Interpretive Communication and the Multiliteracies Framework: Curricular and Instructional Perspectives

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Overview

- **RATIONALE**: Literacies and textual thinking in undergraduate language programs
- **CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**: Multiliteracies pedagogy and interpretive communication
- **APPLICATIONS**: University of Minnesota Spanish curriculum
- **IMPLICATIONS**: Curriculum, instruction, teacher professional development
“Of course you feel great. These things are loaded with antidepressants.”

Source: The New Yorker, 3/31/15
Literacy is the use of socially-, historically-, and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts. It entails at least a tacit awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use, and ideally, the ability to reflect critically on these relationships. Because it is purpose-sensitive, literacy is dynamic—not static—and variable across and within discourse communities and cultures. It draws on a wide range of cognitive abilities, on knowledge of written and spoken language, on knowledge of genres, and on cultural knowledge” (Kern, 2000, p. 16)
Foreign language professionals “have not thought about how the texts we engage could be models for our students’ language development or how language functions to make content meaningful—we have been socialized to divide these language acquisition imperatives, not to teach them holistically.”

(Maxim, 2014, p. 93)
Meaning Design

1. is a dynamic process of discovering meaning through textual interpretation and creation

2. may refer to both a process (the act of creating or interpreting a text) and a product (a text and the forms, conventions, and content that characterize it)

3. encompasses the linguistic, schematic, visual, spatial, audio, and gestural resources that contribute to a text’s meaning

4. involves attention to our social and cultural knowledge and experiences

5. engages learners in the processes of interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection

(Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996)
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<th><strong>EXPERIENCING</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>spontaneous, immersive learning without conscious reflection</td>
<td>explicit instruction &amp; practice of skills and knowledge needed for communication</td>
<td>relating textual meaning to social, cultural, historical contexts and purposes</td>
<td>application of new skills and understandings</td>
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<td>focus on learners expressing their thoughts, opinions, and feelings</td>
<td>unpacking texts — language forms, conventions, organization, etc.</td>
<td>questioning the meaning, importance, and consequences of what is learned</td>
<td>using knowledge and producing language in creative ways</td>
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| brainstorming | concept map | cultural comparisons | news broadcast genre imitation |
| global comprehension Qs | text annotation | debate | |

(Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis et al., 2016; New London Group, 1996)
Challenges to Implementing Multiliteracies Pedagogy

1. Tensions between teacher beliefs/experiences and multiliteracies principles
   (e.g., Allen, 2011; Menke, 2018; Menke & Paesani, in press)

2. Nature of text-based instructional materials
   (e.g., Maxim, 2006; Menke & Paesani, 2018; Warner & Dupuy, 2018)

3. Complexity of literacies concepts
   (e.g., Barrette & Paesani, 2018; Dupuy & Allen, 2012)
Interpretive Communication

an individual and collaborative act of constructing meaning from written, audio, audiovisual, and digital texts

(Kern, 2000; NSCB, 2015; Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016)
Interpretive Communication: Literacies Perspective

- exploration of multiple meanings through different interpretive lenses
- language use plus meaning construction through textual content
- linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions
- overlapping language modalities
- individual and collaborative meaning design

(Kern, 2000, 2008; Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016)
PACE Project — Overview
Soneson (2018)

• Language Flagship Proficiency Initiative
• Four-year project (2014-2018)
• Major initiatives:
  • proficiency testing & student self assessment
  • curriculum revision & development
  • professional development workshops
  • data analysis & research
  • dissemination
PACE Project — *Data*

- Data sources (collected in Spring 2015-2017):
  - Background questionnaire
  - ACTFL LPT, RPT, OPIc tests
  - Student self-assessment questionnaires

- Languages, levels, and participants:
  - Arabic, French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish
  - End of years 1 (n=477), 2 (n=1065), 3 (n=399), 4 (n=222)
PACE Project — Findings

Mean Proficiency Ratings by Curriculum Year (French, German, Portuguese, Spanish)

Year 1:
- AM: 209
- AL: 209
- IH: 194 [15BR]

Year 2:
- AM: 689
- AL: 636 [50BR]
- IH: 571 [116BR]

Year 3:
- AM: 307
- AL: 291 [18BR]
- IH: 254 [58BR]

Year 4:
- AM: 260
- AL: 255 [11BR]
- IH: 255 [12BR]

Legend:
- Red: Speaking
- Blue: Reading
- Green: Listening
PACE Project — Findings

Spanish by Course Level 2014-2017

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPAN 1002</td>
<td>N=42</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 1022</td>
<td>N=87</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 1004</td>
<td>N=231</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 3105</td>
<td>N=125</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPAN 3972</td>
<td>N=95</td>
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Revised Lower-Level Spanish Curriculum

- Develop interpretive, multiliteracies listening lessons (ongoing)
- Professional learning circle (2015-2017)
- Course release for 4th-semester coordinator (Spring 2017)
- Targeted professional development (2017-2018)
Project Goals

• Inform curriculum revision and materials development

• Understand teacher learning and use of multiliteracies pedagogy

• Develop resources to increase understanding of multiliteracies principles

• Improve application of multiliteracies pedagogy in the classroom
## STUDY 1: Materials Analysis — Methods

(Menke & Paesani, 2019)

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<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Participants &amp; Data Sources</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Does the distribution of knowledge processes vary according to course level?</td>
<td>25 lesson plans, 134 tasks</td>
<td>Knowledge processes framework (Kalantzis et al., 2016; Rowland et al., 2014)</td>
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<td>3. Are some knowledge processes emphasized more than others?</td>
<td>1st and 4th semester Spanish courses</td>
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<td><strong>EXPERIENCING</strong></td>
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| **KEYWORDS:** describe, examine, explore, imagine, immerse, observe, record, respond, survey | **EXPERIENCING the Known**
- draw upon and articulate personal opinions and familiar, lived experiences
  e.g., bring in, show, or talk about something/somewhere familiar or “easy” | **EXPERIENCING the New**
- work with and reflect upon new situations, ideas, or texts
  e.g., introduce/immerse students in something new or unfamiliar |

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| **KEYWORDS:** clarify, deduce, define, extrapolate, generalize, identify, recognize, solve, sort | **Conceptualizing by naming**
- classify the individual design elements of texts
  e.g., define terms, make a glossary, label a diagram, sort or categorize like and unlike things, etc. | **Conceptualizing with theory**
- outline schematic relationships between the design elements of texts
  e.g., make generalizations by connecting concepts and developing theories (e.g., concept map, summary, diagram) |

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| **KEYWORDS:** assess, conclude, connect, critique, evaluate, interpret, judge, justify, synthesize | **Analyzing functionally**
- account for the various ways a text works to convey meaning
  e.g., analyze logical connections, cause and effect, structure and function (e.g., explain, create a flow chart, make a model) | **Analyzing critically**
- account for the perspectives, interests, and motives of producers of texts
  e.g., evaluate own and other’s perspectives, interests, and motives (e.g., identify gaps, discuss consequences, hold a debate) |

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<th><strong>APPLYING</strong></th>
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| **KEYWORDS:** compose, create, demonstrate, design, personalize, plan, produce, synthesize, use | **Applying appropriately**
- use accepted text conventions to produce a traditional text type
  e.g., try knowledge in real-world or simulated situations; write, draw, act out in the “correct way”, solve a problem, etc. | **Applying creatively**
- innovatively recombine text conventions to produce a hybrid or transgressive text type
  e.g., use knowledge in an innovative, creative way; express one’s own voice; transfer knowledge to a different context |

**SOURCES:** Kalantzis et al., 2016; newlearningonline.com; Rowland et al., 2014
## Study 2: Teacher Discourse — Methods

(Menke & Paesani, in press)

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<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the nature of teacher discourse around multiliteracies pedagogy?</td>
<td>3 instructors of 4th semester Spanish</td>
<td>Descriptive coding</td>
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<td>(Miles, Huberman, &amp; Saldaña, 2014)</td>
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<td>2. Does this discourse reflect prevailing ideologies of communicative language</td>
<td>Pre- and post-study questionnaires</td>
<td>Concept coding</td>
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<td>teaching and if so, how?</td>
<td>Post-observation interviews</td>
<td>(Saldaña, 2015)</td>
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<td>Course-level meetings</td>
<td>Triangulation with questionnaire</td>
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<td>responses</td>
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“Like... how can you get the most out of a text? And not be like so, oh but we have to cover this, but more like what, you know, what does this offer?” (Course meeting 3)  

“The main thing that I wanted was for them to talk, and to, you know be critical about the painting.” (Interview 1)
STUDIES 1 & 2 — Summary and Implications

1. Encourage teacher awareness of beliefs and personal history about pedagogy, language development, and texts

2. Build coherent language-content curricula grounded in backward design principles

3. Provide sustained, articulated teacher professional development

4. Develop tools and resources that enhance understanding and application of multiliteracies pedagogy
Foreign Language Literacies

CARLA's Foreign Language Literacies project gives teachers research-based tools, resources, and experiences that help them effectively apply literacies pedagogy and engage students with authentic texts in secondary and post-secondary classrooms.

What is "Foreign Language Literacies"?

Traditional definitions of literacy focus on language users' ability to read and write accurately. Yet in the 21st century, being literate in a language entails other abilities such as:

- understanding and creating multimodal texts like web pages;
- communicating across cultural and geographical contexts; and
- using language for a range of social, professional, academic, and everyday purposes.

Because the modern meaning of literacy is multidimensional and dynamic, it is more appropriate to speak of literacies in the plural.

Why Adopt a Literacies Approach to Foreign Language Teaching?

It is important for foreign language classrooms reflect the dynamic, socially-determined, and multidimensional uses of language encountered in daily life. Adopting a literacies orientation helps meet this goal and has a number of advantages for teachers, students, and foreign language programs, including:

- equipping students with the tools necessary to navigate the complex world of foreign languages and cultures;
- engaging students with various types of authentic written, audio, audiovisual, and visual materials that provide a window into the products, practices, and perspectives of the target cultures they study;
- providing a point of articulation between secondary and post-secondary contexts; and
- bridging the language-content divide that characterizes many collegiate foreign language departments.
Questions? Comments?

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<td>Meaning design</td>
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<td>Input</td>
<td>Available designs</td>
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<td>Language use</td>
<td>Knowledge processes</td>
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<td>Proficiency development</td>
<td>Genre</td>
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<td>Meaningful language use</td>
<td>Cultural knowledge</td>
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<td>Instruction of language forms</td>
<td>Language use</td>
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<td>Fluency</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
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<td>Communicative competence</td>
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<td>Individual differences</td>
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