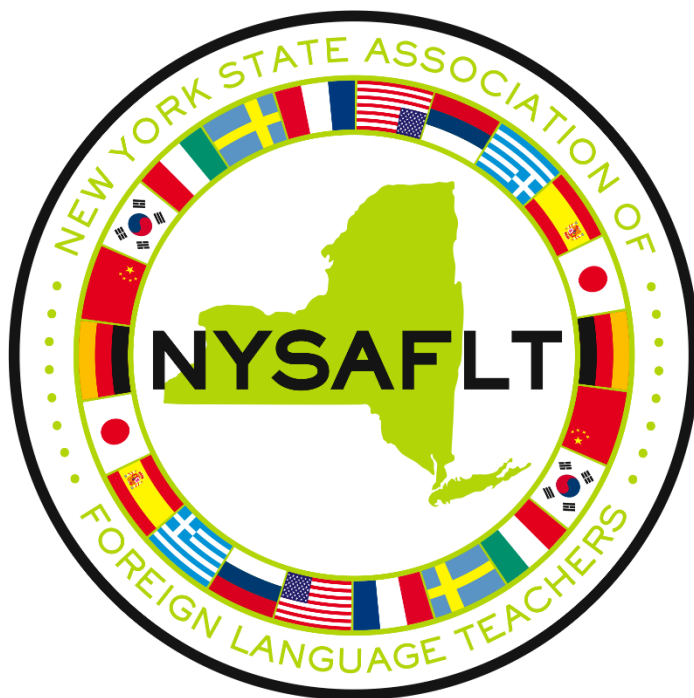


# Language Association Journal

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New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, Inc.

## **Language Association Journal**

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# Letter from the Editors

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Dear Colleagues,

We are truly honored to be your new Co-editors of the Language Association Journal! The Language Association Journal has been an integral resource provided by NYSAFLT to language teachers across the state for decades. It is with the Journal that NYS World Language Educators have been able to contribute their unparalleled expertise, share their experiences/research and learn from one another through the collaboration and creation of this publication. With the ever-evolving world, this publication has sustained the constant sharing of ideas and scholarly research amongst colleagues to promote connectivity and support within the educational community.

We received a large number of article submissions for this issue. Some of these submissions appear in this issue, while others will appear in our fall issue. There is still time to submit an article for the fall issue for anyone interested in contributing to the Journal. We humbly ask you for your understanding for any errors/typos found within this issue as this is our first issue and we are still navigating becoming new Co-editors.

We have worked diligently with our Editorial Board and authors to create this Spring issue which consists of 15 teacher-to-teacher articles. We would both like to extend a sincere thank you to Mary Caitlin Wight, our outgoing journal editor. Thank you, Mary Caitlin, for providing your expertise and dedication to the *Language Association Journal* for the past 4 years. Your leadership has sustained and promoted an invaluable resource for the world language community where educators have been able to collaborate and share their research, ideas, resources, and experiences through engaging and impactful articles. We would like to thank the Editorial Board for volunteering their time and sharing their knowledge and feedback throughout the revision process. We would also like to thank everyone who submitted an article for consideration as well as the authors for striving to give back to the world language community and help us all grow as educators by writing and researching effective and engaging instructional methods that can be applied across the proficiency levels within both modern and classical languages. Learning from one another so that we can build and enhance our own tried and true instructional strategies helps us to challenge ourselves as educators so that we may strengthen our impact in the classroom and continue to promote cultural awareness and second language acquisition. Lastly, we would like to thank the Executive Committee and Staff as well as the Board of Directors for entrusting this publication to us. We will continue to work diligently on this publication so that we can provide support for educators and advocate for world language education.

Thank you,  
TinaMarie and Sarah

**Language Association Journal Co-editors**

Dr. Sarah Jourdain & Tina Marie Friscia

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TinaMarie Friscia earned her BA in French Language and Literature and MAT in French, both from SUNY Stony Brook. She holds certifications in teaching French and Italian both at the secondary and elementary levels. She is currently the Secretary on the Executive Board of LILT. She is also a member of NYSAFLT, AATF, AATI, ACTFL and NECTFL. Tina was most recently a Leadership Ambassador in NYSAFLT's 2021 Leaders of Tomorrow Cohort. She currently teaches French in Three Village CSD. Tina is also a member of the NYSED Leadership Council and was a member of the NYS World Language Standards Review Committee for the Long Island region.

Dr. Sarah Jourdain is Director of World Language Teacher Preparation and Chair of the Department of European Languages, Literatures and Cultures at SUNY Stony Brook. She has been involved in World Language Teaching and World Language Teacher Preparation for over three decades. She has served in numerous organizations including ACTFL, NECTFL, AATF, LILT and NYSAFLT and has published articles in Foreign Language Annals, The French Review, The Modern Language Journal, and NECTFL Review, among others.

# Call for Papers

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The Language Association Journal is the official peer-reviewed journal of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT). The audience for this journal includes world language educators at all levels, teacher educators, administrators, and others who are interested in world language education. To address the diverse interests, focuses, and needs of this audience, each issue of the Language Association Journal allows for three submission types—scholarly articles, reports, and teacher-to-teacher articles—across multiple categories that are organized by key words, including, but not limited to: advocacy, assessment, culture, curriculum, FLES, instruction, issues in the profession, language development, literacy development, methods, policy, professional development, teacher preparation, technology. While previously the journal was thematic, we now welcome submissions from a range of topics for each edition. The Language Association Journal is published two times per year.

## Submission Guidelines

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- Publication Status
  - Your manuscript must not be previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- Language
  - Write your manuscript in English.
  - You may include examples written in languages other than English. Italicize these and include the English translation.
- Content
  - Your manuscript may be a scholarly article, a report, or a teacher-to-teacher article.
  - Graphic content such as tables, charts, and photographs, should enhance your written content.
  - Keyword categories: advocacy, assessment, culture, curriculum, FLES, instruction, issues in the profession, language development, literacy development, methods, policy, professional development, teacher preparation, technology.
  - Present content that is appropriate for the audience of the Language Association Journal; that is accurate, timely and relevant; that extends or deepens what is currently known on the topic; that represents innovation or new ways of thinking; and that bridges theory and practice.
- Length
  - Limit scholarly articles to no more than 8,000 words.
  - Limit reports to no more than 5,000 words.
  - Limit teacher-to-teacher articles to no more than 3,000 words.
- Writing and Style
  - Write in an active voice and with language that can be understood by all audiences of this journal. Define terms that may be unfamiliar to readers.
  - Include only and all works cited in the reference section.
  - Use style guidelines outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7<sup>th</sup> edition* (2019). See <http://www.apastyle.org> for style support.
  - Replace all references that would reveal your identity in the manuscript with generic terms such as *Author X* or *School X*.
  - Proof-read your manuscript to ensure that it is error free.

- **Technical Considerations**
  - Prepare the manuscript in a word document (.doc or .docx) using Times New Roman font size 12, double-spaced.
  - Assure that any external links included or hyperlinked in the manuscript are active at the time of submission.
  - Indicate the placement of any graphics (e.g., charts, tables, illustrations, student work) or photographs, within the word document. (You will submit these in separate files.)
  - Remove any evidence of tracked changes that were used in the writing of the manuscript.
- **Permissions**
  - **Photographs**
    - Your photographs must have high resolution and in a standard file format (e.g., .jpeg) and be the property of the author.
    - Obtain written consent for publication from anyone recognizable in your photographs. (You will submit this in a separate file.)
  - **Graphics**
    - Obtain written consent for any graphics (e.g., charts, tables, illustrations, student work) that are not your own or that are not copyright free. (You will submit this in a separate file.)

### **Manuscript Submission Guidelines**

- Submit your manuscript and any additional files (e.g., graphics, photographs, consent forms) that have been prepared according to the above guidelines through the submission form on the NYSAFLT webpage.
- In your manuscript submission, provide a brief biography to include at the end of your article or report if it is published.
- Upon receipt of your manuscript submission, the Editor will send you an acknowledgement email and an approximate timeline for review of your submission.

### **Manuscript Review**

- After the Editor has received your manuscript and completed on-line information form, he or she will do an initial review to assure that your submission abides by the stated guidelines.
- If the submission abides by the guidelines, the Editor will forward the manuscripts to one or two members of the Editorial Board for anonymous evaluation and publishing recommendation. If the submission does not abide by the guidelines, the Editor will communicate this information to you.
- When all reviews are returned to the Editor from the Editorial Board, the Editor will make the final decision regarding the manuscript's publication and will notify you about the submission's status.
- All manuscripts accepted for publication are subject to editing.

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# Remembering John Carlino, Executive Director of NYSAFLT

William Anderson, Interim Executive Director

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We are all still in shock and grief over the recent passing of our dear friend and colleague, John Carlino. The outpouring of condolences, memories, and shared stories on social media has been at once both heart-breaking and heartfelt. I am still numb as I try to write these words. When I was first approached to remember John for this publication, I said yes without hesitation. Now that I wrestle to find the words to best memorialize him, I am incapable of summing up the tremendous feelings that we all have for this man. I will, instead, simply share the script from the 2014 NYSAFLT Annual Conference Banquet, at which I presented my President's Award to a very stunned John:

"I am going off script now, as nobody from the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or Headquarters knows about this...not even John. As I mentioned previously, the NYSAFLT President's Award is presented annually by the current NYSAFLT president to an individual who has made significant contributions to the organization. I could not finish out my tenure at NYSAFLT without acknowledging this person.

We first met at the Annual Conference in 2004, ten years ago today. I was immediately impressed by this person's ability to work well under pressure and to keep things flowing seamlessly. He inspired me to step up, get involved and to serve this organization! We have worked so well together over the past ten years. Oftentimes anticipating what the other one is thinking, planning or going to say. His institutional knowledge is a commodity that the Board of Directors and Executive Committee would be lost without. As he celebrated his 10th anniversary as the Executive Director in January, I reached out to past presidents to ask them to share with me thoughts or memories of working with him. Here are just a few:

*John is a German teacher treasure.... He is calm, thoughtful, careful and very patient. NYSAFLT is lucky to have him on board.*

*I am sure there won't be a shortage of accolades pouring in for John's indefatigable and professional expertise in all matters NYSAFLT. All warranted and well deserved. My heartfelt kudos, John, for your dedication and earnest desire to advance the cause of NYSAFLT.*



*John Carlino took on NYSAFLT during changing times on so many levels in NYS. He continues to organize and ably manage it for the 21st Century. I congratulate him on this auspicious occasion.*

*John Carlino is one of the most dedicated, hard working and task oriented people I have ever met....and that is a compliment!! Add to that work ethic the tremendous knowledge he has of the NYSAFLT organization and its history and you have an executive director extraordinaire! Throughout my tenure on the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee and as president, John served as a patient guide, often repeating answers he had already given. He constantly inspired me! Language teachers couldn't ask for a better advocate. Congratulations and thanks, John! Here's to another ten years!*

John continues to inspire me to get involved and to lead. NYSAFLT would not be where it is today without him. Please join me in congratulating this year's final recipient of the NYSAFLT President's Award, John Carlino."

John's legacy will outlive us all. He was an understated yet powerful pioneer in our field. On a personal note, I have lost a brother. Let's all raise our glasses to this Übermensch!

---

Bill Anderson has a B.A. in Spanish and Political Science (Syracuse University) and an M.S. Ed. in Foreign Language Education (Syracuse University). He is currently the Director of World Language Education (Hofstra University) and the K-12 Curriculum Associate for World Languages and English as a New Language (Massapequa School District). Presently, Bill is the Interim Executive Director, NYSAFLT. Bill has also served as President of NYSAFLT (2014), on the NECTFL Board of Directors (2016-2019) and the ACTFL Board of Directors (2016-2018).

# Remembering John Carlino, Executive Director of NYSAFLT

Bill Heller

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For over 20 years, John Carlino skillfully and generously served NYSAFLT. John was elected treasurer in 2000 and stepped in to assume the position of Executive Director in 2004 after the retirement of the legendary long-time executive director, Bob Ludwig. John Carlino also served as the Executive Director of the Northeast Conference for the past six years. John's professional service and achievements were many. If you only knew John from seeing him at the NYSAFLT Annual Conference, or at NECTFL or communicating with him by email, you have experienced John with his full, game-face on: Efficient. Organized. Unflappably calm. Uncompromisingly professional. On top of every detail. But, I'd like to give you a glimpse at the extraordinary man that I was fortunate to call a friend.

I first met John when he was 11 years old and I was his sixth-grade teacher, in my first-year teaching in a small-town elementary school in Warsaw. We go way back. Nobody who knows him would be surprised to learn that he was usually pretty quiet in class, responsible, observant, and reserved. Needless to say, nobody was more amazed (or laughed harder) when, in his senior year, John appeared on the stage in the musical, *Bye, Bye, Birdie* as the long-suffering father to the young high school girl obsessed with Conrad Birdie. When I saw John bust out, with unbridled enthusiasm, singing the "We're Gonna Be on Ed Sullivan" song, I realized that the world had better look out.

It would be taking French with Mrs. Linda Chamberlain at Warsaw High School that would steer the course of his life. He saved up money to complete a year abroad in Paris, France and continued his study at the University of Buffalo. He took methods with Nancy Wallace, a French teacher and past president of NYSAFLT and began his career teaching French in Lewiston. Our paths again crossed, when John took a job teaching French with me in Perry, NY, where I had moved to teach Spanish. I fondly remember accompanying John on a trip he organized for his students to Quebec City and the two of us looting and pillaging boxes of authentic resources to stash in the bottom of the tour bus to bring back to Perry, including a coveted copy of the Quebec City Yellow Pages - the mother of all authentic resources at the time.

He would later go on to complete requirements for his German certification and subsequently took a job teaching German at Kenmore West High School, which was a much shorter commute in a larger district. He eventually became the Department Chair there and taught the IB German class. Perhaps the achievement he was most proud of during his time at Kenmore West was the establishment of what was, I believe, one of the first GSAs - Gay-Straight Alliances as we called them then, in Western New York. He would host a series of small dinner parties around this time of year, for eight or ten guests, for which he, himself, would cook every course, as a fundraiser for the club. He also served on the board of Gay Lesbian Youth Services of WNY. He was a pioneer in the Buffalo area advocating for representation and visibility for LGBTQ youth in secondary schools.

What John's greatest gift would be to so many of us who got to know him, was his ability to inspire participation through invitation. His one-on-one approach of nudging people to consider leadership, followed up by patiently guiding and encouraging each individual to develop their own voice, has created a whole new generation of language leaders. He challenged all of us who worked with him to develop new skills and competencies, to think things through from many angles, and to polish our focus and messaging. In so many ways, watching John lead, made his old teacher a successful student and a better leader. Without his invitation and support I never would have considered being a NECTFL Conference Chair, let alone imagine that that would become one of the highlights of my professional career.

But, as I remember John and begin to process the idea of inhabiting a world without him in it, I come back to so many wonderful conversations over good food and good drink. After NYSAFLT or NECTFL, I'd often get to go out to dinner with a few other colleagues to decompress and to share stories. John was usually in charge of choosing the restaurant and making the reservation, and the food was always most excellent; but the conversation and camaraderie that he facilitated and drew around him was priceless. We'd often celebrate his birthday at ACTFL, a wonderful tradition that I'll miss greatly. At other times, he'd just give a call and have me come out to his family cottage on a small lake only 30 minutes from my house. He'd whip up a wonderful lunch, with dishes seasoned with fresh herbs he'd grow outside the cottage door, and we'd sit on the screened porch sipping wine, enjoying the tranquility and beauty of John's happy place.

Amid all of the doing, all of the organizing, all of the leading, for most of the second half of his life, he was able to center himself in his relationships as a husband to Larry and as a father to Ian. He and Larry brought the best out of each other. Their marriage was an anchor that allowed them both to lead and excel. Ian is an amazing young man. It will be no surprise to learn that he is bilingual in English and German and also has professional proficiency in French. He works at the NY Times on international versions of the New York Times Magazine. I'm sure that for all of John's accomplishments and achievements, he would consider parenting Ian to be his greatest legacy.

Suffice it to say that all of us who have had the privilege of working beside John have been touched by his life and legacy and have been changed for the better. The robust health of NYSAFLT, which has been able to weather the present challenges, stands as a testimony to his skillful stewardship. As a fitting tribute, the current NYSAFLT Executive Committee and Board of Directors have named the sustaining fund that John initiated in connection with the 100th Anniversary of NYSAFLT in his honor. The fund is now known as the NYSAFLT 100 K for 100 Years John D. Carlino Legacy Fund. To honor John's memory consider contributing to the Legacy fund. But, an even more fitting tribute would be to consider how you might step forward and take on a leadership role in your state or regional professional organizations and contribute to creating a strong future for our world language programs. May his memory be a blessing.

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Bill Heller has taught in public elementary, secondary, community college and undergraduate classrooms for over 40 years, including 24 years teaching Spanish at Perry High School. He has been a methods and Spanish instructor at SUNY Geneseo since 2001. Bill served as Conference Chair for the 2017 Northeast Conference (NECTFL) and is currently a member of the Executive Board and Content Advisory Panel for World Languages at the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

# Remembering John Carlino, Executive Director of NYSAFLT

Joanne O'Toole, Ph.D.

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Ever since our professional paths first crossed in 2005, John Carlino has been a constant in my professional life and someone I considered a close friend. He became such a constant that the name *John* in my household is understood to refer to John Carlino, even though my husband's brother is also named John. (In talking to my husband, I refer to him as *your brother John*.)

John was an idea person and a visionary. When I was NYSAFLT President in 2007, John's frequent communications with me (and typically Kenney Hughes as well) almost always included one or more ideas for my consideration. At times, I asked for the ideas to slow down so we could consider the ones already on the table. John's ideas were always conceived with NYSAFLT's mission, goals, and best interests in mind. Some ideas were small and mostly invisible to NYSAFLT membership although useful to the organization. Others, like *Leaders of Tomorrow*, have had a large, visible, and lasting impact on NYSAFLT. The numerous cohorts of *Leaders of Tomorrow* since 2007 have contributed confident, capable, leaders to our field and, more specifically, to NYSAFLT. They were simultaneously mentored by John and well-established NYSAFLT leaders. The once "future" leaders have become today's highly-qualified NYSAFLT leaders. A quote on the NYSAFLT *Leaders of Tomorrow* webpage states, "*Before you are a leader, success is about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.*" (Welch, 2005). John was someone who grew others to benefit NYSAFLT, its members, and the field of world language education.

John was also someone who seamlessly blended the professional and the personal. He held high expectations for himself as NYSAFLT Executive Director and for the work of NYSAFLT leaders. At the same time, he showed compassion and understanding for the times when we weren't at our best or able to give as much in our roles. Toward the end of his life, as I looked for the right greeting card to send John (as if such a thing were possible), I ended up deciding to buy two. One card helped me express my caring, love, and support for him as he battled cancer. The other was a thank you card. I realized that my gratitude to John was deep. I needed him to know how much I appreciated not only all he did for NYSAFLT but also for me. In trading stories about John with numerous colleagues and friends, this deep sense of gratitude is ubiquitous. John has left a legacy of both leadership and kindness for which I and others are grateful.

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Dr. Joanne O'Toole is a Professor of Modern Language Education and Interim Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department at SUNY Oswego. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the NYSED World Languages Content Advisory Panel and the Principal Investigator of the NYS World Language Standards Initiative. Joanne is a current NECTFL Director and former NYSAFLT President. She taught Spanish for 16 years prior to entering post-secondary education.

# Remembering John Carlino, Executive Director of NYSAFLT

Mary Caitlin Wight, Ph.D

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Dear John,

Thank you. It isn't enough, those 2 words, to encompass all the gratitude I have in my heart for you. Thank you for creating a home base in NYSAFLT for so many of us. Where we came together, empowered each other, and flew in new ways we didn't know possible. You built our foundation. Thank you for believing in me and taking chances on me for new opportunities. You gave me the courage to take on journal editing at a time when I needed it as a professional outlet. You did that for so many of us, extended a hand and opened a door, so we could grow as people and as professionals. You invited us in and challenged us to do more. I wish there were better words. I wish there had been more time. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for the joy, laughter, organization, and advocacy you brought to our field. Thank you.

With all my love and gratitude,  
Mary Caitlin Wight

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Dr. Mary Caitlin Wight is a former middle school Spanish teacher who currently works with World Language teacher candidates at SUNY Geneseo. She is the former editor of the Language Association Journal and an active member of NYSAFLT. Dr. Wight additionally serves on the Fairport Central School District Board of Education, living in Fairport, NY with her husband and children.

# Au-delà de Paris; vers l'enseignement d'une francophonie plus inclusive

## (Beyond Paris; Advocating for the Teaching of a More Inclusive Francophone World)

Françoise Piron

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When presenting cultural content to students, French teachers tend to focus extensively on Paris and more broadly on France. In so doing they limit the scope of instruction to only one of the many facets of the francophone world. In their defense, this can be attributable to the political structure of the country: unlike the United States, or Switzerland, another French-speaking country, the French Republic is a highly **centralized** state. Paris is far more than the capital of the country: it is the administrative center, and everything starts and ends there. The French education system, for example, is national, and all French students take the same tests for their “*baccalauréat*” (exam to complete high school and be admitted into university), at the exact same time. Some would argue that Paris is also the cultural capital of the country, if not of Europe or the world...

Enter the ideas for the workshop that the author and her colleague presented in the fall of 2021 at NYSAFLT's annual conference: how can we encourage fellow French teachers to expand their teaching of French and francophone culture beyond that of the Hexagon? How can we be more intentionally inclusive in everyday lessons while presenting current, relevant content to our students? How can we include in our practice the many aspects of the francophone world, and in particular, the vibrant culture of many emerging African countries and other areas of the world that are traditionally overlooked? How can we help our students to break stereotypes and identify implicit bias relative to cultural models? How can we teach about products, practices and perspectives while encompassing the multi-faceted aspects of the francophone world? These are some of the questions that led the presenters' thinking towards expanding their own perspectives and hopefully helping others to expand theirs. Below are the 3 main categories, with examples, that were used to explore opportunities to include a more inclusive Francophonie in our classrooms. The author also started curating diverse francophone infographics on [this Pinterest board](#).

### 1. *La diversité en images* (Diversity through images)

We clearly live in a very visual world, and our attention is constantly grabbed by images of all sorts, through advertising, memes, photos, videos and much more. To harness the power of the image, the presenters decided to introduce some of their current favorite online artists and resources.

*“How can we encourage fellow French teachers to expand their teaching of French and francophone culture beyond that of the Hexagon?”*

### A. *Hair Love*

The 2019 Sony Pictures animated short film “[Hair Love](#)” is an incredibly well-designed and thought-out movie, in which a little girl struggles with her hair and enlists her parents' help to deal with the challenge. With very limited speech (in English) and universal themes of love, trust, empowerment and family, this short can be used in many different ways in the classroom. It can be the basis for a “clip chat”, pausing every few seconds to elicit student feedback to basic questions about what they see and what is happening in the story; it can be embedded in an EdPuzzle activity, with comprehension and opinion questions; it can serve as the introduction to a discussion on physical appearance and much more. The beauty of such a simple yet compelling video is that it can be used



at any level: for novice students, the focus can be on the roles of the characters, their appearance and their actions, while more advanced students can be expected to predict how the story will end and discuss the messages of the film. This story will particularly resonate with students of color who have struggled with their hair and have been challenged by the lack of adequate hair products available on the market. It will also serve to educate others who may be unaware of the particularities of this cultural difference. Representation matters, especially given the current imbalance between teachers and students in NYS when it comes to understanding the intricacies of various ethnic backgrounds (see article: “[New York's teacher diversity problem: 80% are white, when most students aren't](#)”). May our classes offer mirrors and windows in everyday lessons!

### B. Storybooks Canada

A second resource introduced in the context of visual supports for compelling lessons is the website [storybooks Canada](#). The site offers a series of stories all inspired by African tales. They are organized by level (from level 1 for novices to level 4 for advanced students) and are available in 21 languages, from Amharic to Urdu. All are beautifully illustrated and allow the reader to click on the audio icon to hear a very clear human voice read the text, page by page. The story chosen as an example at the workshop was “*Tom le vendeur de bananes*” (Tom the Banana Seller), a tale that exposes the sexism of villagers who believe that only women should be selling fruit. The story can be used in many different ways and at different levels of depth depending on the teacher’s objective; alternating between choral reading (all students engaged), teacher reading and computer reading has proven successful. Other recommended strategies include asking questions using comprehensible input techniques, putting lines in chronological order, asking students to provide captions for some of the pictures, and having part of the class act out the story, complete with accessories. Although the interpretive mode is the most obvious one for a reading activity, the tale can serve as a basis for interpersonal activities as students put themselves in the skins of the characters. In addition, presentational tasks can be assigned in the shape of a prepared oral or written follow up to the story. “*Tom le vendeur de bananes*” presents fairly basic vocabulary, but contains some words that are not typically taught at the intermediate level, such as “*mûr*” (ripe), “*un régime de bananes*” (a bunch of bananas) or “*un plateau*” (a tray). However, the basic language surrounding these terms allows students to easily infer their meanings using context clues, an essential skill when learning to interpret a text. The story is a perfect blend between a very simple tale with many down to earth words and themes (shopping, fruit, villagers etc.) and a more complex message (sexism) that students can discuss in the context of established patriarchal practices.

*“May our classes  
offer mirrors and  
windows in everyday*

### C. Elise Gravel

Elise Gravel is a Canadian children’s book author whose blog contains many free printables (in French and in English; with a small sampling in Spanish) intended for use by parents and teachers. Her goal is “to promote diversity, tolerance, respect and empathy” (<http://elisegravel.com/en/>). Her messages express complex ideas with simple words and as such, they serve as great tools for the French classroom. They can be used as introductions to new themes, to discuss a given concept or to let students know that the world language classroom is a safe place that is open to all.

Elise Gravel tackles many themes, including gender, family, science, appearance, empathy, autism and much more. Some will resonate with students and many will empower them to be who they want to be while being comfortable in their own skins.

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## TOUS LES SENTIMENTS

SONT POUR TOUT LE MONDE !

Il n'y a pas d'émotions "de filles" ou "de garçons".  
Tous les humains peuvent ressentir:



Illustration by Elise Gravel: <http://elisegravel.com/en/>

### D. *Ijourlactu*

The French online magazine *Ijourlactu* is full of articles and videos geared towards children from the age of 8. Because it is intended for young people, this authentic resource can be used with learners of French at intermediate and advanced levels. The videos cover many current and relevant topics and are based on actual questions that children have asked: *Comment se souhaite-t-on la bonne année dans le monde?* How do people celebrate the new year in the world? *Comment la langue arabe est-elle née?* How did the Arabic language come into being? *C'est quoi la discrimination?* What is discrimination? *C'est qui Harry Potter?* Who is Harry Potter? The videos use clipart style illustrations that are appealing to young students while supporting the message. Key words and key ideas are used in writing to help to make the content more comprehensible. The videos (which are all under 2 minutes) strike an excellent balance between well-researched, fact-based information and engaging ways to present it, thus making this site a fantastic resource for the French classroom and a favorite among many teachers and students alike. Videos can be used in class to introduce a new topic; to delve deeper into a current theme; to respond to a student question; to obtain students' perspectives; to check for understanding using EdPuzzle etc. It is relevant to note that even though *Ijourlactu* is produced in Toulouse, France, the content extends far beyond "L'Hexagone" and thus can be viewed as an excellent resource to bring the world into the language classroom.

### 2. *L'écriture inclusive* (inclusive writing)

Inclusive writing is a challenging topic: how do we strike a balance between including everyone (for example in terms of genders, non-binary individuals, etc.) while not falling into the rabbit hole of questioning every word and thus impeding communication? When you add to that dilemma the grammatical structures of romance languages, where every noun is masculine or feminine, the challenge significantly increases. In this context, here are "*quelques pistes de réflexion*" (a few clues).

A. The famous rule "*le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*" (the masculine wins over the feminine) is actually a relatively modern (and quite sexist) construction that dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when members of the "Académie française" (all men) decided that the masculine gender was more noble. Prior to that, adjectives would match the word closest to it (*accord de proximité*). Many people have advocated a return to that practice as it is deemed more logical and more fair. [This article](#) presents an interesting interview of the historian and professor Eliane Viennot. It also details how feminine forms of professions were in use several centuries ago, and should



be rehabilitated today, even though they may sound funny to the modern francophone ear (professeuse, autrice, écrivaine...). The historical context gives an interesting perspective, revealing that usage often has no linguistic basis; rather, it is based on the blatant discrimination of a group of individuals by those in power. Interestingly, some words used for feminine professions vary according to regions: *Anne Hidalgo est la maire de Paris et Valérie Plante est la mairesse de Montréal* (both mean “mayor”). This can be all the more confusing as the word “maire” is a homophone to “mère”. One might question if Mme Hidalgo is seen as Paris’s mother as well.

B. In the context of inclusion, it is preferable when possible to use gender-neutral terms for people, and often collectives will do the trick: “*le corps enseignant*” (the teaching staff) instead of “*les profs*” (teachers); “*les droits humains*” (human rights) instead of “*les droits de l’homme*” (man’s rights). When it is impossible to find an all-encompassing term, several options exist: using a dot or a hyphen to include both genders (*cher.e.s collègue.s/* dear colleagues) in one word is quite common, although it has been banned by the “Ministre de l’éducation publique” (France). Remarkably, one of the reasons for the decision is that this practice adds a level of complexity for **dyslexic** students learning how to read and write.

C. When talking about people identifying as non-binary, the emergent pronoun “*iel*”, a combination of “*il*” (he) and “*elle*” (she) has been written about extensively and was even identified as the word of the year 2021 by the famous dictionary “*Le Robert*”. Including *iel* in interpretive and interpersonal activities in everyday lessons is a nice way to make non-binary students feel included and to keep current on trends from the French-speaking world.

It is interesting to note that French, Swiss and Belgian students have lower scores in their native language (French) compared to their counterparts from other nations because of the difficulty of learning the illogical and numerous grammar and spelling rules of the French language. In an effort to counter that situation, the Swiss education authorities from “*Suisse romande*” (the French-speaking part of the country) have decided to introduce a simpler and more inclusive orthography in textbooks, starting in 2023. Details can be found in this very enlightening [article](#) from the French newspaper *L’Alsace*.

### 3. Examples of favorite tools/ activities

When it comes to bringing in rich experiences about the francophone world and to making the classroom a highly inclusive space with the use of sound pedagogical activities, options abound. Some of our favorite examples are as follows:

A. Gimkit Draw (one of the game options from [Gimkit](#)) would be a good choice with sentences describing students’ identities based on descriptions of themselves that they wrote and that they agreed to share with the class. Gimkit Draw, a mix of “Pictionary” and “Hangman”, is a favorite of students because of its highly engaging nature. To play this game, one student illustrates a word, phrase or sentence by drawing it on their computer or tablet, while the other students have to guess what it is by spelling it properly. Every few seconds, a random letter is added to the word/ expression as a clue. This is a great way for students to practice their reading comprehension and their spelling while also creating an opportunity to get to know each other in the class.

B. [Wordwall](#) is an inexpensive resource that allows teachers to make matchings and many other activities to practice vocabulary. A Wordwall could be created based on images to be matched with expressions of gratitude. In a prior lesson, French 3 students had made statements about what they were thankful for. This became “*J’ai de la chance parce que...*” (I am lucky because...), a reflexive and positive activity where students expressed their thankfulness for shelter, food, family, friends, favorite hobbies, and much more. This is an enlightening activity for teachers, as it provides an opportunity to get a sense of what students appreciate in their personal lives.

























1. 	 j'ai accès à l'éducation.
2. 	 j'ai de la nourriture.
3. 	 je suis né(e) dans un bon hôpital.
4. 	 j'habite dans une maison.
5. 	 j'ai beaucoup de libertés.
6. 	 j'ai une famille aimante.
7. 	 j'ai des bons amis.
8. 	 j'ai des activités à choix.
9. 	 je suis en bonne santé.
10. 	 j'ai une bonne attitude.
11. 	 je suis créatif/ créative.
12. 	 j'ai un emploi.

Image courtesy of Wordwall

C. Novice students could practice their interpersonal skills with an informational gap activity based on the fruits found in Martinique. This example would help students to master the question “*Quel est le 1<sup>er</sup> (2<sup>e</sup>/ 3<sup>e</sup> ...) fruit?*” (What is the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> ... fruit?) thus practicing basic ordinal numbers, but it would also help them to identify the words for fruits, and in particular for exotic fruits from the Caribbean island, such as “*corossol*” (soursop) and “*massisi*” (Caribbean cucumber). The word “*péyi*” is also worth mentioning as it stands for “*pays*” (country) and is the creole word for “local”.

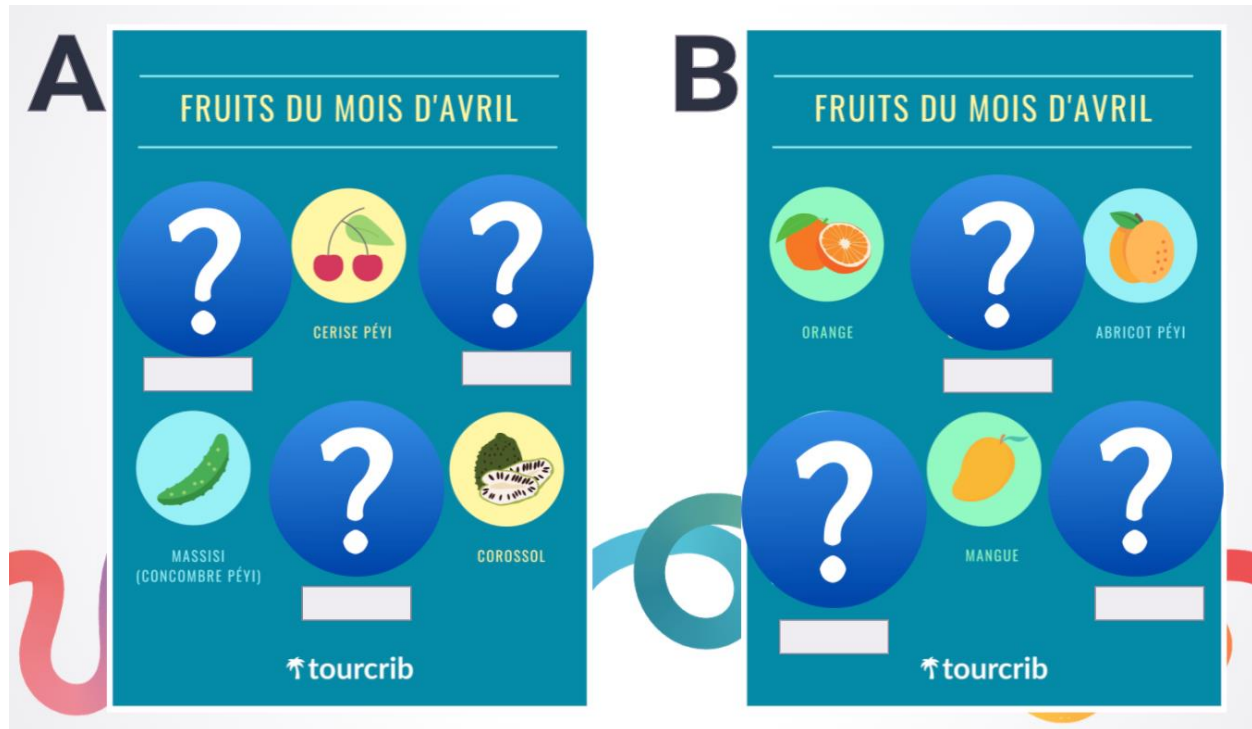


Image courtesy of: Tourcrib; visit their website: <https://tourcrib.com/>

### Conclusion

In our everyday life as teachers in the trenches, we strive to go beyond the walls of the classroom and offer experiences in which students would otherwise not have the chance to be engaged. We teach world languages, or languages of the **world**. As such, our playground has few limits. Let us try to continue expanding the fabric of our craft; the gigantic quilt of education is made of many colorful pieces. Each piece represents a student with their background, personality, quirks and unique personality. Each piece also represents the gifts that we, as

educators, have to offer; specifically, the talents we bring forth, the content we choose to present, and the strategies we hope to successfully implement. All the pieces are interdependent, interwoven and incredibly diverse. Let us try to build upon these quilts, broaden our knowledge, and work together to further the teaching and learning of languages in New York State and beyond.

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# Teaching Writing: Effective and Efficient Strategies that Enhance Learning

Amy W. Pento

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Place four student writing samples down in front of you. I bet you can easily see which one is the strongest and which is the weakest. At this point, you probably grade them and hand them back with a few errors circled, a comment or two of praise or encouragement, along with an explanation of an error or two such as gender agreement, word usage, or verb conjugation.

Recognizing errors and working to reduce them is part of learning to write — no doubt. That aspect of writing instruction is much like being a copy editor, someone whose job it is to revise writing so it's more readable and ensure it is free of grammatical and factual errors.

Now imagine a scenario where the student with the lowest grade comes to you and earnestly asks how they can be a better writer, how to be like the student with the highest grade.

What would you say?

Maybe you'd tell them to make fewer errors or add more detail. You might suggest they write better, more varied sentences. Perhaps you'd recommend they add detail or expand their ideas?

Put yourself in the shoes of the student. Although all are solid suggestions, none of them tell the student *how* to do them. Most likely the student will thank you and walk away, not having any concrete steps to improve their writing. They may blame themselves for not understanding what you mean and think they are incapable of writing better.

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I have been this teacher — thousands of times over. For all the hours I have spent creating, assigning, teaching, and assessing writing over my three decades in the classroom, what was my return on that investment? Not high enough, I fear. Many of my students improved but I doubt much of what I did ever changed the trajectory of a student's writing proficiency. My better writers stayed better and my weak writers stayed weak. I could easily spot strong writing yet struggled to isolate specific writing 'moves' a student could do to improve — so I told them to do a rough draft, to make sure they understood the rubric and standards, to proofread. But other than a few isolated tricks — like making sure they included a few transitional phrases so their writing would flow — I didn't have much to help a weak writer become a good writer.

That all ended in the summer of 2017 when I read the journal article "One Sentence at a Time: The Need for Explicit Instruction in Teaching Students to Write Well" by Judith Hochman and Natalie Wexler in *American Educator*. In it, they give an introduction to The Hochman Method and the book about to come out called *The Writing Revolution*.

The Hochman Method has six principles: (<https://www.thewritingrevolution.org/method/hochman-method/>)

- Students need **explicit instruction** in writing, beginning in the early elementary grades.
- **Sentences** are the building blocks of all writing.
- When **embedded in the content** of the curriculum, writing instruction is a powerful teaching tool.
- The **content** of the curriculum **drives the rigor** of the writing activities.
- **Grammar** is best taught in the context of student writing.
- The two most important phases of the writing process are **planning** and **revising**.

These principles made sense to me so I bought the book; the foreword alone is worth the \$20 cost. *The Writing Revolution* is full of step-by-step instructions for strategies to improve writing with examples for both elementary and secondary levels that work for all disciplines but they are particularly useful for language learning. As I read, my brain started to whirl. In each chapter, I saw strategies to use. I saw how the strategies

would not only teach students how to write better in Spanish but they would also help students learn the content — a twofer. I was sold. That fall, I co-facilitated a book study. Twenty-five teachers joined, from eight different content areas.

Although I recommend many of the strategies from the book, these are the three I use the most which can be used at *every single* level of language instruction: **Because/But/So, Appositives, and Sentence Expansion.**

**A. Because / But / So — Take sentences from “meh” to “wow” with these three essential conjunctions.**  
(Hochman & Wexler, 2017)

**Because, But, So** is a strategy that helps students build better sentences. These three little words move sentences from simple to complex while deepening content knowledge.

**Step 1.** Provide a simple sentence as a stem.

*I want to eat paella.*

**Step 2.** Write that simple sentence stem three times then add the three conjunctions.

*I want to eat paella **because***

*I want to eat paella **but***

*I want to eat paella **so***

**Step 3.** Students complete the sentences logically.

*I want to eat paella **because** I like rice.*

*I want to eat paella **but** it is expensive.*

*I want to eat paella **so** I should go to Valencia, Spain.*

From these three sentences, I can assess vocabulary, syntax, and knowledge of the content, paella. By including *rice* and *expensive*, I know they know two details about paella. If a student wrote “...because it is a soup,” I would immediately know they are confusing paella with a different food, probably gazpacho.

This strategy also provides practice in converting a simple sentence to a complex one, moving students up the proficiency scale. By using conjunctions, students learn the role they play in verb conjugation. In Spanish, students learn early on that in a sentence with two verbs, the first is conjugated and the second isn’t — which is true, except when it isn’t. **Because / But / So** is a great way to get them started to understand the difference.

Do you tire of seeing the same language used over and over? Careful selection of the **Because / But / So** stems and requiring students to provide details about the stem will show you what the student knows while pushing them to vary their vocabulary. Let’s compare the previous stem to another one that is general.

*I want to eat paella... vs. I like to dance...*

The generalized nature of the second stem allows students to use the same basic language over and over: “...because it’s fun” “...but it’s boring”, “so I do it a lot.” These are not specific to dance; they could be talking

about any activity. These sentences are accurate and use good vocabulary and structures but why stop there? Selecting stems that address culture multiplies the benefits of this strategy.

Imagine changing “I like to dance...” to “I like the tango...”. Those general responses would all work here but why not push your students to add detail about the cultural element.

*I like the tango **because** it is dramatic. (They know something about the style.)*

*I like the tango **but** I prefer flamenco. (They know another style.)*

*I like the tango **so** I will travel to Argentina. (They know where the dance originated.)*

**What’s so special about these three conjunctions?** Used together, these three words help students address one topic three different ways, bringing a depth of understanding that students may have forgotten about without guidance. Now, instead of writing “add detail”, we can tell students to add detail by using **Because / But / So**.

**Because** — gives a reason

**But** — indicates a change of direction (U-turn)

**So** — tells the result or effect

### Level It Up?

Once students get the hang of it, level-up the conjunctions.

Instead of *because*, use *since* or *given that*.

Instead of *but*, use *although* or *even though*.

Instead of *so*, use *therefore* or *thus*.

If you want to get really fancy, flip the order of clauses and add a comma.

***Because** it is dramatic, I like tango.*

***Although** I prefer flamenco, I like tango.*

### When to Use Because / But / So

Since the **Because / But / So** strategy is so simple and straightforward, it can be used daily as a bellringer, exit ticket, quick practice, or more formally as a writing assessment — but don’t stop there. Why not use it with reading, listening, and speaking tasks as well?

Use the strategy to assess reading or listening comprehension. Imagine a passage where someone describes a place they visited. Follow it with a **Because / But / So**. You will be able to glean their understanding by how they complete the sentences. The sentence stem and conjunctions also act as a scaffold by focusing the students’ attention on searching for a reason, a change of direction, and a result. Familiarity with the strategy means it doesn’t use up much space in students’ working memory, allowing their mental effort to be spent on grappling with the text. It can be in place of or as a complement to comprehension questions. The **Because / But / So** becomes your scaffolding; then they work to answer the comprehension question.

The **Because / But / So** strategy fits perfectly into speaking instruction as well. Once the students get the hang of it with writing, there’s no reason these three conjunctions should not be some of the first tools in our students’ speaking toolbox since they elevate an utterance to the intermediate level.



## In Summary

**Because / But / So** deserves a regular spot in your instructional toolbox.

- It is simple to create.
- It is applicable to all subject areas and levels since the content drives the rigor.
- It efficiently shows how well students understand the content.
- Although designed for writing, use it with reading, listening, and speaking too.
- The three conjunctions used together help students see a topic from different angles.
- It helps students add detail and pushes them to go beyond verused responses.
- It moves students from simple to complex sentences.
- In time, more conjunctions and word order options can be added, leveling up the strategy.

**B. Appositives — An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that is used after another noun to rename it or explain it more fully.** (Hochman & Wexler, 2017)

Here are two simple sentences. Each provides one detail about paella.

1. Paella is a rice dish.
2. Paella originates from Valencia.

Each sentence is complete, correct, and true. They're both lovely and I would be pleased to receive these from my students — but the sentence structure is the same. This isn't an issue when we're looking at sentences in isolation but once we get to paragraph length writing, seeing the same sentence structure over and over is tiresome and detracts from the whole.

What if we taught students a way to combine these two sentences into one — without relying on the ubiquitous conjunction 'and'? Tell them to use an **appositive**.

An **appositive**? What is an appositive you ask? Don't feel bad. I didn't know either — nor did the vast majority of the 25 teachers in the book study. **Appositives** are simple to do but tricky to explain so let me show you first. Here are the previous sentences combined into one by using an appositive.

1. Paella, **a rice dish**, originates from Valencia.
2. Paella, **a dish from Valencia**, contains rice.

An **appositive**, a noun or noun phrase, is used after another noun to rename it or explain it more fully. (Do you see what I did there? Did you catch it?) I used an appositive to explain an appositive.

Inserting an appositive is an elegant way to either better explain a noun or add some detail about it. An added benefit is that it changes up the sentence structure from the 'subject + verb + object' pattern that dominates student writing and speech.

We've all done matching activities, right? There's nothing wrong with a good matching activity but why stop there? Matching can be the first step to appositives.

**Level 1 - Perfectly fine:** Classic matching

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Paella   | a. a cold soup       |
| _____ 2. Churros  | b. a crunchy dessert |
| _____ 3. Gazpacho | c. a rice dish       |

**Level 2 - Better:** Match but then ask students to turn the pair into a complete sentence.

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Paella   | a. a cold soup       |
| _____ 2. Churros  | b. a crunchy dessert |
| _____ 3. Gazpacho | c. a rice dish       |

1. *Paella is a rice dish.*
2. *Churros are a crunchy dessert.*
3. *Gazpacho is a cold soup.*

**Activity 3 - Best:** Match, make an appositive, and finish with outside information.

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Paella   | a. a cold soup       |
| _____ 2. Churros  | b. a crunchy dessert |
| _____ 3. Gazpacho | c. a rice dish       |

1. *Paella, **a rice dish**, originated in Valencia.*
2. *Churros, **a crunchy dessert**, are often dunked in hot chocolate.*
3. *Gazpacho, **a cold soup**, is made from vegetables.*

If you take the appositive out, you should still have a complete sentence. If not, you've done something wrong. Appositives also work with our classic fill-in-the-blank exercises. You provide two parts of a sentence and the student fills in the third.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, **a rice dish**, originated in Valencia.
2. Paella, \_\_\_\_\_, originated in Valencia.
3. Paella, **a rice dish**, \_\_\_\_\_.

While all three fill-in-the-blank examples work, they are not equally challenging. The first sentence merely asks the student to name the dish. The second requires the student to generate an explanation of what paella is. The third is quite demanding, asking the student to tell what paella is, does, or has. All three have their place.

Sentences with appositives follow this formula:

Noun, **other name for or explanation of noun**, conjugated verb [rest of sentence].  
Important! You must use commas to set the appositive apart from the rest of the sentence.

**Non-Examples:** The sentences below attempt to use appositives but are not done correctly. Use the formula for an appositive to spot and then fix the errors. Answers are at the end.

1. The rice dish is paella, originated in Valencia.
2. Churros is the crunchy dessert often dunked in hot chocolate.
3. Gazpacho, is a cold soup, made from vegetables.



4. Saffron is an expensive spice, and, is used in paella.

**Can we Level-Up Appositives?** Yes, let's combine **Appositives** with **Because / But / So**.

*“We owe it to our students to arm them with tools to become stronger writers.”*

Paella, **a rice dish**, originated in Valencia **because** the soil there is good for growing rice.  
 Paella, **a rice dish**, originated in Valencia **but** can be enjoyed all over the world.  
 Paella, **a rice dish**, originated in Valencia **so** you'll find the best paella there.

Do you see how neither strategy is all that difficult yet without explicit instruction, students may never do them and for those who do, it'll be due to luck and may never be internalized. We owe it to our students to arm them with tools to become stronger writers.

## In Summary

**Appositives** deserve a regular spot in your instructional toolbox.

- They are simple to create.
- They are applicable to all subject areas and levels since the content drives the rigor.
- They help students write more sophisticated sentences.
- They elegantly add detail.
- They make the most of definitions.
- They add sentence variety.
- They teach a new use for commas.
- When spoken, they offer an opportunity to work on intonation; the voice falls at the appositive.

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## Sentence Expansion — Create one richly detailed, well-organized sentence (Hochman & Wexler, 2017)

Getting students to add detail is like pulling teeth. It is particularly frustrating when you know they have the knowledge, they just didn't think to provide it. **Sentence Expansion** is a three step strategy that helps students prepare for writing by helping them generate details (notes) about a topic and leads them to write one, well-organized sentence that is full of detail.

### Three steps to an expanded sentence:



**Step 1.** Provide a Kernel Sentence. A Kernel Sentence is one complete sentence, devoid of detail. It is bare-bones, brief. It lacks modifiers — but is complete and accurate. It is often the kind of sentence our students themselves provide. Below is an example of a Kernel Sentence for a unit on Day of the Dead.

Ex. **It is placed on the altar.**

**Step 2.** Provide Questions. Under the Kernel Sentence, add a list of interrogatives. Ask students to generate details they know about the Kernel Sentence. These are notes so they should be brief. This step acts as an enhanced method of brainstorming. The questions help students generate details that may not come to mind by merely “thinking hard”.

Ex. **It is placed on the altar.**

**What?** *A picture of a loved one*

**Where?** *prominent spot on the altar / Mexico / grave*

**When?\*** *Day of the Dead / November 2nd / autumn*

**Why?** *So they know which altar is theirs / so they can return to visit / in remembrance*

**Step 3.** Write an Expanded Sentence, a new and improved version of the Kernel Sentence, by adding details generated by the question words; start with the *when* when possible.

Ex. **It is placed on the altar.**

**What?** *A picture of a deceased loved one*

**Where?** *prominent spot on the altar / Mexico / grave*

**When?\*** *Day of the Dead / November 2nd / autumn*

**Why?** *So they know which altar is theirs / so they can return to visit / in remembrance*

**Expanded Sentence:** *On November 2nd, Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead by placing a picture of a loved one on a prominent spot on an altar in remembrance so the deceased can come back to visit the living.*

\*Starting with the *when* helps students move away from the ‘subject + verb + object’ sentence structure common in speech but less common in academic writing. Getting students to start with the *when* in writing will make reading sentences with that structure easier. If there is no *when*, encourage students to start with the *where*: “In Mexico, ...”, “In Valencia,...”,

“In Argentina,...”

The Expanded Sentence is better than the Kernel Sentence; it has rich detail that is elegantly woven into one sentence. If this feels overwhelming, simplify it by either asking fewer questions or by requiring students to add only one or two details to the Kernel Sentence.

**Ex. It is placed on the altar.**

**What?** *A picture of a loved one*

**When?\*** *Day of the Dead / November 2nd*

**Expanded Sentence:** *On November 2nd, the Day of the Dead, Mexicans put a picture of a loved one on an altar.*

Of the three strategies I’ve shared, this is the most demanding so do this with the whole class to model. Gradually wean them to where they are doing more of the work themselves. Generate details together. Then do a Think, Pair, Share by giving students a few minutes to generate details on their own. Then give them a minute or two to exchange details with a partner. End by calling on students to provide details for the class, encouraging students to add anything they didn’t already have. Then, when writing the Expanded sentence, challenge them to add one detail to the Kernel Sentence. If successful, push for two, then three.

### Sentence Expansion as a way to embed grammar

After using this strategy for a while, I started to notice certain grammatical structures were needed with certain question words. By using Sentence Expansion regularly, these structures become students’ go-to tools helping them write at a higher level.

**The *Where*** question is a great place to differentiate between proper and also common ones, allowing you to address capitalization. For the Day of the Dead, ‘*Mexico*’ is a *Where* but so is ‘*at the gravesite*’ or ‘*in a prominent spot on the altar*’. A review of prepositions is also a good fit here.

**The *When*** lets you review the basics like days, dates, months, years, seasons, and saying at what time but it also offers an opportunity to level it up by adding things like *at the beginning of fall*, *at 3:00 on the dot*, *in the early morning*, *at dusk*.

**The *Why*** questions often needed *because*, *since*, *in order to*, or *so that*. For lower levels, stick with *because* — but for the upper level Spanish this became a great place to teach *so that* + *subjunctive*. For the middle Spanish, *para* + *infinitive* fits beautifully.

**The *How*** questions often use *by* + *ing*. In Spanish, this is simply done by using *por* + *infinitive*.

### In Summary

**Sentence Expansion** also deserves a regular spot in your instructional toolbox.

- It is simple to create.
- It is applicable to all subject areas and levels since the content drives the rigor.
- It helps students write more sophisticated sentences.
- It helps students generate details.
- It provides a spot for authentic grammar instruction.
- It gives repeated exposure to interrogatives.
- It teaches students how to generate details / take notes.

- It makes it easy to assess what students know about a topic.

Over thirty-two years of teaching, I've attended a lot of professional development — some good, some bad, some ugly; *The Writing Revolution* book study is the best ever, hands down. To quote a colleague who is an English teacher, "It's a game-changer." The three strategies included here are but a few of many included in the book. The later chapters have been a lifesaver as I mentor students through the Seal of Biliteracy. The strategies have allowed me to raise the bar for writing while giving me concrete ways to support students along the way. Now when students ask if I can help them become a better writer, I can confidently say yes. I am finally a teacher of writing, not merely a copy editor. By using strategies from *The Writing Revolution*, you can be one too.

*Answers to appositives practice*

1. The rice dish, **paella**, originated in Valencia.
2. Churros, **a crunchy dessert**, is often dunked in hot chocolate.
3. Gazpacho, **a cold soup**, is made from vegetables.
4. Saffron, **an expensive spice**, is used in paella.

Also, I used two appositives in the section on Sentence Expansion. Go back to the Step 3 section and see if you can find them.

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# Stepping into the World of CI at the High School Level

Nicole Alberico-Farr

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I am a veteran Spanish teacher and have taught every level offered in my suburban school district. With over 20 years of teaching experience, I have had a variety of experiences in my classroom throughout the years. I have taught every Spanish course offered at one point or another and after being in the high school for the majority of time. In 2018, I was, for the first time, not enjoying my job regularly. I felt weighed down by the constant complaints of students that the class was too hard. After much reflection, I realized I wasn't doing anything differently to make the class harder. I was using the same curriculum my district had been using, I was offering the same support, extra help as I always had. I was still using song and games interspersed with other communicative activities to help them memorize the vocab and verb conjugations. I finally realized that the students had changed. It was a new generation that was used to instantaneous gratification and results from their digital world.

My turning point was when a student told me they would study the vocab if I made the study guide for them. I was floored! Soon after, I casually looked at blogs and Facebook posts and the term Comprehensible Input (CI) showed up more and more. I started to dive into an online investigation to discover what it really was. I realized that I had too many years in this profession to no longer enjoy it on a regular basis. The students were of a new generation and if something were going to change it would have to be me or rather my method of delivering instruction and structuring my classes. So after 20 years of teaching, I started to intentionally look for information, video examples, teacher testimonials and in discussing it with one of my colleagues, we started to shift our mindset from grammar based to more proficiency based teaching. We were nervous and excited at the same time because it was a change. We were teaching level 3 and through our investigation it seemed this shift was more popular among the level 1 teachers. We set our minds to try it and were fortunate enough to have the support of our administration.

Comprehensible Input is the theory of sheltering language and limiting language use so that the learners get exposed in a meaningful and comprehensible manner, to some new vocab. The learners hear and read (input) the new words and expressions so that they receive a lot of repetition. With support of signs on the walls, gestures and the use of cognates, learners will start to acquire the language naturally and not need to rely on memorized lists. The theory reflects how we learned our first language and encourages educators to use topics of interest to the learners so that they stay engaged and motivated and let the language be absorbed. The more language input (reading/listening) they are engaged with the more they will eventually model in their own speaking and writing (output).

We started small. In order to test the waters, we used some activities that we had read about by other World Language teachers who were professing the successes in their classrooms of using Comprehensible Input. These activities included games such as "Calendar Talk" (<https://growingwithproficiency.com/blog/>), ("The Lucky Reading Game" ([www.senorachase.com](http://www.senorachase.com)), and "Write, Draw, Pass" (<https://comprehensibleclassroom.com>). As we were becoming more and more convinced that it would yield the results we wanted, we asked our district to let us attend a 2 day local workshop given by Mike Peto. Seeing it in action was just what we needed. He presented as if we were his students in a Portuguese class. We sat through 2 days of a deskless workshop and walked away convinced we were on the right path and empowered that we could incorporate more CI methods into our class

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immediately, keep the students engaged and push their proficiency skills forward without the battle we had been fighting. We discovered the power of a “Write and Discuss”. This is an activity to summarize a topic as a whole group. The teacher records the ideas on the board in a short paragraph. As you review it, the teacher models pronunciation, points out cognates or may ask that students make observations about the language patterns they notice. Mike Peto encourages a quick listening quiz immediately after. I realized that my listening quizzes had been up to that point testing their listening interpretation but also their memories. In this manner, it truly is an interpretive assessment based on that class. He also encourages a 5 question quiz rather than a 10 questions quiz. That has been a game changer for me. Not only is the record keeping easier but the students are more often successful than not and I can immediately touch base with struggling students. My course is building skills to be successful on a regular basis as long as I stay comprehensible and they stay engaged.

We knew that the NYS Standards were going to be revised and between the experience at the workshop and the response of the students, we knew we wanted to transition. In the fall of 2019 we decided to jump all in. We even went deskless! We had read up on renovating our curriculum and how to deliver content to advance proficiency while stepping away from the “drill and kill” practice worksheets. We stopped giving weekly vocab quizzes, but instead paired our lists down to have common “target vocab”. We introduced our students to the concept of proficiency and all the different ACTFL levels so that they were well-informed as to why we were making the changes in the high school classes. We implemented a Free Choice Reading (FCR) program and started accumulating readers to create a class library of readers at all different levels. I felt like a brand new teacher again. It was tiring but the results and excitement in the class could not be denied. Our plan was working!

Many students were relieved that the pressure for perfect conjugations was gone. Our emphasis was on communication and adding details. While some missed the routine and predictability of the old verb charts, we offered them “extra practice” and had some printed up, but eventually they stopped taking them. I believe those kids liked that type of practice because they had the discipline to sit and memorize and it was an easy grade. As simply a practice, the drive to do it was gone.

I am a language teacher who does like the rules and structure of teaching and learning about the grammar of a language. As I started to teach AP, it was glaringly obvious that there were no rubrics that described conjugating the imperfect subjunctive perfectly in the third person. It’s all about the depth of details in communication and interpretation. As a teacher who likes grammar, is at the high school level and always enjoyed the structure of a predictable routine throughout the week, I’ve found a compromise. What I’ve determined is that if you miss the grammar driven lessons, PACE model lessons are a great combination of CI + old school grammar. PACE stands for presentation, attention, co-construction, extension (<https://wlcclassroom.com>). It is a model in which you can focus on grammar but within a cultural context. As I continue to teach with a focus on being comprehensible, I continue to evolve and revise. I am not throwing out everything, but rather modifying what I really liked and then adding some new activities in.

With multiple teachers in my department, we were worried that the students would have different backgrounds and foundations to move forward. We decided at the high school to agree on a small set of vocab that we would all shelter. As discussions in different classes happen organically, the students acquire more language but we know they will all have some common vocab foundation. My level 4 students came to me from two different teachers and thanks to CI, they have the skills to communicate and clarify their ideas when needed so that they may also be comprehensible to each other.

Comprehensible Input is not a cookie cutter method. CI will not look the same in every class nor with every teacher. Start small so as not to overwhelm yourself or your students. Familiarity with a small set of activities helps the classroom management. Be up front with your department, students and parents and explain why you are making the changes. Administrators appreciate a teacher who changes for the benefit of the students' learning

outcomes. If possible, attend a conference by an experienced CI teacher. It works at all levels (level 1-AP) you just have to find the right fit for you, your students and your curriculum.

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Nicole is a veteran Spanish teacher who has had the opportunity to teach levels 1-AP in the same suburban district. Most of her time has been at the high school levels where she currently teaches Spanish 4 and AP.

# Approaches to Teaching & Learning in International Baccalaureate & Advanced Placement World Languages

Kerri Titone, Ed.D.

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**Abstract:** This article offers a description of the Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classroom teaching and learning methods and themes. While there are many overlaps between the AP and IB in the curriculum themes, there are unique differences; namely, inquiry-based learning. World Language teachers and supervisors can use this article to establish a baseline of knowledge surrounding these advanced programs, when considering adoption or to better understand each.

**Keywords:** assessment, culture, curriculum, instruction, language development, methods, professional development

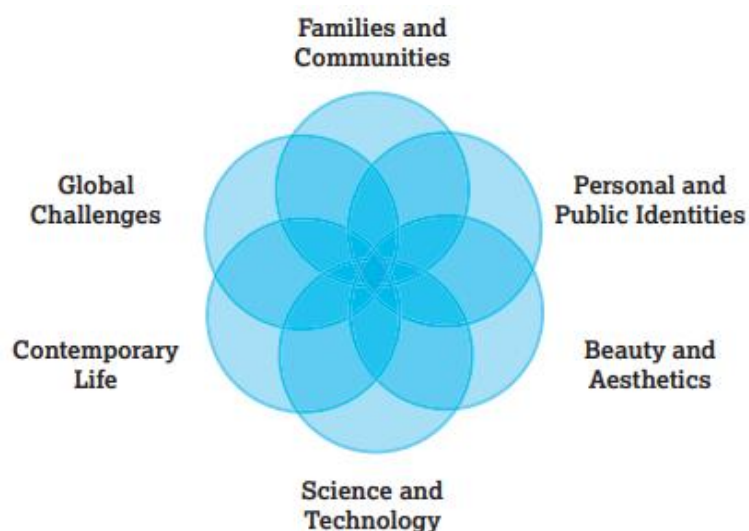
Many high schools throughout New York State offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and/or Career Programme, and/or Advanced Placement (AP) World Language/Literature courses. The IB courses occur in a student's final two years of schooling, at the Standard and/or Higher Level, offered to students depending upon their level of proficiency. Students must be enrolled in an IB course at their school in order to sit for the exam, and therefore have an assured experience in the classroom. The IB offers language acquisition courses in modern and classical languages. Advanced Placement courses and exams may occur in any academic year for a student, and do not require course enrollment. Most of the AP world language exams assess a student's knowledge and skills in language and culture.

There are significant overlaps in the required themes found in an AP or IB world language classroom. The IB themes include Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organization, and Sharing the Planet, while the AP Language and Culture themes include Families and Communities, Global Challenges, Personal and Public Identities, Beauty and Aesthetics, Comtemporaty Life, and Science and Technology.



Theme	Guiding principle	Optional recommended topics	
<b>Identities</b>	Explore the nature of the self and what it is to be human.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyles</li> <li>• Health and well-being</li> <li>• Beliefs and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subcultures</li> <li>• Language and identity</li> </ul>
<b>Experiences</b>	Explore and tell the stories of the events, experiences and journeys that shape our lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure activities</li> <li>• Holidays and travel</li> <li>• Life stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rites of passage</li> <li>• Customs and traditions</li> <li>• Migration</li> </ul>
<b>Human ingenuity</b>	Explore the ways in which human creativity and innovation affect our world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Artistic expressions</li> <li>• Communication and media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Scientific innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Social organization</b>	Explore the ways in which groups of people organize themselves, or are organized, through common systems or interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social relationships</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Social engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• The working world</li> <li>• Law and order</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing the planet</b>	Explore the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment</li> <li>• Human rights</li> <li>• Peace and conflict</li> <li>• Equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Urban and rural environment</li> </ul>

*IB DP Language acquisition subject group Language B SL & HL Themes, ibo.org 2022*



*AP Language & Culture Themes, [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org) p. 21*

Within these broad themes, teachers choose which subtopics to build into their curriculum and daily lessons. Both the IB and AP provide plentiful suggested subtopics and resources for teachers to use. The AP and IB courses and assessments incorporate the [ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages](#), as they ask students to communicate, interact with cultural competence and understanding, connect with other disciplines, develop insights into the nature of language and culture, and build community through cultural competence within and beyond the classroom. The IB provides teachers with the *Approaches to teaching and learning*, which are at

the heart of any given lesson, in all subjects. “The five approaches to learning (developing thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, self management skills and research skills), along with the six approaches to teaching (teaching that is inquiry based, conceptually focused, contextualized, collaborative, differentiated and informed by assessment), encompass the key values and principles that underpin IB pedagogy” (International Baccalaureate, 2020). Lesson design to target any one of these approaches, paired with themes selected by teachers, set the stage for dynamic lessons for students in the world language classroom. The IB provides resources and practical suggestions for teachers in how to develop these skills, including essential questions, experiential learning, project based learning, discussion of core themes and ideas, teamwork and collaboration (International Baccalaureate, 2020). Among the resources provided by the College Board, AP teachers have access to essential questions that are aligned with each theme, and connected to core understandings. Through the Language B subject guide and the AP Language and Culture Course and Exam Descriptions, teachers are supported to put theory into practice, with lesson suggestions and accessible tools for teachers to implement in the classroom.

### *Essential Questions*

While students will vary in their proficiency levels in an AP and IB classroom, all students will move along the continuum through intentional lesson design that incorporates a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. Building the skills and knowledge of the world language student through dynamic lessons will empower them to become lifelong learners. One approach to consider is the use of essential questions. “Essential questions foster the kinds of inquiries, discussions, and reflections that help learners find meaning in their learning and achieve deeper thought and better quality in their work” (Wiggins & Wilbur, 2015). The work of Wiggins and McTighe (2004, 2011) provides pointed guidance on how to craft and utilize essential questions, in any subject area. Using these deep and meaningful questions in a world language classroom, students are exposed to open-ended learning experiences. For example, new learning could be introduced through a few theme-based essential questions. Then, students can continue to revisit these questions as they progress throughout the unit, demonstrating what they are able to do with their knowledge and skills. From the work of McTighe and Wiggins (2004, 2011), we learn that there are nine characteristics to essential questions. As opposed to non-essential questions (including hook, topical, overarching, or leading questions), essential questions have seven defining characteristics:

1. **Open-ended:** no final, single, correct answer
2. **Thought-provoking and intellectually engaging:** spark discussion and debate and inquiry
3. **Higher-Order Thinking:** such as analysis, inference, evaluation, synthesis
4. **Important, Transferable ideas:** within, and sometimes across, disciplines
5. **Additional Questions:** generates additional questions, ideas, areas for inquiry
6. **Support and Justification:** requires support and justification
7. **Recurr:** the question can and should be revisited again and again

In the IB and AP world language classroom, examples of essential questions (in the target language) may include:

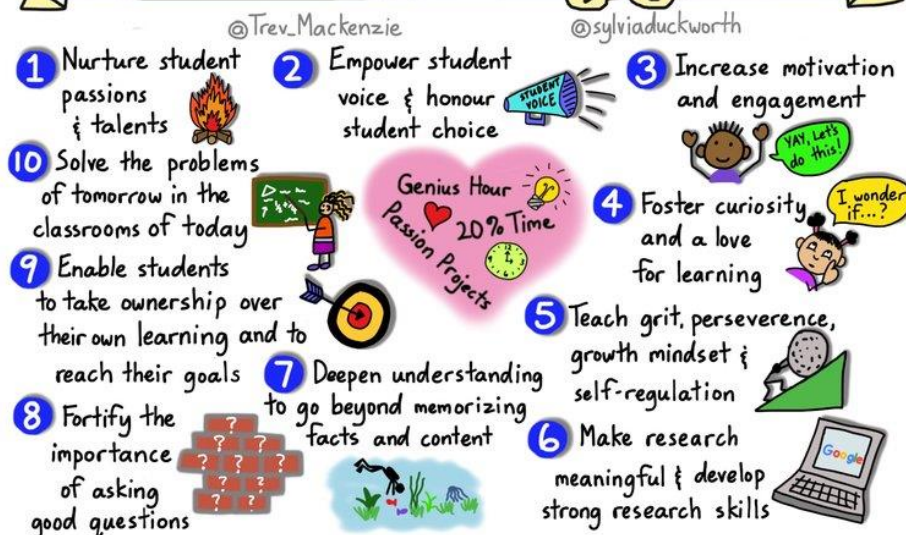
- How do I go beyond thinking in my native language?
- How much can you thrive only speaking one language?
- If a person speaks more than one language, how does their knowledge change?
- To what extent does your language shape your identity?
- What are the consequences of scientific or technological advancements?
- Why are customs and traditions an important part of contemporary life?

*“Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.” -Chinese proverb*

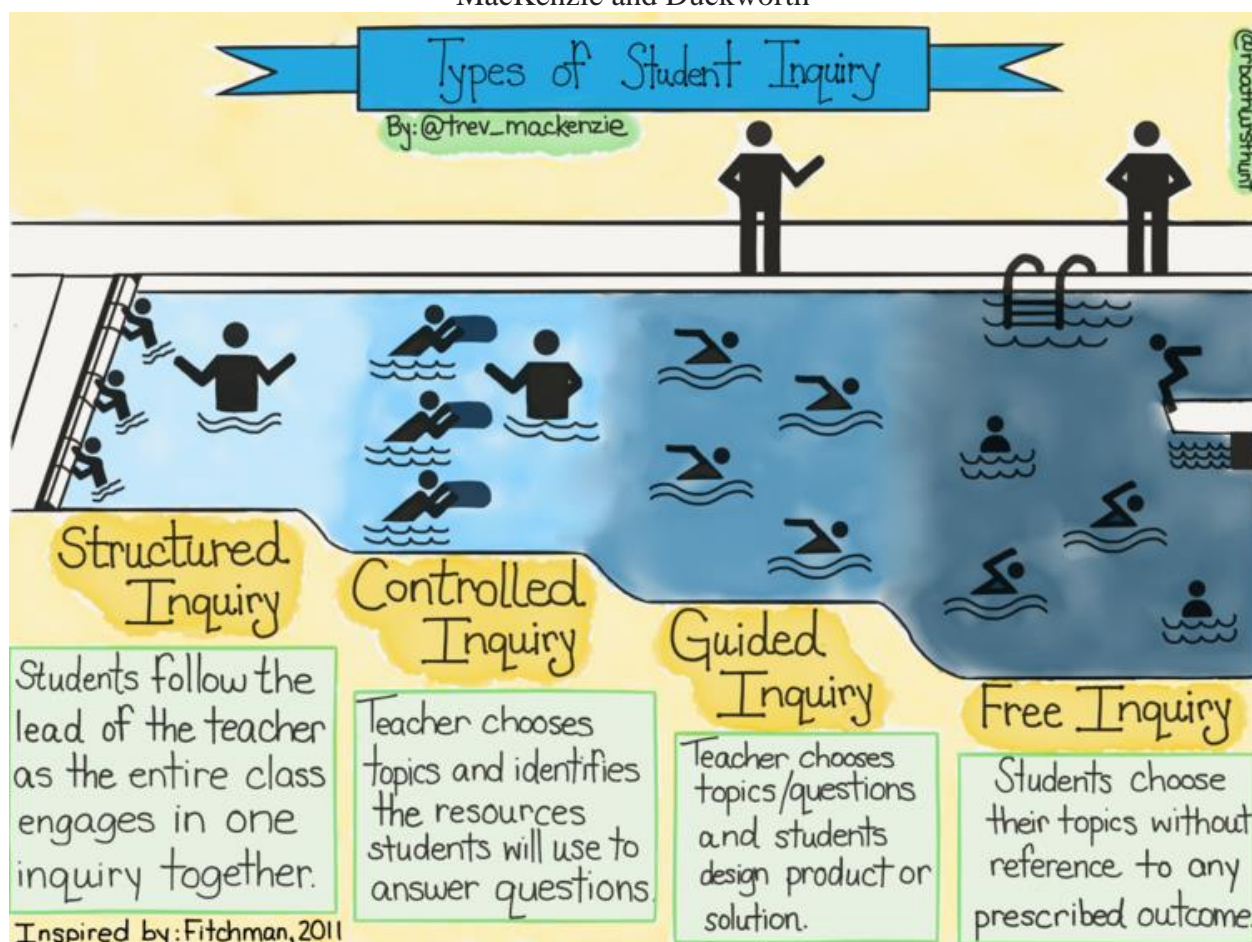
Approaching the world language classroom through a lens of inquiry, students can be deeply engaged and invested in their learning. Trevor MacKenzie’s *Dive Into Inquiry* (2016), explores the characteristics of the inquiry-based classroom and strategies to incorporate into lessons. Moving towards inquiry-based lessons will allow the world language student to explore the language and culture of study, making deep connections as an empowered learner. Students should be encouraged to make meaning on their own, as active participants in their

learning. In this way, they may be asked to step out of their comfort zone, as there will be unfamiliar words or concepts to discover. Through exposure to real-world sources, cultural artifacts, and problem-based learning, students have an authentic opportunity to use language.

## 10 Characteristics of the Inquiry Classroom



MacKenzie and Duckworth



MacKenzie and Duckworth (2016, p. 28)

### *Local and Global Contexts*

In an upper-level, advanced classroom, it is critical that students be able to demonstrate an understanding of the world around them. In both the AP and IB exams, students are asked to make cultural comparisons using the target language. It is therefore critical that students be exposed to teaching that is developed in local and global contexts. Students must make interdisciplinary and cultural connections, by identifying and describing content, explaining differences, and presenting their own experiences and perspectives. To do so, students may explain how information from a source such as an infographic, article, or chart connects or relates to the target language/culture. Students may also compare this new information to their own experience, adding new vocabulary to their lexicon in the process. In the world language classroom, it is important to give students a platform to explore the course themes, within a truly global context. Rich and authentic resources can provide students with this input, opening a window to the world far beyond where the eye can see.

Overall, approaches to teaching and learning in the IB and AP classroom support our most advanced students as they strive to achieve the highest levels of proficiency. Through intentional lesson design that incorporates essential questions and inquiry within local and global contexts, students will be exposed to a rich learning environment. It is through these methods and paths that the world language classroom sets the stage for students to open their minds, be able to communicate, and experience the world beyond the schoolhouse.

For more information, please visit [ibo.org](http://ibo.org) and [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org).

Dr. Kerri Titone graduated from St. John's University with a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration, completing a dissertation entitled *The DNA of 21st Century Schools: A Mixed Methods Analysis of Teacher and Administrator Qualities that Facilitate Innovation*. She is currently the coordinator for Advanced Placement and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at a high school on Long Island. Dr. Titone taught secondary Italian and Spanish for 12 years, from elementary to Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses in Standard and Higher Level, and led trips abroad to Italy. Dr. Titone has presented at local and national conferences, including Long Island Language Teachers, New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and the International Society for Technology in Education. Dr. Titone has served as the LILT Executive Board Secretary and Second Vice President; she is currently the President of LILT.

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# Student Showcase: A Celebration of Language and Culture

Kathryn L. Inhelder and Margaret Leone, PhD

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Are you looking for a way to showcase what your students are doing in the classroom with the community? Are you looking for a way to collaborate with colleagues from different schools? Are you looking for another way to assess your students' proficiency? Hosting a Student Showcase: A Celebration of Language and Culture is a way to make these connections. This article demonstrates how we went from our original idea to the showcase presentation, while suggesting the steps you can take to create a celebration of your own.

**Background and funding.** In 2019, in pre-pandemic life, we wanted to bring students, teachers and community members together, under one roof, to celebrate Francophone cultures. Since our large and mostly rural geographic location is greatly influenced by Quebecois culture, and, due to our proximity to Quebec, we embarked on our journey to host the first [Célébration de la Culture Francophone](#). In January, we applied for a grant from the [Adirondack Foundation's Foreign Language Enhancement Fund](#). The Adirondack Foundations' Foreign Language Enhancement Fund supports innovation, elevation, and excellence. The fund was created to inspire French and Spanish teachers within Adirondack elementary, middle and high schools (K-12) to reach for the stars and to elevate the status of language teachers in the teaching community. In February, our funding request was granted.

**Booking a venue, contacting colleagues and advertising for the event.** We immediately contacted the historic Strand Theater in Plattsburgh about available dates to host the event, keeping in mind the end of the SUNY Plattsburgh semester and public schools' vacation schedules. Once a date was set (April 27, 2019), we contacted area French teachers via [email](#) to encourage them and their students to participate in the showcase while scurrying to contact the local media outlets to publicize the [event](#).

**Lights, camera, action!** The day came and the show was a success! Starting with student informational presentations "science fair style," the community had an opportunity to interact with the students. Next, students performed on stage (poetry reading, songs, musical renditions) supported by professional lighting and sound crew. To wrap up the event, a video of student projects recorded in the classroom was shown and every participant was entered into a raffle for prizes. At that time we had the luxury of gathering in-person but also the disadvantage of having limited time for our colleagues to prepare their students to participate.

**Finding an alternative during COVID.** In [2020](#) and [2021](#), the showcase was adapted to accommodate virtual learning. Teachers and students were encouraged to submit videos of performances and projects. These were then compiled into one video and shared with local schools. The first asynchronous show included messages and performances by professional musicians too. The second celebration was the most far reaching, as it included more participation from students of multiple districts and levels in the area. Under the circumstances, the ability to be more flexible was necessary for the recorded presentations. As a result, this situation increased district to district collaboration yet sacrificed community involvement. This year's showcase will again be held virtually, but we look forward to hosting an in-person showcase in 2023.

**Making assessment meaningful.** Regardless of the format, the showcase is useful for assessment purposes. Teachers measure student proficiency in culture ([See Anchor Standard 1: Cultures in the New York State Standards for World Languages](#)). Students in our celebration were encouraged to link their personal interests to the Francophone world. They were given the freedom to choose their project content. Teachers also measure student proficiency in communication ([See Standard 3: Presentational Communication in the NYSS for WL](#)). In our case, students were assessed based on the ACTFL performance indicators and proficiency guidelines. On a more global level, the showcase provides an opportunity to measure [skills of the 21st Century Learner](#).

This is the story of our journey to create something that can be used for the purposes of assessment and regional advocacy for language learning. More importantly, this event can serve as an opportunity to create community for both students within the classroom and among their peers in the region, as well as for teachers who could create bonds with their colleagues. All of these are needed to find direction and to heal in a post-COVID world.

For more detailed information, a PDF version of our Google Slides presentation from our session at the 2021 NYSAFLT Annual Conference can be viewed [here](#).

Kathryn Inhelder is currently a French teacher at AuSable Valley Middle-High School in Clintonville, NY. She has been teaching French at the middle school level for 16 years. She has an undergraduate degree in Education from SUNY Plattsburgh and a Master's Degree in Second Language Acquisition from McGill University. She was a member of the NYS World Languages Standards Review Committee and an annual guest speaker in Dr. Leone's Methods course at SUNY Plattsburgh from 2011-2021. She is a six time recipient of the Adirondack Foundation's Foreign Language Enhancement Fund Grant. She is currently the Capital-East Regional Director for NYSAFLT and is one of the facilitators for the NYSED OBEWL Book Study - Authentic Materials Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching.

Dr. Margaret Leone is a recently retired French, Methods and Linguistics instructor at SUNY Plattsburgh. She served on the World Languages Standards Revision Committee for the Capitol East Region and is a Certified AAPPL rater.

# Learning Language Outside: Reflections on Outdoor Learning during a Pandemic

David C. Schultz

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**Abstract:** At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many districts urged their teachers to take their classes outside to safely reopen schools. Some language teachers reported that although teaching outside can be uncomfortable and inconvenient, world language teaching is actually well suited to outdoor learning. This article is a reflection on world language teachers' experience teaching language outside during the pandemic. It explores the developing pedagogical toolkit and learning experiences of outdoor language learning programs, while reviewing the relevant research and literature on the topic.

**Keywords:** FLES, Instruction, Issues in the Profession, 2020 Reflection, Outdoor Learning

## **Introduction: A Silver Lining**

Teaching under the extremely stressful conditions of a raging plague, some teachers reported a “silver lining” that will inspire and inform their teaching long after the pandemic subsides. Starting in April 2020 with the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic, in an effort to promote social distancing and prevent viral spread, classes in schools across the country were forced to be conducted outside. Drawing on previous research as well as the author’s own experience taking his Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) Mandarin Classes outdoors, this work describes and affirms outdoor language learning for its linguistic, socio-emotional, and health benefits. It also offers instructional guidance to equip the world language teacher with the tools to “break down the walls” and bring their teaching out into the real, natural world.

## **A Dearth of Research**

In many districts throughout the country, there have always existed advocates of outdoor learning, “holistic learning” and integrating our real and natural worlds into the classroom (Wirth & Rosenbow 2013). Successful outdoor learning programs in Northern Europe and Scandinavia were popularized in critically-acclaimed documentaries, “Schools Out – Lessons from a Forest Kindergarten” and “NaturePlay” (Molomot 2021). For the past decade or so, scattered experimental “Forest Schools” have also been popping up around the country (Dennis et al. 2019; Mycock 2019). However, in the US, these programs and their advocates have existed largely at the margins of the instructional mainstream. Although outdoor language learning is a relatively new topic of investigation in academic circles and suffers from “a lack of research about language learning in outdoor environments” (Norling & Sandberg 2015), there is compelling evidence that some of the general benefits of teaching outside may be extended to language learning (Mettis and Våljetaga 2021; Wirth and Rosenbow 2012). Prior to the pandemic many language teachers in the USA did not have the wherewithal nor the opportunity to explore the kinds of outdoor learning that Northern Europe has pioneered. That all changed when the pandemic forced outdoor learning from the margins to the frontlines of the public health response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## **Outdoor Language Learning is Contextual**

According to some of these newfound outdoor language teachers, learning outside offers unique curricular advantages and opportunities for meaningful, relevant language and content learning. By virtue of not being confined to a controlled environment, rather out in the “great outdoors”, a typical outdoor language lesson is “by nature” interactive, spontaneous, and creative. Research suggests that the mobile and dynamic “interactions with people, environments and materials” that take place during outdoor learning “invites the learning activity itself to be situational and connected to the context it takes place and utilizes contextual information for learning purposes



making learning meaningful” (Mettis and Väljataga 2021). Teacher advocates argue, and the scant literature on the topic suggests that world language learning may be particularly well-suited to outdoor learning. Language is a symbolic representation of the world, language is talking about the world - so it follows that taking the students out into the world makes the language come alive in ways that it cannot in the classroom. In their investigation on the language development of preschoolers enrolled in outdoor learning programs, Finnish education researchers describe outdoor learning as being an ideal real-life laboratory for language learning: “The outdoor environment provides children with opportunities to experience phenomena that contribute to their meaning-making. The child’s experiences in the outdoor environment give rise to verbal expressions describing things that cannot be experienced indoors, such as ‘the wind is blowing’ or ‘stone is cold and hard’ (Norling & Sandberg 2015). This is especially true for young world language learners. During one kindergarten outdoor lesson with a content objective of labeling and describing animals in the target language, students were guided on a scavenger hunt around the schoolyard to find stuffed animals previously hidden by the instructor. At each animal, students engaged in a role-play conversation between themselves and the animal. During another scavenger hunt activity, students were given a strip of paper with numbers in the target language. Aside from a number, the name of an object from the natural world, such as “twenty-four sticks”, “ten rocks”, was also written on the strip of paper. Students were then sent off in pairs around the outdoor campus of the school to collect the corresponding items. This allowed them to use the language in meaningful and interdisciplinary ways, in this case to discover and explore the natural habitat of their lives and school.

*Figure 1. Students practicing target-language numbers through counting and collecting natural objects in a campus-wide out-of-doors scavenger hunt.*



In the scavenger hunt activities described and pictured above, the space, the natural features of the lesson would have “never have happened inside” (Bohling et al. 2010). The language came alive and was used to interact with and discover their own worlds - natural and imaginary. Outdoor learning also can build upon student’s indoor learning: “A rich outdoor learning environment allows children to connect their learning activities indoors (reading books about insects) to their experiences outdoors (observing insects). Children experience the real world hands-on rather than as a virtual world.” (Wirth and Rosenbow 2012). This sort of immersive and experiential learning reinforces the language teacher’s efforts at making language learning context-based, relevant and meaningful.

### **The Many Modes of Outdoor Learning**

Outdoor learning encompasses traditional pedagogy, such as reading and writing, it also incorporates technology such as mobile devices, iPads, and Chromebooks (Cotic et. al 2020). Outdoor learning is interdisciplinary, connecting to the natural sciences, such as in the scavenger hunt examples above. It also connects to physical education, art and music - students can sing as loud as they want outside, they can also move and run around a much larger (or unlimited) space than in the classroom.

*Figure 2. Students learning the language to label and describe vegetables from the target-language culture in the target language through an outdoor lesson in the school Garden.*



In the author’s own outdoor classroom, learning takes place on the blacktop behind the school - next to the school garden (another site of engaged, interdisciplinary outdoor language learning, see Figure 2 above). Students start each lesson by completing a “do-now” - filling in a form in the target language fastened onto a clipboard, where they write the days’ calendar date, weather, and how they are feeling that day. Their writing is supported by charts with target language posters such as a target-language calendar, weather chart, and emotions hung up on a mobile “chart cart” (Figure 4). After providing five minutes for students to independently complete their do-now, they are prompted by the teacher to stand in a circle for an activity the teacher titles “conversational circle”. Students are then prompted to “turn and talk” and “mingle in Mandarin (target language)” while standing next to each other or mingling around the designated learning area (Figure 5). Between every interaction, as a sort of language-rich movement break, students are invited to pull “Mandarin movement cards” which contain exercise prompts and movement activities in the target language (Figure 6). Conversation Circle is where new language forms are presented and modeled by the teacher. Students use the language modeled by the teacher and displayed on the “chart-cart” posters to engage in small-group and partner interpersonal communication. Finally, presentation and practice is turned into a product in the third part of the lesson, where students engage in project-based learning activities as a summative assessment. These can take the form of many different media, such as creating and designing a nature guide in Mandarin, maps of the school and community, role play, writing and



illustrating comic-books, language learning games, or film videos and creative work on other multimedia using their iPads or devices.

Figure 3: *Sample Lesson Format for Outdoor Language Learning Instruction*

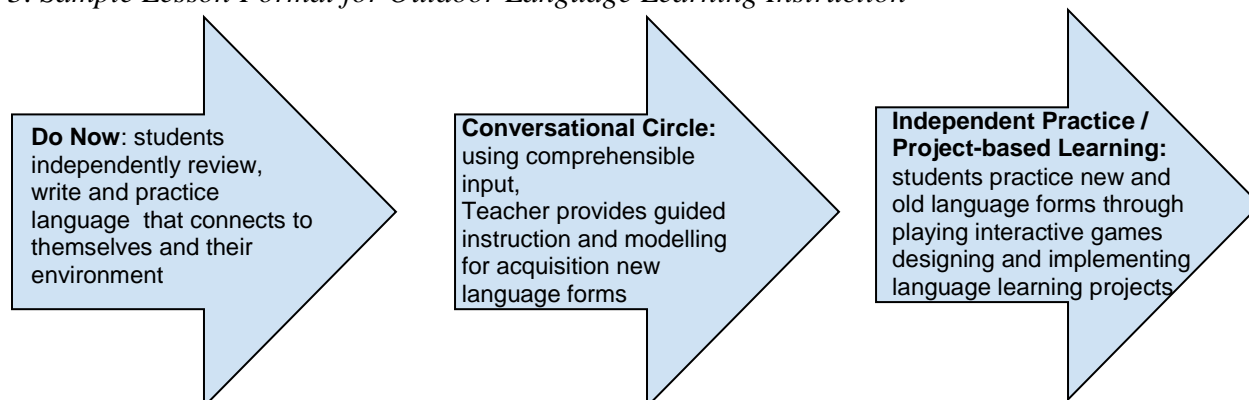


Figure 4. *Student using chart cart calendar to complete do-now sheet containing information in target language about the day's date, weather, and feelings.*



Figure 5. Students practicing interpersonal communication in “conversational circle” formation. Outdoor language Lessons are mobile and take advantage of the unlimited space of the outdoors, allowing students room to move and breathe, as well as enhancing small group and partner work.



Figure 6. Target Language Movement Prompts – students practice language and functions such as counting, colors, action verbs, while engaging in exercises, movements, dances, and TPR games. Research suggests taking students out of doors for lessons may promote lifelong exercise habits and sustainability practices.



In many districts, after students are dismissed from school to go home, they stick around the outdoor spaces of the campus for fun and play after school, reclaiming the space for their playful adventures and exploits. Researchers have indicated the pedagogical value of these spaces and students’ connection to them - “school grounds have been identified as one of the very few places where children can play freely in natural environments with peers, and subsequently, their importance as sites for engaged learning has greater resonance today” (Hunter, et. al 2019). When they are not formally learning, these outdoor spaces are where students are free to socialize

and play. During outdoor learning segments, teachers exploit these spaces for learning. They connect the academic content and language learning to these spaces, while connecting the language in their mind (their linguistic schema) to the language of the world (Merewether 2015).

### **Health and Socio-emotional Benefits of Outdoor Learning**

Teachers reported feeling healthier and happier being outside in the fresh air, and they believe that this effect is also present for students (Wirth and Rosenbow 2012). In fact, studies “link outdoor education to positive learning and developmental outcomes including enhanced imaginative play, increased physical and mental well-being, and environmental stewardship.” (Dennis et al. 2019) This last point is crucial in the face of the climate crisis, and researchers suggest that increased outdoor time during outdoor learning can promote “sustainability training”, environmental awareness, while fostering behaviors of conservation (Mycock 2019).

It is common knowledge that going outside is healthy for children, and the research supports this conventional wisdom: “Nature and outdoor life have positive influences on children’s development, including motor development as a result of engaging in play and movement on varying terrain and physical and mental health as a result of the fresh air and calm environments” (H.V. Sorenson 2021). This calm environment may be a mediator of low anxiety for the learner, which according to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis, encourages higher levels of engagement and acquisition: “Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety” (Krashen 1982).

Outdoor learning promotes health and well-being, constantly under threat in our sedentary, screen-dominated society. In fact, exponents of outdoor education often cite the “Biophilia Hypothesis”, which states that many of the ills and stressors of modern life that afflict our children, such as “crises of obesity, behavior problems and poor social skills” are partly the result of the failure to satisfy humans’ need for a “strong bond with nature” (Mycock 2019). By taking students outside, teachers are encouraging and reinforcing healthy habits that may be buffers against the above-mentioned threats and afflictions of modern sedentary life. This effect may endure for the rest of students’ lives: “Establishing habits of exercise and being in the fresh air are achieved by being active and being outside on a regular basis” (Knight 2016). Considering the positive effects on health, well-being and environmental awareness, there is evidence that taking students outside not only may enhance their world language learning and be a boon to their physical health, but may contribute to saving our entire world from climate disaster.

### **Discussion and Opportunities for Further Research**

Some of the above observations and claims may be anecdotally derived from the author’s two-year experience teaching outside during the pandemic. This is especially so in the context of world language learning. However, the existing research and literature support learning outdoors, and affirm that learning outdoors may have some substantive and unique benefits to students’ second-language acquisition. It is also very difficult to compare the data relating to quality of learning because although there are undeniable advantages of outdoor learning, many other dimensions of students’ learning have suffered great losses because of the pandemic.

Many teachers report the great inconvenience and discomfort that accompanies moving their classes outdoors. Those teachers that do set examples of resilience and creativity by overcoming these obstacles. New territory in the field of education is being blazed as teachers’ adapt and tailor their teaching to the conditions of a historical pandemic. It is therefore important for us to also lead the way in compiling evidence and conducting research to integrate the knowledge, skills, and insights gained teaching during the pandemic into the compendium of best practice and policy.



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## Appendix

Links and Resources for Mandarin

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DpmH76GNGTXCkeFuM8U34nQAyHsB-BxCCE2o7l8soWE/edit?usp=sharing>

David Schultz had been teaching Mandarin at Sea Cliff Elementary School since 2016. Before that he lived in Asia (China and Taiwan) for ten years, teaching English and completing a master's degree in teaching Chinese as a foreign language at Peking University.

# Benefits of Mindfulness and Yoga in the World Language Classroom

Jennifer Schwester

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My path to yoga came from being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014. I had hoped that the movement would help me heal and become strong again. What I did not realize was that yoga is more than movement; that the breath is the core of yoga. My breath helped me heal, be kind to myself, change my outlook and change how I respond to others. My breath has helped me become more calm and grow as a French teacher, as a yogi, and as a human being.

My students noticed a change. I stopped to take a breath before speaking; engaging my brain before opening my mouth. I would pause and think about an answer. I was not bumping into desks and chairs as much. I was calm, and it was apparent to everyone. Since students can be quite inquisitive, they did ask what was going on. I explained that I was going through a Yoga Teacher Training program in order to understand more about my yoga practice.

Their responses were shocking. “When are we doing yoga in class?”, and “Can we do yoga in French?” I had no idea at the time that my high school students would want to do this. I began to experiment with the idea of bringing my new found passion to the classroom. “How can we do this, and how can I do this in French?” I struggled initially with getting yoga terminology: it was challenging to get the flow of speaking while moving (which sounds quite familiar to our novice learners), but I was determined to make this work.

So what, exactly, is mindfulness and yoga? From a Western perspective, mindfulness is the buzz-word of the day; and yoga means that you get to wear cute clothes from chi-chi stores and become toned and skinny, and stay in a handstand for an endless amount of time.

However, from the Eastern perspective, yoga is a union. Yoga teaches people how to fully integrate their mind and body, and how to unite their breath and movement. It is an integral part of the day, not just scheduled into the daily routine (Priyadarshan, 2018).

In discussing yoga, mindfulness is included since bringing attention to one's thoughts, actions, and reactions IS practicing yoga. Using mindfulness activities in the classroom allows us to give our students moments to practice and see that our modern world can often sacrifice focus on the moment, in favor of endless stimulation.. Physical movement activities encourage students to become aware of themselves in space and thinking about each movement.

Mindfulness, meditation, and yoga can help support language input and production by helping to lower the affective-filter, thus lowering anxiety and perhaps encouraging risk-taking in the world language classroom. There is some evidence which indicates that anxiety affects student communication strategies, and that “more anxious students tend to avoid attempting difficult or personal messages in the target language” (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986).



Why should a teacher bring new activities into the classroom? In short, we need to keep it fresh. We need activities that can be timely, flexible, and done in any circumstance (ie: virtual and hybrid vs. in-class). We need to demonstrate to students other ways to use the target languages; and that languages apply to whole life activities. The Harvard Health Blog states that yoga helps children with their balance and aerobic capacity, reduces anxiety and stress, improves classroom behavior, and can increase focus and memory (Wei, 2016). Teachers are always striving to include new methodology and techniques in order to improve our best practices and student outcomes. Mindfulness, meditation, and yoga have been used for millennia; and these are some ways to incorporate them into our language classrooms:

- 1) Dim the classroom lights or part of the classroom lighting as students are entering the room. Calming or energetic music (from your target culture) can be quietly playing. Decorating with fairy lights (if allowed) is another way to give students a place to focus their attention, or to use battery-powered candles.
- 2) Demonstrate how to inhale and exhale through the nose and encourage students to try, although they may be wearing masks. An inhalation and exhalation through the nose begins to stimulate the vagus nerve, which creates a calming sensation in the brain. Do this at any point during a class period: at the beginning, before transitioning to the next activity, or to wrap-up the lesson.
- 3) Videos can be found online to help guide short meditations and visual breathing. Some sites are: <https://youtu.be/u9Q8D6n-3qw>, <https://youtu.be/gLbK0o9Bk7Q>, <https://youtu.be/JLThHhzA9hQ>, and <https://youtu.be/Pnz0Jrz9Xxw>.
- 4) <https://www.kidsyogastories.com> offers thematic yoga poses (seasons, holidays, etc.) which you can easily translate into the target language and have students try to do. There are many free resources on the site, as well as books in a variety of target languages that link yogic movements in a story. The yoga poses can be easily done during breaks and transition times during class, or to reinforce vocabulary.
- 5) Sounds (bells, chimes, etc.) are great for signaling that the end of an activity is approaching. This is essential for students who are challenged to transition quickly between activities. Practicing with classes about how the sound will be used (signaling that the end is soon or it is time to finish) is an important part of the classroom routine. Once students become accustomed to noticing the sound, they can also be encouraged to raise their hand whenever they hear the sound during class. If using a resonating bell, invite students to listen to the sound and then raise their hand when they do not hear it anymore.
- 6) Use emojis to help identify vocabulary in the target language during daily check-ins with students. Students can brainstorm vocabulary that each emoji represents to then use in speaking and writing activities. Emojis can represent emotions, actions, and opinions. A smiley face emoji can express happiness or contentment, a swimmer for swimming (I swim) and a heart for I like/I love. A fun interpretive reading activity is to create a “sentence” of emojis based on what was read. “I love to swim at the beach” may be represented by a heart, a swimmer, and a beach picture.
- 7) Mindful coloring pages encourage students to settle down and focus on a specific object. The students can then discuss their papers with classmates: descriptions, naming objects, colors, asking questions about the other student’s choices for colors, and how many specific items.
- 8) Journal writing for presentational and interpersonal skills are excellent for asking questions or expecting responses. Tasks can range from freeform writing, listing/brainstorming, specific questions and reactions to current events, or school issues. The focus of writing along with a safe space to express emotions can be soothing for many students.
- 9) Free Choice Reading: Along with working on interpretive skills, students can revisit favorite childhood books in the target language as well as experience those from other countries, which is also great to encourage cultural comparisons. The act of sitting and quietly reading helps students to focus on one task and diminishes use of mobile devices and screen time.

I have found in my classroom that students crave and need breaks and down-time. We as teachers may be nervous to incorporate tasks that may lead students to revert back to their L1 or L2 and not focus on the target language. However, our brains need pauses to allow prior material to absorb, solidify, and become part of one’s knowledge

base. Students have had the opportunity to not have to sit at a desk for the past two years. They still need movement, brain pauses, and time to process information and emotions.

Allow yourself, and your students, to take that one breath and pause.

Jennifer Schwester, a.k.a. jennyzenyoga, has been providing yoga services and trainings to many underserved populations for four years, including special needs adults, senior citizens, first responders, and her high school French classes. Jennifer brings her 23 years experience as a French teacher to the mat. She has been practicing yoga for the past 8 years and expanded her practice by becoming a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT-200). Jennifer is currently completing the next 300 hours of Yoga Teacher Training with My Vinyasa Practice in Austin, Texas to become a RYT-500. She is also an Instructor for Yoga For First Responders and a Teacher for the Veterans Yoga Project.

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# Classroom Management in the WL Classroom: Helping New Teachers Manage Their Classroom

Shannon Casso-Lundgren

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After over a year and a half of teaching under far from normal circumstances, many of the teaching skills that teachers took for granted are currently providing professional challenges for many, new teachers and veteran teachers alike. I want to start by clarifying that management is not discipline but instead the procedures, relationships and the organization of our busy classrooms. These methods are the ones that have had the biggest impact on my own practice and on the practice of the new teachers I have worked with over the last several years.

Communication in the three modes is the foundation of the world language (WL) classroom, and therefore a classroom that is busy and loud is not necessarily a non-managed classroom. As we start to take a look at this, we need to remember that these are strategies that can help reduce classroom disruptions. As a teacher becomes more proficient the new teacher should see disruptions decrease. Kids are kids, and mistakes and bad days will happen- just a lot less often! When considering classroom management, there are three separate areas of management: **environment** including materials management, managing **engagement** and behavior, and finally, **relationships**.

## Creating a Well Managed Environment

While setting up the room, it is important to consider what Fred Jones, in his book The Tools for Teaching, outlines as the three areas of the classroom: the Red, the Yellow, and the Green Zones. Each of these zones is a different behavior zone. The red zone is the closest to the teacher. In this zone, the learners are least likely to misbehave as it is too easy to get caught. The yellow zone is the zone that can be a naughty zone. This requires some effort on the part of the learner; they must scan the crowd and find an accomplice. And finally, the green zone- this is the danger zone for the teacher. This zone is furthest away from the teacher. This group can easily find an accomplice and engage in off task behavior- with little effort. As instructors of classes where there is a lot of talking, this is the zone where the English can break out quickly. In order to manage this, the zones must be changed frequently. This capitalizes on proximity which Jones refers to as “**Working the Crowd**” (Jones, 2007, p. 21-23). The best way is to move around with our feet! Yes, **bipedal locomotion** is a teacher’s best classroom management tool to stop questionable behaviors before they start. This works for technology issues and for the “English Issue” faced in the WL classroom!

With the rows required by social distancing procedures, figuring out how to pair the learners and being able to “**Work the Crowd**” was a challenge. One way this challenge was overcome was by using colored paper and labeling each desk with a color and letter A-D. The colors are grouped together making a quick group while the letters help assign jobs or partners when learners are absent. With the high number of absences, this made getting new partners, when a partner was out, easier. This is similar to a regular table set up but modified. The benefit in the WL Classroom is the ability to embed colors and letters into classroom management and make it easier for the learners to be part of materials management and other tasks while maintaining the target language (TL)!

COVID added an extra layer for materials management as well. Since technology is a huge part of my classroom, I had to consider how my learners could charge their devices and how to keep track of the chargers. I created a student use space on the wall of my classroom. I simply took some fluorescent duct tape and placed it around my two chargers where I could see it stick out. I hung two command hooks on the wall to see them easily. I can

quickly see them hanging or see them on the floor. Learners can find pencils, chargers, paper, erasers, sticky notes, rulers and more- as well as “*Cosas sucias*” or “Dirty Things” to be sanitized.



The next consideration was how to get things out and back and then be able to sanitize them? If desks are color coded, stay with those colors for the classroom- my whiteboards and the marker bins have the same colors as my desks. The same with my materials for any projects. Small buckets, shower caddies and simple shoe boxes from the Dollar Store are great. Learners can make sure everything is in their bin or bucket and the teacher can stay in the TL while demonstrating what it should look like. Another helpful strategy is to snap a picture of what the bucket looks like and post it on the board for clear visual expectations, this is especially helpful- and a great way to be able to embed the TL and all those high frequency school items!

It is important to note that the less time spent on managing materials, the less time learners are off task. Too often when visiting classrooms with new teachers, the teacher is doing all this management and the learners are not! A consistent rule to follow is: “Never do anything a middle schooler can do”. It is a bonus when it can be done in the TL and it gives learners authentic classroom conversation. I have almost completely removed the classroom supply unit because of this!

## **Managing Engagement**

***Compliance is NOT engagement.*** This cannot be stressed enough. Too often when visiting a new teacher’s classroom, all the learners are silent. The new teacher is excited because it is quiet. They are shocked and dismayed to find that while they are quiet, they are NOT engaged. They are on Snake, Chess or YouTube, not what the teacher has asked.

When I was a new teacher, I often thought it was the “big deal issues” that made or broke a lesson. Fred Jones quantifies classroom disruptions, a staggering 80% of the time the disruptions are actually talking to classmates

(Jones, 2007, p. 154)! Not the big deal items, but instead all those little stolen moments. While they seem harmless, just by doing a little math, imagine a minute per period (this is **super** conservative) is spent talking to neighbors. The learning loss over a year is 3 days! By addressing the off task talking to the neighbors, we can add more learning time into our classroom. But how do we do that?

**Clear directions** are a huge help in the classroom. If learners do not know what is expected, they cannot do it! While moving around the room is essential for classroom management, knowing when to stand still is equally important. By moving around the room while giving instructions the teacher actually distracts the learners. I often mark an **X** on the floor with tape to remind myself that that is my instruction giving spot. Whenever possible, I write out the directions and use images to show them what they are to be doing. Emojis can be helpful to cue our novice learners and are great reminders for our advanced learners. Keep the instructions simple! The less steps the better!

Another easy to integrate engagement strategy is one from Doug Lemov in his book Teach like a Champion. This strategy is **100%** compliance. When asking learners to do something it is essential to make sure everyone complies before moving on. This can be hard. It sometimes feels like things are slowing down. However, this is really a pay it forward strategy. By expecting 100% compliance 100% of the time, the expectations are established (Lemov, 2010, p 167). Fred Jones also supports Lemov's strategy of 100% compliance by reinforcing the idea that the rules of the classroom are not what is posted but what instructors commit to. In fact, he dedicates a whole chapter to this in "**Meaning Business**" (Jones, 2007, p.175).

**Cold Calling** is a workable and easy engagement strategy (Lemov, 2010, p. 111). By not knowing who is going to be called on, learners must engage. Whether it is popsicle sticks or color coded "Cards of Fate", when learners see these come out, they know they are responsible for answering. It keeps the instructor honest as well. If one calls only on the strongest learners, then only they are being assessed. This does not help the relationship with the other learners. The question is often asked "What about the learner who is not ready to speak?" Since the instructor is the one with the cards, they can always make a choice if they need to modify either the question or the person answering it. By modifying a question to be a "Yes/No" question and calling on the reluctant learner, the instructor can request a "thumbs up/down" to answer. The instructor can also give a question they know the learner can answer. We obviously want to keep the affective filter low, but if learners are never given the opportunity to answer, how do they build confidence? One of the main reasons people speak is out of need. When there is no need, there is no incentive. Bill VanPatten reminds us in the book While We're on the Topic that the classroom is always a "a fixed context that constrains the purpose of communication as well as what gets talked about" (VanPatten, 2017, p. 15). Since there is not a "real need", "**Cold Call**" gives the need within the context of the classroom.

Lastly, having a consistent attention getting device is essential. During one teacher's lesson there were four different attention-getting devices in a 40 minute period and, not surprisingly, none were effective. Learners need consistency and clear expectations. I currently use "**Ojos aquí en 3, 2, 1, 0**" "Eyes on me in 3,2,1,0"- generally I get to "2" and my learners are with me. This is another technique that teachers often feel is a waste of time to teach. I have found the time it saves me in the long run is worth the 15 minutes it takes to teach it. I embed it into activities I am already doing and outline clearly my expectations. With my novice lows, I teach the expectations in English and use this as an opportunity to teach more TL in context! With my novice highs, I use the TL to explain. Since the phrase has been taught in the TL, I manage my room in the TL.



## **Building Relationships**

We must consider building relationships; I confess I have made the choice to do this mostly in first language (L1) this year. In a normal school year, I do this in my TL. Relationships are the number one priority after safety in my classroom. Building relationships cuts down on interruptions, and unwanted behaviors. “Until the students know that you care, they don't care what you know” (Jones, 2007 p. 118). When I notice a learner with their head down, I ask “Sleepy, sick, sad?” The learners are generally honest. When I asked one learner this year this question, they shared they were, in fact, mad! They had overheard some unkind comments made about them. They were so upset they could not concentrate on anything. I sent this learner to the guidance office where they were able to talk about the incident. The next day the learner came in and was ready to learn. Something so small had a HUGE impact; I had shown my learners that I care about them, because I do.

Harry K. Wong and Rosemary T. Wong in their book The First Days of School advocate for greeting learners at the door on the first day and everyday as a way to invite our learners into the classroom (Wong & Wong, 1998, p.67 & pg. 105). Too often this brushed this off. By simply asking the learners how they are on the way in, following up on the game from last night, checking on how their pet is feeling or just seeing them giggling being a kid, can be a huge conversation starter and let them know they are seen and valued.

## **A special note on formative assessment**

Formative assessment is so important but especially so this year- what do learners really know? Do they really understand or are assumptions being made? Going back to basics with simply **circling** instructions and giving a few more **formative assessments** to see if learners are ready for what is being asked of them. Formative assessments can give a quick idea whether or not they are able to do what is expected. When learners can do something, they usually do it!

## **Final Thoughts**

When we approach classroom management considering these three areas of concern we can help reduce the time off task, allow our learners more time, and to spend in the TL and give them time to acquire the language they need. It takes time, practice, patience, and honesty to admit there are issues with which to begin. If possible, try to have a colleague help by observing, or video recording a class for later review. We often don't realize what we are actually doing versus what we perceive we are doing. And finally, we must offer ourselves grace as we approach these problems, knowing when to intervene before an issue starts can be a matter of moments. Let us agree to allow ourselves time to grow.

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# Reaching High with Novice Low

Jeri C. G. Gosier

**Abstract:** This article discusses a blended approach to language learning. Examples of how to incorporate gamification, repetition, and Comprehensible Input are provided to encourage teachers to diversify their teaching strategies.

**Keywords:** Instruction, Methodology, Teacher Preparation, Technology

## Introduction

Knowing where your students are and where they need to go is the first step in the language-learning journey. ACTFL reminds language teachers that, “Speakers at the Novice Low sublevel have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible” (ACTFL). While it is known that “novice” is synonymous with beginner, the addition of the clarifying “low” emphasizes that teachers will be introduced to the most inexperienced type of learner regardless of age. This explains why students at the Novice Low level sometimes just cannot perform the desired skills of reading, writing, or speaking in the target language. Teachers must rethink expectations; before students can demonstrate output, teachers must provide input that is equally quality filled and mindful in quantity. Because Checkpoint A Novice Low learners begin their study at varying ages and grades across NYS and the country at large, it is imperative that the overall cultural practices and societal shifts are valued as key components of an effective classroom while mainstays of language instruction are honored. This can be achieved by combining three specific instructional techniques: gamification, Comprehensible Input, and repetition. The grouping of these techniques can target the culture and interests of students born into a game centric era while incorporating traditional practices. Reach high with Novice-Low by blending these methods will realize the goal of transforming learners from a lack of language ability to usable skills in communication.

## Gamification

Gamification “...refers to the introduction of game design elements and gameful experiences in the design of learning processes” (Dichev & Dicheva, 2017). It is an intuitive choice for modeling how students can utilize content while boosting engagement and igniting a new motive.

*“For students who are on a quest for perfection, games can provide a soft way to make mistakes without the permanence of grading.”*

According to eLearningIndustry, [...] when students are encouraged to work together to solve tasks during games, they learn good sportsmanship and teamwork. Games also teach good communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking skills, creativity, and even time-management when used in group and time-based settings” (Baer, 2021). Gamification allows for controlled wins and losses, which give students the chance to become resilient learners. For students who are on a quest for perfection, games can provide a soft way to make mistakes without the permanence of grading. It provides a natural avenue for face-to-face communication and can incorporate the practice of good online etiquette. “By the time kids are 21, they’ve played 10,000 hours of video games, the same

amount of time they've spent in school. Because of this, they're more likely to respond to the use of games in other settings, like the classroom" (*Gamification in education*). Why not contribute to those 10,000 hours by incorporating World Language Standards? Interpretive mode is one of the easiest to address because many online platforms cater to this standard and physical games lend themselves to quick question and answer style play. Other activities can be tailored to target the Interpersonal Mode that naturally reduces the nerves that prevent students from speaking spontaneously to each other during class. Meeting students where they are at in skill and interest adds to effective language teaching, facilitating, and learning. Games allow educators to easily differentiate and modify materials with efficiency. Many online options offer added features such as reading text aloud and providing extra time as needed. Others offer algorithms that maintain equal competition despite different learning abilities or inequities. Gamification fulfills competitive needs while focusing on academic content and appropriate modes of expressing emotions with wins and losses. It gives a voice to students by demonstrating their knowledge as part of a team and finding a different way to value participation. The benefit of including all students in a relevant task is gained through gamified lessons.

How can teachers incorporate gamification in a realistic fashion? Short form and long form methods of gamification can transform any schedule- whether it be a traditional nine or ten period day or block style schedule. In lieu of a traditional written "bell ringer" or start of class activity, "short form" is most practical. Facilitators can use the same 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning of class to introduce new vocabulary, review a previous day's terms, or practice interview techniques prior to the day's central activity. Take a standard worksheet and award one point per correct response. Simply adding points for accuracy instead of regular "corrections" can add instant motivation and change the mood of the activity. This same time allotment can replace the idea of an exit ticket at the end of class. If the goal is to assess areas of mastery and what needs more focus, a simple game will give instant feedback without the added time of trying to grade individual papers. A second option can be prolonged practice, also known as "long form." Scavenger hunts, escape rooms, DIY board games, all allow students to repeatedly practice the target language and cultural practices but also double as full class activities or lessons. Formative assessments can be fun and functional through gamification.

### **Comprehensible Input**

Comprehensible Input is "...language input that can be understood by listeners despite them not understanding all the words and structures in it" (Bex, 2020). This theory originates from Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis that focuses on the natural acquisition of language versus conscious language learning. Many world language teachers can feel uncomfortable about trying CI methods at first, but will come to find out there are different CI strategies which can be easily incorporated into their own individual teaching styles. Comprehensible Input is an active learning method with easily observable outcomes. Student participation immediately proves understanding of and ability to use the target language. CI methods are explicit; employing scaffolding, modeling, and independent practice are key to effective teaching for any content area. The ability to maintain clarity of expectations and outcomes is key to effective teaching for any content area. It also increases the use of the target language for teachers who struggle to find ways to use it without intimidating new language learners.

Much like gamification, Comprehensible Input benefits both students and teachers because of the many activities it encompasses. Art, movement, speaking, listening, and different reading and writing activities utilize differentiation and satisfy multiple intelligences. Skill level and student need are supported and included as well. Due to the nature of CI strategies, active participation is required and specific roles can be assigned to maximize student participation and success. It should be noted that low preparation is a novel idea for teachers. Although seemingly difficult, once a teacher has achieved a level of confidence with CI strategies, they will find ease and an organic nature. With little more than a dry erase marker and willing energy, activities go into effect with nothing more than an end goal in mind. The lack of excessive materials rewards the teacher with time that most are not used to. Getting started is the hardest part. There are definite shifts for the traditional language

teacher: For example, less grammar lessons at the beginning of a unit and more immediate language usage as a result of context. This does not mean that all past methods have to be deserted. Instead, other modes of teaching are incorporated. Curriculum is honored. Additionally, teachers will find more opportunities to add words and phrases that are of importance to the student. This added interest automatically increases student engagement.

### **Repetition**

The third area of focus to help Checkpoint A Novice Low learners achieve a usable level of proficiency lies in a tried and true approach: Repetition. “Repetition creates long term memory by eliciting or enacting strong chemical interactions at the synapse of your neuron (where neurons connect to other neurons). Repetition creates the strongest learning—and most learning—both implicit (like tying your shoes) and explicit (multiplication tables) relies on repetition” (Schmelzer, 2016). Repetition helps to establish patterns, models proper pronunciation, and reinforces what will be assessed aloud. Many times, language teachers will use flashcards that contain every word from a vocabulary list. Students repeat each word or phrase one time and the activity ends. Instead, try chunking word study into groups of five to seven words and then use just those words as the focus of class. Through popcorn interpretive checks, digital and paper tasks, and scripted speaking practices, this small group of words is repeated and rechecked countless times throughout class. Language teachers aim for mastery and this can be achieved through repetition. Much like math facts are practiced, sports skills are drilled, and vocalists warm up, repetition has a place in the world language classroom to build fluidity and linguistic control.

How can repetition be achieved during class? The use of flashcards, whether paper or digital, are always beneficial. Not only will students hear the teacher pronounce the word, they also see the word, then say the word. If you count those actions, it is three different ways to process one word. Gamification strengthens repetition further when the same set of words is used. Multiple exposures to words in any fashion contributes to these repetitions. Because Comprehensible Input activities thrive off what students already know, this becomes an obvious next choice for reincorporating the day’s chunked vocabulary. One overlooked and obvious method of repetition can be done on paper or with digital tools like Google Forms. Select five vocabulary words and offer students multiple ways to prove understanding such as multiple choice from native to target language, multiple choice from target to native language, translate from native to target, and translate from target to native. Allow students to re-do the activity, awarding one point per correct response until a designated point value is reached. Every practice is an opportunity to repeat and study the word. This places focus on practice, not immediate perfection. Every learner has the opportunity to finish the activity. With this approach, completion signifies quality exposure to the target language.

### **Implementation**

Being aware of where the educator is in their professional journey is the second step in the language-learning journey. “Much like adopting a growth mindset, valuing the act of pushing past what you ‘like to do’ can, in the right circumstance, result in growth” (TeachThought, 2022).

This awareness allows them to grow alongside their students. Staying standards aligned provides a comfortable and familiar starting point. Additionally, focusing on the three modes of communication offers an outline for class despite class time or schedule set up. Starting class with the Interpretive mode allows instant assessment of student mastery before segueing into a new skill and standard. Set a timer for 5 to 7 minutes and try a gamified “Bellringer” or “Do It Now.” Students can battle against one opponent to check for the definition of a word or start a web-based game for a large activity. At the end of the review game, learners have been exposed to the core content that will drive the next task. Simply spending 2 minutes reviewing proper pronunciation while asking students to repeat the vocabulary words will cement the focus for the day and ensure that all students can both

identify and pronounce the word. Next, spend a larger amount of time with a Comprehensible Input activity. Reading activities using CI can revisit the vocabulary studied while introducing new vocabulary that can be practiced the following day. Assess the interpretive mode through comprehension questions, and employ the interpersonal mode through question and answer segments in the activity. Again, re-exposing students to the desired terms throughout class adds continued repetition. Independent practice is an easy follow up to CI to prove that students are indeed progressing as individuals. Demonstration of their newly acquired skills allows the presentational mode to be assessed. Reports and summaries of the information is a developmentally appropriate presentational display for Novice-Low learners. Use this mode as a formative assessment for the duration of class time. Alternatively, try a fast pace online competition that syncs with your vocabulary list or story. Ending class on a high (and successful) note instantly increases the enthusiasm for the next day.

## **Conclusion**

Only two steps of the language-learning journey have been mentioned here, as there are many more routes to discover. What is crucial, regardless of teaching style, is awareness of student needs as well as teacher strength and patterns. With this knowledge, the experience is navigated with rigor, ease, success, and enjoyment. Excitingly enough, the end of the language-learning journey should never be reached. Rather, continuous attempts at helping learners finesse and improve their skill set will increase engagement, motivation, and target language use. One-size fits all is a slippery slope that rarely contributes to a smooth educational experience. Integrating multiple methods like gamification, Comprehensible Input, and repetition will provide avenues where successful and meaningful learning experiences can be found. This blended method will be the student driven vehicle from Checkpoint A Novice Low to the Novice High destination.

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# Using Authentic Materials to Assess 21<sup>st</sup> Century Students' Skills

Norka-Delgado-Fuller

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**Abstract:** This article presents the key elements of an updated Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), the most authentic evaluation of 21st Century students' language skills. It also explains the process of designing an IPA in alignment with the NYS Revised World Language Standards for Communication and Culture and the 21st Century Learning Skills. An example of a unit plan exemplar shows real-life tasks created from authentic resources. A detailed explanation of efficient IPAs across different performance levels closes this article based on research and experience at a 7-12 high school.

**Keywords:** IPA, Assessment, Language development, Authentic resource, 21st Century Skills, Technology

## Introduction

In a world evolving in front of our eyes, teaching methods and learning skills are changing worldwide. Consequently, the assessments used to evaluate students' performance must be updated Malone and Sandrock (2016, as cited in Madison, 2019). In 2011, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills proposed a new framework in which IPAs are now aligned to national standards and incorporate the 21st Century learning skills. The design of effective IPAs starts with selecting an excellent authentic material. This selection is complicated, but fortunately, there are criteria to guide teachers. The proposals to reform world languages' teaching materials and start implementing authentic materials became more prevalent in the 1970s with the arguments of Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972) about the importance of communication in context rather than merely learning the structure of a language (Gilmore, 2007). Although five decades have passed since the introduction of authentic materials, there is still a vast number of educators who still prefer textbooks instead of authentic materials. It is imperative that world language teachers incorporate authentic materials into their curriculum and develop activities aligned to the state and national World Language Standards as well as the 21st-century learning skills. The effectiveness of a lesson and the success of students in a world language classroom does not rely only on the content students learn but also on the learning skills students obtain from the authentic resource. Our classrooms, teaching methods, and assessments need to be at the vanguard in order to provide students the skills they need to learn independently and be self-sufficient to overcome challenges and succeed in higher studies and future jobs. Employers and university tutors complain that recruits are not ready to face the new challenges Tickle (2011, as cited in Suto & Eccles, 2014). This article shows how to design efficient IPA's that will revolutionize your classroom, improve students' language skills, increase their cultural awareness, and prepare them for the future.

The article begins with a description of authentic materials and a list of examples, then presents the criteria to select the perfect authentic material and the advantages, disadvantages, and solutions to overcome the problems. Subsequently, the report states the results of previous studies to evaluate the efficacy of authentic material for different language skills. In addition, the writing piece describes the 4C's 21st Century Skills, strategies to incorporate them into an IPA, and a comparison of the 20th Century Classroom vs. 21st Century Classroom. The following section depicts each of the three modes of communication. The next section details step by step the design of an IPA. After explaining the steps, the last section demonstrates a unit plan exemplar with three IPAs for different performance levels.

## Authentic Material

Although the application of authentic materials in lesson plans or assessments is still not currently applied by all world language educators, Adams (1995) states authentic materials have been around since the mid-1970s with the birth of the communicative approach. In the last five decades, there have been various studies about the efficacy of authentic materials in teaching a world language. Authentic materials are the core of the communicative approach, as they effortlessly satisfy the learner's needs by transmitting not only the form but also the real-life content and culture of the target language. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills developed a skills map that integrates 21st-century learning skills into the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication. The success of the proposed IPA relies mainly on the richness of information provided by the authentic material and the ability of the teacher to develop meaningful tasks for the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes. Thus, teachers need to have a detailed description of authenticity to select the best source to develop such an assessment or lesson.

One of the debates that originated with creating the communicative approach was determining the definition of authentic material. There are several descriptions of the authenticity of a source. Peacock (1997) affirms authentic material as a source not modified to achieve a teaching goal. According to Kilickaya (2004), authentic material is a real written or spoken source whose audience is the people of the target language's community.

Likewise, Cook (1981, as cited in Rahman, 2014) manifests that members of the target culture create authentic materials for natural use, not a pedagogical one. Finally, Rahman (2014, as cited in Forman, 1989, as cited in Underwood, 1989) depicts it as any text created exclusively for real-life communication exchange, and not a resemblance of a modified reality. Upon analyzing these definitions, authentic materials are natural written or spoken sources created by native speakers for native speakers. Table 1 shows examples of original materials that teachers can use to develop IPAs.

**Table 1:** *Examples of authentic materials*

Type of input	Examples of authentic materials
written	Articles, stories, posters, infographics, advertisements, news reports, hotel brochures, instructions, airport notices, bank bulletins, instructions, text messages, emails, letters, business cards, receipts, catalogs, currency, reports, financial statements, bank accounts, application forms, registration forms, graphs, charts, agreements, journals, literature, websites, comic strips, memes, etc.
auditory	Radio broadcasts, conversations, discussions, speeches, messages, songs, podcasts, ads, meetings, etc.
visual	TV shows, paintings, photographs, documentaries, movies, series, short films, silent movies, commercials, news, plays, etc.

Note. The examples for the three inputs are from Benavent, G. T. & Peñamaria, S. (2011) Use of Authentic Materials in the ESP Classroom, Online Submission. *ERIC*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED530013> and Mestari, S. A., &

According to House (2008), these authentic sources allow students to experience the real world of the target culture inside the classroom environment. The authentic materials mentioned in Table 1 offer extraordinary knowledge about the culture and morphology of the target language, which simplifies the work for teachers to create interpretative, interpersonal, and presentational communicative tasks that foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Shi (2006, as cited in Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019) claims it is necessary to incorporate critical thinking as part of content-based instruction. This instructional method resembles the popular communicative approach, which revolves around authentic materials. All language teachers acknowledge that the authentic source is only the material utilized to achieve the lesson's learning goal or assessment established by them, and not the actual purpose.

### **Selection of Authentic Materials**

Due to the abundance of authentic materials, it is indispensable to have the good judgment to select the most suitable one to satisfy the learner's needs. Nutall (1996, as cited in Berardo, 2006) provides three criteria for teachers to consider when choosing a text for their class. The first and foremost criterion is the suitability of the content, which states that the text should engage students while providing the necessary knowledge to achieve the learning goal. It is essential to select sources relatable to the students to spark their interest. For instance, a romantic song might not hold the attention of elementary or middle school students since they probably never had a relationship. The second criterion, exploitability, refers to the quantity and quality of the grammatical or thematic concept that world language educators need to teach or assess. It is imperative to understand that just because the source is in the target language, it is not sufficient for teaching purposes. In other words, the authentic source should portray a meaningful and rich idea that allows students to learn about the target culture and produce creative and genuine responses. The last criterion is readability and mentions the complexity and diversity of linguistic elements and vocabulary, which should not hinder the learner's comprehension. Teachers should choose a text appropriate for the student's language skills level to avoid frustration.

In addition to those three criteria, teachers need to select various types of texts to challenge and maintain students' interests. Generally, students lose motivation when they think they are doing the same topic repeatedly. Students' exposure to different texts will challenge them to learn something new in every class.

Similarly, the presentation of the text is crucial to grab students' attention. A text with a picture, graph, or any other figure will always be more appealing than one with just words. Also, Mishan (2005, as cited in Rahman, 2014) highlights adaptability as a characteristic of the ideal authentic resource, as it increases the possibilities for teachers to develop authentic tasks that will elicit authentic responses from students.

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Authentic Materials**

World language teachers have argued for years about the effectiveness of authentic resources as teaching materials. Whereas some instructors incorporate authentic sources in their lessons or assessments, others prefer to use pedagogically modified materials. Various studies of the effect of authentic resources in a world language classroom have determined some benefits and challenges. Table 2 shows a compilation of these pros, cons, and solutions to solve the cons:

**Table 2:** *Advantages and disadvantages of authentic resources and solutions*

Advantages	Disadvantages	Solutions to disadvantages
<p>They can be updated at no cost</p> <p>They offer authentic cultural information of the target culture</p> <p>Students are exposed to language in a real-life context.</p> <p>Students become aware of current events in the world from the perspective of the target culture.</p> <p>The same material can be used for different tasks across various proficiency levels.</p> <p>At all levels, especially lower levels, it can be used for teaching scanning/skimming</p> <p>In one material, students are exposed to various language forms and vocabulary that textbooks do not offer</p> <p>They engage students to read due to interesting topics</p>	<p>They are not aligned to any instructional standard</p> <p>They do not have a syllabus.</p> <p>It is time-consuming to convert them into teaching materials.</p> <p>Some students cannot see the connection of it with the unit.</p> <p>The complexity of grammar and vocabulary discourages lower-level students.</p>	<p>Teachers can use authentic materials to create an IPA aligned to all or at least most required language standards.</p> <p>There are plenty of authentic materials to be chosen for each thematic unit of the curriculum.</p> <p>After creating a few IPAs from authentic resources, it will be easier and faster to produce teaching materials</p> <p>Teachers need to choose a material and develop tasks that include the vocabulary and grammar of the current unit.</p> <p>There are plenty of simple authentic materials, such as infographics, graphs, short stories, commercials, etc., that are appropriate for beginner students. Even complex texts can be used with lower-level students, as long as the created tasks require lower-level skills.</p>

Students feel motivated because they learn a natural language.		
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Note: Advantages and disadvantages are from Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The reading matrix*, 6(2)., Setyowati, L. & Sukmawan, S. (2019). Authentic Materials for Teaching Writing: A Critical Look, *International Journal of Language Education*, ERIC. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1244358>, Kiliçkaya, F. (2004). Authentic Materials and Cultural Content in EFL Classrooms, *ERIC*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED570173>, and Rahman, R. (2014). A Case for Authentic Materials in Language Teaching. *Dialogue (Pakistan)*, 9(2).

Upon analyzing the pros and cons, it becomes clear that authentic resources are the ideal teaching material to improve the communicative competence in the target language, while non-authentic resources are optimal for teaching the linguistic aspect of the target language. Despite the challenges authentic resources might bring to the classroom, most research studies performed throughout the last few decades determined they are the most effective material language instructors use to teach reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills. Table 3 lists the researchers' findings.

**Table 3:** Results of research studies about teachers' perspectives on the best teaching materials for language learners

Language Skill	Conclusion
Grammar	All teachers used authentic materials to expose students to the correct use of grammar in a real context.
Reading	Teachers used authentic materials to expose students to the language in a natural context. Also, authentic texts are engaging and promote reading for leisure. Additionally, they present all the current changes in the language. Lastly, there is a vast selection of versatile texts.
Writing	Authentic materials are more suitable for intermediate and advanced students, who can benefit from exposure to complex lexical elements, syntactic structures, abstract vocabulary, and low-frequency words. On the contrary, lower-level students obtain better results from the simplicity of artificial texts.  In another study, Styati (2016, as cited in Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019) discovered that students wrote better paragraphs after seeing pictures rather than Youtube videos. Lastly, Setyowati & Sukmawan (2016, as cited in Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2019) observed that when students were asked to write about literary aspects of a few short stories they read in the target language, they wrote an excellent essay that contained an introduction, thesis, and detailed body paragraphs. Students learned about the natural elements of fiction work while enhancing their essay writing skills.
Speaking	Basic speaking classes benefit from the combination of coursebook and audio, audio-visual, and printed authentic material. The top two characteristics they use to describe it are interesting and motivating.

	However, some participants mentioned that spoken authentic sources are more difficult to understand. Thus, they would like teachers to expose them more to audio or audio-visual sources.
Cultural Awareness	Beresova concluded that newspaper articles were the most beneficial for expanding cultural awareness among students. Participants of the study realized they had not given this source the relevance it should have.

Note: Setyowati, L. & Sukmawan, S. (2019). Authentic Materials for Teaching Writing: A Critical Look, *International Journal of Language Education*, ERIC. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1244358>, Beresova, J. (2015). Authentic materials – enhancing language acquisition and Cultural Awareness. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 195–204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.028>, Karyuatry, L., Nurkamto, J., & Rochsantiningsih, D. (2019). Authentic Materials for Freshman Students: A Case of Speaking Class in a Private University, *International Journal of Education and Teaching*, v7 n2 p553-565 202, & Hartatik, S. F., & Rahmah, T. H. (2016). Investigating the Students' views on the authentic materials used in basic speaking class. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 1(1), 1-10.

## The 4C's of the 21st Century Learning Skills

In a world where changes occur every day, teaching is also changing to be at the forefront of the 21st Century. The current generation of learners and workers must not only be skilled in math and literacy but also think autonomously, solve problems and make decisions (Silva, 2009). To accomplish this, the four most essential learning skills, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication, must be part of every curriculum. Communication is the core of world language instruction since the communicative approach is the foundation of language classrooms. Although world language is important for 21st-century learning skills, fewer than 20% of high school students take a language course in the United States, and only 8% of college students register in a language other than English (Stein-Smith, 2018). World language teachers can only advocate for more recognition in our school system by aligning their instruction to the aforementioned learning skills and demonstrating that their subject is as important as the other core subjects.

## Critical Thinking

The notion of critical thinking has prevailed for hundreds of years. There is a common saying, “Tell me, and I forget, teach me, and I may remember, involve me, and I learn.” In other words, students will acquire knowledge more efficiently when they are independent learners and have control over their learning. The selection of an authentic resource with adequate content will facilitate the development of critical thinking tasks.

Moreover, critical thinking is a crucial element of the 21st-century classroom, as it is the foundation of inquiry-based learning Saleh (2019). Sutto & Eccles (2014) graphed the 21st-century skills onto Anderson & Krathwohl's (2001) updated hierarchy of Bloom's cognitive domain. They placed critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making in the analysis level as one of the Higher Order Thinking Skills established by Bloom's Taxonomy Pyramid. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21, 2019) listed the principal characteristics of critical thinking:



- uses inductive and deductive reasoning.
- uses systems thinking to decipher how parts of a whole relate to constructing complex systems.
- makes judgments and decisions by analyzing and evaluating evidence, arguments, convictions, opinions, and stances.
- concludes and makes interpretations based upon analysis.
- reflects critically on the methods for learning and experiences.

Klynhout (2018, as cited in Erdogan, 2019) recommends substituting yes or no questions for open-ended questions that would require students to apply their higher-order thinking skills to analyze the information and find evidence to support their answers. Other activities that promote critical thinking and problem-solving are debates, comparisons, persuasive essays, book analysis, read-to-write activities, group projects, proposals, etc. For instance, for the latter task, students need to research, analyze and evaluate their findings, state ideas/points of view, find evidence to support them, and elaborate a coherent proposal to convince the audience.

### **Collaboration**

The information provided by the authentic resource should lead students to have discussions and work together to reach a goal. Lai (2011, as cited in Erdogan, 2019) affirms that collaboration occurs when students work together on the same task to accomplish the same objective, instead of working on separate sections of the task. This practice has positive effects on the learning experience of all participants. Students who collaborate must:

- work efficiently with others and show respect
  - be flexible and open to compromise to achieve a common goal
  - Complete their assigned task responsibly and appreciate the contribution of each member of the team.
- (P21, 2019)

Krashen (1982, as cited in McKeema & Oviedo, 2013) claims that suitable collaborative activities within the language classroom help lower the affective filter of students, which facilitates the advancement of language skills. Palmer (2015, as cited in Erdogan, 2019) believes collaborative activities should not only involve sharing documents electronically or creating PowerPoint presentations. More effective collaborative activities, such as designing digital resources, presentations, making short films, writing short stories, changing story endings, or drawing conclusions from a written text, resemble real life and are more motivating.

### **Creativity**

It is important to choose authentic material that contains a topic to which students can relate so that their creativity can flourish more easily. As stated in The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2019), creativity is the ability to think ingeniously, work creatively with others, and materialize ideas into innovative concrete contributions. Students, especially the poor performers, need appropriate activities and scaffolding to make their imagination blossom and apply their knowledge to produce something creative. Maley and Bolitho (2015, as cited in Erdogan, 2019) point out that world language allows educators to talk about different topics, create diverse activities suitable for their students' skills, and elicit creative responses. To think and collaborate creatively to contribute innovatively to the discipline, learners need to:

- create and reflect on their ideas to amplify creativity
- take into account other perspectives, suggestions, and feedback to efficiently develop and communicate original ideas to others, acknowledging the real-world limits.
- learn from their mistakes (P21, 2019)

Tin (2013) suggests activities that can be modified to meet students' skills to promote creativity. The recommended activities to use in a classroom are: brainstorming, group projects, rewriting a text, writing different

types of essays, creating a poem, changing the ending of a story, illustrating audio, using technology, and gaming activities. The previous activities will encourage creativity, as long as the teacher designs a task that fosters creativity and the need to communicate something new.

## **Communication**

The vast selection of authentic resources allows teachers to present different types of listening and visual sources to students. Communicating effectively is the most critical skill for every 21st-century student or worker. Furthermore, communication is the key objective of world language classes, especially in this globalized world, where most people talk to anybody thanks to social media and have access to endless sources of information. An eloquent learner should:

- Express ideas and thoughts adequately through speaking or writing using different lexical elements.
- Listen efficiently to others to figure out the meaning, knowledge, intention, and perception.
- Use communication for diverse intents.
- Use various technologies, and evaluate their usefulness and effect.
- Convey ideas effectively in distinct settings. (P21, 2019)

Ananiadou and Claro (2009, as cited in Erdogan, 2019) state that ICT technology is a useful instrument to expand the opportunities for communication while fortifying coordination and collaboration among learners. These technological applications, such as social media, email/chat groups, blogs, vlogs, web.2.0, Google Classroom, etc., improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills by allowing them to exchange information in real-life scenarios.

## **Incorporation of the 4C's to Integrated Performance Assessments**

According to ACTFL (2011), world language instruction aims to enhance students' language competence using real context and three modes of communication. Besides language acquisition, cultural awareness is another supreme objective in language classrooms. Therefore, the implementation of authentic material for the creation of IPAs is essential, because it not only provides knowledge about the language's morphology but also increases the cultural competence of language learners, as they expose them to current issues of the target language. Thus, in 2011, ACTFL affiliated with the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and developed the framework that currently guides world language teachers. This framework mapped the integration of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication, among other learning skills. This paper specifically focuses on critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication.

The quandary language educators confront is whether to impart skills or content (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). However, both have equal importance and should be delivered regularly to students. Teachers need to equip students with the knowledge and train them to know what to do with it to ensure effective enduring learning, prepare them for the future, and help them succeed. To accomplish this, teachers should have a vast selection of activities that access students' skills, teaching techniques to promote students' engagement, proper criteria to select more adequate teaching materials, and the ability to provide accurate feedback to help students fix any problem that arises during instruction (Ansari & Malik, 2013).

In addition to modified teaching methods, the 21st Century Skills Map (ACTFL, 2011) suggests updating our classrooms to successfully increase students' communicative and cultural competence and learning skills. Table 3 shows the differences between the 20th century and 21st-century world language classrooms, as mentioned in the previous framework:

**Table 4:** *Comparison of 20th Century Classroom and 21st Century Classroom*

20th Century Classroom	21st Century Classroom
Students learn the form of the language. For instance, grammar	Students learn how to use the language in real context
Teacher is the protagonist of the class	Students are the protagonist and creator, and the teacher is the facilitator
Listening, writing, speaking, and reading tasks are not connected	The interpretive, interpersonal, and presentations mode are integrated.
Relies on the textbook	Established the learning goal first, and worked backward to achieve it
Uses textbook and pedagogically modified materials as curriculum	Uses the thematic units and authentic resources
Presents isolated pieces of cultural information	Presents the relationship among products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture
Uses of technology for fun	Technology is incorporated into teaching to enhance learning
Learning the language is the ultimate goal	Language is the tool to learn about other academic content
Activities are artificial	Activities simulate real-life situations
Tests assess what students have not learned	Tests determine what students can do
Teachers only see students' work	Students' work is presented to a bigger audience

Note: Characteristics are from American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language. (2011). 21st Century Skills Map.

Finally, the last component of the language acquisition puzzle is the IPA, which should incorporate the three modes of communication, 4C's, and the Revised NYS World Language Standards for Communication and Culture. According to Rotherham & Willingham (2009) "we don't yet know how to teach self-direction, collaboration, creativity, and innovation the way we know how to teach long division." It is overwhelming for teachers to embed every skill and unit content in every lesson or assessment. Therefore, the IPA based on an authentic source offers a way to integrate all the above components and effectively impart to students the knowledge and learning skills they need to succeed hereafter.

### Three Modes of Communication

IPA is an assessment model designed by ACTFL to measure the communication skills of world language students in the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication aligned to World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2011). Recently, the state of New York revised its learning standards for world languages and decided to have two anchor standards: communication and culture. The communication anchor constitutes the three modes of communication, and the culture anchor includes the cultural products, practices and perspectives, and cultural comparisons.

#### *Interpretive mode*

This is a one-way communication mode where learners receive the input (written, audio or visual) and interpret the ideas or message that the authentic resource intends to transmit. (ACTFL, 2011)

#### *Interpersonal mode*

This is a two-way communication mode between two individuals or more. Participants provide and obtain information by speaking or writing to negotiate meaning and get their message across to the listener or reader. (ACTFL, 2011)

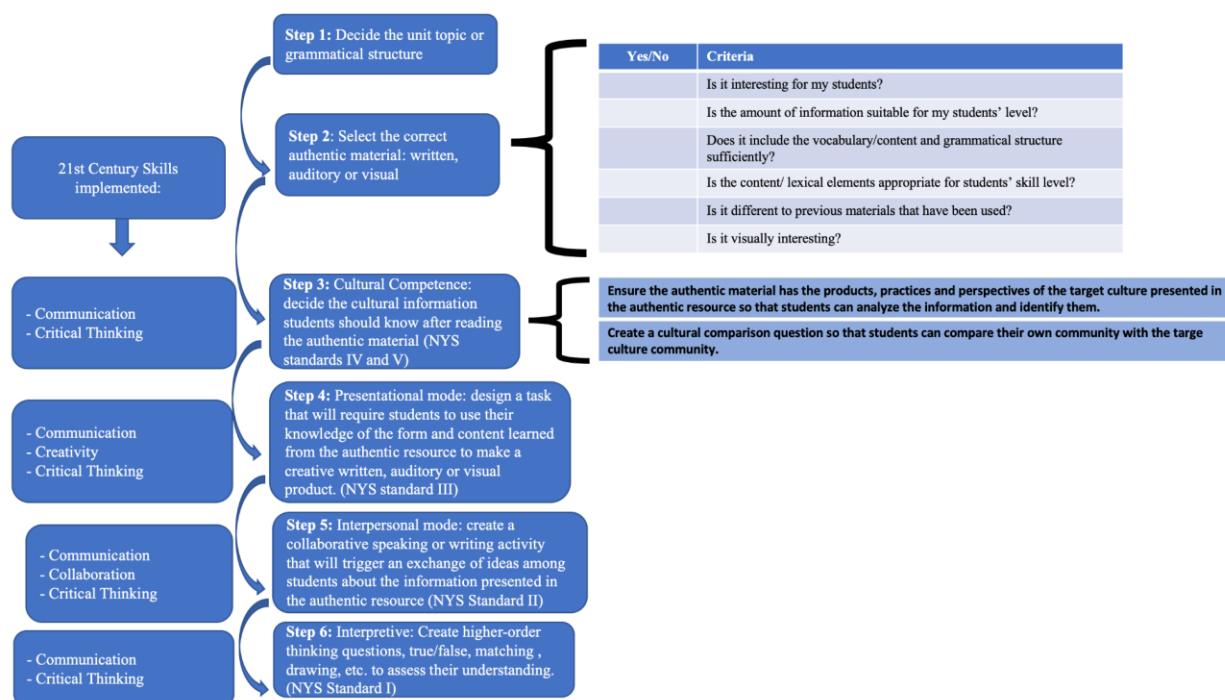
#### *Presentational mode*

This is another one-way communication mode, where the presenter sends a written or verbal message to an audience. The presenter must consider the type of audience, so that said message is clear and logical, as there is no opportunity for feedback. (ACTFL, 2011)

### Steps to design the Integrated Performance Assessment of the 21st Century

Over the last 16 years of teaching Spanish in a 7-12 grade school, I have implemented different teaching approaches, created various types of assessments, and used several teaching materials. IPA has proven to be the most effective model for engaging students, developing their cultural awareness, putting language skills into real-life practice, and demonstrating what they can do. It is overwhelming at the beginning for any teacher to figure out how to integrate content, grammatical structure, communicative and cultural standards, and 21st-century learning skills. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that IPA's benefits are gratifying. The developing process of my IPAs initiates with the application of Backward Design. Senior (2005, as cited in Berardo, 2006) states that our pedagogic goal must be what our students learn from the authentic material. Thus, my first step is to think of the unit topic, and grammatical structure students are learning. Second, selecting an appropriate authentic material takes into account its suitability, exploitability, readability, variability, and presentation. Third, analyze the content of the authentic resource and determine the products, practices, and perspectives it presents of the target culture. Fourth, design a creative presentational task that makes learners produce something innovative to show what they can do with their newly acquired knowledge. Fifth, create an interpersonal activity that fosters collaboration, and ideas exchange about the topic at hand. Lastly, make a comprehension exercise that encourages higher-order thinking skills. Figure 1 illustrates the steps to design an effective IPA in more detail.

**Figure 1:** Illustration of steps to create an effective IPA



## Sample of Unit Plan Exemplar

The following unit plan exemplar includes three IPAs, one for each proficiency level, demonstrating how interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational tasks connect. Besides, the tasks include the 4C's and are aligned to the NYS communication and culture standards. Additionally, to make this ideal assessment a reality, it is necessary to utilize technology which is a powerful student motivator, and a search engine to find most of our authentic material. The current generation of students are digital natives and perform better when they use technology since they do not know what to do without it Prensky (2001, as cited in McKeeman & Oviedo, 2013).

The context of this technology unit exemplar is a technology fair at a school where students can talk about different aspects of technology. The enduring understanding that students should learn by the end of the unit is that technology has crossed barriers regardless of cultures and is taking control of people's lives. The essential questions learners have to answer are about the influence of technology on people's daily routines. See Appendix A for more details.

## Description of IPA for Novice High Learners (Checkpoint A)

The IPA for novice high uses an infographic about Mexico's most popular social media platforms as the authentic material since the use of pictures and simplified information makes infographics more comprehensible for lower-level students. The cultural comparison requires students to compare the use of social media among people in their community and Mexicans. The goal of the presentational mode of this IPA is for students to use *ThingLink* to make a creative interactive brochure for Mexican teenagers explaining the instructions to use the social media platforms popular in the United States but not known in Mexico. For this task, students need to utilize present tense and the verb *gustar*. Students use *Mentimeter* to survey their classmates about the most popular social media platforms among teenagers in their community and collaborate to create a graph for the interpersonal task. Finally, the interpretive mode requires students to answer higher-order thinking questions about popular and unpopular

social media platforms in Mexico using *Google Forms*. It is important to note how interpretive and interpersonal tasks provide students with the information they need to accomplish communicative and cultural goals. See Appendix B.

### **Description of IPA for Intermediate Low-Mid Learners (Checkpoint B)**

The IPA for Intermediate Low-Mid makes students listen to the song “Internet” by Los Alguiens, which focuses on technology and informal commands. For the cultural comparison, learners compare the importance of using the internet in different aspects of their lives in their community and Mexico. To accomplish such comparisons, students need to critically analyze the information from the authentic resource to identify the target culture's products, practices, and perspectives. The goal of the presentational mode is to create a podcast using affirmative and negative commands to recommend the best applications, web pages, and technological devices that would simplify people's daily activities. Students will use the website *Vocaroo* to create a QR code for the podcast so that their classmates and even students from other sections can listen to it. In terms of the interpersonal mode, groups of three students use *Google Form* to come to a conclusion about the best and worst applications, webpages, and technological devices based on their performance in each of their daily activities. Lastly, the interpretive mode consists of an *Edpuzzle* activity that includes higher-order thinking questions to prove they understood the song. Once more, the interpretive and interpersonal tasks give students the information they need about the influence of technology in daily activities to create the podcast and the cultural comparison successfully. See Appendix C.

### **Description of IPA for Intermediate Mid-High (Checkpoint C)**


This IPA uses a Youtube video from the government of Colombia about the free Wi-Fi zones in rural areas of the country. There are various linguistic elements in this video appropriate for an upper-level class. The cultural comparison for this lesson is about the importance of internet access for young people to succeed academically. The communicative goal is to use *Canva* to make a creative *Gofundme* campaign to raise funds and install more free Wi-Fi zones in remote areas of Colombia. For the collaborative interpersonal task, students use *MindUp* to organize their ideas and list the advantages of technology in different aspects of their learning. Finally, students answer higher-order thinking questions on *Padlet* for the interpretive mode. Students use the content from the video and information from their discussion to write the campaign and make a cultural comparison. See Appendix D.

### **Conclusion**

If selected adequately with the proper criteria, authentic material is the most effective teaching material that world language educators can use to develop an IPA and help students increase their communicative and cultural competence. Moreover, students can acquire the 21st Century Learning skills (critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication), which are essential to succeed in college and the workforce. Although its implementation in the classroom might be challenging for teachers, the vast number of advantages makes it prevail.

The richness of the authentic material allows world language educators to design an IPA aligned not only to the NYS Revised World Language Standards for Communication and Culture but also to the 4C's 21st Century learning skills. The goal of every world language teacher is to create tasks that improve and evaluate students' communication and learning skills while increasing their cultural awareness. The ideal IPA includes activities that engage students, empower their learning process, expose them to the form of the target language in a real-life context, inform them about what is going on in the world through the perspective of the target culture, and give them the tools to become self-learners.

The most gratifying moments in my teaching career are when students who have been assessed with IPAs for years learn about the target culture for pleasure, become fluent in Spanish, share their experiences of how confident they feel when they communicate with other people in Spanish in their employment or in social settings, and express how they felt overprepared after taking the mandated World Language Assessments, the AP Spanish Language and Culture Exam and their Language Placement Exams at their future universities. Those comments are the best reward I receive as a teacher, as they are a testament to my goal of giving my students the support to become successful citizens of this competitive and changing world.



Mrs. Delgado-Fuller earned her B.A Major in Spanish, a Minor in Secondary Education, and an M.S. Secondary Education from Queens College. She has 16 years of experience teaching Spanish all grades 7-12. She has been a cooperative teacher for undergraduate students for the past 11 years. After teaching AP Spanish and Language and all the testing levels for several years, she realized the benefits of using authentic materials to create Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs). IPAs help students improve their communication skills, increase cultural awareness, and excel in the World Language Exams.




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## Appendix A: Sample of Unit Plan Exemplar

<p><b>Technology</b></p> 			<p><b>EU</b> Students will understand that use of technology has crossed barriers regardless of different cultures. Students will understand that technology is taking control of people's lives.</p> <p><b>EQ</b> How does technology affect people's daily lives? How technology can improve your daily activities?</p> <p><b>Context</b> You are part of the technology fair at your school and you need to provide the audience interesting information about different aspects of technology.</p>	
<p><b>Novice High Checkpoint A</b> <a href="https://bicyformation.com/2018/04/11/10-redes-sociales-mas-populares-en-mexico-infografia-infographic-socialmedia/">https://bicyformation.com/2018/04/11/10-redes-sociales-mas-populares-en-mexico-infografia-infographic-socialmedia/</a></p>			<p><b>Intermediate Low Checkpoint B</b> <a href="https://youtu.be/2vbNYY79sNw">https://youtu.be/2vbNYY79sNw</a></p>	<p><b>Intermediate High Checkpoint C</b> <a href="https://youtu.be/QbHR7PA-X0s">https://youtu.be/QbHR7PA-X0s</a></p> <p>UCADAPT Template. Eddy, J. 2006, 2014, 2015</p>
<p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>N</b></p> <p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>P</b></p> <p><b>P</b></p> <p><b>R</b></p>	<p>Students will read the infographic and answer questions about popular and unpopular social media platforms in Mexico using Google Form.</p> <p><b>I can read and identify the most and least popular social media platforms that are used in Mexico.</b></p> <p>In groups 10, students will use Google Forms to survey their classmates about the most popular social media platforms that they use and create a graph with the results.</p> <p><b>I can prepare a survey and determine the most popular social media platforms in my community.</b></p> <p>Students will use ThingLink to create an interactive brochure for Mexican teenagers with instructions to install the social media and explain what young Americans like to do in the most popular platforms.</p> <p><b>I can create a brochure to describe how to install social media platforms and mention what young people like to do with it.</b></p>		<p>Students will watch the video using Edpuzzle and answer comprehensive questions about the use of Internet.</p> <p><b>I can analyze the lyrics of song and answer questions about the different way in which we use the internet for our daily activities.</b></p> <p>Students will use Google Forms to post a poll about the best and worst applications, websites or electronic devices for each of the activities mentioned throughout the video. Students will post their results on Padlet and come to a consensus upon analyzing the results.</p> <p><b>I can create a survey about the best ways to perform technological activities and interpret the results.</b></p> <p>Students will create a podcast to recommend the best ways to use technology. Students will use Vocaroo to create a QR code and make the podcast available to the audience.</p> <p><b>I can recommend applications, websites, electronic devices, etc that will improve our daily activities.</b></p>	<p>Students will use edpuzzle to watch a video about free wifi zones provided by the Colombian government in rural areas. <b>I can analyze the needs obstacles Colombian students have due to lack of Internet access.</b></p> <p>Students will create a graphic organizer with their ideas about the different advantages of the internet in different aspects of education using Mindmap. Students will post their graphic organizer on Padlet where they will provide and receive feedback.</p> <p><b>I can discuss with a partner about the advantages and uses of the internet in different aspects of education and learning.</b></p> <p>Students use Thinglink tp create a Gofundme poster to collect funds to open more free wifi zones in rural Colombia. Students will also use the website qr-code-generator to create a QR code of the video and share it with the audience.</p> <p><b>Students can create an interactive poster to motivate people to donate money to help poor Colombian students.</b></p>

**Appendix B:** Sample of IPA for Novice High (Checkpoint A)

Authentic Material	<a href="https://ticsyformacion.com/2016/04/11/10-redes-sociales-mas-populares-en-mexico-infografia-infographic-socialmedia/">https://ticsyformacion.com/2016/04/11/10-redes-sociales-mas-populares-en-mexico-infografia-infographic-socialmedia/</a> Vocabulary: Technology, social media Grammar: Present tense, gustar		
	Task	21st Century Learning Skill	Technology
Interpretive mode (NYS Standard 1)	1.- Según el gráfico, ¿Qué redes sociales les gusta a los mexicanos? <i>According to the graph, What social media do mexicans like?</i> 2.- Según el gráfico, ¿Qué redes sociales no les gusta a los mexicanos? <i>According to the graph, What social media mexicans do not like?</i> 3- Según la información de la infografía, ¿Son los jóvenes mexicanos ciberadictos? <i>According to the infographic's information, Are mexicans teenagers ciberaddicts?</i>	-communication (reading) - critical thinking	Google Form
Interpersonal mode (NYS Standard 2)	En grupos, crea una encuesta para determinar las redes sociales que son populares en tu comunidad. Crea un gráfico con los resultados. <i>In groups, create a survey to determine the popular social media platforms among teenagers in your community. Create a graph with the results</i>	-communication (speaking and listening) - collaboration	Mentimeter
Presentational mode (NYS Standard 3)	Crea un folleto de instrucciones para los jóvenes mexicanos indicando los diferentes lo que se debe hacer para instalar la red social y las cosas que les gusta hacer a los jóvenes de tu comunidad en las plataformas más populares en los Estados Unidos que no son tan populares en México. Menciona lo que les gusta hacer en cada red social y explíquen cómo usarla. <i>Create a brochure for mexican teenagers with instructions to install the social media and</i>	-Communication (writing) - creativity	Thinglink

	<i>explain what young americans like to do in the most popular platforms.</i>		
Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectivas (NYS Standard 4)	Products : ¿qué?/ <i>what?</i> Practices: ¿cómo?/ <i>how?</i> Perspectives: ¿por qué?/ <i>why?</i>	Critical Thinking	
Cultural Comparison (NYS Standard 5)	¿Cuáles son las semejanzas y diferencias del uso de las redes sociales en las personas de tu comunidad?  <i>What are the similarities and differences of how young people use technology in Mexico and your community.</i>	Critical Thinking	

**Appendix C:** Sample of IPA for Intermediate Low-Mid (Checkpoint B)

Authentic material	<a href="https://youtu.be/2vbNVY79sNw">https://youtu.be/2vbNVY79sNw</a> Vocabulary: technology, Internet Grammar: affirmative and negative informal commands		
	<b>Task</b>	<b>21st-Century Learning Skill</b>	<b>Tecchnology</b>
Interpretivel mode  (NYS Standard 1)	1.- ¿Para qué aspectos de la vida usan las personas el Internet? <i>For what aspects of life do people use the internet?</i> 2.- Según la canción, ¿el Internet tiene control de la vida de las personas? Justifica tu respuesta. <i>According to the song, Does the Internet control the life of people? Justify your answer.</i> 3.- Usando los mandatos, contesta las 5 preguntas hechas en la canción sin usar el Internet <i>Using the informal commands, answer the questions of how you would do such activities without the Internet.</i>	-Communication (listening) - Critical Thinking	Edpuzzle
Interpersonal mode  (NYS Standard 2)	Encuesta En grupos de 3, entrevista a tus compañeros sobre las nuevas aplicaciones, páginas web o aparatos tecnológicos que son eficientes para hacer las actividades de la canción. Añade tres actividades más que se hacen en Internet. <i>Survey In groups of 3, interview your classmates about the new applications, webpages, or technological devices that are efficient to do the activities from the song.</i>	-Communication (speaking and listening) -Collaboration	Google Form
Presentational mode  (NYS Standard 3)	¡El Internet ha tomado control de nuestras vidas! Ya que el Internet es parte de nuestras vidas, ayuda a las personas a tener una mejor experiencia usándolo. Crea un podcast en el cual haces una crítica de las nuevas aplicaciones, páginas web o aparatos tecnológicos que se deben usar y no se deben	-Communication (speaking) - Creativity - Critical Thinking	Vocaroo



	<p>usar. Usa los mandatos para decir las que se deben usar y las que no se deben usar. El podcast debe durar aproximadamente dos minutos.</p> <p><i>Internet has taken control over our lives Since Internet is part of our lives, help people to have a better experience with it. Create a podcast to recommend the best and worst applications, webpages, or technological devices that people should use and not use. The podcast should be two minutes long.</i></p>		
<p>Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectivas</p> <p>(NYS Standard 4)</p>	<p>Products : ¿qué? / <i>what?</i></p> <p>Practices: ¿cómo? / <i>how?</i></p> <p>Perspectives: ¿por qué? / <i>why?</i></p>	Critical Thinking	
<p>Cultural Comparison</p> <p>(NYS Standard 5)</p>	<p>¿Qué importancia tiene el internet en diferentes aspectos de la vida de las personas de tu comunidad?</p> <p><i>What is the importance of Internet in different aspects of the life of Mexicans and people in your community?</i></p>	Critical Thinking	

**Appendix D:** Sample of IPA for Intermediate Mid – High (Checkpoint C)

Authentic Material	<a href="https://youtu.be/QbHR7PA-X0s">https://youtu.be/QbHR7PA-X0s</a> Vocabulary: technology, Wi-Fi connection Grammar: present tense, conditional, and present subjunctive		
	Task	21st-Century Learning Skill	Technology
Interpretive mode (NYS Standard 1)	1.- ¿Cuáles son las ocupaciones de Eifer? <i>What are Eifer's occupations?</i> 2.- ¿Cuál es un obstáculo en la educación de los estudiantes de su comunidad? <i>What is an obstacle to students' education?</i> 3.- ¿Para qué tipos de actividades usa Eifer el wifi de la zona digital? <i>For what type of activities does Eifer use free WiFi?</i> 4.- ¿Cómo ayuda Eifer a su comunidad? <i>How does Eifer help his community?</i> 5.- ¿Qué adjetivo describe a Eifer? <i>What adjective describes Eifer?</i>	-Communication (listening, viewing) - Critical Thinking	padlet
Interpersonal mode (NYS Standard 2)	En parejas, discutan sobre todas las ventajas que la tecnología ofrece a su educación tanto en diferentes aspectos como en la investigación, tareas, estudio, organización, etc. Crea un organizador de ideas. <i>In pairs, discuss the benefits of technology for your education. Mention how you use technology for research, homework, study, organization, etc. Outline your ideas on a graphic organizer.</i>	-Communication (speaking and listening) - Collaboration	MindUp
Presentational mode (NYS Standard 3)	Donación. Crea una campaña en Gofundme para recaudar fondos para que los jóvenes de La Guajira puedan tener más zonas digitales. Incluye los beneficios que los estudiantes podrían obtener y explica por qué las zonas	-Communication (writing) - Creativity -Critical Thinking	Thinglink or Canva

	<p>digitales son necesarios para que los jóvenes tengan éxito académico.</p> <p><i>Donation Create a Gofundme campaign to raise funds to help young people of La Guajira get more free WiFi zones. Include the things young Colombians would do with WiFi to succeed academically.</i></p>		
<p>Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectivas</p> <p>(NYS Standard 4)</p>	<p>Products: ¿qué? / <i>what?</i></p> <p>Practices: ¿cómo? / <i>how?</i></p> <p>Perspectives: ¿por qué? / <i>why?</i></p>	Critical Thinking	
<p>Cultural Comparison</p> <p>(NYS Standard 5)</p>	<p>¿Cuál es la importancia de tener internet accesible para educar a los jóvenes de la comunidad?</p> <p><i>What is the importance of having internet access on people's education?</i></p>	Critical Thinking	Voice Memos

# Organizational Practices for All New Teachers (6-12)

Jenny Maldonado

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**Abstract:** This article will address many organizational practices for teachers of any content, lesson plan strategies for SLA and a few resources that can be implemented in one's practice to enhance student engagement.

**Keywords:** Organization, lesson planning, resources, all content area teachers

## Introduction

As teachers, many of us remember the struggle of balancing out full-time teaching jobs, furthering our education at the Master's level, and simply being human. I learned early on that without organization, my life would become chaotic. With so many things on my mind to think about, organization strategies have made it so that I give enough time to all my obligations while taking care of my well-being and mental health.

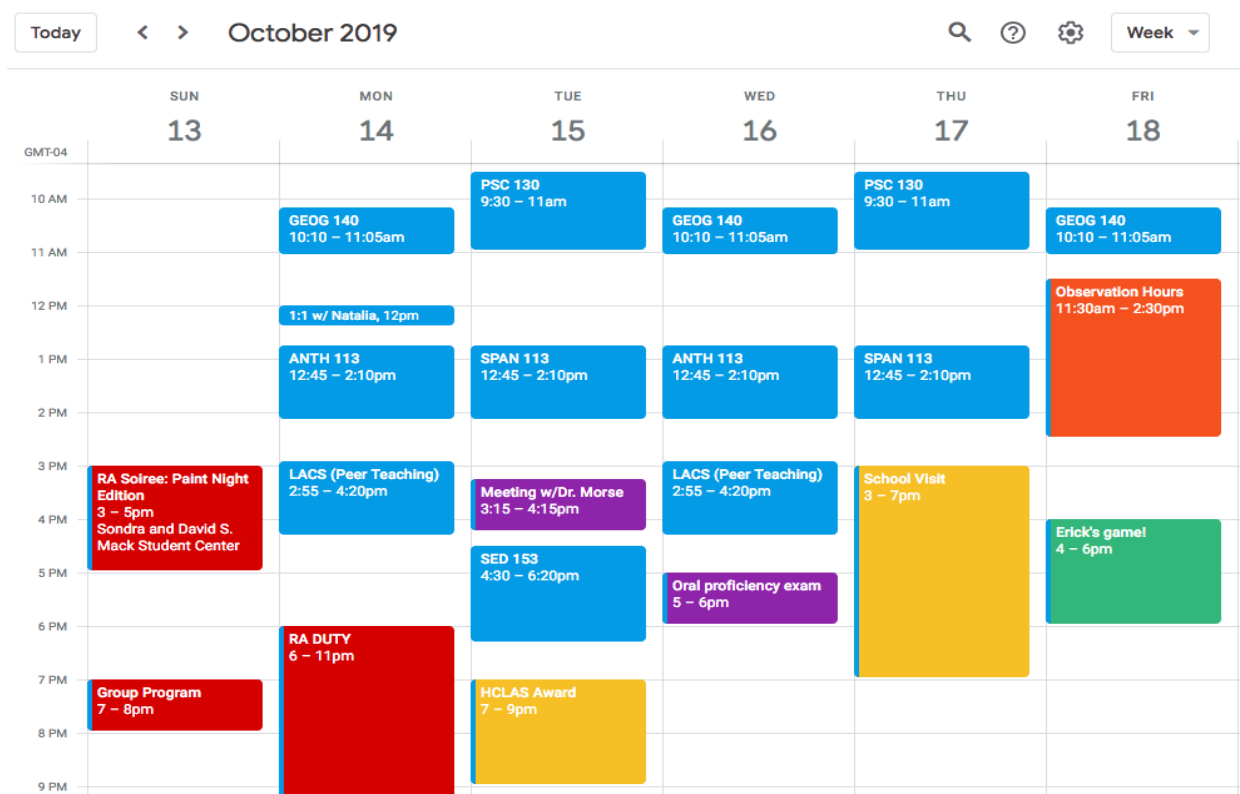
Organization will have a significant part of your lesson plan practice. As World-Language teachers, there are so many components needing to be addressed in a lesson. However, these components and strategies are the reason why our language teaching strategies are so effective.

After our vast transition in the past couple of years to a virtual space, how can we weed out the most effective online resources to keep us back in the classrooms full time? GoFormative is an excellent and effective online resource that can take out old documents and turn them into interactive activities, not only in language classes.

## Organization

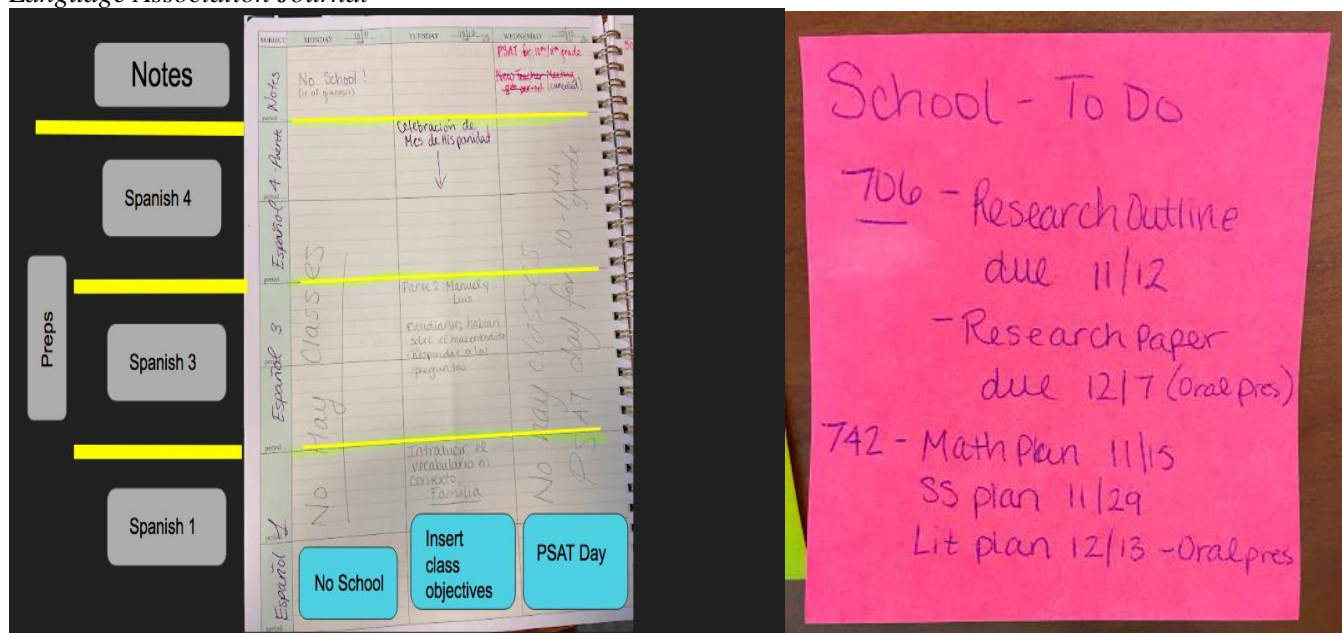
I realized early on in my career that organization could either make or break the flow of the day. We all know the teaching profession is a time-demanding profession. Like myself, there are many teachers who are still furthering their education. Additionally, let's not forget that teachers are regular people that have families, friends, and lives outside of the classroom. Most importantly, we are humans. Therefore, finding an organizational method that works for you is very important. A method that works for you might not work for me or vice versa. The beauty of organization comes from the numerous methods such as planners, calendars, and even grade books. As a college student, my favorite organization method was Google Calendar. Google calendar is accessible through a Gmail account. Therefore, students and teachers have access to the calendar through their professional accounts. The google calendar can organize your obligations by day, weeks, and months. I personally liked the week view. I liked that I could see my responsibilities for the entire week. My first tip of advice would be to organize your obligation by colors. As you can see from my example, my classes are in blue, my Resident Assistant responsibilities in red, school visits in yellow, and most importantly my personal and miscellaneous events in orange. I cannot stress enough how important it is to make time, not only for your professional event but also, for your personal events as well. Sometimes a week might feel so overwhelming that you might think to yourself "Do I have time to attend this?" and the answer is "Yes." If you make the time in your schedule, all events are possible to attend. Another good strategy is to leave gaps in between events and obligations. Sometimes we forget to allow time for travel, meals and most importantly just to give you time to take care of personal needs. This strategy also helps to avoid double-booking yourself and overlapping events. Now as I mentioned prior, the organization only works when you are using a method that works for you. As you can see, this Google Calendar is from 2019 when

I was attending college full-time. As a full-time teacher, this calendar does not work for me anymore because the majority of the day I am at work.



As a teacher, the organization method that works for me currently is my grade book. I rely on my grade book significantly and it serves so many purposes right now. As you can see in the picture below, I have my grade book divided in a particular way. I divided the book into 4 sections: Notes and my 3 preps. Whether or not your school requires you to submit your lesson plans, I always like to write the objective for the day and class for myself. As I plan, I like to make it clear to myself what I will be teaching that day and what I expect students to know from that lesson. I always leave the Notes section for any obligation or meeting I might have during or event after school.

On top of being a full-time teacher, I am also furthering my education at the Master's level. What works for me to keep myself organized for school is simple: Post-it notes. I use the Post-it notes as a reminder of the assignments I have to complete. They are also very easy to update or even recreate again. I like to keep these next to the mousepad on my laptop because most of the assignments are virtual. Therefore, keeping them in my sight always serves as a reminder.



As teachers, the most important part is the lessons we must execute every day. I know when I started teaching, this was what I was most nervous about: Lesson Creation. How do you know where to start? What to include? How do I know if they understood? I spent days and nights perfecting a lesson but I was mostly nervous about teaching them to my students the next day. I found a few strategies that helped me overcome this fear.

## Lesson Plans

Something I struggled with in the beginning was thinking about “How can I get my students excited about this lesson?” Therefore, I asked a group of new teachers and many responded with “music, a quick video, a fun fact in the target language.” All of these responses are a great way to engage students as soon as they walk into the classroom.

One piece of advice I would like to offer is that one thing that will always engage your students no matter what hook you have is Rapport and Routine. At the beginning of the year, I took time to get to know my students' background, goals, and most importantly, their interests. Although I cannot implement sports, music, and make-up in every lesson, I try to implement that in the hook or as they walk into class. Additionally, routine is a great strategy to implement from the beginning so students understand the flow and sequence of the class. My students know that everyday Monday they will pair-share about what they did over the weekend and on Friday, they will share what they will do this weekend. This is a great way to practice verb tenses and oral skills. On top of that, they look forward to sharing and speaking about themselves. My students voted this as their favorite activity in my class. In order to facilitate and support my students, I always provide them with a scaffold. As you can see below, I provide students with sentence starters and visuals to help them brainstorm and construct their responses. Students know they can always call me over to provide them feedback about their responses. I have realized that this has boosted their confidence to share and speak in the target language in front of the class.

I have four steps I go through to create my lessons. These steps are lesson objectives, incorporating culture, modeling, and informal assessment. Brainstorming your lesson objectives is a great way to find the flow to writing a lesson plan. Thinking about the objectives of what your students will perform, will guide you to do activities

*“I always ask myself two questions before creating a lesson: What do I want my students to walk away knowing? What do I want them to know how to do?”*



that they will benefit from. I always ask myself two questions before creating a lesson: What do I want my students to walk away knowing? What do I want them to know how to do? This will help you shape your lesson and design activities that will lead students to that goal. In language, it is important to have the ACTFL Can-Do statements visible to students, so they are aware of what the teacher expects them to be able to do by the end of the class. Below is an example of what students will walk into on the SMARTboard. Students have a clear idea of the objectives, the topic, and the Can-Do statements so they understand what they will have to do during the lesson.

## El Objetivo de Hoy:

Los conflictos o los malentendido

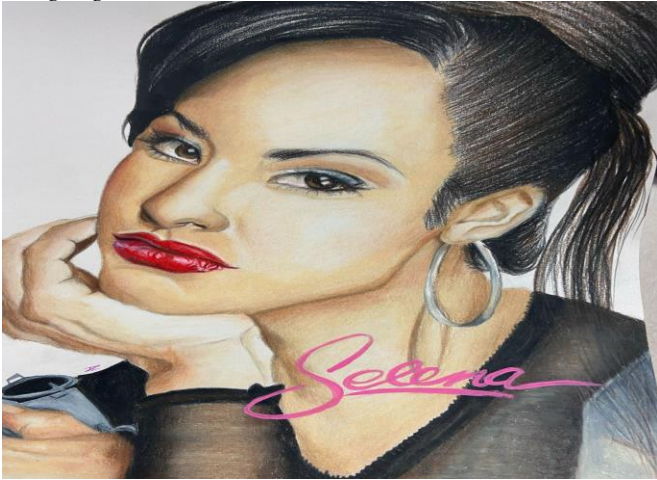
Yo puedo resolver un conflicto con comunicación.



Another way to engage students to immerse them in language acquisition is to incorporate culture in your lessons. Culture is a significant part of language learning and learning about culture could increase a student's appreciation for a language. In my example below, I show a slide where I used culture to teach a lesson on personal identity. Not many of my students were familiar with the singer Selena. However, once I started teaching about her while incorporating the unit vocabulary, I realized that they were more invested when they were able to make real connections with this person. Once students were able to make these connections, the vocabulary and concept of personal identity came much more naturally to them.



Selena Quintanilla era una cantante México-americana que murió trágicamente. Ella era muy famosa y muy popular porque ella cantaba muy bien, pero también porque era sencilla y muy simpática.



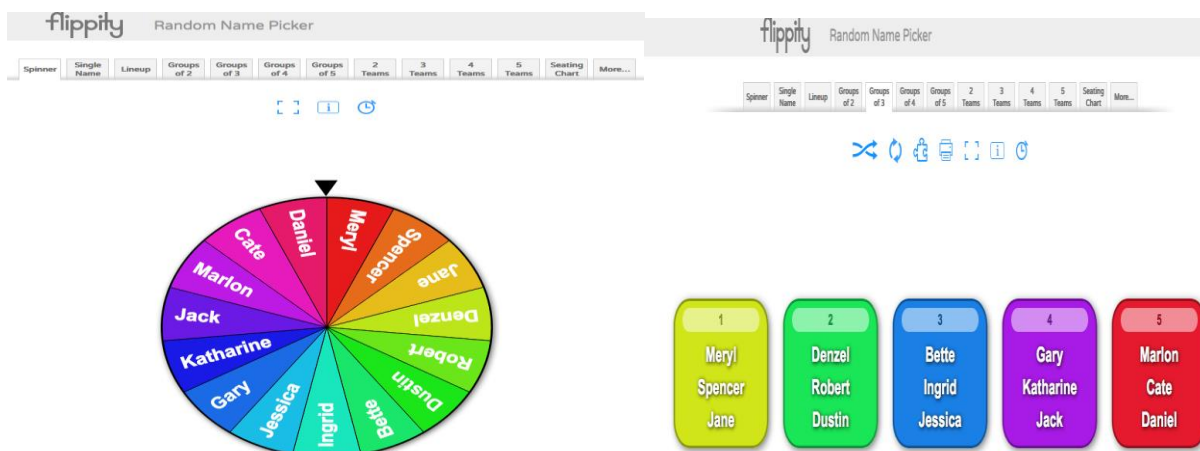
One of the most important things we new teachers forget to do sometimes is to model for students. It is so easy for us to think we have given clear instructions but realize immediately that students are confused. This is where modeling becomes a significant part of the lesson. Clear instructions are essential in order for students to complete the activity that will help them develop their communicative proficiency. Therefore, a good piece of advice when giving instructions is to give students an example or a demonstration of your expectations rather than verbal instructions. Once students are working and completing the task, it is imperative that you check for understanding.

Lastly, as language teachers, we want indicators to tell us if our students are learning and their proficiency level. A way for us to do that is by performing assessments. Now the word assessment carries a big meaning because usually, a student's mind goes completely to either a test or quiz. I always assure my students that not all assessments are quizzes and tests, but more of a measure for me to know their level of growth. There are several ways to assess students without feeling pressure or even knowing they are being assessed. One of my go-to assessments is circulating the room. This is a simple method that can give you a lot of information about a student. I always walk around to different groups of students as they work on the task and make a note of their individual progress and as a group. Assessments can also be informal just to gauge our students' progress. Some good ways are exit tickets or even some games: Quizlet, Kahoot, Blooket. These platforms also execute an individual report. Therefore, if you want to assess vocabulary individually, you can gauge how many students are at the appropriate level and which need additional support.

## **Helpful Resources**

As we still battle with virtual and hybrid spaces, one good thing that came, as a result, is all of the helpful resources that were made available for teachers. However, the amount of resources is overwhelming, and knowing which ones are worth incorporating in your practice. I have tried a few and would like to share which online resources I use to enhance my class even as we are in person.

The first resource I incorporated this year was Flippity (<https://www.flippity.net/>). Flippity has many functions to enhance the classroom such as vocabulary flashcards, bingo, and even self-assessments. Specifically, I use the random name picker. At the end of every year, I give students a survey as an opportunity for them to give me feedback about anything they enjoyed or would have liked to see change. One of the pieces of feedback I received was to make different groups and partners. I also realized that when going overwork or reading an article, I should be picking from the whole class, not just the students who volunteer. Therefore, I also started using the spinner. Flippity allows you to put all of the students in your class's names and gives you access to a spinner, name randomizer, and the ability to make groups of different amounts of students.



From what I hear from the students, they enjoy working with different people in the class and different groups. Flippity is a helpful resource I would recommend for other teachers who incorporate group work and student participation.

The most helpful resource I have come by is Formative (<https://app.formative.com/>). Formative is another online resource that was created by teachers to enhance students' engagement and is most known for allowing teachers to access students' answers in real-time. Formative gives you the ability to create an assignment from scratch or enhance a PDF worksheet you want to use. Because my school has shifted back to in-person learning, formative serves me as a very helpful homework tool. There are more than 20 question types of answers you can receive. To name a few, you can make multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, audio response questions, matching, multiple selections, and even video responses, as you can see below in the picture.

### Choose your content or question type

#### Add Content:

- Audio
- Embed
- Image
- Text Block
- Video
- Whiteboard

#### Add Question:

- Audio Response
- Categorize
- Drag and Drop
- File Response
- Fill In The Blank
- Free Response
- Graphing
- Hot Spot
- Hot Text
- Inline Choice
- Match Table Grid
- Matching
- Multiple Choice
- Multiple Selection
- Numeric
- Resequenece
- Short Answer
- Show Your Work
- True Or False
- Video Response

#### Upload Your Own Content:

- Enhance a PDF/Doc/Image/GoogleDoc

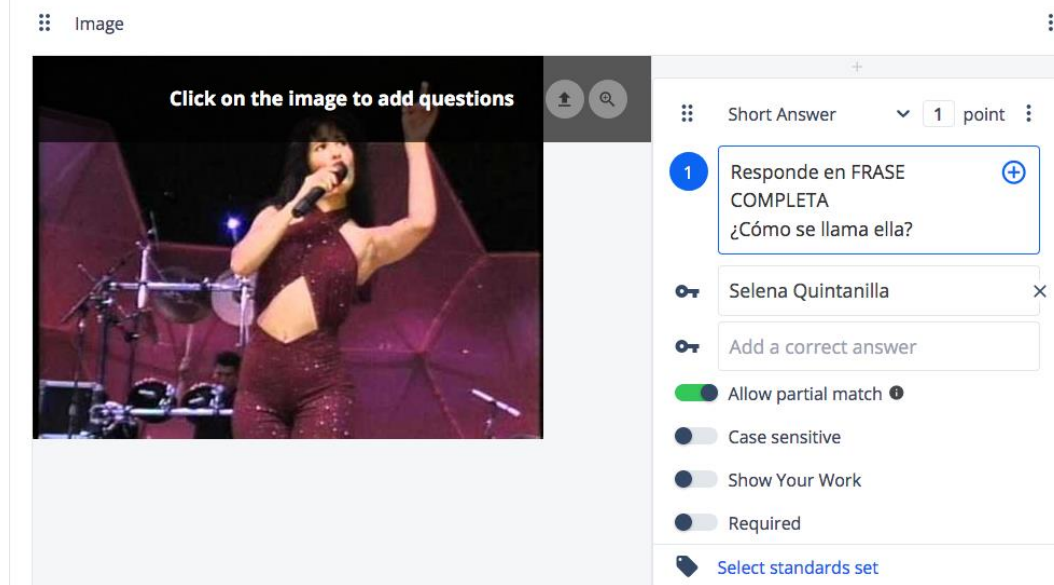
#### Grab From Library:

- Search from existing questions

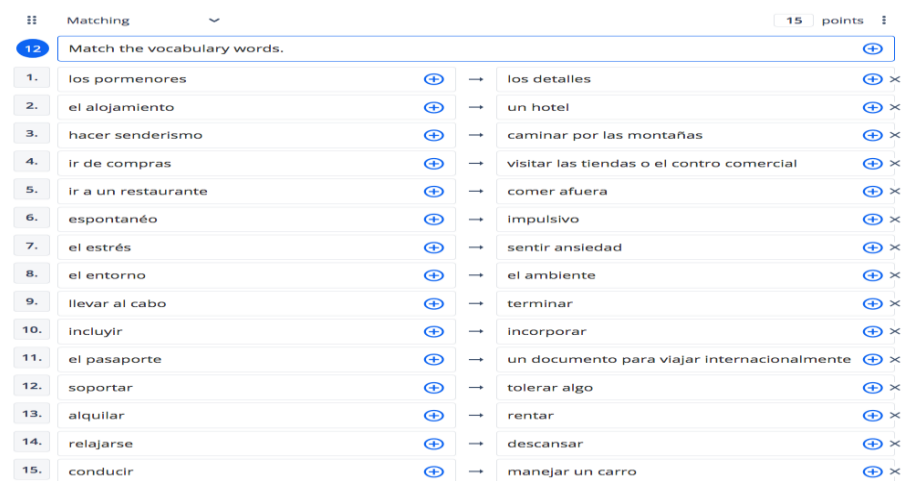
#### Layout:

- Add a Section

As you can see from the picture, before adding a question, you can add audio, a picture, or a video if you wish to provide the question they will answer.



In the picture above, you can see that I provided students with a picture of the singer *Selena* before asking them the question. After entering the image, I chose to add a short response question for students. Formative allows me to insert the correct answer but also has an option for partial credit, case sensitive, show your work, and the option to make the question required, meaning they cannot submit the formative without answering the question.



I depend on the matching option to assess vocabulary. It is a very useful tool because it grades itself. On the top right corner, it gives you the option to input the total number of points you would like to award for that specific question, making it a self-grader.

One of the most impressive features of formative is its ability to enhance a PDF document into an interactive assignment. When you click the option to make a new question, on the bottom left of the menu, it gives you the option to browse your documents and you will select the document you want to enhance. In the image below, I inserted a reading I like to use with my level 1 classes. I only have this document as a PDF but formative allows me to make it into an online document with interactive questions. In the first line of text, I saw an opportunity to review a very important verb. Therefore I clicked next to the words, once you click, you get the option to ask a question. For this one, I chose to make it a short response question. You can see that where the number 18 is, is

where they will answer the question. I inserted the question I wanted the students to answer and assigned a point for the question. Now I can continue to add questions to this document.

The image shows a digital worksheet interface. On the left, a stick figure is labeled with numbers 1 through 10, corresponding to body parts. The title 'Partes del Cuerpo' is at the top. On the right, a sidebar allows adding questions. A question is added: 'What is (1) body part in Spanish?' with a point value of 1. The key answer is 'los ojos'. Settings include 'Allow partial match', 'Case sensitive', and 'Show Your Work'.

## Conclusion

Organization skills, lesson plan strategies, and new online resources have a significant impact on my teaching practice. As a new teacher, these are the things I knew I wanted to perfect and improve on in order to be an effective teacher. As I learned and became better within these areas, I really wanted to spread the wealth of knowledge with other teachers to avoid the same mistakes and instead hit the ground running in this profession at such a challenging time. (See Appendix A for additional advice from veteran teachers.) However, my intention to share this knowledge has even opened my eyes and made me appreciate the professional development world where many language teachers share the same goals and can be supported through improving and achieving them.

Jenny A. Maldonado is a new teacher in the World Language teaching profession. This is her second year teaching Spanish at North Shore Central School District in Glen Head, NY. As a native speaker, Jenny saw the importance of knowing an additional language other than English. Therefore, she tripled majored in Spanish, Foreign Language Education, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Hofstra University in 2020. During her experience, she served as a Peer Teacher and Spanish Teachers' Assistant in both the Language and Latin American and Caribbean Department. Jenny has taken the initiative to further her education in the teaching field and is earning her Masters of Education in Teaching English to Students of Other Language (TESOL) at Queens College. Additionally, Jenny enjoys attending professional development and paying it forward to rising language teachers. She has memberships with LILT and NYSAFLT. She has also presented at the LILT Annual Conference, NCTLF, and NYSAWLA.

**Appendix A: Top 10 advice for New Teachers from Veteran Teachers**

1. Budget your time. To be a great teacher you must devote yourself to the time it takes to plan, grade, and do all of the clerical work that seems to never end. But, to be a great teacher you also need to take care of yourself. Remember you are not a machine, you are a human, and this is a career, not your entire life. Set clear boundaries for when work ends and when it is time to relax and be yourself with your friends and family. Decompress. Find time to unwind. These are buzzword statements, but they are still important. I remember in my first year I never stopped working. I would stay up until midnight or later planning lessons, grading, answering emails, and then commute into work the next morning only to repeat it all over again. Quite frankly, I don't know how I didn't collapse one day. Love what you do as a teacher but loving what you do must also include treating yourself well.

- Martin Abrams, Social Studies, North Shore High School

2. Teaching is not a job; it is a lifestyle. You need to love what you do. If you do not, the students know and you are doing them a disservice.

- Barbara Huether, Spanish, East Islip Middle School

3. NEVER lose sight of your WHY. Mine was a statement that I wrote with my portfolio. Read it again every year and remember why you chose this career path. Of course it will evolve as you gain more experience but remember why you pursued teaching in the first place. Lastly, HAVE FUN! It is such a rigorous job but it is truly rewarding.

- Judith Rodriguez, Spanish, Westbury High School

4. Don't let exterior factors affect your passion for teaching and working with kids. Education is ever-changing and there are countless factors beyond our control. But, always remember why you chose this profession and don't let anything negatively impact your desire to make an impact on your student's lives.

- Toni Cohn, ENL, North Shore High School

5. My advice for teachers entering our profession is that connections with your students are more important than any curriculum you will teach. In 20 years when your students think back on your class they will not remember a worksheet on AR verbs but they will remember how you made them feel. Take time to get to know them as people, design activities that allow you to have authentic conversations, and most of all have fun with your students!

- Christina Margiorie, Spanish, North Shore High School

6. I believe that adaptability is a skill to hone as an educator in our current academic climate. Education is an evolving entity that changes depending on our students' needs. Being adaptable and furthering our own education strengthens our ability to seek out different outlets to reach an array of students.

- Gabriela Fernandez, English, North Shore High School

7. My advice for any first-year teacher is to give yourself one day each week to not do anything school related. It's so important for your self-care to remove your teacher hat for the day and focus on your own well-being! You don't need to be "on" 24/7. Taking better care of yourself will help you be a better teacher. Burning yourself out won't.

- Jennifer Rizza, Math, North Shore High School



8. Don't be afraid to try new things in the classroom. A lot of times we either learned something a certain way and feel that we need to stick with that, or we are afraid of how the students will react to the idea, but remember that YOU are the teacher and YOU know what needs to be done to provide a positive experience in which the students will LEARN. Also, don't let student attitudes affect your ideas (obviously be reasonable and hear your students out). Unfortunately, students tend to be over-worked and will try to get out of ANYTHING they see as extra work. Don't let them persuade you to steer away from what you want to do and what you know is good for them!

- Steven Burgos, Spanish, North Shore High School

9. Always have a well-structured plan, as this will help with classroom management, but don't be afraid to pivot in the middle of your lesson to account for the needs of the group. Also, when things don't go according to plan, show yourself and your students grace. I have found that when I teach the person first, then the student, I create a friendly learning environment, as well as a positive and warm rapport with my students.

- Madel Soriano-Mazzella, Spanish, North Shore High School

10. It is easy to become overwhelmed as a first year teacher. New teachers enter the profession excited to begin implementing creative strategies and techniques. The possibilities seem endless, but it is important to choose a few key objectives to focus on. As all the unknowns of teaching begin to reveal themselves through experience it will be necessary to adjust and modify your techniques and strategies to be effective with the students in front of you. Take the time to master a few instead of juggling many. This consistency will benefit you and your students.

- Amanda Haleiko, ENL, North Shore High School

# Get Cozy with Can-Do Statements

Anna Domingo & Margaret Krone

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**Abstract:** This article discusses strategies to create communicative Can-Do statements. Examples of activities are provided to encourage teachers/students to put Can-Do Statements at the center of their learning in a meaningful way.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Instruction, Language Development, Methodology, Professional Development, Teacher Preparation

## Introduction

Margaret Krone and Anna Domingo had the distinct pleasure of educating students together for three years. During that time, we discovered a shared passion of wanting to help our students become real communicators of a target language. We had heard all the buzzwords and were anxious to jump on the proficiency train, but did not really know where to start. We decided if we were going to really do this, the very start would have to be deepening our knowledge of what it meant to be a proficiency-based teacher with the ultimate goal of promoting authentic communication in the target language.

Together, we would sift through endless pages of teacher blogs, listen to hours of podcasts, scroll through Instagram accounts, watch YouTube videos, and read research articles with the hope of understanding how to make the shift towards proficiency-minded instruction. In all that reading and many hours of deep dives on the internet, we were still left with the question of, “how?” We were finally understanding the why, but how does one actually put it into action? What follows here is our journey and how we arrived at where we are today. The important thing to know is that Margaret and Anna continue to learn every day by reading new things, trying out new activities, and always encouraging other teachers along the path to proficiency.

## What was the cause of this shift in our mindset?

When we started working together, Margaret had been teaching for approximately eight years and Anna, only four. Anna came in with this energetic, infectious personality and tons of new ideas. We would lesson plan together and exchange ideas

about how to get our students more engaged and become more comfortable using the target language. We realized together that we were doing all the right things but not getting anywhere and, ultimately, not providing an environment where students could communicate authentically. Based on the research we were reading and all the resources we were finding, we quickly realized that memorizing vocabulary and verb conjugations were not getting our students to the desired goal. Finally, we came to this shared realization that so many have preached before: To achieve authentic student output, we as teachers must provide authentic input that consists of comprehensible language used in real-world scenarios that are relevant to our students’ lives.

*“To achieve authentic student output, we as teachers must provide authentic input that consists of comprehensible language used in real-world scenarios that are relevant to our students’ lives.”*

## When did it finally click?

We participated in a workshop along with colleagues led by a former ACTFL Teacher of the Year, Katrina Griffin. Learning how to create an effective “Can-Do” statement was the pivotal shift in our teaching experience. Can-Do statements frame student learning, give a clear expectation of what to expect, provide measurable evidence for the teacher, and offer students a relevant and attainable goal. Most importantly, Can-Do’s provide students with the *context* for learning and help to keep students invested because they understand the *how and why* of what they are learning.

## Creating Effective Can-Do Statements

Once we understood the basic components of a solid Can-Do Statement, we started to see real progress in our classes. So, how do you create a “good” Can-Do?

### I can + language function + context

The “**I can**” provides the goal. The “**language function**” provides the communication task, which shows what students will *actually do with the language*. The “**context**” provides the setting in which they will carry out the task.

Can-Do Statements must be written in student-friendly language. If students struggle to understand the objective we are setting for them, it loses effectiveness before we even begin the lesson. Look at the examples below, taking note of how none of them mention a grammar point or specific set of vocabulary. Yet, we as teachers can understand what the students will need in order to be able to be successful (*How to read the NYS world language standards - modern...*, 2021). Table 1, below, contains specific examples of effective Can-Do statements in given contexts.

**Table 1:** Sample Can-Do Statements

Can-Do Statement	Language Function	Context
<i>I can ask for help about an issue with my laptop.</i>	Explain, describe, ask & answer questions <b>Interrogatives, modal verbs</b>	Technology
<i>I can persuade my peers to shop at local businesses.</i>	Persuade, suggest, explain & defend <b>Impersonal expressions, commands, subjunctive</b>	Community, Shopping
<i>I can tell a story about the best gift I ever received.</i>	Narrating in the Past <b>Preterite vs. imperfect</b>	Childhood, Toys, Memories

<i>I can give my opinion about restaurants in my neighborhood.</i>	Expressing & defending opinions <b>Impersonal expressions, comparatives, superlatives</b>	Restaurants & Food
<i>I can convince a friend to binge watch a show.</i>	Persuade, suggest, explain & defend <b>Impersonal expressions, comparatives &amp; superlatives</b>	TV Shows & Entertainment

Take a look at these impostor can-do statements. We have learned that it can be quite difficult to come up with an effective Can-Do. It takes time, patience, and reflection to see what works and what does not.

- I can count from 1 to 100.
- I can say the days of the week.
- I can say sentences in the future tense.

While each of these statements is framed with “I can,” they are not true communicative goals. They do not push to increase students’ language proficiency. Effective and meaningful Can-Do statements should provide an opportunity for students to *do* something with the language. These show what students know about the language, but not what they can do (Cabral, 2021).

### Implementing Can-Do Statements

Once the Can-Do statement has been created, the fun can really start! Once we feel like we have an effective Can-Do statement or set of statements, we choose and design activities based on our students’ abilities to achieve their goals, align those activities across the three modes of communication, and ultimately provide a variety of opportunities for students to use the target language naturally.

Below are three activities that we consider to be our most effective, go-to activities in supporting students on their path to proficiency. We have provided the name of the activity, the mode of communication it focuses on, and a sample Can-Do statement. The Can-Do statement provided is a generic one; however, teachers can adapt the Can-Do statement to better suit the context of what they are teaching. The Can-Do statement listed simply provides a starting point.

### Annotation Walk, Interpretive Mode (Loveless, 2021)

#### *Can-Do Statement*

I can understand information presented in a text.

#### *How to Implement*

Provide students with a text. Explain to the students that they will need to make personal connections to the text. While they read they are to annotate the text using various symbols. For example:

- (!) = this part surprised me;
- (\*) this is important to me;
- (LOL) = this made me laugh.

The teacher places chart paper around the room. Each paper has one of the symbols used during the annotation. Once the students have completed annotating the text, they will walk around the room and write the sentence that they labeled with a particular symbol on the corresponding chart paper. As a closure to the lesson, the teacher reviews what sentences the student wrote under each symbol. Depending on the level of their students, discussions that follow can be done in the target language or in English.

### ***Rationale***

This activity provides real purpose to students while they read. There is something that they actively have to do while reading as opposed to just underlining the “important things.” It also requires the students to reread the text multiple times which provides more input. And finally, it serves as a springboard for authentic discussion about a relevant topic. For a more in-depth visual and explanation, visit: <https://comprehensibleclassroom.com/2021/01/19/annotation-walk/>.

## **Negotiate Order, Interpersonal Mode** (Negotiate Order, 2018)

### ***Can-Do Statement***

I can express my opinion.

### ***How to Implement***

Students rank a selection of things according to a scale. For example, students are given pictures of various houses from the target culture and rank them according to a variety of scales such as: most expensive to least expensive, most luxurious to most economical, largest to smallest, and would most like to live in to least like to live in. It can be done with ANY collection of things. The teacher can provide the set of items to rank and the scale, the students can decide the scale based on the set of stimuli, or the teacher can give a scale and the students can provide the stimuli to rank. The possibilities are endless!

### ***Rationale***

This activity provides students with an opportunity to explain and justify their opinions about the set of stimuli. They will compare and contrast their opinions with others and ultimately create connections with each other that aid in building the classroom community. It provides a comfortable space for students to communicate authentically. For a more in depth explanation, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SoOeo5tGXc>.

## **Pecha Kucha, Presentational Mode** (Pecha Kucha, 2018)

### ***Can-Do Statement***

I can

describe, explain, and narrate about a given prompt.

### ***How to Implement***

Students are presented with a series of pictures and provided a context. Students will describe each picture for a set amount of time (20-30 seconds or more based on the abilities of the students). Within that time frame, they must talk about the picture within the scope of the given context.

***Rationale***

This provides students with a low-stakes way to spontaneously communicate and demonstrate what they have acquired throughout a given unit. It gives the teacher an opportunity to assess where the student is on their path to proficiency. For a more in depth explanation, visit: <http://www.creativelanguageclass.com/pecha-kucha/>.

**Conclusion**

We have jumped headfirst into teaching towards proficiency. Together we have embraced the chaos of trying a new idea, had countless conversations about what went well and what would work better, and have seen the direct effects of how our students have improved in using the language. Taking the first leap can be scary, but our goal is to make the process as “cozy” as possible. It is a practice and a craft. Some days are good, some days are not. Ultimately what matters is that we are providing students with the ability to foster connections with other cultures and opportunities for authentic communication in ways that are relevant to our students’ lives.



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Anna and Margaret provide professional development, not only at conferences such as NYSAFLT and LILT, but also host workshops for school districts across Long Island. For more information please reach out to them at [thecarefullycuratedclassroom@gmail.com](mailto:thecarefullycuratedclassroom@gmail.com).

# Decem Annos Mirabiles: A Retrospective on 10 Years of Teaching Latin

Catherine Stevens

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**Keywords:** Advocacy, Issues in the Profession, Teacher Preparation

I was incredibly surprised, and honored, to be invited to the NYSAFLT Conference this year by my former graduate school advisor. I could not say no, but I felt tremendous pressure to display a success story in perfect attainment of all the naïve teaching goals I set for myself (or, that others set for me) from my graduate school days. I felt that I could not deliver. My husband, however, suggested that I have a lot to offer not only from my teaching itself, but through reflections on my career. So, that is what I offer: a reflection on my approaches to teaching, defending, and propagating Latin over 10 years as an educator through four different school communities in Buffalo, NY. In so doing, I hope to engage other educators in a discussion on teaching from all backgrounds, approaches and philosophies, while acknowledging the pressures we all face in our eternally challenging careers.

Latin teachers—at least those in NYS—tend to stick together and discuss their unique perspective separately, with one occasionally adventuring out into the extended family of NYSAFLT or ACTFL. Latin has a reputation of being different, and indeed it is. I tend to see Latin as a means to an end, whereas the study of modern languages is an end in itself, i.e. study the language to use the language in an immediate, real-world setting. The study of Latin, not used as a common national language anywhere, becomes a vehicle in the pursuit of many other things: English language fluency, Romance language fluency, logical thinking skills, and an understanding of western civilization and cultures. That is not to say that Latin cannot be used very actively—it can! This is what brings me back to my formative experiences in undergraduate and graduate school.

I entered my university's graduate school of education immediately after completing a four-year undergraduate degree in Classics and Anthropology there. I was given a lot of advice by family members—all practicing teachers—telling me that teacher training programs should, at times, be taken with a grain of salt. After teaching for 10 years, I see the value of that statement, even if I don't *completely* agree with it. Their point was that nothing can stand in the place of raw *experience*. I, being a high achiever who follows directions, quickly discovered that the *creativity* needed for teaching was extremely challenging for me. I wanted to approach it in a formulaic way, like following a recipe, but, of course, teaching is much more nuanced. My favorite teachers, including my high school Latin teacher, were very methodical. What I failed to realize right away is that they had perfected a teaching system over a thirty-year career by the time I had them.

The graduate program in language education, perhaps unsurprisingly, catered toward modern languages; Latin is generally the “black sheep.” Thankfully, there was an unheard-of, record-breaking, five other aspiring Latin teachers in the cohort that year! We were able to work together to apply Latin as a more modern language in the program, while gently corroborating each other's arguments against any un-doable or unreasonable assignment associated with our unique language goals. I found that my graduate program demanded active language use, no matter how “dead” our second language was. Given my background and inclinations, I naturally tend towards very traditional, straight-forward teaching methods. Indeed, Latin has traditionally been taught via grammar-translation, which most people tend to (falsely) associate with boredom and ineffectiveness. (This may be true at times, but doesn't have to be!) Thankfully, I had the good fortune of being introduced to the idea of speaking Latin in a very active way by one of my professors in the department of Classics. I readily applied these skills to my teaching assignments and even researched active approaches for a masters' thesis. I attended a few workshops. One was called Rusticatio, and was held for six days in a mansion in West Virginia, completely isolated from

outside influence and English language use; it encouraged full immersion of spoken Latin. Through my continued exploration of active Latin language use, I realized that there was a movement among some to teach Latin in a full-immersive, CI setting. The concept has since grown exponentially and I follow some of its progress through social media. With all of that background, I developed a teaching philosophy which combines the benefits of tried-and-true methods to share how a language works with the application of it all to active, communicative outcomes.

Upon graduation, I was fortunate enough to accept a .8 position at a very affluent district in my area; I came to realize that 0.8 FTE actually meant a terrible combination of full-time work without the full-time benefits. Despite this school also being my student teaching placement previously, the year was less than ideal. Looking back, I realize that I was given very poor mentorship, little professional assistance, and very little encouragement from my coworkers and administrators. Given the state of the economy, there were no other new hires with whom to associate, and no teachers close to my age. I have come to realize that this isolation is extremely unhealthy for new, if not all, teachers. Relationships with coworkers can mean a great deal. By no means, however, was my experience all to be blamed on the school itself: I had a lot of growing up to do, both professionally and personally. I still saw myself as a student instead of a colleague among the faculty. I also admit, because I know that others can relate, that many mornings were spent with 10 minutes of crying in the car before entering the building. It is worth noting that one of my close friends left teaching entirely because of the anxiety of the first year. My approaches learned and developed through graduate school did not work here. Students did not respond well to the “new” teacher and essentially walked all over me. (It was not all bad; there were a few really great students who made my days better.) I found that working with another teacher’s curriculum was difficult; it was like fitting the square peg into the round hole. Moreover, the next academic year, the part-time position changed and my contract was not renewed. I found this out at the end of August. I feel that it is worth sharing all of this, because experiences like this cause new teachers to leave the profession easily. Thankfully, through family support, stubbornness, and a simple inability to figure out a new life-plan, I kept with it. Now, I also realize that no experience is wasted, and I learned a lot, even if it did not seem like it at the time.

Despite a short period of waiting and worrying, I was hired, part-time, at a smaller suburban district that September, two weeks into the school year. Here, I received much better mentoring and encouragement. I had friendly coworkers a little closer to my age, interests, and experiences to talk to. The students were very high achievers and responded well to my active Latin approaches. I learned much more about how to handle the ins-and-outs of maintaining a healthy Latin program.

For instance, through discussions with my mentor and fellow Latin teacher, I changed my approach to grading. Maintaining an encouraging, motivational environment is important. Achievable goals can help students perform better.

I began to allow quiz retakes, to accept late

assignments, and to provide extra credit. A student’s self-confidence is more valuable than academic punishment. I also saw my own development of better routines and procedures in a more structured environment. I saw the development of a true growing Latin program, and I learned a lot about outreach and providing for students outside of class; e.g. the National Latin Exam, National Junior Classical League state and national conventions, and international travel. These sorts of things can be more important than anything you actually do *inside* the classroom. This may seem counterintuitive, but I realized that working from the outside in was actually a smarter way to maintain an engaged student body. Notably, during my time here, my co-teacher had set up an Italy trip, but after an unforeseen circumstance, he had to drop away and I became the leader of this trip. This would actually change my life on a profound personal and professional level. I came home with an unbelievable sense of self-

*“A student’s self-confidence is more valuable than academic punishment.”*

confidence that I never had before. Being responsible for a group of minors in a foreign country was the scariest and most wonderful experience in my life. In fact, the teacher I worked with at the first job, who seemed to greatly dislike my work during that year, noticed a change. I will never forget the way she looked at me at our next conference and her tone of voice when she said “You’ve changed!” I felt that I “showed her” that I was capable, even if she thought I could not cut it as an educator just a year earlier.

Although I was relatively comfortable at this school, it was clear that they could not provide a full-time position. After two years there, I applied and was hired to fill a vacancy as the only Latin teacher at a small, all-girls, Catholic high school. This gave me my first opportunity to develop my own program, my own way. This was also a relatively supportive environment, and for the first time I made actual friends at work. I greatly enjoyed being out of the public sector. There were other pressures, but I was glad to lose the stress of certain observation requirements, SLOs, and HEMI scores for APPR. It was worth the pay cut in that regard. Still, I was staying up until all-hours lesson planning; the workload as a new teacher jumping from school-to-school was not sustainable. I had never really found a full sense of enjoyment in my daily work, and wondered if I should have continued into a career of academic research instead. I hit a breaking point and made a decision with myself to stop caring. I decided that I had to work to build up my savings, and then continue into academia. Although it seems counterintuitive, this was one of the best decisions I ever made for my teaching career. Everything got easier! stopped worrying about how I was “supposed to” teach and just started doing what I wanted to do, the way I wanted to do it. It worked so much better. For the first time, I became myself, instead of an emulator of the ideal “master teacher.” I taught more genuinely. After three years here, I realized that I could be happy and financially secure in this position.

Three summers later, I was told about a position open at another local public school. It was, at least initially, posted as a part-time position. I had no intention of actually leaving my current full-time program where I had finally achieved a level of comfort, but something made me apply to this one. I was very apprehensive about going back to APPR, scored observations, a larger working environment, and cooperating with another Latin teacher again. However, five years later, I have found my home and feel that I have a career in teaching. I work in an amazing environment where teachers and administrators are very supportive of each other and of the Latin program. When I made the move, September to December was very difficult, but things started turning around at a specific point. I want to mention this, because I need to remind us all about the importance of encouragement. On my birthday that first year, the existing Latin teacher spoke with me about how happy he was with my hire. It made all the difference in my continued performance. On a personal level that year, I vowed to make more time for a life outside of work. I began searching to purchase my first house, I spent more time with friends, and I devoted more time to choir. I even began a Bible study program that January that would lead to my marriage.

After all of this biographical information, what is it that I have finally embraced through my 10 years as an educator? First, I realize that simplicity is usually best when it comes to planning content. “Bells and whistles” are nice, but not ever necessary. I have integrated my active Latin approaches into my teaching while still using traditional methods. In other words, I am true to myself, not to an identity that educator propaganda often pushes us towards. Second, building the “cult of personality” (as my husband calls it) can make or break a class (and, ultimately, one’s job). At one of my schools, the Spanish teacher and I concluded that young students did not choose their language based on the facts of its utility, but instead based on “how nice” or “fun” or “easy” the teacher seemed to be. To that effect, maintaining extra-curricular activities are vital to the success of a program. I make every effort to attend National Junior Classical League competitions, plan Latin Club events, and encourage membership in our World Language Honor Society for program retention. Not only do these opportunities serve the students well, they make my job a lot more fun.

Now that I have found my identity as an educator, contrary to my state of mind 5 years ago, I actually *do* care whether or not I have a job in education. As a Latin teacher, my perpetual challenge is this: to keep Latin interesting and practical. Latin teachers face an existential crisis daily. We are constantly bombarded with statements like “Do they still teach that?” and polite remarks behind eyes that clearly think Latin is a waste of time. In my short 10 years of teaching, I have seen programs close out. (I have also seen German and French

programs close. I know that the plight of the Latin program is not unique!) Many administrators do not support languages at all and Latin is easily used as a cost-cutting casualty. For example, two years ago, Canisius College in Buffalo, NY, a Catholic college founded by those whose education was based in and on the Classics, dropped its Classics department. In light of this disturbing decision, how do we convince the general public of our relevance and importance? This question is all-too-often asked and discussed at professional educator conferences. In my experience, it has become a depressing refrain during every state and local Latin organization meeting as of late. As a Latin educator speaking to an audience of fellow teachers of all languages, I pose these questions: How do we support our World Language teachers in all stages of their careers? How do we work toward cooperation, not competition, in our diverse departments? How do we encourage the study of ALL world languages and cultures through our individual content areas? I hope that my humble reflections, admissions, and opinions serve as a starting point to make others reflect on their own professional positions. A kind word to a new teacher, an allowance for teachers' creativity to not be limited to the latest and greatest, and a spirit of cooperation within departments can be a great start.

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Catherine Stevens has spent the past decade teaching Latin in Western New York in both the public as well as parochial sectors. An avid believer in active language acquisition, Catherine's pedagogical insights have been hard-won and she is glad to share them with any and all who might wish to read her paper.

# Market Day: A Full-Class Simulation

Janis Labroo

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**Abstract:** This article lays out a model to organize a market day activity. Markets make an excellent cultural setting that help students develop interpersonal speaking skills for specific tasks. Creating a simulation allows students to practice the spoken language in a fun and active format. The ultimate goal is to get students to speak spontaneously in a cultural setting. The examples presented have been successfully used with levels 1 through 3 in secondary classes, but they can be modified to suit any level. The teacher and students prepare the activity together for the best outcome.

**Keywords:** culture, instruction, interpersonal mode, language development, simulation, task-based learning, communicative language teaching

## Introduction

One of the more relatable activities we can do with our students is to teach them how to enjoy the energy of shopping at an open-air market. Be it for food, clothes, holidays, or souvenirs, preparing and simulating a market day can be a rewarding opportunity for students and teachers alike. A market situation gives students an occasion to practice addressing others, asking questions, answering questions, using money, negotiating price, and understanding basic cultural norms of a specific region. It provides teachers with a simple formative assessment as students work their way around the market. It allows students to self-assess their ability to participate in a similar setting when traveling. This article attempts to give teachers a model to help them organize and implement a successful market day activity that can be adapted to accommodate their own situations.

## The Goal

When travelers set forth to discover new places, one of the most universal activities to engage in is shopping. It can be entertaining to shop for locally inspired gifts, souvenirs, and food. One of the best life-lessons we can offer our students is to ensure that they get speaking practice shopping face to face. Shopping in this fashion is a skill that holds great communicative potential. It is interactive, task-based, and meaningful. Throw in a layer of target-language culture and *voilà*, we have an interesting experience to navigate with students. While the predominant goal of this activity is for students to produce fluid and spontaneous speech, cultural behaviors such as eye contact, proper salutations, and assessing product quality are also at play. What's more, we want our students to feel as if they are in a setting that is motivating and alludes to cultural authenticity. Both communicational and cultural standards can be met as students work through this activity.

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*When travelers set forth to discover new places, one of the most universal activities to engage in is shopping.*

*Gaze into the crystal-ball: A glimpse of things to come*

Let's start by visualizing Market Day itself. This model is intended for a 42-minute class. Students are organized into groups of 3 to 4. Each group becomes a different stand. It is important that there is always at least one person running the stand, while the others are out shopping. For a 42-minute class, you will need:

- 5 minutes for setup
- 30 minutes for the simulation, divided into 5 to 7-minute shopping rounds where 2 people from each group go out to shop at a time.



- 5 minutes for cleanup

Photo 1: Students Actively Shopping



As with any successful activity, planning is key. Including all preparations and reflections, the market will take about two-weeks from start to finish.

## Pre-preparations

### *Choosing a Theme*

As you begin to brainstorm themes, think about where a shopping activity would be typically performed by a student in the target culture. How would that fit into your curriculum? Here are some suggestions:

1. Purchasing ingredients for a dish that you will be taking to a dinner while abroad.
2. Purchasing food for a picnic with friends while studying abroad.
3. Shopping for souvenirs and gifts as a tourist.
4. Buying food or decor to consume in lieu of a class party.

Each of my classes have a market activity once a year. The novice level starts by purchasing food to create a salad using local ingredients to take to a dinner. After each group presents their salad to the class, students vote on two categories: The most delicious sounding salad and the most creative one. (NYS WL Standards 2, 3 and 5: Interpersonal, Presentational and Cultural Comparisons) During the travel unit, students set up a market to purchase souvenirs and gifts. They must buy two gifts for others and two for themselves. They must also purchase

some kind of street food. Students follow up by presenting what they purchased, describing it, and saying why they bought it. (NYS WL Standards 2, 3 and 5: Interpersonal, Presentational and Cultural Comparisons)

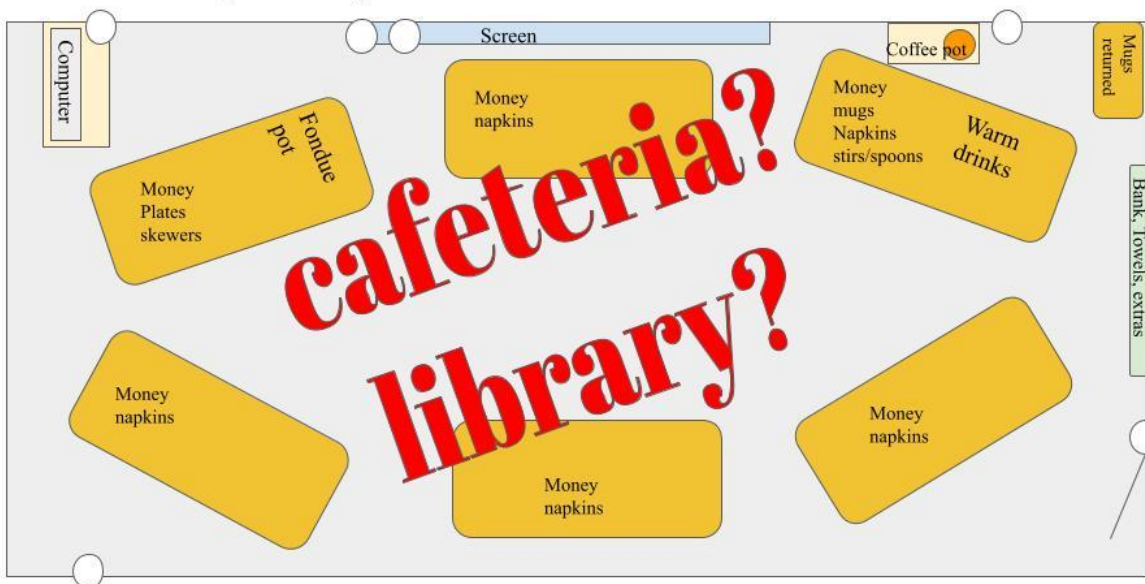
The intermediate students have a holiday market in lieu of a holiday party. It is a wonderful way to reframe a traditional party whose focus is exposing students to traditional foods. I typically have a pot of chocolate fondue, while students sell fruits, cookies or pretzels for dipping. They can also sell small items like dreidels or ornaments that are typically found at markets in the target culture. The market format forces students to mingle with everyone in the class using the target language. It has been a favorite activity of most students for many years. (NYS WL Standards 2 and 4: Interpersonal and Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives)

### *Choosing a Venue*

Once your theme has been established and your shopping goals are set, focus on where you can safely run the market. Can it take place in your classroom, or will you have to move to a larger space such as the library, the cafeteria, or a large group instruction room? Students must be able to move desks together and have a center courtyard where they can move around safely without obstacles. Wherever you will be, know the layout of the room, and the location of all working outlets. Below is a drawing of how the market is laid out in my room. It is ideal to have access to a large screen and speakers so you can play music and project a background image. If you will be using electrical appliances like a coffee pot or a fondue pot, those groups will need to be stationed by an outlet. Reserve the room, any extension cords, and a large coffee pot as soon as possible.

Photo 2: Classroom layout

Know the layout of your room and the location of outlets.



### **Preparing the students**

Two weeks prior to the event, announce the activity to your students. Divide them into groups of 3-4. Each group will create a vendor stall. Together they must research what would typically be found there and then decide what they would like to sell. Once they have agreed upon an idea, they must confirm it with the teacher to avoid everyone selling the same thing. Two stalls selling similar items is however a great way to add competitive interest. Each student is responsible for bringing in items to sell. There should be enough for each student in the class to purchase 1-1/2 items. Encourage students to sell items that transfer easily, like strawberries, cookies, or

ornaments. They can also opt to use images of art, clothing, flowers or foods, while keeping the cultural authenticity intact.

This is also an opportune moment for you to send a mass email out to parents to communicate positively about the valuable skills and insights their children are developing with this activity. Ensure parents that students have time in class to get creative about the merchandise they will be selling, and nothing needs to be purchased. With this communication, you are providing families with a little more to talk about together. Most parents will appreciate being informed of what is happening and have a chance to ask their child about the project.

Students must research exchange rates and decide on realistic prices in the target culture. Amazon.fr/mx/de/it/jp can be helpful in determining prices. Each group will also make a display sign in the target language that relates to what they are selling. Remind students that the tax may already be built into the price. Add types of acceptable payments, including cash, cards, and mobile payments. (NYS WL Standard 5: Cultural Comparisons)

The theme gives students a focus to research local products, customs, or foods that they would naturally encounter at the market. Offer students a lot of visual and linguistic input to facilitate their research. (NYS WL Standards 1, 4 and 5: Interpretive Communication, Cultural Practices and Products, Cultural Comparisons)

Photo 3: Students at their stall with their homemade sign





Warm them up with authentic images of markets asking, “What is happening here?” or “What do you see?” Continue with short videos of typical markets of your target language. A search on YouTube will bring up more videos than you can use. Have students travel virtually using videos such as [Aix en Provence jour de marché](#) to take them on an adventure in a new locale. Interpretive questions will help raise their awareness. Examples such as “What do you recognize?” “What looks good?” “What part of the market is the most interesting? And the least? Why is that?” “What was something you saw that you have never tried?” “Why do you think these markets are popular?” Sites such as Edpuzzle or Playposit may already have an interpretive task ready to use. You may want to reinforce their understanding by offering another market video from a different region, like [this one](#) in Vannes from the north of France. (NYS WL Standards 1, 2 and 5: Interpretive, Interpersonal and Cultural Comparisons)

Another valuable source for input is a travel blog. Travel blogs make excellent reading as they use high frequency vocabulary and are authentic. They transport us to our destination efficiently. Finding a good travel blogger is like hiring a tour guide who can take students to celebrated places with a fresh perspective. I love examining certain comments on the site, as some can be utilized like voices of other travelers on the same virtual tour. A nice blog about Alsatian Christmas markets can be found [here](#). For comparison, [here](#) is another one written by a different blogger. It would be interesting for students to note if any favorite activities or destinations are recommended by both bloggers. (NYS WL Standards 1 and 4: Interpretive Communication, Relating Cultural Practices and Products to Perspectives)

Once students have a vision of what a market is like in the target culture, be sure to go over cultural norms like eye contact, posture, volume of voice, language register, when to negotiate prices and so on. (NYS WL Standard 5: Cultural Comparisons)

### **Teacher preparation**

Have you reserved the venue and the coffee pot? If you will be dealing with food, you will need to have tableware, a tub and towels. Keep your teacher checklist handy, as it will be helpful. (Appendix A) Next, the teacher will need to prepare money. A copy of Euros, gift cards and debit cards can be found [here](#).

You should only have to print the money once. If you copy the various denominations on different colored paper, you can easily organize the money and have it for years to come. French teachers may want to create debit cards on blue paper as *la Carte Bleue* is visible everywhere in France. It is your decision to implement having a budget or not. If you choose to do it, you might want to have sellers write down the total sum of purchases on the back of the card. Get some envelopes to divide up the money, one envelope per stall. Each envelope should have about 500 Euros and 4 debit cards. It can be fun to include a gift card in two random envelopes. It is free money for the person who discovers it and adds interest. Cutting out the money and organizing it can be an activity for student helpers or language clubs.

Once the money is ready, create a music playlist appropriate for your location. I have had success using accordion tunes, folk music and holiday songs depending on the theme. If you have a student that plays a softer sounding instrument, perhaps you could work that in. One year I had a student play her guitar. She cleverly put out a hat to collect money, which raised the level of fun.

Finally, find a high-quality image with a scene from your desired locale. There are also YouTube videos that have people walking around areas that could fit your purpose. It will be used to create a culturally infused backdrop which you can project on a large screen. It is one more component to helping students imagine themselves in a world outside of their own.

## Practice Buying and Selling

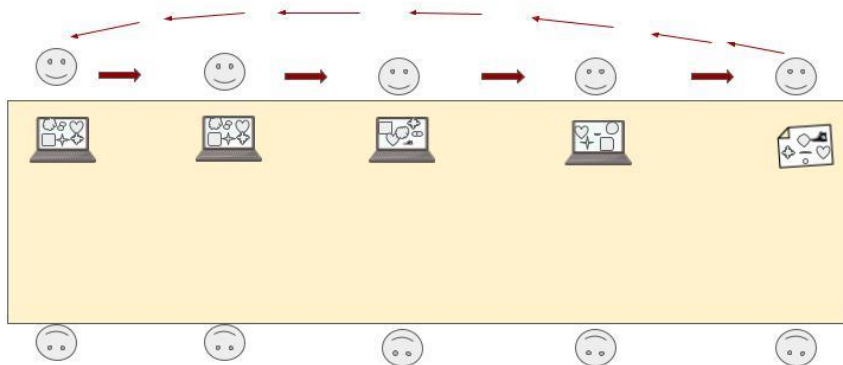
Now it is time to turn our attention to the linguistic portion. Using a [KWL chart](#), ask students to add any useful phrases that they already know for shopping. Subdivide the columns into expressions for the buyer and seller. Then ask them to add phrases they would want to know and fill in the gaps. [This](#) is an example of basic phrases. [Here](#) is a simplified holiday version.

After creating a list of possible phrases, students will create a quick virtual mini stall using an online document. Keep it simple. Its purpose is for building fluency as they practice their phrases. Students should create a document with 6 familiar items to sell. If all students have computers, this can be done quickly by copying and pasting images on an online document. If students do not have computers, they can make quick sketches of items. They should use vocabulary that all students know well. This activity will be used to practice speaking, speed dating style. (NYS WL Standard 2: Interpretive Communication)

Have students seated across from one another, with one side designated as the sellers. The side facing them will buy. The sellers will use their 6-item document as their vendor stall. Give students one minute to practice selling before the timer goes off and they move one place to the right. To keep things simple, only sellers move. Have students do the same task twice in a row. After selling twice, the sellers become the buyers for two rounds. Each role should be repeated four times. Do this every day until it becomes second nature. Buying and selling two times every day works out best, and they will see their improvement. Adopt a routine of STOP (what you're doing), DROP (everything you are doing), and SPEAK (as if you were in a market).

Photo 4: Speed Dating Diagram

Practice by using a speed dating format or inside outside circles.



After two rounds of being the seller, the other side becomes the seller and moves over one to the right.

A valuable follow-up homework is to give students a variety of typical market exchanges with gaps to fill. A student may hear or see written “Can I help you?” and would need to know how to reply. Since they will be simulating both roles, you could also give a dialogue exchange where students would have to come up with the preceding utterance. If they see or hear, “It will keep for 2-3 days.” Students would say or write “How long will

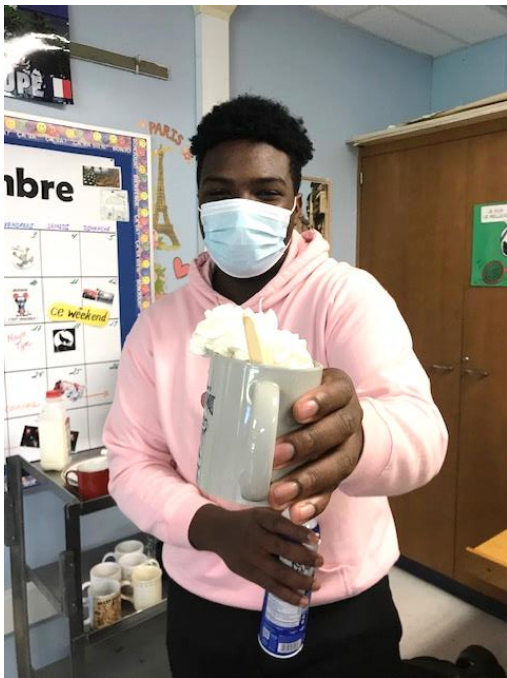
this be good?” This could be done online with most learning management systems, sites like Lingo, Extempore or on paper copies. (NYS WL Standard 2: Interpersonal Communication) [Here](#) is a written example.

### **Set them up for success**

Three days before the actual market day, show the students the room set up, how it will run, and where they will be stationed. Designate a spot to drop off food ahead of time. Any food that comes in early should be placed in the same spot where the leftovers will go once the market is over. If you are doing a market in more than one class, it is best to hold them on separate days. Assign a spot for backpacks too.

The day before the big event, have students tell you what is happening, where they will be and what to expect. Have them show you who will go out first and who will man the stall. The teacher should have the money, signs, cords, pots, and tableware ready. The coffee pot can be filled with water the night before. Use the checklist (Appendix B) to ensure a smooth day.

Photo 5: Student serving hot chocolate



### **It's Market Day!**

On the big day, students should come in ready to set up as they enter the room. If the teacher has the money, napkins and signs already distributed to each area, that will save time. Once the students have the money and items laid out and organized, they are ready to begin. Those shopping use money from the stall's bank. The music and the timer start and off they go! One or two students from each stall go out to shop while the other two work the stall. After 5 minutes, the teacher dings the bell and students switch roles. Do a total of four rounds so that each person gets to go out twice. During the last round students can slash or negotiate prices.

Students should gather their purchases separately to be able to talk about it in their reflection. Students can organize money and what they bought while they are manning the stall. They can take pictures of what they bought for their reflective piece. During the market, the teacher circulates and listens to conversations, practices with students, encourages target language use and oversees safety.



In the last five minutes, everyone cleans up. Money can be separated into trays. Leftover food can go to the designated food area. Tableware should be collected to be washed or recycled. Desks and tables should be wiped down and set back in place.

### Student Reflection

The next day, students will reflect on how the activity went and what they accomplished. It is beneficial if they help each other remember what happened and give their different perspectives on the activity. Simple reflective questions for a market can be found [here](#) and those for a holiday market are [here](#). Once they have discussed the questions, then they can write about it. This is an exercise that lends itself well to using the past tense with object pronouns. (NYS WL Standard 3: Presentational Communication)

### Conclusion

Market Day has proven to be very motivational and successful with my students. They remember it positively and talk about it with others. As human interactions are becoming more filtered and virtual, face to face shopping with vendors who know their product well is not an activity that is as familiar with the younger generation as it used to be. Students enjoy having this opportunity to play and prove to themselves that the linguistic and cultural codes they are learning have a real purpose. This exposure might well be their dress rehearsal for the real thing.

As teachers, we set the stage, so that students can put together what is useful to them. It is paramount that teachers and students plan the market together so that students understand its essence and can work to create a worthwhile replica of the real deal. It is not only a valuable assessment for teachers, but for students as well. It is a confidence builder for them to know that the “code” works. A rewarding endeavor awaits those who risk the hassle of taking time to do it, even during a pandemic.

Janis Labroo studied French and Spanish at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She spent two years as an *assistante d'anglais* in a middle school in Caen, France then returned to SIU to get her master's degree in French and English as a Second Language. Thanks to scholarship awards from NYSAFLT and AATF, Janis has enjoyed furthering her studies of French during the summer in Grenoble, Quebec City and Brest. Janis has been teaching secondary and post-secondary education for over 30 years and still loves what she is doing. She lives in Oneonta New York with her husband and tortoise. Janis is looking forward to traveling abroad again this summer.

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**Appendix A: Preparation for Market Day Checklist**

<b>Market Preparation</b>	<b>Started</b>	<b>Finished</b>
Theme		
Venue		
Working outlets		
Coffee pot, appliances, and extension cords reserved		
Cups, napkins, forks/spoons, dishrags, tub, garbage can		
Computer, screen, stopwatch/bell		
Background image		
Music Playlist		
Print & cut out paper money, debit cards, gift certificates		
Organize money in envelopes		
Verification of vendor group names & products		
Paper and markers for signs		
Videos and Blogs		
KWL Chart		
Final List of Phrases		
Mini-vendor document for practice		
Room setup: where people will be, where to drop off food, backpacks		
Reflection document		

**Appendix B: Set-Up Checklist**

<b>Market Day: Set-Up</b>	<b>Ready</b>
Coffee pot – A large pot takes an hour to heat	
Appliances	
Extension cords	
Computer, screen, background image, playlist	
Cups	
Napkins	
Plates	
Spoons/forks/knife	
Tub	
Dishrags/paper towels	
Money in envelopes	
Trays for organizing money	
Bell/stopwatch	
Camera	
Designated food area cleaned	
Signs and tape	

# Promoting Cultural Learning Through an Art-Focused Unit

Alex Bakke

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**Abstract:** The need to include culture in the foreign language classroom is more critical now than ever, and there is an ever-growing movement to do so amongst foreign language instructors. This article discusses a unit that is designed to teach culture through art. Art is a creation that holds a great amount of cultural and historical significance, and this article addresses how to expose students to these cultural artifacts and make conclusions about the target culture. A specific lesson plan is included to demonstrate how this method can be carried out in an intermediate-level Spanish course. However, this unit can be easily manipulated for any other language and level. Overall, the aim of this article is to show how we, as foreign language instructors, can instruct students on cultural beliefs and practices using artwork.

**Keywords:** Culture, Curriculum, Instruction, Language Development, Methodology, Teacher Preparation

## Introduction

At national and state levels, there is increased emphasis on meaningfully addressing culture in the foreign language classroom, as this is crucial to engaging students and helping them understand the ideals and values that shape a language, and gives way to a more accepting environment of diverse cultures. Engagement with culture in the language classroom can also lead to broadened perspectives and more acceptance of cultural diversity among students. As educators of foreign languages, we not only have the ability, but the responsibility to foster growth of cultural knowledge. Therefore, finding ways to employ authentic resources facilitates first-hand experiences with cultural meaning. This specific purpose was my motivation for designing a unit around art and literature. The unit was designed with a focus on the Spanish language at the intermediate university level. However, it can be easily adjusted for use at a different level and with other languages, for example at the secondary level and for other languages whose iconic art is a cultural symbol.

Language, culture, and identity are closely intertwined (Agar, 1995; Kramsch, 1993), and learners enter a domain of potential intercultural meaning-making and identity growth when they learn new languages (Kearney, 2004; 2016). When we think of idioms, colloquialisms, and even grammaticalization, we say “I wonder where that comes from.” Often, the answer has to do with culture. Whether it be historically significant events that have affected a language community, or the products of iconic figures who belong to that community, one of these events is usually what stimulates language change. For this reason, it is imperative that students understand culture to understand the target language more fully. The unit that I designed exemplifies this, as I chose culturally significant figures across different planes of art. I drew from paintings as well as literature, all while focusing the unit on a specific cultural community where the Spanish language is spoken (Mexico). Using works by the celebrated painter Frida Kahlo and the equally influential poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, I taught about culture and historically significant events in Mexico.

## Target language and level

The unit was designed to be used for the instruction of Spanish at the intermediate high level, applicable to B2 or C1 levels in high school, or 4th semester Spanish and its various equivalents in college. I personally used lessons from this unit for third and fourth semester Spanish courses at the university level. However, when designing the unit, other possibilities for level and language were considered. This unit could be used for lower or higher levels, and for other languages as well. For example, French instructors may wish to include pieces by Cezanne, Monet, or Renoir, German instructors could use works by Franz Marc, and a Japanese classroom could of course use “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” by Hokusai. These are just a few of the many directions that one could take this unit. Since it was designed for Spanish at the intermediate high level, the complementary grammar concepts that were selected reflect this. These could too, however, be replaced by the appropriate grammar concepts in a different language. For example, at this level it is appropriate to review concepts such as prepositions, to talk about where certain things are located in paintings, the subjunctive tense to talk about doubts or opinions on the student’s behalf and on the artists’, and the pluperfect tense to discuss uncertain events in the past. In Japanese, since there is no subjunctive tense (equivalent to that of Spanish or French), attention could be shifted to all the different directional prepositions that exist in the language. This would allow students to describe the artwork in the target language more precisely. This principle also applies to the vocabulary selected for the unit, where the same topics and/or categories could be used but with either simpler or more advanced words. For this type of unit, it is essential to focus on the following categories for vocabulary: metaphors, symbolism, imagery, literature, painting, drawing, poetic rhythm, and different artistic movements.

## Design – Themes & Goals

Before deconstructing each idea into detailed plans, the unit needs a general set of themes and goals. These will help to remind instructors what it is we are looking to achieve by teaching culture through art. It is helpful to organize the unit

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*This essential question was “How does art reflect historical moments?”*

accordingly, putting the larger questions first and slowly focusing our ideas into specific lessons. In my personal experience designing this unit, I used the ACTFL *Keys to Planning for Learning* Unit Template designed by Clementi and Terrill (2017). This template provides an excellent way of organizing ideas for a thematic unit and elaborating on them, providing spaces where educators can fill in specific goals, what they will need for these goals, how much time it will take to achieve them, and more. Starting off generally, as stated above, I thought of what I wanted my students to be able to construct in the target language by the end of the unit. For this unit, it was also crucial to consider what cultural knowledge they should have and how they could apply it. Planning these end goals ahead of time is part of mine and many other language instructor’s processes and is one of the steps involved in backwards design. I often employ backwards design, and I would recommend it to anyone who is looking for a place to start when planning a lesson or unit. This method is useful for maintaining focus on these tasks, as instructors (myself included) very frequently come up with many different ideas for activities that fit the theme of the unit, but that may not be as productive as intended. My understanding of backwards design stems largely from McTighe and Wiggins (1998), where the idea of starting with the desired results and how to focus on productive lessons is discussed. Glisan and Donato (2021) also provide useful resources for enacting backward design in planning units, as a core practice in language teaching.

After planning out the general learning goals for my students by the end of the unit, I was able to come up with an essential question that, when answered, would demonstrate if the objective for the unit had been achieved. This essential question was “How does art reflect historical moments?”. Then, I brainstormed what the most relevant goals and skills were that the students could use in combination to answer this essential question. Some examples of these goals, which I also included in the planning template, were:



- Be able to identify key artists from Hispanic speaking countries.
- Discuss the historical importance of these works.
- Identify key movements in art and literature and their historical context.
- Discuss how these have influenced the target languages cultures today.
- Relate these pieces of art and literature to ones of their own culture and explain the similarities and/or differences.

What these goals have in common is that they engage students with authentic cultural works and then prompt them to explain their significance, and then tie this significance into a modern-day context. This assists students in the realization of why these practices are still upheld. This sort of connection also provides insight as to how culture affects language. These objectives support the Cultures and Communication standards as well as the Connections standard established by ACTFL, which demonstrates the importance of the relationship between culture and language and why it should be emphasized.

### **Design – Performance Assessments**

After considering my goals for using art to teach language, I focused on the next part of the template which was how to assess using the IPA criteria. What is to be looked for in terms of interpretive skills, interpersonal skills, and presentational skills? When planning out the interpretive section of the unit, I considered what it was that I wanted students to understand about each piece of art. This comes in stages; first the piece of work itself should be understood, so questions like “What was the poem about?” “What story does the painting tell?” are asked and students are guided through different stages of interpretation, from literal to more figurative or symbolic elements that have cultural meanings. For the presentational section, I categorized what they should be able to do into “polished” and “on demand”, which was part of the unit design template. A “polished” presentation is simply one in which they have time to prepare. “On demand” is information they should be able to articulate in a non-complex sentence structure when called on. One of the “polished” presentational assessments is to have students claim a piece of iconic artwork and pretend to be the artist who created it. They must create a speech, in Spanish, explaining the piece of art through the artist's lens and tell the class what its cultural significance is.

Following the creation of these lesson ideas, which were designed to help students achieve proficiency in the IPA criteria, I created can-do statements for each of the criteria. Based on what ACTFL suggests, my goal was to make can-do statements that summarized the communicative goals for each lesson. This reinforces the idea behind the lesson, and keeps the instructor in-check, reminding them of the priorities of the unit. These can-do statements for the art unit are as follows:

**Interpretive** - I can identify the cultural implications of various pieces of art and identify their messages as they relate to people on an individual level and on a collective level.

**Presentational** - I can talk about the famous artists from countries where the target language is spoken.

**Interpersonal** - I can ask someone about the differences among the various artists, their styles, and eras they lived in.

These can-do statements are also useful to students, as they provide goals that sound achievable which can help to alleviate any anxieties or feelings of being lost and/or overwhelmed. How, though, can we put all of these into practice?

The IPA format was used to plan a lesson, which I will describe below, where students can practice each of these elements and display them in the classroom. In the lesson, as part of the interpretive task, the students observe a painting and try to decipher its cultural meaning. Then, as part of the interpersonal task, they have a conversation about questions that have to do with Mayan culture. Finally, as part of the presentational task, they share a painting from their own culture that evokes a similar array of emotions.

## **Example Lesson**

I have thus far addressed the overarching goal for this unit, its various sub-goals, who the unit is designed for, who it can be used with, and how to assess student learning. There is a specific lesson that I designed, which belongs to this unit, that I believe exemplifies all these ideas, and I believe it to be useful to demonstrate how it can be orchestrated in the classroom. As mentioned before with the unit in general, this lesson could be easily re-designed to fit the needs of a more introductory- level classroom, or of a different target-language.

The first part of the lesson is a warm-up activity, it is designed to review a grammatical concept while also having the students practice their verbal skills. The students are given prompts which specifically elicit the grammatical concept – in this case the pluperfect tense – and that also introduce the topic for the lesson. An example of one of these prompts is *¿Tú y tu compañero habían aprendido sobre la cultura maya antes de llegar a la universidad?* which translates to “Had you and your partner learned about Mayan culture before coming to college?” Here, they must answer using the pluperfect tense and they must start discussing any prior knowledge of the topic, which is Mayan culture.

The next stage of the lesson, which draws on art to teach about culture, starts off with simply showing the students a piece of artwork. This idea was sourced from an instructional video from the Annenberg Learner “Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Classroom Practices” collection, produced by WGBH Educational Foundation with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (link in references). In the video, Ms. Zingle shows her grade 10 class a piece of art, *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso. The students then must write down words, in Spanish, that they associate with this painting before moving on to other forms of analysis and sense-making. My lesson follows suit, with the students looking at Frida Kahlo’s *Viva la Vida* and writing down any words that come to mind upon seeing the painting. The students are told that these words could belong to any category; colors, food, feelings – anything that can be observed. To keep track of these words, students are given a link to a google document which has spaces designated for each student. Under their own respective names, students will enter the words that they come up with.

After reviewing the words that students brainstorm, the students will be given questions that draw their attention to what is depicted in the image. Some of these questions, asked in Spanish, include:

- What is the phrase that is written in the watermelon?
- What do you think it means?
- Why did Frida include watermelons in this painting, specifically?
- Do you think that this represents a connection to a part of Mexican culture?

After having students write down their answers, they should share their thoughts and hypotheses with the class. I tried to see if any students were close or had interesting ideas that I had previously not considered.

In the next part of the lesson, students are given information that will either confirm or deny their answers to the questions in the previous section. Since the lesson has to do with Mayan culture, I inform the students about a Mayan belief that has a connection with the Mexican holiday *Día de los Muertos*, or “Day of the Dead”, in English. This belief is that watermelons represent life on earth, in contrast with life after death. It was for this reason that Frida Kahlo wanted to paint watermelons, as a celebration of the life that humans experience on earth. It is possible she was reflecting on this idea very much, as this piece was created towards the end of her life.

Finally, the students are directed back towards the google document where they had shared the words they brainstormed. They are asked to find a painting that is equally significant in their culture and paste it into a separate table underneath their name. If they cannot find it, they are asked to simply provide the title and author of the painting. This allows students from different cultural and racial backgrounds to have a voice in the classroom, pointing out what is valued in their cultures and exposing other L2 learners in the class to works of art by representing cultures, lifeways, and perspectives they know little about. It also helps L2 learners to create their own relationship with this artwork, as they can make a connection to similar traditions and beliefs that resonate with them.

## Personal Results

I have used this lesson in my fourth semester Spanish classroom twice now, and it has yielded the results I planned for both times. Having the students answer relevant questions before beginning the analysis of art proved to be a helpful warm-up tool. After they had answered the questions in pairs, we briefly discussed them as a group, where students ended up having questions about the grammar that were quickly cleared up. During the analysis, students were very eager to share the words they had thought of upon viewing the painting. Most of the words shared were to be expected, i.e. *rojo* (“red”), *vida* (“life”), *frutas* (“fruit”), *sandía* (“watermelon”) etc. However, some students used their creativity and had thought of words such as *celebración* (“celebration”), *verano*, (“summer”) and other words that were not depicted in the painting. This provided confirmation that the painting had evoked thought and emotion within the students. When asked to share pieces of art, most students were easily able to come up with artwork that addressed a similar theme. Notably, international students were very excited to share their artworks and provided images of foreign paintings (namely Chinese) that I had not seen before, and as the instructor I was able to learn something at the end of the lesson as well.

## Closing remarks

This unit was designed to use artwork to promote cultural awareness. So often, pieces of art are symbols that denote a culture’s tradition or history and can be used to engage learners with these concepts visually. This is especially powerful in early stages of language learning, when students’ proficiency may not yet be very developed and where images can support part of the communicative process. What makes this unit so flexible is that the artworks discussed can easily be replaced by other artworks which are meaningful to other cultures and target languages. The questions can be tailored to different levels as well, and the lesson that was demonstrated in this article is an example of how to support students’ development of cultural awareness while simultaneously giving students the opportunity to connect personally and share about their own backgrounds.

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