

*Dialog on  
Language  
Instruction*



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## *Dialog on Language Instruction*

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*Jiaying Howard*

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# **Six Principles that Guide You to Instruct Brain-Friendly Lessons**

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*The extensive current research on the brain, especially that regarding memory and learning, has been making increasingly beneficial impact on the instructional and classroom leadership practices of teachers; this impact, though, has not been as far-reaching or as thorough on the teaching field as it should be. Whereas the limited impact of brain research across all fields of education is evident, it is especially the case with second language instruction. This paper, then, connects six foundational concepts from cognitive psychology—positive emotions, novelty, repetition, movement, vision, and reduced-stress learning environments—to second language instruction, instruction that is brain-friendly and more effective.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Students often comment that they study many hours a day but see little beneficial impact on learning or grades. These sincere students possess adequate intelligence and work diligently, often to the point of losing sleep for additional study time. This in itself may be the issue. Researchers have long known that sleep is vital to mood maintenance and body wellness; does this brain-centered issue have any implication for language learning as well? Recent improvements in modern technology (such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Electroencephalography (EEG), etc.) have provided greater knowledge of how the brain functions. These devices enable researchers to see how a person processes information and what factors—sleep, for example—influence how well that processing occurs. However, it seems that these beneficial efforts in cognitive psychology and neurology are not applied well in second language (L2) learning and teaching. When instructors know more about how the brain works, they will become more efficient and effective in teaching an L2 to students. There are six foundational brain research findings that guide this improvement: positive

emotions, novelty, repetition, movement, visuals, and reduced stress in the learning environment. We hope that these research findings will contribute to brain-friendly classes.

## POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Most students express a preference for a “fun” class, but is there real, research-based evidence to support that having fun in class promotes learning? The answer is a resounding “Yes!” The proof of this assertion starts with brain neurons themselves. Neurons are cells, which transmit and process information via electrochemical signals. Neurotransmitters are chemicals that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of communication among neurons. Dopamine, one of the major neurotransmitters, helps regulate degrees of pleasure and is strongly associated with one’s emotional state. When a student is having fun, the level of dopamine increases measurably. In addition to emotional states, dopamine is also connected with and appears to augment a person’s alertness, perception and memory as well (LeDoux, 1996). In other words, when students have fun in class, dopamine increases, and they are more alert and perceptive; their memory also improves. Positive emotions trigger dopamine’s release; these increased levels make students alert and enthused, and when this neurotransmitter is abundantly available in a student’s system, they tend to remember what they have learned.

Negative emotions, on the other hand, release a different hormone. This chemical—cortisol—causes a much different reaction in the body, prompting the *survival mode*, which is the opposite of what is needed for optimal learning. Sustained stress increases the cortisol level, which inhibits the hippocampus or memory center from functioning fully. When cortisol is prominent in a body system, learning and remembering are significantly hampered (Medina, 2010).

What can conscientious second language instructors do to increase positive emotions while reducing their negative counterparts? In other words, how might a teacher foster the increase of dopamine for learning while limiting the flow of cortisol in an effort to maximize student learning in a brain-friendly manner? Here are some examples that are proven helpful in practice.

- The use of music has been repeatedly proven to increase dopamine levels.
- Games and jokes, accessible on the internet ([www.kahoot.com](http://www.kahoot.com), for example) also have a beneficial impact toward developing a positive classroom environment.
- Storytelling or the narration of fun and positive emotional events has been proven to create a learning environment beneficial to academic achievement. For example, when teachers verbally relive emotionally satisfying anecdotes from class history with students, a greater positive emotional bond is created among them.
- Positive emotion-arousing topics like those found in intentionally selected introductory YouTube videos (i.e., fun brainstorming videos) establish what is to follow on a warm and welcoming foundation.

## NOVELTY

Upon first reading, this proposed topic seems less impactful than others within this list. What do new or novel ideas have to do with learning? Simply put, our brains are pre-wired to notice new things, to spot differences that enter into our visual field or experience. Our prehistoric ancestors were either hunting or being hunted, so our DNA is designed to be alert for anything that is different or unexpected. That was a necessary skill in treacherous surroundings where vicious animals were ready to attack. When something new is detected, the human body produces hormones to highlight or to draw attention to the unexpected stimuli. This hormone, often in the form of adrenaline, results in increased attention and blood flow (Jensen, 2008).

As what is new catches people's attention, the first few minutes of any given class is vital (Medina, 2010). Because of this *novelty factor*, the first five to ten minutes in class can be used to capture the attention of students; once their attention is fully focused, course content is much more memorable for them. If they must present an important item, instructors should present it in the first part of the lesson and do so in a powerfully engaging and novel way. The so-called BEM (Beginning-End-Middle) principle reflects this brain-friendly teaching approach, stating that beginning, end, and middle is the sequence of how information is remembered best (Jensen, 2008).

How do teachers make content novel throughout multiple lessons? Obviously, using the same textbooks and repetitious activities will not address the brain-friendly requirement. The following approaches may help the instructor with lesson novelty:

- Presenting new concepts interspersed among previously presented content increases student retention (Bunzeck & Duzel, 2006). Instructors relate old material to a new concept so that students associate new ideas with previously learned material.
- Each lesson should include a minimum of one out-of-textbook activity.
- Frequently used activities can be employed but changing partners each time triggers greater alertness to the assigned task.
- Reference to English as a Second Language (ESL) resource books and websites provides instructors with numerous new activity ideas.
- Colleagues are an excellent source of new ideas. Regular conversation and interaction about novel pedagogical approaches is worthwhile.

## REPEAT TO REMEMBER, REMEMBER TO REPEAT

Educational or instructional repetition refers, not to the out-of-context and the mechanical, but to intentional and focused repetition within a clear context and in an elaborate manner. An elaborate manner is one that provides *systematic* repetition. Repetition should consolidate information. As is well known, in order



to consolidate a piece of information in the brain, it has to move from the short-term memory to the long-term. The brain's memory center is the hippocampus. When a signal enters the brain, it goes first to the cerebral cortex and then to the hippocampus (See Figure 1). However, under normal conditions, this stored information may take years to consolidate as retrievable memory for easy access by the cortex.

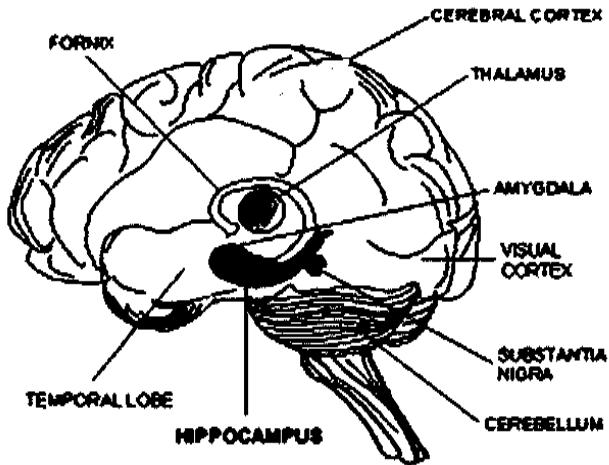


Figure 1

*Brain Memory Centers*

(Retrieved from <http://worldofcaffeine.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/hippocampus.jpg>)

Connections among different information associated to a single event or memory must be strengthened or *solidified* within the brain for those memories to be usable in the academic sense. This is only accomplished by repetition, but research has shown that only a specific type of repetition accomplishes this necessary transition. Cramming for an exam, for example, results in a loss of information within a matter of days. Researchers have found, however, one method of repetition/review that works better than others; that technique is known as spaced repetition. Instructors should re-expose students to information periodically (Karpicke & Roediger, 2007). Unfortunately, the exact lapse between content review sessions has not been determined. Nevertheless, several studies seem to indicate that a gap between re-exposures of more than a day is preferable (e.g., Cepeda, Coburn, Rohrer, Wixted, Mozer, & Pashler, 2009).

This research-based approach, though, can be problematic for a variety of reasons. For examples, most commercial textbooks do not include sufficient repetition materials, and some teachers do not like the idea of repetitiously repeating previously covered material in class. However, given the fact that spaced repetition is proven to be incredibly effective for student learning, teachers

should consider recycling old material systematically (Roediger, 2013). Examples of this approach are provided below.

- Instructors should assess with a comprehensive test, not just a unit test, so that students need to review what was previously learned.
- Previously covered content should be reviewed in new and different ways, perhaps with new people or in a new context.
- Review sessions should be presented regularly.

## **MOVEMENT**

Researchers have determined that our prehistoric ancestors moved about 12 miles a day (Medina, 2010). They moved to gather food and to escape from wild animals' pursuit. As a result, the modern human brain is pre-wired for frequent movement. In addition to this apparent design element, movement also helps people think better. Movement increases blood volume in the brain and makes neurons communicate better (Jensen, 2008). This benefit of movement is lifelong; older adults who were engaged in aerobic exercises had enhanced memory abilities over those that were not physically active (Brinke, Bolandzadeh, Nagamatsu, Hsu, Davis, Miran-Khan, & Liu-Ambrose, 2014). Clearly, sitting all day long does not help students to learn. Increasing movement in a lesson benefits student achievement. Some teachers do not promote much student movement around the classroom, because it looks students are not under proper control. However, the brain simply must have movement to learn best. Just standing up and moving for one minute increases blood circulation by 15% (Sausa, 2011).

Given this clear necessity of student movement while learning, below are a few practical suggestions to foster an active classroom that incorporates movement during learning.

- Instead of simply passing out handouts, the teacher could invite students to come to the front of the classroom to collect papers.
- By assigning different partners throughout a class period, the teacher forces students to move frequently to work with newly assigned peers.
- One simple approach would be for the instructor to simply give learners standing permission to get up, to move around, or to stretch in class as needed.
- By using poster or sticky note exhibition activities, the teacher will encourage students to walk around the room, seeing what other pupils have produced.
- Finally, teachers could invite students to write on the room's white board in answer to a question (so that they stand and write). Then, the class could discuss, as a whole, how each individual responded to the prompt.

## **VISION AND OTHER SENSES**

When visual information is presented to the retina, the neurons behind it send electronic signals to the brain, and the information is processed. Although this sounds uncomplicated and straightforward, the process is neither linear nor simple. While fully simultaneous, sight is also very interactive. Eyes are not like cameras, which are passive; rather, they respond to their environment in order to provide the brain with the best image. Because of this complexity and interactivity and because of the visual sensitivity and power that results, sight takes up half of the brain's resources. Numerous studies have shown that more than 2000 visual images seen in only ten seconds of exposure may be recalled with nearly 90% accuracy. If something is orally presented, only 10% is remembered after 72 hours, but with pictures, 65% is remembered (Medina, 2010).

Clearly, multimedia input during instruction is significantly more effective to student learning, because visual images enhance memory. The Contiguity Principle (Mayer, 2001) states that students learn more effectively when texts and graphics are tightly integrated, rather than presented separately. Finally, learning and memory are enhanced by integrating different senses, including haptic (i.e., touching) and smell. The sense of smell can be a powerful memory enhancer. The signal from the nose goes straight to the amygdala (i.e., emotion center) and hippocampus (See Figure 1), which is strongly implicated in emotion and memory.

Below are three practical ideas for using vision and the senses more powerfully in instruction.

- Academic vocabulary should be presented with matching visual images, connecting the new words with an associated new image for greater retention.
- Videos with narration are powerfully effective tools for communicating content that is memorable to students.
- As much as is feasible and possible, teachers should strive to have students use multiple senses, including touch and smell, throughout the learning session.

## **REDUCED STRESS ENVIRONMENT**

There are two kinds of stress within a classroom setting: good stress and bad stress. Good stress is acute and short, and it occurs when students are moderately challenged and assume that they can overcome the difficulty. It heightens their senses and increases their motivation. Bad stress occurs when students feel threatened by physical or emotional difficulties. Both stresses will tell the brain (especially the amygdala) to produce several hormones, such as cortisol, adrenaline and norepinephrine, which heighten sensitivity. Cortisol supplies energy for a short period of time, but if produced continuously, it causes damage to the brain and the body. Over time, cortisol may weaken the brain's

memory center, the hippocampus. The hippocampus is also the center of the immune system, so the continued release of cortisol weakens the body's ability to fight illness (Jensen, 2008).

What can teachers do to reduce the myriad causes of stress in the classroom? Several practical suggestions are provided below.

- The instructor should give students plenty of time and genuine opportunities to complete certain tasks, and teachers must be available for students to answer questions and to resolve difficulties in the learning process.
- By giving a review session before all assessments—even short quizzes, the teacher alleviates much of the anxiety related to testing.
- Teachers who avoid calling on students unless they volunteer protect students from avoidable unease in the classroom.
- Physical relaxation practice and meditation actually work in enhancing memory (Flor, Monir, Bitar, & Shahnaz, 2013). Teachers should consider incorporating breathing and stretching in class as a means of reducing stress in the learning environment.
- Finally, instructors are encouraged to talk to students about the importance of sleep and rest. While sleeping, students replay what they did throughout the day. Sleep is, therefore, critical for assisting in organizing the content of the brain, in unlearning what is unnecessary, and in strengthening memory about what is necessary (Stickgold & Walker, 2007). Research repeatedly reinforces the idea that more or better sleep results in better learning and in better grades (e.g., Baert, Omey, Verhasest., & Vermeir, 2015).

## **CONCLUSION**

The six principles—positive emotions, novelty, repetition, movement, vision, and reduced-stress learning environment—are not difficult to achieve in class. Teachers who have not yet done so are encouraged to take small steps toward fostering a brain friendly class. Merely keeping these principles in mind throughout the instructional planning process will help students achieve better results. In addition, instructors are encouraged to explain to students how their brains work, giving them an edge on improving their own learning. Brain research is another tool to assist teachers in accomplishing the most for their students.

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# ***Four Considerations on Listening Materials for Foreign Language Learners***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Listening awakens awareness of the language as it is a receptive skill that first develops in a human being” (Renukadevi, 2014, p. 59). In the foreign language (FL) field, listening remains a difficult skill to acquire. In fact, listening is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most difficult of them to learn (Ghaderpanahi, 2012) and teach. Not surprisingly, designing materials to teach and assess listening can be complex and challenging. For quite some time now there has been a shift in perspective, so that listening as a skill has taken priority over the details of language content (Field, 1998). “This [shift] has been reflected in the provision of a contextual framework, recognition of the importance of inferring the meaning of new words, the use of recordings which are authentic in origin, the inclusion of materials with conversational features, and the use of simulated tasks rather than formal exercises” (Field, 1998, p. 35).

As research and practice geared towards listening skills have continued to grow (Renukadevi, 2014), so have the benchmarks for the selection of audio materials. Studies relating listening practiced in the classroom to that in real life have shown positive outcomes (Buck, 2001; Coppens, 2013; Liu, 2012; Mousavi & Aravani, 2012; Sabet, 2012). As a result, the selection of materials has widely prioritized the task-based approach, mirroring a real-life learning experience. Scholars have recommended various listening processes to help develop second language listeners’ abilities, processes that have largely been included in listening course materials.

The success a teacher will attain when enhancing or assessing students’ listening proficiency starts with the selection of audio materials. During that process, FL instructors often ponder a variety of considerations. Throughout a comprehensive study on teaching and researching listening, Rost (2011) notes the array of decisions instructors and curriculum developers need to make regarding not only the level, suitability, and authenticity of an audio text, but also the source, relevance to student interests, length, and exploitation of the materials, to name a few.

“By conducting a valid materials evaluation project, teachers and curriculum planners can arrive at practical solutions for selecting, adapting and supplementing materials” (Rost, 2011, p. 281). The purpose of this paper is to address four main considerations when selecting listening materials for foreign language learners: 1) Should listening materials be treated as reading materials? 2) How important is lexicon in listening comprehension? 3) What are the challenges of authenticity in listening? 4) Should teachers rate (based on the Interagency Language Roundtable proficiency scale) the level of difficulty of an audio cut by its transcript? This paper aims to compile brief yet relevant information that can address these four questions.

## **LISTENING VS. READING**

### **To what extent should listening materials be treated as reading materials?**

Earlier research suggested that listening and reading skills are in many ways similar but are also unique, especially regarding how the information is delivered (Buck, 2001). L2 listening research has traditionally been an offshoot of reading research, following the belief that because both are receptive skills, the two are very similar, and the research on reading would be applicable to listening (Buck, 2001). However, unlike reading, in which the learner is given a single text to follow, in real-life situations native speakers speak over each other, at different volumes and speeds, and often with frequent interruptions. For several years now there have been criticisms regarding the standard technique of using listening texts that are written and read aloud. According to Buck (2001), this technique is not typical of authentic spoken language, and is therefore often inappropriate when assessing a student’s listening ability (Buck, 2001).

“Because listening is essentially a transient and invisible process that cannot be observed directly [contrary to reading], we need indirect descriptions – analogies and metaphors to describe it” (Rost, 2011, p. 2). Vandergrift (2004) also supports a distinction between listening and reading, claiming that oral texts exist in real time and must be processed quickly; “when the text is over, only a mental representation remains” (Vandergrift, 2004, p.18). This is not the case with reading. One could claim that students who have good memory retention are better listeners but may not necessarily have higher proficiency in listening comprehension. In his earlier study, Field (1998) calls for a rethinking of the purposes of the listening lesson, as he examines ways in which instructors could teach the skill rather than simply practice it. However, he claims that successful listening should follow the reading approach considering that “subskills of listening closely parallel those of reading” (Field, 1998, p.112).

A more recent study conducted with adult students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) addressed specific issues related to listening comprehension in contrast to reading. The researcher points out fundamental features separating listening from reading such as sound, intonation, and interference, and suggested that the written equivalent of an audio cut containing

those features would be one “having two or three texts mixed up with a variation of font and sentences interrupted by comments and other sentences” (Ghaderpanahi, 2012, p.146). In addition, the study suggests that the myriad of accents encountered in spoken language makes it even more difficult for the learner to follow a conversation. Similarly, the handwritten equivalent contains variations of calligraphy, depending on the writer. In fact, FL learners usually do not experience the difficulty in reading texts from different sources within the same language that they do with listening (Ghaderpanahi, 2012).

## **VOCABULARY RETENTION**

### **How important is lexicon in listening comprehension?**

Over the years, research on FL teaching has established that vocabulary has different roles in reading and listening (Field, 1998; Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013). Zeeland and Schmitt (2013) explain that instructors have a good idea of the percentage of vocabulary that students need to comprehend a written text; when it comes to listening, the same principle applies. However, the authors do say that “although the lexical coverage and vocabulary size requirements seem relatively established for L2 reading, this is far from the case for L2 listening” (Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013, p. 459). That being said, FL instructors often select an audio passage based on the vocabulary and ask students to focus on a particular terminology; the benefits of such an approach seem debatable.

Renukadevi (2014) suggests that listening should not be a skill taught in isolation, as it is consistently interrelated with other skills (Renukadevi, 2014). Teaching listening while focusing on words should depend on the strategy used. Top-down strategies rely on background knowledge, the listening context, the text type, etc.; whereas bottom-up strategies are text based: the listeners use linguistic knowledge (a combination of sounds, words, and grammar) to arrive at the final message (Renukadevi, 2014). This distinction in listening comprehension is consistent with Field’s (1998) findings, which state that “L2 listeners form inferences: they use their knowledge of the context to make intelligent guesses about the ideas which link the sometimes dislocated words which they have been able to recognize” (Field, 1998, p. 115).

Even outside the scope of FL teaching, there is a general understanding of the concerns involved when receivers do not fully grasp the content of an oral message. Murphy, Daneman, and Schneider (2006) posit that because listeners miss part of what is said and lack confidence in the accuracy of their understanding of the parts they do hear, they are prone to anxiety or frustration and may avoid or be excluded from social interaction. This is true in the FL classroom as well. As FL instructors, we can closely relate to this statement. Moreover, we could claim that it is because listeners miss part of what is being said, they lack the confidence in the accuracy of their understanding of the parts they do hear. From such a standpoint, it would be reasonable to conclude that



students who miss a word in an audio cut are more likely to miss the next one, even if they can hear it.

The approach to vocabulary teaching for listening comprehension remains a subject of discussion. In Bang and Hiver's study, empirical evidence and theoretical considerations contribute to the conclusion that "both grammar knowledge and vocabulary knowledge are key factors in determining L2 listening proficiency that may at certain levels even override other cognitive and affective factors" (Bang & Hiver, 2016, p.14). Nevertheless, there are contradicting views on this matter which suggest that listeners may focus less on vocabulary because of the fleeting nature of spoken discourse, whereas written text has a permanence that allows readers to refer back to lexical items to decode the message, which cannot be done in listening (Zeeland & Schimitt, 2013).

## **AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

### **What are the challenges of authenticity in listening?**

For decades now, research data on the benefits of authenticity in language teaching have been thoroughly investigated and validated. Among several reasons is the fact that authentic texts contain contextual and situational clues, natural sequences, elements of surprise and opportunities to predict and guess (Kang & Lim, 2004). When students interact directly with authentic materials, the "middleman" (i.e., the textbook writer) is removed from the equation and students can engage with the culture on their own terms (Liu, 2012). However, despite all the undeniable benefits of using authentic materials in the FL classroom, the difficulties that authenticity might present should be addressed.

Both instructors and students are challenged by the use of authentic listening materials: first, authenticity presents a challenge to the instructor when selecting materials. There are three factors that one should take into account when selecting authentic materials: the item's suitability, its interest, and the appropriateness of task and sequence (Liu, 2012). Language teachers are faced with the dilemma of balancing authenticity with appropriateness especially when it comes to choosing teaching materials (Liu, 2012). Second, the student is challenged by the natural elements inherent in spoken language. "There is inevitably a shock when learners move from a scripted text to an authentic one. The speech rhythms are different and conversational features will be entirely unfamiliar" (Field, 1998, p.114). Students may not understand an audio segment because of their unfamiliarity with native accents, vocabulary items, and native speakers' normal speed of utterance (Mousavi & Aravani, 2012).

Although such scenarios might at first result in frustration, research shows that it is a necessary step in language teaching. The benefits that authentic materials bring to the FL classroom greatly outweigh the difficulties they might raise (Sabet, 2012). Once the cycle of anxiety and frustration has been broken, listeners will likely experience less stress when listening to authentic language in a live setting (Ghaderpanahi, 2012). Therefore, the question is not whether

instructors should use authentic materials, but rather how can they minimize learners' shock so students are receptive to authentic sources. For instance, it is a common practice to introduce segments of "authentic listening at an early stage of learning, alongside scripted texts, to help learners to become familiar with the real cadences of the target language" (Field, 1998, p. 114).

Of course, natural listening situations do not simply involve listening to a single talker in a noisy background (Murphy et al., 2006). Everyday communication often involves more than one person, leading to frequent changes in voice and location (Best, Keidsert, Freestont, & Buchholzt; 2016). Authentic materials include all delicate points of real language, points that are mostly ignored in non-authentic materials: hesitations, pauses, shift of functions, fillers and the like (Mousavi & Aravani, 2012). The impact of authentic listening materials should be investigated to see its effect on other aspects of language acquisition, such as intonation, stress patterns, extra-linguistic factors, etc. (Sabet, 2012). Although language features such as accents, intonation, interference, hesitation, etc. are characteristic of spoken language, it would be reasonable to say that they should be taught as any other aspect of language competence (lexicon, structural, discourse and socio-cultural) and gradually introduced to students as proficiency improves.

## **RATING AN AUDIO PASSAGE**

### **Should we rate the level of difficulty of an audio cut by its transcript?**

Aside from content, what are the main differences between an L1+ and L2 audio segment? The current ILR scale provides the following guidance regarding L2 listening: "able to understand face-to-face speech in a standard dialect, delivered at a normal rate with some repetition and rewording" (ILR, 2018). Considering the intricacies involved in the characteristics of spoken language, it would seem suitable to have more detailed guidance on rating listening passages with respect to the delivery format. In fact, when it comes to rating an audio passage it is important to know that it has received little attention and the validation of ability scales describing multidimensional skills is challenging. Not surprisingly, rating listening comprehension is a very complex process (Buck, 2001).

More often than not, the content of an audio segment seems level appropriate, but the delivery format inhibits students' understanding of its basic meaning. According to Murphy et al. (2006), comprehension of dialog includes more cognitive components than does the comprehension of a monolog. Thus, it would seem relevant to conclude that information delivered in a dialog format would generally be more challenging than a monolog. The number of speakers has also been identified as an important characteristic. Best (2016) suggests that in the context of a dialog, the introduction of a third speaker removes the predictability of who will talk next (and from where) that exists when there are only two speakers (Best et al. 2016). Buck (2001) stresses the importance of

spoken characteristics (e.g., phonological modification, accent, prosodic features, speech rate, hesitation phenomena, discourse structure, and non-verbal signals) and urges that authentic samples of speech be used when testing L2 listening ability (Buck, 2001).

Removing audios that present those challenging language characteristics or deliberately selecting passages that do not present these challenges to FL learners prevents exposure to authentic listening. If spoken language features could be accounted for with the same degree of importance as the content of a listening passage, a more accurate text rating process would result. Moreover, by adding spoken language characteristics (accent, hesitation, intonation, number of speakers, stuttering, background noise, etc.) to the ILR level proficiency descriptions, the rating of a given audio text would be more accurate. Students would experience less frustration because their lack of understanding would be due to the delivery format as opposed to content. After all, even in a non-FL environment, aural features may inhibit listening comprehension regardless of the information contained in the message.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this paper are:

- 1) Listening materials should not be treated as reading materials because the information is not presented and processed in the same fashion and spoken language has characteristics that do not exist in reading;
- 2) Vocabulary is important in listening but should not be the focus of an audio segment. When selecting lexicon, instructors should focus on the delivery style of the speakers more than on topic-related vocabulary. Placing the focus on vocabulary is a common approach for reading;
- 3) Authentic speech should prevail in listening materials with the occurrence of spoken characteristics in mind; and
- 4) In order to account for different audio text delivery formats, it is recommended that instructors and curriculum developers consider the prominence of spoken characteristics in conjunction with an audio transcript when rating a passage.

Although not exhaustive, this paper has compiled relevant information helpful to the FL education field, specifically with respect to selection of audio files. As research recommends approaching some aspects of listening and reading distinctively (Buck, 2001; Ghaderpanahi, 2012; Vandergrift, 2004; Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013), audio materials should be selected and rated using different guidelines from those used for reading. Thus, it is more practical and effective for instructors not to select an audio segment based on its transcript alone, because much of the language does not transfer from the aural to the reading form. If students receive an audio text in class, it would be natural that instructors approach the audio text through an aural perspective so as to address the effects caused by spoken features. Lastly, it is worthwhile to point out that rating an aural passage,

including its delivery format and speech characteristics, could at times result in a difficulty level higher than its written transcript. Would this be perceived as contradictory and/or unreliable? More research is needed to answer this question.

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# ***Beliefs and Practice on Target Language Use: Implications for Faculty Training***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Research confirms that learners exposed to target language (TL) use in immersive environments attain better proficiency development in a foreign language (FL) learning environment (Aldukhayel, 2014; Candilas, 2016; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). Accordingly, an effective classroom needs to provide sufficient TL input and ample opportunities for students' TL output through meaningful interaction and negotiation with timely feedback. These factors, in instructional practice, are essential to develop student communicative competence entailing strategic, linguistic, sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and pragmatic proficiency. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) advocates 90% of TL use in a language class (ACTFL, 2010), and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) suggests 75% of TL use in a language class. However, the implementation of these goals is more challenging when students are in a monolingual environment and experience limited TL use outside of the classroom. Moreover, teachers have different views on TL use at various stages of language instruction, which affects teaching practice.

Standing research advocates greater comprehensible TL use in the classroom (Krashen, 1982; Long, 1981; Swain, 1995; Turnbull, 2001; Vygotsky, 1986), in which the teacher becomes a valuable TL source and uses the TL as a tool for interaction, leading to approximate the quantity and quality of TL use in a FL context. Other studies have highlighted the positive impact of TL use on student motivation (Lamb & Arisandy, 2018; Macdonald, 1993; Wong-Fillmore, 1985), as increased TL use bolsters willingness and confidence to communicate in the TL and decreases anxiety and apprehension (MacIntyre, 1995). Some studies suggest that language teachers who endeavor to maximize TL use appear to be better prepared and organized in lesson planning (Christie, 2016), have more teaching experience, and higher confidence in using the TL (Lai, 1996).

On the other hand, some researchers (Ekmekçi, 2018; Krulatz, Neokleous, & Henningsen, 2015; Neokleous & Krulatz, 2018; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Watanbe, 2008; Zulfikar, 2018) have suggested the benefits of first language (L1) use in the classroom. They discuss the reliance on the L1 as a tool

to support learners' comprehension of unknown content, grammar explanation, classroom management, and procedural instructions. Yet Atkinson (1995) advises restraint in the overuse of L1 for the convenience of students' ease in understanding.

Additionally, there is research supporting code-switching between the TL and the L1 as an instructional strategy (Bilging, 2016; Cook, 2001; Coste, 1997; Lapkin & Swain, 2000), which offers a valuable cognitive tool for teachers to scaffold the learning process. Use of the L1 may increase efficiency, improve students' focus, and assist interpersonal communication. However, if code-switching is overused, students may not sufficiently develop the abilities to resolve communication breakdown through active negotiation or to employ a wide repertoire of strategies for language learning and use. Furthermore, an overreliance on code-switching may perpetuate an L1 presence in the classroom, inhibiting learner development. Ellis (2005) states that significant TL input is essential for cognitive representations of the TL as a source of modeling for students in various linguistic functions and genres and in attitude towards the TL. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to maximize TL use in the classroom (Ellis, 2005), because extensive comprehensible TL input with significant opportunities for meaningful TL output accompanied by timely feedback may lead to optimal language acquisition and learner development.

Ceo-DiFrancesco (2013), however, reveals that there is often a mismatch between what research recommends and the actual amount of TL used by teachers in class. She cites studies documenting the varying amount of the TL used during instructional time (ACTFL, 2009; ACTFL, 2010; Bilging, 2016; Turnball, 1999; Wilderson, 2008), despite significant research in the same time period arguing for large amounts of comprehensible input to support students' linguistic and sociocultural proficiency development (Burke, 2010, Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). Ceo-DiFrancesco (2013) also observes that less TL is used in lower level classes. The notable disparity between research recommendations and typical instructional practice suggests the need for further research (Grove, 2003).

Based on the aforementioned findings, the current study aims to increase understanding of teachers' beliefs about the use of the target language and how the beliefs influence instructional practices. Accentuated understanding of these two issues may help the Institute's in-service professional development better address teachers' beliefs and concerns that limit the TL use in the classroom. The study sought answers to the following two research questions:

- 1) What are instructors' perceptions of the optimal use of the target language and English in class?
- 2) What are the techniques and strategies implemented by instructors to enhance the target language use in class?

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

Sixteen DLIFLC teachers from two departments at the Middle East III School participated in the study. The teachers had attended in-school, self-nominated, in-service faculty development training workshops on teaching listening and/or reading conducted by the authors in the summer of 2017. Among the teachers, 11 had more than 10 years, and five had three to five years of teaching experience at the DLIFLC. All participants had completed the DLIFLC one-month pre-service Instructor Certification Course (ICC) and at least one iteration of the in-service Instructor Recertification Course (IRC), both courses having discussed the principles of communicative language teaching and the role of TL use in a language class. The survey did not collect information about participants' educational background. The fact that the participants voluntarily took the in-service faculty training workshops, without the mandate by the supervisor or the administration, indicated that they might be more interested in improving teaching and more willing to reflect on their classroom practices when completing the survey. This was the first consideration for the authors to select these participants. The second consideration was that these teachers had more than three years of teaching experience at the DLIFLC. Newly hired teachers, having recently completed the ICC, might still be relying on their previous teaching habits and beliefs in TL use in class, as some might not have been familiar with communicative language learning and maximum TL use.

### **Questionnaire**

This study used a survey questionnaire featuring six sections, which was adapted from Levine (2003) (see Appendix). It starts with a question to determine participants' years of service at the DLIFLC; Section 1, an open-ended question, elicits participants' opinion about TL use in class; Section 2, a multiple-choice question, investigates participants' TL/L1 use in the classroom; Section 3, a multiple-choice question, surveys participants' use of English in various situations; Section 4, a multiple-choice question, determines how frequently participants use TL; Section 5, an open-ended question, asks about participants' strategies to use TL; Section 6, a five-point Likert scale, reveals the participants' perception of students' response to TL use. The survey was in English. It was administered, using hard copies, at the end of an in-service, faculty-training workshop. Participants remained anonymous. The completed questionnaires were collected by a designated workshop participant and subsequently submitted to the workshop facilitators on the same day.



## **Data Analysis**

The answers to the open-ended questions were analyzed manually, by means of the detection and categorization of common trends and tendencies in responses. The multiple-choice and the five-point Likert scale results were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics—finds were presented as percentages.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Teachers' Beliefs**

Regarding Research Question 1 (What are the instructors' perceptions on the optimal use of the TL and English in class?), the results revealed that 10 instructors (62.5 %) believed the use of the TL for language instruction should be increased gradually as students' progress through the 64-week course. The gradual increase of TL use would reduce students' misunderstandings and anxiety. Accordingly, they believed that it was reasonable, also necessary, to use English in Semester I and early Semester II with the goal of exclusive use of the TL in Semester III. The underlying assumption for using more English in Semester I was to ensure that students with limited TL proficiency early in the course would fully understand the content and activity instructions. Conversely, six teachers (37.5%) stated that the exclusive use of the TL should be sustained throughout the 64-week course.

The findings indicated that a large percentage of teachers were not implementing exclusive or maximal use of the TL from the beginning of the course. Although the DLIFLC performance standards required faculty to use the TL during 75% of instructional hours, teachers' responses, if representative of the DLIFLC faculty, suggested otherwise. That meant that students did not receive rich TL input or produce TL output early in the course. As the performance standards permitted teachers to use L1 in 25% of the instructional hours, it would be meaningful for teacher training not to focus solely on the amount of TL use, but on the development of teaching principles, with teachers' input, that would help teachers determine when and how much to use L1 in class.

Eleven teachers expressed reservations about using the TL for administrative matters and grammar instruction at any stage of the course. They believed that avoiding confusion was important—L1 would provide elaborate explanations of TL grammar and deal expeditiously with administrative matters. They indicated that English was necessary in the following situations: a) academic counseling sessions (81.25%); b) grammar instruction (75%); c) behavior counseling sessions (62.5%); and d) translation of vocabulary (43%). Teachers' perceptions suggested a likely classroom practice, among the participants at least, that the use of the TL was limited to communicative activities and certain instructional topics.

Participants also reported variations in TL use based on the type of instructional activities. For example, teaching vocabulary, correcting errors in

speaking, questions to check comprehension, and debriefing following group activities were more likely to be conducted in the TL. Moreover, participants frequently used the TL to explain lesson objectives, conduct daily routines, and correct students' quizzes and homework. In general, teachers viewed TL use more suitable for routine classroom instruction and communicative activities. To deliver information efficiently and facilitate student understanding, they regarded English more suitable for grammar explanations, administrative and counseling sessions, discussion of culture topics, and instructions for projects/assignments.

### **Classroom Practice and Strategies**

For Research Question 2 (What are the techniques and strategies implemented by instructors to enhance TL use in class?), the survey showed that 13 participants (81.25%) used various techniques to promote the use of the target language, including: a) using communicative and metacognitive strategies, b) maintaining a TL-only policy, c) teaching grammar or writing skills prior to conducting TL speaking activities, d) using information-gap activities for pair/group work, e) conducting debate and playing games, f) using technology to increase exposure to authentic materials, and g) providing background knowledge in English outside of class. Three teachers (18.75%) did not mention any strategies that they had used to promote TL use in the classroom.

The findings showed that the participants had received training on various strategies to promote effective TL use and felt comfortable using them in daily. However, as they still allocated English a defined role in Semesters I and II, their beliefs influenced their use of English and the TL in instruction.

### **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study provides implications and recommendations for Faculty Development Specialists, Academic Specialists, as well as platform teachers. Faculty Development Specialists and Academic Specialists may consider developing training that responds to teachers' perceptions of TL use in the classroom. Platform teachers may benefit from reflections on their practice, beliefs, and attitudes about using the TL in language teaching. They may also think about how they would respond to the DLIFLC's current language use policy and in-service training, both of which promote the optimal use of the TL (75% of instruction) to empower students to reach higher language proficiency. This section suggests 1) guidelines for developing a target language environment; and 2) considerations for school and institute-wide faculty training.

#### **Guidelines for Developing a Target Language Environment**

Creating and sustaining an immersive TL environment in a FL context depend on many factors. Based on the Zone of the Proximal Development (Vyotsky, 1978), it is crucial to empower teachers with a wide repertoire of

strategies and techniques that scaffold learners in the learning process. A safe and positive learning environment centers around the supportive social interactions in class, in which teachers are able to offer social and cognitive assistance.

The guidelines to develop a TL environment in the language classroom (Moeller & Roberts, 2013) encourage teachers to: 1) identify students' learning preferences; 2) set learning goals; 3) use formative and summative assessment; 4) promote risk-taking; 5) teach learning strategies; 6) integrate technology and authentic materials; and 7) develop a set of principles that determine a systematic and judicious use of L1. All of the major elements in the guidelines are promoted and practiced at the DLIFLC. The DLIFLC teachers follow many of the recommended guidelines in creating an immersive TL environment. Findings of the current study also confirmed that participants were aware of how to employ instructional strategies and techniques to promote the use of the TL.

Most importantly, teachers need continuous, systematic reflection on their teaching practices, beliefs, and attitudes. They could start with collecting data of their TL and L1 use via video-recording or journal writing. Once they have gained a better understanding of their practice, as well as the knowledge of student needs and expectations, they may develop plans for using the TL, aligned with the institutional policies, second language acquisition (SLA) theories, and effective teaching practices.

Shvidko (2017) points out that students' opinions of appropriate TL and L1 use should be considered when developing effective and meaningful classroom language use policies. This fosters students' ownership of, and responsibility for, learning and language use. Students may be surveyed about teachers', as well as their own, TL use, which would contribute to students' meta-cognitive awareness of their TL use.

## **Considerations for Faculty Training**

### *Belief-Knowledge Distinction*

As suggested by the findings of this study, participants believed that there was a need to gradually increase TL use, as opposed to a maximal TL use from the beginning of the course. This belief may be a principal factor influencing teachers' TL use in the classroom. The findings imply that knowledge and technique-based training alone is inadequate to alter teachers' behavior, especially relating to ingrained and unconscious beliefs about how a foreign language is learned. In fact, previous studies investigating teacher beliefs have focused on the belief-knowledge distinction (Fenstermacher, 1994), the hierarchical structure of beliefs (Phipps, 2010), the collective nature of teacher beliefs (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001), and the process of teachers' conceptual change (Kubanyiova, 2012; Gregoire, 2003). Knowledge learning occurs at the surface level, whereas transformative learning takes place at a deeper level. Superficial learning simply expands an individual's existing paradigm, understanding or simulated instructional practice (Roberts, 2006). Deep learning encompasses

critical self-reflection, resulting in the reformulation of meaning and perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one's experience (Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Roberts, 2006). Promoting training that engages teachers with pedagogical techniques and allows them to examine their beliefs, experiences, and development exemplifies teachers' readiness as an ongoing process rather than a final point of achievement.

### *L1 and TL: Functions and Situations*

Although the language teaching profession has long emphasized TL use in the communicative language teaching and post-methods periods (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Nunan, 1991; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), L1 use is common for a variety of reasons (Ekmekçi, 2018; Pan & Pan, 2010; Zulfikar, 2018), especially in classrooms where all students share the same L1, as they do at the DLIFLC. The results of the study indicate that the choice between the TL and English depends on the situations, teaching topics, and students' language limitations. By examining the use of the TL and L1, faculty training may provide teachers with instructional strategies appropriate for lower levels and tools that bridge the gap between the TL and students' needs. This type of training may make teachers feel more confident that students can understand the TL input.

Pajares (1992) claims that a teacher's beliefs, consciously and unconsciously, inform instructional practice and lesson design and, therefore, impact students' exposure to the TL input and opportunities for the TL output. It may also be useful, during teacher training, to examine English-language use in the classroom. Once they are more aware of the functions and situations of English use, teachers may think about fostering a more structured, and limited, use of English in the classroom, thereby avoiding the overuse and the unstructured way that L1 is used (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009).

### *Conceptual and Behavior Change*

Teaching practice, at some levels, is a form of personal habit and a teacher may become comfortable with a teaching routine that he/she is unaware of until explicitly asked to reflect upon it. It is, therefore, important for faculty training to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on and assess their teaching practices. A follow-up action research of the teacher's beliefs and practices may increase the teacher's understanding of the benefits, and the challenges, of a change in perception and practice. Professional training needs to include opportunities to engage faculty in cyclical and ongoing reflective practice (Farrell, 2007).

Conceptually viewing instructional practice differently alters practice. Whitelaw, Sears, and Campbell (2004) observe that learning, for faculty, is a process. Whereas teachers' conceptual changes may not be evident in classroom practice immediately, the transformation has begun in their minds. For example, a teacher has developed a new understanding of lesson planning and has designed

a lesson accordingly, yet the changes may not appear in classroom delivery. A new teaching approach, such as maximizing the use of the TL, needs to be cultivated over time.

## CONCLUSION

This study has investigated teachers' beliefs and practices of target language use in language classrooms. The findings illuminate the importance of considering teachers' beliefs when implementing the institutional language policy, such as maximizing the use of the TL in language instruction. This study has made some suggestions, based on the findings, for teacher training—the necessity to address teachers' beliefs and perceptions. An institute-wide, multi-faceted faculty training is underway at the DLIFLC, which simultaneously discusses teacher beliefs, learning goals, institutional structure, and collective team teaching practice. The study emphasizes the importance of creating opportunities for teachers to reflect on their beliefs, practices, and development, which is vital for teachers' conceptual and behavior change.

The study has discussed implications for language teaching and teacher training, but the suggestions and recommendations should not be generalized as they are based on a small sample within one Middle East school. More research across schools and languages will further our understanding on this important topic.

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**APPENDIX**

**Questionnaire**  
**The Ideal Balance between Target Language and English**

Years of your service at the DLIFLC: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is your opinion of how much English and the TL should be used when you are teaching?**

**2. Select three reasons you use the target language (TL) in the classroom.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Department policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching method or approach
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher training
- \_\_\_\_\_ Limited English Proficiency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pedagogical theories
- \_\_\_\_\_ Previous teaching experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students' request
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal beliefs about teaching/learning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others-Explain, please:

**3. Mark the situation(s) in which you feel more English (ENG) is needed.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom administration
- \_\_\_\_\_ English practice
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grammar Instruction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Translation of unknown vocabulary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom management
- \_\_\_\_\_ Poor comprehension of material
- \_\_\_\_\_ Academic counseling session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Behavioral counseling session
- \_\_\_\_\_ Response to students' use of English
- \_\_\_\_\_ For better rapport with students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Others-Explain, please:

\_\_\_\_\_

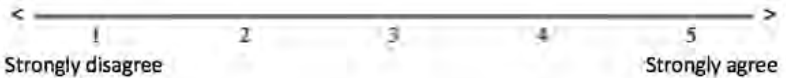
**4. Mark the answer that most accurately describes your practice with TL use in specific classroom activities.**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Frequency of Response</i>				
	<i>Nearly all in ENG</i>	<i>Mostly in ENG</i>	<i>Half in the TL, Half in ENG</i>	<i>Mostly in the TL</i>	<i>Nearly all in the TL</i>
Teaching new vocabulary					
Starting class/conducting daily routines					
Correcting students' work (quizzes, homework, etc.)					
Correcting students' errors in speaking					
Giving instructions for classroom activities					
Tapping on students' background knowledge or experiences					
Asking questions to check students' reading or listening comprehension					
Debriefing with the whole class after pair or small-group activities					
Explaining grammar concepts					
Presenting information about the target culture					
Discussing cultural issues as a class					
Explaining instructions for assignments or projects					
Providing clarification when students don't understand the TL					

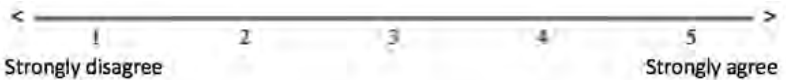
5. What strategies and techniques do you employ to promote effective use of the TL in class? Provide two or three examples.

6. What do you believe students feel about TL use in class (1: strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

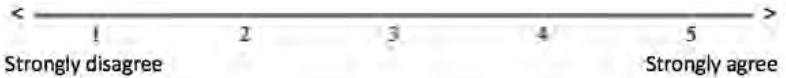
- a) I believe that my students generally feel anxious using the TL, especially during the first semester.



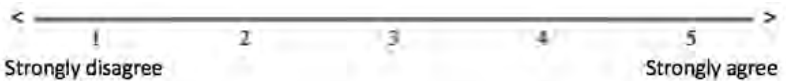
- b) I believe that my students generally find it frustrating to communicate in the TL.



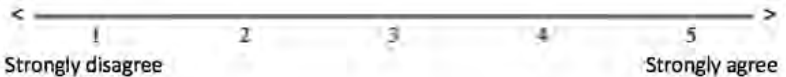
- c) I believe that my students generally view it as a rewarding and worthwhile challenge when they need to use the FL to communicate (rather than relying on English).



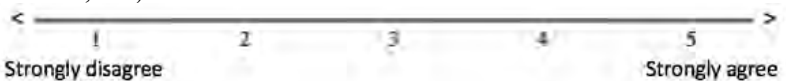
- d) I believe my students generally feel uncomfortable or anxious speaking the TL during activities about FL topics.



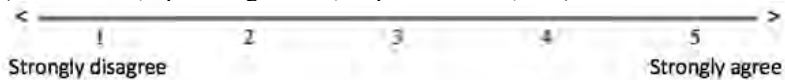
- e) I believe that students generally feel uncomfortable or anxious using the TL when working on, discussing, or asking questions about grammar and usage.



- f) I believe that students generally feel uncomfortable or anxious using the FL when working on, discussing, or asking questions about tests, quizzes, and other assignments (how much will be covered, the format of test sections, etc.).



- g) I believe students generally feel uncomfortable or anxious using the FL when discussing or asking questions about administrative information (office hours, upcoming events, important dates, etc.).



(Adapted from Levine, 2003)

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## FACULTY FORUM

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*Faculty Forum* welcomes readers' contributions. We are interested in (but not limited to) your ideas and views about innovative foreign language education practices, as well as comments on matters of general academic interest and on articles in previous issues of this journal.

### ***Are “Learning Styles” Real?***

JON PHILLIPS

*Faculty Development Support, Academic Support*

We talk a lot about the role of individual learning styles at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC). However, in light of the controversy that exists over the educational implications of learning styles among researchers and educators, perhaps we need to reassess our approach to the learning styles concept in the DLIFLC context.

Theories of learning styles suggest that individuals have different learning styles. These are not differences of ability, but rather differences in preferred ways of processing and retaining new information and skills. This definition includes learning styles theories that differentiate between visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners, or between visual and verbal learners, as well as distinctions between intuitive and analytic thinkers (Willingham, Hughs, & Dobolyi, 2015). Although belief in learning styles theories continues to be widespread in popular culture, in fact, scientific support for these theories is lacking.

The overwhelming consensus among scholars is that no scientific evidence backs this hypothesis of learning styles (Kirschner 2017; Pashler, McDonald, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008; Simmonds, 2014). “While all learners can develop subjective preferences for studying or digesting material, studies deny that students learn better through a self-reported style. Instead, scholars increasingly call for educators to replace ‘neuromyths’ with resources and strategies rooted in evidence from cognitive and adult learning theory” (“Learning Styles as a Myth”, 2019).

How did an invalidated belief become so widely-held? There are multiple reasons why the learning styles concept remains so popular. Willingham, Hughs, and Dobolyi (2015) discuss one possible reason: People commonly take things to be a scientific fact even when they have not seen any evidence that they suppose must exist. It seems that many people simply want to believe in the idea that everybody has the potential to learn effectively if only instruction is tailored to their individual learning styles. The concept is appealing, easy to comprehend, and all-embracing, so why not plausible?

Khazan (2018) conjectures that the spread of the concept is likely connected to the Self-Esteem movement that took over America during the 1980s and 1990s and continues to endure. A certain cultural characteristic was established during this time: it was the role of schools to educate, and also to instill, in each individual child a sense of his or her own specialness and potential. It was an easy transition from this belief to the widespread idea that everyone must have a unique learning style. Teachers like to think that they can reach every student, even struggling students, just by tailoring their instruction to match each student's preferred learning format.

A third reason for the spread of learning styles in the popular culture is the proliferation of the "thriving industry that has developed devoted to the publishing of learning-styles tests and guidebooks for teachers" (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008, p. 105).

In their study, Husmann and O'Loughlin (2018) administered the VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading, and Kinesthetic) questionnaire to hundreds of college-age students to discover their supposed learning styles. The students were then provided with study strategies intended to match their so-called learning styles. The authors found that the majority of students did not use their tailored study strategies, and those who did use strategies that matched their VARK learning style category had no additional success in the course. The main takeaway from research studies such as this is that, at present, there is no adequate evidence base to justify incorporating learning-style assessment into educational practice (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008).

The consensus among researchers is that the weight of evidence fails to support learning styles; learning style theories ought to be debunked. The problem is that the idea of individual learning styles has seeped into popular culture and many people believe it. Although rarely influencing how students actually study, learning styles theories, when brought up by students, are most often offered as an explanation for poor classroom performance (Willingham, Hughs, & Dobolyi, 2015). How many of us have had a student with low performance protest, "Your teaching is not compatible with my learning style," with the expectation that the teacher will make individual accommodations that go beyond quality instruction.

So what are the implications for DLIFLC teachers and students? The bottom line is there is little scientific support for the concept of learning styles, but stronger evidence for learning strategies. Fortunately, cognitive science has identified various methods to enhance foreign language learning, and these techniques have fairly universal benefit and are encouraged and promoted at the

DLIFLC. Students are more successful when they space out their study sessions over time, experience the material in multiple modalities, test themselves on the material as part of their study practice, and elaborate on materials to make meaningful connections (i.e. incorporating real-life tasks and projects) rather than engaging in activities that involve simple repetition of information. These effective strategies were identified decades ago and have convincing and significant support (May, 2018).

Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, DiPietro, and Norman (2010) explain how students benefit from different kinds of instruction and how alternating modes can serve diverse students' aptitude, levels of self-awareness as a learner, and cultural backgrounds. Instructors should imagine students to be neither uniform, nor categorized, in their learning, but instead experiencing similar development through singular personalities and experiences. As such, instructors can incorporate active learning, group work, and inclusive teaching strategies to invite students to engage their full faculties. Multiple modalities can assist all students regardless of proposed learning style.

In conclusion, the present findings, along with extensive prior studies about the myths of learning styles provide strong evidence that instructors and students should not be promoting the concept of learning styles for studying and/or for teaching interventions. Explicit instruction in evidence-based study strategies may help students to better develop strategies that are truly beneficial.

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## **Challenge the Orthodox Way of Teaching Listening**

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Listening plays a vital role in foreign language learning and has long been regarded as an essential element of communication. Through listening, students internalize linguistic information without which they cannot produce language (Brown & Lee, 2015). Yet, in comparison with reading, speaking, and writing skills, “the development of listening skill receives the least systematic attention from the teacher and instructional materials” (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 4). For many teachers, listening comprehension, considered a passive skill, can be developed without help (Osada, 2004). Others find that listening is a skill challenging for teachers to teach and for students to acquire (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010).

Based on the review of several textbooks of foreign language programs at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) and the observation of many classrooms, it was discovered that most of the listening instructional activities tested students’ word recognition or listening comprehension rather than providing instruction to help them in word recognition or comprehension. The teaching of listening usually has students listen to a passage, answer content questions, fill in the blanks with missing words/phrases, transcribe a segment of the passage, or get the gist of the passage. Such an approach overlooks the challenge that students face while listening and does not help them improve their listening skills (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Hence, the purpose of the paper is to challenge this traditional approach to teaching listening. The paper argues that the notion of achieving *comprehension* has led teachers to focus on the product of listening, in the form of answers to content questions, ignoring the listening comprehension process itself. The paper will 1) provide an overview of the listening comprehension process and 2) suggest an instructional framework to enhance the listening comprehension process.

### **THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION PROCESS**

Listening comprehension is a complex process (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2012). In understanding an aural input, the listener decodes the words and builds the relationship between them, formulates the meaning of an idea, forgets the actual words, and retains the gist of the idea. Then, the listener adds more ideas to build the summary of the whole text (Field, 2008; Goh, 2000;

Vandergrift, 2004; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Figure 1 illustrates the listening comprehension process.



Figure 1  
*Listening Comprehension Process*

Listening comprehension undergoes two main processes: 1) the decoding process and 2) the meaning-building process (Field, 2008; Goh, 2000; Vandergrift, 2004; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Decoding happens at different levels: phoneme, syllable, word, syntax, and intonation. The meaning-building process happens while the listener is decoding the message at different levels; word, syntactic, and the meaning of intonation. The listener exercises several processes to build the overall contextual meaning. The listener identifies information, interprets inferences such as emotional overtones, attitude, and nuances, identifies relevance, redundancy, or incoherence, and integrates information while checking consistency of the overall meaning. These meaning-building processes are directed by the listener's contextual and linguistic background knowledge (Field, 2008; Vandergrift, 2004; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Vandergrift (2004) explains that while decoding and building the meaning, students are challenged with linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic issues. Linguistic issues are tied to phonology, word, and syntactical formations such as consonants (emphatic, non-emphatic, vowels, semivowels, etc.), syllable structure, word structure (prefix, infix, suffix) and syntax (word order and function). Paralinguistic elements communicate the speaker's feelings, attitude, or emotional state. Extralinguistic elements are those that provide evidential information such as identity of the speaker, habitual aspects of the speaker's voice quality, overall pitch range, and volume. The chances for not decoding or mis-decoding are greater when the listening input is higher than students' level (Field, 2008; Nguyen & Abbott, 2016). This often happens as teachers provide listening input higher than students' level in order to achieve higher proficiency. From the students' perspectives, they may be experienced learners in mathematics, science, history, or other subjects, but the strategies that they developed from studying these subjects do not transfer to decoding or building the meaning of the aural input of a challenging foreign language (Vandergrift, 2004). Considering this complex comprehension process and the challenges that students face, teachers need a different approach to teaching listening. They need to teach listening strategically.

## STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LISTENING

The paper proposes a framework to help students attend to the comprehension process and to support them in decoding, building the contextual meaning, and overcoming linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic challenges. The framework has two phases: 1) Structured Preview Phase; and 2) Selective Strategic Listening Phase.

### 1. Structured Preview Phase

This phase may be compared to a movie trailer. The trailer consists of a series of selected shots from the movie and its purpose is to attract the audience. Excerpts are usually drawn from the most exciting, funniest, or noteworthy parts of the movie, but in abbreviated form and without producing spoilers. Like the movie trailer, the Structured Preview Phase consists of a series of selected strategies that would direct student's attention to the linguistic, paralinguistic, and extralinguistic elements in the text. The objectives are: a) adjusting to the speaker's voice, intonation, enunciation, pitch, etc.; b) using cues to predict contextual meaning; c) predicting emotional overtone using stress and intonation; d) raising awareness of sociocultural context; and e) attending to the function of grammatical features. The description of each is as follows:

- a. *Adjusting to speaker's voice and preview of content.* Students listen to the first few seconds of the listening passage while reading the corresponding transcript. They guess what the passage is about and share their answers with peers. Vangergrift (2004) explains that the first couple of seconds of any listening texts are challenging for language learners. Inexperienced listeners need to adjust to the speaker's voice. This activity helps students adjust to the speaker's voice by recognizing the speaker's articulation of sounds, stress, pitch range, and loudness (extralinguistic elements). It also previews the type of vocabulary, grammatical structure, and syntax (linguistic elements) that students will hear in the passage. The preview helps students employ content and linguistic background knowledge to facilitate comprehension (Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2011).
- b. *Predicting contextual meaning.* Students listen to five key excerpts/sentences taken from the passage and suggest a possible context for each. Next, they write a prediction summary of the passage. This strategy requires some preparation from the teacher. First, the teacher listens to the passage and identifies several sentences or excerpts that may guide the students in predicting the context of the text. Students are then asked to listen to the sentences and suggest a possible context of each (what, where, when, who, how, or any other information worth noting). Using context developed, students produce a short prediction summary of the text. This two-step strategy helps students identify details and employ applicable background

knowledge to support comprehension. Ehrman (1996) explains that students who have the ability to separate details from surrounding contexts are successful students. Moreover, Huettig (2014) suggests that prediction is necessary to understand language. He explained that prediction gives students a reason to listen and helps them make connections between prior knowledge and the text.

- c. *Predicting emotional overtone.* Emotions are expressed differently by speakers from various language and cultural backgrounds. For example, emotions of despair, happiness, depression, or anger expressed by an American are different from those expressed by an Arab. Identifying the emotional status of a speaker helps students understand the speaker’s intentions and attitude. In this strategy, students listen to several short segments, extract the content words spoken with the highest stress, and take notes. They guess the reason for the speaker stressing these words and mark the speaker’s emotions on an emotional status chart (see the example featuring student marks in Figure 2). The chart helps students to determine when the speaker is active, passive, positive or negative in delivering the message.

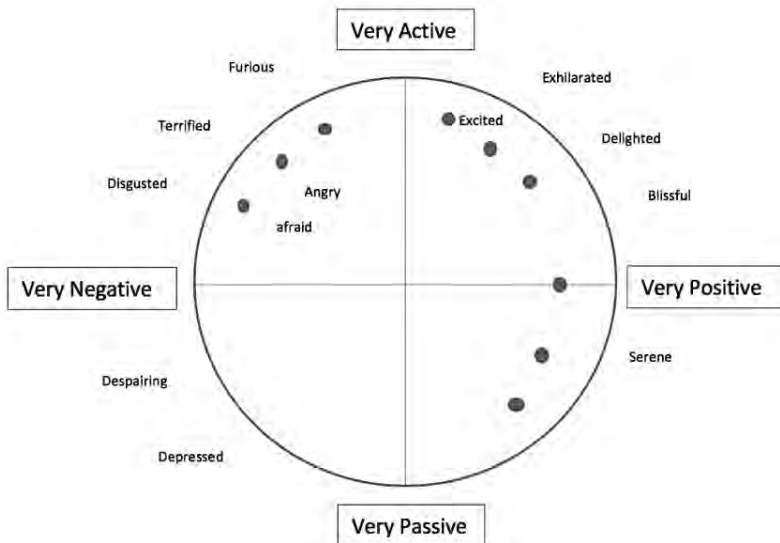


Figure 2  
*Emotional Status Chart*

- d. *Attending to function of grammatical features.* This strategy directs students’ attention to the role of grammar in building the meaning of the listening text. The teacher listens to the text and identifies the common grammatical feature(s) used by the speaker. The grammar features are constitutive in

constructing the intended meaning of the text (Hengeveld & Lachlan, 2008). Students listen to short segments that include the common grammatical feature(s). They transcribe the sentences, identify the common grammatical feature(s) used, and indicate the intention of the speaker for using them. For example, if negation was used by the speaker, the teacher extracts the excerpts that include the negation forms and asks students to identify the form and the intention of the speaker. Possible students' answers are: the speaker used negation to express rejection, refusal, or opposition. The strategy helps students focus on and build not only the structural, but also the pragmatic, functions of the language (Hengeveld & Lachlan, 2008).

- e. *Raising awareness of sociocultural context.* The teacher selects the social, cultural, or historical references included in the passage and asks the students to guess the implication of each or find them on the Internet (in the target language). Students share their guesses. Cultural elements can be names of cities, places, addresses, official/unofficial titles, dates of special events, social activity, celebration, and rituals. McConachy (2008) highlights the importance of the sociocultural context in meaning making. This activity helps students situate the text in a sociocultural context, improving the meaning building process when listening to the entire listening passage.

## 2. Selective Strategic Listening Phase

In this phase, students implement several strategies to achieve specific learning objectives. Based on students' needs and the content of the text, the teacher chooses the type of strategy that students can use to process the input. Some strategies support top-down, others bottom-up processing. Strategies include: a) building a storyline and staging information; b) paraphrasing to understand inferencing; c) identifying redundancy; d) selecting relevant information; e) decoding selectively; f) building relationships among paragraphs; g) identifying referents; h) differentiating between facts and opinions; and i) building a comprehensive summary.

- a. *Building a storyline and staging information.* This strategy is useful for listening passages that include a sequence of events. Students listen to the passage and use a graphic organizer to indicate the chronological order of events: a) what happened, b) what is happening, and c) what may happen. Kaplan's thesis (1966) was that languages have various patterns of discourse. For example, English discourse proceeds in a straight line whereas Oriental discourse proceeds in a spiral line. For students who are studying Oriental languages (such as Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, and Pashtu), this activity would help them sequence the events in chronological order, not discourse order, which would be different.

- b. *Paraphrasing to understand inferencing.* After selecting key sentences, the teacher paraphrases them with the same words but different word order and hence different meanings. Students listen to the corresponding original sentences, read the paraphrased sentences, and indicate which ones mean the same and explain why. This strategy helps students understand nuances and shades of meaning with a focus on syntactic formations.
- c. *Identifying referents.* Almost all pronouns—personal, possessive, reflexive, relative, reciprocal, demonstrative, and indefinite—challenge inexperienced listeners (Brown & Lee, 2015). They are difficult to detect in a speech or track their referents, especially if they appear, as in some languages, attached to verbs, nouns, particles, and prepositions. To help them identify the referents of pronouns, have students listen to the passage, read transcripts of short extracts where a pronoun (or more) is used, and write the referent of each as indicated in the listening passage.
- d. *Decoding selectively.* Having a specific form-focused objective in mind, the teacher prepares a partial transcript, alters syllables, words, or phrases using the same letters or word derivatives. The key is that the altered transcript must be comprehensible. Students listen and underline the odd transcription while listening. Next, they listen for a second or third time to correct the transcription. This strategy helps students decode at different levels: phoneme, syllable, word, or phrase.
- e. *Identifying redundancy.* Certain speakers repeat themselves or others' ideas. Such repetition may enhance or impede comprehension (Brown & Lee, 2015). In this strategy, students listen to an extract and write it down. Then, they listen to the whole passage and find the sentence which says the same thing in a different way and write that down.
- f. *Building relationship among paragraphs.* Audio or video presents ideas in chunks or hypothetical paragraphs. Each paragraph provides a specific meaning that contributes to overall contextual meaning. Have students listen to a passage, and whenever they think the speaker is starting a new paragraph, write the first three or four words. They listen to the passage again, check their paragraphs with one another, examine how each paragraph is linked to the previous one, and make brief notes about what the speaker is saying in each paragraph. Students may need to listen to the passage several times to complete this task. This strategy helps students follow the speaker's development of thoughts.
- g. *Selecting relevant information.* Students often have difficulty identifying the essential information in a text (Brown & Lee, 2015; Ehrman, 1996). The teacher may prepare a summary of the listening passage. This features altered or additional information that is not mentioned in the passage. Let students

listen to the passage and read the slightly altered summary, then ask them to underline the points which they think were altered or not mentioned in the passage.

- h. *Distinguishing between facts and opinions.* Speakers often build their opinions around facts (Giridharan, 2012). Using a graphic organizer with two columns, facts vs. opinions, students listen to an excerpt and compose a list of the facts and opinions. Then let them explain their answers.
- i. *Building a comprehensive summary.* Teachers often ask students to listen and summarize a passage, overlooking the difficulty of the summary task (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Brown and Lee (2015) explain that summarizing requires grasping the original meaning, identifying key points, and restating them simply, briefly, and accurately. This is a difficult listening task for inexperienced foreign language students. Using a graphic organizer, students listen to the text in segments, where each is represented with a box, and take notes in the box to specify the main idea of each segment. They may need to listen repeatedly to add more information and build a comprehensive summary.

## CONCLUSION

This paper explores an alternative approach to teaching listening. The approach has two phases: (1) Structured Preview Phase and (2) Selective Strategic Listening Phase. The approach, based on the framework of viewing comprehension as a process, helps students overcome listening challenges. The goal of the proposed strategies is to enable students to decode and build the contextual meaning of the listening text. Based on students' needs, teachers may select the type and number of strategies from the Structured Preview Phase and/or the Selective Strategic Listening Phase. Both phases develop text processing strategies to cope with the input in the listening passage and make sense of the information obtained.

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## ***What Successful Students Do to Succeed***

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Why some students achieve 3 or 2+ on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) whereas others do not. Although there are multiple causes for student performance, the researcher believes that some unsuccessful students do not know how to study a foreign language. Many students have no experience studying a second language; they need to learn how to use appropriate strategies to improve their learning abilities. “We would expect that use of appropriate strategies leads to enhanced actual and perceived proficiency, which in turn creates higher self-esteem....” (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; p.75).

Other factors, such as interest, motivation, and attitude, also affect language learning. “Affective strategies help learners directly optimize their emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations for the purpose of L2 learning” (O’Neil & Spielberger, 1979; p.64). In addition, “L2 learners benefit from knowing more about how to set goals. Learners need this information in order to be strategic planners of their own learning.” (Oxford, 2011; p.79).

To answer the question of “What do successful students do to succeed?”, the researcher designed a study to interview successful students and identify the strategies (learning, time management, coping, etc.) that they had used. The purpose of identifying the strategies was to share them with new students, as the successful students’ learning experiences and strategies may help new students set learning goals, manage learning, and succeed in language training.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Participants**

Eighteen successful students from various departments at the Persian Farsi School (UPF) participated in the study. Success was defined by student DLPT5 and OPI scores. The 18 students scored as follows:

Five students scored 3, 3, 2

Three students scored 3, 2+, 2

Four students scored 2+, 3, 2

Six students scored 2+, 2+, and 2

Participation was voluntary. The participants agreed to share their learning strategies and learning experiences with new students.

### **Procedure**

To identify the strategies used by successful students, the researcher conducted and recorded one-on-one interviews with the 18 participants. Ten questions were prepared for the interview. These questions were chosen based on relevance to the military learning environment at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) and to students of the Persian Farsi Basic Course. During the interview, all participants answered the 10 questions.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made a Powerpoint presentation to new students at the Persian Farsi School (UPF).

### **Rationale for the Interview Questions**

*1: How can a student balance school and military requirements?* This question is relevant to students at DLIFLC because in addition to being full time students, they have military duties that sometimes become more important than participation in class; therefore, task management plays an important role in a student's success.

*2: How do you manage your time to do all the tasks?* Having taught at DLIFLC for 15 years, the researcher was aware of the military duties that students have—they are required to follow the services' rules and perform well (PT, formation in the morning, mandatory ceremonies, etc.). Moreover, students must spend time on homework assignments, learning new vocabulary and grammar rules, and practicing listening and reading skills. Time management is important in students' success.

*3: How do you manage your sleeping time?* Although the military units do not have rules on how much sleep students need or when they should go to bed, 5-6 hours of sleep are necessary for students to keep fit, handle seven hours of intensive language instruction, perform military duties, and fulfill personal responsibilities. It is, therefore, important to know how students manage their sleeping time.

*4: What is the best time to study during the weekdays?* This question is to discover when students feel is the best time to focus on learning.

*5: Did you take notes in class? If yes, what was/were the benefit(s) for you?* This question is to find out if students see note-taking as beneficial way to use their time during class.

*6: Did you have a study plan? If yes, tell me about your study plan.* A study plan may be especially helpful for busy students with various tasks and duties. Planning the best time for study and managing priorities are some steps that successful students take.

*7: Which of the following are the best places for study? 1) the school library, 2) the school house, 3) the public library, 4) an Internet caffè, and 5)*

anywhere away from TV or other distractions. With many locations available to students, it helps to learn where students find most suitable to focus on learning and conduct various learning activities.

8: *What are the benefits of studying in a group?* Teachers encourage students to study in a group, learning from one another. Learning how much time students spend in group study and which learning materials are most effective for group study provides useful information,

9: *Do you have any advice for new students?* This question is to elicit more information on student learning experiences and understandings of the learning environment at the DLIFLC.

10: *In your opinion, what is/are the benefit(s) of being consistent in learning a language?* This question is to discover whether successful students benefit from consistent, regular practice.

## FINDINGS

### **Question 1: How can a student balance school and military requirements?**

Almost all interviewees responded with “by being organized” to balance school and military requirements. When asked to elaborate, they explained that they made a priority list for daily tasks. When performing each task, they made a plan of what and how to do it.

### **Question 2: How do you manage your time to do all these tasks?**

Responses to this question showed that individuals handled daily work in different ways:

- Allot time for each task such as school work, military duties, and relaxing.
- Every day do a part of each task.
- Learn every day’s grammar on the same day.
- Learn every day’s vocabulary and be prepared for next day’s new vocabulary.
- Make flash cards for the vocabulary learned that day.
- Review previously learned vocabulary.
- Study the feedback given by teachers.
- Make a list of mistakes.
- Reward self after finishing each task—such as spending time with friends; taking short trips to places around Monterey; contacting family members; and having fun.

### **Question 3: How do you manage your sleeping time?**

During the weekdays, almost all participants tried to sleep at least six hours; i.e., 10 P.M. to 4 A.M., take a short nap after lunch, and catch up on their sleep on the weekend. Some students explained that because of more sleep on the

weekend, they did not have any problem that was caused by lack of sleep on Mondays, or even Tuesdays. Some respondents elaborated that a good night's sleep helped them to be focused during class sessions; remember most of the materials learned that day; and improve the quality of learning.

**Question 4: What is the best time to study during the weekdays?**

Four choices were given to students: 1) right after school, 2) after dinner, 3) early in the morning, and 4) during lunch time.

Student responses provided interesting information. Although most participants acknowledged that the best time for study was different for individuals, many stated that evenings (after dinner) and early mornings worked best for them, as they had more focus, better concentration, a fresh and rested mind and body. None of the interviewees recommended study in depth during lunch time. In fact, most believed that lunch time was good for taking a short nap and getting ready for the afternoon classes.

**Question 5: Did you take notes in class? If yes, what was/were the benefit(s) of note taking for you?**

Participants mentioned that note taking in class was essential, especially during the first and second semesters, because there were so many learning objectives to reach every day, such as grammar rules, pronunciation, word definitions, and phrases. It was impossible to remember them without notes. They reviewed the notes after class. Benefits of taking notes are summarized as follows:

- Taking notes kept me more engaged during the class sessions.
- Taking notes helped me to pin down what I needed to study at exam time.
- Taking notes enabled me to review the daily objectives instead of an entire textbook.
- Taking notes in class is the only way to prevent missing any part of every day's objectives.
- Taking notes is part of an attempt to become an independent and autonomous learner.

**Question 6: Did you have a study plan? If yes, tell me about your study plan?**

All interviewees had a study plan that they followed on a regular basis. Many had one study plan for weekdays and one for the weekends. Some relaxation was built into the weekend plan; such as going to a movie, having dinner outside of the base, and playing games (soccer, volleyball, tennis, pool, video, etc.) with friends and peers.

The following examples indicate that having a study plan is essential for success:

- Learned every day's objectives the same day;
- Wrote flash cards and reviewed them every day;

- Reviewed previous lessons every weekend;
- Reviewed the vocabulary list every other day;
- Prepared for the Unit Tests several days in advance;
- During the weekend, spent some relaxing hours and slept a few hours more.

**Question 7: Which of the following places are the best places for study? 1) the school library, 2) the school house, 3) the public library, 4) an Internet café, and 5) anywhere away from TV or other distractions**

Most responded, “A study place that maximizes productivity is the best (the learner can tell).” Almost all interviewees mentioned that for grammar and homework, it worked better to study in a group. They studied in the library. As for learning vocabulary and writing journals, which required concentration, they preferred to study alone in their rooms or in the library. Students found that writing journals needed maximum concentration. Apart from being creative, writing was a good opportunity to explain their thoughts in detail and receive constructive feedback that helped them learn from their mistakes.

**Question 8: What are the benefits of studying in a group?**

The participants indicated that they benefited from group study. The benefits are summarized as follows:

- Sometimes learning materials were confusing and, even with notes taken in class, one still could not fully understand. When studying with peers, students compared notes and put information together to have a clear understanding of the objectives.
- Group study helped students prepare for the unit tests. They spent a considerable amount of time testing one another and learning from the experience.
- Group studying involved teaching and learning from one another. Some grammar rules were impossible to grasp during limited class time. Due to the compactness of the course, teachers did not have the time to explain grammar rules in detail. Group study and note sharing helped solve this problem.

**Question 9: Do you have any advice for new students?**

Each interviewee offered several suggestions for new students. The following is a list of suggestions. Similar suggestions were grouped to avoid repetition.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions during class.
- Come to class with a list of questions.
- Take notes in class and study them at home.
- Make sure you learn every day's objectives before leaving school.

- Participate in all assistance programs available to you in the school such as one-on-one sessions, *zero hour, eight hours*, etc.
- Ask for a tutor and spend as much time as you can to benefit from your tutor's knowledge of the TL.
- Do self-study and learn as much as possible about the culture, history, traditions, life style, and everything that is related to the target language (TL) to build strong background knowledge.
- Participate in group study with your peers and quiz each other to be better prepared for class and exams.
- Start learning vocabulary from day one and review it every day.
- Take a quick look at the next day's objectives to be prepared for the new learning materials.
- Take your homework assignments seriously and complete them every day.
- Carefully study and digest the feedback you receive from your instructors on homework assignments or journals to avoid making the same mistakes again.
- Start speaking Farsi early in the course and use words that you learn every day while speaking the TL.
- If not every day, at least every weekend, listen to Farsi news on Radio Farda, BBC Farsi, Voice of America, or other Farsi programs, and watch some movies in the TL.
- If possible, get up an hour early every weekday and establish regular study habits.
- Make sure you get enough sleep during the weekends or holidays to recover from being short of sleep during the weekdays.
- Definitely set aside some time during the weekends to entertain yourself and spend some hours with friends.
- Be consistent in studying and don't spend a day without learning something about the TL, especially vocabulary.

**Question 10: In your opinion, what is/are the benefit(s) of being consistent in learning a language?**

Interviewees strongly believed in consistency. They emphasized that studying every day and regularly being engaged in language learning were extremely helpful. Some indicated that consistency was the key to success because consistency allowed them to find the most effective learning strategy. Studying regularly also enabled them to develop a learning habit. The following are some benefits mentioned by the interviewees:

- Consistency means daily practice, and naturally it helps a person to progress and results in improvement in learning.
- Consistency fosters accountability and makes setting aside time to study a priority in order to have a better focus in learning.

- Trying something consistently for a period of time allows the learner to determine whether it works for him/her.
- Consistency keeps learners up to date with every day's learning objectives and enables them to help their classmates.
- Studying regularly prevents students from falling behind and, as a result, from becoming discouraged and giving up on learning.
- Consistency enables students to improve their knowledge and demonstrate the level of proficiency that they need to be successful in the final DLPT5 and OPI assessments.
- Consistency helps individuals find the method of learning a foreign language that works best for them, because there is no single universal learning strategy that works best for everyone.
- Consistency helps one stay up-to-date.
- Consistency is an essential part of time management.

### **Summary**

About 90% of the interviewees mentioned practices as the key to their success. The following is a summary of what they did to succeed.

- Having a study plan and following it regularly.
- Making notes in class and studying them after class and at the end of the day.
- Carefully managing out-of-class time (leisure time) and setting priorities for each part of the learning materials.
- Spending sufficient time on building thorough background knowledge.
- Actively participating in speaking activities.
- Using the TL as much as possible outside of class.
- Learning about the culture and history of the target people.
- Listening to music in the TL and trying to understand the content of the songs.
- Reading simple articles and listening to the news in the TL.
- Learning about the target people's daily life situation such as their struggles, happiness, interests, food, sports, forms of entertainment, and economy.
- Learning about the target country's international policies.
- Being consistent in any of the above-mentioned steps.
- Taking time to have fun and enjoying life.

### **DISCUSSION**

Although the purpose of this action research was to elicit information about successful students' learning strategies and share the information with new students, the researcher also hoped that this study would shed light on the problems that unsuccessful students might experience. Findings of this study

showed that determination, consistency, time management, and motivation affected student success; specifically, successful students used separate study plans for weekdays and weekends; took notes during class; participated in group study; actively engaged in self-study. Sharing these successful learning strategies with new and/or unsuccessful students may help them to resolve some problems in learning a second language. “Many learners need affective learning strategies to deal with anxiety, frustration, low motivation, and uncertain self-efficacy.” (Oxford, 2011, p. 67).

An important finding was the participants’ self-discipline in study. Without exception, 100% of the participants ( $n=18$ ) had a study plan for weekdays and another for weekends and holidays, and they were committed to following the plans. This showed that these students were highly determined and motivated in learning a foreign language and benefited from being consistent in their study. Another important finding was that the participants were flexible in using learning strategies, such as studying in a group, studying individually, and doing self-study to build strong background knowledge. In so doing, they became independent learners who could effectively manage their learning.

The findings of this study may help both instructors and students. As stated earlier, some students do not know how to learn a second language. They need extra care, more time, closer supervision, and more guidance from teachers about learning strategies and time management. As teachers, we may remind students of the importance of practice, the effectiveness of consistency in studying, the benefits of group study, and the necessity of self-study. We need to provide the above services especially to unsuccessful students because these students may need the information and guidance more than most students. There must be a carefully designed plan that students with learning difficulties can follow. Such a plan also allows us to monitor student improvement in the learning process.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study provides useful information about successful students’ learning strategies and learning experiences, which can be shared with other students, particularly those who do not know how to learn a second language. The information also helps teaching teams to encourage, motivate, and guide students to overcome difficulties in language learning.

The study, however, has its limitations. As the participants were not randomly selected, they might not fully represent the student population in the Persian Farsi School. Another weakness was that the number of participants ( $n=18$ ) was not large enough for the outcome of this study to be generalized to the all students. The fact that all participants were in the military refrained the researcher from questions about their living conditions, personal matters, and military unit obligations—thus the interviews did not examine many factors that could have contributed to student success.

To increase the validity of the study, further research is recommended that includes: 1) a larger sample size to allow a broader generalization of the



findings at the DLIFLC, and 2) research of unsuccessful students that reveal the reasons for learning failure. For example, It would be beneficial to conduct a larger-scale study that includes all UPF students who have failed the final DLPT5. A logical follow-up to the current study would be a study of the effects of sharing the successful students' strategies with new students.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the students who participated in this action research. They generously and willingly volunteered to be interviewed by me. Special thanks go to my dear friend, Dr. Gordon Jackson, for our wonderful discussions about the findings of this study. Dr. Jackson generously shared his linguistic insights with me and made constructive suggestions.

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**THEME  
SECTION**

**REACHING HIGHER LEVELS:  
HOW WE DO IT**

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## ***Developing Socio-Cultural Competency through Media and Social Media***

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### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper discusses how to develop learners' socio-cultural competency through media and social media. In particular, it focuses on the use of TV commercials to help learners reach a deeper cross-cultural understanding of the target language and society. The paper will 1) review the criteria for Professional Intercultural Communication Competence on the Interagency Language Roundtable Language Skill Scale<sup>1</sup> and discuss the skills learners need to reach higher-level proficiency; 2) explain how to use TV commercials to promote intercultural competency based on the theoretical framework of the Intercultural Development Continuum, modified from the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett,1986); and 3) demonstrate an engaging way to use discussion threads on social media, which enhances students' socio-cultural competence.

### **Intercultural Communication Competence**

Some scholars have defined intercultural communication competence as "the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviors that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment" (Chen & Starosta, 1999, p.28). Others suggest that intercultural

communication competence is “the individual’s capacity to suspend or modify some of the old cultural ways, and learn and accommodate some of the new cultural ways, and creatively find ways to manage the dynamics of cultural difference and the accompanying stress” (Kim, 1992, p.377). In the model developed by Byram (1997), a comprehensive definition of intercultural communicative competence includes the social context and non-verbal dimensions of communication as well as linguistic competence.

Intercultural communication competence is also an essential skill measured by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). As “communicative effectiveness entails more than language” (ILR, 2012), the ILR descriptions of intercultural competence include both *linguistic* and *extralinguistic* elements and incorporate both *verbal* and *nonverbal* forms of communication. Learners that have achieved Professional Competence (Level 3) and above are able to successfully participate in most social and professional interactions by accurately interpreting and responding to both formal and informal language and behavior. In addition to having good control of nonverbal responses, learners with Professional Competence in intercultural communication are able to communicate via social media, which reflects their “significant knowledge and understanding of cultural expectations” (ILR, 2012). In a study on the factors contributing to level 4 language proficiency among adult language learners, 95% of the interviewees considered improved sociocultural competence as a crucial element, whereas improved vocabulary and grammar were identified by only 80% of the participants as crucial (Leaver & Atwell, 2002).

### **Intercultural Development Continuum**

In developing students’ intercultural competence, we can use Bennett’s (1986) Intercultural Development Continuum as a theoretical framework to gauge individual perceptions and attitudes toward other cultures. There are five stages in Bennett’s Intercultural Development Continuum, ranging from monocultural to intercultural mindsets: Denial, Polarization, Minimization, Acceptance, and Adaptation (Bennett, 1986).

On one end of the spectrum, in the Denial stage, individuals avoid or dismiss other cultures, because they believe that their culture is the only reality.

Next, individuals in the Polarization phase see their culture and other cultures as polar opposites. They are either in the defensive or reversal mode, thinking that their culture is either superior or inferior to other cultures.

The next stage is Minimization, where individuals believe that universal values such as family values and work ethics can be applied across cultures. Cultural differences are minimized while similarities are over emphasized in this stage.

Beyond the Minimization stage is the Acceptance phase. People at this stage are curious about other cultures and are able to appreciate the richness of other cultures. They not only accept values from other cultures as equally valid

but also have the capability to learn the cultural knowledge required to interpret different cultural behaviors.

The most developed stage in the continuum is Adaptation. In this phase, individuals are able to shift among multiple cultural perspectives as well as among multiple social behaviors according to their socio-cultural environment. They achieve not only *cognitive frame-shifting*—changing cultural perspectives—but also *behavioral code-shifting*—changing behaviors in culturally-appropriate ways (Bennett, 1986). To achieve Professional Competence (Level 3), learners should have reached the stage of Acceptance; to achieve Advanced Professional Competence (Level 4), learners should have attained the stage of Adaptation.

## **USING MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

Having established the framework for assessing intercultural competence, we took advantage of the plethora of authentic media materials on the internet to develop our students' socio-cultural competence. We chose to focus on advertisement because they are omnipresent in our daily life and involve both verbal and non-verbal elements of communication. As the goal of advertising is to convince people to purchase the advertised product or service, a variety of “persuasive techniques” particular to a culture are used to “appeal to the psychology of consumers” (Baiymbetocva, Kalibekova, & Raiymbekova, 2013). Hence, guiding students to analyze both the cultural content and linguistic features of advertisements can be an enjoyable and effective way to promote their intercultural competence.

### **Learning Activities**

We selected a piece of TV advertisement that stirred up much controversy in Chinese and Western media and guided students to analyze it based on the framework of the Intercultural Development Continuum. We selected this TV commercial because researchers have observed that discussing controversial issues in the classroom increases students' critical thinking skills and appreciation of cultural diversity (Steiner, Brzuzy, Gerdes, & Hurdle, 2003). The following paragraphs describe how we conducted learning activities associated with the TV commercial.

#### *Step 1: Initial Discussion*

After showing students the advertisement, we asked students to share their initial response—first impressions and emotional reactions—in pairs or groups. Based on individual responses, students rated each other in terms of which stage they think they belong in the Intercultural Development Continuum. The purpose of this activity is twofold: it promotes learners' self-awareness through

self and peer evaluation; it provides instructors diagnostic information about the baseline of students' current level of intercultural competence.

### *Step 2: In-Depth Analysis*

Based on the iceberg theory of culture<sup>2</sup>, visible cultural behavior and phenomena represents only the tip of the iceberg that is easily observable in daily cultural transactions (Language and Culture Worldwide, 2000). To explore the core values and beliefs hidden beneath the superficial cultural phenomena, we asked students to probe deeper by conducting an in-depth analysis of both the linguistic and cultural content of this commercial using an analysis worksheet. Students worked in pairs or groups to analyze both verbal and non-verbal elements, as well as the characters, plot, and linguistic features of the advertisement. Listed below are some questions that help students with the analysis:

- What product is being advertised? What kind of role does this product play in the target language society?
- What is the plot and theme of the advertisement?
- What are the characters like in the advertisement? What can be observed about their facial expressions, body language, age, sex, hair and skin color, ethnicity, education, occupation, relationship (among one another)?
- What are the linguistic features of the verbal communication? What kind of language register is used? Does it include any cultural references?
- How is language used in the advertisement? Does it provide information or does it try to generate some kind of emotional response? How and why?
- What is the general ambience of the advertisement? How does it create this mood? For what purpose?

After analyzing the advertisement, students, in pairs or groups, selected 2-3 verbal and non-verbal elements of the advertisement for a more in-depth cultural analysis based on the following chart:

	Surface Culture (words, actions, music, facial expression, body language, attire, etc.)	Underlying Values (perceptions, assumptions, attitudes, expectations, beliefs, etc.)
Verbal communication		
Non-verbal communication		

After interpreting the underlying core cultural beliefs and values conveyed in the advertisement, students discussed the following questions:

- Who is the target audience of the advertisement? How do you know?
- What is the intended message of the advertisement? Why?
- What socio-cultural beliefs are being highlighted? How and why?

### *Step 3. Production*

The in-depth analysis of the commercial's linguistic and cultural features serves as scaffolding for the production task. In this task, we introduced students to a social media website. The selection of a social media website was based on criteria such as language quality, level appropriateness, and topic relevance. For instance, we selected a popular online forum in China and one of the discussion threads featured a heated debate on a controversial advertisement. Students were asked to analyze discussion posts and identify posts that represent the mentality of individuals at different stages in the Intercultural Communication Continuum. Then, in a virtual discussion forum created within our classroom, students composed a paragraph-level post, sharing their opinions about the commercial and critiquing the posts they identified with justifications supporting their arguments. We assessed students' posts based on word choice, syntax, language register, and socio-cultural appropriateness. Analyzing threads from authentic discussion forum enabled students to evaluate how native Chinese speakers perceived the commercial and how they interpreted its implicit messages. In order to formulate responding posts and offer their opinions, students engaged in critical reflection to find the most culturally appropriate way to get their message across, thereby expanding their intercultural communication competence.

## **CONCLUSION**

The learning activities outlined above have helped students in multiple facets. Using the Intercultural Development Continuum as a theoretical framework allowed students to reflect on their current state of intercultural competence and guided them to the next level. By analyzing both the linguistic and cultural content of TV commercials, students probed deeper into the hidden socio-cultural values. In this digital age, viral and controversial commercials always spark an abundant outpouring of comments from netizens. Using these authentic materials raised students' learning interest and exposed them to native speakers' perceptions and interpretations of the chosen commercial that they otherwise would not have access to. Analyzing online discussion posts based on the intercultural continuum also allowed students to explore the values and beliefs of the target society and examine the differences from their culture. Finally, the composition of virtual discussion posts in response to netizens encouraged students to express their opinions in culturally appropriate ways, demonstrating the progress and results in their learning.

## NOTES

1. The Interagency Language Roundtable Language Skill Scale is the standard scale for measuring language proficiency in the US Federal government services.
2. The iceberg theory of culture (The Cultural Iceberg) posits that visible cultural behavior or phenomenon are merely “external manifestations” driven by invisible deep-rooted values and beliefs of a society.

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## REVIEWS

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***Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide to Theory and Practice.* By Patricia Cranton. (2016). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. Pp. 174.**

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*Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Patricia Cranton includes a wealth of information on adult learning from the learners' perspective. After defining transformative learning, the author explains how transformative learning is situated in the context of adult learning and concludes with the principles of applying transformative learning to practice. Several case studies are presented and analyzed at the end of each chapter, offering insights for teaching that is transformative and empowering. The book provides a framework for incorporating transformative learning in different settings. The intended audiences are adult educators and adult learners. It consists of a preface, acknowledgments, and ten chapters. Although not clearly indicated in the content page, the first five chapters focus on theory and context, whereas the subsequent five provide strategies for promoting transformative learning.

### **Outline of the Book**

The first three chapters address adult education, the origins of the transformative learning theory, and its context. Based on Mezirow's (1991) definition of transformative learning—a process in which assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives become more open and subject to change when challenged, the author integrates the theory with Dirkx's (2012) notion of imagination and intuition and its effect on understanding the transformative process, and with Brookfield's (2005) perspective on critical theory. Critical theory proposes that critical thinking is a process that identifies, challenges, and changes perspectives.



Chapter 4 explores the transformative learning process from the learner's perspective, illustrated by the learning experiences of the author's students and colleagues. Their experiences articulate how learners felt as the process happened. Chapter 5 describes how learning preferences and styles affect transformative learning. The author uses Jung's (1971) views of psychological processes to show how individual differences influence the way we learn.

Chapters 6 to 9 examine the integral elements of the transformative process: reflection, empowerment, and the roles of learners and teachers. The author endorses reflection as a critical component of transformative learning. Although it is possible for learners to casually engage in critical thinking, it is the educators' responsibility to help learners challenge and examine previous beliefs. To establish an environment conducive to transformative learning, we need to reflect on how learners and teachers engage in the learning process. The educator should serve as a role model, establishing learning environments that foster trust and positive relationships among learners, challenge learners' assumptions and beliefs, and accept and respect learners.

The last chapter reflects on our own practices, maintaining explicit objectives and engaging in critical reflections and dialogs with others. The foundation of transformative learning is the awareness of our philosophy as educators. Heavy teaching workloads, lesson planning, and giving feedback to students cause instructors to seldom think about their own views of the education process.

## **Review**

I recommend this book because it serves the purpose of understanding what the transformative learning process is and how to engage in it. The highlighted sections, summaries, and case studies of each chapter are helpful, as they provide useful thoughts for consideration. The arguments following the case studies are, in my opinion, inherent in the transformative learning process. Providing a flexible learning solution that offers learners a convenient way to move at their own pace may help them achieve their educational goals.

I appreciate the recommendations for promoting reflection, an essential component of the transformative process, in a meaningful way. It should start with creating an environment where learners decide the meaning of learning independently. They are challenged with open-ended questions that allow them to develop new ways of relating to knowledge. This is particularly helpful when the probes are drawn on learners' experience and interests relevant to the topic.

Transformative learning, moreover, is tied to empowerment, meaning that transformative learning experiences start with self-reflection in a trusting and sharing environment, and allow for a change in perspective. Planning, self-awareness, support, and sharing with others need a supportive and empowering setting. The most important suggestions for empowerment in the classroom, from the instructor's perspective, are to 1) develop authentic connections with students;

2) avoid making all decisions; and 3) involve students in controlling the learning environment.

In addition, teachers that understand transformative processes know how to address individual differences. As the author proposes, acknowledging differences is imperative because the transformative process varies among learners with different learning preferences, learning styles, cultural background, language, and knowledge about the world. Understanding these characteristics comprises the views that we use to interpret our experiences—the views are the frame of reference to what the author calls *the habits of mind*. These habits of mind remain constant until we encounter an alternative perspective that cannot be ignored. Only when we find an alternative perspective can the transformative process take place. Subsequently, individuals experience transformative learning in different ways.

A minor weakness of the book is the use of specific psychological terminology, which, although extensively detailed, may be challenging for some readers. Nevertheless, the core of the book is a valuable resource on the meaning and practices of learning and teaching. The suggestions for keeping teaching journals, taking workshops in reflective teaching, reading books on teaching, and discussing with colleagues are all practical ideas for improving teaching practices. We may create conditions to reevaluate our assumptions about teaching and increase self-awareness, such as asking about our teaching philosophy, our teaching and learning preferences and styles, and what is most interesting about teaching. Valuable strategies in the book help readers to explore teaching methods and relevant topics that encourage students to engage in self-evaluation, share learning experiences, and make learning decisions.

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***Factfulness***. By Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling & Anna Rosling Rönnlund. (2018). New York, NY: Flatiron Books. Pp. 342.

Reviewed by MUHAMMAD JAWAD KHAN  
Faculty Development Support, Academic Support

*Factfulness* addresses instincts that lead to errors in judgments and distorted perspective. Resultantly, decision making is affected. The book derives from Hans Rosling's (hereafter Hans, to distinguish him from the junior authors) experiences in academia and medicine. Based on the responses of 12,000 people in 14 countries to ten fact-based questions, Hans identified ten instincts, which affect how humans perceive and react to global issues. What is most revealing is how these instincts exist among those in all walks of life including scholars, experts, and researchers. Hans and his co-authors suggest accurate analysis and interpretation of data and trends—measures to avoid these instincts—to perceive facts objectively. The suggestions are applicable to any amalgam of social and cultural diversity.

The way these instincts affect academia is illustrated by Hans with examples from his research and teaching. The effect on institutions of learning is revealing and disturbing. Educational institutions nurturing critical thinking, empirical research, and objectivity are marred by the ten instincts. The book is, therefore, of great significance to educators who may develop biases due to hubris, complacency or intellectual lethargy. In the context of education, the book further underscores how widely applicable these *instincts*, or *biases*, are. Ironically, *Factfulness* confirms how characteristics of learning, as identified by Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, DiPietro and Norman in their book *How Learning Works* (2010), are also applicable to these perception-distorting instincts. First, the instincts are domain independent. No matter the subject one is teaching or researching, all are vulnerable to developing these biases and thereby distorting perspectives. Second, the instincts are cross-culturally relevant. Culture offers no advantage or disadvantage when it comes to these biases. Third, the biases are independent of one's experiences. Hence, *Factfulness* informs us that our perceptions and judgements may be incorrect.

The book has eleven chapters. Each of the first ten chapters discusses an instinct in descending order of influence. The last chapter is about putting *factfulness* into practice. The authors reference data to highlight how each instinct exists across different countries. Some graphs in the book convey the implied message in an easily discernible manner. Additional graphs are offered to readers at the supporting website—[www.gapminder.org](http://www.gapminder.org). The book highlights the implications of misinterpreting information at micro- and macro-levels. Each chapter concludes with proposed remedial measures. The salient points of each chapter are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Chapter 1, *The Gap Instinct*, explains how the human tendency of binary thinking oversimplifies complex issues; e.g., good versus bad, strong versus weak. Consequently, data are overlooked and problems misconstrued. To overcome the gap instinct, Hans suggests skepticism when only two extreme stances address complex human issues. For that, he suggests wariness of (1) comparing averages; (2) comparing extremes; and (3) the stance from which one evaluates data.

Chapter 2, *The Negativity Instinct*, discusses the tendency to stress the bad over the good. Despite major advances that have in standards of living, literacy, information accessibility, and technology since the 1800s, people instinctively exaggerate the ills and ignore the improvements. To overcome negativity, Hans suggests the following: (1) maintain two thoughts simultaneously; e.g., the failure of one student is not a reflection of the entire class's performance; (2) evaluate bad news objectively; (3) gradual improvements is not news, so seek these improvements; (4) more bad news does not mean increased deterioration, but extensive reporting; and (5) be mindful of glorifying the past.

In Chapter 3, Hans defines *The Straight-line Instinct* as the assumption that a line on a graph will continue straight. In reality, trends take on different forms—S-bends, slides, bumps, etc. The chapter explains this instinct with data for different trends, including traffic deaths, vaccination, and income gaps—all displaying different forms but a straight line. The suggestion is to mitigate this instinct by not expecting straight line graphs in the real world.

Chapter 4, *The Fear Instinct*, explains how some fears are hardwired in our brains because of evolutionary reasons, including fear of violence, captivity, and contamination. Although fears helped our ancestors survive, our brains continue giving them undue attention. We overestimate risks whenever we are fearful. Hans suggests calculating risks objectively for each frightful situation and staying calm to control the fear instinct.

Chapter 5 identifies *The Size Instinct*. Humans have a tendency to assess things out of proportion and misjudge the size. Hans contends that we do this in two ways. First, we misjudge the importance of a single number. For example, students' performance dropped by 10%. Without any reference point, this number may be taken out of proportion. Second, we also have the tendency to misinterpret the significance of a single occurrence or an identifiable event. For example, when a star student fails, we instinctively believe that the entire class performance has deteriorated. To control the size instinct, Hans suggests the following: (1) compare numbers instead of focusing on a single number; (2) in a list of numbers, identify and tackle large numbers first; and (3) analyze the effect of numbers by calculating amounts and rates.

Chapter 6, *The Generalization Instinct*, addresses distorted perceptions. We continuously categorize things, people, and events for better understanding and engagement. However, if we are not mindful of how we categorize we may formulate an inaccurate picture. To redress the negative effects of the generalization instinct, Hans recommends the following: (1) look for differences and similarities within and across groups; (2) be wary of "the majority," as 51%

and 99% are both majorities; (3) be alert for vivid examples because they may be recalled easily and we may form an erroneous picture; and (4) when something or someone is not in agreement, be curious and humble enough to explore further.

Chapter 7 is about *The Destiny Instinct*; because people believe that their fate is determined by factors beyond their control and their future has been decided and nothing will change it. For example, a student believes that as an introvert he will never be a good public speaker. Hans notes that the destiny instinct is instrumental because we fail to recognize gradual improvements. He suggests (1) tracking gradual improvements; (2) updating knowledge about modern trends and technologies to know how these will affect us; (3) reflecting on how things were in the past to realize that improvements have been made; and (4) challenging the notion that cultures and people do not change.

Chapter 8, *The Single Perspective Instinct*, explains that we love a simple idea because it lets us understand the complex. Hans argues that this simple or single perspective approach is weak because many essentials are missed. The single perspective instinct is obvious in our daily lives due to our political ideologies. Professionally, however, it is the experts who exhibit this instinct more by their narrow perspective and imagination. To overcome the single perspective instinct, Hans suggests (1) testing ideas with those who disagree with us; (2) limiting our expertise to our field and humbly seeking the opinions of others; (3) being mindful of not overusing the tool(s) readily available to us and be flexible in applying tools from other fields; (4) evaluating numbers but digging deeper to know more than the numbers; and (5) welcoming complexity and accepting that one size will not fit all.

Chapter 9 identifies *The Blame Instinct* as a commonly displayed trait that has two aspects. When things go wrong we blame someone or something, and when they go well we claim more than our fair share. Hans warns that when we look for scapegoats or heroes we lose our focus on identifying the reasons for failure or success. When faced with failure, we should look for causes, not villains; with success, we should credit the system and not seek heroes.

Chapter 10 is about *The Urgency Instinct*. Hans recommends that we avoid acting in haste and the “now or never” mindset. We should recognize when a decision or situation is urgent, which is rarer than we expect. Whenever we feel that the situation is urgent, we should (1) ask for more time and information; (2) insist on data that is accurate and relevant; (3) beware of predictions about the future; and (4) avoid drastic actions without considering consequences.

Chapter 11, the last chapter, is about practicing *factfulness* and avoiding the ten instincts. Hans’ definition of *factfulness* is a consolidation of all the anti-instinct measures that he shares at the end of each chapter. He argues for implementing *factfulness* in a wide array of fields including education, business, journalism, and politics. He concludes that these instincts lead to misperceptions and misjudgments. Therefore, we need to develop a fact-based perspective and avoid biases.

Educators will find *Factfulness* useful when reflecting on their perceptions and practices. The book offers ample evidence that these instincts are

widespread traits. Hence, irrespective of one's field of study, be it teaching or research, we exhibit some, if not all, of these instincts. The book explains in plain language the effects and consequences of the instincts and underscores how they affect judgment and decision making.

The use of the term *instinct* is misleading. The Oxford dictionary defines *instinct* as “an innate, typically fixed pattern of behavior; a natural or intuitive way of acting or thinking.” The definition implies that instincts are permanent—how can one change something permanent—thereby dismissing the book's suggestions in countering instincts. In fact, what the book labels as an *instinct* is more of a *bias*, which the Oxford dictionary defines as “inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group; a concentration on or interest in one particular area or subject; a systematic distortion...” The word *attitude* may have been a better replacement for *instinct*. It seems that the authors have inadvertently categorized impermanent behavior traits as permanent ones. Another minor weakness is that Hans alludes to the reasons for the instincts but does not provide any details.

Unfortunately, Hans Rosling did not live long enough to see his life's work published. He passed away several months before *Factfulness* came out. His son, Ola Rosling, and daughter-in-law, Ranna Rosling Rönnlund, continue his work and legacy in making people aware of these instincts (biases) and eradicating what may be called *informed ignorance*. The most important takeaway from the book is optimism. Hans repeatedly emphasizes that evolutionary survival still lurks in our DNA; consequently, we exaggerate dangers and weaknesses, and underestimate our achievements and strengths. This world, for all its problems, is much improved and continues to improve. *Factfulness* is, therefore, a perfect balance of showing the weaker and stronger sides of humanity.

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Reviewed by MISHKAT AL MOUMIN  
*Middle East School I, Undergraduate Education*

### **Introduction**

*Zero Prep: Ready-to-Go Activities for the Language Classroom* addresses the challenges that language teachers face—allocating time for preparing classroom activities. It focuses on one aspect of classroom teaching; i.e., flexible and adaptive activities that promote student participation. It takes one aspect of the target language, such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, etc., and provides a guided practice activity that may be applied infinitely. The authors, Pollard and Hess, have extensive teaching experience. Laurel Pollard has more than 20 years of experience teaching and working with teachers in a wide variety of educational settings, including public schools, adult education, English as a Second Language, literacy, and foreign languages in English-speaking countries. Natalie Hess has a Ph.D. in the analysis of feminist literature. She has authored and co-authored books and articles on linguistics and teaching English as a Second Language.

### **Summary of the Book Content**

The book has three introductions: the first explains the purpose of the book; the second explores how to use the book to manage preparation time without affecting the quality of instruction; the third shares the authors' reflection on their journey of teaching languages and their conclusion that when they teach less the students learn more. It also provides a list of terminology helpful for teachers who are non-native English speakers to review before reading the book. To promote a better interaction with the book and optimize its benefits, operational definitions of key terms are provided. For example, the term "routine" is used to reference an activity that a teacher may use repeatedly because of its effectiveness in delivering the class objectives and its adaptiveness to the teacher's busy schedule. To help readers find the activities easily, the book includes two indexes. The first index categorizes the language skill targeted, whereas the second sorts activities based on their purposes. In addition, there is a designated space for teachers to write notes for saving preparation time.

The book has seven chapters, each exploring activities targeting one area of language learning, such as listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary, and grammar.

Chapter 1 explores ice-breaking activities. Icebreakers are frequently used in training workshops, but the authors advocate that they be used as short opening activities that energize the class. Icebreakers help reduce stress among adult learners and restore students' focus. For example, asking students to talk about people they admire or choose adjectives for the day gives them a breather and energizes the class. The prerequisites of a successful icebreaker are 1) making it short and avoiding the drag; 2) designing it to be language-centered; and 3) providing students the opportunity to learn about one another.

Chapter 2 examines activities to hone listening skills. The authors warn teachers against the belief that listening skills develop automatically. Listening for comprehension should be practiced in well-designed input, followed by meaningful activities. The listening activities are based on what students have learned. The previously acquired language, through a listening passage, is the basis for producing new language, such as creating a skit based on what students hear in the listening passage. The activities for the beginner level revolve around reconstructing the stories and conducting the recall protocol, whereas those for the advanced level are centered around changing genres and predicting the end of the stories and news reports.

Chapter 3 focuses on speaking activities. Pollard and Hess observe that when students practice speaking, they develop a sense of security because they can communicate in the target language. The chapter encourages teachers to utilize speaking and provide corrections and feedback to students. The activities present an innovative approach to offering feedback and making corrections. For example, the teacher can read the correct answer or give the answer key to students for homework. Then, the teacher asks students to circle the wrong answer. Afterwards, students will mingle with one another looking for the student who has the correct answer. That student tells the others how he or she figured it out. As students may feel vulnerable when being told that they are incorrect, speaking with peers instills confidence.

In Chapter 4, the authors acknowledge that securing meaning from reading a foreign text requires careful coaching from the teacher. The chapter features activities that give student opportunities to extract meaning from the text. Activities employ a deductive approach, guiding students to extract clues and make connections. Several jigsaw activities are presented using the information-gap strategy, including classic jigsaw, paragraph jigsaw, question jigsaw, and vocabulary jigsaw.

Chapter 5 analyzes writing and finds that it develops confidence. The activities combine dictation and composition to teach paraphrasing. The teacher guides students by including the use of specific vocabulary in dictation. Students then have to express their ideas through composition. This shows that writing can also be an opportunity for students and teachers to work together in learning a language. The common element between Chapters 4 and 5 is language production, whether in the form of speaking or writing, inculcates the confidence and motivation needed for language learning.



Learning and mastering vocabulary is a major challenge for second language learners. Chapter 6 points out that students encounter new words constantly and need the time and opportunity to consolidate vocabulary. As such, the activities in Chapter 6 focus on a manageable number of words that a student learns during a specific lesson. Engaging activities, such as Total Physical Response (TPR), matching, ranking, connecting nouns to verbs, and utilizing realia and symbology, help students retain vocabulary. Chapter 6 also emphasizes the use of visual aids, associations, and body language to help remember words. These activities also help develop the skills of extracting meaning from context.

Grammar is presented in Chapter 7 as the “glue that holds the language together.” The authors examine how to use grammar structure to help students enhance comprehension of the meaning and usage of vocabularies in social contexts. The activities allow students to master the grammar of the second language without going through their first language. The chapter takes a direct approach to identify grammar patterns in the target language and leaves it up to the students to make the connection with their native languages, if needed. The authors also suggest several activities that encourage quick responses, such as verb conjugation, which may help build automaticity in language production.

### **Critique of the Book**

Pollard and Hess offer effective and adaptive activities for language classes. One strength is that the authors have adhered to three principles when designing the activities: 1) skill integration; 2) level appropriateness; and 3) positive integration.

*Skill Integration.* The activities are designed to utilize two or more language skills at a time. Whereas an activity targets a specific skill such as listening or reading, the skill is not practiced in isolation. The completion of all activities requires skill integration. For example, when performing the “Bingo” activity, learners read and listen to the definition of a set of words before placing them on the correct spot on the bingo board. In the “Dictacomp” activity, the learners practice listening and writing. The effectiveness of these activities stems from targeting a specific skill while engaging another skill. Thus, language skills are not practiced in isolation. The activities offer the learner multiple opportunities to engage with the language to hone the targeted language skill.

*Level Appropriateness.* Whether the activity is appropriate for the beginning, intermediate, or advanced level is suggested. The objective or the end goal of the activity is presented to guide teachers during the implementation phase. Teachers can tailor the delivery to make the activity more suitable for their students. They can also adjust the feedback, allowing students to measure their own performance. The authors also suggest variations of the same activity to assist teachers in tailoring the activity for their students.

*Positive Interaction.* The authors promote a positive interaction with the target language in the activities, which are designed to lower the affective filter among adult learners—developing a safe learning environment where it is safe to

make mistakes and learn from them and where learners can consult with a partner, receive an answer sheet, or revisit his or her own work at a later stage in the course.

Moreover, the book provides *templates* for activities targeting each language skill, which reduce the teacher's lesson preparation time. Although teachers can save time in preparation, they still need to plan a lesson because planning is necessary for implementing activities in class. Therefore, teachers should review the activities and select the most appropriate activities for lessons.

The activities offer excellent guided practice; this strength may also be a weakness of the book as they do not directly help learners in performing a task which constitutes a non-guided practice. The book does not provide guidance for taking these activities to the next level and elevate them to tasks. The activities follow the classic role division between a student and a teacher. Consequently, the role of students is limited to performing the activities following the teachers' guidance.

Nevertheless, the book is a useful source of excellent teaching activities that target various language skills. The authors have published two sequels of the book to include, *Zero Prep for All Levels* and *Zero Prep for Beginners*. The sequels are a testimony to the success of the original book.

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# MEET A TEAM

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## ***The Institutional Review Board***

*An interview with Dr. Lorraine Miller-Nara, Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), Training Analysis Division, Office of Standardization and Academic Excellence*

**Editor:** *Dr. Miller-Nara, could you tell readers about the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** Let me start with some information about how human research regulations began and how these regulations relate to the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) at the DLIFLC.

Did you know that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were no regulations regarding the ethical use of human subjects in research? The first regulation, signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, required food and drugs to be labeled with ingredients that were addictive or dangerous. This led to the implementation of federal regulations for foods, drugs, biological products, cosmetics, tobacco, and other products. This regulation came about, in part, due to medical experiments on young men recruited to eat meals laced with increasing doses of preservatives. The young men suffered horribly and the experiment, dubbed “The Poison Squad”, was stopped after receiving poor publicity for obvious reasons.

The Pure Food and Drug Act heralded the regulation of food safety. However, the experiments on healthy young men only proved that food additives should be regulated, and nothing else. The atrocities of World War II were the catalyst that initiated the series of steps leading to regulation on human subjects’ research. At the end of WWII, the Nuremberg Trials of War Criminals (1946) produced the Nuremberg Code (1947), which advocated voluntary participation and informed consent in any human research and that benefits of research must outweigh the risks. The Nuremberg Code was not binding but it began a process to protect human subjects during research.

**Editor:** *The Nuremberg Code attempted to establish clear rules about what was legal and what was not when conducting human experiments. Did the Code ensure ethical research?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** No. In 1974, the Belmont Report was released, following the revelations about the birth of 10,000 physically deformed babies whose mothers had taken thalidomide and the experimental studies with the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. The drug, thalidomide, if taken during pregnancy, often resulted in birth defects, such as malformed limbs. In the Tuskegee University syphilis study, a group of African-American men, during the 40-year-long study, was never told they had syphilis and were never treated for it, even when penicillin became available as a cure. The Belmont Report (prepared by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research) published a statement of basic ethical principles and guidelines to assist in resolving the ethical problems that surround the conduct of research with human subjects. These basic ethical principles are: Respect for persons, Beneficence, and Justice.

**Editor:** *Can you elaborate on the three principles for ethical research?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** The principle of *respect for persons* requires that researchers receive informed consent from participants; the principle of *beneficence* means that researchers should have the welfare of the research participant as a goal of any research study; and the principle of *justice* gives rise to moral requirements; that is to say, there should be fair procedures and outcomes in the selection of research subjects.

Based on the Belmont Report, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued federal regulations in 1981. In 1991 core DHHS regulations (45 CFR Part 46, Subpart A) were formally adopted by more than a dozen other Departments and Agencies. The 1991 adoption of the core regulations is known as the “Common Rule”.

**Editor:** *What does the “Common Rule” include?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** The main elements of the “Common Rule” are the following:

- 1) requirements for assuring compliance by research institutions;
- 2) requirements for researchers obtaining and documenting informed consent;
- 3) requirements for Institutional Review Board (IRB) membership, function, operations, review of research, and record keeping; and
- 4) additional protections for certain vulnerable research subjects—pregnant women, prisoners, and children.

**Editor:** *What has the DLIFLC done to ensure compliance with regulations and requirements for research ethics?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** In compliance with CFR 32.219 (Department of Defense “Common Rule”), the DLIFLC has a Human Research Protections Plan (HRPP), which ensures that all activities related to human-subjects research be guided by federal, Department of Defense (DoD), Army, state regulatory requirements and

policies<sup>1</sup> and the ethical principles set forth in the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (i.e., The Belmont Report).

*Editor: Would you explain the mission and work scope of the HRPP?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** The HRPP ensures that all DLIFLC research: 1) recognizes the rights and welfare of human research participants and ensures these are adequately protected; 2) is guided by the three ethical principles set forth in the Belmont Report, and is conducted with the highest level of expertise and integrity; and 3) complies with all applicable federal, state, DoD, and Department of the Army (DA) laws and regulations.

Specifically, the DLIFLC HRPP has 1) outlined specific policies and procedures to ensure ongoing compliance with applicable federal, state, DoD, and Department of the Army (DA) laws, regulations, and policies and procedures for the protection of human subjects; 2) formulated specific policies and procedures for the required scientific, regulatory, and ethical review and approval of human-subjects research; 3) established and directed continuing education requirements for personnel involved in human-subjects research; and 4) assigned roles and responsibilities for the HRPP.<sup>2</sup>

*Editor: Does it mean that the DLIFLC faculty and staff who plan to conduct research with human subjects need authorization from the HRPP?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** Yes. The DLIFLC Office of Human Research Protection has a Human Protections Administrator (HPA) and an IRB Chair. We work together to review projects that come to our office. We review many different projects, from dissertations to internal DLI research, to projects from external agencies. Our office determines if a project is research, and then determines the category of each project according to regulations; this process is called a ‘determination’. Some projects may need an IRB review.

In short, the HRPP Office reviews proposed research plans and related documents before a study can begin. The review assures that the rights and welfare of participating research subjects are adequately protected during the proposed research study. To be ethically acceptable and comply with regulatory requirements, our office determines that risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the importance of the knowledge the study might produce, that the process of participant selection is fair, and that there are adequate plans for obtaining informed consent.

*Editor: How does the Institutional Review Board fit into the HRPP?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** The DLIFLC IRB is part of the HRPP and has 10 members. Federal Regulation 32CFR 219.107 requires at least five members with varying backgrounds, diversity, and expertise. The regulation specifies that at least one

member has primary concerns in scientific areas and at least one member with concerns in non-scientific areas. At least one member must be included who is not affiliated with the institution. Our IRB meets once each quarter to discuss research protocols and other related issues. During the meetings, the IRB will review human subjects' research as necessary, members receive updates on regulations, and training on applicable topics; for example, the changes in the Common Rule were discussed this year.

*Editor: How do the changes of the Common Rule affect your work?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** This year the Common Rule has been revised and our office has updated our Human Research Protection Plan and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for compliance with the new regulations. We have some new categories for determinations as well as new guidance for obtaining consent from participants in research, to name a few.

*Editor: Does your office provide training in research ethics?*

**Dr. Miller-Nara:** Yes, we conduct training for the Scientific Research Boards (SRBs) and for faculty and staff. We also conduct training on action research, writing abstracts for conference proposals, and the various kinds of research done at the DLIFLC. If you would like training related to research at the DLIFLC, please contact us.<sup>3</sup>

*Editor: Dr. Miller-Nara, thank you for taking the time to inform readers about the HRPP Office and the IRB. The information helps the DLIFLC community comply with the policies and follow the procedures for ethical research.*

## Notes

1. Specifically, federal regulatory requirements defined at Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 219; DoD Policy requirements as defined in the DoDI 3216.02; Army policy requirements as defined in the AR 70-25; and California Family code 7002 (20 May 1998).
2. See *Policies & Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects Engaged in Research*, by Human Research Protection Program, Institutional Review Board, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center.
3. For more information, contact:

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# FRESH IDEAS

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*Fresh Ideas* welcomes readers' contributions. We are interested in (but not limited to) reports, summaries, and reviews of new and innovative ideas and practices in language education.

## ***Physical Activity Enhances Learning a Second Language***

JON PHILLIPS

*Faculty Development Support, Academic Support*

The results of a recent research study suggest that concurrent physical activity during language class amplifies students' ability to learn, retain, and use new L2 vocabulary as compared to learning it in a static condition.

In recent years, studies in both animals and people have shown that we learn differently if we also exercise (Reynolds, 2011). Sedentary, elderly lab rats given access to running wheels create and maintain memories almost as well as much younger rats, for example. And, students tend to perform better on reading and math tests if they participate in some kind of physical activity during the school day (Reynolds, 2014). Many scientists suspect that exercise alters the biology of the brain in ways that make it more pliable and receptive to new information. However, numerous questions remain unanswered about movement and learning, including whether exercise is most beneficial before, during, or after instruction and how much and what types of exercise might be best.

In a new study published last year in PLOS ONE (a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science), researchers in China and Italy focused specifically on L2 learning and the adult brain (Liu, Sulpizio, Kompapanee, & Job, 2017). To determine what effects physical exercise might have on L2 learning, the researchers recruited 40 college-age Chinese beginning learners of English. The participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: simultaneous physical activity during learning (20 participants: Experimental group), and static learning, conventionally seated during learning (20 participants: Control group). The two groups were balanced for gender and age among the participants. For all participants, L2 proficiency and



aerobic fitness were tested before the experiment. The participants in the Experimental group would ride stationary exercise bikes at a gentle pace (about 60 percent of their maximum aerobic capacity) beginning 20 minutes before the start of the lessons and continuing through the 15 minutes of instruction.

Both groups learned their new vocabulary by viewing words projected onto large screens, together with matching pictures. They were shown 40 words per session, with the sequence repeated several times. The students then completed a vocabulary quiz, using computer keys to note as quickly as possible whether a word was matched with its correct picture. They also responded to sentences using the new words, marking whether the sentences were accurate or not. The participants completed eight vocabulary sessions over the course of two months.

At the end of each lesson, participants in the Experimental group who had ridden bikes performed better on the subsequent vocabulary tests than did the Control group participants sitting conventionally. Also, after several weeks of instruction the physically active group had also become more proficient at recognizing correct sentences than the sedentary participants. The gains in vocabulary and comprehension lingered longest for the cyclists. When the researchers asked the participants to return to the lab for a final round of testing a month after the lessons, without practicing in the meantime, the cyclists remembered words and understood them in sentences more accurately than did the participants who had not moved during their learning.

According to Simone Sulpizio (2017), a professor of psychology and linguistics at the University Via-Salute San Raffaele in Milan, Italy, and a study co-author, “the results suggest that physical activity during learning improves that learning” (p.10). “These improvements extend beyond simply aiding in memorization,” she added, “the exercise also deepened language learners’ grasp of how to use their newly acquired words” (p. 10).

This study does not explain what is happening inside the brain that might account for the benefits of the exercise in L2 learning. But according to Dr. Sulpizio, many past studies have shown that exercise prompts the release of multiple neurochemicals in the brain that increase the number of new brain cells and the connections between neurons. These effects improve the brain’s plasticity and augment one’s ability to learn.

From the standpoint of teaching and learning here at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), the study’s implications might seem at first to be impractical. None of our classrooms are equipped with stationary bicycles. But specialized equipment is unnecessary, Dr. Sulpizio (2017) says. “We are not suggesting that schools or teachers buy lots of bicycles. A simpler take-away message may be that instruction should be flanked by physical activity. Sitting for hours and hours without moving is not the best way to learn” (p. 11).

Viewed in this way, DLIFLC students are likely candidates to reap the benefits suggested by this study. Most of them conduct rigorous daily physical training to meet the standards of their services. As far as concurrent physical

activity and language learning go, on many afternoons, students can be seen walking with their teachers around the Presidio as they practice their respective languages. According to implications of this study, the benefits of this type of activity may go beyond simply a change of scene from the classroom. The concurrent physical activity and learning may very well amplify their ability to retain, understand, and use their foreign languages.

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## NEWS & EVENTS

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*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.

### ***Asian School I Hosted the Emissary Program***

SU-LING HSUEH, SCPO SANG PHAN, & JANETTE EDWARDS,  
*Asian School I, Undergraduate Education*

SGT KATELYN MARSHALL  
*USAH, U.S. Army*

CTI3 ANASTASIA MASON  
*CYBERCOM, U.S. Navy*

Asian School I participated in the Emissary Program, a joint effort of the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC), from January 22 to 24, 2019. The near-peer graduates serving as Multi-Disciplined Language Analysts (MDLAs) were invited to share their success stories or challenges to motivate current students to achieve higher language proficiency levels. Through this program, current students may understand better how to reinforce positive study habits, alleviate stress, and understand the requirements for future jobs. Another intent of the visit is to improve curriculum and instruction via interaction and communication with faculty and staff.

To make the Emissary Program effective, Chinese Mandarin Emissaries—SGT Katelyn Marshall (USA) from NSAH and CTI3 Anastasia Mason (USN) from CYBERCOM—met with SCPO Sang Phan and Dr. Su-Ling Hsueh to plan the training sessions. They decided on an interactive, open forum rather than presentations delivery. The program's topics were the following:

- Classroom cohesion (make it or break it)
  - Mutual support – team building, positive atmosphere
  - Accountability – for self and others
  - Communication
  - Role of class leader
  - Opportunities for MLI intervention/influence

- Expertise over rank
  - Seniority
  - Skill atrophy
  - Building a reliable foundation (SME)
  - Loss of credibility – the cost of being unprofessional
- Emotional stressors (resiliency)
  - Support via military and teaching teams
  - Fostering gratitude
  - Time management – simplify life, find what works
  - Organization – if you are behind
  - Prioritization based on end goal/original purpose
- Postgraduate opportunities (proven performance/expertise-based)
  - Military Language Analyst Program (MLAP).
  - Embassy duties
  - Tactical opportunities/Spec Ops, etc.
  - Free NCS courses, CHIN 3242, CHIN 3225, CHIN 4360, etc.

Participants of the emissary program included Asian School I students (from the end of the first semester to the middle of the third semester), faculty, and specialists. The emissaries met with eight classes and conducted three staff Q&A sessions. Before the end of the visit on Jan 24, the emissaries, SGT Marshall and CTI3 Mason, met with Dr. Janette Edwards, Dean of Asian School I, and provided the following:

### **Suggestions to Students**

- *Maintain Healthy Habits:* Save recreational activities for the weekend. Create an evening schedule and adhere to it because you are investing in your future. Poor habits are not necessarily destructive, but they are not conducive to learning. For example, you can eliminate social conflict and upheaval from life by communicating to loved ones that you have less available free time during the course. Tell your love ones that their understanding and support are crucial.
- *Practice Proactivity:* Due to the fast pace of the course, you can attain real success by staying at least one lesson ahead throughout the course. Utilize time on the weekends to do homework in advance and preview course materials for the following week. You should not be seeing the textbooks or class resources for the first time on the day that teachers introduce them. This gives you the advantage of knowing what questions you have about the course content and what is difficult to grasp.
- *Keep a Positive Attitude:* The way you approach a conflict or respond to a criticism may determine your success and influence those around you. Aim for excellence, treat failure as a learning opportunity, and be inspired to do better. Language learning requires continuous and maximum efforts.

- *Appreciate Meticulous Instruction:* Sometimes instruction may seem overly meticulous and error corrections overwhelming. If you are open-minded, you will appreciate the time and effort instructors have invested in your potential and performance.
- *Mitigate Fatigue:* To improve learning, you need proper nutrition, maintain physical fitness and good sleep habits, and avoid alcohol. Physical fatigue may affect mental health.
- *Achieve Autonomous Learning:* It is important to be reward-driven, not consequence-driven. For example, daily vocabulary quizzes keep you accountable for testing. Rote memorization is necessary to develop self-discipline. In the military, everybody knows that “if you are not early, you are late.” Previewing a lesson prepares you better, internalizes what you have learned, and boosts your confidence.
- *Build a Solid Language Foundation:* During the basic course, you should follow the curriculum to build a solid foundation, which makes it easier for you to maintain proficiency and continue to make progress once coursework is over.
- *Master Organizational Skill:* Maintain an “I love me” folder that contains the important training certificates and documents beneficial to career. This way, you do not need to worry about losing certificates or retaking the trainings.
- *Know Military Resources:* Some may undergo non-academic related struggles. To mitigate stress, avail yourself to military-sponsored services to enhance your life.

### **Suggestions to Faculty and Staff:**

- *Formulate Tailored Instruction:* Ability groups can be demoralizing and divisive. Normal class division creates balance and unity. Students prefer the one-on-one attention and tailored instruction. Tailored instruction maintains a positive classroom environment and fosters proactivity and cooperation among students.
- *Maintain Positive Dynamics between Teacher and Student:* When teaching teams have high expectations of their students, they are willing to provide strong support and intensive care to ensure student success. Communicate with the class leaders who are bridges between the students and the teaching teams and seek their support to encourage students to stay positive and trust the teaching teams.
- *Be Attentive to Behavioral Health:* Teaching teams should be proactive in communicating with military units when mental or behavioral issues happen. When poor stress management patterns are found, report the information to leadership groups, ensuring that immediate corrective measures are taken.

The emissaries provided resourceful information, which were well received and praised by faculty and students. Students were motivated to serve as military linguists with high language proficiency.

## ***The CLTAC Spring Conference at Stanford University***

ZHENLIN QIAO

*Asian School I, Undergraduate Education*

The Chinese Language Teachers Association of California (CLTAC) held its spring conference on March 9, 2019 at Stanford University. Nearly 100 Chinese language teachers and students from 29 universities and schools participated in this event. There were 26 presenters at the conference, including 18 from the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) — composing 69.2% of the total. The conference eight panels presented 20 academic papers on subjects ranging from prosody, syntax, and consecutive interpreting to inquiry-based teaching, autonomous learning, and Chinese punctuation.

Following the opening address by the CLTAC Vice President and Conference Chair Hsin-Yun Liu of the City College of San Francisco, Professor Ping Li from Pennsylvania State University gave the keynote speech about understanding the second-language-learning brain from a neuro-linguistic perspective. He outlined the state-of-the-art of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) studies on learning-induced brain changes, showing that the brains of bilinguals exhibited increases in gray matter and information pathways, ultimately resulting in network complexities and strengths of connection that differ from the brains of monolinguals. Li also pointed out that individuals with certain neural connection patterns may be predisposed to learning the Chinese language and may perform better in the language classroom than those without such patterns. Li concluded the speech with suggestions for teachers that included situated learning and modality-specific learning activities, all of which are based on a model of embodied cognition. The audience also saw a demonstration of virtual reality (VR) language learning software developed at Li's Penn State lab that allowed learners to interact with items in various environments such as a kitchen, a supermarket, or a zoo.

A second keynote speech was delivered by Professor Chengzhi Chu of the University of California at Davis, whose talk on cultural realism in the Chinese language curriculum revealed the unrealistic nature of current approaches to Chinese culture instruction—focusing on ancient traditions with which few natives are familiar and presenting the material in an overly positive light while ignoring potentially negative aspects of the culture. Chu introduced a new approach to cultural instruction, centered on (1) understanding, (2) tolerance, (3)

integration, and (4) identification of Chinese culture. The key to teaching culture is to allow non-Chinese to understand Chinese cultural concepts and, to some degree, tolerate unique aspects of Chinese culture. This does not imply that the learner will want to identify with or integrate his or her life around the Chinese culture. Instead, allowing the learner to preserve his identity and critically ponder issues of tolerance, integration, and acceptance would better serve the current generation of students. Chu concluded that cultural instruction should aim to be objective and realistic and would be better served by focusing on current and relevant cultural practices.

Two parallel morning panels followed the two keynote speeches. In the panel on “Tone and Grammar Teaching,” presenters explored issues in Mandarin tone sandhi, the teaching of Mandarin prosody, and the differences between the verb-copying construction and the BA-construction. The panel on “K-12 Chinese Curriculum and Instruction” included presentations on content-based language instruction, language learning in a makerspace, and potential changes to K-12 instruction in the U.S.

The afternoon sessions included 1) a panel on “Teaching Culture and Teacher Training,” discussing the use of Chinese painting in language instruction, the role of bicultural knowledge, and the prevalence of errors in punctuation among Chinese language teachers and learners; 2) a panel on “Language Acquisition and Instruction,” exploring tech-assisted metacognitive learning, tech-enhanced development of literacy skills, and the promotion of autonomous language learning through reflection; 3) a panel on “New Approaches,” illustrating the gap-analysis model, contextualized inquiry-based teaching, and different ways of enhancing student motivation; 4) a panel on raising cross cultural awareness, using folk art to teach language, and directionality in consecutive interpretation; 5) a panel on “Curriculum Design,” in which three DLIFLC presenters explained how language instruction might benefit from a user-centered, design-centric approach; and 6) a panel on “Understanding Language Learners,” showing how learners do better through holistic learning via a humanistic approach. The day’s events concluded with closing remarks by the CLTAC president Professor Zhiqiang Li of the University of San Francisco.

The CLTAC was established in 1964. Its mission is to promote the study, teaching, and research of the Chinese language and culture; to provide a platform for Chinese instructors to share and exchange teaching experience, ideas, and information; to serve as a source for professional development and lifelong teaching; to enhance the quality of Chinese language teaching at all levels; to provide a network of support service to Chinese language teachers; and to increase awareness of the Chinese language and culture. For more than 50 years, the CLTAC has organized annual conferences. DLIFLC faculty members have been active in the CLTAC conferences and other professional activities, from which they have gained immense professional benefit.

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## QUICK TIPS

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*Quick Tips* welcomes readers' contributions. We are 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.

### ***Hypothesizing about History: Students Helping Themselves Learn***

DAVID KRALL

*Faculty Development Support, Academic Support*

Linguists benefit by knowing key information about the history of a country or region. In addition to reading properly researched and well-written history books, a variety of class activities based on hypotheses generated by students can be a useful adjunct to books. With more advanced students the following activities can be done in the target language, which combines history with language practice.

One activity is asking students to *hypothesize about historical events* based on a small amount of background information, which allows them additional chances to exercise thinking skills. The following examples involve basic history. During my culture classes at the Student Learning Services I give pairs of students up to 15 items that include background information, followed by a question for each item. To maintain variety, I assign only five items at a time and fit other work among the hypothesizing sessions. Students are not allowed to use any additional resources while answering the questions. The teacher should monitor how each pair is doing.

Here are three samples from the lesson I use with Farsi students:

1. 1804: England and Russia had been rivals in central Asia for years—England wanted to use countries such as Afghanistan and Iran (often called Persia then) as buffer zones between Russia and England's colony in India. Russia wanted those buffer zones for itself. In 1804 the Caucasus region north of Iran became a battleground between Russia and Iran. After a nine-year fight, Iran had to concede defeat. Britain stepped in and convinced Iran to sign a treaty, part of which stated that Britain would defend Iran. However, in 1826 when



Iran tried to regain the Caucasus, Great Britain did not help at all because it was working with the Russians to defeat the Ottoman Empire in the War of Greek Independence. Consequently, Iran was defeated again and it was forced to sign a treaty, which included expensive war reparations. How did that situation foreshadow Iran's feelings about specific alliances? (Pollock, p.1)

2. By 1856 Iran became more interested in making business and political deals with the United States. Along with England, we were included in a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce. Of course, the Iranian government wanted more trade but what were other motivations for dealing with America rather than Great Britain? (Pollock, p. 18)
3. 1905: The Qajar regime which ran Iran was in debt to Britain and Russia, yet it was also spending a lot of money. Iranian business people (the bazaaris), intellectuals, peasants, and mullahs (religious leaders) were advocating for a constitution. Why was it to their advantage for Iran to have a constitution? (Pollock, p. 20)

Once students have answered, they can then refer to sources provided by the teacher to check their hypotheses. Consequently, it is important to provide students with sources to ensure they have access to quality information. After that, pairs could check each other's work and then participate in a review led by the teacher, which is especially useful during a language class because it involves speaking practice.

Students may then participate in a *history review game* to help reinforce their understanding. The following five questions are an example, but there can easily be 25 questions in the game— *The Persian Puzzle*. (The answers are in brackets. Each correct answer is worth one snack):

1. During the 1800s these European nations were rivals for influence and control in Iran [answers: GB and RU] Follow-up question: What were their motivations?
2. By the mid-1800s, Iran preferred to deal with this nation [USA] Follow-up: Why?
3. Around 1906 bazaaris, mullahs, intellectuals, and peasants wanted Iran to have this type of document [a constitution] Follow-up: How would this document help them?
4. After 1907, three countries had some control in Iran. Which nation controlled the north, which the middle, and which the south? [North: RU; Middle: Iran; South: GB] Follow-up: Why was the country divided in that way?
5. This Shah, installed by GB in 1921, wanted an oil deal with the USA [Reza Khan/Reza Shah] Follow-up: Why did the Shah focus on a deal with the USA?

During my culture classes, hypothesizing about history has been a useful activity when combined with other classroom work. It can be a catalyst for student

thought and discussion about history, and an element of language instruction in a language class.<sup>1</sup>

### **Note**

1. The author can answer any questions or arrange a demonstration of the activities.

### **Reference**

Pollack, K. (2005). *The Persian puzzle: The conflict between Iran and America*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.

## ***Strategies to Foster Mindful Learners Towards Higher Proficiency***

UNSOON WON

*Faculty Development Support, Academic Support*

KARA MACDONALD

*Middle East School III, Undergraduate Education*

When learning a foreign language, students go through various stages of personal and academic development. From the initial entry to the final graduation goal of achieving 2+ 2+ 2, students must continuously renew learning goals, update learning plans, and adjust study strategies. Reflection on learning experience is beneficial for students to take appropriate course of actions. In this regard, teachers can provide guidance for students to practice reflective learning. This paper gives teachers tips for guiding students to become mindful learners through reflection.

Reflection on learning focuses on three main areas: (1) learning goals, (2) the learning process, and (3) learning outcomes.

*Learning Goals.* Setting clear and achievable learning goals with a timeline helps students to direct their efforts, plan their learning, and evaluate their progress. Guidance may be provided by the following questions:

- What must I do to master the material in the upcoming unit?
- Is this goal achievable?
- What can I do differently this time to achieve the goals?

- What are the obstacles that I may encounter when trying to achieve my goals?

Self-questioning involves critical thinking about analyzing and evaluating goals, the learning process, study habits, and other factors affecting learning.

*The Learning Process.* Reflection on the learning process raises students awareness of learning practices. What is taught in the classroom does not necessarily lead to student learning. Students make learning happen in and out of the classroom. The more knowledgeable they are about the learning process, the better they can identify their strengths and weaknesses. Self-monitoring skills enhance the ability to employ appropriate learning strategies. To discover how they learn best, students need to focus on learning practices and keep records of them.

Teachers can guide students to reflect on the learning content as part of the learning process. Reflection on content relates to students' interest in the course topics and materials. Students may reflect on those learning materials, topics, and/or content that challenge them. Collaborating with teachers, students may identify problems and receive assistance to overcome lack of interest or motivation.

Reflection on the learning process usually brings up learning preferences and learning strategies. Teachers may guide students to use reflective questions that make them more mindful of their learning strategies. For example, when checking their comprehension of content, students can ask themselves the following:

- What do I know about this topic?
- What vocabulary might I encounter?
- What should I get out of this passage?
- What did I miss?

This reflection may take place anytime, in or out of classroom.

*Learning Outcomes.* Reflection on learning outcomes assesses achievement. The learning outcomes help students make plans, modify learning goals, and adjust learning strategies. By acknowledging students' actions and strengths and avoiding critiques of errors, teachers may guide students to assessing what they have yet to master and how to perform a task better. The reflection should be future-oriented and focus on problem solving so that students can take small steps toward bigger gains.

Reflective learning is an ongoing process for learner growth and improvement. The more students reflect on their learning, the more they are mindful of the effectiveness of their study habits and learning strategies. Teachers may use the following strategies to guide students' reflection on learning:

1. Explain reflective learning to students.
2. Communicate the purpose and benefits of reflection on the learning experience.

3. Introduce a list of reflective learning tools and strategies for students to select from and apply, based on their learning needs.
4. Model the steps required to reflect on learning.
5. Encourage students to rehearse and record their learning progress and experience.
6. Share examples of students' reflective learning practices with the class.
7. Follow-up with students' actions, provide assistance or feedback as needed.
8. Encourage students to share their success stories or lessons learned with peers.

*Engage*

*Innovate*

*Apply*

*Reflect*

*Discuss*

*... Dialog on Language Instruction*

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# TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

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*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, online training, etc.

## ***Using Google Classroom in a Dynamic Language Classroom***

MIHYANG ALWILL, CHOUNG-SOOK CHO, HAESOOK HAN, & GOANPYO HONG  
*Asian School II, Undergraduate Education*

When discussing students' learning styles and preferences, language-teaching practitioners often tout the importance of computer-assisted language learning. "Today's students think and process information fundamentally different from their predecessors" (Prensky, 2001; p. 1). Prensky calls today's students *digital natives* who grew up using computers, cell phones, iPads, iPods, video games, and digital music players. As such, they tend to have the following in common:

- an acclimation to obtaining information quickly;
- parallel processing and multitasking;
- a preference for graphic/pictorial information over written material;
- a preference for random access (e.g., hyperlinks);
- functioning best when networking; and
- a preference for gaming over working.

Due to *digital natives'* specific information-processing procedures, Prensky (2001) urges language-teaching practitioners to design classroom activities that incorporate digital tools.

This paper will 1) describe what our teaching team did with *Google Classroom*—a digital tool for classroom activities; 2) show how to use *Google Classroom* to share materials with students; and 3) demonstrate the benefits of using *Google Classroom*.

## Google Classroom

Our teaching team has implemented *Google Classroom* to provide a virtual learning platform for digital native students (see Figure 1). *Google Classroom* is “a free web service developed by Google for schools that aims to simplify creating, distributing and grading assignments in a paperless way” (Google Classroom, 2018).



Figure 1  
Our Teaching Team's Google Classroom Home Page

We used *Google Classroom* primarily to 1) share materials; 2) post announcements; and 3) provide feedback to students.

Our team started *Google Classroom* in week 45 of instruction (late 2<sup>nd</sup> semester). We wanted a virtual space where we could share learning materials among team members and with students. As we prepared many teaching materials, the team agreed to share each teacher's materials in *Google Classroom*, allowing the teachers to know what materials had been covered and what needed to be taught. Through *Google Classroom*, we provided more authentic materials to students, tailored the 7<sup>th</sup> hour Special Assistance (SA) and/or Probation (PB) instruction materials, personalized instruction materials to meet student needs, and assigned additional homework (see Figure 2).

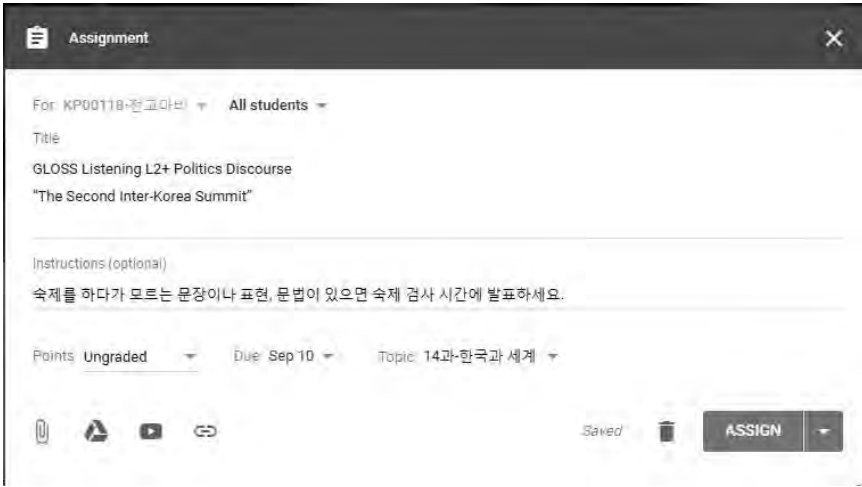


Figure 2  
*The Google Classroom Assignment Function*

We improved communication with students via posted announcements and provided feedback (see Figure 3) in virtual space. Once forwarded through *Google Calendar*, students received email notifications to remind them of due dates for submission of homework assignment (see Figure 4).



Figure 3  
*Announcements through the Google Classroom Announcement Function*

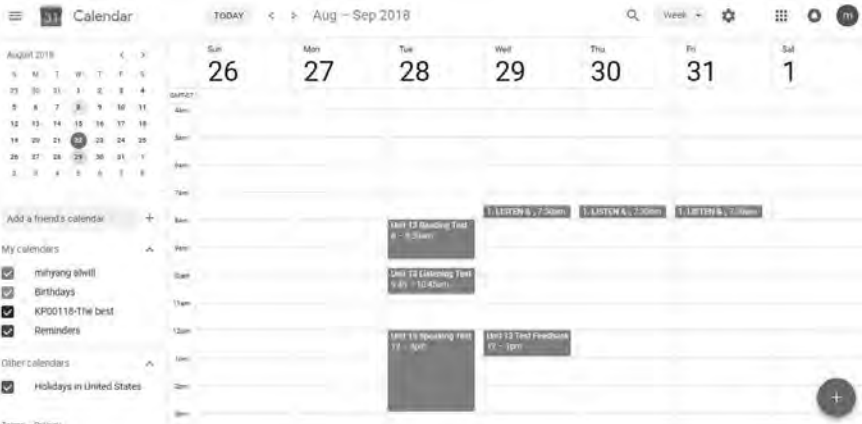


Figure 4  
*Google Calendar to Manage Classes*

### The Steps for Using *Google Classroom* to Share Materials

*Step 1.* You must register for a *Gmail* account to use *Google Classroom*. After signing into *Google Classroom*, you navigate to *My Drive*, where files may be downloaded (see Figure 5). Conversely, files and folders may be uploaded from the desktop and/or shared folders (see Figure 6). You can also create documents using *Google Docs*, *Google Sheets*, and *Google Slides* within *Google Classroom*, eliminating the extra step of opening files in another editing program such as *Microsoft Word* or *Excel*.

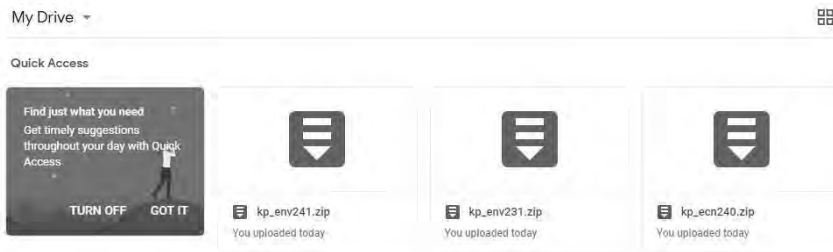


Figure 5  
*Quick Access to Files and Folders*



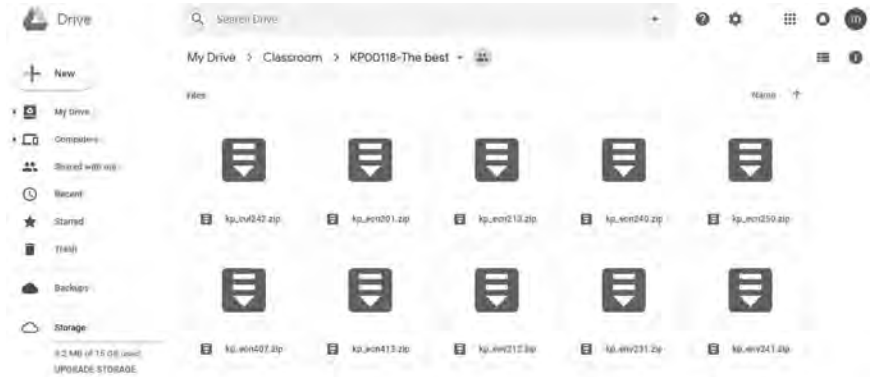


Figure 6  
*Uploading Files from Various Sources*

*Step 2.* Once files are uploaded, organize lessons and assignments into appropriate folders (e.g., lesson units).

*Step 3.* Invite students to join *Google Classroom* (see Figure 7). Students can find the learning materials under the teaching team’s *Google Classroom*.

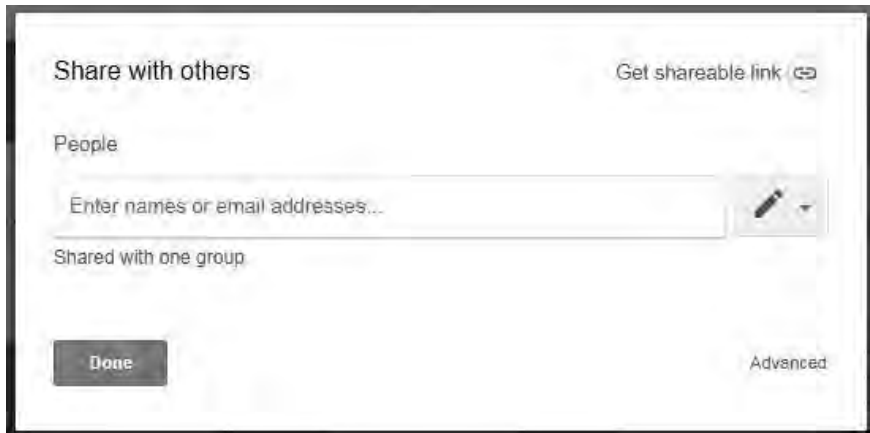


Figure 7  
*Sharing Google Classroom Access with Other Users*

### **Benefits of Using Google Classroom**

One benefit of *Google Classroom* is its easy access. Students can access materials and homework assignments via an internet browser. They are able to access the materials any time and any place, as long as there is an internet connection. In contrast, when using network drives, students often reported difficulty accessing our teaching team’s share folder.

Another benefit of *Google Classroom* is that teachers can control instructional materials to avoid overlapping. In team teaching, it is sometimes difficult to manage the materials. For example, we sometimes discovered that the materials used in regular teaching hours had been used by a teacher during one-on-one sessions. A teacher who had planned to use an authentic text for a lesson, upon entering the classroom, found that the text had already been used. Consequently, the teacher had to devise a contingency plan quickly.

A third benefit is that teachers can grade student work in *Google Classroom* and provide timely feedback. Because assignments and feedback are stored in one place, it is easy to retrieve previous feedback. For example, our team used *Google Classroom* to review writing assignments when conducting one-on-one speaking practice.

To make it possible for digital-native students to maximize opportunities to use a language in class, teachers need to implement digital tools that boost teacher-student interaction. In our opinion, *Google Classroom* is an effective digital tool to enhance the learning experience.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

### 2019

#### MAY

- May 21-25 *CALICO: Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium 2019*, Montreal, Canada  
Information: <http://calico.org/>
- May 26-31 *NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference and Expo*, Washington, DC  
Information: [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

#### NOVEMBER

- November 14-17 *Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting*, Atlanta, GA  
Information: [mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html](http://mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html)
- November 22-24 *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention (ACTFL)*, Washington, DC  
Information: [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)
- November 22-24 *American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Fall Conference*, New Orleans, LA  
Information: [www.aatj.org](http://www.aatj.org)
- November 22-24 *Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) Annual Conference*, Washington, DC  
Information: [clta-us.org](http://clta-us.org)

## 2020

### JANUARY

- January 2-5*      *Linguistic Society of American (LSA) Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA*  
Information: [www.linguisticsociety.org](http://www.linguisticsociety.org)
- January 9-12*    *Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention, Seattle, WA*  
Information: [www.mla.org/convention](http://www.mla.org/convention)

### FEBRUARY

- February 6-9*    *American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL), San Diego, CA*  
Information: [www.aatseel.org](http://www.aatseel.org)
- February 13-16* *Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL)*  
New York, New York

### MARCH

- March 9-12*      *Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL), New York, New York*
- March 12-15*    *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Convention, Atlanta, GA*  
Information: [www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)
- March 26-28*    *Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) Annual Conference, Mobile, AL*  
Information: [www.scolt.org](http://www.scolt.org)
- March 28-31*    *American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Denver, CO*  
Information: [www.aaal.org](http://www.aaal.org)

### APRIL

- April 2-5*        *California Language Teachers' Association (CLTA) annual conference, Anaheim, CA*  
Information: <http://cita.net>

**MAY**

*May 24-29*      *NAFSA: Association of International Educators Annual Conference and Expo, St. Louis, MO*  
Information: [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)

**OCTOBER**

*October 10-13*      *Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC*  
Information: [mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html](http://mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html)

**NOVEMBER**

*November 20-22*      *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Convention (ACTFL), San Antonio, TX*  
Information: [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)

*November 20-22*      *American Association of Teachers of Japanese (AATJ) Fall Conference, San Antonio, TX*  
Information: [www.aatj.org](http://www.aatj.org)

*November 20-22*      *Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) Annual Conference, Washington, DC*  
Information: [clta-us.org](http://clta-us.org)

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## VENUES FOR ACADEMIC PUBLICATION

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

### **Academic Journals on Language Education & Language Studies: Guidelines for Authors**

*ADFL Bulletin*

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

*Al-'Arabiyya*

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

*American Journal of Evaluation*

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(Published by Sage Publishing on behalf of the American Evaluation Association)  
<http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/american-journal-of-evaluation/journal201729#submission-guidelines>

*Applied Linguistics*

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(Published by the Oxford Academic)  
[http://academic.oup.com/applij/pages/General\\_Instructions](http://academic.oup.com/applij/pages/General_Instructions)

*Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*

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

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*Brain and Language*

(Published by Elsevier)

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/brain-and-language>

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*CALICO Journal*

(Published by the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium)

<http://journals.equinoxpub.com/CALICO/about/submissions>

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*Canadian Modern Language Review*

(Published by the University of Toronto Press)

<http://utorontopress.com/ca/canadian-modern-language-review>

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*Chinese as a Second Language*

(Published by the Chinese Language Teachers Association, USA)

<http://clta-us.org/publications/>

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*Cognitive Linguistic Studies*

(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Co.)

<http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journal submissions>

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*Computer Assisted Language Learning*

(Published by Routledge)

<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

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*Educational and Psychological Measurement*

(Published by Sage Publishing)

<http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/educational-and-psychological-measurement#submission-guidelines>

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*Educational Assessment*

(Published by Routledge)

<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

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*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*

(Published by Sage Publishing)

<http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/educational-evaluation-and-policy-analysis#submission-guidelines>

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*Educational Technology Research and Development*

(Published by Springer)

[http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11423?detailsPage=pltc\\_i\\_2543550](http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/journal/11423?detailsPage=pltc_i_2543550)

*Foreign Language Annals*

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(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/19449720/homepage/forauthors.html>

*Hispania*

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(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese)

<http://www.aatsp.org/page/hispaniasubmissions>

*International Journal of Applied Linguistics*

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(Published by John Wiley & Sons)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14734192/homepage/forauthors.html>

*International Journal of Testing*

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(Published by Routledge)

<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

*Japanese Language and Literature*

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(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Japanese)

<http://www.aatj.org/journal>

*Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*

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(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company)

<http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions>

*Language*

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(Published by the Linguistic Society of America)

<http://www.linguisticsociety.org/lisa-publications/language>

*Language & Communication*

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(Published by Elsevier)

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/language-and-communication>

*Language Learning*

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(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the University of Michigan)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/14679922/homepage/forauthors.html>

*Language Sciences*

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(Published by Elsevier)

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/language-sciences>



*Language Teaching: Surveys and Studies*

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(Published by Cambridge University)

<http://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-teaching/information/instructions-contributors>

*Language Testing*

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(Published by Sage Publishing)

<http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/language-testing#submission-guidelines>

*Linguistics and Education*

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(Published by Elsevier)

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/linguistics-and-education>

*PMLA*

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(Published by the Modern Language Association of America)

<http://www.mla.org/Publications/Journals/PMLA/Submitting-Manuscripts-to-PMLA>

*Profession*

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(Published by the Modern Language Association of America)

<http://profession.mla.org/>

*RELC Journal*

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(Published by Sage Publications on behalf of the Regional Language Center of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization)

<http://journals.sagepub.com/home/rel>

*Review of Cognitive Linguistics*

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(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company)

<http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions>

*Russian Language Journal*

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(Published by the American Council of Teachers of Russian)

<http://rlj.americancouncils.org/>

*Second Language Research*

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(Published by Sage Publishing)

<http://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/second-language-research#submission-guidelines>

*Slavic and East European Journal*

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(Published by the Ohio State University on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages)

<http://u.osu.edu/seej/>

*Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics*

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(Published by John Benjamins Publishing Company)

<http://benjamins.com/content/authors/journalsubmissions>

*Studies in Second Language Acquisition*

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(Published by the Cambridge University Press)

<http://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/studies-in-second-language-acquisition/information/instructions-contributors>

*System*

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(Published by Elsevier)

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/system>

*The American Journal of Distance Learning*

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(Published by Routledge)

<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

*The French Review*

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(Published by the American Association of Teachers of French)

<http://frenchreview.frenchteachers.org/GuideForAuthors.html>

*The International Journal of Listening*

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(Published by Routledge)

<http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/>

*The Korean Language in America*

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(Published by the American Association of Teachers of Korea)

<http://www.aatk.org/>

*The Language Educator*

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(Published by the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages)

<http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/author-guidelines>

*The Modern Language Journal*

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(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the National Federation of Modern Language Association)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15404781/homepage/forauthors.html>

*TESOL Quarterly*

(Published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the TESOL International Association)

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15457249/homepage/forauthors.html>

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

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

**Deadline:** Submissions are welcome at any point. Manuscripts received by **31 January** will be considered for the 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. 104-109): *Information for Contributors*.

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## INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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### Submission Information

#### 1. Submission

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

Send all submissions electronically to the Editor: [jiaying.howard@dliflc.edu](mailto:jiaying.howard@dliflc.edu).

#### 2. Aims and Scope

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

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

#### 3. Review Process

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

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

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

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

#### **4. Specifications for Manuscripts**

Prepare the manuscripts in accordance with the following requirements:

- Follow APA style (the 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### **5. Correspondence**

Contact the Editor: [jiaying.howard@dliflc.edu](mailto: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.

### 1. Research Articles

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

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

Ensure that your article has the following structure:

<i>Cover Page</i>	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: <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Foster Learner Autonomy in Project-based Learning            JANE, DOE            Assistant Professor            Persian-Farsi School, UGE            jane.doe@dliflc.edu            831-242-3333</p> </div>
<i>Abstract</i>	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.
<i>Introduction</i>	State the objectives, hypothesis, and research design. Provide adequate background information, but avoid a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.
<i>Literature Review</i>	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.

<i>Method</i>	<p>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.</p> <p><u>Participants.</u> Identify the number and type of participants. Indicate how they were selected. Provide major demographic characteristics.</p> <p><u>Materials.</u> Briefly describe the materials used and their function in the experiment.</p> <p><u>Procedure.</u> Describe each step in conducting the research, including the instructions to the participants, the formation of the groups, and the specific experimental manipulations.</p>
<i>Results</i>	<p>State the results and describe them to justify the findings. Mention all relevant results, including those that run counter to the hypothesis.</p>
<i>Discussion</i>	<p>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.</p>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<p>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.</p>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<p>Identify those colleagues who may have contributed to the study and assisted you in preparing the manuscript.</p>
<i>Notes</i>	<p>Use sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article. They should be listed on a separate page, which is to be entitled <i>Notes</i>.</p>
<i>References</i>	<p>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.</p>
<i>Appendix</i>	<p>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.</p>



## **2. Review Articles**

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

## **3. Reviews**

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

## **4. Faculty Forum**

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

## **5. Fresh Ideas**

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

## **6. News and Events**

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

## **7. Quick Tips**

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

## **8. Resources**

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

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## THANK YOU

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*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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