Teaching Heritage Languages: Teacher Training and Classroom Resources

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Maria M. Carreira
NHLRC UCLA
STARTALK Spring Conference
April 29, 2017
1. NHLRC resources
2. The knowledge base for HL teachers
3. Results of a recent study
4. Targeted outcomes of HL instruction
5. The foci of HL curriculum development
6. PBL for HL learners
7. What resources do YOU need?
Funded by Title VI U.S. Department of Education (2006-10; 2010-14; 2014-18)

One of 16 NLRCs

Dedicated to heritage language research and teaching
10th HL Research Institute

• MAY 22-25, 2017
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA CHAMPAIGN

• http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc/events/institute/2017/home
The workshops address topics such as selecting appropriate materials and assessment tools for heritage learners.

The goal is to bring research findings and best practices to practitioners.

2017: Last week in June at UCLA
Research Resources

- Heritage Language Journal
- Sample questionnaires
- Bibliographies
- HL-related dissertations
- Research tools
- Demographic search tools

http://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc
Teaching Resources

- Curriculum guidelines
- Materials from all workshops
- Teaching materials for high school students of Korean, Arabic, Russian, Persian, Hindi
- Online scripts for Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian
- Curriculum samples

http://www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc
STARTALK/NHLRC Online Workshop (2010)
STARTALK/NHLRC Online HL Teaching Certificate

• **Authors:** Maria Carreira and Claire Chik

• **Purpose:** Provide instruction in specifics of HL teaching

• **Format:** Online modules combining videos, readings, comprehension checks and projects
The Modules Focus: HL teacher preparation

1. Features of languages in contact
2. Affective factors in HL teaching
3. Differences between teaching native language, HLLs, and L2Ls
4. Instructional approaches:
   - Macro/top-down approaches: from what HLLs can do to what they can’t do yet (Vygotsky’s ZPD)
   - Project-based HL teaching
   - Differentiated teaching
5. Mixed classes
Heritage Language speakers are individuals “who have been exposed to a particular language in childhood but did not learn it to full capacity because another language became dominant.”

Polinsky and Kagan 2007 (Working definition)
“Because of massive pruning of synapses and brain cell death in early brain development (e.g., Rakic, Bourgeois, Zecevic, Eckenhoff, & Goldman-Rakic, 1986), childhood language memory might not survive with little or no exposure to the language.”

“To ... maintain a heritage language, children need to speak it beyond early childhood.”
What language did you use most at the following periods in your life?
Immigrant Generations

• **1.5 generation**: came to the US to live before the age of 15;
• **2nd generation**: born in the US to at least one parent who was foreign-born;
• **3rd+ generation**: both children and their parents were US-born but had one or more foreign-born grandparents.

(Rumbaut, Massey, & Bean 2006)
HLL: A generic profile

- Second or 1.5 generation
- Sequential bilingual
- Continued (but limited) use of HL
- HL specific motivations: linguistic and cultural
- Dual identities

Carreira & Kagan (2011)
• **Environment**: Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

• **Experience**: Providing meaningful experiences that advance student learning/proficiency

• **Planning**: Planning effective learning experiences
OVERALL RESULTS AND FOUR CASE STUDIES

A 2017 RESEARCH PROJECT (Kagan & Kudyma in press)
UCLA Online Placement Exam (2013-16)

• Sections:
  – Background questionnaire (n=81; 2d gen – 41)
  – Grammar (n=94)
  – Reading (n=78)
  – Listening (n=83)
  – Speaking (n=83)
  – Writing (n=75)
• Grammar: 69%
• Reading: 66%
• Listening: 67%
# 2d Gen Students: Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Lang use</th>
<th>Speaks to</th>
<th>Studied Russian</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>every day</td>
<td>parents</td>
<td>2-3 yrs at home</td>
<td>writes in block letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>parents</td>
<td>Russian pre-school – 1 year; taught at home</td>
<td>writes in block letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>parents</td>
<td>1 year (where?)</td>
<td>cannot write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>every day</td>
<td>parents</td>
<td>12 years: pre-school, at home, tutor</td>
<td>writes in cursive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Test Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grammar %</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>IM/IH</td>
<td>IL/IM</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>93.83</td>
<td>IM/IH</td>
<td>IL/IM</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>IL/IM</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>AH</td>
<td>IM/IH</td>
<td>100</td>
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Speaking and Writing
IL-IH

• Lack of vocabulary
• Not knowing pragmatics
• Strings of sentences
• Some grammar mistakes that do not hinder communication
That correlates with linguistic research:

- **Vocabulary** appears to be the best indicator of HLLs’ overall proficiency
- **Pragmatics**: formality/informality is of paramount importance
- **Grammar** in HL is …selective and localized.

Sources: Polinsky, Dubinina, Montrul
## Test Results

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A surprise funding
LISTENING: n=83

95-100% (n=20)
80-85% (n=19)
65 % and below (n=44)

2d-generation mean score: 67%.
Listening

• The listening text: factual description of a museum collection; text level: Advanced; level of questions: Intermediate (What? When? Where?)
Self-Assessment (n=81) (blue – listening; native-like – last column)
1. The results on **listening** do not agree with the students’ self-assessment or our perceptions

2. To assess HL learners and form the basis of curriculum, we need an **integrated linguistic profile** (all skills)

3. The same integrated approach applies to learning
PROFICIENCY OUTCOMES

TARGETING PROFICIENCY OUTCOMES IN AN HL CURRICULUM DESIGN
Russian and Spanish HL speakers failed at carrying out tasks beyond Intermediate or Advanced levels due to
1) lexical deficiencies
2) lack of discourse organization strategies

Martin et al. (2013) and Swender et al. (2014)
When attempting an abstract perspective

- 57% were unable to produce well-organized extended discourse
- 42% lacked precise vocabulary

Data on Russian speakers
(Martin et al. 2013, p. 220)
When attempting a supported opinion

• 71% lacked precise vocabulary
• 71% were unable to produce well-organized extended discourse

Data on Russian speakers
(Martin et al. 2013, p.220)
TELL: Environment, Learning experience, Planning

• **Experience:** Provide meaningful experiences that *advance* student proficiency:

  - Vocabulary development
  - HL specific discourse organization

• **Planning:** Plan *effectively to meet these goals*
HL Curriculum: targeting ALL FOUR Skills and focusing on

- Vocabulary expansion
- Pragmatic competence
- Certain grammatical points
- Cultural enrichment (based on motivation)
• **Environment**: Create a safe and supportive learning environment

• Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) [gradual release of responsibility]
“WHAT A CHILD CAN DO IN COOPERATION TODAY, HE CAN DO ALONE TOMORROW”

- Anxiety Zone: Can't do now
- Learning Zone: Can do with help
- Comfort Zone: Can do now
Project-based Learning

Maria Carreira
What is Project-Based Learning (PBL)?

• more than using projects in the curriculum as a culminating activity
A learner-centered teaching approach in which students work over a period of time on a task which involves engaging with complex issues, solving problems, or meeting particular real life challenges. To communicate their learning, students develop a product (e.g. timelines, blogs, brochures, reports, public-service announcements, etc.).
Advantages for HL teaching?

• Lends itself to addressing HL learners’ linguistic and socio-affective needs in an integrated fashion;

• Is consonant with the From-to principles and Macro-based (top-down) teaching;

• Facilitates differentiation and learner-centered teaching in HL- and mixed classes.
STANDARDS: ACTFL, TELL PRINCIPLES, STARTALK ENDORSED PRINCIPLES
GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND ELEMENTS OF PBL
PBL should:
(Stoller, 2006, p. 24)

• Have a process and product orientation;

• Be defined, at least in part, by the students, to encourage student ownership in the projects;

• Extend over a period of time (rather than a single class session);

• Have a natural integration of skills;

• Make a dual commitment to language and content learning.
• Oblige students to work in groups and their own;

• Require students to take some responsibility for their own learning through the gathering, processing, and reporting of information from the target language sources;

• Require teachers and students to assume new roles and responsibilities;

• Result in a tangible final product;

• Conclude with students’ reflections on both the process and the product.
Source: The Buck Institute For Education
Key knowledge, understanding, and success skills

The project is focused on teaching students key knowledge and understanding derived from standards, and success skills including critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
Source: The Buck Institute For Education
The project is based on a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge for students, which is operationalized by an open-ended, engaging driving question.
Sustained inquiry

The project involves an active, in-depth process over time, in which students generate questions, find and use resources, ask further questions, and develop their own answers.
Authenticity

The project has a real-world context, uses real-world processes, tools, and quality standards, makes a real impact, and/or is connected to students’ own concerns, interests, and identities.
Student voice and choice

The project allows students to make some **choices** about the **products** they create, **how** they **work**, and **how** they use their **time**, guided by the teacher and depending on their age and PBL experience.
Reflection

The project provides opportunities for students to reflect on what and how they are learning, and on the project’s design and implementation.
Critique and revision

The project includes processes for students to give and receive feedback on their work, in order to revise their ideas and products or conduct further inquiry.
The project requires students to demonstrate what they learn by creating a **product** that is presented or offered to **people beyond the classroom**.
PBL is consonant with the STARTALK Endorsed Principles

• Grammar is not the focus of the course, unit, or lesson. The teacher teaches grammar as a tool for communication, avoiding meaningless rote drills and ensuring that all practice requires attention to meaning;

• The teacher engages learners in cognitively challenging real-world tasks.

• The teacher uses authentic materials and designs tasks appropriate to the language proficiency and age level of the learners.
STARTALK-Endorsed Principles (cont.)

• Learning experiences are designed to allow students to use language as they work with the content and cultural topics of the unit.

• Learners engage in summative real-world performance tasks to demonstrate how well they have met the performance goals of the unit.

• The teacher makes instructional decisions based on learner’s performance and allows for ongoing feedback from a variety of sources to improve learner’s performance.
• Content-related instruction allows learners to make meaningful connections to the world around them. Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines and the world while using the target language.
MORE ON AUTHENTICITY AND MEANING
Why is authenticity important?

The most commonly reported positive outcome of project work is linked to the authenticity of students’ experiences and the language they are exposed to and use (Stoller, 2006, p. 24).
• It’s just a story to just learn Spanish, it’s not real (p. 197).

• (This) might serve as an explanation of why students did not engage in the discussion. Because students’ exposure to and use of Spanish had been highly contextualized and communicative, designing curricula that emulate naturalistic, authentic contexts should have been a goal of this class (p. 197).
• What do we mean by authenticity?

• Tips for creating authentic, motivating, and accessible projects.

• Connection to the Standards:
  – The ACTFL Standards;
  – The TELL principles.
FOUR WAYS A PROJECT CAN BE AUTHENTIC
A project is authentic if...

1. It meets a **real need in the world** beyond the classroom or the products students create are used by real people.

e.g. A website of favorite movies, books, songs, etc.
Projects that involve information collecting, processing, evaluating, and reporting are both authentic and accessible for lower-proficiency learners.

- Summaries/Compacting information
- Linguistic landscape
- Curated collections
The ACTFL Standards
Communication

Communicate in languages other than English

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
TELL: Environment, Learning Experience, Planning

- **Environment:** Creating a safe and supportive learning environment
- **Experience:** Providing meaningful experiences that advance student learning/proficiency
- **Planning:** Planning effective learning experiences
A project is authentic if...

2. It focuses on a problem or an issue or topic that is relevant to students’ lives or on a problem or issue that is actually being faced by adults in the world students will soon enter.

e.g. Students prepare a presentation on how increase rates of participation in STEM of minorities and women.
Tip

Projects can connect to students’ experiences, interests, and goals vis-à-vis the target language.

• Surveys
• Interviews
• Oral histories
• Studies of the HL community using Census data and other sources (linguistic landscape)
• Working with ethnic literature
Main reasons why HLLs study their HL

Carreira & Kagan, 2011

1. Finding identity;

2. Communicating with family and friends in the U.S.;

3. Communicating with speakers of the HL outside the U.S.;

4. Pursuing professional goals.

See also: Feuerverger (1991), Schwarzer & Petrón (2005), Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relaño-Pastor (2009)
The ACTFL Standards
Students participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming lifelong learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.
A project is authentic if...

3. It sets up a scenario or simulation that is realistic, even if it is fictitious.

   e.g. Students are asked by the Archbishop of Mexico in 1819 to recommend a location for the next mission in California.
Tip

• Projects can connect to other areas of the curriculum to reinforce content-area knowledge and build academic skills, as they teach the HL.

• Examples:
  – Replicating and expanding on a project from another class, in the HL;
  – Collecting and reporting on HL texts that connect thematically to those from another subject area.
The ACTFL Standards

NHRC
National Heritage Language Resource Center
Connections

Students connect with other disciplines and acquire information.

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.
Cultures

Students gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and experiences of the culture(s) studied.
A project is authentic if...

4. It involves tools, tasks, standards, or processes used by adults in real settings and by professionals in the workplace.

e.g. Students explore different careers and the job market.
Projects can help learners reflect on their professional goals and build professional skills in the HL.
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Connections: Students connect with other disciplines and acquire information.

Communities: Students participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.
OVERALL: PBL FACILITATES
HL Curriculum: targeting ALL FOUR Skills and focusing on

Vocabulary expansion

+ Certain grammatical points

+ Pragmatic competence

+ Cultural enrichment (based on motivation)
Learner-centered instruction

PBL supports learner-centered instruction by:

• Giving students a voice;

• Emphasizing the development of academic skills which can help students become independent learners;

• Providing opportunities for scaffolding and formative assessment, thereby making it possible for learners at different levels of readiness to get to the same endpoint.
Learner-centered instruction

• Supporting HL and L2 learners in mixed classes
DISCUSSION: Resources

WHAT RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR HL TEACHING WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE?


References


*Heritage Language Journal*, 10-2, 2013


Thank you

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