Best practices in World Language Teaching and Learning

Current Status and Implications for Policy and Pedagogy

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The purpose of the talk is to

- Identify LRC contributions
- Discuss best practices in world language teaching and learning
- Describe tests being used K-12
- Identify existing resources
Overview

Introduction

- Discuss best practices in world language teaching and learning
- Describe tests being used K-16
- Identify LRC contributions
- Identify existing resources
What are LRCs?

- The Language Resource Centers were established through US Dept. of Education Title VI funding in 1990
  - Currently 15 LRCs

- LRCs are mandated to “improve the capacity to teach and learn foreign languages effectively” in the US
Locations of the LRCs
Current LRCs

- Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CALPER)
  - The Pennsylvania State University
- Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research (CARLA)
  - University of Minnesota
- Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS)
  - University of Oregon
- Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language & Literacy (CERCLL)
  - University of Arizona
- Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR)
  - Michigan State University
- Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL)
  - University of Texas at Austin
- Language Acquisition Resource Center (LARC)
  - San Diego State University
Current LRCs

- National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC)
  - George Washington University, Center for Applied Linguistics, Georgetown University

- National Foreign Language Resource Center (NFLRC)
  - University of Hawai‘i

- National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC)
  - University of California, Los Angeles

- National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMELRC)
  - Brigham Young University

- Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR)
  - Indiana University

- National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)
  - Indiana University

- National East Asian Languages Resource Center (NEALRC)
  - The Ohio State University

- Slavic and Eurasian Language Resource Center (SEELRC)
  - Duke University

Focus on specific languages, cultures, or geographic areas
Specific LRC Activities

- Research on new and improved teaching methods, including the use of advanced educational technology

- Development of new teaching materials reflecting the use of such research in effective teaching strategies, including:
  
  - **Significant focus on the less commonly taught languages and the publication of instructional materials in the LCTLs**
  - **Development of materials for foreign language teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels**

- Development and application of performance testing for use as a standard and comparable measurement of skill levels in all languages
Specific LRC Activities (cont.)

- Professional development training for teachers on diverse topics, including:
  - Administration and interpretation of performance tests
  - Use of effective teaching strategies
  - Use of new technologies

- Intensive summer language institutes of several kinds, including:
  - Training of advanced foreign language students
  - Preservice and inservice language training for teachers
What are best practices in foreign language teaching? (1/2)

1. Extended, uninterrupted study
2. Extended time in complete immersion
3. Length of time for L1 English speakers to learn many important languages
4. Continuous, articulated study that builds on previous
5. Competence and skill of instructor

From Jackson and Malone, 2009
6. Small class size

7. Systemic assessment of progress and maintenance of records

8. Incorporate opportunities that focus on language and cultural content and functional ability at ALL levels

9. Exploit technology whenever appropriate

10. Heritage learners have different needs

From Jackson and Malone, 2009
Why do we need assessment?

- Quality assessment is necessary to institute, nurture, and replicate successful language programs

- Effective assessment:
  - Allows students and teachers to measure language proficiency
  - Promotes accountability among programs
  - Documents success and can make an argument for increased funding for programs.
    
    (Carstens-Wickham, 2008; Jensen, 2007; Reese, 2010)
What are current best practices in FL assessment?

- Self-assessment
- Performance assessment
- Teacher professional development
- Integration of language and culture
What is “self-assessment”?  

- Allows students to reflect on what s/he CAN do  
- Reflects the student/course goals and expected outcomes  
- Can provide an opportunity for students to communicate their perceptions to their instructors  

Example: LinguaFolio Online
What is performance assessment?

- **Requires and expects** students to use language in real-life situations (Norris et al., 1998; Sandrock, 2010);

- **Demands** that students develop an understanding of what real-life situations are like in the language; and

- Is based on **performance** or the active construction of language rather than a demonstration of passive understanding only.

**Example**: Online oral proficiency assessments
What assessment professional development is available?

- Online guides
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Summer institutes
- Books
How can assessment integrate language and culture?

- Assessment traditionally focuses on language
- Culture is an integral part of language
- Assessment must look at both
  - Assessments such as the examples previously mentioned – self-assessments and performance assessments – can encourage the integration of language and culture by requiring students to use language (or reflect on language use) in culturally authentic ways or situations.
How do LRCs support best practices?

- Research
- Professional development
- Materials development
- Assessment development
- Awareness
What are some resources?

- Teacher Guides & Tools
- Journals, Newsletters, Blogs
- Resources Directories, Databases, Bibliographies & Webinars
- Language Materials for K-12
- Materials for Teaching Specific Languages
- Materials Series for Specific Languages
- Other Resources
- Meet us on the Social Networks