CAPRII:
Key Concepts to Support Standards-Based and Content-Based Second Language Instruction

Note: This text was adapted by D. Tedick in 2003 and excerpted from "Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction and Assessment: Standards, Philosophies, and Considerations for Assessment," an introductory section of the *Proficiency-Oriented Language Instruction and Assessment (POLIA) Curriculum Handbook for Teachers* (Tedick, 1998) with permission from the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota.

New Standards for Language Education

"The essence of second language education is embodied in its attempt to join individuals together so that they might communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (Tedick et al., 1993, p. 44). Never before has the need for such communication been greater. For students in the U.S., the need to function competently in more than one language has become increasingly important in this rapidly shrinking, interdependent world of the 21st century. It has become crucial to prepare students with second language competence—being able to talk about language, to describe its grammar, and to conjugate verbs will simply not suffice. In this new century, students must be able to communicate orally and in writing and to comprehend both oral and written language. They must be able to participate in culturally appropriate ways in face-to-face interaction with members of other cultures, and they must also be able to interpret the concepts, ideas, and opinions expressed by members of these cultures through their media and literatures (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 35).

It is indeed an exciting time to be involved in language education. The national standards for Foreign Language Learning, unveiled in early 1996, describe a challenging yet stimulating vision for language education in the 21st century, a vision that recognizes the need for language instruction to facilitate genuine interaction between and among individuals who represent different cultural and linguistic communities (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). Most states have created state standards for world languages that parallel or incorporate the national standards. The message across the nation is clear. It calls for language education to focus on what students should know and be able to do; the emphasis is on language use and culture is seen as central to acquiring language for real communicative purposes. The national standards represent broad, long-term goals for language instruction. They are intended to be interpreted broadly and we have done so in the context of the lessons and units found at the CoBaLTT Web Resource Center.

Despite emphasis through the 1980's and 90's on proficiency-oriented language instruction for foreign language classrooms and, in the late 90's the national standards, grammar has maintained its role as the key organizing principle of traditional foreign language instruction in the vast majority of language classrooms. In most language classrooms, language is viewed as "object"—something that is acted upon, an entity to be scrutinized, analyzed, and broken down into its smallest components (Tedick et al., 1993; Tedick & Walker, 1994). This view has emerged in part due to the historical influence that the field of linguistics has had in the field of

language education and also in part because of the long road language teachers have had to travel in order to legitimize their place in the arena of U.S. schools. The "content" of language curriculum has been defined as the lexicon, syntax, morphology, and phonology of language, or as the notions and functions. In order to emphasize the communicative nature of language and to acknowledge that language has meaning when it is embedded within a social context, it is necessary to view language as "subject" (something that acts) (Tedick et al., 1993; Tedick & Walker, 1994) and to strive for a balance between language-as-object and language-as-subject in curriculum and instruction. Balancing the two perspectives means that students are engaged in learning about language—its vocabulary, its grammar and morphology, its phonology (that is, engaging with language as *object*), yet always within the context of using language to communicate meaning (that is, engaging with language as *subject*). In other words, it's important for a teacher to teach language rules (e.g., verb conjugations), but it's also important always to follow that instruction with application of the rules. How well can students use conjugate verbs correctly to write a letter? In a nutshell, not only do students need to know how language works, they also need to know how to use language for meaningful purposes and the opportunities to practice these applications.

In order to strive for a balance between language-as-object and language-as-subject and to emphasize language use with culture as core in the language classroom, a rethinking of curriculum and instruction needs to occur. Traditionally, most foreign language classrooms have concentrated on *how* (grammar) to say *what* (vocabulary), but have left the *why*, *whom*, *where*, and *when* out of the equation (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 1996; Tedick & Walker, 1994). While grammar and vocabulary remain important components, the others, which highlight the sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of language, are essential for communication. "In other words, grammar and structure are not the goal of instruction, but rather essential tools toward achieving other, more important goals—language use in social contexts and intercultural communication" (Tedick & Walker, 1994, p. 306). One way to achieve these more important goals is to make content and cultural themes the organizing principle for language curriculum and instruction. This rethinking of the curriculum, toward content-based, task-based language instruction and an emphasis on meaningful language use is the focus of the CoBaLTT Program.

The focus on meaning and language use does not argue that teachers should be neglecting form. On the contrary, what's necessary is a balance between meaning and form in the context of communication. In a way, this language instruction issue is similar to an issue that has dominated the field of literacy instruction for some time. For decades there has been a debate about literacy instruction that has centered on whole language vs. phonics instruction. The question has too often been: Should teachers focus on the whole or the parts? The answer is "neither," because the question is wrong—it is simply not an "either/or" issue. Good teachers know that effective literacy instruction provides a balance between the whole and the parts. Children who are learning how to read need to be surrounded by a rich literacy environment that involves frequent interaction with stimulating texts; at the same time, they need to know how language "works." In other words, they need to understand the language system—how the parts work together to make up the whole. The more contextualized the instruction of the parts, the better students understand their relationship to the whole. A complete treatment of the whole language vs. phonics debate is far beyond the scope of this introduction. We include the analogy

here to help language teachers understand that *in order for students to achieve high levels of proficiency in a language, there needs to be a balance between language and language use.* In order to understand further how to strive toward such a balance in the language classroom, it is important for teachers to consider some key concepts that should underlie the instructional strategies in content-based language instruction.

CAPRII

Six key concepts that we believe should guide language instruction: (1) *Contextualization* of grammar in language instruction, (2) *Authenticity* of task and text, (3) an emphasis on *Process*, (4) the value of *Reflection* for both language learners and language teachers, (5) an emphasis on *Interaction* within and beyond the classroom, and (6) *Integration* of the four modalities and of language and content, be it related to other academic disciplines or cultural themes. While these six concepts—referred to by the acronym CAPRII—are and indeed should be understood as interrelated and inseparable in effective language teaching, they can each be considered in turn (Tedick, 1996; Tedick & Tischer, 1996). Figure 1 provides a brief summary of the concepts that make up CAPRII.

Contextualization

According to Shrum and Glisan (1994):

> Language that is introduced and taught in context presents real situations that encompass the physical setting, the purpose of the exchange, the roles of the participants, and the socially acceptable norms of interaction, in addition to the medium, topic, tone, and register of the exchange (Hymes, 1974). Grammatical structures that might otherwise be devoid of context become an integral part of the communicative acts that occur in contexts (p. 23).

Contextualized teaching recognizes that meaning changes depending upon the context in which it occurs. When we begin to think about teaching language for communication rather than as a system of grammatical forms, we see that grammatical categories do not necessarily correspond to communicative functions and that grammar alone cannot determine meaning. In other words, context (the topic and situation) plays a major role in establishing meaning. For example, one might assume that the imperative mood as a grammatical category always indicates the act of commanding. Widdowson (1978, in Lyster, 1990, p. 162) provides examples illustrating how context, not grammatical function, determines meaning:

> "Bake the pie in a slow oven" is an instruction, not a command.

> "Come for dinner tomorrow" is an invitation, not a command.

> "Forgive us our trespasses" is a prayer, not a command.

Figure 1: CAPRII

Contextualization of grammar involves teaching grammar in context , that is embedded in *meaningful* language use for *real* communicative purposes; grammar that is presented in context enhances meaning; contextualized teaching recognizes that meaning changes depending upon the context in which it occurs.

Authenticity of Text and Task—authentic texts and tasks reflect the intention of a real communicative purpose for a real audience.

Process—language acquisition (be it first, second, or third...) is an ongoing process that requires a great deal of time, patience, thought, effort, and encouragement. Recognition of the nature of this process needs to guide instruction and assessment.

Reflection—both teachers and students need time for deliberate thought, or reflection.

Interaction—learners must use language in meaningful interaction in order to learn it.

Integration—an integrative approach to language teaching sees the connection of languages and cultures to what we do, how we think, and who we are.

> of the four modalities—creating classroom activities that require students to use language within two or more of the four modalities, with attention to how those modalities work within the framework of communicative modes, helps to reinforce the concepts being emphasized.

> of language and content—language must be integrated with content, be it other academic subject matters or cultural themes. A content-based approach to language teaching emphasizes language use; language structures are emphasized in the context of that use. Language classrooms must become places where students and teachers understand themselves as cultural beings and begin to discover the complexity of the concept of culture as they view cultures both within and outside of the U.S. from a number of perspectives.

Context refers to the topic and situation of a communicative act that are necessary for understanding (Walz, 1989). Walz (1989) points out that a number of language textbooks provide contextualized grammar exercises. These exercises provide thematically related sentences requiring mechanical manipulation of a grammatical form, but often do not force students to understand. Therefore, contextualization of mechanical drills in this sense is

certainly not the same thing as creating a context (Walz, 1989, p. 162). Contextualization of grammar as it is interpreted in the CoBaLTT Program involves teaching grammar with an eye toward meaningful language use for real communicative purposes and helps students to understand how meaning is constructed by language users (be they writing, speaking, reading, or listening) depending upon context.

CoBaLTT lessons/units contextualize grammar instruction in that they provide a topic and situation in which students need to use language with one another for some meaningful purpose. For example, in the lesson entitled "Senegal by Numbers," students learn about Senegalese demographics through an information-gap activity. The task gives students an opportunity to practice understanding and communicating complex numbers in the context of Senegalese demographics. In other words, the topic (Senegalese demographics) contextualizes the use of numbers.

Authenticity of Text and Task

Related to the concept of contextualization is the notion of authenticity. Authentic texts or materials have been defined by Villegas Rogers and Medley (1988) as "...language samples—both oral and written—that reflect a naturalness of form, and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by native speakers" (p. 468). Texts that are prepared *for* native speakers *by* native speakers reflect the culture and societal values of everyday life. "No textbook culture note on the Hispanic family, for example, can replace the study of authentic birth or christening, wedding and death announcements, where, under the observable linguistic conventions, lie the rituals of events, the connotations of rites of passage, the meaning of 'family,' and the dynamic nature of culture" (Galloway & Labarca, 1990, p. 139).

For our purposes, any text that is *purposeful*, *meaningful*, and has a real *communicative intent* for a real audience can be considered to be authentic. In other words, it is authentic in the sense that it was not originally produced for language-teaching purposes but rather for the purpose of communicating meaning (Brinton et al., 1989, p. 17). This means that an e-mail message sent via the Internet by a student of German to another student of German is "authentic" as long as the message is meaningful (even though the message was not written by a native speaker for another native speaker). Furthermore, authenticity in a deeper sense does not reside in the text itself but rather is determined by how that text is used (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), i.e., the authenticity of the task. For example, if a teacher uses an article from a target culture magazine for the sole purpose of having the students underline all of the instances in which the subjunctive appears, the authenticity of the task disappears.

Let's examine a task and consider ways in which it can be slightly altered to become more authentic.[1] Imagine that students are engaged in a unit on Costa Rica (or any other target country). As a culminating activity at the end of the unit, the teacher decides to have students create travel brochures in the target language to demonstrate their knowledge of what they have learned. Such a task asks that the students pretend to act as native speakers, which they clearly are not. Kramsch (1993) would argue that authenticity involves having students be who they are—learners of the target language. To revise the task somewhat with an eye toward greater

authenticity, the teacher can have students create travel itineraries for a group of students who will be traveling to Costa Rica, the intent being to demonstrate their knowledge of what they have learned by communicating it to other students.

Another example would involve having students at the beginning of the unit write letters in the target language to various travel agencies, tourist bureaus, and "Chamber of Commerce" equivalents to indicate that they (1) are students of Spanish, (2) are studying about Costa Rica, and (3) are interested in receiving travel information in Spanish. Such a task has a real purpose and a real audience. The added benefit is that it will also lead to additional authentic materials for classroom use!

A final example of an authentic task for this instructional setting is to have students write to Costa Rican students about Minnesota (i.e., their home state), given what they have learned about Costa Rica. A letter written for this task might include, for example, a comparison between Minnesota's Boundary Waters and Costa Rica's Tortuguero National Park in terms of their environmental restrictions.

These suggestions highlight the importance of creating tasks that involve students in using language for real communicative purposes and for real audiences. For example, a teacher might have high school students write children's stories that are then shared with an elementary language program in the same district. It is important to note, however, that it is not possible to make every task or text authentic in the language classroom. Sometimes students need to pretend to be native speakers for a role play; sometimes they need to write for a hypothetical audience; sometimes they need to read a text that has been adapted for nonnative speakers of the language. Such activities are valuable and certainly have a place in the language curriculum. What is important (and possible!), however, is for teachers to find a good balance in their curriculum between tasks and texts that are less authentic and those that represent the principles of authenticity as described above. Teachers should also make sure that some of the texts they use in the curriculum contain language as used by native speakers so as to incorporate cultural and linguistic authenticity. A number of authentic texts (i.e., written by native speakers for native speakers of the target language) are used in CoBaLTT lessons/units found at the Web Resource Center.

Process

Language acquisition (be it first, second, or third...) is an ongoing process that requires a great deal of time, patience, thought, effort, and encouragement. A teacher who recognizes the importance of process in language learning understands, for example, that although a student is introduced to a grammatical structure (or function or topic) early on, s/he will need time to internalize that concept before being able to produce language in spontaneous interaction that shows an accurate representation of that concept. For example, students of French, German, and Spanish are taught the concept of gender and number agreement relatively early on in language classrooms. While the students may be able to produce language with accurate agreement on quizzes and tests, they often cannot when asked to produce language spontaneously for a meaningful communicative purpose. They need time to be able to see, hear, produce, and

experience number and gender agreement in many meaningful contexts for a variety of purposes before they develop a "feel" for the concept—before it becomes part of their internalized language repertoire. This process takes years.

Heilenman and Kaplan (1985) provide a useful distinction among various degrees of control of function, topic (or context), and form as students develop proficiency. They argue that at different levels of proficiency, certain grammatical structures, functions, and topics or contexts need to be taught for *full control*, others for *partial control*, and still others for *conceptual control* (authors' emphasis, p. 63). Concepts that are taught for partial or conceptual control at one level of proficiency are recycled at subsequent levels where full or partial control is the goal (Heilenman & Kaplan, 1985). These degrees of control in Heilenman and Kaplan's framework correlate with levels of proficiency as defined by the ACTFL guidelines (ACTFL, 1986). In other words, if students' proficiency is in the Novice range, they should be expected to demonstrate full control of certain functions (e.g., making lists), topics (e.g., dates, numbers, etc.), and accurate production of certain forms (e.g., question words). They can be expected to have partial control of various concepts that correspond to the Intermediate-Low/Mid range and conceptual control of concepts that are representative of the Intermediate-High and Advanced range. The point here is that acquisition of the functions, topics, and forms of language is a time-consuming process that requires teachers to recycle those functions, topics, and forms systematically and purposefully throughout their curriculum so that students can achieve higher degrees of control as they advance as language learners.

Process is also related to classroom instruction. In this sense, process involves several instructional phases—e.g., preparing students for an activity, carrying out the activity, and providing a follow-up that requires students to apply what they learned. CoBaLTT lessons and units break lessons down into pre-, during-, and post-activity stages to emphasize the need for an awareness of process in the classroom.

An awareness of process in language learning can also be reflected in assessment practices. Too often assessment practices focus on the product—that is, whatever the students produce, be it a paper, an oral presentation, a videotape, etc. But it is equally important to assess students' work in the process of working toward the final product. For example, if students are asked to work in small groups to co-create a project (e.g., a skit), the teacher may want to assess the students' ability to collaborate and work cooperatively. Such an assessment gets at process. If a writing assignment requires drafts, feedback, and revision, the teacher may decide to assess how well students attend to feedback in their revisions. This assessment, too, gets at process. The teacher who recognizes the importance of process creates a classroom environment where process is reflected in instruction as well as assessment, where risk-taking is encouraged, and where meaningful communication is emphasized over accuracy for the *sake of accuracy*.

Reflection

Closely related to the concept of process is reflection. Reflection involves *deliberate* thought. In essence, it engages an individual in a "conversation" with a situation, be it problematic, confusing, or illuminating. Our views of ourselves and our cultures and of the

views of others and their cultures are never uniform or static. As Claire Kramsch (1991) explains, "…a large part of what we call culture is a social construct, the product of self and other[s'] perceptions." Indeed, language use, or communication, is embedded always within culture, and therefore is largely dependent upon peoples' *perceptions* of meaning, which may or may not match the intended meaning. It is this very social, dynamic nature of language and culture that makes second languages different from and more special than other academic disciplines, and, hence, makes reflection so important for both students and teachers.

Students' reflection should be both culturally and linguistically based, as well as focused on self-as-learner, self-as-human-being, and self-in-relationship-with-other. Students will not be able to engage in profound reflection on any of these topics overnight; reflection represents yet another process related to language learning which needs to occur gradually and carefully in an atmosphere where the students can ask questions freely and where risk-taking is encouraged (Tedick, 1992). Some activities that represent attention to student reflection include learning strategies, self-assessment, peer review, and "debriefing" exercises. Many of the lessons and units in the CoBaLTT Resource Center involve activities that encourage student reflection. Teachers must also be engaged in reflection as they plan for and carry out instructional activities. Most teachers do this naturally, asking themselves how a lesson could have been improved, for example.

Interaction

Learners must use language in meaningful interaction in order to learn it. In order to acquire language, learners cannot simply listen to or read "input;" they must interact with and negotiate the type of input they receive (Long, 1981). The term "interaction" implies face-to-face communication that involves negotiation of meaning, but it also means active involvement with all types of language use. Of great value in this discussion is the "Framework of Communicative Modes" used in the national standards document (Brecht & Walton, 1994, in Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 1996). In this framework, there are three communicative modes—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. The *interpersonal mode* involves active negotiation of meaning between individuals who are in personal contact, for example, direct oral communication that is face-to-face or via telephone. It may also involve direct written communication, such as the exchange of personal letters, notes, or e-mail messages. Therefore, this mode includes all four language modalities—speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The *interpretive mode*, which focuses on receptive abilities (listening, reading, viewing), involves the comprehension or interpretation of oral or written messages. Examples include reading a text, listening to the radio, or watching a movie. At times these receptive abilities are mistaken as passive rather than active activities. Yet research has shown that readers and listeners must function as active participants in the act of comprehending. They must *co-construct meaning* as they work to interpret the input provided. This act of co-construction implies interaction between text and reader/listener/viewer even though the opportunity for negotiation of meaning may not be present. The *presentational mode*, involving the productive skills of writing and speaking, refers to the creation of spoken or written communication for an audience with whom there is no immediate personal contact. Extended oral presentations and written essays are examples of language use in this mode. As writers or

speakers work to construct meaning, they must consider their purpose and imagine interaction with an audience. That is, they must rely on understanding of the purpose for the communication and knowledge of audience as they choose the words and put together phrases to communicate meaning. These three communicative modes correspond to the three national communication standards. Interaction, then, as it's interpreted in CAPRII, involves language use within these three communicative modes.

A teacher who understands the importance of interaction organizes the language classroom to minimize teacher talk and maximize student discourse. This involves organizing classroom activities so that students will have reasons to respond to and interact with one another as well as others outside of the classroom. At the same time, it is not enough to have students interact without feedback or attention to form. In other words, quality of interaction is key. Teachers must create a balance between meaning (function and content) and accuracy. To achieve this balance, it is important to incorporate different kinds of interactive activities for different purposes. At times, spontaneous interaction should occur, where the focus is entirely on communicating meaning, regardless of the accuracy. Other times, students should be expected not only to communicate meaning, but also to do so accurately. Such instances will be characterized by tasks that are reflective of the presentational mode of communication. They involve time for planning and, when appropriate, rehearsal. Most importantly, accuracy must always be addressed in a meaningful context. Drawing students' attention to accurate forms and providing them with constructive feedback that encourages them to reflect on the linguistic accuracy of their output is critical, yet needs to occur in ways that encourage language production, not inhibit it. Lyster's (1998) recent work on types of corrective feedback in advanced immersion classrooms has shown that when teachers provide feedback that requires students to think about and respond to the feedback in some way, the students are more likely to repair their errors and improve their linguistic accuracy.

It's important to remember that the higher the level of proficiency, the greater one's expectations for linguistic accuracy should be. Heilenman and Kaplan (1985) emphasize that proficiency-oriented curriculum and instruction must strive for a balance among function, context (or topic/content), and accuracy, "while at the same time allowing for the imbalance frequently seen at the Novice or Intermediate levels where one component may compensate for another" (p. 60). Virtually all of the CoBaLTT lessons and units encourage interaction in one or more communicative modes, because content-based language instruction is about language *use*.

Integration

The final CAPRII concept refers to the integration of a variety of factors. It represents the integration of content and language, including both language and culture and also language with other disciplines. It also refers to the integration of the four modalities (reading, listening, writing, speaking).

Integration of the four modalities is important. Creating classroom activities that require students to use language within two or more of the four modalities helps to reinforce the concepts being emphasized. This approach also lends itself well to a variety of learning styles.

For example, writing helps some students improve their listening skills. It has also been shown that reading helps students develop competence in writing. Practice in one modality often results in improved competence in other modalities. In addition, by integrating all modalities in curriculum and instruction, the teacher considers how students can be using language for a variety of purposes. Many of the lessons and all of the units in the CoBaLTT Web Resource Center integrate the four modalities. Some tasks emphasize one modality over the others, but include ideas for extending the tasks to incorporate additional modalities. With the increased focus on the national standards, it is also important for teachers to begin to understand how the four modalities work together in the framework of the communicative modes discussed in the previous section.

Integrating content and language suggests following a content-based approach to language teaching wherein the linguistic elements that make up language (i.e., grammatical structures, vocabulary, etc.) emerge naturally from the content and are understood within the context of that content. A content-based approach to language teaching emphasizes language use and lends itself well to interdisciplinary curriculum design. In content-based instruction, the purpose is to teach or reinforce content via the target language. Content, not language, is the organizing principle for the task or unit. Language is the vehicle that allows access to the content areas and related tasks. Content may be related to other academic disciplines in the curriculum (science, anthropology) or may be related to cultural themes. Content-based instruction forms the foundation of the CoBaLTT Program.

Languages need to be integrated with other disciplines in the school curriculum. In fact, the importance of connecting language and other disciplines is highlighted in the national standards (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, see standard 3.1). It is time for languages to be understood as *central* to a well-defined school curriculum rather than peripheral. "Learning today is no longer restricted to a specific discipline; it has become interdisciplinary" (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 50). To approach language teaching from a content-based or thematic perspective allows one to see how a variety of subject matter areas can be meaningfully and purposefully integrated.

An integration of language and content also occurs when the content is based on cultural themes. Integrating language and culture is key in effective language teaching and learning. If language is seen as social practice, then culture must become the core of language teaching (Kramsch, 1993). As we are becoming a smaller, more interdependent global community than ever before, culture must take center stage in the language classroom. It can no longer be limited to a single perspective on surface elements and cultural "facts" found in most textbooks. Instead, language classrooms must become places where students and teachers understand themselves as cultural beings and begin to discover the complexity of the concept of culture as they view cultures both within and outside of the U.S. from a number of different perspectives (Kramsch, 1993; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996; Tedick et al., 1993).

The integration of language and content (be it related to academic subject matters or cultural themes) will likely receive much more attention in the field of language education in years to come, particularly with the focus in the national standards on cultural understanding and the call to connect languages with other academic disciplines. Integrating language and content

expects that teachers attend to both content curriculum and language curriculum and find ways to balance the two in instruction.

Conclusion

In summary, CAPRII describes a number of important pedagogical principles that language teachers should implement in their teaching practices. These principles are reflected throughout CoBaLTT lessons and units, though it is important to remember that not all tasks incorporate all of the principles simultaneously. It is hoped that the CoBaLTT lessons and units will help teachers to consider how the principles of CAPRII can enhance their own teaching and, ultimately, student learning.

Notes

1   These examples of adapting a task to make it more authentic appear in Tedick and Klee (1998) and are reprinted here with permission from the Center for Applied Linguistics.

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