High-Leverage Teaching Practices in a Post-Methods Era of Collegiate Foreign Language Teaching

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How do future FL professors learn to teach?

“[O]verview, prime, drill, and check … gives new teachers a secure base for lesson planning, and attempts in this way to reduce the insecurities and anxieties felt by so many novices … beginning teachers can be certain that they have included an introduction and motivation to an activity, examples and review of material necessary for conducting the activity, varied and appropriate drilling techniques, and evaluation of students’ progress”

(Knop, 1982, p. 91)
How do future FL professors learn to teach?

“Communicative approaches generally emphasize the necessity of large amounts of appropriate comprehensible input (ideally of ‘authentic,’ context-bound language samples); meaning is perceived as more important than form—that is comprehending and expressing personal meanings is valued more highly than grammatical accuracy … communicative approaches encourage negotiation of meaning … Considerable instructional time is devoted to so-called skill-using activities performed in small groups of learners”

(Schulz, 2006, p. 252)
What is postmethod teaching?

“[N]ot based on the prescriptions and procedures of a particular method nor which follows a predetermined syllabus but which draws on the teacher’s individual conceptualizations of language, language learning and teaching, the practical knowledge and skills teachers develop … the teacher’s knowledge of the learners’ needs, interests and learning styles, as well as the teacher’s understanding of the teaching context … The kinds of content and activities that the teacher employs in the classroom … will depend upon the nature of the core principles that serve as the basis for the teacher’s thinking and decision-making”

(Richards, 2013, p. 18)
Challenges of equipping future FL professors with core principles to guide teaching in higher education today

- **Scope** of professional development
- Timing & content of “methods” course
- Consequences of departmental bifurcation on professional development experiences & perceptions of their relevance for future teaching
Research findings on shortcomings of the dominant professional development model

- Difficulty in making **theory-practice connections** (Brandl, 2000; Dupuy & Allen, 2013)

- Lack of **formation of a coherent base** for teaching language, literature, & culture (Allen, 2011; Wilbur, 2007; Mills, 2011)
Using the multiliteracies approach to frame professional development of future FL professors

- **Literacy** as an overarching, multi-dimensional educational goal

- Instruction that envelops *communication within textual learning* (Kern, 2000) and integrates language development & analysis of literary-cultural content across the undergraduate FL curriculum

- Focus on apprenticing learners into understanding & use of new **linguistic** & **schematic resources** to make meaning in the FL

- A **non-sequential pedagogy of four learning processes** or pedagogical acts (New London Group; 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015)
Key concepts & techniques: the multiliteracies approach

**Principles of literacy:**
- Collaboration
- Conventions
- Cultural knowledge
- Interpretation
- Language Use
- Problem Solving
- Reflection & Self Reflection


**Multiliteracies pedagogy:**
- Situated Practice/Experiencing
- Overt Instruction/Conceptualizing
- Critical Framing/Analyzing
- Transformed Practice/Applying

**Cope & Kalantzis (2015)**

**Available Designs**
- Genre
- Instructional conversations
- Textual Borrowing
- Design
Conceptual development is slow; scope of required professional development inadequate to support its long-term growth (Allen, 2011; Allen & Dupuy, 2013; Dupuy & Allen, 2012;)

- novice FL TAs *can* label & define key concepts by end of methods course
- novice FL TAs *can*, with appropriate scaffolding, create lesson plans that align with the aims & learning processes of multiliteracies approach & evaluate those plans
- novice TAs *do not possess* macro-level understanding of the approach or how to align macro and micro concepts
HLTPs: A means of creating a more coherent knowledge base for future FL professors?

- Their use in line with the notion proposed by Kumaravadivelu of framing post-methods FL teacher education within a macrostrategic framework

- “A network of ten macrostrategies … (a) maximize learning opportunities, (b) facilitate negotiated interaction, (c) minimize perceptual mismatches, (d) facilitate intuitive heuristics, (e) foster language awareness, (f) contextualize linguistic input, (g) integrate language skills, (h) promote learner autonomy, (i) ensure relevance, (j) raise cultural consciousness”

- “[M]acrostrategies are made operational in the classroom through microstrategies” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 69)
HLTPs: A means of creating a more coherent knowledge base for future FL professors?

- A means of integrating a theory-based conception of learning (e.g., multiliteracies approach) with a practice-based theory of knowledge for teaching

- An emphasis on connection & alignment between core practices/macrostrategies & sub-practices/microstrategies

- Compatibility with theory-based conceptions of how teachers learn to teach (e.g., SCT)

- Applicability across different types of professional development activities AND teaching contexts (i.e., language, literature, and culture)

- A means of bringing together faculty within a FL unit to dialogue on instructional priorities?
Incorporating HLTPs into professional development of future FL professors

- **Identifying learning outcomes** of professional development with clarity; examples: learning outcome statements in the “methods” course syllabus, departmental aims or mission statement
  - Facilitating TL Comprehensibility
  - Building a Discourse Community
  - Guiding Learners to Interpret and Discuss Texts
  - Focusing on Form in a Dialogic Context
  - Teaching Cultural Products, Practices, and Perspectives in a Dialogic Context
  - Providing Feedback to Improve Learner Performance

(Glisan & Donato, 2015)
Incorporating HLTPs into professional development of future FL professors

- **Evaluating teacher learning** in various types of professional development activities
  - lesson study
  - summative, written assessment of conceptual development
  - rubric for evaluation of teaching across levels

- **Designing teacher learning experiences**
  - reflections on theory-based publications on learning
  - tools for use in class to mediate teacher learning activities (Glisan & Donato, 2015)
Questions: Implementing HLTPs in professional development of future FL professors

• Which HLTPs to focus on in early in-service professional development activities and in what order?

• What types of professional development activities to use to connect theory-based conceptions of FL learning with a set of core HLTPs, particularly in the methods course?

• How to use HLTPs in ongoing one-on-one professional development between teacher educators / LPDs and GTAs?