

# AAUSC 2017 Volume—Issues in Language Program Direction

## Engaging the World: Social Pedagogies and Language Learning

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**AAUSC 2017 Volume - Issues in  
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Social Pedagogies and Entwin-  
ing Language with the World  
Sébastien Dubreil, Steven L.  
Thorne, Stacey Katz Bourns**

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The volume contributors, of course, deserve special thanks for their willingness to engage in and explore a wide array of social pedagogies in diverse in- and out-of-class contexts.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge department chairs and heads, administrators, and language program directors who recognize and value experimental pedagogies that seek to enhance engagement with the broader world beyond university classroom settings. We hope that the social pedagogies reported in this volume will not only amplify conditions for language learning, but that they will also highlight the capacity of world language education to foster empathy and intercultural understanding at a time when such abilities are greatly needed.

*Sébastien Dubreil and Steven L. Thorne*  
Editors

# Abstracts

## Part 1—The learner in the environment: Inhabiting the city, community engagement, and service learning

STÉPHANE CHARITOS AND NELLEKE VANDEUSEN-SCHOLL

### **Engaging the City: Language, Space, and Identity in Urban Environments**

Cities bring together a great diversity of people and cultures and constitute the backdrop for many of the sociocultural processes shaping the new century. Yet urban spaces are not just the product of urban design and architectural concepts. They are also constructed, appropriated, and given meaning through the social and linguistic interactions of the people who inhabit them, in other words, at the confluence between language and space. The languages of the city are in a dynamic relationship with the urban spaces where they occur. In this chapter, we discuss current developments in language pedagogy and connect them with the recent literature on social pedagogies and spatial analysis. We first explore their potential to serve as a bridge between formal language classroom instruction and motivated, purposeful engagement with language usage beyond the classroom and then reflect on how place-based curricular offerings can help language programs connect with the other disciplines that also study and engage with the city. We end by highlighting opportunities for building communities of practice within and outside the classroom and offering suggestions for incorporating principles, tools, and techniques to help L2 learners connect with the evolving nature of the modern multilingual and multicultural global city.

ALBERTO BRUZOS

### ***Encuentros con el Español: A Case Study of Critical Service Learning in the Latino Community***

This chapter presents a pedagogical model that combines service learning with course materials on Spanish language in the United States to promote critical reflection on the social and political dimension of Spanish. In order to situate this model within larger debates, I examine the points of connection between social pedagogies and approaches to second language education that bring the social dimension of language to the foreground, blending language learning with the development of an understanding of the cultural, social, political, and ideological aspects of language; I also consider the intersection between critical approaches to second language education and service learning. I describe the course curriculum, organized around five thematic units that examined different aspects of Spanish language in the United States, and outline pedagogical tools and practices, including a sample lesson on

the immigrant condition. Finally, I use qualitative data gathered through weekly service-learning journals to consider the impact of the course on the students' understanding of Spanish language and their own identities as learners.

DIANA RUGGIERO

### **Lessons from the CruCES Project: Community Service Learning and Intercultural Sensitivity in the Foreign Language classroom**

The 2007 Modern Language Association (MLA) report called for a transformation in the governance, curricula, and aims of modern language programs. Specifically, it urged language educators and program directors to shift their curricular emphasis away from divisive disciplinary agendas to the shared goals of translingual and transcultural competence. The emergence of new course offerings, particularly in the area of community service learning (CSL), reflects these concerns. Yet while much of the language scholarship on translingual and transcultural competence focuses on the acquisition of linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, and critical thinking skills, less attention has been given to the development of cognitive orientations critical to the acquisition of intercultural competence. Drawing on developmental and process models of intercultural sensitivity, this chapter contributes to the existing literature in illuminating the role and value of CSL in developing attitudes and mindsets conducive to the acquisition and development of intercultural competence. This chapter presents the findings of a study of intercultural sensitivity development (ISD) in the context of a CSL project titled *Creating Communities, Engaged Scholarship* (CruCES). The study sought to assess how and to what extent service learning helps to foster the development of intercultural sensitivity among students in language courses. Implications for Language Program Directors (LPDs) to deploy this model on a programmatic scale are presented.

VIVAN BRATES, CITLALLI DEL CARPIO, ALICA A. MIANO, PAITRA HOUTS, IRENE CARVAJAL, AND MISLA BARCO

### ***Abriendo Caminos: Breaking New Ground in Community-Engaged Language Learning***

This qualitative study of a critically conscious (Freire, 1970/1993) community-engaged learning (CEL) track in a second-year university Spanish program examines (1) students' evolving identities as speaker/actors (Kern & Liddicoat, 2008) of and in a language, (2) their increased appreciation of the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) evident in Spanish-speaking communities, and (3) students' enhanced abilities to reflect upon these phenomena and develop perceptions about various societal systems at play (Plann, 2002). The study describes three quarter-length courses, each engaged with a different Spanish-speaking community partner: an art class at a nearby Boys & Girls Club, a Spanish for heritage speakers class at a local high school, and a class of elderly adults studying for their U.S. citizenship

test at a local institute. Through a line-by-line analysis of students' written texts, this chapter bears out Bettencourt's (2015) contention that a CEL approach combined with world language study expands student learning in nontraditional ways. In this study, students developed their identities linguistically, culturally, socially, and civically, gaining new solidarities with communities and community members. Gains were not unidirectional and also included setbacks such as persistent misperceptions and stereotypes, which, though sometimes discouraging, also provided opportunities for class discussion and ongoing course improvements.

## **Part 2—Literacy, symbolic representations, and the learner as social actor**

STÉPHANIE PELLET AND LINDSY MYERS

### **Social-Pedagogical Life Imitates Art: Scaffolding the Voices of L2 Fans and Critics**

This chapter describes a modular intermediate French course (Pellet & Myers, 2016) anchored by a constructivist approach to social L2 reading and writing. Connected by digital technologies fostering a community of shared readership, students encounter a metaphor of fan interaction and engagement in the contemporary French short story, "*Odetta Toulemonde*" (Schmitt, 2006). The course incorporates multiple levels of readership and authorship by playing out the social themes of the narrative. This model redefines traditional roles by embracing continuums rather than dichotomies such as reader-writer, fiction-reality, classroom and real-world interaction. Such authentic transcultural encounters turn students into digital-footprint-making producers (Sharpe, Beetham, & de Freitas, 2010) rather than mere consumers. More specifically, social pedagogies transform potentially isolated readers and language learners into authors, fans, and critics in an extramural classroom through communal reading and textually inspired, real-life activities. Subsequently, this model dovetails current language program transformations favoring integrative curriculum design focused on cultural inquiry (MLA, 2007) that is socially inclusive, adaptive, encourages knowledge co-construction, and promotes process over product.

KRISTEN MICHELSON AND ELYSE PETIT

### **Becoming Social Actors: Designing a Global Simulation for Situated Language and Culture Learning**

Recent developments in multiliteracies scholarship and pedagogies have highlighted the situated nature of language use and the diversity of ways that meanings are expressed, calling attention to creative, agentive processes of designing meanings using linguistic and semiotic resources for particular communication purposes within discourse communities. One way in which foreign language

teaching can engage students in second language/culture discourse communities and social worlds is through a Global Simulation (GS) pedagogy. A GS consists in the creation of a fictitious, socioculturally realistic lifeworld where learners take on specific roles and interact within a particular community as they work collaboratively to advance a storyline or complete a project. By adopting a character, students become social actors who engage with cultural practices as they appropriate language and other symbolic resources in order to communicate particular meanings across different discourse contexts. We present a GS curriculum developed in fourth-semester French based on the *Immeuble* model (Debyser, 1980) and carried out through a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996). We describe the overarching organization of curricular content, including tasks designed for students' interpretive and productive engagement with texts. We present one module—immigration—and students' textual responses and reflections on this module. Finally, we discuss the experience of designing a GS curriculum and include considerations for the development of simulations.

JESSICA GREENFIELD, VIVIAN M. FINCH, AND STACEY MARGARITA JOHNSON

### **Networked Learning: Students as Producers, Curators, and Consumers of Authentic Resources on Campus and Abroad**

This chapter examines the impact of a study abroad course design in which students are part of a network of learners who act as producers, curators, and consumers of authentic resources through an asynchronous collection, distribution, and usage cycle. This student-driven approach allows students from different semesters and locations to collaborate in the production of, augmentation of, and engagement with authentic resources. The chapter begins with a proposal for a pedagogical model for networked learning in study abroad courses based on recent disciplinary literature and outlines potential ways to involve on-campus students in the curation and use of the authentic resources. We present findings of one cohort of students on a short-term study abroad trip in Sicily to answer the questions: (1) What kinds of assignments will prove most beneficial to study abroad students while also providing useful resources for subsequent on-campus students? (2) How can this model be made more feasible, and therefore more sustainable, for instructors and students? The authors present conclusions about the viability of the model and suggestions for next steps.

CHANTELLE WARNER AND DIANE F. RICHARDSON

### **Beyond Participation: Symbolic Struggles with(in) Digital Social Media in the L2 Classroom**

Integrating digital social media in foreign language curricula expands the space of the relatively stable world of the classroom to include more dynamic

and complex social worlds. One of the struggles for scholars and practitioners of instructed foreign language environments is how to merge this complexity with the classroom, which is saturated with its own frames of reference and typical ways of communicating. This chapter looks at two instructional units implementing digital communications in a fifth-semester, intensive German course with a curriculum inspired by multiliteracies and genre-based curricular models (e.g., Byrnes & Sprang, 2004; Maxim, 2008). In both cases, sociable digital media—digital games and online discussion forums—were perceived by the instructors and the LPD as an opportunity to overcome the two-dimensionality of text-centric pedagogies (see Lotherington & Ronda, 2014). The focus of the analysis is two case studies—one student from each unit—one positioned as a “struggling” student and the other positioned as a “good” student at the start of the engagement with digital media. Through an analysis of the symbolic struggles that students face as they positioned themselves within the layered social spaces afforded by the integration of digital media into other classroom practices, the authors make a case that digital social pedagogies can enable students to imagine alternative positions for themselves beyond the typical participation frameworks of the classroom—even when their actions do not necessarily resemble the learning trajectories envisioned by LPDs.

CORI CRANE, MATTHIAS FINGERHUTH, AND DAVID HUENLICH

**“What Makes This So Complicated”: On the Value of Disorienting Dilemmas in Language Instruction**

This contribution considers how challenging moments arising in social pedagogies can serve as powerful learning opportunities for learners and teachers. Drawing on transformative learning theory (Johnson, 2015; Mezirow, 1994, 1997), which sees “disorienting dilemmas” as catalysts for reflection and changes in viewpoint, the study chronicles the experiences of four participants (coordinator, pedagogical designer, teacher, and student) involved in a “Reacting to the Past” game (Carnes, 2014) on German–Comanche relationships in 1847 Texas, a game that was planned for—but ultimately not carried out in—a collegiate intermediate German course. Although the game was successfully played in previous semesters, in fall 2015, a formal complaint was issued shortly before it was to be performed in class. The game was cancelled; in its place teachers discussed the content material with students and problematized the activity itself. This chapter describes how the four participant groups responded to this crisis moment and discussed the multifaceted, interconnected learning opportunities that “disorienting dilemmas” in social pedagogies can result in.

## Part 3—Social pedagogical interventions: A view from the terrain

ISABELLE DREWELOW

### **A Socio-Constructivist Approach to Developing Intercultural Empathy**

The pedagogical intervention presented in this chapter uses a recent event that received global exposure (the 2015 terrorist attack on the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo*) to engage learners' critical awareness of the subjective dimension of freedom, especially freedom of speech. To facilitate learners' encounter with and reflection on variation of cultural frames of reference, the intervention integrates geosemiotics theory (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) within a socio-constructivist approach to learning. A collaborative engagement inside and outside the classroom is enabled with LinoIt, a digital and interactive bulletin board. The chapter begins with curricular considerations to create a participatory and empathy-generating classroom-based learning environment. A detailed description of the sequence of project-based activities and assessments designed for a third-semester French course follows. The research and creative projects can be adapted to lower or higher level L2 courses and include other culturally organized constructs. I conclude with insights into how to use the design of the learning activities and the pedagogical sequence as a model for further curricular development and for the professional development of graduate students and instructors.

VINCENT VANDERHEIJDEN

### **Of Cookies and Saints: Deconstructing L2 Learners' Myths of the Target Culture**

Lessons on culturally integral products of winter holiday *speculaas* cookies and the holiday figures of St. Nicholas and his attendant, Black Pete—always portrayed in blackface—are presented to illustrate possibilities for prompting reflection on difficult topics such as colonial legacy and the cultural dynamics of exclusion and belonging in foreign language (FL) Dutch instruction. *Speculaas* is a product of Dutch colonial power and practices, which made tropical spices affordable in cold Northern Europe, while the feast of *Sinterklaas* has become a contested site in Dutch culture precisely for its racial dynamics at the heart of a fundamentally Dutch cultural practice. By didacticizing such examples, language instructors can help students develop transcultural abilities, specifically within the domain of “critical cultural awareness” (Byram, 1997). This chapter suggests that the development of nuanced understandings of the target language-culture is both a long-term process requiring explicit curricular design and constitutive of key skills with applications beyond the FL classroom. I conclude with thoughts on the challenge this approach can pose for the professional development of pre-service and in-service instructors.

LARA DUCATE AND LARA LOMICKA

### **Engaging Students in Intentional Cultural Learning during Study Abroad**

This action research project creates intercultural learning opportunities by engaging students with the culture of the target country. During their study abroad experiences, German intermediate language learners became engaged with their environment to negotiate intercultural, translingual, and transcultural contexts by the deliberate act of noticing. Assigned to a particular instructor-identified theme, such as transportation or public spaces, students analyzed and reflected on each picture to distinguish how it fit into the LESCANT (Victor, 1992) categories (language, environment, social organization, context, authority, non-verbal, and time). We investigated the following questions: (1) What do students notice as they intentionally pay attention to a particular theme in the host country? (2) How do students' understandings of German or their own cultures change over the five-week program? Data consist of study abroad students' pictures, captions, and final questionnaires. Our goal was to promote and illustrate a deeper engagement with the target culture beyond the typical study abroad classroom and host family experiences and to share ideas for successfully engaging students in critical thinking about their translingual and transcultural experiences through interpersonal and social means.

JEANNE M. JOHNSON

### ***L'Incubateur*: Increasing Student Engagement through Global Simulation and Gaming Pedagogy in the L2 Classroom**

This research seeks to increase learner engagement in a third-year high school French class through GS, based on the principles of video game design and participatory culture. This virtual start-up incubator is set in the backdrop of La Halle Freyssinet, an actual incubator in the 13th *arrondissement* in Paris. As they developed their team's start-up companies, students became entrepreneurs and pursued their own interests, navigating their future selves, personally and professionally. They also completed instructor-led tasks that provided structure and communicative tools in the L2. Along with student choice, another motivating factor was a final competition for virtual investor funds. Results show that participants' engagement—as measured through surveys and reflective narratives as well as instructor observations—is increased when students are given a choice in their learning, are challenged to see themselves in the learning scenario, and compete with their peers for top position.

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