

The Development and Implementation of an Innovative, Research-Informed Spanish Curriculum

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Outline

- Theoretical framework:
 - Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Learning by Design
 - Integrated Performance Assessment
- Information about Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU
- Information about instructional materials
- Information about implementation
- Plans for the future



Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

- Concept introduced by New London Group (1996) and later in work by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope (Cope & Kalantzis 2009, 2015; Kalantzis & Cope 2010, 2012)
- Defined as “a framework that emphasizes the multiplicity of languages, genres, and modalities present in any given social context, and advocates a pedagogy that puts this multiplicity at the center of the curriculum, while also honing learners’ agency, all with a goal of generating active and dynamic transformation.” (Kumagai & López-Sánchez, 2016, p. 2)
- It allows us to guide learners in their understanding of “the inevitable fluidity of meaning, their different [expressions] and interpretations [to serve different purposes], the necessity to negotiate meanings socially...and the process of expressing a meaning in one mode, then another [synesthesia]” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012: Kindle locations 3573 and 3857).

Learning by Design

- Learning is interpreted as involving four interweaved knowledge processes—**experiencing**, **conceptualizing**, **analyzing**, and **applying**, and “as a dynamic process of discovering form-meaning connections through the acts of interpreting and creating written, oral, visual, audiovisual, and digital texts” (Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2015, p. 23)
- Embedded in learning activities that allow learners to do the following:
 1. experience known and new meanings [departing from known experiences/concepts and exploring new situations and/or information];
 2. conceptualize meanings by naming [grouping into categories, classifying, defining] and with theory [formulation of generalizations and connections to concepts, development of theories];
 3. analyze meanings functionally [focusing on structure and function, establishing logical connections] and critically [evaluating different perspectives, interests, and motives];
 4. applying meanings appropriately [real-life applications of knowledge] and creatively [applications that are innovative and creative] (Kalantzis & Cope 2010, 2012).



Learning by Design



Source: <http://newlearningonline.com/learning-by-design/pedagogy>



Integrated Performance Assessment

- Main theoretical (and pedagogical) premise: Existence of a strong connection between classroom instruction and assessment;
- Example of what Wiggins (1998) calls “educative assessment;”
- In direct relation to the “assessment for learning” movement (Black et al., 2003; Brown, 1999; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2006): assessment instruments “must feature authentic tasks, or those that mirror the tasks and challenges encountered by individuals in the real world” (Adair-Hauck et al. 2013, pp. 25).



Integrated Performance Assessment (Cont.)

- Defined as
 - “A multi-task or cluster assessment featuring **three** tasks, each of which reflects one of the three modes of communication—**interpersonal**, **interpretive**, and **presentational**;
 - All three tasks are aligned within a single overarching theme or content area;
 - It reflects the manner in which students naturally acquire and use language in the real world or in the classroom.” (Adair-Hauck et al., 2013, pp. 24-26)



Integrated Performance Assessment and ACTFL

- IPA in direct relation to ACTFL's Communication Standards: Focus on the purpose behind communication (what are we using language for?).
- **Interpersonal communication:** It focuses on exchanging information, reactions, feelings, and opinions by negotiating and clarifying meaning.
 - Standard: Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.
- **Interpretive communication:** Goal is to answer the question: “What does the author, speaker, or producer of media want you to understand?”
 - Standard: Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.
- **Presentational communication:** To create a message (oral or written) for a specific purpose and for a specific audience.
 - Standard: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers. (NSCB, 2015, p. 9)

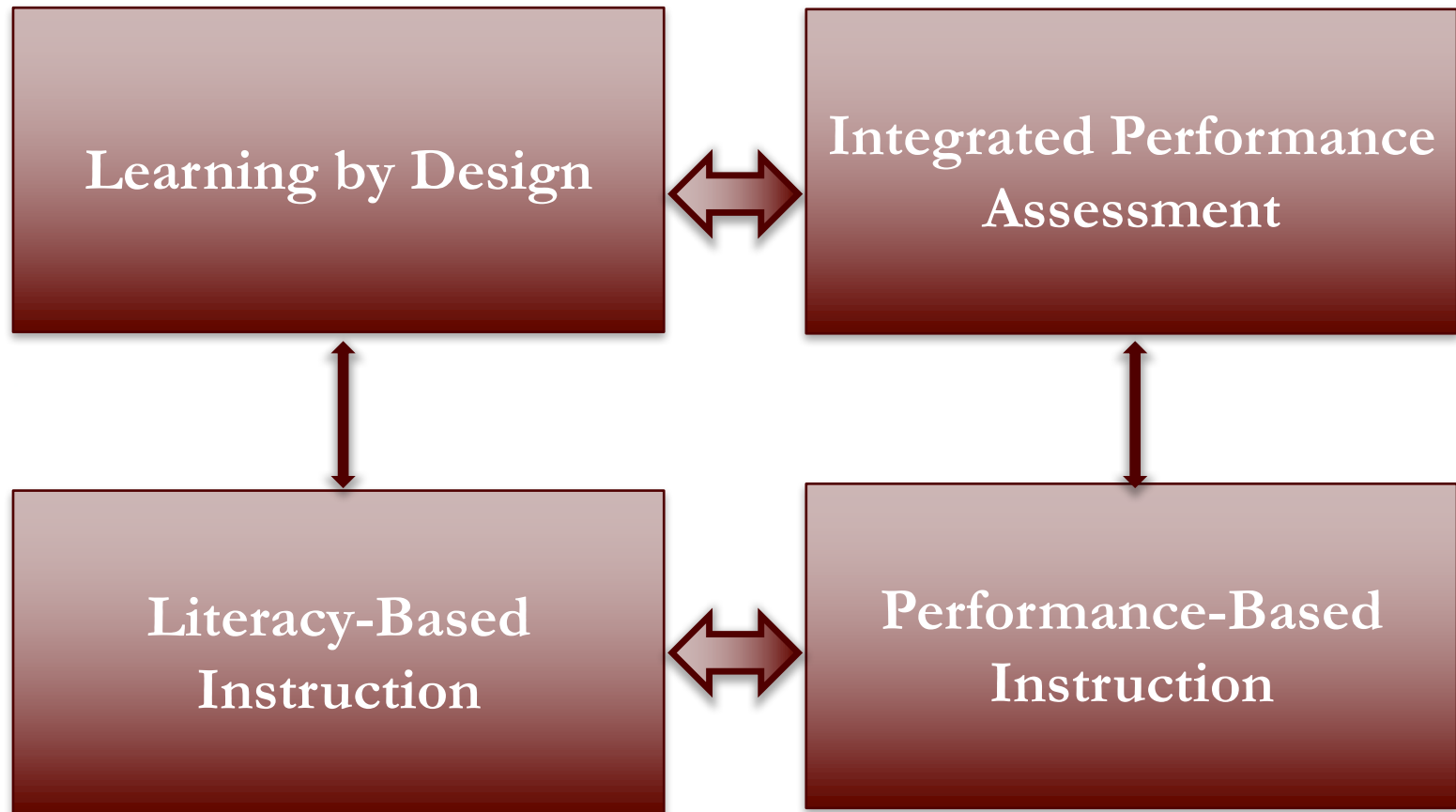


Integrated Performance Assessment: Essential aspects

- Strong connection between students' class work and assessment;
- Students complete tasks in the three modes of communication (within a common theme);
- **Feedback**
 - ✓ Students are made aware of the ways in which they will be evaluated (what the expectations are).
 - ✓ Rubrics are discussed and used in class.
 - ✓ Students' work during the assessment period also becomes part of the IPA learning cycle.



Theory and Instruction



Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU

- Four levels of language instruction in Spanish (NH, IL, IM, and IH—proficiency level expected in each course);
- Classes taught by 17 graduate students, 3 lecturers, and 2 tenured faculty members;
- Approximately 860 students per semester, in 33 sections with a limit of 26 students;
- The curricular changes presented are being implemented: Already in place: NH, IL, and IM classes.



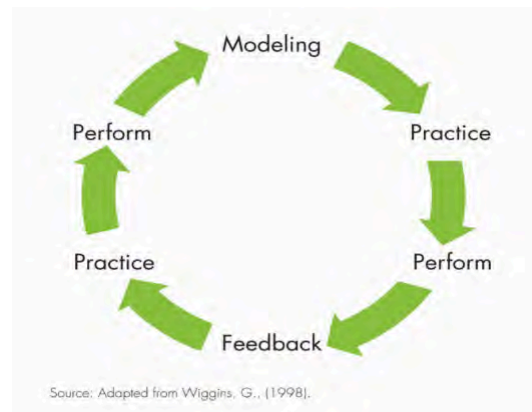
Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU (Cont.)

- Instructional materials:
 - Textbook:
 - *Plazas* (5th edition). The book is divided into four parts, and 4 chapters are included in each level of instruction. Content limitations tied to “processing limitations”: Guided by “Less is More” Hypothesis (Kersten & Earles, 2001)
 - Open-source class activities (Sample—Handout):
 - Based on multimodal, authentic materials and including the integration of the three modes of communication—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational (IPA);
 - Students’ work guided by the Learning by Design thinking processes;
 - Performance-based: Tasks promote students’ active use of the language;
 - Designed by Program Director, and connected to the themes of each textbook chapter.



Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU (Cont.)

- Instructional materials (Cont.):
 - IPA assessment instruments: Formative assessment (performance-based)
 - The same kinds of tasks done in class;
 - Tasks: Interpretive (reading, listening, and viewing); presentational (writing); interpersonal (in pairs);
 - Strong connection between instruction and assessment (IPA).



Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU (Cont.)

- Instructional materials (Cont.): (Samples: Handout)
 - Readers in three levels of instruction, starting with level II (IL) [Literacy-based instruction; performance-based: Interpretive and presentational modes of communication].
 - Technology-based tasks that promote students' creative use of the language. [Learning by Design; performance-based: Presentational mode of communication].
 - Digital magazine (issuu)
 - Digital books (issuu)
 - Interactive posters (buncee)
 - Interactive Tours (Google Tours)



Spanish Basic Language Program at TAMU (Cont.)

- Instructional materials (Cont.):
 - Technology-based tasks: Guiding principles for “becoming a better teacher in this new digital age” (Tapscott, 2009, p. 148):
 - “Cut back on lecturing—[Tied to performance-based instruction: Active use of the target language, learner-centered instruction];
 - Empower students to collaborate—[All projects require student collaboration: development of ideas, peer reviews, collaborative completion of project and its presentation];
 - Focus on lifelong learning, not teaching to the test;
 - Design educational programs according to the eight norms: choice, customization, transparency, integrity, collaboration, fun, speed, and innovation of [students’] learning experiences. Leverage the strength of Net Gen culture and behaviors in project-based learning.” (Ibid, p. 148)



Keys to Success

- Clear objectives and outcomes
 - Make sure both instructors and students understand them.
- Scaffolding
 - Connected to High-leverage Teaching Practices (Glisan & Donato, 2017)
 - Guidance: Learning by Design—starting with “experiencing the known” and moving forward.
 - Technology support:
 - Choose platforms easy to use;
 - Engage students to help (extra credit opportunities);
 - Understand what projects will entail: Simplify instructors’ task.
- Classroom-based research



Keys to Success

- Teacher training:
 - New instructors: Methods class: High-Leverage Teaching Practices (Glisan & Donato, 2017)
 - Workshops (at beginning of semester, as needed). Focus on 6 practices:
 1. “Use the target language as the vehicle and content of instruction;
 2. Design and carry out interpersonal communication tasks for pairs, small groups, and whole-class instruction;
 3. Design lessons and tasks that have functional goals and objectives, to include specifying clearly the language and activities needed to support and meet the communicative objective;
 4. Teach grammar as concept and use in context;
 5. Design and carry out interactive reading and listening comprehension tasks using authentic cultural texts of various kinds with appropriate scaffolding and follow-up tasks that promote interpretation;
 6. Provide appropriate feedback in speech and writing on various learning tasks.” (ACTFL 2015a, 2015b as cited by Glisan & Donato, 2017, p. 10)
 - Classroom observations
 - Instructional material for instructors
 - Support programs: Graduate Teaching Assistant Mentoring Program



How are we doing so far?

- After one semester of implementation, better instructor and course evaluations:

		Overall Inst.	Overall Course
NH	Mean	4.76	4.65
	Median	4.89	4.69
	Mean	4.60	4.52
	Median	4.68	4.45
IL	Mean	4.76	4.65
	Median	4.74	4.69
	Mean	4.32	4.25
	Median	4.59	4.36



How are we doing so far? (Cont.)

Sample student comments:

NH: Comments to questions on course requirements, objectives, and overall quality:

- “I love how much we have to speak. I believe that this is the best way to learn a language.”
- “I learned a lot and had fun.”
- “I learned more from this one semester than in all three years of high school.”
- “I felt immersed in the language, but it was never too overwhelming.”

IL: Comments to questions on course requirements, objectives, and overall quality:

- “The change to only covering [fewer] chapters was so helpful because it takes a while for me to learn, especially with foreign language, so not covering a ton of material in a short time helped me to learn more.”
- “I vastly expanded my knowledge of the Spanish language with just a semester of this class.”



What happens next?

- Classroom-based research: Taking place this semester:
 - **Integrated Performance Assessment in Novice High and Intermediate Low Spanish Classes:**

Investigates the connection between research-informed practices and assessment by examining the implementation of Integrated Performance Assessment in novice high and intermediate low L2 Spanish classes.
 - **The Role of Technology-Based Projects in Performance-Based Instruction**

Investigates L2 Spanish students' collaborative work when developing technology-based presentational projects (digital magazines and books, interactive posters, and Google Tours) in novice high and intermediate low and mid classes.
- Continue with the development of material, curricular revisions as needed, and teacher training.
- Long-term goal: Instructional material: Open-source and developed in house.



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Thank you!



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