listening and reading comprehension, investigated the impact of vocabulary knowledge on listening with a sample of 154 college students who were learning Spanish. The correlational and multiple regression analysis revealed that lexical knowledge was significantly related to both listening and reading comprehension, and it was a significant predictor, whereas grammar knowledge failed to be a predictor for both listening and reading skills. As for the amount of the variance explained, the lexical knowledge appeared to be more crucial for reading than listening. It explained 25% of the variance in reading but only 14% in listening, suggesting that a large portion of variance in listening was due to other factors besides learners’ lexical knowledge.

A more recent study by Staehr (2009) explored the role of vocabulary knowledge in listening comprehension for advanced Danish learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The two independent variables—learner’s depth of vocabulary knowledge\(^1\) and breadth of vocabulary knowledge\(^2\)—were found to be significantly correlated with listening comprehension scores. A further examination through regression analysis showed that the two variables combined (the size and depth of vocabulary knowledge) predicted half of the variance in the listening scores. Vocabulary size alone accounted for a significant 49% of the variance in listening comprehension and the depth of vocabulary added very little (2%) to the variance, suggesting that the depth of vocabulary knowledge did not play a separate role.

As for vocabulary knowledge in L2 listening, van Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) observed that lexical knowledge contributes to both first language (L1) and L2 listening comprehension, but there is more variation for L2 listeners. Some L2 listeners are better with strategies coping with unknown vocabulary. Whereas vocabulary knowledge plays an important role in L2 listening, there are variations among listeners in the degree to which they manage unknown vocabulary. Other variables in listeners, such as metacognition, also influence listening comprehension.

Not directly investigating the relationship between L2 learners’ vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension, Taylor and Geranpayeh (2011) observed that language learners who lack vocabulary knowledge experience substantial problems in listening. Kelly (1991) analyzed listening errors of advanced EFL learners and concluded that lack of vocabulary
knowledge is the main obstacle to successful listening comprehension. Kelly’s conclusion, however, seems to be questionable because 100 out of 148 listening errors were produced by a single participant. Whereas learners’ vocabulary knowledge may not be a decisive indicator for successful L2 listening, learners who lack this knowledge will not be successful in listening.

**Lexical Chunks in L2 Listening**

Tang (2013) investigated the effectiveness of acquisition of chunks in improving L2 learners’ listening competency in two parallel classes at a Chinese university. The participants were all engineering sophomores who were learning English. Two teaching methods were provided to the two classes—the experimental and the reference classes. Using the same textbooks, the experimental class focused on the input of lexical chunks and the reference class employed the conventional teaching method. A listening passage (286 words) was used for the pre-test and another passage (279 words) for the post-test. Each passage was played three times and the students were asked to write in the target language what they had heard. The number of chunks recorded by the experimental class far exceeded that by the reference class. After two semesters of experiment, students in the two classes showed substantially different performances in the post-test listening comprehension. The correlational analysis revealed a positive correlation between the number of chunks and student listening scores, meaning that the more chunks students had mastered, the higher they scored on the listening test.

**METHOD**

The present study investigated how L2 learners’ auditory knowledge of words (smaller idea units) and phrases (larger idea units) affected listening comprehension, which was measured by listening recall. The first goal of the study was to examine whether L2 learners’ knowledge of words and that of phrases have different relationship with listening comprehension. The second goal was to explore the relative contribution of the two variables (learners’ knowledge of words and of phrases) to listening comprehension through regression analysis.

**Participants**

Participants were students learning Korean as a Foreign Language (KFL) in a classroom setting at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). They had no previous experience in learning Korean before coming to the DLIFLC. They were assigned to the Korean Basic Program, a 64-week, 3-semester course, based on their Defense Language Aptitude Test (DLAP) scores.
The participants were high school graduates, and some had attended or graduated from two-year or four-year colleges. Their ages ranged from 18 to 39. Of the 12 students who were assigned to an intact class in the Korean School, 11 participated in this study, with one student separated from the class for his lack of effort. It was in the 16th week (the first semester) of study when the data were collected.

Table 1  
Participants’ Gender and Age Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-22</th>
<th>23-27</th>
<th>28 and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments

L2 Listening Comprehension Test

Learners’ listening comprehension was measured by listening recall. Students listened to an entire passage twice with a five-second pause and then wrote everything they had heard on a recall protocol sheet. A blank sheet of paper was used as a listening protocol sheet. Afterwards, students’ protocols were collected and graded to assess their listening comprehension.

Auditory Knowledge of Words (Smaller Idea Units)

To test learners’ auditory knowledge of words, eight words were selected from the listening passage and each word was played twice. A blank sheet of paper was distributed for students to write the meaning of each word in English.

Auditory Knowledge of Phrases (Larger Idea Units)

To measure learners’ auditory knowledge of phrases, a blank sheet of paper was used as the test sheet. Five phrases were selected from the passage and each phrase was played twice. Students were instructed to write the meaning of each phrase in English.
Procedure

Three tests were conducted as follows: a vocabulary knowledge test, a phrasal knowledge test, and a listening comprehension test. Blank sheets were distributed to students for the vocabulary knowledge test. Students were instructed to write the meaning of each word in their native language (English) after listening. Each word, voice-recorded in advance by a native Korean speaker, was played twice with a three-second pause in between.

Blank sheets were distributed to students for the phrase knowledge test. Students were instructed to write the meaning of each phrase in English after listening. Each phrase, voice-recorded by a native Korean speaker, was played twice with a three-second pause in between.

The listening recall test was conducted to measure students’ listening comprehension. Blank recall sheets were distributed. Students were instructed to write, in English, everything they had heard—not simply listing words or phrases but writing complete sentences. A 20-second long listening passage, voice-recorded by a native Korean speaker, was played twice with a five-second pause in between. Students were given enough time to write their recall. All test sheets were collected and graded by the researchers.

Data Analysis

A correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between learners’ auditory knowledge of words and phrases and listening comprehension. Then, multiple regression analysis was used to 1) determine how much of the learners’ listening comprehension was explained by their auditory knowledge of Korean words and phrases; and 2) check the reliability of learners’ listening comprehension scores. The scores were reliable: inter-rater reliability (R=.932, significant at p<.01) and intra-rater reliability (R=.995, significant at p<.01).

Results

The first goal of the study was to examine the relationship between L2 learners’ knowledge of words and phrases and listening comprehension as measured by a listening recall test. The second goal was to explore the relative contribution of the two learner variables to L2 listening comprehension, investigating how much variance in listening comprehension is accounted for by learners’ knowledge of words and phrases.

Correlational Analysis

A Pearson Correlation was used to examine the relationship between L2 learners’ knowledge of words and phrases and listening comprehension. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and minimum/maximum scores for each variable. Tables 3 and 4 indicate a positive relationship between
learners’ vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension, although the positive relationship does not imply causation.

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Minimum/Maximum Scores for Each Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Min/Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of words</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.168</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of phrases</td>
<td>1/6*</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.779</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC** (recall)</td>
<td>0/7</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.796</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One of the five phrases was to be given partial points, so the maximum score is 6 instead of 5.
** LC= Listening Comprehension.

The mean scores for learners’ knowledge of words were 4.18, the standard deviation 1.168, and the minimum and maximum scores 3 and 7 respectively. For learners’ knowledge of phrases, the mean score was 3.18, the standard deviation 1.779, and the minimum and maximum scores 1 and 6 respectively. The mean and standard deviation for the listening comprehension (recall) were 2.73 and 2.796 respectively.

Table 3 shows how much L2 learners’ knowledge of words is correlated with listening comprehension scores. The results of the correlational analysis showed that the coefficient (.476) was not high enough to be statistically significant.

Table 3
Relationship between L2 Learners’ Knowledge of Words and Listening Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LC* (recall)</th>
<th>Knowledge of Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* LC = listening comprehension

When compared to the non-significant correlation between L2 learners’ knowledge of words and listening comprehension scores, the relationship between the L2 learners’ knowledge of phrases and listening comprehension scores was much higher and statistically significant (r=.916, p<.01) (see Table 4).
Table 4

Relationship between L2 Learners’ Knowledge of Phrases and Listening Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LC (recall)</th>
<th>Knowledge of Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC (recall)*</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* LC = listening comprehension  
** Indicates that the result is significant at p<.001

Multiple Regression Analysis

As relational analysis does not show causation, we conducted multiple regression analysis to investigate how much variance in listening comprehension is explained by the predictor variables (L2 learner’s knowledge of words and that of phrases). Tables 5 and 6 show the percentage of total variance in listening comprehension explained by the multiple regression analysis and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). As presented, R square ($R^2$) was .841, which means 84% of the variance in listening comprehension was accounted for. The adjusted R2 was .801, which means 80.1% of the variance in listening comprehension was explained by the multiple regression analysis when it was applied to other samples. The finding was significant at p<.001 as indicated in Table 6.

Table 5

Regression Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R$ square</th>
<th>Adjusted $R$ square</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.917</td>
<td>.841</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>1.248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

ANOVA Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Regression</td>
<td>65.725</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32.863</td>
<td>21.106</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>12.456</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.557</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78.182</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at p<.001.

As shown in Table 6, L2 learners’ knowledge of words was not a significant predictor for or contributor to listening comprehension, whereas their knowledge of phrases was a significant predictor for the variance of listening comprehension.
Table 7

Multiple Regression Coefficients, % of Variance Explained, & Collinearity Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Collinearity***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>-.347</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>K-W*</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.760</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.045 .686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K-Ph**</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>.001 ****</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>.784 .686</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* K-W—learners’ knowledge of words.
** K-Ph—learners’ knowledge of phrases.
*** Collinearity means how closely variables are correlated.
**** Significant at p<.001

Based on the standardized regression coefficients (β values in Table 7) for the predictor variables, a regression yielded the following equation:

\[
L2 \text{ listening comprehension} = \]
\[-.054 \times \text{a learner’s score of the knowledge of words} + .946 \times \text{a learner’s score of the knowledge of phrases}
\]

More than 79% (which came from squaring the partial correlation coefficient .891) of listening comprehension is accounted for by L2 learners’ knowledge of phrases, when the other variable of learners’ knowledge of words is controlled. More than 61.4% (which came from squaring the part correlation coefficient .784) of the variances in listening comprehension are accounted for by L2 learner’s knowledge of phrases. In a multiple regression model, if the variables are too closely correlated, it becomes difficult to tell which variable is the predictor—leading to a collinearity issue. The Tolerance value (>0.1) and VIF value (<10) indicated that the predictor variables did not have any collinearity problems.

In sum, the results of the analyses indicated that both L2 learners’ knowledge of words and knowledge of phrases had a positive relationship to listening comprehension. With regard to the predicting power of listening comprehension, knowledge of phrases was more significant than knowledge of words, as measured by the listening recall test.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

Regarding the construct *vocabulary knowledge* in L2 learning, most researchers have regarded it as the knowledge of words in a written form and used vocabulary tests (e.g., *Vocabulary Levels Test;* Nation, 1983) in which learners identify a stimulus word and choose from written alternatives through reading (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015). The present study distinguished two types of vocabulary knowledge—*visual vocabulary knowledge* and *auditory vocabulary knowledge*. Given that L2 learners’ visual vocabulary knowledge
appeared to have a much weaker relationship to listening comprehension than their auditory vocabulary knowledge, this study focused on learners’ auditory knowledge of words and phrases.

As researchers discover, L2 learners’ vocabulary knowledge is a strong indicator of listening comprehension. Many learners acquire L2 words through visual, not auditory, senses. In listening, however, auditory vocabulary knowledge seems more crucial than visual knowledge, because listening is a process of working with sounds, not written words. As comprehension includes many idea units from small to large, the present study tested the supposition that learners with knowledge of larger idea units (phrases) would be better at listening than those with knowledge of smaller idea units (words). The findings indicated that knowledge of phrases is a stronger predictor of listening comprehension than knowledge of words.

In this respect, learners and teachers may give more attention to acquiring phrases than words to improve listening skills. Unlike reading, listening takes place in real time and the listener does not have the option of reviewing the information presented or controlling the speed of input (Vandergrift & Baker, 2015). L2 listeners with auditory knowledge of phrases spend less energy and time processing the input than those with knowledge of words, who have to connect small units of ideas (words) to process the meaning of the message. Believing that vocabulary knowledge is one of the most important aspects of language learning, many learners spend considerable time learning individual words. DLIFLC students are no exception, using flashcards and foreign language learning applications to memorize words. Teachers at DLIFLC conduct vocabulary quizzes as often as possible with the hope that such quizzes would motivate students to study and master vocabulary.

This study shows the importance of learning and mastering phrases, as listening is a process in which the listener understands the message by identifying units of meaning rather than individual sounds. If teachers give phrase tests rather than word tests, students may focus more on phrases, which could have a stronger impact on listening comprehension.

A related issue is that the words presented in vocabulary tests are often in the dictionary form. As we know, in authentic dialogs and listening passages, verbs, for instance, are usually in the conjugated, not dictionary, form. Learners who have only studied the dictionary form are surprised when hearing the words in the conjugated form, which adds more steps to processing the input and slows the understanding of meaning. We suggest that future vocabulary tests present words in the form of phrases, because phrases usually contain the conjugated forms of verbs. This, in turn, may help students improve their listening ability.

Although this study has yielded some valuable findings, it has its limitations. First, the sample size was small. A larger sample would have provided a better picture of the effect of L2 learners’ knowledge of phrases on listening comprehension, as compared to the effect of the learners’ knowledge of words. As this study was conducted at the early stages of foreign language learning, studies conducted at various learning stages might lead to a more
comprehensive picture. In other words, proficiency levels might affect vocabulary knowledge with regards to its effect on listening. Studies with languages other than Korean might also produce different results.

NOTES

1. *Depth of vocabulary knowledge* is defined as the quality of lexical knowledge that reflects how well a learner knows individual words or how well words are organized in the learner’s mental lexicon.
2. *Breadth of vocabulary knowledge* is defined as the size of a learner’s vocabulary—the number of words for which the learner has some knowledge of meaning.

REFERENCES


The Scenario-based Syllabus for the Post-Basic Arabic Program at the DLIFLC

REEM DABABNEH
Resident Education, Continuing Education

At the Defense Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) there has been a persistent calling for the development and implementation of an open-architecture syllabus to enhance student language proficiency and autonomous learning. The syllabus presented in this paper does not rely on one textbook, but utilizes myriad authentic sources selected according to students’ needs and goals. Instructors who use it are flexible and creative in choosing materials and instructional styles. The open-architecture syllabus is challenging but exciting; its landscape is open and transparent; its design is free yet bound by guidelines and objectives. Teachers and students collaborate to construct its foundation and shape its growth.

Using an open-architecture syllabus is not new to the Resident Education School in the Directorate of Continuing Education. For decades, instructors relied on themselves to find appropriate authentic material and develop suitable tasks according to a topic designated for every week. By using a syllabus not based on a textbook, teachers enjoyed the liberty to think outside-the box in regards to vision and its execution. They explored unconventional instructional approaches and redefined roles and expectations.

Until 2013, the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced courses ran for 47 weeks. In 2013, the courses were shortened first to 12 weeks, then to 16 weeks, and currently they are 19 weeks. To meet minimal requirements for the abbreviated courses, the teaching team overhauled the syllabus in terms of organization and goals. Themes were reselected and reordered and the weekly culminating activity became a scenario, not a presentation.

Key words: syllabus design, theme-scenario-based syllabus, open-architecture syllabus, scenario-based learning
INTRODUCTION

The Arabic Department at the School of Resident Education in Continuing Education (CE) teaches 19-week Intermediate and Advanced courses in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and dialects. The entry requirement for the Intermediate Courses is Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 2 in Listening Comprehension (LC) and Reading Comprehension (RC) and level 2+ in the same skills for the Advanced Courses. In 19 weeks, students are required to score at least 2+ in LC and RC in order to succeed in the Intermediate Courses, and at least 3 in LC and RC in the Advanced Courses. The syllabus for these courses consists of weekly units, each with core subject matter, ending with a culminating scenario on the last day of the week. There is one main theme for the week and sub-themes for every day of the week. The weekly units are independent and flexible. The theme provides the unifying content element and the vocabulary domain.

This article examines the theme-scenario-based learning program. Following a short literature review, it presents the five features of the theme-scenario-based syllabus design and discusses the benefits of planning and executing a scenario at the end of the unit. It demonstrates that language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of instruction from teaching for the test to learning the language through discussions and negotiations about the meaning and contexts of subject matters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scenario-based learning is a group activity. A small or large group of learners may play the role of a community going through a conflict or experiencing a challenge. The community must work together to achieve reconciliation or overcome the challenge. To reach a resolution, the group members must negotiate with one another and strategize the course of action that must be followed. The major assumption underlying the design and implementation of scenario-based activities is that learners may have a more authentic experience when collaborating on solving real-life problems. Di Pietro (1981) stressed the importance of individualistic scripting in promoting ordinary interactions that are purposeful, oppositional, and situationally relevant. For Di Pietro, roles are lived via transactional discourse through which strategies between the parties are transferred for the purpose of moving toward a shared goal. Di Pietro expanded the limited circumscribed dialogs in role playing to the “open-ended scenario” where the participants are called on to redirect their communication as soon as they are exposed to new urgent or tense information introduced to them in phases “so as to force decision and alter the direction of the action” (p. 233).

Scenario-based learning is neither problem-based nor project-based. Unlike problem-based learning, the occurrence of a problem, though recommended, is not essential for scenario-based learning. For example, a
scenario that demands learners, playing the role of an advisory committee, to submit a report or a plan with recommendations or solutions for some challenges. The “problem” in the scenario has to be dealt with by a group, whereas in problem-based learning, it may be handled by an individual. Negotiation and interaction are less important for problem-based learning. Gallagher (2013) notes that the problem-based learning model that has influenced the education field was created in the seventies by a medical educator to train medical students to think like doctors and experts. The model starts with an “ill-structured, or open-ended, problem” that is designed to facilitate understanding of specific content within a curriculum (p. 1). In comparison, the project-based learning does not have to be open-ended, and is also less inquisitive and not as flexible. Moreover, in project-based learning, the final product may be viewed as more important than the mental process employed in generating it. Similar to problem-based learning, scenario-based learning is flexible, open-ended, transformative, and values the cognitive and collaborative process provoked to give birth to the product.

Spinelli (2004) points out that scenarios can be easily incorporated into a theme-based curriculum thus contributing to shifting the focus “from learning about language toward learning to use the language in culturally-appropriate ways” (p.1). Her view is that the learners’ feel of the target language is expanded as they conduct research and gain new knowledge about the culture. As a result, learners begin to see the purpose of language study as something with practical value and life-long benefits. While executing the scenario, learners develop and practice interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational language skills. They also learn to incorporate content from other disciplines while demonstrating a variety of interpersonal, academic, investigative, and technological skills.

FEATURES OF THE THEME-SCENARIO-BASED SYLLABUS

The teaching teams of the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced Courses implement a theme-scenario-based syllabus where students cover a single core content theme in a week, such as technology, politics, economics, history, education, health, security, with a culminating scenario on the last day of the week.

Five features were applied to the design of the theme-scenario-based syllabus for the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced Courses:

1. A non-textbook-based curriculum;
2. Progression in quantity and difficulty of material;
3. Coherent transitions across themes and subthemes;
4. Recycling and positive tension; and
5. Integrated assessment

The following is a description of each of the features.
1. A Non-textbook-based Curriculum

In a theme-scenario curricular framework, the Intermediate and Advanced Courses does not use a textbook. Students listen to and read authentic materials selected according to weekly themes and daily subthemes, with a culminating scenario on the last day of the week. At the beginning of the course, the teaching team designs the scenario for the students; in the middle of the course, students, having developed confidence and resourcefulness, collaborate with the teachers to develop the scenarios. Dr. Andrew Corin, who spearheaded the implementation of theme-scenario-based learning in the Resident School in 2013, advised Arabic faculty to choose a weekly unifying theme, the core of which “should be sufficiently specific so that materials utilized during the module reinforce one another, yet it should still be broad enough so that it could be explored from a variety of perspectives” (2013). Using an open architecture design, teachers choose themes and sub-themes and alter the curriculum components according to the needs of their students.

One challenge to this type of curricular design is the learners’ impression that the curriculum lacks structure. To allay student concerns, it is critical that teachers clearly explain the nature of the course and its curricular design. To win students’ enthusiasm and trust in the program and the teaching team from the start, a well-defined course structure should be in place before students’ arrival. Developing materials and tasks as the course progresses is necessary, yet it is important to organize the following major components of the course ahead of time: the written syllabus; materials; assessment rubrics; schedules for testing; immersion events; and Diagnostic Assessment (DA).

2. Progression in Quantity and Difficulty of Material

Some students, particularly those who approach learning analytically, prefer a traditional textbook because it is less fluid in nature, and is more predictable and static in flow and organization. To minimize student uneasiness, make the course more enjoyable, and render the material easier to understand, the weekly units in the syllabus, the daily subthemes, the activities, and the expectations of students must gradually ascend the ladder of complexity as students develop proficiency (Corin, 1997). From the outset, authentic content and activities are introduced within a sheltered wrap though an increased complexity is emphatically maintained. As a result, students gradually develop a stronger grasp of topic, context, function, and form. The quantity and quality of materials and tasks are graded and sequenced so that each lesson and unit is comprehensible yet more cognitively challenging than the previous lessons; therefore, helping students achieve an increasingly distinct level of competence every time they complete one unit (Stroller, 2002).

Following this design principle, the theme for the first two weeks is Tourism. The first unit starts with Culinary Tourism, promoting positive feelings.
about the target region, and drawing attention to cultural qualities like generosity and family values. The topic also helps break the ice between newly arrived students and teachers, who bond over preparing food together and sharing meals. This allows students to experience the host-guest relationship in the target culture. The topic of Tourism, incorporating history and geography, is rich in facts and descriptions (ILR level 2). This topic is also “highly visual, spatial, and contextual,” making it an appropriate choice for starting the course, especially when the first week is interrupted by entry Diagnostic Assessment Sessions (DAs) and entry Oral Proficiency Interviews (OPIs) (Stryker & Leaver, 1997, p. 288). (See Appendix A for a sample of the the first two units with a culminating scenario for the second unit).

3. Coherent Transitions across Themes and Subthemes

The units are self-contained, yet interrelated in the sense that each weekly theme paves the way for the next one. Threads and linkages are overtly or covertly established across subthemes and themes in order to prompt coherence and connectivity and ensure meaningful and logical transitions (Stroller, 2002). For example, moving from Culinary Tourism in the first week to Types of Tourism in the second week facilitates a segue to Health in the third week because Medical Tourism is studied on Thursday of the second week. The topic of Health in the third week opens the discussion of family planning and other struggles that impact a family’s well-being which is explored in Unit 4. Poverty and high prices lead to violation of laws and crimes (Unit 5). Because tribes in the Arab World play an important role in enforcing justice, Unit 6 is a continuation to Unit 5 as it discusses Tribal Dispute Resolution in the Arab World. (See Appendix B for examples of weekly themes in the Intermediate and Advanced Syllabus).

From Tribal Conflict in Unit 6, the class moves to Women’s Rights in Unit 7; the Arab’s concept of honor and belief in revenge studied in Unit 6 are linked to the honor killing of women at the beginning of Unit 7. Unit 7 closes with Underage Marriage—a logical flow to Unit 8 on Ceremonies and Rituals. As the style in which people practice their ceremonies and rituals is influenced by religions, Unit 9 focuses on Worship and Religion. Religions in the Arab World touches the Holy Land and the relationship with Israel which is covered in Unit 10. From the topic of war (Unit 11), the effects of war on the environment and the economy are discussed in Units 12 and 13. After that, students transition to the more hopeful topic of Education Reform and its role in nurturing future generations (Unit 14). Weeks 15 and 16 are scheduled for overseas immersion, and the last two weeks (16 and 17) are devoted to watching TV series, reading literature, and review. (See Appendix C for examples of theme transition in the Intermediate and Advanced Arabic syllabus).
4. Recycling & Positive Tension

Each unit presents lexicon and structures within the context of the main theme under study, such as history, politics, health, technology. Students access various resources to research multiple viewpoints on the theme. The authentic reading and listening passages introduce students to vocabulary and structures about the same theme in various contexts. This exposes students to complementary, as well as conflicting, views on issues around the theme—the core aim of positive tension. This exposure encourages students to use their higher order thinking skills by engaging in extended discourse and challenging them to elaborate and recycle content and language (Stroller, 2002).

The recycling of authentic materials and tasks happens through a spiral sequence of progression from the simple and less demanding to the more complex and challenging while targeting the scenario planned to be executed on the last day of the week. Everything during the week prepared by instructors follows the roadmap leading to the culminating scenario. This recycling of vocabulary and structures on the same theme in various contexts promotes proficiency growth.

5. Integrated Assessment

Resident Education School students receive evidence-based feedback from the time they join the course. The Entry Diagnostic Assessment interviews are conducted during the first two days, followed by a learning plan developed for each student. The plan shows a student’s learning style, entry level in the language, and recommendations for improvement. As the course progresses, part of the monthly counseling interviews is to review the learning plan with each student. Because negotiation is essential in communication, students are given the opportunity to modify the learning plan, expand it with new learning techniques or more useful activities or homework assignments. They are encouraged to set goals for themselves that they may meet by the next interview date; as among these are improving speaking, achieving faster comprehension, practicing with one grammatical feature, or doing more accurate transcription, etc. In the monthly interview sessions, students self-assess success or failure in terms of goals, and adjust/establish new goals.

Peer assessment, in addition to self-monitoring, is valuable because it establishes accountability. Post-basic classes consist of adult learners sharing a wide range of strengths and learning styles; as such, students will seek one another’s help in learning and assessment. All lesson plans incorporate group-work and peer-support to promote synergy and team-spirit. Although the official indication for students’ success is passing the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT5) and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), throughout the course, students still have to take quizzes, write papers, design brochures, debate, present, and engage in four-handed teaching. Students are given rubrics to
measure the quality of end results and the processes of learning on the first day or the course, if not earlier via email.

**BENEFITS OF CULMINATING SCENARIOS**

Before the theme-scenario-based syllabus was developed, students typically studied a particular theme for four days and made a presentation as the weekly culminating activity. Teachers observed that students did not fully process the content of the presentations made by their peers as they were preoccupied with preparing for their own presentations. To improve the learning experience, the Arabic Department replaced the presentation with the culminating scenario. This has promoted more active learning and engaged students in a dynamic process of group work including role assignment, identification of objectives and problems, negotiation of solutions, discussion and prioritization of recommendations, consensus making, consolidation of recommendations, written document preparation, and presentation of recommendations. Through this process, students forge a learning community. Additionally, they gain familiarity with the pragmatics and protocols used in the target culture, such as openers, connectors, preclosers, closers, and self-repair mechanisms like correcting misleading starts, signaling turn-taking, changing the topic, and silently reserving the right to speak while searching for the appropriate words (Di Pietro, 1981).

When working in small groups, students identify the desired outcome of a problem and decide on a plan to reach the outcome. The choice of strategies is influenced by personal preferences and inclinations of the group members. For example, should the learner show a threatening disposition or be apologetic? Shy or combative? Direct or illusive? Each strategy demands a different choice of functional expressions (Di Pietro, 1981). Students who interact in learning scenarios recognize the need to pay close attention to what their classmates say given the latter may possess information that is key to proposing a solution. The problem-solving process typically requires negotiation skills, which exploit higher-order thinking (Corin, 2013).

Language in scenarios becomes a powerful means for social practice. As learners engage in interpersonal, receptive, and presentational flow of communication in simulated natural contexts, they become more adept in recognizing language and cultural subtleties and nuances like innuendos, hints, idioms, allusions, and body language. With that, improvement starts to be seen in the quality and pace of their discourse whether in regards to accuracy, fluency, automaticity, or spontaneity (Kreuger & Ryan, 1993). There is no predetermined path for how a particular group of learners will execute a scenario. In the Post-basic Arabic courses, students work together in the morning to research and collect required information and in the afternoon they execute the scenario. The activity on the last day of the week is geared to the knowledge students acquired during the week. Throughout the planning and execution, there are trouble-shooting phases where the teacher coaches students about their
linguistic and non-linguistic performance. Out-of-class teacher coaching lessens learner anxiety about mistakes made in class.

Another positive outcome of using scenarios is that teachers must collaborate to coordinate lesson plans every hour, every day of the week (Corin, 2013). When developing the scenario, the teaching team must be cognizant of the learners’ learning styles, strengths and weaknesses, preferences, and comfort zone boundaries. After engaging in culminating scenarios for some time, students become risk-takers and bolder managers of their learning. Guided by the syllabus they obtained at the start of the course and the schedule they accessed one week earlier, students will eagerly develop scenarios with the teachers. They readily form groups and assign roles to themselves. They also decide on the interactional modes to be adopted during the enactment of the scenario: self-assurance, contemplative watching, cooperation, submission, or argumentation.

For the success of this type of curriculum, it is important to make students feel that they are partners in the learning project. They have a voice, and their voice is heard. Their contribution to the curriculum is essential: they choose topics, add topics, and design activities and culminating scenarios. Allowing students to take ownership of the course, respecting their opinions, and giving weight to their feedback motivate them.

CONCLUSION

Sharing the syllabus and the teaching schedule with students before their arrival at the DLIFLC helps them develop a positive impression of the program and the teaching team. The syllabus spells out the relevant details—the sequence of topics, the culminating scenario, the testing schedule, the Diagnostic Assessment schedule, and the immersion dates. From the beginning, students have a clear picture of the expected learning outcome and the path to achieve the goal. This is a huge contributor to enhancing their confidence in the program.

The theme-scenario-based syllabus is characterized by flexibility in design, progression in complexity and expectation, connectivity across daily lessons and weekly segments, recyclability of language, structure, and content, and the ongoing fluid integrated assessment protocol. The syllabus promotes learner-teacher negotiation on aspects of the curriculum as they add and remove materials and activities according to student needs.

Scenarios are efficient in assessing students’ comprehension because they demand students listen, read, speak, and write about the content studied during the week, helping strengthen all four skills while focusing on meaning and form. As scenarios are goal-oriented, open-ended, and relevant, they promote skill integration, critical thinking, risk-taking, and problem solving. Stressing the functional use of the language in ordinary settings, scenarios improve student communicative competence and the confidence to communicate with native speakers in authentic settings synchronizing between linguistic and
non-linguistic performance (Spolsky, 1978). It is energizing for teachers to design, develop, and execute scenarios at various levels because the learning becomes individualized, with teachers providing differentiated instruction according to the composition of the class. A scenario-based syllabus demands considerable time and effort from teachers and learners, but the rewards—enhanced learner motivation, learner autonomy, and proficiency growth—are worth it.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

The First Two Units in the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced Syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 1    | Culinary Tourism & Cultural Identity | • Appetizers  
• Main Dishes  
• Desserts  
• Drinks  
• Culminating Scenario |
| 2    | 2    | Types of Tourism | • Religious Tourism  
• Historical Tourism  
• Environment Tourism  
• Medical Tourism |

Culminating Scenario (on Friday):
The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) is hosting a forum in Dubai for the Tourism Ministers in the Arab world. The Ministers, played by students, will research the following types of tourism: Religious Tourism, Historical Tourism; Medical Tourism; and Environmental Tourism. The assignment is to provide recommendations for enhancing the full exploitation of the nations’ touristic capacity through increased cooperation among the Arab countries. The recommendations will reflect past approaches—both those that succeeded and those that failed. The Ministers’ recommendations will be submitted to special committees in their Ministries for further action.

--Students divide themselves into groups and choose one of the four types of tourism to research.
--Each group decides on the four tourist sites that best represent one of the four types of tourism.
--Each group narrows its three choices to one. Each group justifies its selection.
--Each group agrees on five approaches used by the governments to boost tourism at the tourist site that have proven successful and five that were failures.
--The lists are prioritized and members of each group must reach a consensus regarding the ranking.
--Each group makes five recommendations to enhance the tourist site.
--The groups exchange their recommendations, comparing...
and contrasting differences and similarities.
--The groups present their recommendations to the diplomats of the respective embassies, who are played by the teachers.

### APPENDIX B

**List of Weekly Units in the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced Syllabus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td><strong>Health Care</strong></td>
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<td>• Medical Insurance</td>
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<td>• Challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Obstacles to Social Development</strong></td>
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<td>• Poor Family Planning</td>
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<td>• Price Inflation</td>
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<td>• Corruption</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Crime &amp; Punishment</strong></td>
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<td>• Examples of Civil Wrongs</td>
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<td>• Inside some Arab Prisons</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>Tribal Dispute Resolution in the Arab World</strong></td>
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<td>• The Concept of Honor</td>
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# APPENDIX C

## A Sample of Linking Threads across Weekly Themes in the Arabic Intermediate and Advanced Syllabus

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INTRODUCTION

“Open Architecture”, as applied to curriculum design, has its origins in information technology, where it is defined as “a type of computer architecture or software architecture that is designed to make adding, upgrading and swapping components easy. … For example, the IBM PC and Apple IIe have an open architecture supporting plug-in cards, whereas the Apple IIC and Amiga 500 computers have a closed architecture” (Wikipedia, open architecture, August 2016). Betty Lou Leaver, former Provost of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, first used the term in 2015 when describing the Transformative Instructional Approaches that are critical for reaching the new graduation goals of 2+/2+ without increasing course length.

Open Architecture (OA), as it refers to language learning, is a curriculum design principle that encourages teachers to add and swap activities and tasks on a continual basis according to learner needs, specifically their styles, strategies, level of fossilization, interests, and zone of proximal development. At levels 0+ through 1, a textbook is used to ensure all learners are exposed to the same content corpus; i.e., the building blocks of language learning focused on language features such as structure and lexicon. At level 1+ and above, the teacher is asked to create flexible weekly and daily lesson plans according to a thematically-based syllabus based on authentic materials. The teacher, who takes on the role of advisor, mentor, and partner, negotiates aspects of the syllabus and lesson plans with the learners and uses formative, educative assessments to prepare learners for the occasional summative assessment and the standardized exit test at the end of the course—the Defense Language
Proficiency Test. Teacher creativity is enhanced as the teacher concentrates on teaching versus (over) testing with summative assessments. Without the constraints of a textbook and the corresponding summative assessments, teachers are freer to take advantage of block scheduling and a wide variety of instructional approaches such as scenario-based learning, project-based learning, integration of activities promoting higher-order thinking skills through the hybrid, flipped course design, integration of non-standard and colloquial language, use of defossilization activities, etc.

The OA Summit that took place in May 2016 emphasized the practical application of OA in the classroom. The plenary speaker and presenters were afforded the opportunity to contribute to a Proceedings. This section of Dialog on Language Instruction, which constitutes Proceedings, provides readers the opportunity to hear from several Summit participants about their experience with OA. We hope you find the reading rewarding!

Christine Campbell, Ph.D.
Professor Emerita
The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center
President
Campbell Language Consultants
Achieving a Superior Level of Proficiency: CBI, Korean Film, and the Five Cs

SANG YEE CHEON
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

1. INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalization, the need for professionals in the United States who possess high levels of proficiency in less commonly taught languages (LCTLS) has become a critical issue in federal agencies, businesses, and universities. Despite the increased attention paid to global professionals, most foreign language programs in higher education neither utilize innovation in curricula nor produce graduates who have attained high levels (i.e., superior) of proficiency in LCTLS. Although student enrollment in some foreign languages in the United States continues to decline, enrollment in Korean language classes continues to increase. According to a report from the Modern Language Association of America (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015), student enrollment in Korean language classes rose by 45 percent between 2009 and 2013. Korean is taught at more than 150 colleges and universities, with an enrollment of approximately 12,000 students, placing it among the top 15 most popular foreign languages in higher education. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding for higher-level proficiency language courses and instructors, most Korean programs struggle to offer advanced Korean courses.

Four primary factors drive an interest in Korean language learning in the United States: 1) Korea’s rapid economic development; 2) the US’s enhanced international relations with Koreans in all areas; 3) Korean immigration; and 4) the Korean Hallyu phenomenon (e.g., K-Pop, K-Drama, and K-Beauty). One might include among these factors the US government’s designation of the Korean language as critical to national security, as well as the Korean government’s policy of funding the globalization of Korean language and cultural studies. Since 2000, the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) has been successful in obtaining a multi-year federal grant from the National Security Education Program (NSEP) to run the Korean Flagship program. In Spring 2007, at the request of the NSEP, the non-degree program was transitioned to the Korean Language Flagship Center (KLFC). Soon after, the center developed the Flagship Master of Arts in 2007 and the Flagship Bachelor of Arts in 2008, in cooperation with the UHM East Asian Languages and Literatures (EALL) Department. The UHM KLFC was the first Korean language and culture education center in the United States dedicated to cultivating Korea specialists with professional-level proficiency in Korean. The
KLFC has systematically developed degree programs, curricula assessment, and recruitment. Upon successful completion of the Korean Flagship program, students become certified Flagship global professionals who are highly qualified graduates possessing professional-level language proficiency in Korean. Having completed a one-year overseas component with advanced cultural skills and having experienced living and working in Korea, they also possess intercultural insights useful for careers in the federal government, international business, and the private sector. With the goal of producing a greater number of graduates who have reached a superior level of proficiency in Korean, the KLFC modifies and strengthens its undergraduate program curriculum continuously.

Just as the KLFC has based curriculum and classroom activities on the use of language and content to help learners reach superior proficiency, the Open Architecture (OA) Design has been implemented for moving beyond the advanced level at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) (i.e., towards the goal of achieving 80% ILR Reading 2+/Listening 2+). The curricular framework of Open Architecture “contains components that can be easily added, upgraded, or swapped in and out, and promotes flexibility and creativity, and uses formative, alternative assessments (portfolios, short- and long-term projects, presentations, contracts, etc.). Accordingly, language learning can be enhanced by using the Open Architecture Design and various transformative instructional approaches along with standards-based, task-based, content-based, or learner-centered instruction (Campbell & Tovar, 2017).

This OA design can be understood as similar to the Language Flagship, which is a new frontier in higher education for creating global professionals commanding a superior level of proficiency in languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security through a groundbreaking approach to language education since its inception in 2002. A content-based instruction (CBI) approach has been adopted as the primary pedagogical model in the KLFC undergraduate program. Curricula, instruction, textbooks, assessments, media materials and other instructional tools are rooted in a CBI approach to pedagogy (Cheon, 2012). The Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [ACTFL NSFLEP], 1996), a collaborative project of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages’ (ACTFL) standards task force, emphasizes the importance of integrating language and culture (or content) for effective communication in foreign language education. Specifically, it focuses on the five goal areas for language teaching, better known as the Five Cs: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. This paper examines how the Five Cs framework can be integrated into a CBI language course in the KLFC. The first three Cs—Communication, Cultures and Connections are a core part of the CBI approach. In addition to analysis from the language educator’s perspective, this study also examines learners’ perceptions of the Five Cs in a CBI course.

The Korean undergraduate program at UHM has developed CBI courses in the past decade. This study addresses instructional materials—
especially Korean films—for teaching a CBI course in a college setting. It includes results from pre- and post-surveys of students from various language backgrounds who took at least one Korean language and culture course that involved film. I begin with a brief overview of the CBI course using Korean film, followed by a description of the goals and standards of the Five Cs in Korean language instruction. I then will provide survey results and present conclusions and implications of this study.

2. CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION COURSE WITH KOREAN FILMS

CBI is defined as a holistic approach to the integration of language learning and content learning in foreign or second language education: that is, language and content instruction are integrated so that students learn both at the same time (Brinton, 2003; Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 2003; Crandall & Kaufman, 2002; Kaufman & Crandall, 2005; Stryker & Leeaver, 1997). CBI is one of the most widely used communicative language teaching methods (Kim, 2005; Shin & Kim, 2000; Stoller & Grabe, 1997; Stryker & Leeaver, 1997). In the KLFC curriculum, the idea of “culture as content” is used to develop students’ overall language proficiency as well as promote content knowledge in Korean. This is because a lack of cultural understanding often results in inefficient communication, or even misunderstanding, between L2 learners and native speakers of Korean. It is now widely acknowledged that there is a close correlation between cultural literacy and language proficiency in L1 and L2 acquisition. Cultural literacy was first defined in the context of the interpretation of written materials, as “the fund of information possessed by all competent readers belonging to a certain culture” (Hirsch, 1987). It was after Hirsch (1987) published his book Cultural Literacy that some researchers (Heusinkveld, 1997; Kovacs, 2009) suggested that cultural literacy should be applied to foreign language education. In fact, they proposed that the shared body of basic information needed to survive in a given culture is also necessary for L2 learners to possess if they wish to reach high levels of proficiency in an L2.

The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has created five categories for the classification of any language based on the approximate amount of time required for an American English speaker to learn it. Languages in Category V—which include Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—are exceptionally different from English both linguistically and culturally, and thus require considerable time for American English speakers to learn. For instance, it takes a greater amount of time and effort for American English speakers to reach a high proficiency level in Korean than in Spanish. For this reason, Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) teachers or curriculum developers try to offer courses that stimulate students’ interest and satisfy their needs.

According to Garrity (1987), films have great potential as language learning tools because visual and audio materials can stimulate the interest of second or foreign language learners, motivating them in their language
education. Lee (2000, p. 1) also states that a film is essentially a “cultural text produced in society” and films, whether documentaries or feature films, “provide the audience with images of the society in which they live in.”

Exposure to orally and visually authentic Korean film not only provides students with rich cultural and sociopolitical information about Korea but also exposes them to vocabulary and grammar patterns that are beyond the students’ current proficiency level (Cheon, 2007). The course Korean Proficiency through Film (KOR 480), which I have been developing since 2005, is designed to help students elevate their Korean language proficiency level and improve their knowledge of Korean culture, society, and history. Students taking this course differ in their level of Korean proficiency but are fluent enough to enroll. The student population, however, has varied slightly by semester. The student body in the course usually includes heritage language (HL) learners, non-heritage language (non-HL) learners, and native speakers (NS) of Korean. The syllabus may be modified to fulfill the needs of students at different Korean proficiency levels and with diverse disciplinary knowledge. When I began developing the course, most students were HL learners, but for the ten years that the course has been offered, the proportion of non-HL learners has increased. The syllabus is built around content-based units from authentic resources (e.g., newspaper articles, periodicals, etc.). Diverse content and various language skills are embedded in the language tasks or activities that students are required to complete. In the current version of the textbook, each Korean language text is followed by an English translation.

Previous research has provided strong support for the success of content-based instruction with HL learners. For instance, Shin and Kim (2000), in their study of HL learners in a college-level Korean program, claim that CBI has proved extremely successful because it takes into account student needs and interests. Similarly, in a study of the effects of a CBI curriculum on Korean language use by heritage students in class, Kim (2005) found that students were satisfied with the CBI curriculum, reacting positively to the topics and displaying an increased understanding of and insight into Korean social and cultural issues. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted on non-HL learners of Korean. The present study goes beyond past work in this area by comparing the perceptions of non-HL learners with those of HL learners enrolled in the same CBI course.
3. GOALS AND STANDARDS OF THE FIVE Cs IN THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

*Standards for Korean Language Learning* (Korean National Standards Task Force [KNSTF], 2012) is a collaborative project of the KNSTF and the American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK). Building on the ACTFL’s *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (ACTFL NSFLEP, 1996), it articulates the themes of the Five Cs by providing concrete standards in each of these categories. (Specifically, *Standards for Korean Language Learning* specifies 11 different standards, consisting of two different standards in four of the Five Cs, plus three different standards in the area of Communication.) The goals and standards of the Five Cs in the Korean language are briefly described below.

**Communication** (Goal 1: Communicate in Korean)

Students are asked to engage in conversations; provide and obtain information; express feelings and emotions; exchange opinions; understand and interpret written and spoken Korean on a variety of topics; and present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

**Cultures** (Goal 2: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Korean Culture)

Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of both the relationship between the practices and perspectives of Korean culture and between the products and perspectives of Korean culture.

**Connections** (Goal 3: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information)

Students are encouraged to reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the Korean language and to acquire information about and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the Korean language and culture.

**Comparisons** (Goal 4: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture)

Students are required to demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language by comparing the Korean language with their own and to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture by comparing Korean culture with their own.

**Communities** (Goal 5: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and around the World)

Students are encouraged to use Korean both within and beyond the school setting and to show interest in becoming lifelong learners by using Korean for personal enjoyment and enrichment.
The ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (ACTFL NSFLEP, 2013) is a revised version of Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL NSFLEP, 1996); the former is based on 15 years of implementing the standards. The current study utilized the original versions of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL NSFLEP, 1996) and the Standards for Korean Language Learning (KNSTF, 2012) for pre- and post-surveys.

4. SURVEY

4.1. Methods: Participants and Survey Questions

This study presents the results of pre- and post-surveys about a CBI course with films for advanced learners (KOR 480: Korean Proficiency through Film). Surveys included questions about the course design and the textbook, as well as about how learners of Korean perceived the CBI course with respect to the Five Cs. The surveys were administered to 59 students enrolled in three difference sections of the course during the Fall 2015, Fall 2016, and Fall 2017 semesters at UHM. Participants included 23 HL learners, 12 non-HL learners, and 24 native speakers of Korean. Twenty three participants were Korean HL learners who were born in the United States or came to the United States when they were infants or in elementary school. Twelve non-HL learners of Korean were not ethnically Korean or had no exposure to Korean when they were young. Twenty four were native speakers of Korean; Most of them were majoring in Korean at UHM. Participants who had come to the United States after the age of 10 or who claimed to be native speakers of Korean were categorized as such. All 23 of the native speakers of Korean claimed that their English was not fluent enough for them to be considered native or bilingual. A few students were excluded because they missed either the pre-survey or the post-survey.

Questions for the pre-survey and post-survey were created based on the Standards for Korean Language Learning (KNSTF, 2012). The questions in the surveys used a 7-point rating scale in three different versions: scale A from strongly agree (7), to neutral (4), to strongly disagree (1); scale B from strongly familiar (7), to familiar (4), to unfamiliar (1); scale C from strongly interested (7), to interested (4), to not interested (1). Sample survey questions for the first C (Communication) are as follows: “I think that the Korean through film course will help me develop communication skills” (in pre-survey), and “I think that the Korean with film course helped me develop communication skills” (in post-survey). Specific sub-questions were added—for example, questioning whether the student is (was) able to “engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, or exchange opinions.” The pre-survey was done on the first day of instruction and the post-survey on the last day of instruction.
4.2. The CBI Course: Korean Proficiency through Film (Cheon, 2017)

As noted above, since 2005, I have been developing and teaching a Korean language and culture course for advanced learners of Korean that utilizes film or media materials (Cheon, 2017). The three films selected for this course during the semesters were *Joint Security Area*, directed by Chan-wook Park in 2000; *The President’s Barber*, directed by Chan-sang Lim in 2004; and *Peppermint Candy*, directed by Chang-dong Lee in 2000. Two additional films—*May 18* (2007), which covers the historical event of the Gwangju democratic movement in 1980, and *The President’s Last Bang* (2005), which covers President Park’s assassination—were shown in class to supplement existing course materials and themes. Specific themes selected for each of the core films are summarized as follows:

**Film 1: Themes in *Joint Security Area* (2000)**

1. The director Chan-wook Park and the main characters
2. The murder of two U.S. soldiers by North Koreans in the DMZ (1976) and the aftermath of this event
3. Korean anti-communism education
4. National security law
5. Military power in South and North Korea, the United States, Japan, and China
6. The Korean War
7. Family dispersal due to the Korean War
8. Reunification

**Film 2: Themes in *The President’s Barber* (2004)**

1. The director Chan-sang Lim and the main characters
2. President Rhee Syng-man (1948-1960)
3. The constitutional amendment of 1954
4. The rigged election of March 15, 1960
5. The revolution of April 19, 1960
6. President Park Chung-hee (1961-1979)
7. The military coup of May 16, 1961
8. The dispatch of Korean combat troops to Vietnam
9. North Korean guerrillas’ attempt to infiltrate the Blue House (January 21, 1968)
10. The new constitution of 1972
11. Park’s assassination on October 26, 1979 (a theme also prominent in *The President’s Last Bang*)
12. The military coup of 1979

**Film 3: Themes in *Peppermint Candy* (2000)**

1. The director Chang-dong Lee and the main characters
2. The Gwangju democratic movement of 1980 (also in the film: *May 18*)
3. Steps toward the development of democracy in the Spring of 1987, along with the 6·29 declaration
4. The IMF crisis in 1997-1999 and the current Korean economic situation
6. The role and importance of the song “Na Ottokhe” (What should I do?) in the film and popular culture from the 1980s to 2000s
7. The state of the current democracy with respect to national security, the economy, and human rights in Korea

The textbook summarizes not only the films themselves but also the historical background reflected in the films.

4.3. Survey Results

4.3.1 Responses about the CBI Course

As shown in Figure 1 below, all survey participants (i.e., students in the CBI course) reported more interest in Korean films and more learning about Korean culture. The English translations in the Korean language textbook helped participants understand the materials covered in class. As expected, native speakers of Korean showed less interest in the English translations in the textbook. The English subtitles in the films were highly valued by all participants because they provided fuller comprehension of authentic language use and diverse cultural experiences regardless of their Korean proficiency level. Although the entire film screening may need English subtitles first, we repeatedly used short video clips (in duration from 15 seconds to one minute) during the discussion or lecture without English subtitles.

The surveys showed that all participants preferred inclusion of advanced idiomatic expressions or pronunciation rules in the CBI course. Interestingly, native speakers of Korean rated the importance of explicit descriptions of linguistic features higher in the post-survey than in the pre-survey. Unlike learners of Korean, the Korean native speakers had registered in the CBI course without lower-division prerequisite courses (i.e., from KOR 101 to KOR 402). Based on my class observation and my record of grades, most of the native speakers of Korean who had come to the United States when they were in elementary school were not confident with essay writing or sophisticated Korean expressions. They spoke and listened like native speakers of Korean, but their reading and writing skills were less accurate than their speaking and listening skills.
4.3.2 The Five Cs with the CBI Course through Film

The survey questions regarding the Five Cs as they relate to the CBI course through Korean film are as follows: The Korean CBI through film course (will, in pre-survey) or (did, post-survey) help students to 1) develop communication skills; 2) gain knowledge and understanding of culture; 3) reinforce knowledge of other disciplines; 4) develop comparative skills; and 5) expand Korean language skills beyond the classroom setting. Overall, non-HL learners and native speakers of Korean rated the first three Cs (Communication, Cultures, and Connections) higher in the post-survey than in the pre-survey. However, they rated the last two Cs (Comparisons and Communities) almost equally in pre- and post-survey. A few HL learners rated Communication slightly lower in the post-survey than in the pre-survey. At the end of each fall semester, most participants commented on the course, mentioning that they learned a lot about Korean history or contemporary society. That is, all participants reported achieving the goals and standards of Cultures and Connections after taking the CBI through film course. Focusing on effective
cross-cultural communication, they expressed a greater preference for activities such as speaking practice, small group discussion, and debate sessions than that expressed by HL learners and native speakers of Korean. Undoubtedly, taking only a few CBI courses is not sufficient for learners to attain high levels (i.e., ACTFL superior or ILR 3) of proficiency in LCTLs or to achieve the five goals and eleven standards of the Five Cs; rather, an innovative and comprehensive curriculum covering the Five Cs is needed.

Figure 2
Learning the Five Cs through the CBI Course with Korean Film in Pre- and Post-survey
5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Culture teaching is important in foreign-language education because language and culture are inseparable and mutually reinforcing. The CBI courses in the KLFC undergraduate program cover history, politics, popular culture, literature, science, and other areas, with the aid of various authentic multimedia materials, including films that are widely accessible. Film, a widely accessible medium, is one of the most effective media in introducing students to current Korean social, political, economic, and cultural events and issues. According to Pegrum (2008), film is a widespread and popular medium for the teaching of cultures. A study by Herron, Cole, Corrie, and Dubreil (1999) shows that students achieved significant gains in overall cultural knowledge after watching videos from the target culture in the classroom. Our survey found similar results, with all participants indicating that the CBI through film course helped foster their cultural knowledge of Korea and facilitated the creation of connections with other disciplines. However, non-HL learners of Korean showed slightly different responses in the case of achievement of the standards of the Five Cs; among non-HL learners, development of the Five Cs standards was limited to Cultures and Connections; development in the Cultures and Connections standards was most prevalent among HL learners, while improvement among all the Five Cs was observed.

This study also examined how L2 learners of Korean perceived the CBI through film course. The survey results show that all survey participants became more interested in Korean films and learned more about Korean culture. However, learners have different needs or learning strategies depending on heritage status. Another lesson learned is that it is a pedagogically good idea to let students watch films with English subtitles regardless of their background or proficiency levels. In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that exposing students to both authentic texts and culturally rich media materials such as film facilitates the achievement of the Five Cs.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

A. The CBI Course in Pre- and Post-Surveys

A-1. *I am interested in Korean films.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (5.47/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.04/7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>6.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-2. *I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me learn about Korean culture.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (6.21/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.55/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>6.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-3. *The textbook includes English translation preceded by each Korean language text. I think that the English translation (will, did) help me understand class materials.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (5.71/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.12/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-4. *I think that the English subtitles are necessary or recommended to ensure fuller comprehension of the Korean films.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (4.97/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (5.94/7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A-5. *I think that the Korean through Film course should include linguistic features such as grammatical expressions or pronunciation rules.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (4.5/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (5/7)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. The Five Cs through CBI film course in pre- and post-surveys

B-1. Communication
I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me develop communication skills in Korean (i.e., engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, or exchange opinions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (5.94/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.04/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>6.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B-2. Culture
I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me gain knowledge and understanding of Korean culture.

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (6.23/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.59/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>6.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B-3. Connections
I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me reinforce knowledge of my own or other disciplines (i.e., disciplines such as cultural studies, film studies, Korean history, politics, literature, etc.).

<table>
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<th>Pre-survey (6.04/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.42/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>6.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B-4. Comparisons
I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me develop comparative skills (i.e., develop insight into the nature of languages and other culture through comparisons of Korean and English).

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<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (5.94/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (5.99/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B-5. Communities

I think that the Korean through Film course (will, did) help me expand my Korean language skills beyond the classroom setting (i.e., use the Korean language and one’s knowledge of Korean culture both within and beyond the school setting).

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Pre-survey (6.17/7)</th>
<th>Post-survey (6.2/7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-HL Learners</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL Learners</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Speakers</td>
<td>6.29</td>
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</table>
This article discusses the use of authentic materials in language education. After presenting a brief literature review regarding the use of authentic materials in language teaching within the open architecture framework, it discusses the challenges of using authentic materials and reviews criteria for selecting appropriate materials. It then shares teaching ideas for using authentic materials. Finally, it explores teacher’s role as advisor to language learners.

**AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN THE OPEN ARCHITECTURE CURRICULUM**

The open architecture curricular design is controlled by syllabi that do not include textbooks; that is to say, lesson components can be added or upgraded easily, which promotes flexibility and creativity (Campbell & Tovar, 2017). The open architecture framework allows instructors to include materials that reflect the most recent events in the target language society as well as to adapt language lessons to learners’ needs (Campbell & Tovar, 2017). Within such a design, instructors can take advantage of authentic materials that are not adapted for foreign language learning so that learners may enjoy maximum exposure to authentic language.

In language teaching at higher levels, authentic materials are the major learning resources. Authenticity in language materials refers to the language “produced by native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 98). Authentic materials expose language learners to real language and culture, allowing them to read at the literal level on the lines and learn phrases and sentences that have not been modified for foreign readers. Students can also learn to read between the lines and beyond the literal meaning to explore the author’s tone, and any values and sociocultural information conveyed in a particular context.

In target language domains, writers and speakers produce authentic language naturally in daily communications. Nunan (1988) defined authentic materials as the materials produced for purposes other than language learning. Similarly, Wallace (1992) defined authentic materials as “real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes” (p. 145). Tomlinson (2001) reiterated that authentic materials were “ordinary texts not produced specifically for language
teaching purposes” (p. 68). The purpose of authentic texts is to achieve social purposes in the target language community (Peacock, 1997). Thomas (1995) noted that individuals used language to perform actions that would cause effects or changes. Stubbs (1996) also supported the practical value of authentic materials— actual and attested language with real authentic use in communication. Such values of authentic materials make them a significant source for language instructors to use.

As the real world is distinct from the classroom, authentic context is often absent. Teachers and textbooks provide language that focuses on the forms rather than the context of such language. Non-authentic texts are artificial and do not represent how the language is really used. Authentic materials can bridge the gap between the real world and the classroom. Such materials allow students to contextualize language learning, because they provide a genuine context and bring valuable original information to the classroom (Abbasian, Mahmoudi, & Shahbazi, 2016). Such exposure to the original language increases learners’ communicative competence—the capability to use language receptively and productively in real situations (Brown, 2007).

Authentic materials can cultivate language pragmatic competence—the knowledge of accurate use of the language in proper situations (Abbasian et al., 2016). Some scholars argue that textbooks cannot train language learners in this regard because such materials lack pragmatic context and may even provide a distorted picture of the real language in their perfectly formed sentences and repetitions of structures (Berardo, 2006; Gilmore, 2007). Effective application of a learned language includes not only mastery of linguistic elements such as lexis and syntax, but also the ability to appropriately communicate in the target language society. Authentic texts can prepare learners for real communications as they show what and how people use the language for various realistic purposes. This may make learners feel that they are acquiring a language that has practical value outside the classroom.

Gilmore (2007) revealed that authentic materials helped increase language learners’ discourse competence. As non-authentic textbooks often focus on language forms rather than content and context, they may include isolated sentences that do not help students develop abilities to analyze discourse. On the other hand, authentic materials deliver purposeful messages through cohesive texts, which allow the audience to follow logical flow and detect the transitional devices used to connect pieces of information. Learners need such language models practiced by proficient speakers or writers, so that they may understand how natives manage discourse and emulate these patterns (Gilmore, 2007).

Many educators proposed that the use of authentic materials in language classrooms motivated learners (Al Azri & Al Rashdij, 2014; Berardo, 2006). There are several reasons for this. Learning from authentic texts motivates because students can extract real information from a genuine setting in a new language (Berardo, 2006). Authentic materials are more active, interesting, and stimulating as compared to textbooks (Al Azri & Al Rashdij,
Students may see authentic texts as evidence that the language is used for various social purposes in real life, which may draw them closer to the target language communities. Furthermore, Thanajarjo (2000) discovered an increase in learners’ self-confidence and motivation when using authentic listening materials to teach second language classes.

SELECTING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

Although many scholars have supported the use of authentic materials, others have pointed out the challenges in selecting appropriate materials. Selecting and preparing such materials for language classes may be time consuming. Such materials can be difficult to comprehend by language learners, especially by lower-level learners, who require training on forms and basic linguistic elements. The cultural implication may also hinder the comprehension of authentic materials. Improper use of authentic materials that are too difficult for learners may lead to frustration, confusion, and demotivation (Al Azri & Al Rashdij, 2014). Additionally, authentic materials created for specific social purposes at a certain period of time may become quickly outdated.

As we strive to make the most of authentic materials in language teaching, we should note the possible challenges and consider the factors that may influence the appropriateness of teaching materials. Based on Nuttall’s (1996) criteria for choosing teaching texts, Berardo (2006) introduced four important factors in selecting authentic materials: suitability of the content, readability, exploitability, and presentation.

The content of the materials should be suitable for students’ needs and readable at their levels. Authentic materials may contain unfamiliar vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, abstract concepts, implicit tone, complicated structures, and presumed background knowledge. These factors create obstacles in comprehension. Although students should study texts that are above their current levels to allow meaningful development, they can also become discouraged if the materials are too demanding and completely beyond their comprehension. When selecting materials, we need to keep in mind the teaching objectives and the levels of the students, so that we choose the passages with the proper cognitive and linguistic demands and with the right amount of new linguistic and cultural knowledge.

A text should also be exploitable for language teaching purposes. A listening and reading piece in the target language does not automatically qualify as teaching material. Evaluation of the quality of the materials should be among the initial steps. Moreover, teachers need to evaluate whether a text can be exploited to develop students’ competence, what purpose can be fulfilled by using the text, and what language skills can be developed among individual students (Berardo, 2006).
Presentation of a text may also affect the choice of authentic materials. Daily target language communities produce vast amounts of authentic materials. Because learners often assume that language presented to them in the classroom can be generalized in the target communities (Gilmore, 2007), materials chosen should be representative of the authentic language usage in real life. Multiple usable articles for language teaching may be available on a certain topic. Choosing interesting and attractive texts can make students want to read more (Berardo, 2006). The intriguing nature of learning materials is helpful to attract and retain learners’ attention in studying the language.

**USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

As we browse the sources of authentic materials produced for native speakers, we evaluate the quality of the language and its appropriateness for our students according to the criteria discussed above. While building students’ linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of a certain topic, we may use multiple authentic passages that represent different levels and text modes. For example, to have intermediate and advanced students analyze a social phenomenon that attracts wide attention and stimulates heated discussion in the target language society, we may first prepare our students with an oral or written news report that describes that social event. The communicative purpose of such materials is to convey factual information. Such materials reflect an instructive text mode usually within the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Level 2 or 2+ range. Understanding the related instructive and descriptive information lays a foundation for learners to further analyze the social phenomenon.

After mastering the facts about the social event, students can use an editorial or a commentary piece about the same issue as the main text of the lesson. They may analyze the articles in an evaluative mode in which authors express their ideas, opinions, attitudes, and so on. Such materials require readers to read between the lines and detect authors’ intention and tones and usually rank as ILR Levels 2+, 3, and above. Appropriate activities and tasks may accompany the authentic materials to train learners’ higher order thinking skills. Learners can study the language as well as the way proficient writers and speakers develop their arguments.

Exposing students to different language registers helps them become familiar with both formal and informal language. As possible supplemental or post-listening and post-reading activities following the main analytical text, authentic discussions from popular forums may be used to expand students’ exposure to the colloquial language. Reading short comments from native speakers in forums provides valuable learning opportunities for authentic communicative language and the values of the target culture. How native speakers interact in the forums may also reveal important information about the sociolinguistic aspect of the target language. Activities such as cultural comparison and composing potential responses to forum posts may be beneficial for language learners.
As we use different authentic materials to scaffold and help students build knowledge, we may consider exposing students to various genres. In addition to training their comprehension of descriptive and factual statements, we can use analytical and commentary texts for training critical thinking skills, the ability to detect implications and author’s attitudes. We can also use literary pieces to develop appreciation of figurative language and abstract concepts. Depending on levels of the students, teachers may decide which authentic resources can be used as the main text and which ones as supplemental materials.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

Authentic materials can be used as a rich source of the target language and can be exploited in various ways. Language teachers mediate between the materials and the students (Gilmore, 2007). Productive learning happens if teachers effectively mediate between the two and provide sufficient support to students in the learning process. We may design meaningful tasks to engage students in learning both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge involved in authentic materials. Meanwhile, we need to be careful not to “overload learners’ language processing system by asking them to analyze inputs for meaning and form simultaneously,” but to “focus on meaning first before shifting attention to language forms” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 111).

In the educational philosophy of transformation, teachers are no longer the sages on the stage but advisors who work with learners (Leaver & Shekhtman, 2002). Students are at the center of the learning process. The dialog between teacher and students is essential in the transformation (Mcclinton, 2005). Teachers need to get familiar with students’ individual strengths and weaknesses, learning styles, and learning needs. This individualization is maximized within the open architecture curricular design, as lesson components are tailored to individual learning needs. In this environment, students are involved in selecting authentic materials suitable for their levels and needs.

We should also ensure proper support when encouraging learners to engage in research and explore authentic materials on their own. For example, when the authentic text contains concepts difficult for the learners to comprehend, teachers may suggest learning strategies for the comprehension process. Teachers may ask students probing questions to lead them in the right direction. Sufficient support and feedback can be provided individually so that every student may maximize learning outcomes.
CONCLUSION

Produced by native speakers for the target audience, authentic materials serve communicative or social purposes. They are valuable resources for foreign language teaching and learning. Authentic materials not only provide language models for learners to learn and emulate, but also offer an original context to show the practical language application in real situations. Through authentic texts, students enhance their communicative, pragmatic, and discourse competence of the foreign language. In turn, genuine language in the authentic texts motivates students to learn.

In the selection of authentic materials, we should consider the suitability of content, readability, exploitability, and presentation. Multiple authentic texts may be used to teach one topic. Students develop analytical skills by first understanding the fundamental facts of an issue, then exploring evaluative texts and other supplementary materials such as genuine comments from native speakers. Such practice exposes learners to different genres and language registers and helps them form a comprehensive picture of the target language. Authentic materials provide crucial sources for foreign language learning.
REFERENCES


In April 2016, the Head of the English-language department at the French War College in Paris sat at her computer and experienced a harsh and personally embarrassing reality check: students’ feedback on the English course had just come in, and her screen was full of low approval ratings. The students had spoken and, for yet another year, the comments about the English course were far from positive. She thought she had designed a good course, but had to admit that, for the learners, it was not working.

A year later, she is again looking at the students’ feedback. This time, she sees the highest approval ratings the school has ever had. What had happened in the meantime?

This article examines the transition of the English-language program for French military officers at the War College, Ecole de Guerre, (EdG) in Paris over two years, from traditional grammar-translation teaching to a Transformative Instructional Approach (TIA) that embraces open architecture and transformative pedagogy.

First, it presents the background and characteristics of the English course, and why a change in teaching method was needed. Second, it describes the course manager’s encounter with open architecture and the transformative approach, and the challenges of implementing these within the learners’ particular cultural context. Finally, it examines in detail how the new approach is implemented today in the EdG curriculum.

The roughly 180 officers who attend the War College (Ecole de Guerre) as a yearly promotion are not chosen by a selection board. In France, the admissions process for the equivalent of American Ivy League schools centers on a difficult written competitive exam. The officers are mainly male, Caucasian, Catholic, very well-read, clever, quick thinkers from upper-class or aristocratic families, and usually military dynasties. Aged in their late 30s they have already seen some 12 to 15 years service. Most have a good, if not very good, command
of the English language. They constitute a tightly sealed cultural and social bubble.

The objective of the College is to shape future leaders for joint, intergovernmental, interagency, and multinational operational environments by providing well-trained and well-educated senior officers—many go on to command regiments, ships or air bases. The officers must shift their thinking from tactical to wider operational and higher strategic level. For these students this is a decisive yet difficult career transition. At the War College, officers augment their experience, general military culture, and methodology to heighten their effectiveness as leaders. This includes a focus on oral and written expression to boost their powers of communication; their future battles will be mostly in meetings of strategic importance. By contrast, the young (19-22 years old) men and women who join the military academies are attracted by the prospect of carrying out operations at the tactical level, as opposed to favoring operational theory, which connects tactical details to strategic goals.

For the English program, the aim is to complement this desired turn in an officer’s thinking with a similar shift from passive to autonomous learning. Although many officers will not move on to international roles, they nevertheless show a grudging curiosity in English and a desire to enjoy the wealth of English entertainment and the broader horizons that English represents, particularly to parents.

Until recently there was no formal English training at the French War College. France’s return to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2009 was the necessary wake-up call. The English Department was founded in 2010 to train officers to express, promote, and defend France’s strategic interests effectively in an English-speaking environment, a challenge demanding not only an advanced level of English but also strong cultural competence and leadership skills.

**CREATING THE ENGLISH PROGRAM**

The current Head of the English Department was recruited in August 2010 to develop the department from scratch and design a course that would complement and meet these cultural and leadership goals for the French War College.

After several months’ studying the incoming students’ linguistic profiles and the requirements for their future posts, it was decided that the English course goals would be best met by using the communicative approach, focused on transactive modes, as the head of the department had already experienced great success with adult military learners in an all-French environment. The English course in the War College would be delivered twice a week in lessons of 90 minutes, by a team of teachers from English-speaking countries. The officers would first be grouped by ability, based on a test to assess speaking, listening and reading skills. All instruction is conducted in English. The content of five themes dictated the communication skills and lexis
to be taught. Lesson plans were produced that prescribed class activities in great detail, distinguishing medium- and high-level English speakers.

Serious budget challenges precluded employing teachers on a permanent basis. But we needed talented professionals for these demanding learners. The only solution was project-related employment. We could pay reasonably high hourly rates to attract the best teachers, but this type of recruitment comes with a fair amount of risk. Although the team proved to be excellent, commitment and work efficiency can be difficult to promote and can decrease rapidly in the absence of job security.

**INITIAL RESULTS**

Despite a very competent teaching team and highly dedicated English Department staff, there was strong reluctance, if not hostility, among the learners. Their approval rating for the English program was consistently low, and they used the formal feedback to express dissatisfaction. This was eventually understood to be frustration and discomfort rather than judgment on the failings of the course.

Convinced that the course had been designed in the best way possible, there was a reluctance to address dissatisfaction. The head of the English Department took refuge in her assumptions and ignored feedback from teachers, some of whom suggested that the course was possibly too rigid to meet student needs. She chose to believe that this was just the way things were and to blame it all on the students’ incapacity to handle transformation, as if their career shift from tactical- to operational/strategic-level players would be automatically matched by a shift in their mode of language learning from passive to autonomous learners. And it was easy to convince the school’s directing staff, not being pedagogues, to support this diagnosis. Consequently, no feedback could alter analysis of the problem: no change of course was necessary. Nevertheless, the head came to understand that she needed to transform herself before she could do anything to help the officers learn. She needed a trigger event to bring awareness and lead her to self-actualize as a teacher and course designer. When paradigms dominate, it is probably time to question them.

**THE NEED TO CHANGE**

Transformation had to begin with the head of English department. The first push came with the annual permanent change of station (PCS) orders. In the summer of 2014, many members of the school’s directing staff, including the commandant and the head of training and education, were transferred. The new commandant was especially struck by the students’ obvious lack of motivation, and the transaction educational philosophy simply lost his support. The head of the department had to face key questions: Most officers knew they needed to learn English, so why did that not translate into motivation and enthusiasm for learning English? What was the impediment?
The second push came in May 2016 at a conference in Riga, Latvia, while listening to a presentation by Dr. Leaver (former Provost of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center) on transformative pedagogy and the counter-intuitive nature of teaching and learning for upper proficiency levels. The Head suddenly realized that finding a solution meant being counter-intuitive and opening up to what seemed to go against common sense. This insight allowed room to revise her framework of assumptions and perspectives and make them more inclusive. This required critical reflection. It meant letting go of some long-held beliefs, admitting there was a clear need for diagnostically orientated instruction, ideally individualized by style. And now it was realized that this could be achieved via open architecture. The next step was how to incorporate these improvements into a new course design.

THE NEW ENGLISH PROGRAM

The first task was to understand the key principles of Transformative Instructional Approaches (TIA). Contrary to transformative learning, there is far less literature on open architecture. The Defense Language Institute’s courses for advanced Korean, Arabic, and Spanish use a transformative approach. The work of Mezirow (1978) and Rogers (1969) is enlightening but difficult to plow through. So the next step was to translate the description of a transformative approach into lay terms so that the Head could discuss it with the directing staff, help them identify the obstacles to integrating transformative pedagogy and open architecture into the English program course design, and convince them to take that path.

It would be a mistake to imagine that transformative pedagogy is a miraculous, ready-to-use panacea. Transformative Instructional Approaches should not be used unless adapted to the specific teaching context—in the present case, one that combines French, military, and learning, three extremely culturally-charged elements. It seems obvious that the chances of success would be jeopardized if an American-born theory were merely superimposed onto a different culture.

TRANSFORMATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Transformative pedagogy—taking the idea of transformation into education—is culturally marked. Jack Mezirow’s approach received official approval as his extensive national study on behalf of the United States Department of Education in 1978 looked into second-chance education for women. There is now a very strong North American influence on adult-learning research.

American schools enjoy a tradition of encouragement and self-empowerment. There are dozens of student-led clubs in high school and even lower school. Teachers are requested to point out achievements instead of
inadequacies, and they put particular effort into creating a positive learning environment. Grades are used more to indicate what is good, to encourage, and to reveal areas for improvement—less often to punish.

In France, teachers spoon feed knowledge. They are the sages on the stage and students are not to negotiate with or debate with a teacher (as in this case, military students do not negotiate with or debate a higher-ranking officer unless requested). The French educational system is a vertical structure. Students expect and want teachers to force them to work and assume this assures learning. Grades and assessment are used to spotlight failings, and students see grades as the only method for measuring progress. This means that most of the feedback that students receive is negative. In the case of foreign-language learning, the crucial element of self-confidence needed to speak in public is eroded, as students are stopped and disparaged every time they make a mistake.

Understandably, the French War College students associate schooling and English classes in particular with frustration, wasting time, meaningfulness and, often, fear. In grade school, English was taught to them using the grammar-translation method. While this approach allows students to acquire extensive knowledge of grammar and to master long vocabulary lists, it does not offer them practice in speaking and becoming proficient in oral communication. They experience the frustration of sitting in English classes for a minimum of seven years yet not being able to sustain a conversation.

The grammar-translation method is, however, key to understanding the French War College academic culture. When the English program was initially designed, this culture was not taken into account. As French learners always emphasize how much they regret not having benefited from a method that focused on oral communication, it became obvious that the students would not only subscribe to the communicative approach but also very much enjoy what they had lacked during their grade-school years. The irony was that an enormous amount of time and effort was put into writing what seemed to be a uniquely well-adapted syllabus, perfectly tailored for these demanding learners, yet the result was to re-create a teacher-directed course with a rigid structure.

When the Head of English was training to become a teacher, she had been taught to plan and design in three steps: What does the teacher want the students to learn? What teaching and learning activities will the teacher use? How will the teacher assess progress? The needs analysis is filtered through the teacher’s framework, and the process leaves the adult learners out of the equation by not valuing their experience, addressing what they regard as useful, and discussing a learning contract with them.

As a result, students viewed the syllabus and teaching team as antipathetic, even as threats. In the feedback, they often stated that they felt being told that British or American culture was better than French culture; however hard the teachers tried, they would not renounce their French culture. Although this, of course, had never been the teachers’ intention, it resulted from students feeling that a syllabus was being forced upon them. They were
uncomfortable, resentful, and fearful. A barrier was created in the classrooms between the students and the teaching team.

To make matters worse, and for obvious reasons, the French officers have views that are strongly grounded in a set of prescriptive assumptions. A tightly-knit community, their military culture does not overlap with academic culture, and as military personnel they are defenders of national values.

Moreover, French students may be reluctant to learn English for historical, linguistic, and cultural reasons unrelated to education. As France is traditionally a monolingual country, there has not been much of an urge to learn foreign languages; though it has a history of immigration, the newcomers are principally from ex-colonies and therefore francophone. But the most salient point may be that the French identify the English language with the English, not the British, or the Americans, or the Canadians, or the Scots. Unfortunately, there is a long history of violence between the French and the English, starting with the Norman invasion in 1066 and lasting until the Entente Cordiale in 1904, with episodes as horrific as the Hundred Years’ War in between. From June 1743 to June 1815 alone, the two nations fought 123 battles. This long-lasting rivalry has infused everyday life. Media broadcasters even refer to some battles during athletic contests between the two nations.

In addition, the French language has undergone enormous phonetic changes between the Old French period and that of modernity—the loss of final consonants, the loss of the formerly strong stress, and dissolution in the pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs, etc. Because few of these changes are reflected in spelling, French children must invest much time and effort in learning their own language, with a strong focus on writing skills. Their view is that they have learned an elaborate and sophisticated language, one that dominated European culture and diplomacy and is still pre-eminent in the European Union (EU) and north/west Africa. Finally, French pronunciation has over the centuries evolved radically, so that English often seems counter-intuitive to French speakers who feel like they are going back in time. They tend to retain a strong accent as a marker of linguistic identity.

So whatever the mind-changing process might be that may lead War College students to grow from passive to active autonomous learners, it was certain that this process could not come in the form of a culture shock, as that would only create mental resistance that prevents learning. It was clear that having teachers stand in front of a group of French officers and trying to encourage them to become autonomous learners, saying, “You are smart, you are high achievers, you have incredible experience; you are going to use your wit and experience to work on your own course design to meet your own needs” would baffle them at best and terrify them at worst. It was a paradox: these problems could be addressed by an approach embracing transformative pedagogy and open architecture, but the cultural context seemed incompatible with this approach.
ADAPT TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY TO THE CONTEXT

Successfully implementing Transformative Instructional Approaches requires a strategy for hurdling all identified challenges. Not only can it be adapted, it must be adapted: the pedagogy needs to fit the learners, not the opposite.

There is not much literature on open architecture, so in addition to reading a selection of syllabi, it was decided to look into the meaning of this expression in other settings so as to draw clearer and more accurate inferences for designing the English course. Open architecture or open system describes software and protocols designed to facilitate the heterogeneous adding, upgrading, and swapping of components and whose specifications are made public to encourage third parties to develop compatible add-ons; a regulatory body owns the process and sets the standards by which outsiders may build and tailor their own content. This contrasts with closed architecture that is homogeneous and whose specifications are kept secret.

The analogy between closed architecture and a transactional approach is striking. In transactional learning, there is a teacher’s edition—a textbook not available to the students. The students receive instructions for activities fully designed by the teacher, who has total control over tasks and projects. The transformative approach, however, promotes learner delivery of content and project-based learning. It encourages students to input ideas, reorient modules, and add activities into the process, based on their experience and what they deem useful—as third-party developers do in open-software systems. Using open architecture to design a module is all about contingency planning and which parts can be jettisoned. This may be called pliability: the marriage of structure to flexibility, and strength to elasticity, exactly like an architect designing an earthquake-proof building.

THE BIG LEAP

To embrace a transformative approach and integrate open architecture into course design, the first step is to shift the attention from teacher to learner. A learner-focused approach may include designing a learning road map with learners, building around learner delivery of content, and project-based learning. The teaching team needs to pay special attention to the students’ needs and develop a deep understanding of their experience and interest in academics, culture, and language.

On entering the French War College at the beginning of the school year, each incoming learner talks one-on-one with a teacher about his/her experience. This 30-minute interview is divided into three parts: 1) a set of questions on the students’ careers thus far, designed to make them use different tenses and increasingly complex sentence structures and thus enable the teachers to assess speaking skills; 2) teachers learning more about the students’ history with
English; and 3) opportunity for students to express what would be useful, meaningful, and even enjoyable in an English course.

Using the results of this interview, the officers are streamed into groups based not only on their command of English but also their language-related expectations and content-related interests (learner delivery of content). If the interests of the eight or nine officers in each group converge, the chances of them reaching strong consensus for a learning contract with the teacher and of avoiding material that is, or is perceived as, meaningless are much greater. The higher the group’s English level, the more the students’ profiles—professional experience, exposure to the language, expectations, and ambition—might differ.

Due to French academic culture—the diametric opposite of transformative pedagogy and open architecture—it is important to lay the groundwork step by step, sowing the seeds for an effective use of the new method. First, the English Department enlightens the students’ French military mentors so that they can understand and support the English program and know how to react when there is resistance. This is to gently encourage open-mindedness and trust. Second, the students are slowly introduced to the new concept via a clear and precise presentation, by both the Head of the English Department and her boss, to the entire incoming class at the start of the school year; this is followed by explanations during individual interviews. Finally, the first lesson sees each small student group addressed by its teacher, who explains that he/she will gradually step back from a traditional teaching role and empower the students to identify the most suitable learning format for achieving their goals, thus inviting them to become autonomous learners.

Paradoxically, it was found that the most effective way to bring transformative pedagogy and open architecture into the French War College English program was to start the year with a module designed on the old transmission-transaction model. Why?

The teacher can only build on the prior knowledge and experience of the students, who need to start the journey from a place that is familiar, their academic culture, and this preliminary step is better than throwing them unprepared into unknown territory. At the same time, the theme of this first module is Civil-Military Relations, one to which teachers can meaningfully contribute with some credibility. Teacher and learners set out together on this new pedagogical journey.

Finally, the transmission-transactional model also takes into account the students’ military culture: a lesson plan is like a mission statement or road map, to which their military training has accustomed them. It shows where to start, where to finish, and the route to take. It is reassuring.

**IMPLEMENTING TRANSFORMATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES IN THE WAR COLLEGE ENGLISH CURRICULUM**

The curriculum modules needed to reflect the officers’ backgrounds, and give them the opportunity to value their experience and expand their self-
awareness; the content initially included a relevant communication skill to carry the language activities. The modules chosen were Civil-Military Relations (short ad hoc presenting), Ethics (debating), International Organizations (participating in and chairing meetings), NATO Operational Planning (long prepared presenting, TED-style talks), and Alliances (negotiating). A module runs from six to twelve hours depending on how a group decides to tackle it.

An interesting development quickly occurred across all learning groups. Students explicitly began to favor non-military content. This in turn allowed skill-based activities to be decoupled from particular content, leaving teachers and learners free to choose any skill-based activity and to work on it as long as they wished. This was more relevant to students. It also meant that groups diverged in their work so that teacher-to-teacher exchange was enriched and became a vital element in the teachers’ own development.

Introducing Learners to Transformative Instructional Approaches: Module 1

The first module that all groups begin with, Civil-Military Relations, prepares students to shape the outlines offered by open architecture. Teachers begin to focus on changing how students think and feel about themselves, about their level of English, about learning and practising English, and about the culture of English-speaking countries. The feedback teachers provide is positive and objective, reinforcing the learners’ sense of control as they seek to master English. The teachers coach them as to how they can both assess their own competency levels and stop constantly referring to, and being discouraged by, the negative feedback they have always received. The aim is to make students aware of how in their past and present achievements they can find inspiration for moving forward—toward improving their English in general and into an open architecture course design in particular.

Flexibility is introduced gradually. It is another striking paradox that these learners are used to exercising initiative in their professional jobs but they have been raised in the educational system as passive learners. The English program now invites them to take the lead in their language learning.

From the beginning, classes start with a warm-up activity—a ritual that creates a reassuringly regular structure in which students get accustomed to exercising choice: word or idiom of the day, news brief, elevator pitch, etc. The ensuing peer-to-peer feedback allows the teacher to step back and let the learners become involved. The teacher will introduce them to techniques such as brainstorming (often not understood or practised in France); collaborative discussion (equally misunderstood by the competitive Gallic temperament which prefers antagonistic argument); and facilitating (modeled by the teacher, and then handed over to students). These techniques are the foundation of interactions in the following modules.
Given the cultural factors, the students’ early steps are disorienting. Teachers therefore allow enough flexible time for silence, and often a bit of resistance, as students pause, reflect, try to find words to voice what they were never requested to express before. Once the students are convinced that these are positive, even necessary, steps to achieve their English-learning goals, they will be ready to design their own classes from module two.

And when, despite efforts to stream the students into homogenous groups, an individual might want to do something different from what the rest of the group has decided, the group will ideally take this request into account and find a solution upon which everyone can agree and from which everyone can benefit. The non-conforming student can, for instance, research and give a presentation, write an essay to be corrected by the teacher, create a video presentation, or provide the rest of the group with resources for learning more about the subject at hand. (On a side note, class management is a non-issue as students go about their own work or interact with their fellows within activities they have negotiated and agreed to.)

**Going into Transformative Instructional Approaches: Module 2**

With Module 2, students begin to exercise choice as autonomous learners over the content, skills, and activities they wish to work on. If a group decides not to do a theme, then the teacher will nevertheless give a basic run-through of useful functional and cultural ideas and language; and students must provide an alternative to the theme, with relevant skill-based activities.

In the second part of their careers, many students will have to take part in international meetings in an English-speaking environment, so they are offered an English module to enable them to efficiently chair and effectively participate in meetings (organizations differ in the type of meetings they hold and the roles they allot staff: some will chair, some will prepare the agenda, some will have a seat at the table to defend their country’s interests, and others will take minutes for reporting to their higher-ups).

Students interested in this module will first need to agree to the group’s learning contract. They and the teacher will examine the skills and activities that are most useful: writing skills (preparing the agenda, amending the agenda, taking minutes, etc.), and/or oral skills (negotiating, objection-handling, pitching, etc.). Once the group agrees on the skills, the discussion moves to the activities they would prefer for developing them (elevator pitch, note-taking, role playing, etc.). The teacher will help them choose by exploring what each activity can achieve, how much time each requires, and what kind of preparation is needed.

The next step is deciding on content. Is it for civilian, military, or civilian–military meetings? Within NATO, the UN, the EU, or an international military HQ? What specific issue will the meeting be called to address? With this information, the teacher can suggest related vocabulary and the grammar that needs to be reinforced. During every brainstorming session or discussion, the teacher can take notes and give feedback on language. French military
learners demand frequent feedback; teachers must find the balancing point where the frequency of intervention does not hinder the student-led flow of language.

Once the group has agreed on skills and content, they can hold open discussions on the cultural challenges that might be encountered in international meetings—civilian as opposed to military culture, a French versus an American approach—as well as on the students’ experience with meetings in general: Were the meetings you attended efficient or a waste of time? Why? Were the chairs effective or did they drag the meetings down? What would you have changed in these meetings, and why?

Online, the students can then find a variety of agenda and minutes templates upon which they will comment, comparing them to one another and to those they have used, and aided by their teacher’s input as to the value of these tools.

As learning objectives and outcomes are no longer imposed but discussed within each group, the composition of the group is key to the success of this approach, as demonstrated by the case of a group composed of a medical officer, four Gendarmerie officers and two budget-finance officers who chose to hold a meeting to discuss organizing the Bastille Day parade. Agenda items included: How can we be cost-effective? How can we organize potential medical evacuation through the crowds? How do we ensure the security of the public and dignitaries, especially with the real threat of terrorist attacks? How do we manage the security of the guest of honor: the President of the United States (some students played the roles of American Embassy representatives and Secret Service agents)?

Going Deeper into Transformative Instructional Approaches: Module 3

For the third module, the students will be even more involved as autonomous learners. Instead of a sole brainstorming session at the beginning, there will be a collaborative discussion every week. The students will prepare by sharing their proposed activities online. The teachers can review the suggestions before the in-class discussions, during which they will provide guidance. As some students might not feel comfortable speaking out in front of the group, the teachers will also hold one-on-one interviews on a regular basis to give students the opportunity to share their reflections on their progress and explore how the classes’ collaborative discussions can bring the students closer to meeting the next learning goals. At the end of each class, the students share what they just learned: linguistically (new words, grammar rules), culturally, and procedurally (what worked well for them, what they found difficult, what support they need). This process encourages peer-to-peer support.
ASSESSMENT, FEEDBACK

Formative assessment is used because it allows the students to focus on strategies and effort instead of on test results; it prevents score-driven thinking. Students will prepare and deliver a mission-analysis briefing to senior officers and their English teachers. They will receive feedback by the senior officers on the content of their briefing and then with their teachers they will discuss their resultant feelings of success, or hopelessness, or the array of emotions in between.

If they choose to write a research paper in English, they will travel to Washington, D.C. or London to present their findings to experts from famous think tanks or universities. Debate tournaments will be organized internally and with external partners. Networking gives them direct exposure to realistic social situations, in which they have specific aims to achieve. For all these activities, which are realistic goal-based in situ events involving realistic interaction with outsiders, students are accompanied by the teacher who will later provide an opportunity for debriefing and offer feedback on their performance.

CONCLUSION

To date, only one English course has been implemented within transformative pedagogy and open architecture, and there is only one year’s data and insight. Yet it can be stated with certainty that, for the first time, a vast majority of students were content with the course—86% in the satisfaction survey for the academic year 2016-2017, compared to 52% the previous year.

Leadership support has made a huge difference. The English Department has enjoyed the support of the school’s directing staff, who had the (correct) intuition this was the right direction to take.

Finally, success could not have happened without all the teachers being on board, ready to question their paradigms and teaching methods and to go into uncharted waters. There was no obvious incentive for these free-lancers to commit to the extra workload required by this change in approach. Some teachers made some interesting comments. According to Angela N, “It has shifted some responsibility to the students, in terms of setting deadlines and allocating tasks; and this frees me up somehow to better focus on language.” She added that “students always seem happy to come to class. Also, they are able to draw their own conclusions about the usefulness of grammar and vocabulary drills, because whenever they ask for them, they get them, until they ask to stop.” Kathy E found “the changes have brought the course to life, with a greater personal investment on the part of students. Overall resulting improvements within the classroom are palpable, particularly with regard to students’ attitude and their sense of the relevance and pleasure in the whole learning process.”

There is still a long way to go. But the process is enjoyable and rewarding when teacher comments, student feedback, and learning results all indicate that the program is on the right path. For the Head of English, having to
admit the initial course design was not aligned with the students’ needs and having then gone through a painful transformation, was a blessing in terms of both the ability to better relate to and help the students and her professional development and satisfaction.

Transformative learning and open architecture nurture open-mindedness. The French War College English program is helping to educate officers who will build more effective cross-cultural relationships, hopefully becoming life-long learners in the process. That could be a small contribution to positively transforming the world.

REFERENCES


Learning through Discussions in a High-level Foreign Language Course

HEEYOUNG TERESA LYU
Distance Learning, Continuing Education

Foreign language production is not automatically transferred from reception: comprehension entails semantic decoding and production requires syntactic processing. Military linguists are required to reach the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency Level 2 in listening and reading on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) which leads to more focus on developing listening and reading skills and less on speaking and writing. If learners are pushed to talk or write about what they intend to convey, they use more grammatical features and words (Swain 2005). It is thus suggested that speaking practice helps develop not only oral proficiency but also listening and reading skills. This paper shares ideas on using oral discussion to improve listening and reading skills and designing and organizing effective discussion classes.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper introduces a foreign language course based on oral-discussion activities, targeting learners who intend to improve listening and reading skills. Military linguists are required to reach the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) proficiency Level 2 in listening and reading on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). Consequently, they focus more on developing listening and reading skills while giving less attention to speaking and writing. Foreign language learning is not limited to input. Learner output contributes to learning when learners convey information and ideas in the target language to others. As oral discussion requires learners to manage content, language, and a situation, it challenges learners cognitively. They need to comprehend, create, and express ideas, and coordinate target language learning with social actions. Foreign language learning occurs in speaking when engaging in a conversation, giving a speech or a lecture, or telling a story.

This discussion-based course adopts Nation & Newton’s (2009) conditions of learning through meaning-focused output where learners focus on conveying information. As learners’ understanding of a given discussion topic
varies, it is important to make the discussion activities flexible, leaving room for creativity, adding, upgrading, swapping contents and materials. Flexibility is a characteristic of open architecture. Open architecture in discussion activities engages learners with various levels of understanding of the discussion topic. The instructor helps learners fill knowledge gaps by providing discussion guidelines, dictionaries, or additional materials. The expected outcome of the discussion-based foreign language course consists of, apart from speaking, improved listening and reading proficiency, which is assessed by the DLPT.

This article discusses how oral discussion improves listening and reading skills and shares ideas of designing and organizing effective discussion classes. In Section 2, a literature review presents the conditions for learning through meaning-focused output, which are core in discussion activities. In Section 3, the open architecture approach in oral discussion activities is discussed. In Section 4, the details of the discussion-based language course—course description, daily class activity, class materials, and learning outcome are described. Learners’ initial and final DLPT scores are compared and learners’ achievement after the discussion-based language course is discussed.

2 SPEAKING AS A METHOD OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Learners speak and write in the target language to communicate meaning after they have acquired sufficient vocabulary to express themselves. Vygotsky (1978; 1987) argues that language is one of the most important tools to mediate the development and functioning of all higher mental processes. Vygotsky (1987) emphasizes that language serves communication in which human beings create meanings to coordinate social actions and mediate intellectual activities through the internalization of communication.

Focusing on the language functions highlighted by Vygotsky, Swain (2006) argues that speaking and writing shape and reshape cognition, which is an aspect of learning: as learners talk through things with themselves or other people, they make sense of the meaning of what they want to convey. In the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge through language, learners operate on linguistic data and understand the materials; that is, learners may gain a deeper understanding while speaking and writing. Learning takes place when learners speak and write.

Nation & Newton (2009) consider speaking as one approach of learning through meaning-focused output where learners focus on conveying information to other people. The conditions for meaning-focused output are as follows:

1. “The learners write and talk about things that are largely familiar to them;
2. The learners’ main goal is to convey their message to someone else;
3. Only a small proportion of the language they need to use is not familiar to them;
4 The learners can use communication strategies, dictionaries, or previous input to make up for gaps in their productive knowledge; and
5 There are plenty of opportunities to produce” (Nation & Newton, 2009, p.5).

These conditions for *learning through meaning-focused output* are essential in discussion activities: when learners discuss an issue, the goal is to convey what they intend to express. A successful discussion-based course requires students to have the background knowledge of the discussion topic and adequate linguistic knowledge to express themselves. Learners’ levels of understanding of the topic and their language abilities may vary, but the instructor can help learners by creating opportunities for them to produce the language, providing discussion guidelines, dictionaries, or additional materials.

3 DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES IN OPEN ARCHITECTURE

Discussions are common in advanced language courses. Through engaging in discussions, learners are actively involved in the learning process. Learner engagement leads to improved critical thinking and application skills, which is shown in studies by Carnini, Kuh, & Klein (2006), Gellin (2003), and Kuh (2000).

Regarding *open architecture in language learning*, Leaver and Campbell (2015) and Campbell (2016) explain that *open architecture* is adapted to learner needs (styles, strategies, level of fossilization, interests, and Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development). Learning can be enhanced in today’s 24/7 learning environment through the application of open architecture design. As learners may have various levels of content and linguistic knowledge, it is important to ensure that discussion activities be flexible. Flexibility and creativity are key features of the open architecture approach to language learning (Campbell & Yuan 2016).

4 DISCUSSION-BASED LANGUAGE COURSE

This section shares ideas of designing and organizing an effective discussion class, using the example of an advanced Korean language course. The focus is on conducting oral discussion to improve listening and reading.

The School of Distance Learning at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) provides Mobile Training Team (MTT) Course for Department of Defense (DoD) linguists. The MTT course is four to six weeks long. Those who take the MTT course have reached Level 1+, 2, or 2+ on the ILR scale. As they are required to reach the ILR proficiency level 2 in listening and reading on the Defense Language Proficiency Test, the linguists focus more on developing listening and reading than speaking and writing skills. As discussed in Section 2, foreign language learning takes place when learners convey what they intend to express to others. If learners are encouraged to
produce output, they use more grammatical features and words (Swain 2005). Based on the idea that speaking practice helps develop not only oral proficiency but listening and reading skills, the discussion course was designed and implemented for advanced learners (ILR Level 1+ or higher).

4.1 Course Description

The objective of the discussion-based course is to enhance the learners’ target language reading, listening, and speaking proficiency by half a level on the ILR scale; that is, Level 1+ to 2, 2 to 2+, or 2+ to 3. For Level 3 learners, the goal is maintenance at this level. By the end of the course, all students are expected to perform tasks and functions in reading and listening at Level 2 or higher as described on the ILR scale. In order to help students develop skills in various modalities and integrate acquired skills, the focus is on interactive and communicative activities. No textbook is used and only authentic materials are used in the classroom and for homework. Instruction was conducted solely in Korean, creating an immersive environment.

All language skills are used in class and homework: for homework, learners read and listen to authentic materials and relayed and wrote the summary to the instructor via voice and text messages. During the class, learners present what they have understood from homework and participate in discussion, conveying their opinions about the discussion topic, persuading peers to accept their opinions, and negotiating to reach an agreement or conclusion.

4.2 Learning through Discussion

In the discussion-based course, the daily class is planned with one discussion topic. Homework materials are selected based on the topic to provide learners the background knowledge. For homework, learners watch and listen to authentic materials that contain the background knowledge for discussion next day, read aloud, with provided scripts, several times while listening to the materials, record their final reading, write a summary in the target language, and text or email the audio file and the written summary to the instructor. The instructor provides immediate feedback to the recording and the summary via text/voice message or email. During class, learners verbally summarize the homework assignments to the instructor in the target language, present the summary to their peers, and participate in the discussion. Homework assignments vary according to learner proficiency levels:

**Homework for learners at ILR Level 1+**

1. To watch a short TV broadcast or listen to a short radio program related to the following day’s topic to acquire background knowledge. The instructor provides a different link to each learner: each learner previews different homework materials.

2. To read aloud several times the script provided by the instructor while listening to the audio.
3. To record the final reading of the script and write a content summary in the target language.
4. To text or email the recording and the written summary to the instructor.
5. To understand and memorize the target language expressions related to the topic (the instructor provides a vocabulary list).

_Homework for learners with ILR Level 2 or higher:_
1. To watch a documentary, drama, movie, or talk show program. The instructor provides different links to learners according to their proficient levels: each learner previews different homework materials.
2. To write and record a summary in the target language.
3. To text or email the written summary and the recording to the instructor.
4. To understand and memorize the target language expressions related to the topic (learners compose a vocabulary list for the homework content).

The instructor sets the homework due schedule and provides immediate feedback to learners.

Daily class activities are outlined in an open structure—the order of the activities may be changed, more materials may be provided, an additional discussion activity may be conducted if the learners are interested in a specific topic. The activity plan is flexible, changing to meet learners’ interests, current events, news, and developments in the target culture. The outline of daily class activities is as follows:

1. Vocabulary review and culture and/or history instruction to help learners develop background knowledge of the discussion content.
2. One-on-one speaking activity: each student presents a summary of the homework content and personal opinions of the discussion topic to the instructor.
3. Online self-study. During the one-on-one speaking activity, the other students take an online self-study of the topic by practicing listening or reading comprehension (the instructor provides the link to the online lesson).
4. Authentic listening and reading activities—all activities help students activate content and language knowledge. The instructor also provides the most recent cultural materials to students.
5. Discussion: students present a summary of homework content to the class (each learner is assigned different authentic materials) and discuss the various aspects/views of the topic. Students also provide their own opinions and debate critical views.

Discussion activities take various formats, such as structured group discussion, unstructured group discussion, role play, group discussion with a nominated leader (Sethi & Adhikari, 2010), and small-group discussion—brainstorming, tutorials, task-directed, role-playing, simulation, and inquiry-centered (Orlich, Harder, Trevisan, Brown, & Miller, 2013). The daily discussion topics are selected based on current, historical, and cultural issues in
the target language societies. Discussion types are decided according to the topics. The teaching plan is flexible, making it easy to change, replace, or reassign discussion topics.

4.3 Learning Outcome

The following table shows the linguists’ initial and final DLPT\(^4\) scores in listening (LC) and reading (RC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Initials</th>
<th>Initial DLPT(^{\text{(pre-course)}}) LC/RC</th>
<th>Final DLPT(^{\text{(post-course)}}) LC/RC</th>
<th>Difference in DLPT Levels</th>
<th>0.5 or More Point Proficiency Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>2/2+</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/2+</td>
<td>0/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>+1/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2+/2</td>
<td>3/2+</td>
<td>+0.5/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JG</td>
<td>2+/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>+0.5/0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM</td>
<td>2+/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>+0.5/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>2+/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>+0.5/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>1+/1+</td>
<td>2+/2</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>2/1+</td>
<td>2+/2</td>
<td>+0.5/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>2+/2+</td>
<td>3/2+</td>
<td>+0.5/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PF</td>
<td>2+/1+</td>
<td>2/1+</td>
<td>-0.5/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW</td>
<td>1+/2+</td>
<td>2+/2+</td>
<td>+1/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH</td>
<td>2+/2</td>
<td>3/2+</td>
<td>+0.5/+0.5</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>2+/2+</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>-0.5/-0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>1/1+</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>1/1+</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>2/2+</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JA</td>
<td>1/1+</td>
<td>1/1+</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NB</td>
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<td>3/2+</td>
<td>+0.5/+0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>1+/2+</td>
<td>2+/3</td>
<td>+1/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>2/2+</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>0/+0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>2+/3</td>
<td>-0.5/0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four-week course: Feb to Mar 2015

Five-week course: May to Jun 2015

Five-week course: Feb to Mar 2016

Five-week course: Aug to Sep 2016

Four-week course: Oct to Nov 2016

Six-week course: Jan to Mar 2017
Among the 23 learners in the six MTT courses, 19 (83%) reached the intended goals of improved listening and reading skill and gaining better DLPT scores in LC and RC.

5 CONCLUSION

Subsequent to the discussion-based language course, learners showed enhanced listening and reading skills as evinced in their DLPT scores. It demonstrates that if learners are encouraged to produce output, they use more grammatical features and words (Swain, 2005). Oral discussion can be made to improve not only oral proficiency but also listening and reading skills. The discussion-based foreign language course with an open architecture approach provides more opportunities for learners to engage in cognitive and intellectual activities, resulting in improved listening and reading skills.

NOTES

1. In this paper, linguist means a Department of Defense (DoD) employee whose assigned duties are related to a foreign language such as translation and interpretation. More details are found at: http://www.goarmy.com/linguist/about/linguist.html.
2. ILR–Interagency Language Roundtable (http://www.govtilr.org/)
   Level 2 (Limited Working Proficiency): LC–Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social demands and limited job requirements; RC–Sufficient comprehension to read simple, authentic written material in a form equivalent to usual printing or typescript on subjects within a familiar context.
   L3 (General Professional Proficiency): LC–Able to understand the essentials of all speech in a standard dialect including technical discussions within a special field; RC–Able to read a variety of authentic prose material about unfamiliar subjects within a normal range of speed and with almost complete comprehension.
3. DLPT Guides (http://www.dliflc.edu/resources/dlpt-guides).
4. Some military units do not release linguist DLPT scores. Therefore, some learner data is not included in the table.

REFERENCES


Help Students Succeed by Conducting Classroom Diagnosis

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The intensive language programs at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) pose tremendous challenges to teachers and students because students have to reach a high language proficiency in a short period of time. The challenges require teachers to develop new skills to “align teaching with students’ emerging proficiency” (Wong & Du, 2006, p. 35). To achieve this goal, diagnostic teaching has become an important job-performance requirement. Yet, no classroom diagnosis training has been provided for teachers. In this article, we will briefly review the literature on diagnostic teaching, discuss the importance of classroom diagnosis, introduce the concept of diagnostic competence, and share examples of how we conduct classroom diagnosis to help students succeed in their language learning.

Literature Review

Diagnosis is a process of examining syndromes and their circumstances, identifying the nature and the causes of a problem, and providing remedies. In language classroom, according to Alderson (2005), diagnosis is meant to “identify both strengths and weaknesses in a learner’s knowledge and use of language (p. 11). The focus of diagnosis is “a learner’s weaknesses, or possible areas for improvement, and lead to remediation or further instruction” (Alderson, 2005, p. 11).
Some scholars promote classroom diagnosis, a process designed to “obtain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning...and to use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective” (Angelo & Cross, 1993, p. 3). Angelo and Cross (1993) state that classroom diagnosis is, by nature, an ongoing process that should be conducted by teachers while they are teaching. Edelenbos and Kubanek-German (2004) assert language teachers need to be equipped with diagnostic competence, i.e., “the ability to interpret student’s foreign language growth, to skillfully deal with assessment material and to provide students with appropriate help in response to this diagnosis” (p. 260).

In sum, language teachers should be aware of the importance of classroom diagnosis and consciously develop their diagnostic competence to “gauge students’ emerging language proficiency and to take appropriate remedial measures in language teaching” (Wong & Du, 2006, p. 36).

**What Is Classroom Diagnosis and Why Is It Important in Teaching?**

The ultimate goal of teaching is achieved when learning takes place more quickly and effectively. At DLIFLC, periodical tests (such as mid-unit and unit tests) provide a big picture to help teachers better understand how much learning has occurred and what has not been mastered by students. In addition to testing, the Online Diagnostic Assessment (ODA), developed by DLIFLC, is also utilized to gauge students’ learning achievement.

There are 19 language assessments in the ODA, with each assessment comprised of authentic materials that are in accordance with the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level descriptions. Following the assessment, a report is provided to the test-taker on what has or has not been mastered. This report also includes an ILR level, such as Reading Level 1+ and Listening Level 2. At Asian School I, teachers usually administer the ODA at the end of the second semester.

As the ODA is administered after nearly nine months of learning, a student’s learning deficiency and weakness are not discovered in a timely manner. If teachers can diagnose and identify a student’s learning deficiencies in a more timely fashion, immediate remedies can be applied, thereby potentially decreasing the possibility of error fossilization. Selinker (1972) defines fossilization as “linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their interlanguage relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or the amount of instruction he receives in the target language” (p. 215). This shows that language learners will likely make no further progress in interlanguage development toward the target language and become permanently fossilized, in spite of the amount of exposure to the second language (Huang, 2009).

To prevent the permanent fossilization, teachers should observe students, collect and analyze data, identify the root causes of the errors, decide what remedies should be adopted, and redirect teaching (Selinker, 1972). Thus,
classroom diagnosis is an integration of teaching, assessing, and adjusting; it is an observational, interpretative, remedial, reflective, flexible, and ongoing process that should occur daily.

**What Is Diagnostic Competence and How to Conduct Classroom Diagnosis?**

According to Helmke (2012), diagnostic competence is an ability to accurately assess an individual or groups of individuals. Observational competence and interpretative competence are the two elements of diagnostic competence (Edelenbos & Kubanek-German, 2004). Observational competence is the ability to observe the learning process and collect useful and critical information on what has not been learned during instruction. Interpretative competence is the ability to understand the data collected and identify the gap between teaching and learning and the root causes behind the problems. For classroom diagnostic competence, in addition to the two competencies discussed above, the authors add remedial competence because without timely remedies, there is no immediate result of the classroom diagnosis. Remedial competence is 1) the ability that teachers have in making decisions about what remedies should be implemented, how much remedies should be adopted and when to adopt the remedies, and 2) the ability to adjust teaching based on their decisions.

The following is an example of how the authors conducted classroom diagnosis. The steps taken were: 1) data collection, 2) data interpretation, and 3) decision making for remedies.

**1. Data Collection**

Collecting data identifies errors made by students and what students do not understand when listening and reading. For learner’s language, teachers should focus on errors, rather than mistakes. According to Larsen-Freeman (2003), errors usually result from a lack of linguistic knowledge and skills, whereas mistakes are, in essence, a performance deficiency. There are many types of errors, such as lexical, syntax, and pragmatic, etc. When collecting data, teachers need to be aware of students’ emerging linguistic patterns, and in particular take note of the structure of errors that learners frequently produce (Larsen-Freeman, 2003).

*What type of data to collect?* When reading and listening, a student’s incomprehension may stem from unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar grammar, speed of the speech, and other factors. Teachers usually pay more attention to incomprehension caused by 1) the target language grammar that does not exist in the student’s primary language, and 2) critical grammar points that play important roles in future learning. There are two reasons for this. First, it usually takes longer for students to master target language grammar that does not exist
in student’s primary language. Second, not being able to learn critical grammar points will, in general, negatively affect students’ reading and listening comprehension.

For example, the frequently used Chinese  
Ba-sentence is one grammatical point that students find extremely difficult to master; this difficulty affects their listening and reading comprehension if they do not master it.

When  
Ba, a marker for an object, is used in a sentence, the word order of the sentence has to be changed from

\[
\text{Subject + Verb + Object}
\]

to

\[
\text{Subject + Ba + Object + Verb + Verbal Complement}
\]

The Chinese word order for “Mother sold her car” is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Ba</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Verbal Complement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Ba</td>
<td>her car</td>
<td>sell</td>
<td>le (verbal complement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>妈妈</td>
<td>把</td>
<td>她的汽车</td>
<td>卖</td>
<td>了</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the object (her car) is a specific car (the car, not just any car),  
Ba must be used in this sentence.

On the other hand, in the sentence “Mother bought a car”,  
Ba should not be used because this car is just “a car,” not “the car.” However, if “Mother finally bought the car she had been thinking about for a long time”,  
Ba must be used, because it is a specific car (the car). Consequently, the word order needs to be changed as well.

Mastery of  
Ba-sentence greatly affects students’ reading and listening comprehension because it is heavily used in daily conversations and in higher level listening and reading materials. The example below illustrates how students failed to comprehend a simple sentence because they did not master the  
Ba-structure.  
Ba is first introduced at the 12th week of the program. In a class practice during the 26th week, students were asked to translate the following sentence:

快过年了，小年把房间打扫得干干净静。

[(As) the Chinese New Year is in coming, Xiaonian has cleaned up his room.]

The word 把(Ba) is in bold and students were able to recognize it. The word before  
Ba (the name of a person) is the subject of the sentence. By coincidence, the name of the person, 小年, shares one character with 过年 [celebrating the Chinese new year]. If unfamiliar with the  
Ba structure, some students cannot understand the sentence.

This example indicates that as teachers, being aware of critical errors is important for data collection.

When to collect data? At DLIFLC, teaching includes classroom instruction, grading homework, total immersion, extra curriculum activities, etc. Data should be collected whenever and wherever they are available. In general,
listening and speaking data are primarily collected during class, total immersion, and extra curriculum activities. Reading and writing data can be collected from homework, project assignment, and classroom exercises.

During classroom instruction, among Present, Practice, and Produce, diagnostic actions usually occur in Practice and Produce. One example of Practice is that teachers check student comprehension after students listen to a passage. This is when teachers can identify what is not understood and interpret the cause of the problem. For example, students may not understand a new grammar pattern or a key word that is critical for comprehension. During speaking practice, when students have casual conversations with peers and the teacher, is also a good time to collect data.

2. Data Interpretation

Data interpretation is designed to “identify possible causes for the error, such as native language transfer, intra-lingual error, induced error, communication strategy and so on” (Tarone & Swierzbin, 2009, p. 25). However, occasionally “errors may be caused by more than one reason” (Tarone & Swierzbin, 2009, p. 25).

Except for the causes mentioned above, we found that errors could also be caused by ineffective teaching. Below is an example:

We often heard students saying: 真不巧，我没有钱，所以不能买我喜欢的车。In their minds, the sentence means: Unfortunately, I don’t have money, so I can’t buy the car I like.

Although “unfortunately” is the explanation of 不巧 provided in the textbook, the real meaning of 不巧 is a “coincidence”—a concurrence of two events or circumstances without an apparent causal relationship. For example, one could say “My car broke yesterday.” (first event) and “My wife’s car broke today.” (second event). In this context these two separate events can be interpreted as coincidental, and therefore the word 不巧 can be used. Or, “I went to visit him.” (first event) and “He has gone out.” (second event); 不巧 can be used in this situation as well. However, if one does not have enough money to afford a car, this is not a coincidental event, as the lack of money is a fact already known by the individual.

The above example indicates that teachers simply did not adequately explain the meaning of the word. This error may lead teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their vocabulary instruction.

3. Decision-Making on Remedies

Decisions about remedies determine the effectiveness of classroom diagnosis. Decisions are made by taking several factors into account. First, the seriousness of the errors is the most critical factor to be considered. In general, a teacher’s perspective on different errors is reflected on a judgment of error
gravity (Hughes & Lascaratou, 1982). Because of the limited time during class, teachers should treat more critical errors early and carefully. The earlier a remedy is implemented, the more quickly learning occurs. The Ba-structure, discussed in Data Collection, is an example of when teachers should provide remedies. They may have to re-teach a difficult grammar point to reinforce students’ knowledge.

Secondly, if many students make similar errors, teachers should allocate more class time to work on these errors. For example, when checking homework, teachers find several students have made the same errors. Teachers should immediately analyze why the error was made, provide more examples, and engage students in more practice to ensure that they master the language.

Thirdly, the amount of remedies should be considered. Fauziati (2011) found in his research, “adequate treatment could eliminate almost all of learner’s grammatical errors” (p. 25). If there is sufficient class time, teachers should provide opportunities for students to practice.

Lastly, except for linguistic performance, when conducting diagnosis, teachers need to consider the learner’s motivation, aptitude, learning strategies, and other learner variables. For example, we had a student whose listening skill had been weak from the beginning of the program. The teaching team allocated time and teaching resources to help him with his listening. Because the student’s reading was much more advanced than his listening, we assumed that he was a highly motivated student. By the third semester, the student confessed that he spent little time on listening because it was difficult and frustrating for him. His reading comprehension was more advanced because he enjoyed reading and spent more time on it. Teachers’ assumption of the student’s motivation led to a decision that wasted the teaching team’s time and energy, which could have been used more effectively to help this student, and others.

In sum, collecting and interpreting data and making appropriate decisions for remedies are the steps for conducting classroom diagnosis. Furthermore, understanding a student’s learning style, motivation and aptitude is equally important for making the right decisions for remedies.

Conclusion

Classroom Diagnosis not only enables teachers to discover student strengths and weaknesses in the learning process, but also helps teachers gain insight into their own teaching methods and identify areas that need improvement. We believe that teachers should purposely and cautiously develop classroom diagnostic competence in daily teaching. On the other hand, it would be beneficial for the Institute to provide classroom diagnosis training to teachers and help them become diagnostically competent. With the collaborative effort of the school and faculty, we can help students to achieve higher language proficiency.
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Dynamic Assessment in the Language Classroom: Reflective Thoughts

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Introduction

Looking back at my experiences as a learner in an authoritarian classroom, I often viewed assessment as a scary experience. Assessment measures student performance, gauging student readiness to move to the next unit in the syllabus. In general, tests were and are still perceived as tools to measure what students can do now, not what they can do in the future; that is, what they can do by themselves. During tests, students are not allowed to talk or ask for clarification.

While developing an interactive assessment tool that measures students’ proficiency, I was exposed to the concept of dynamic assessment (DA). At that time, DA appeared to be innovative and appealing. It dovetails with my belief in fostering a collaborative learning environment in the classroom. It is an interactive approach to assessment that measures the learner’s ability to respond to intervention or some form of support.

The purpose of the paper is to reflect upon the use of DA as an alternative approach to in-class-assessment that not only evaluates learners’ current level—what they can or cannot do—but also their readiness to progress to a higher one. It 1) explains assumptions about DA; 2) outlines a collaborative framework for mediated interactions between the learner and the teacher that identify the learner’s ability and promote his/her development; 3) defines the role of the teacher and the learner; and 4) shares examples of mediated interactions in Modern Standard Arabic that may be applicable to other languages.

Dynamic Assessment

In describing DA, Lantolf and Poehner (2004) state that DA “… [it] integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity aimed at promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual’s (or in some cases, a group’s) current abilities” (p. 50). The first underlying assumption of dynamic assessment is that a full assessment of abilities requires interaction with the learner and must be concerned with determining the learner Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Zone of Actual Development (ZAD). Additionally, observation of independent performance provides inferences about learner ZAD, internalized/fully formed abilities, but does not tell us about ZPD. Therefore, we
cannot infer ZPD based on ZAD, as development is non-linear. Neither can we assume that two learners with similar ZADs will have similar ZPDs (Vygotsky, 1978).

Another assumption of dynamic assessment is that all learners are capable, to some degree, of learning with the help of others. Reaction to assistance provides important information about the individuals’ ability and future development. This is in sync with the notion of ZPD. Vygotsky (1978) believes that a learner’s independent problem-solving skills reveals little of an individual’s ability. A learner’s responsiveness to assistance provides clearer insights into what the learner 1) can do now with the help of others; and 2) will be able to do alone in the future.

The concept of DA differs from any other assessment approach because learners receive implicit and explicit assistance. This, in turn, provides on-going assessment data to the teacher, who is then able to identify and address the learner’s individual needs on the spot. Such interventions are crucial to understanding the learner’s ability and promoting development during the assessment process. DA focuses on not only what the learner can do individually but also what he/she can do with assistance, with the intention of inducing changes in the learner’s current performance.

Subsequently, according to Poehner (2008), providing mediation through interaction to learners also helps the teacher as follows:
1. Understand the cognition process underlying the learner’s performance, regardless of correct performance;
2. Determine sources of difficulty or misunderstanding; and
3. Identify abilities that are still emerging but not fully developed, which are indicated by responsiveness during interaction.

What distinguishes DA from other approaches is the collaboration between student and teacher. The teacher is allowed to ask leading questions, to model, to start the task and ask the student to continue, and to provide hints. Such techniques are encouraged because it makes it clear which strategies are effective in providing the kind of support a student needs to solve a problem. It also measures students’ reaction to interventions that enhance as well as hinder successful learning (Lantolf & Poehner, 2006).

During the DA process, the teacher plays two roles: teacher and tester. The teacher assesses the assistance the learner needs to perform the task, offers it, evaluates the learner’s response, modifies the assistance if necessary, and gives feedback. The teacher is also responsible for selecting the task that matches the student’s growing skills and brings the learner to the level where cognitive changes take place. These cognitive changes are the main concerns in DA (Lantolf & Poehner, 2006). There is no single prescription of interactions or single structure for recording observations, but it would not be difficult to audio/video record the assessment process.

For instance, in a DA session that I conducted, students were asked to read a text to check their abilities to summarize the main ideas, formulate questions, and predict what would happen next. I initially modeled these skills
and increasingly released the leading role to the students. During the process, I continued to model and provide feedback. After the session, students reflected on the strategies they employed to perform the tasks, and self-assessed their performance. By observing students’ responses and checking their worksheets, I was able to evaluate their performance.

The interaction in dynamic assessment is dialogic and flexible, aiming to support learner development. The teacher is a collaborator who allows and guides the learner through interactions to promote understanding. Mediation prompts reflection, leading to development in psychological functions of attention, perception, memory, language, reasoning, and metacognitive processes (Poehner, 2014). The mediator-, collaborator-teacher invites the learners to share any problems they have with the text by asking “what sort of problem did you have with the text? What problems did you have with this [pointing at a particular part of the text]?” Through the interactive process of dynamic assessment, the learner comes to understand the text, goes beyond the immediate language task, and co-creates, with the teacher, additional learning opportunities. This includes attention to discrete points, lexicon, grammar, discourse coherence and discourse parts in general (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011).

Mediated interactions move from general to specific, reflected in learner’s responses, and illustrate learner’s development stage. Mediated interactions can be categorized as follows:

1. **Stimulate general attention and orientation to content/question**: The teacher uses implicit strategies such as asking the learner to pause and reflect and let the student discover the reason for his answer; repeating the incorrect answer or telling the student “That’s not correct. Please, think about it again.”

2. **Encourage attention to specific content/language/question**: Here, the teacher directs student attention to a particular segment, utterance, sentence, or paragraph. The teacher could repeat that part of the sentence with the error, bringing student focus to the sentence that contains the error. For example, the teacher may give hints: “Can you pick anything up from this part of the text?”; “You can’t use a subjunctive verb here.”; “It is not really past but something that is still going on.” The teacher may indicate, but not identify, the nature of the error; “There is something wrong with the tense marking here.”

3. **Teach or recall an acquired learning strategy**: The teacher intervenes by providing the student an appropriate learning strategy. When guiding the student to find the main idea of a text, the teacher could say: “A taxi service? Mm, no…Why don’t you look more closely at the title and the first two sentences. See if you can figure something out from that.” “What do you usually do to find the main idea in a text? Try it out.” When looking for specific details, the teacher could say: “Scan the text for dates to determine when this event happened.” To identify parts of speech and their functions, the teacher could say: “We have neHnou, anTum and hom, we have three pronouns. Right? So, what is the relationship between them? Who’s
directing the verb?” To help students trace the author’s development of thought in a higher-level text, the teacher could ask them to look at the discourse markers at the beginning of each paragraph and speculate what each is about. When other forms of help fail to produce appropriate responses, the teacher may provide and explain the correct form.

According to Poehner (2014), within contextual constraints, mediation should be as follows:
1. As explicit as necessary to support learner engagement and performance;
2. As implicit as possible to allow learner to retain maximum responsibility/control;
3. Responsive to learner moves and leaner needs (e.g., learner attempts, learner resistance, learner requests); and
4. Development-focused rather than strictly task-focused (openness to moving in unanticipated directions, beyond immediate task).

Furthermore, during DA, students are active participants who self-assess their performance. By self-assessment, students see progress in learning, identify weaknesses and strengths, become more goal-oriented, independent, and motivated (Lantolf & Poehner, 2006). Students have the opportunity to use learning strategies already known to them and to be exposed to new ones. For the teacher, self-assessment is an alternative tool for non-stop classroom assessment and contributes to building a cooperative environment. During DA sessions such as these, the traditional role of the tester and the examinee is replaced by a more collaborative environment in which the group works toward a common goal: the success of the learner.

**Conclusion**

The paper presents an alternative way of thinking about assessment and the applicability of DA in classroom assessment. DA has been advocated as an interactive assessment approach that differentiates student proficiency at the finer grained level (Grigorenko & Steinberg, 1998; Grigorenko, 2008). It involves embedding interaction within the assessment and observing and recording the learner’s responses and ability. The greatest difference between DA and other conventional assessments is the shift from the final result to the process, which directs teacher and students to learning (Peohner, 2008).
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Homework:
How Much Homework Is Too Much?

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Homework and Its Goals

The same old question arises: How much homework is too much? For many of us, the issue of the effectiveness of homework remains open. Homework advocates state that homework promotes better mastery of the learned materials and students are consequently made to do more of it. Homework opponents believe that homework deprives students of rest, affects their motivation in learning, and can be a senseless waste of time. Teachers and students discuss the necessity of homework and debate the relationship between homework and student achievement. Although most teachers believe that homework should be a mandatory element of the educational process, some parents and students disagree. Letterman (2013) states, “Trying to get students to complete their homework is one of the most frequent and frustrating behavior for educators. Homework is usually assigned with the best intentions of educators but may cause conflict between school and home” (p. 113).

What is homework? Homework is an integral part of the learning process, a set of learning activities assigned to students for self-study to reinforce the materials learned in class. Homework may be seen as a form of training—a continuation of learning outside the classroom. It is not only meant to consolidate the knowledge, skills, and habits acquired in the classroom environment, but also to develop independent learning skills and abilities, and become prepared for more challenging and creative work in the real world. Along this line, homework should stimulate students’ curiosity and their thirst for new knowledge and skills. According to Nakhaeva (n.d.), “Homework as independent work has long existed in school practice, and shouldn’t be abandoned, since knowledge gained independently is different in depth and strength” (p. 1).
in education shifted from drill to problem solving. Homework fell out of favor because it was closely associated with the repetition of learning materials. The launch of the satellite Sputnik by the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s reversed this thinking. The American public worried that American education lacked rigor, leaving children unprepared for complex technologies. Homework, it was believed, could accelerate knowledge acquisition. The late 1960s witnessed yet another reversal. Educators and parents became concerned that homework was crowding out social experience, outdoor recreation, and creative activities. In the 1980s, homework once again leapt back in favor when A Nation at Risk (1983), the report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, cited homework as a defense against the rising tide of mediocrity in American education. The push for more homework continued into the 1990s, fueled by increasingly rigorous state-mandated academic standards. As the century ended, a backlash against homework set in, led by parents concerned about too much stress on their children (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1994).

If homework benefits learning, why then is it controversial? What features make homework so debatable: types, volume, content, levels of challenge, required time, or feedback? Letterman (2013) points out that homework affects student achievement, and students recognize that doing homework is one of the most important activities. But do students actually complete their homework assignments? The amount of the homework and the time required for completing the homework effect student motivation. According to Letterman (2013), student motivation to complete homework assignments is influenced by a collection of beliefs, attitudes, and emotions. These include students’ experiences that lead to success or failure, their personal expectations and standards for performance, and confidence in their ability to do well. A study conducted by Trautwein, Koller, Schmitz, and Baumert (2002) have found that extensive homework assignments are associated with a comparatively unfavorable development in overall student achievement.

To make homework effective, assignments should be doable and meaningful. When assigning homework, teachers need to focus on quality, not merely on quantity. Potashnik (2010) states that in order to attract students to do homework willingly, it is important to use a variety of forms and types of assignments to intrigue their interest and desire to fulfill them.

The time required for homework may vary according to the purpose of the assignments. Educational institutes have guidance on homework assignments. According to Barre (2016), despite the evidence that the average college student only spends 12–15 hours a week studying, there seems to be a general agreement that the Carnegie Unit recommendation of two hours out of class for every credit hour, or 24–36 hours a week, is a perfectly reasonable expectation. Unlike K-12, where debates about the virtues of homework rage, most recognize that the structure of higher education is such that college students should be spending far more time on homework than they spend in class.
Homework for DLI Students

How much homework is too much for students at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)? DLIFLC Regulation 350-10, dated 2017, states that “The amount of homework assigned per night will not exceed three hours for the average student.” In practice, however, this regulation is not strictly enforced. For example, the homework assignments for the Russian Basic Course may require more time, because there are more than 60 new words per lesson, which students must learn for a quiz the next day. In addition, there is an enormous amount of written homework (see Lessons 32-35 of new MOD VI, 2017 edition as an example). Every lesson has four parts of homework and each part has a minimum of five pages. Homework includes many (too many, in the author’s opinion) activities translating Russian into English. Written assignments, open questions, and summaries all require translation. These assignments, in average, take four hours to complete, leaving students no time to learn the new vocabulary. As writing and translation take too much time, students are stressed. Consequently, they lose interest in homework, which also affects their attitude toward and motivation in learning.

The amount of assigned homework should be realistic, not to keep students up late at night. More homework does not mean better results. Potashnik (2010) observes “…the congestion of the content of the educational material, the loss of the essence behind the details, the unreasonable desire to give up the textbook, the attitude towards the child as a dimensionless capacity will not change for better” (p.12).

Although the burden of homework may be caused by a student’s poor time-management skills or inadequate understanding of the materials covered in class, I would still argue that homework should be interesting and meaningful. Homework is not a formality for checks and grades; students need to see the benefit of doing homework. Certain principles should be observed in designing effective homework. Teachers need to control the content, type, level, and volume of assignments. There should not be many similar tasks or tasks that are at inappropriate levels. Teachers also need to tell students what the potential challenges are and possible ways of completing certain tasks. Once students have finished the homework, it is essential for teachers to provide meaningful feedback. Currently, the availability of new technologies makes it possible to diversify the types and ways of performing and monitoring homework (Shalbayea, 2013).

A Final Remark

Students’ experience with homework plays an integral part of building the foundation for their careers in learning (Coutts 2004). However, there is no need to overwhelm students with extra tasks. What is important is quality; the students’ responsibility is to do quality homework.

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The book *Fluent Forever: How to Learn Any Language Fast and Never Forget it* (hereafter *Fluent Forever*) by Gabriel Wyner is relevant for foreign language educators who want to equip students with autonomous learning strategies that will assist them in memorizing hundreds of words and various grammar concepts quickly. The book relates directly to the learning context of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

Wyner graduated summa cum laude from the University of Southern California (USC) with degrees in mechanical engineering and vocal arts. He later became a distinguished opera singer, which required him to learn German, Italian, French, and Russian quickly. In *Fluent Forever*, he generously shared his experiences, research, and language learning tools. I consider this book a practical manual that provides specific advice, strategies, and techniques on foreign language acquisition.

The book consists of seven chapters, a toolbox, a glossary of terms and tools, and six appendices. In the first chapter, *Introduction: Stab, Stab, Stab*, Wyner makes an analogy between learning to fence and learning to speak a foreign language, both with a final goal of “stabbing” (the words) and forgetting the rules, i.e., to speak automatically in the latter case. According to the author, there are three basic keys to language learning:

1. Learn the pronunciation first
2. Don’t translate
3. Use the spaced repetition systems

The first key—learn the pronunciation first—is important because “our ears become attuned to the sounds, making vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and speaking come much more quickly” (p. 4).
The second key—don’t translate—is significant in learning how to think in a foreign language. It is particularly important for students to build fluency at the beginning level.

The third key—use spaced repetition systems (SRSs)—significantly increases retention of vocabulary, grammar structures/rules, or whatever one needs to memorize. SRSs are flashcards that you create according to your personal study plan to retain the information.

The first chapter also contains advice on how to use language books, dictionaries, and the Internet resources including the website Fluent-Forever.com and the electronic flash card creator Anki.

In Chapter 2, *Five Principles to End Forgetting*, Wyner describes the system that drives thousands of words and grammar rules deep in your memory, which is relevant to the DLIFLC learning environment where students are likely to be overwhelmed with a huge amount of learning materials. Principle 1, *Make Memories More Memorable*, teaches how to make foreign words memorable by doing three things: “1) Learn the sound system of your language; 2) Bind those sounds to images; and 3) Bind those images to your past experiences” (p. 27). When describing principles 2 (*Maximize Laziness*), 3 (*Don’t Review. Recall*), 4 (*Wait! Wait! Don’t Tell Me!*), and 5 (*Rewrite the Past*), the author emphasizes that working hard on review and rote repetition does not help students memorize the material. He provides valuable guidelines on how to take a more effective approach: practice recalling the material by trying to remember, writing on a sheet of paper, or creating flash cards accompanied with images, sounds, and personal experiences.

In Chapter 3, *Sound Play*, G. Wyner highlights the importance of mastering pronunciation, which allows students to recognize new words when native speakers speak to them. Better pronunciation helps better listening comprehension—one of the major and most difficult skills for DLIFLC students. The author suggests using the website forvo.com, a valuable online resource for finding pronunciation guides for millions of words in hundreds of languages. Students at the DLIFLC have the advantage of interacting with native speakers (teachers) on a daily basis. When they have a question about pronunciation and a teacher is not around, however, they can use this online resource. If students need to record sentences, they may go to rhinospike.com, suggested by the author, where they submit a text and a native speaker will record it for them, usually within 24 to 48 hours. Chapter 3 also provides valuable tips on how to create flash cards to memorize the necessary spelling patterns, connecting the writing system to pronunciation and listening comprehension.

Chapter 4, *Word Play and the Symphony of a Word*, is about the importance of creating lists of frequently used words that provide learners with a solid foundation for the target language. “With only a thousand words, you’ll recognize nearly 75 percent of what you read. With two thousand, you’ll hit 80 percent” (p. 87). The author refers to Appendix 5 where he suggests a list of 625 common words that are easy to visualize, so one can learn them with pictures instead of translation because translation “strips words of their music” (p.90). To
learn vocabulary more efficiently, students may create/investigate memorable stories about words and connect them with their own lives. The author recommends using “the greatest illustrated book ever written: Google Images,” or drawing pictures by hand while researching words and creating flash cards. According to Wyner, for target-language nouns that use gender, students may try something more interesting than rote repetition, namely the “Mnemonic Imagery Game”—making nouns perform vivid and multisensory actions.

Chapter 5, *Sentence Play*, focuses on learning grammar in order to converse and write in a foreign language. Wyner gives valuable advice on combining difficult grammar patterns into simple stories and turning the stories into illustrated flash cards. Examples are given on how to choose a person, an action or an object, and create a card on difficult grammar structures. The author recommends using mnemonic devices, turning “maddening declension charts” into memorable stories, and incorporating them into flash cards.

Chapter 6, *The Language Game*, is about customizing vocabulary—how students approach books and TV programs. At a first glance, this may seem irrelevant because language programs at the DLIFLC follow a strict curriculum and vocabulary choices. However, if we promote autonomous learning, the strategies described in this chapter are valuable when students are out of class and after graduation. The author also shares strategies for speaking and where to find native speakers. These strategies help students explore the language on their own.

The final Chapter 7, *Epilogue: The Benefits and Pleasures of Learning a Language*, summarizes the advantages of knowing a foreign language, resonating with the DLIFLC students’ aspiration for their future military and civilian careers.

In the Toolbox, the author presents the *Gallery: A Guide to the Flash Cards That Will Teach You Your Language*, introducing the basic principles and the art of creating flash cards. The Gallery is followed by *A Glossary of Terms and Tools* and six Appendices—1) Specific Language Resources; 2) Language Difficulty Estimates; 3) Spaced Repetition System Resources; 4) *The International Phonetic Alphabet Decoder*; 5) Your First 625 Words; and 6) *How to Use This Book with Your Classroom Language Course*. The last Appendix may be of special interest to students and teachers at the DLIFLC because Wyner gives guidelines on how to apply his strategies in the classroom. A language class is “a wonderful resource,” and “a walking, talking grammar book.” He encourages students to turn new vocabulary and grammar patterns, homework, and test mistakes into illustrated flash cards and review them daily. Students are reminded that to be successful in language learning they must take charge of their learning and be extremely disciplined. “No one can give you a language; you have to take it for yourself” (p. 45 and Appendix 6).

The book provides specific, clear advice as well as numerous valuable resources on how to learn foreign languages. Using the author’s strategies and techniques, students may create and keep flashcards on computers, download them to their smartphones, and use them anytime, anywhere. The author also
provides free access to his website fluent-forever.com, which contains links to resources and tools that help the reader to explore additional information on foreign language acquisition. I thoroughly enjoyed reading Fluent Forever because the book is easy and fun to read. Moreover, it provides excellent tools to help students develop higher language proficiency and become autonomous learners.


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**Overview and Background**

Facilitation With Ease, by Ingrid Bens, describes a hands-on approach to facilitation. Bens, an educator, consultant, and trainer, shares her 25 years of experience in facilitating meetings and workshops. The book offers a clear and detailed roadmap for facilitators planning to conduct meetings, events, and workshops. The book is designed to support the professional development of junior facilitators who wish to build a career in facilitation. More experienced facilitators may use the book to troubleshoot difficulties and challenging situations. Teachers responsible for facilitating students’ learning can also benefit from the book, using it to plan classes and reflect on the implementation of the plan. The book is full of practical and effective techniques to make meetings and workshops productive. Capitalizing on her education and experience, Bens offers an in-depth analysis of, and practical guidance to, the planning and executing of a participatory event. As teachers act as facilitators to support student language acquisition, this review will draw parallels between facilitating a workshop and facilitating (teaching) a foreign language class.

**Structure of the Book**

Throughout its 10 chapters, the book uses a preemptive approach to challenging situations, providing step-by-step guidance to planning and implementing a workshop/meeting, and illustrating with samples, charts, and informative diagrams.
Chapter 1 discusses the true essence of facilitation as “a leadership role in which the decision-making power resides with the members” (Bens, 2012, p.7). Thus, the facilitator is transforming the participants into leaders through their daily duties. The definition of the facilitator as leader brings forth the transformational leadership concept, in which the leader and the followers work together to clarify a vision. Similarly, the facilitator guides the group to a certain destination. Whether the objective is to reach a consensus or analyze a problem’s root causes, the facilitator’s sole responsibility is to help the group achieve that objective. In comparison, a teacher performing a leadership role designs and directs classroom activities. The teacher is leading the students to achieve the objectives of the hour, not by dictating which path each student takes to achieve the objectives, but letting the decision on which path to take reside with the students.

To effectively perform the leadership role, the facilitator should remain neutral. By maintaining impartiality toward the workshop’s content, the facilitator does not dictate what decisions the participants may reach, but manages the process needed to reach the decision. Similarly, scaffolding the materials and facilitating students’ learning, the teacher remains neutral toward the materials’ content, even if they contradict his or her personal views. Neutrality helps address difficult participants/students and gives the facilitator/teacher more credibility as a referee, not a judge.

Chapter 2 examines the rising phenomenon of leaders as facilitators. The leader is invested in the outcome of the meeting; because of this, remaining, or being perceived as, neutral may be difficult. Likewise, the teacher is invested in the outcome of teaching—helping students learn and progress to the next higher level of language development. Chapter 2 mediates the dilemma by offering strategies to leaders of how to facilitate more and supervise less. The strategies include rotating facilitation duties to their followers or implementing shared facilitation. The chapter differentiates several types of questioning that can be used to achieve certain goals. Arguing that facilitators ask questions not to impose their views but to help the participants, the author explores how to ask and approach sensitive questions. Similarly, questioning is one of the most powerful tools that teachers possess to interact with students, engage them in critical thinking, and check their progress. Chapter 2 provides applicable strategies for forming and asking questions.

Chapter 3 explains the seven stages that should be completed when designing and implementing a workshop. The stages are: 1) assessment and design, 2) feedback and refinement, 3) final preparation, 4) starting a facilitation, 5) during the facilitation, 6) ending a facilitation, and 7) following up on a facilitation. Throughout the stages, the facilitator monitors the group’s productivity to determine when to intervene. The “art of intervention” is crucial to offering a disclosure to the group’s discussion. In a classroom setting, the teacher may use the same techniques to offer a disclosure to the class discussion and address student concerns.
Chapter 4 offers techniques to help the facilitator understand the participants. The facilitator needs to know the participants and why they are attending the workshop/meeting. The chapter categorizes participants into: 1) total strangers, 2) future team members, 3) good acquaintances, 4) a group in turmoil, and 5) high achievers. Each category requires different techniques to build a good rapport. For example, knowing that English is participants’ second language, a facilitator may tailor the language by utilizing body language rather than academic jargon to deliver the message. Likewise, knowing the students, their strengths and weaknesses, is the key for a successful teaching hour to reach the learning objectives.

Chapter 5 discusses the reality that participants are often reluctant to participate in a meeting. Barriers that block participation run the gamut, from being tired of attending meetings to a traumatic event that left people feeling stressed. Facilitation is more than just distributing information or handouts; facilitation creates conditions for full and active participation so that participants are empowered to reach a consensus. The chapter provides techniques of involving the participants. Correspondingly, students come to class with many concerns or misconceptions about learning a second language. The teacher can utilize the techniques in Chapter 5 to address student concerns.

Chapter 6 provides guidance on one of the most difficult tasks for the facilitator: helping the participants engage in the decision-making process. Sometimes participants come to the meeting unprepared or confused about the meeting’s purpose. The facilitator’s role is to clarify the purpose and the approaches to reach the purpose. Similarly, teachers need to engage all students in the learning process and assess student progress.

Chapter 7 examines two topics: dealing with conflict and giving feedback, which are a facilitator’s core responsibilities. The facilitator must distinguish between a healthy debate during which people share their diverse experiences and an argument during which people assume they are right. A healthy model of feedback should be feedforward, actionable, succinct, and timely, also known as the F.A.S.T Model. The simple feedback of “good job,” or “bring up the learning points more,” is vague and ineffective because the participant has no specific action to take. Vague feedback can lead to conflict and confusion. A teacher often faces conflict in class. Clear feedback is essential as students may argue with the teacher and reject the feedback if it is vague or useless. Chapter 7 provides extensive guidance for mitigating conflict.

Chapter 8 provides a checklist for designing and implementing an effective meeting. An agenda with clear roles and objectives is key to a successful event. The chapter describes the symptoms and cure for dysfunctional meetings. In a dysfunctional meeting, 1) participants talk without acknowledging each other’s contributions, 2) participants try to convince each other that they are right, 3) the dissenting view is ignored, 4) the vote is utilized to make decisions, 5) conversations go nowhere for extended periods; 6) those with power do most of the talking, and 7) no attention is paid to body language. Cures for these symptoms include: 1) asking participants to acknowledge each
other’s comments, 2) training members to paraphrase what is said in response to their points, 3) developing an ear for dissenting views, 4) pre-planning meetings to use other tools, 5) using round robins to obtain input, and 6) asking people to express their feelings. A teacher can use the checklist to enhance classroom management, including making sure that students listen and respond to, rather than talk over one another. The teacher can also develop an ear for dissenting views rather than ostracizing the student who delivers them.

Chapter 9 gives facilitators the necessary tools, each with a specific purpose, to perform their roles. The tools include visioning, sequential questioning, facilitative listening, appreciative review, brainstorming, written brainstorming, affinity diagrams, gap analysis, needs and offers dialog, force-field analysis, root-cause analysis, and the five whys. These tools are useful for teachers. For example, a teacher may use effective listening to address a student’s concerns, whereas root-cause analysis may help a teacher improve classroom practices.

Chapter 10 addresses the designing of different processes for various needs. Selecting the most suitable process is key to a meeting’s success. The chapter lists several steps in designing a process, including conducting background research, interviewing or surveying members to identify goals, creating a draft design, obtaining ratification of the primary design by some or all members, preparing a detailed agenda in advance, preparing needed worksheets and handouts, and designing an appropriate evaluation form. The chapter concludes by providing a sample design for each process. Similarly, a teacher creates several processes to facilitate classes that meet different needs. A process centered on bringing forth a lesson’s learning objectives may help students understand the purpose of their actions. The needs and dialogs may help a teacher integrate a new teaching approach. Each step of the process encompasses one of the learning objectives.

Conclusions

In today’s work environment, it is practically impossible to be part of an organization without conducting or participating in a meeting or a workshop. These gatherings require a facilitator to manage the discussion. Facilitation With Ease is a guide that provides the know-how for conducting and managing effective workshops and meetings. The book also provides valuable and practical information that may help teachers facilitate student learning. Whereas some information may be perceived as practical and commonsense, the strength of the book lies in its embrace of practicality.
NEWS & 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, major projects, and news items.

Announcement of a New Newsletter

MARIA CUBAU
Miami-Language Training Detachment, Field Support, Continuing Education

We are pleased to announce the launch of a new newsletter, created by the Miami Language Training Detachment (LTD), focusing on the manifold cultural aspects of the Spanish-speaking regions of Central and South America and the Caribbean. The publication, available in print and online, is sponsored by the Language, Regional Expertise and Culture Office of the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) in Miami, Florida.

SOUTHCOM is responsible for providing contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation in Central and South America and the Caribbean. With an extensive area of responsibility, there is a need for highly proficient speakers of Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, and French with cultural and regional expertise. The Miami LTD, a satellite office of Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) at SOUTHCOM, develops, enhances, and maintains language skills and cultural expertise for qualifying personnel.

The newsletter is the latest outreach media production of the Miami-LTD, aiming to serve as a portal to the culture of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Command’s area of responsibility. Through monthly publications, the newsletter introduces aspects of history, religion, literature, art, and language, with a focus on the basic values that guide behavior, formulate conventions, and constitute the essence of thinking in this eclectic and heterogeneous region.
Underscoring the transformative power of experience in producing a new perspective, the newsletter carefully selects themes and topics that are intended to create cultural curiosity. This experience prompts the reader to ask questions about that culture and critically reflect on the differences in social realities. A major occurrence—a disorienting dilemma—is often needed to provoke transformation, as a dilemma reveals a discrepancy between our worldview and what has just been experienced. Disequilibrium is the impetus for a mental shift. SOUTHCOM personnel may experience this disequilibrium, anticipated as a part of culture shock, once they interact with the partnering nations and become aware of the differences between the social realities, understandings, and beliefs of the target culture and their own perspective. In this encounter, the pendulum swings towards new cultural understanding for a moment but, without the ability to transform and expand the frame of reference, no new knowledge is captured and it can potentially swing back past center, casting the new cultural experience into a pool of misperceptions, misunderstanding, and mistrust, all of which contribute to missed opportunities.

With this newsletter, the Miami-LTD aims to leverage its strategic position and ability to impact the Command on a broader scale and create propitious conditions that foster a more rapid and conscious cultural transformation. Creating change at the individual level via a publication produced with many in mind is no small goal for the Miami-LTD. Yet with this approach, one that pricks our cultural consciousness of norms, it is sure to generate a desire to know more. To wit, according to Tom Stoppard in *Arcadia*, “It’s wanting to know that makes us matter.” The measure of success in this publication will not be how much more knowledge the reader has after reading, but how much more knowledge, after reading, the reader wants.
Appendix

Sample Newsletter

La Isla de Pascua o Rapa Nui en Chile

Perdida en la mitad del Pacífico, en la Polinesia, esta isla chamada a 3,800 kilómetros de la costa, es uno de los lugares más misteriosos del planeta. Sus habitantes levantaron miles de monolitos de piedra.

El descubrimiento de la isla en 1722 que comenzó con el descenso de garzas dio lugar a numerosas hipótesis. El hecho de que la historia y la cultura Rapa Nui no haya podido desarrollarse de forma total, ha dado lugar a mitos y leyendas, muchas veces discutidas por la imaginación del que lo transmite.

La isla ofrece una historia, cultura y tradiciones fascinantes, escritas en un lenguaje misterioso y una belleza impresionante.

Recomendados

El Secreto de Sus Ojos

Ganadora del Premio Óscar a la mejor película extranjera en 2010. Emir Kusturica, un famoso director de serbia, decide ponerse a escribir un principio diciéndose que es para ocupar su tiempo.

Punto queda claro que es para referirse a un fenómeno del pasado, el asesinato asesinato de una joven que quedó sin resuelto. A través de recuerdos se va reconstruyendo el caso que toca lo humano y lo político. Espósito pronto empieza a toparse con una dificultad inesperada: la violencia institucional de la dictadura en Argentina.

En esta edición:

La Isla de Pascua
¿Besar o No Besar?

Película: El Secreto de Sus Ojos

Autor: Fernando Roturo
¿Besar o No Besar?

La primera vez que uno se encuentra con alguien en América Latina en un marco de negocios, muchas veces uno da la mano independientemente del género.

Una vez que se estrechan lazos y hay un denominador común ocurre como cuando se para del "usted" al "tú". Entonces un beso (raramente un contacto de mejilla en el lado derecho de la cara) se más apropiado entre un hombre y una mujer o dos mujeres.

Los hombres no salen rara vez a un fuerte ajetreo de manos antes si asegurándose de mantener contacto visual. Las excepciones son Argentina y Uruguay, países en los cuales es común besarse en la mejilla entre hombres. Esto puede verse en los equipos de fútbol cuando se hace un gol y los futbolistas dan un beso en la mejilla como señal de felicitación.

Los Músicos de Fernando Botero

Fernando Botero, nacido en Colombia en 1932, es uno de los artistas más identificables por su pintura figurativa y sus temas volúmenes, lo que ya se conoce como "boterismo". Su acido incansable incluye el uso de colores vivos e intensos donde la luz hace del propio color de las formas, y no de un foco anterior que proyecta sombras sobre las mismas. Los Músicos representan una escena cotidiana de su Colombia natal, una fiesta ampliada por nuevas melodías con diferentes instrumentos. Botero es de los pintores y escritores vivos más conocidos del mundo.
Quick Tips welcomes readers’ contributions. We are particularly interested in previously unpublished, novel or innovative, easy to follow ideas for use in the language classroom or in any aspect of foreign language teaching, such as technology tips, useful classroom activities, and learner training tips.

**Teacher-scripted Drama to Enhance Students’ Speaking Skills**

DOHEE KOO
*Asian School II, Undergraduate Education*

**Introduction**

Drama is not a novelty in the foreign language classroom. Drama here refers to acting out a script. Besides reinforcing vocabulary and grammar, there are other benefits of using drama in teaching a foreign language:

- Students use the language in simulated conversations and contexts. This can help them overcome the fear of using the language in real situations (Barzallo, n.d.);
- Through drama, students learn expressions and the context where the expressions are used. Drama allows students to sense the real meanings of expressions (Barzallo, n.d.);
- Drama promotes native-like pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, and other prosodic features (Wessels, 1987);
- Drama builds confidence, self-esteem, and cooperation skills in students; it also refines their presentation skills (Boudreault, 2010);
- Students explore and develop variations of register and style;
- Students develop conversational skills, such as turn-taking, topic-changing, or leave taking; and
- Drama teaches culturally appropriate body language (e.g., Koreans do not shrug).

This article shares the author’s experiences in using drama to teach conversational Korean to Basic Course students.
Writing Drama Scripts

Several years ago, I conducted weekly drama class for about three months at one of the UGE schools and, eventually, I had to stop these classes because more time was needed for listening and reading activities. Nevertheless, students enjoyed playing a variety of characters. I used drama to 1) reinforce the grammar items that students had learned (students sometimes kept making mistakes or opted to not use the grammar items with which they were unfamiliar), and 2) enhance the naturalness of speaking. Using colloquial language and various registers, I wrote a short script each week. I did not ask students to write a script, because if they did so as homework, it would increase the workload; if they wrote in class, one hour of class time would not be sufficient for writing, acting, and evaluating.

Below is an example of a short script. The grammar items that I included were compound verbs, such as 들어오다 [to come in] and 가져오다 [to bring].

Scene #1
- 여비서: 회장님, 김 장군님께서 오셨습니다. [Mr. CEO, General Kim has arrived.]
- 여비서: 장군님. 들어가십시오. [General, please go in.]
- 김장군: 박회장, 잘 있었습니다? [Hey, CEO Park, have you been well?]  
- 박회장: 어서 와. 그 동안 소식이 없어서 궁금했네요. 미스 김, 여기 인삼차 좀 가져 와요. [Come in. I was wondering because I haven’t heard from you. Ms. Kim, please bring ginseng tea.]

Even though the main focus here was compound verbs, this scene contained cultural information, such as different levels of politeness (between the CEO and General Kim, between the CEO and his secretary) and linguistic information of set phrases and sentences frequently used in daily conversation (그래? Is that so?; 잘 있었습니다? Have you been well?; and 어서 와, Welcome). The dialog also made students aware that ginseng tea is often served to VIP guests in Korea, as ginseng is expensive and believed to promote good health.

A week later, Scene #2 was introduced, in which General Kim tells CEO Park that he could not reach one of their old friends for a week. In Scene #3, a Sherlock Holmes-like Detective, Choi, examined a murder scene, conversing with the victim’s subordinates. I was able to write several exchanges for each scene. As each scene had a story line, it attracted the students’ attention. Any teacher would be able to write a few lines and create a simple story, should they decide to use drama for elementary-level students.
Implementation

What follows is a step-by-step account of how I taught language through drama:

1. I provided simple explanations of each character.
2. After reading the script line by line, I explained the grammar, vocabulary, sociolinguistic features (e.g., register), and cultural aspects.
3. I had the students repeat my speech, sentence by sentence. This stage demonstrated how to express emotions with tone, intonation, stress, gesture, and facial expressions. I acted as naturally as I could and asked the students to imitate me.
4. I had the students practice the scene in groups. A combined class is recommended because it is better to create a competitive atmosphere among teams. I observed that some enthusiastic students memorized the script even though I did not instruct them to do so.
5. Each group acted out the scene. The audience evaluated the performance on a grid in terms of pronunciation/accent/tone, fluency, and acting ability. When the scene was complete, the class chose the best actor.

Drama class can be conducted in many ways: if a two-hour time block can be secured, you may have the students write a script with your assistance; you may also use literary work for reading and acting. Drama is also an excellent venue for co-teaching, as tone or facial expressions peculiar to each gender is better represented by either male or female teachers, as the situation requires. I hope you will have the opportunity to use drama in your class.

References


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.

Using Blogs to Promote Autonomous Language Learning

SONIA ESTIMA
Center for Leadership Development

What is a Blog?

The word blog is short for weblog, a term used to designate a frequently updated website. Blogs usually consist of a series of entries of informal writings or articles, not necessarily created with education in mind. Writers often use blogs to publish their ideas, and groups of like-minded individuals use blogs to share and discuss topics of interest. Blogs have become a popular form of publication because of the ease afforded to the author. Producing and updating a blog is simple, requiring only access to the Internet and some basic technical knowledge. This simplicity is what has promoted the use of blogs in education. Many educators have discovered the benefits of using blogs in the classroom as one of the easiest ways to publish student writing.

Types of Blogs Used in Language Teaching

Blogs can have many forms and serve a variety of purposes. Currently, there are three main types of blogs that are often used in language teaching.

- **Teacher Blogs**—created by teachers for teachers. Typically, these contain a space in which teachers can collaborate with colleagues and share ideas, ask questions, or discuss classroom issues. Here at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) we have recently launched a faculty blog—InterACT: https://blog.dli.flc.edu/faculty (you must be on the LEN network to access this blog).
• **Class Blogs**—created by teachers for students. Teachers can use blogs to share information with students. The content of this type of blog can include the course syllabus, lesson information, additional resources, homework assignments and other class activities. Many DLIFLC teachers have used SAKAI or network share folders to disseminate information for the students. Class Blogs may be a good alternative to network sharing of information and uploading classroom and course content.

• **Learner Blogs**—a shared space, where students take charge of the content and become the main creators of the blog. The Learner Blog is used as a collaborative discussion space, an extension of the classroom, and the students’ own online space. Students are encouraged to write frequently about what interests them and comment on other students’ posts. Learner Blogs offer great potential in language learning, providing a forum where students express themselves and take charge of their learning. When students begin to use the blog for meaningful communication with one another, the teacher is no longer the center of the class or the learning process. By using the blog for meaningful communication in the target language outside the classroom, students take the first steps towards becoming autonomous learners.

**Why Blog?**

One of the best reasons to use blogs in the classroom is to provide a real audience for student writing. Traditionally, the teacher is the only person who reads students’ writings and often the teacher’s focus is on form, not content. With blogs, students write for an audience that, in addition to the teacher, may include their peers, or possibly readers outside the school or even in the target-language country.

Students may use blogs for journal writing and the entries are shared among peers—a sense of community begins to take shape in the classroom.

Blogs can also serve to encourage shy students to participate. Some feel more at ease communicating in writing rather than speaking before a class. Although writing is not the focus of DLI instruction, it can help students who have different learning styles find their voices.

Blogs help stimulate out-of-class discussion. Students’ blog posts can be homework assignments, thereby extending the time spent engaging with the target language. Blogs also encourage a process-writing approach—students are more careful if they know others, not just the teacher, will be reading their work; they are more likely to understand the value of re-writing before going “public” with it.

Students may use blogs to create an online portfolio of their written work. As they move through the course, students can look back and reflect on their progress.
Where to Start?

There are many options available for creating and starting a classroom blog. One of the first and best-known blogging platforms is Wordpress.com, a reliable program with many features available. However, most of the desirable features of the site are not available in the free version. To take full advantage of Wordpress and all of its useful features, users must upgrade to a paid account. The same is true for Edublogs.org, a blogging program designed specifically for educators. This site has great customer service and offers many features that make the teacher’s job easier. But, again, many of the features needed to make Edublogs an effective tool for the language classroom are not free.

A third option is Blogger.com. The free version of this site offers all the necessary basic features and is relatively easy to set up. To alleviate any concerns about user identity and privacy, this platform allows teachers to make their blog private with settings and access rights that create a closed community. Teachers can provide access to only those who have registered.

To see a brief tutorial on how to set up a blog on Blogger.com, check this link: https://youtu.be/3IXXrFpkr5c.

Keeping Students Interested

Blogs work best when learners acquire the habit of using them regularly. If learners are not encouraged to post to blogs frequently, a blog can quickly become obsolete and be abandoned. Teachers should be prompt in responding to student posts. Teachers may ask provocative questions about what the learner has written to create stimulus for additional writing and to keep the conversation lively. Students should be encouraged to read and respond to classmates’ posts through the blog’s commenting feature.

Writing to the blog may be made part of the class assessment, thus requiring student posting. Students may also be encouraged to post their writing assignments on the blog as an alternative to handing in paper copies.

Ideas for Classroom Activities

- Mystery guest—Invite another teacher or someone from another department or school as a mystery guest to join the class blog. Ask the students to engage the guest in a dialog and see if they can guess the identity of the guest.
- Project—A blog is an ideal space for developing a project, especially if the project is a shared one between multiple classes.
- International link-ups—Contact another educational establishment to see if they are interested in a joint blogging project. Students can write about their lives, culture, interests, etc., and read and comment on one another’s posts.
• Photoblog—ask students to post photographs to the blog, and encourage others to comment and respond. Photos and images can help make the blog more interesting.
• Journals—Use a blog as a teacher-student journal in which teachers and students post comments, reactions, and reflections on work done in class, calling the students' attention to the learning process.
• Reflections—Ask students to use the blog to document their contact with the target language outside of the classroom, or to reflect on their learning process, successes, and struggles.
• Reactions—Have the students discuss topical issues by posting reactions to a reading or answers to thought-provoking questions.
• Collaboration—Use the blog to organize collaborative writing and peer review among students.
• Invited guest—ask other teachers or content-area experts to add comments and interact with students via blog.
• Community of Practice—Let the blog become an online community of practice in which teachers and students interact, network, help and learn from one another.

Conclusion and Recommendations for the DLI

As we strive to press students to reach higher levels of proficiency, blogs can be a useful tool for DLI faculty. Faculty may use blogs to engage with one another, share ideas, ask questions, and discuss. Teacher blogs are a great instructional resource to share what has worked well in the classroom or to discuss issues teachers have encountered.

In addition to teachers’ professional development, blogs can be used with students to promote independent learning. Many DLI instructors have used some blog features previously available in SAKAI. Now that SAKAI is no longer available, other blogging platforms offer good alternatives. We can take advantage of blogs as an educational tool in the language classroom to promote communication among students.

The activities mentioned above may help increase students’ confidence in using the language for meaningful communication. When students use the target language to share their thoughts, ideas, and opinion, it is no longer just a sterile set of grammar rules to be memorized but instead becomes a tool for real-world communication.

Knowing they have an audience for their work, students become more invested in what they produce. They begin to take greater interest in reviewing and correcting their work, and they take ownership of the writing and communication process. By engaging in the blogging process, students begin their first steps on the path to becoming autonomous learners.
Sitting for six hours a day in an intensive language course for months can be exhausting, repetitive, and monotonous for students. However, doing something fun, even for a few minutes, can reenergize and reengage students. Kahoot can be a fun pedagogical tool to use in class.

Kahoot is a free, user-friendly game-based platform, accessible from any Internet browser at https://getkahoot.com/ or from the Kahoot app. After a quick sign up process, teachers can create a variety of activities in minutes or choose one from hundreds available on the Kahoot website.

Kahoot offers four different options (quizzes, jumbles, discussions, and surveys) for creating engaging learning games. Quizzes can be used to drill vocabulary, conjugations, or grammar structures. Jumble, a new addition to Kahoot, is ideal for word order activities. Discussion and survey games provide a good platform as a discussion starter for students to provide their opinions on various topics.

Creating games on Kahoot is straightforward and requires little time. To make a quiz, for instance, click on the Quiz option button (see Figure 1); provide the information required in the introduction page (Figure 2)—a title, a brief description, a language, the audience (school, university, business, training, event and social) that the quiz you are creating is designed for, and whether you want your quiz to be visible to everyone or only to yourself. Once the introduction page is completed, click on the upper right green button OK, go and start creating your quiz by filling in the boxes on the next page.

Figure 1
Choose What to Create—Quiz, Jumble, Discussion, Survey
Figure 2

*Provide Introductory Information*

First, in the question box, type a question or a sentence with a blank if you want to create a fill in the blank activity. Select a time limit between five and 120 seconds during which students will choose their answer. Write four different answers in the appropriate boxes, and select the right answer by clicking on the check button next to the correct answer. You also have the possibility to upload a picture or a video from YouTube for each question of your quiz. Then, click on the upper right green button *next*, to go on to another page to create the second question (Figure 3).

Figure 3

*Create a Multiple-choice Question*

There is no limit on the number of questions that can be created. When the quiz is done, click the upper right green button *save*. The quiz will be saved into *My Kahoots*, which can be accessed by clicking on *My Kahoots* on top of the bar of the website.

The discussion and survey games follow the same multiple-choice format as the quizzes. The Jumble game, however, displays sentences whose words have been shuffled. To create a jumble game, simply divide a sentence into four parts and add each part in the correct sequence into one of the four
boxes (Figure 4). The program will then shuffle the four parts of this sentence. For instance, in the screenshot below (Figure 5), the sentence *ça te dit de faire du vélo demain* [Do you feel like biking tomorrow?] has been automatically shuffled to *faire ça te dit de demain du vélo*. In this example, students have 22 seconds to put the words in the correct order. To receive points, they must rearrange the four parts of the sentence in the correct order. The faster a student does this, the more points are awarded.

![Create a Jumble Game](image)

**Figure 4**
Create a Jumble Game

![Example of a Jumble Game](image)

**Figure 5**
Example of a Jumble Game

To use Kahoot in class, students need to have an Internet connection and a computer to connect to kahoot.it, or have a tablet or a smartphone to connect through the Kahoot application. Once connected (Screenshot 1), students enter the game PIN, which appears on the SMART Board as soon as the teacher launches the kahoot game (Screenshot 2). Then, students enter a nickname of their choice (Screenshot 3), which will instantly be displayed on the SMART Board (Screenshot 4). Finally, the teacher can click on the *start* button, on the right side of the screen (Screenshot 4) to begin the game.
In conclusion, Kahoot is a diverting and engaging pedagogical tool that can be used in class to introduce a new topic, to quickly and formatively assess students’ knowledge on a specific point that was taught, or to engage students in lively debates. In addition, Kahoot can encourage collaborative work by having students play in teams on a shared device, inducing them to use their Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) by discussing, negotiating, and agreeing on a final answer. Finally, students can be motivated to take charge of their own learning by creating Kahoot games themselves and presenting them to their peers.
How to Create Interactive Videos and Flip Your Classroom by Using PlayPosit

ILKNUR ODED
Faculty Development Support, Academic Support

The flipped classroom reverses the traditional classroom lecture format with guided, hands-on activities. As Larcara (2014) states, many educators have latched onto the concept of flipped classroom because it promotes active learning, critical thinking, and optimized use of student-faculty time. A prerecorded video lecture is often seen as the key component in the flipped approach and “although a prerecorded lecture could certainly be a podcast or other audio format, the ease with which video can be accessed and viewed today has made it so ubiquitous that the flipped model has come to be identified with it” (Seven Things You Should Know about Flipped Classrooms, 2012). One challenge in creating videos, however, is to make them engaging so that learners do not lose interest after watching it for several minutes and then fail to complete the self-study material at home. Teachers can circumvent these issues by creating videos that include prompts that learners respond to or embedded questions that learners must answer.

Several online services enable teachers to create interactive videos. One is PlayPosit, which is free and user-friendly. PlayPosit allows teachers to create interactive online videos by embedding questions into them. Below are detailed instructions on creating an interactive video via PlayPosit.

Step 1: Register at https://www.playposit.com/. Click on Design Video Bulb to start embedding questions into a video. As shown in Figure 1, PlayPosit gives you the option of copying and pasting a video’s URL from YouTube or browsing to find videos. (Note: not all YouTube materials can be used; copyright restrictions are imposed on some videos, so users should make sure only copyright-free videos are used.)
Figure 1
*Create Video Bulb Window Where Users Search for Videos*

Step 2: After selecting a video, you can edit it, such as cropping it by adjusting the time tabs to get a segment of the video, as shown in Figure 2. Then you can play the video and pause at the point where you would like to add a question.

Figure 2
*Timeline Bar and the Crop Video Option*
Step 3: Click the *add question* button, which brings a new window with types of questions to choose from, as shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 3**
Window Showing Type of Question

Step 4: Select the *Type of Question* (e.g. free response, multiple choice, etc.). After adding questions, click on *Save and Continue*, and assign it to a specific class as illustrated in Figure 4. Alternatively, you can share the URL with students without requiring them to register for PlayPosit, as can be seen in Figure 5, by checking off the *require students to register* option. When a student watches the video, it pauses at the point where a question is inserted. A question panel slides out for the student (shown in Figure 6).

![Figure 4](image)

**Figure 4**
Assign Your Lesson Option
In conclusion, PlayPosit enables teachers to embed questions into any video. This tool helps teachers to creating engaging flipped classroom materials, which turn passive videos watching into active learning experiences.

References

Educause (2012). 7 things you should know about flipped classrooms. Retrieved from https://library.educause.edu/resources/2012/2/7-things-you-should-know-about-flipped-classrooms

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2018

### MARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 8-11</td>
<td>California Language Teachers’ Association (CLTA) annual conference, Ontario, CA</td>
<td></td>
<td>cita.net</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15-17</td>
<td>Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.scolt.org">www.scolt.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 24-27</td>
<td>American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Chicago, IL</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.aaal.org">www.aaal.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27-30</td>
<td>Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Convention, Chicago, IL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tesol.org">www.tesol.org</a></td>
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### APRIL

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 6-8</td>
<td>Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) Annual Conference, Herndon, VA</td>
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<td>clta-us.org</td>
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### MAY

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 27-June 1</td>
<td>NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference and Expo, Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nafsa.org">www.nafsa.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 29-June 2</td>
<td>Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) Annual Conference, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL</td>
<td>calico.org</td>
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</table>
JUNE

June 24-27  International Society for Language Studies (ISLS)
London, UK
Information: www.isls.co/index.html

June 25-28  American Association of Teachers of Spanish and
Portuguese (AATSP) Annual Conference, Salamanca, Spain
Information: http://www.aatsp.org

NOVEMBER

November 15-18  Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting,
San Antonio, TX
Information: mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html

November 16-18  American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
Annual Convention (ACTFL), New Orleans, LA
Information: www.actfl.org

November 16-18  American Association of Teachers of German (AATG)
Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA
Information: www.aatg.org

November 16-18  American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Fall
Conference, New Orleans, LA
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.

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.

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.

Correspondence

Contact 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:

**Cover Page**
Type the title of the article and the author’s name, position, school/department/office, contact information on a separate page to ensure anonymity in the review process. See the example below:

  Foster Learner Autonomy in Project-based Learning
  
  JANE, DOE
  Assistant Professor
  Persian-Farsi School, UGE
  jane.doe@dliflc.edu
  831-242-3333

**Abstract**
Briefly state the purpose of the study, the principal results, and major conclusions in a concise and factual abstract of no more than 300 words.

**Introduction**
State the objectives, hypothesis, and research design. Provide adequate background information, but avoid a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.

**Literature Review**
Discuss the work that has had a direct impact on your study. Cite only research pertinent to a specific issue and avoid references with only tangential or general significance. Emphasize pertinent findings and relevant methodological issues. Provide the logical continuity between previous and present work.
### General Information

| **Method** | State the hypothesis of your study. Describe how you conducted the study. Give a brief synopsis of the methodology. Provide sufficient detail to allow the work to be replicated. You may develop the subsections pertaining to the participants, the materials, and the procedure. |
| **Participants** | Identify the number and type of participants. Indicate how they were selected. Provide major demographic characteristics. |
| **Materials** | Briefly describe the materials used and their function in the experiment. |
| **Procedure** | Describe each step in conducting the research, including the instructions to the participants, the formation of the groups, and the specific experimental manipulations. |

| **Results** | State the results and describe them to justify the findings. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to the hypothesis. |

| **Discussion** | Explore the significance of the results of the work, but do not repeat them. A combined Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature. |

| **Conclusion** | Describe the contribution of the study to the field. Identify conclusions and theoretical implications that can be drawn from your study. Do not simply repeat earlier sections. |

| **Acknowledgments** | Identify those colleagues who may have contributed to the study and assisted you in preparing the manuscript. |

| **Notes** | Use sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article. They should be listed on a separate page, which is to be entitled *Notes*. |

| **References** | Submit on a separate page with the heading: References. References should be arranged first alphabetically, and then sorted chronologically if necessary. More than one reference from the same author(s) in the same year must be identified by the letter ‘a’, ‘b’, ‘c’, etc., placed after the year of publication. |

| **Appendix** | Place detailed information (such as a sample of a questionnaire, a table, or a list) that would be distracting to read in the main body of the article. |
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 fall issue and by **31 July** for the spring issue.

For guidelines in the preparation of your manuscript, please refer to the previous section (pp. 117-121): *Information for Contributors.*
THANK YOU

Dialog on Language Instruction relies on peer 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 for this issue. The publication of Dialog on Language Instruction was made possible with their generous support.

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