

# Workshop 6

## Valuing Diversity in Learners

“When learners come into the classroom, they don’t divest themselves of their cultural experiences or their linguistic background. They bring all of that with them to the classroom. So it’s incumbent upon the teacher to accommodate that wide array of learners.” —Marjorie Hall Haley, Ph.D., Associate Professor, George Mason University

### Learning Goals

How do you accommodate the needs of diverse learners in a foreign language classroom? In this session, you’ll review relevant research, observe video discussions and classroom examples, and do activities on working with learners who are at different levels and who have different learning abilities and approaches. At the end of this session, you will better understand how to:

- identify the various aspects of diversity that affect foreign language learning; and
- explore strategies for improving the learning of all students in your classroom.

### Key Terms

- differentiated instruction
- heritage speaker
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- learning style
- multiple intelligences

Definitions for these terms can be found in the Glossary located in the Appendix.

### Materials Needed

A sample Individualized Education Program (IEP) or other district-specific form for students with special needs (optional). For more information, see the Put It Into Practice section.

# Before You Watch

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To prepare for this workshop session, you will tap your prior knowledge and experience and then read current research on working with diverse learners.

**Facilitator's Note:** Ask everyone to complete the Reflect on Your Experience and Examine the Research sections below before arriving for this session.

## Reflect on Your Experience *[Reflection]*

Consider the instructional strategies that you have used to meet the needs of different kinds of learners, then answer the following questions. You may want to save your answers in order to reflect on them again at the end of the session.

1. Describe the cultural, linguistic, and/or ethnic diversity in your classroom. How do you draw on this diversity to promote learning?
2. What learning styles seem to predominate among your students (for example, auditory, visual)? How do you accommodate those learning styles?
3. If you are familiar with the concepts of the multiple intelligences theory, what steps have you taken to incorporate them in your teaching?
4. In multilevel classes or ones in which proficiency levels are quite varied, how have you differentiated instruction for the range of performance levels?
5. Have you taught special needs students in your classroom? If so, how did you respond to the instructional challenges that they posed? In your experience, how can learning disabilities or learning differences affect learning in a foreign language classroom?
6. What school resources have you found to be helpful when you are faced with making an accommodation that you have not had to make before?

## Examine the Research *[Assignment]*

Read the articles listed below, then answer the following questions.

### Articles

#### **"Understanding Learner-Centered Instruction From the Perspective of Multiple Intelligences"**

This article describes an action research study that identified, documented, and promoted real-world application of the multiple intelligences theory in foreign language and second language classrooms.

Haley, Marjorie Hall. "Understanding Learner-Centered Instruction From the Perspective of Multiple Intelligences." *Foreign Language Annals* 34, no. 4 (July/August 2001): 355–367.

#### **"Multiple Realities of the Classroom"**

This article describes some of the challenges presented by the different kinds of learners that make up today's foreign language classrooms and addresses what can be done to accommodate these learners.

Barr-Harrison, Pat, and Cathy P. Daugherty. "Multiple Realities of the Classroom." In *Agents of Change in a Changing Age*, edited by Robert M. Terry, 79–105. Northeast Conference Reports. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 2000.

# Before You Watch, cont'd.

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These articles are available as downloadable PDF files on the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* Web site. Go to [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/), click on the session title, Before You Watch, and scroll down to Examine the Research.

**Facilitator's Note:** Be sure that everyone has access to these readings. You may want to have a few copies available for those without Internet access.

## Reading Questions

1. What difficulties do you foresee in creating an environment in which each student can feel challenged, especially in a class with diverse learning styles, paces, and achievements?
2. Take the multiple intelligences survey in Appendix B of the Haley article. How accurately does it reflect your own learning preferences? How might this influence your teaching?
3. What insights did you gain from reading about the multiple intelligences study? What questions do you have about the study or its results?
4. Which aspects of working with at-risk, special needs, or gifted and talented students are of most concern to you as a language teacher?
5. If you have heritage language speakers for the language you teach in your class, how would you describe their language competencies?
6. What additional recommended strategies and resources would you add to Table 2 (pp. 91–92 of the Barr-Harrison article), based on your experiences?
7. What insights did you gain from how Ms. Garcia and Ms. Brown adapted instruction in the case study on pages 99–102? What would you have done differently?

**Assignment:** Submit your written responses to the Reading Questions.

# Analyze the Video

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**Facilitator’s Note:** When the workshop session begins, you may want to spend a few minutes discussing participants’ prior knowledge and experience and reviewing the Reading Questions.

## Video Summary

In “Valuing Diversity in Learners,” Professor Marjorie Hall Haley of George Mason University in Virginia talks about ways of addressing multiple learning styles and levels in a standards-based foreign language classroom. Professor Haley also joins a round-table discussion on effective instructional practices for diverse learners and methods for connecting research to practice. The discussion is moderated by University of Pittsburgh professor Richard Donato, and includes teachers Debra Terry of Springfield, Massachusetts, and Barbara Pope Bennett of Washington, D.C. The video also features excerpts from Ms. Terry’s and Ms. Bennett’s classes, as well as other classes across different grade levels and languages.\* The video addresses the following questions:

- How do you define diversity in learners?
- What instructional strategies work for diverse learners?
- How do teachers connect research and theory to practice?

\*The classroom excerpts featured in this video are from the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* video library. To learn more about the featured lessons, go to the Library Videos Chart found at the end of this chapter.

## Watch the Video *[Reflection]*

Watch the video “Valuing Diversity in Learners,” and take notes as you watch. Consider pausing at the end of each section to answer the questions before moving on to the next section. If you are working in a group, discuss your responses; if you are working alone, reflect on them in your journal.

### 1. How do you define diversity in learners?

In this section, Professor Haley describes different ways to define diversity. The teachers then describe the learner diversity in their classrooms and share strategies for learning about students’ interests and needs.

- Surveys and classroom observations were mentioned as techniques for learning about students. What other strategies might a teacher use to learn about students’ backgrounds and learning preferences?
- In what ways did Ms. Terry use the Spanish heritage of her students to help them learn French? What additional approaches might a teacher use to help students whose heritage language is not the target language?

### 2. What instructional strategies work for diverse learners?

In this section, the group talks about strategies for accommodating diverse learners in a single classroom. Professor Haley also shares the results of a national research project that looks at the theory of multiple intelligences in foreign and second language classrooms.

- What strategies do you observe Jane Shuffelton using with the different levels of learners in her Russian classroom? What strategies do you observe Haiyan Fu using with her Chinese language students?
- What role can grouping play in a classroom of learners with diverse skills and/or learning approaches?
- What strategies did the teachers in the classroom excerpts use to create a positive learning environment for both the heritage and English language students in their classes?

# Analyze the Video, cont'd.

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- How can teachers help students to value the diversity of their classmates, particularly when the students' skills or learning styles set them apart from one another? How can teachers provide for students whose skills or learning styles are different from their own, while acknowledging the validity of other learning styles?

### **3. How do teachers connect research and theory to practice?**

In this section, Professor Haley talks about the value of using theory and research to inform practice. The group also discusses the benefit of teachers conducting action research projects to collect evidence on their own teaching practices.

- How do the teachers' practices in the excerpted classes reflect an understanding of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories?
- What are some benefits of conducting action research projects? Describe potential benefits to the teacher, students, and school. What might be the challenges?

# Examine the Topic

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## *[Assignment]*

Now that you have read the research and viewed the video discussion on working with diverse learners, you will examine the topic further by looking at ways to address the needs of different types of learners that you may have in your class.

**Try it online!** This activity is available online as an interactive activity. Go to the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12 Workshop* Web site at [www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/](http://www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tfl/). Select this session and go to Examine the Topic.

**Facilitator’s Note:** Hand out the forms for each of the four categories of learners. Ask participants to select one category and complete Steps 1–3 of Part A below. Have participants repeat the process for each of the four categories of learners. All handouts can be found at the end of this chapter.

### **A. Strategies for Working With Diverse Learners**

For this activity, you will have the opportunity to think about four categories of learners that may be part of a typical foreign language classroom: heritage language learners, students with learning disabilities, students with different learning styles, and students in different levels.

You will now read information about each type of learner, and then begin to develop strategies for addressing the learners’ diverse needs. Go to the workshop Web site for the interactive version or follow along below.

1. **At a Glance.** Select one of the four categories of learners to begin. Using the form for this category, read the At a Glance summary of the issues related to working with this type of learner.
2. **Reflections.** Using the same form, read the Reflections from other educators about how they have accommodated this type of learner in their classrooms.
3. **Strategies.** Next, read the Assignment about a particular learning scenario, and describe the strategies you might use to address the needs of the student(s) in this scenario. If you are taking this workshop for credit, be sure to save your strategies to submit as part of your assignment. When you have finished describing your strategies, you can read how other teachers have responded to this scenario under Sample Strategies.
4. Repeat this process for each of the four learner categories.

### **B. Reflect on the Activity**

After comparing the sample answers with your strategies for working with diverse learners, reflect on the following questions:

1. How might you gather information on the students in your class so that you are able to address their diverse needs?
2. Consider the needs of the different types of learners that you explored in the interactive activity. Which kinds of learners are you currently most comfortable accommodating? Which kinds of learners pose the greatest challenge to you? How might you begin to research ways to accommodate these learners’ needs to meet that challenge?

**Assignment:** Describe your strategies for working with the four categories of learners and write a brief summary of what you learned from this activity to submit as an assignment.

# Reflect on Your Learning

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## *[Assignment]*

In this session, you have been introduced to a range of issues that contribute to the diversity of students in our foreign language classes, and you have thought about strategies for meeting the needs of these diverse students. You will now write a one- to two-page summary of what you have learned and how you plan to apply it in your classroom. Review the notes you have taken during this session, as well as your answers to the Reflect on Your Experience questions. Use the questions below to guide your writing.

1. How would you now define diversity as it's reflected in your classroom?
2. What are some key strategies for teaching multilevel classes?
3. What strategies would you use to accommodate heritage speakers if they were in the minority in your class? What strategies would you use to accommodate non-heritage speakers if they were in the minority? What strategies would you use if you had students learning a third language?
4. If you were faced with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that you had no experience accommodating, how might you research the issues? Who might you turn to in your school for help? What questions would you ask?
5. When might you steer instruction toward a particular learning style or intelligence to accommodate one student or a small group of students? When might you encourage a student to approach a task using a learning style that is different from his or her typical learning style?

**Assignment:** Submit your summary as an assignment.

**Facilitator's Note:** The activities in the Put It Into Practice and Action Research Project sections are designed to be completed outside of workshop meeting times. Be sure that participants have all necessary forms for these activities. Also, plan time to debrief participants on their results for the Put It Into Practice activities during a later workshop session.

# Put It Into Practice

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## *[Assignment]*

In this section, you will apply what you have learned to your own teaching. The following activities are designed to assist you in developing resources for working with multilevel classes or with Individualized Education Programs for students with special needs. Choose one or both of the activities below.

### **A. Grouping Students in Multilevel Classes**

Multilevel classes are often a response to low enrollment. Teachers may have two adjacent levels, such as Level III and Level IV, or more divergent ones, such as Level I and Level IV. Multilevel classes involve differing goals, objectives, and expectations for proficiency and other learning outcomes for students at different levels. Making decisions about when to group, how to group, and when to bring the whole class together is critical to successfully teaching in this environment.

One approach is to use themes. This allows teachers to design activities that align and challenge both groups. In this activity, you will begin to plan a unit for a multilevel class, focusing on strategies for group and whole-class instruction. You can use the Grouping Multilevel Classes form found at the end of this chapter.

1. List the levels in your class. You can focus on a class that you are currently teaching, a class that you have taught in the past, or consider a hypothetical class.
2. Identify a theme that you would like to use with all of the levels. For example, you could focus on life in the city, suburbs, and country in your region or in a country in which your target language is spoken. Keep in mind that almost any theme can be spiraled. Spiraling provides an opportunity for students to extend their knowledge on a subject as they advance in their language study. For example, weather is a typical theme in beginning courses. Students often learn basic expressions, such as “it is warm” and “it is raining.” When students go on to the next level course, they might access a Web site and read weather reports—a task that gives them the opportunity to learn more sophisticated language on this topic. But if students in the advanced course move on to environmental issues, such as rain forest preservation, without learning language that goes beyond basic statements about or descriptions of the weather, they may have difficulty.
3. Draft the communicative outcomes for students in each level. The following is an example using the theme of life in the city, suburbs, and country:
  - a. **Level I:** Students brainstorm a list of features of life in the city, suburbs, and country. Students also express their preferences for 1) where they want to live now, and 2) where they want to live when they are adults, and give reasons why.
  - b. **Level II:** Students read about a major city and a small town or rural village in a country where the target language is spoken. They use what they learn to decide on a place to stay for three months.
  - c. **Level III:** Students interpret a literary text or film that explores the theme of city versus country life, and they discuss what life was like in each of these places during a given era. (For example, students might read excerpts from *Madame Bovary* or view scenes from the movie that relate to her trip into the city and her view of life in the city versus life as a country doctor’s spouse.)
4. Draft the cultural and/or content outcomes for students in each level. For example:
  - a. **Level I:** Students acquire terminology for city and country attractions and compare the two areas (social studies connection).
  - b. **Level II:** Students acquire information about the geography, historical settings, cultural events, and recreational attractions in a city and village in a target country.
  - c. **Level III:** Students acquire information about life in rural and urban areas and gender roles during specific historical time periods. They also address common human characteristics and frailties.



# Put It Into Practice, cont'd.

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5. Sketch out activities that you could do with each level. Try to identify activities that you could do as a class, in multilevel groups, and in single-level groups. Use the following questions to guide you:
  - a. What sources/materials can you use with differentiated tasks? (For example, in Level I, students could make a sketch of a home based on its description in a real estate ad. In Level II, students might read the ad and develop a series of questions to ask the realtor. In Level III, students could develop a Web site for the seller that further elaborates on the description of the home.)
  - b. In which part of the lesson should students at different levels work on common tasks? What kinds of materials are appropriate for each group, in terms of both the task and that group's proficiency level? (For example, students in all levels might engage in a common interpretive task to learn more about life in the city, suburbs, and country, but they use different materials that reflect their proficiency levels. In Level I, students could look at two pictures accompanying a target-language magazine article: one of a city and the other of a rural village. They would generate lists of what they see, mark these observations as positive or negative features in their opinion, and create an argument for living in one place or the other. In Level II, students could read the article from the same magazine using pre-reading skimming/scanning and close reading questions provided by the teacher. In Level III, students could read an article about urban decay in a target-language country. They would also use pre-reading skimming/scanning and close reading questions provided by the teacher, and then outline a city plan for improving conditions.)
  - c. How do you check that students at each level are challenged when they work together? (For example, can beginners keep up with the task? Are advanced students acting more as tutors, or are they also learning?)
  - d. What activities can groups at one level do on their own while you work with groups at another level? (If you are working with more than two levels, describe what each level will be doing.)

## **B. Working From an Individualized Education Program**

In this activity, you will explore ways of meeting student needs as prescribed in an Individualized Education Program (IEP). (For more information on the IEP, go to the Glossary in the Appendix or go to the Resources section found at the end of this chapter to see information about the U.S. Department of Education Guide to the Individualized Education Program.)

If you have an IEP or a similar district-specific form, you can elect to use it for the activity. You can work with either a completed form for a student in your class or a blank form on which you've checked off the series of accommodations that you would like to consider. If you do not have access to an IEP or district form, you can use the form developed by the Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Special Services. You can find the Fairfax County IEP form at the end of this chapter.

Note the areas that are checked on your selected form and create a plan for how you would accommodate the student in a foreign language class. You may choose any grade and language level for the class. You can use the IEP Accommodation Plan form found at the end of this chapter to record your ideas. Please note that the specific details of an IEP will vary from school to school.

# Put It Into Practice, cont'd.

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Create your plan using the following questions to guide you:

1. How flexible is the set-up in your classroom? Can students who need special seating or other classroom modifications be accommodated?
2. How can you collaborate with the special education teachers to provide these accommodations? Are there ways that they could provide support for this student while in your language class? Are there ways you can work together to ensure that this student is progressing?
3. How can you provide these accommodations in a way that does not draw undue attention to the student?
4. How have you modified your assessment practices to accommodate the needs of this student?
5. Do you have the same expectations for all students?

**Assignment:** Submit your thematic unit plan for a multilevel class or your IEP accommodation plan as an assignment.

# Action Research Project

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## *[Assignment]*

The following four-step process will help you plan a small action research project to explore your questions about working with diverse learners, implement action plans for accommodating the needs of all of your students, and collect information to assess your instructional innovations. Before you begin this section, you can go to the About Action Research section (page 8) for an introduction to the process of designing and conducting action research projects. If you are taking this workshop for credit, you will need to complete one action research project from any one of the eight workshop sessions as an assignment.

If you would like to focus on working with diverse learners for your action research project, use the following questions and examples to help frame your thinking and shape your action research project.

### **I. Thinking**

1. What issue concerning working with diverse learners do you want to describe, document, and investigate? For example, you could examine your students' learning strategies, observe the diversity that exists in your classroom, or study how the concept of multiple intelligences may be applicable to your students. If you teach heritage language speakers, you might want to investigate their unique learning needs and how instruction can accommodate these students. This will be the focus of your action research project.
2. Why is it important to you as a teacher to accommodate the needs of different kinds of learners? How have you accommodated different students' needs in the past? How do you want to change that approach and why? What has been your experience with accommodating heritage language speakers? Students at different language levels? Special needs students? Are you satisfied with your approach to working with each of these types of learners? Why or why not?
3. What is your research question concerning working with diverse learners? The research question will help you investigate your area of focus and understand it better. For example:
  - a. What are the unique learning styles that my students bring to the classroom? How do my students' learning styles compare with my own learning style?
  - b. How can I differentiate instruction to ensure that all students' learning needs are met? What will guide my instructional decisions, and how will I evaluate whether my differentiated approaches are effective?
  - c. What are the opinions of my heritage language speakers regarding their language class? What do they identify as their own learning needs? How could I begin to address or improve upon the way I address the needs that they report?
  - d. How do my special needs students with identified learning disabilities in their first language perform in my foreign language class? How are their achievements similar to or different from those of students without learning disabilities? (In other words, are there significant differences in learning outcomes? If so, how can these differences be described?)

### **II. Acting**

1. What is the action plan for carrying out your project? Depending on your action research question, the following are some questions you might ask yourself to help you develop an action plan:
  - a. How will I identify my students' learning styles?
  - b. How will I differentiate instruction for my students, and how will I know if the instruction is effective?
  - c. How will I gather information on the diverse needs of different learners?

# Action Research Project, cont'd.

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- d. What accommodations will I make for special needs students, and what school resources might I use to inform my decision making?
  - e. How can I better understand the diversity of my classroom?
2. What information will you need to collect to answer your research question and assess your project? For example, you could take field notes, ask a colleague to observe your class and look for particular aspects relevant to your study, distribute student questionnaires and self-assessments, or gather and analyze student work samples. You should have at least two sources of information.
  3. How much time will you allot for your action plan? That is, when and for how long do you plan to collect information before you're ready to begin analyzing it? Develop a timeline for implementing your action plan.

## III. Reflecting

1. After collecting your information, how will you analyze it? That is, how will you organize and review the information you have collected to understand it better and help you answer your research question? For example, will you use responses to a questionnaire, such as the Multiple Intelligences Survey? Will you compare performance data that is based on your instructional intervention? Will you review observations of critical incidents that took place during your study? Will you gather students' opinions using pre- and post-activity questionnaires to assess how your instruction met their needs?
2. How will you display the information so that it can be shared with others? For example, you can use charts, graphs, and/or tables. The goal is to organize your data in a way that presents a clear description of what you investigated.

## IV. Rethinking

Note: The final step of the action research project is to reevaluate your teaching practice based on your research data. Because it takes time to complete an action research project, it may not be possible to do this step during the workshop. However, if you are taking this workshop for credit, you will need to complete one action research project during or after the course of the workshop to submit as an assignment.

1. Based on what you learned through your data analysis, how will you rethink your teaching practice? What changes will you make to your lessons the next time you plan to address the needs of a diverse group of learners? If you had to research the needs of diverse learners in your classroom again, what changes would you make to your action research plan?

**Assignment:** If you are taking the workshop for graduate credit, submit your completed action research project on any one of the eight session topics.

# Resources

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Check out these additional resources to explore the topic further.

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*. National Standards in Foreign Language Education Collaborative Project. Yonkers, NY: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999. (To purchase the *Standards* document, go to [www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org) or call 1-800-627-0629.)

Barr-Harrison, Pat, and Cathy P. Daugherty. "Multiple Realities of the Classroom." In *Agents of Change in a Changing Age*, edited by Robert M. Terry, 79–105. Northeast Conference Reports. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 2000. (See the Before You Watch section for a brief description of this text and instructions on how to access it online.)

Haley, Marjorie Hall. "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Students: Refocusing the Lens." *ESL Magazine* (November/December 2000): 14–16.

Haley, Marjorie Hall. "Understanding Learner-Centered Instruction From the Perspective of Multiple Intelligences." *Foreign Language Annals* 34, no. 4 (July/August 2001): 355–367. (See the Before You Watch section for a brief description of this text and instructions on how to access it online.)

Haley, Marjorie Hall, and Patricia Rentz. "Applying SLA Research and Theory to Practice: What Can a Teacher Do?" *TESL-EJ* 5, no. 4 (March 2002): A–2.

Haley, Marjorie Hall, and Sabrina Wesley-Nero. "Dialogic Construction and Reflective Practice: A Teacher Educator's Action Research Study of Teacher as Learner." *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 131–150.

Ladson-Billings, G. "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *Theory Into Practice* 34, no. 3 (1995): 159–165.

Schwarz, Robin L. "Learning Disabilities and Foreign Language Learning: A Painful Collision." [[http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/foreign\\_lang/painful\\_collision.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/foreign_lang/painful_collision.html)] Learning Disabilities Online.

Taggart, Germaine L., and Alfred P. Wilson. *Promoting Reflective Thinking in Teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1998.

U.S. Department of Education. *A Guide to the Individualized Education Program*. [<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>]

Valdés, Guadalupe. "The Teaching of Minority Languages as Academic Subjects: Pedagogical and Theoretical Challenges." *The Modern Language Journal* 79, no. 3 (1995) 299–328.

# Assignments

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If you are taking this workshop for credit or professional development, submit the following assignments for session 6: Valuing Diversity in Learners.

## **1. Examine the Research**

Read the articles, then submit your written responses to the Reading Questions.

## **2. Examine the Topic**

Complete the activity in this guide or do the interactive version online, submit your strategies for working with the four categories of learners, and then write a brief summary of what you learned from the activity.

## **3. Put It Into Practice**

Complete one or both of the activities, then submit your thematic unit plan for a multilevel class and/or IEP accommodation plan.

## **4. Action Research Project**

Submit your completed action research project on any one of the eight session topics.

## **5. Reflect on Your Learning**

Review your notes, then write a summary of what you have learned and how you plan to apply it in your classroom.

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

## Valuing Diversity in Learners > Analyze the Video Session 6: Library Videos Chart

The following lessons from *Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Classroom Practices* are listed in the order in which they appear in the "Valuing Diversity in Learners" video:

Lesson Title	Instructor	Language	Grade Level
Exploring New Directions	Haiyan Fu	Chinese	9-12
Food Facts and Stories	John Pedini	Spanish	8
Family and Home	Debra Terry	French	5
Interpreting Literature	Barbara Pope Bennett	Spanish	11
A Cajun Folktale and Zydeco	Paris Granville	French	8
Communicating About Sports	Jie Gao	Chinese	6
Russian Cities, Russian Stories	Jane Shuffelton	Russian	9-12
Happy New Year!	Leslie Birkland	Japanese	9-11
Routes to Culture	Pablo Muirhead	Spanish	9-10
Daily Routines	Margaret Dyer	Japanese	5
Chicken Pox	Jai Scott	French	K

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Examine the Topic

## Heritage Language Learners

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### At a Glance

Heritage language learners can vary greatly in their knowledge of the target language and culture. Some may have recently arrived in this country, while others may be removed from the language by several generations yet have some communicative abilities. Even newly arrived students might differ in the quality and number of years of schooling they received in their native country as well as in the form of the language they learned in the region where they are from. Heritage learners who were born in the U.S. also may vary in their target language skills, depending on whether they were schooled bilingually or exclusively in English and on how often they hear or speak the language in their home environment. They may also vary in their English skills and in the form of the language they know.

In any given class, a teacher could have a number of heritage learners, each at a different level in their language development. Consequently, it becomes the teacher's task to create a profile of the language skills (such as oral fluency, use of colloquial language, and literacy), schooling, and generational distance from the language that each heritage learner embodies. For example, newly arrived, younger students may need to continue developing age-appropriate language skills, maintain their existing skills, and acquire elements of a more common dialect of the language. Immigrant students who are older will have similar needs, but an assessment of their literacy skills in the native language will also help a teacher determine if they need additional development of these skills. Finally, second- and third-generation bilingual students will need to focus on maintaining, retrieving, or even acquiring language skills, depending on their background knowledge. Also, their literacy skills in English will need to be transferred to the target language, and they will need to continue expanding their bilingual range.

Overall, the most important thing that a teacher can do is to respect and value the language and cultural experiences that heritage language learners bring to the classroom, and work together with these students to build on these experiences.

### Reflections

"Native speakers are a big asset in the classroom. We just need to be careful that they're also getting something out of the class; that they're not being exploited only for the benefit of those students who are not native speakers. Also, students who arrive in schools without speaking English and are in the process of acquiring English, sometimes they get the message that only English is valuable and that they should cast aside their native language abilities. So, when the students are invited to share their native culture and ability to communicate in a language that their classmates are trying to learn, they get a very positive message that their language is important to maintain and continue to progress in."

- Duarte M. Silva, *California Foreign Language Project*

"I think we all lament the loss of language resources in this country where people who already speak a language are not encouraged to maintain that language. And in the situation where you've got heritage language speakers who can represent to their classmates a level of knowledge of language and knowledge of culture that they might aspire to, that's good for everybody."

- Patsy Lightbown, *Professor Emeritus, Concordia University in Montreal*



## Heritage Language Learners

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### Reflections, cont.

"If you have heritage speakers or speakers with substantial outside experience in the class, it intimidates the other students. You have to reassure the other students that they're not going to be held to the same standards at which those students can perform, and you have to encourage the native or near-native speakers to speak slowly and to enunciate. And then you have to be aware that you're teaching to meet the heritage speakers' needs, and that they're going to want to expand further than the other students are going to be able to. So you have to provide a certain number of activities that allow them to do that."

- Ghislaine Tulou, French III teacher, McLean, Virginia

### Assignment:

You have a small number of heritage language learners with minimal reading/writing competencies in your class. What strategies could you use to interest them in the lesson content, help them develop their proficiency, and maintain their interest in the class?

### Sample Strategies

Here's what other teachers have said.

#### Teacher 1:

Is the cup half full, or half empty? Tantamount to helping these learners grow is recognizing and celebrating the many attributes they bring to the table. It is critical that we not give their home language less credibility than what we might teach as the "standard" in class. Their perception that we are devaluing their language may turn them off. Therefore, I might locate reading resources that are of high interest and at, or a little bit above, their level. I might use comic books, or basic readers, in order to provide them with rich, comprehensible input. I might also use dialogue journals so they can express themselves through written language without the heightened anxiety of filling in the blanks incorrectly.

#### Teacher 2:

One strategy I might use is to choose lesson content that can address heritage learners' needs, while keeping them integrated with the class. A topic whose content they have not already mastered helps them to focus and develop their reading and writing proficiency, as well as increase their lexical base and perhaps their cultural knowledge. I have had a Russian III class work with a short excerpt from a narrative poem. Traditional learners just read the excerpt, while heritage learners read the entire text and wrote a summary in Russian for the class. They also had to ask their parents about their experience with reading the poem when they were in school (all Russians know the excerpt) and report the results.



# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Examine the Topic

## Students With Learning Disabilities

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### At a Glance

Today's foreign language classrooms consist of a wider diversity of students, including students with learning disabilities. These students may require adaptations in instructional approaches, assessments, and even curricular goals.

Some teachers may need to accommodate students with physical disabilities, such as visual, hearing, or movement impairments. To begin, a teacher should first consult with available experts in the local school or district. Students with moderate to severe disabilities will have a prescribed Individualized Education Program (IEP) to help their teacher adjust instruction. To accommodate students with sight limitations who require Braille materials, or students with hearing loss who require an ASL interpreter, the teacher would need to work closely with the students, their families, and any resource people, such as interpreters. Also, both of these situations require that teachers plan their lessons well in advance, so that appropriate instructional materials can be created. Any issues that arise spontaneously during a lesson will also need to be managed carefully.

Similarly, when a teacher encounters a student with a cognitive or behavioral disability -- for example, dyslexia, stuttering, or attention deficit disorder -- it is important to learn about the student and his or her particular disorder from district specialists. The teacher can then begin to explore ways of accommodating the student's needs so that he or she can achieve as much success as possible from the foreign language experience. This might range from trying different grouping arrangements and varying instructional approaches, to adapting instructional materials and allowing for students to show their language acquisition in diverse ways.

In the end, it really is incumbent upon the teacher to develop a repertoire of strategies to meet the needs of the various students in the classroom and to make sure that, no matter what their language level, all students can develop along the language continuum to a higher level of proficiency.

### Reflections

*"Learning disabled is a term that has many different connotations, because disabled could be a learning disability, a physical disability, an emotional disability, etc. Students who come with IEPs may have as many as eight to ten accommodations, and often-times these students come into foreign language classrooms without the benefit of an assistant. So it's up to the foreign language teacher to decide how to provide appropriate instruction for these students and to provide goals and expectations that these students are going to be able to meet.*

*"So when teachers are working with learning disabled students or students who come with any kind of required accommodation, the first thing the foreign language teacher has to do is to realize what accommodations he or she can make. Sometimes it will be something like allowing students extra time on a test or a quiz. It may be that students will need someone to read test items or quiz items to them. One of the things that I have found in my research that's been very helpful for foreign language teachers, however, is the notion of giving students options, because a written test may not be the most appropriate or the most likely way to assess a learner with a disability."*

*- Marjorie Hall Haley, Ph.D., Associate Professor, George Mason University*

## **Students With Learning Disabilities**

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### **Assignment:**

You have a diagnosed dyslexic learner in your class. What strategies could you use to develop his or her oral, reading, and writing proficiency in the target language? How might this practice in the target language help the dyslexic learner gain oral, reading, and writing proficiency in English?

### **Sample Strategies**

Here's what other teachers have said.

#### **Teacher 1:**

A problem occurs when there is a disproportionate amount of focus placed on writing, with the assumption that students' language ability will improve. In looking at the three modes of communication, I think we tend to give the least amount of importance to interpersonal communication because it seems more difficult to assess. Even in the older four-skills approach, speaking was typically assessed through more presentational types of activities (for example, rehearsed speeches and role plays) that were focused on writing. Therefore, in order to improve reading abilities, particularly in students who have the added challenge of learning difficulties such as dyslexia, I would use reading aloud or written material with a lot of visual support.

#### **Teacher 2:**

I would allow students with dyslexia to use audio books for assignments, so that they could strengthen both their reading and listening skills; they could listen to the audio text while following along with the written text. These students could also tape record presentations or lectures in order to avoid having to write copious notes. I would also present information visually and with tactile learning experiences as much as possible to give the students additional ways of accessing the information. Finally, I would clearly define when spelling is an important part of the assignment and when it is less important.

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Examine the Topic

## Students With Different Learning Styles

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### At a Glance

Not all students learn the same way. Students with different learning styles require different teaching approaches. For example, some students may have a preferred way of learning. By designing lessons that complement the various styles, such as auditory, visual, or kinesthetic styles, teachers can help these students learn more easily. In fact, instructional approaches that incorporate multisensory techniques and organize around multiple intelligences provide a richer classroom experience for everyone.

Some students may have a learning style that inhibits effective learning. For these students, the teacher's goal is first to recognize the learning style, and then to help the student move toward acquiring more effective strategies. For example, a student with a low tolerance for ambiguity may have difficulty working with authentic materials that have many unfamiliar words and references. To counter this, the teacher could help increase the student's comfort level by showing him or her how to guess from context and skim and scan the text for information. A student who is a low-risk-taker may avoid testing his or her language skills in interpersonal communication tasks that involve language beyond what he or she already knows. Here the teacher's challenge is to help the student move past the fear of making mistakes and instead focus on the larger goal of communication. In the end, by maintaining an awareness of their students' learning styles, teachers can help them use effective approaches to language acquisition.

### Reflections

"I try to design activities for students' different learning styles. If the student likes to draw, I have a drawing activity; if they are good at listening, we have a listening activity; if they like to write, they have a writing activity. I have to have an activity for the different learning styles, so everybody is able to engage in their favorite way to learn."

- *Carina Rodriguez, Grade 4 Spanish teacher, Gahanna, Ohio*

"The more we learn about learning styles, learning strategies, and multiple intelligences, the more we understand that pencil and paper testing doesn't work for every learner. So, when students are able, in a language class, to demonstrate what they know via multimodal methods, we're finding that they are performing better, and their attitudes and motivation about studying another language increase."

- *Marjorie Hall Haley, Ph.D., Associate Professor, George Mason University*

"A lot of research has been done regarding students' different learning styles and what motivates them. I think one of the reasons why performance tasks are good is that they attempt to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses within our students. A performance task allows any type of learner a variety of ways in which he or she can demonstrate learning. In fact, at the end of a unit, you could have multiple performance tasks to give the students a choice, so that if you have learners who are more visual, if you have learners who are artistic, if you have learners who tend to be more analytical, or perhaps [have] a learner who enjoys performance in terms of acting -- all of those strengths can be brought to a performance task."

- *Elizabeth Runnalls, Language Coordinator, Nanuet, New York*

## Students With Different Learning Styles

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### Assignment:

You have several students in your class who do not work to grade level in their language arts classes and who work with the remedial reading teacher. What strategies could you use in your foreign language class that might help these students acquire effective reading strategies across languages?

### Sample Strategies

Here's what other teachers have said.

#### Teacher 1:

I would model reading strategies on a written passage for ALL students. These strategies would include the following:

- circling any easily recognized words (sight vocabulary)
- highlighting any cognates in the passage
- using these identified words (plus photos, captions, or section titles) to predict what the passage is about
- posting 10 key words; having students in pairs or small groups prepare a summary of the passage's main ideas, using the 10 words provided
- asking questions to probe students' understanding of the passage; using their answers to create a visual web of the main ideas and supporting details, leaving the circle in the middle for students to fill in with the overall point of the passage

#### Teacher 2:

I would focus on activating the students' prior knowledge and personal experiences and finding ways of hooking them into the topic of the text. I would first model some reading strategies for the students, and then ask them to "think aloud" about the strategies they might use to identify the main idea, skim for general ideas, and scan for details. Most importantly, I would have students talk about the strategies they would use to predict what is going to happen next. I would also use as many age- and topic-appropriate authentic materials as possible in order to engage the students in the reading.

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Examine the Topic

## Students in Different Levels

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### At a Glance

Although having a multilevel class is a challenge now faced by many language teachers, there are strategies that can help ensure that all students in the class, regardless of level, move forward in their language development.

When students are just one level apart, both groups may be at a similar level of oral proficiency, but their interpretive skills may differ. The teacher's challenge therefore is to create activities that both levels can work on, but that allow the higher level to delve further into understanding texts. For example, Level III and Level IV students can watch and summarize the same film or reading, but the tasks they are given and the rubrics used for assessment may differ depending on their level.

When the levels are farther apart (e.g., Level I and Level IV), or when there are more than two levels (e.g., Levels II-IV), the challenges are greater. Often the greatest challenge is determining when to teach to the full class and when to separate students into distinct groups. Thematic units or content-based units can help solve that problem. Within a single theme or content area, teachers might devise several different level-appropriate tasks. This way, all students can share information and communicate together about the topic, but do level-appropriate work on language forms and interpretations.

In the end, whether students are given different tasks for the same text, or work on the same activity but with different criteria for assessment, the focus must remain on helping all students learn at their level of ability and continue to progress in their language development.

### Reflections

"Students can perform at different levels, and when you have a multilevel classroom, you are going to depend on the students who have a greater amount of language competency to serve as role models for those students who are in a lower level of language study. It is in this kind of a context that every student will see themselves as a resource to each other. The students who are at a higher level of language study also get something out of it, because they get a message back that they have attained a certain level of competency."

- Duarte M. Silva, California Foreign Language Project

"In a multilevel class, you have to find the median. Instead of teaching to the threes and hoping that the twos catch up, or teaching to the twos and watching the threes get bored, you have to find the middle ground. But you also don't have to segregate them and say, 'These are the threes and you're going to be looking at gerunds and gerundives,' and 'Level twos, you look at passive voice verbs,' and neither the twain shall meet. There's a way of introducing the twos to the gerund and reviewing the passive voice with the threes but not intimidating the twos by saying, 'You have to know this,' or not shaming the threes by saying, 'Don't you remember this?'"

- Lauri Dabbieri, Latin II-III teacher, Fairfax, Virginia

## Students in Different Levels

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### Assignment:

You have students in your high school class who are at two different levels, or you have students in your elementary or middle school class who have studied the target language for varying numbers of years. What strategies could you use at either the high school or the elementary/middle school level to accommodate all learners in activities in your class?

### Sample Strategies

Here's what other teachers have said.

#### Teacher 1:

In a Level II-III class, I have used interpersonal activities that involved information gap questions of interest to both levels. Students worked in pairs to exchange information on music preferences, free-time activities, etc. Level III students were spiraling lexical information, and both levels were practicing words that were new to them. Another strategy I used was story reading and writing. The class read a story about a travel experience, and then used the story as a model for a writing assignment. Students worked in pairs: Level III students practiced reading on their level and helped Level II students with new vocabulary. While they were writing their own original story as a pair, if a Level II student needed a vocabulary word, the Level III student could often supply it.

#### Teacher 2:

- From a reading or video, intermediate/advanced students summarize the main events, while beginning students use context clues to guess at the main idea. Beginning students then receive the advanced students' written summary as separated sentences and arrange them in the proper sequence, while advanced students discuss their interpretations.
- Students compare and contrast the target culture with their own: Beginning students arrange items in a Venn diagram; intermediate students write paragraph descriptions; advanced students write advice for exchange students from a target country coming to their community.
- Tasks are differentiated for a unit on housing: Beginning students create a floor plan; intermediate students describe activities that go on in each room; advanced students compare housing in their own and in the target culture.

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Put It Into Practice > Activity A

## Grouping Multilevel Classes

Plan a unit for a multilevel class. Focus on strategies for group and whole-class instruction.

<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Level:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
Communicative Outcomes:	Communicative Outcomes:	Communicative Outcomes:
Cultural Outcomes:	Cultural Outcomes:	Cultural Outcomes:
Content Outcomes:	Content Outcomes:	Content Outcomes:
Activity Ideas:	Activity Ideas:	Activity Ideas:







**CONFIDENTIAL**

Department of Special Services  
**Individualized Education Program**

**DRAFT UNTIL IEP IS SIGNED**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRICULUM/ CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS**

8. What accommodations, supplementary aids and services, supports in general education and/ or special education programs or modifications to the general curriculum, and/or supports for school personnel does this student require because of his/ her area( s) of need?

**Settings**

- Preferential Seating
- Small Group

**Assignment**

- Reduced Level of Difficulty
- Shortened Assignment
- Reduced Pencil/ Paper Tasks
- Extended Time
- Opportunity to Respond Orally

**Instruction**

- Shortened Instructions
- Assignment Notebook
- Oral Exams
- Frequent/ Immediate Feedback
- Dictated Information, Answers on Tape
- Individual/ Small Group Testing
- Taped Lectures
- Reduced Language Level/ Reading Level
- Incorporation of Learning Styles
- Peer tutoring/ Paired Working Arrangement

**Other**

- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

- Taped Text/ Material
- Highlighted Text/ Materials
- Manipulatives
- Braille
- ESL Materials
- Calculator
- Keyboard Modification
- Access to Keyboard/ Word Processor

**Behavior**

- Positive Reinforcement
- Frequent Breaks
- Clearly Defined Limits/ Expectations
- Quiet Time
- Behavior Management Plan

**Support for personnel**

- Consultation
- Information
- Other
- Other

*Information from the Fairfax County Public Schools student scholastic record is released on the condition that the recipient agrees not to permit any other party to have access to such information without the written consent of the parent or of the eligible student.*

# TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES K-12 WORKSHOP

Valuing Diversity in Learners > Put It Into Practice > Activity B

## IEP Accommodation Plan

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Design a plan for how you would accommodate a student with an IEP in your foreign language class.

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodation 1:

Describe how you would make this accommodation:

Accommodation 2:

Describe how you would make this accommodation:

Accommodation 3:

Describe how you would make this accommodation:

