CALPER NEWSLETTER

CALPER 2018-2022

The project team at the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research is looking forward to its fifth grant cycle as a national Language Resource Center (LRC) funded under the Title VI program of the U.S. Department of Education. We are honored to belong to the group of sixteen LRCs across the country.

Looking back on sixteen years of continued Title VI funding, we are proud to have been awarded our fifth grant in the LRC competition. When Title VI funds were cut by U.S. Congressional decree by more than 50% in 2011, our College of the Liberal Arts and our Center for Language Acquisition supported us financially and made it possible for us to sustain all of our projects and produce our material. It is because of their support that we did not have to reduce the number of projects we conducted.

Since CALPER was first established in 2002, our focus has always been on researching and supporting the development of advanced language learning. In this cycle, too, we will maintain that focus. Specifically that means for us that we will continue to develop materials for language learners at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. We will concentrate on learning materials for the less-commonly taught languages - Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Russian - but will also create some materials for the more commonly taught languages , such as French and Spanish.

For the ne cycle, CALPER entered into a consortium with the University of Pittsburgh - to concentrate efforts in shaping language education practices in the state. We are excited to work with Richard Donato (Pitt), who will assume the role of CALPER's co-director. New in the team from Penn State is Kevin McManus, who will also serve as a co-director.

CALPER Newsletter

CALPER Administrative Team
James P. Lantolf, Director
Richard Donato, Co-director
Kevin McManus, Co-director
Gabriela Appel, Associate Director
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High-leverage Teaching Practices

In this new CALPER grant cycle, several of our projects are framed within the concept of *High-leverage Teaching Practices* as put forward for language instruction by Eileen Glisan and Richard Donato in their 2017 publication *Enacting the Work of Language Instruction: High-leverage teaching practices (*Alexandria, VA: ACTFL)

High-leverage teaching practices (HLTPs) are the "tasks and activities that are essential for skillful beginning teachers to understand, take responsibility for, and be prepared to carry out in order to enact their core instructional responsibilities" (Ball & Forzani, 2009 in *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*, p. 204). As Glisan and Donato explain, the "professional dialogue surrounding HLTPs was initiatied by the University of Michigan School of Education, and more specifically by its Teacher Education Initiative", which began a little over ten years ago. The mission of the reform initiative was to ensure that "all students have skillful teachers who are committed to and able to support their growth" as *Teaching Works* explains (Teaching Works, 2016, High-leverage teaching paractices. retrieved from http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices). While initially, the HLTP initiative focused on novice teacher preparation, Glisan and Donato stress the importance for ALL teachers to command such practices.

HLTPs have important characteristics, including: (1) they are complex; (2) they are almost impossible to learn through observation alone, and (3) they need to be unpacked and deconstructed into pedagogically valuable moves and then taught.

Within the current grant cycle, we will concentrate on four HLTPs, which were defined and presented by Glisan and Donato:

(1) provide systematic feedback to students during speaking tasks, (2) integrate authentic materials and high-quality conceptual knowledge of target language features to pronote production, discussion, and interpretation of spoken and written texts, (3) build a discourse community in the classroom through teacher-students and student-student spoken and written activities, and (4) increase teachers' target language comprehensibilty and interaction during instruction.

The goal of several projects in this new CALPER grant is twofold: one, to develop professional devlopment (PD) materials and engage teachers in PD events on a well-defined set of practices considered essential to teaching world languages across various contexts of instruction and two to create teaching materials that include useful guidance for language educators to maintain HLTPs.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Eileen Glisan as a member of CALPER's Advisory Board and Rick Donato as the Co-director from the University of Pittsburgh.

LARC/CALPER Webinar Series on Assessment

From 2010-2014 LARC at San Diego State University and CALPER conducted a highly successful webinar series on a number of critical aspects in language assessment. We invited national and international scholars to share their expertise. These free webinars are still available to view and can be used for professional development and in in-service courses.

Some of the presenters were:
Glenn Fulcher on Speaking
John Norris on Task-based Performance
Matt Poehner on Assessment for Learning
John Reed on Assessing Vocabulary
Larry Vandergrift on Listening
JD Brown on Developing Rubrics
Donna Clementi on Backward Design
Cindy Brantmeier on Reading
Meg Malone on Performance Assessment

URL: http://calper.la.psu.edu/webinars

L1 & L2 Language Use in WL Classrooms

While first language use in world language classrooms has traditionally been considered a controversial topic, research shows that principled use of the L1 can significantly improve language learning, especially for grammar. Moreover, awareness of how the L1 and the L2 are different and/or similar can improve the comprehension and production of the L2 by reducing the effects of cross-linguistic influence. However, despite increasing evidence that L1 use and awareness can play an important role in L2 development, very little is understood about teachers' use of the L1 beyond amount in %.

A new CALPER project will document teachers' use of the L1, the target language (and other languages) in language classrooms. Using this evidence, the project will develop best practices for L1 and target language use,

thus contributing significantly to both research and policy on L1 and target language use in anguage classrooms.

The project will concentrate on Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, and Russian classrooms, and audio-record the classroom talk/discourse, then transcribe and analyse it. The resulting classroom talk/discourse corpora will include audio-recordings from first, second, and third semester courses at the college-level and will be accompanied by transcripts, which we plan on making available to teachers and researchers once our study is completed.

This research will make an important contribution to knowledge about teachers' language use in world language classrooms, and subsequently inform language teacher professional development.

Project Coordinator: Kevin McManus (Penn State)

Concept-based Language Instruction

The core principle of Concept-based Language Instruction (CBLI) is that in order to achieve higher levels of proficiency in the classroom setting, learners need access to useable high-quality knowledge *about* the language, most especially when dealing with *complex* linguistic features.

Some examples of complex features are verbal aspect and mood in Romance languages and Russian, word order in Chinese and German, how to express identity, emotions, complaints (pragmatics); what effects rhetorical styles have, and how texts are organized (discourse); how to understand and use sarcasm, metaphors (figurative language); and how the vocabulary of a language is structured (motion verbs in Russian, verbs and prepositions in German) and so forth.

CBLI normally covers five phases of instruction. The first converts the findings of linguistic research into pedagogically useful knowledge. The second makes this knowledge memorable for learners through the use of visual images, or SCOBAs (Schema for Orienting Bases of Action) that holistically capture the meaning of a concept. The third and fourth phases engage learners in verbalizing their understanding and use of the relevant concepts. Finally in the fifth phase, learners are engaged in various spoken and written communicative activities in which they practice what they learned in the previous phases.

This new CALPER project will produce a guide designed to help teachers develop and implement lessons grounded in principles of CBLI. It will explain the theoretical rationale for the approach, give examples of successfully used SCOBAs in the classroom, will provide guidance on how to select language features and create SCOBAs and finally present video clips of lessons in which the approach was used.

Project Coordinators James P. Lantolf (Penn State) and Jie Zhang (University of Oklahaoma)

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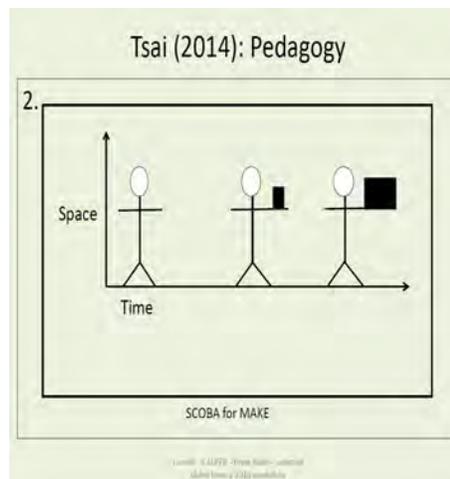
Materials for L2 Writing in Arabic

Our research has shown that instructional materials for teaching Arabic are often not reflective of the social context of language use. To fill this void, this new CALPER project seeks to develop a series of genre-based modules to support the teaching of writing in Arabic at several levels of proficiency.

Genre analysis is a social theory of language that describes language in relation to the context in which it occurs. There are three meanings that interplay in any genre: ideational, which is concerned with how experiences are presented; interpersonal, which is concerned with the relationship between writer and reader; and textual, which is concerned with the organization of a text. The goal of this pedagogy is to make the language features signalling these meanings visible to students and thus help them advance in their language learning.

Project Coordinator: Myriam Abdel-Malek (University of Pittsburgh)

Dual-language Immersion

The state of Delaware offers an immersion program in Chinese and Spanish in 31 schools across the state. When students graduate from these programs, they will likely exceed AP level proficiency. To offer those students appropriate courses that make it possible for them to continue with their language studies at a higher level, we planned a project which will formulate viable content-based courses at the high-school and college-levels that help those students to continue to develop their proficiency. We partnered with Delaware State University and several DE School Districts to create a course program offered by Delaware State for which students will receive both high-school and university credit. We will work with a group of educators and together assess needs of this specific student population. Then we will design content-based courses that will be taught at Delaware State, and in parallel create a series of professional development opportunities that will support language educators teaching these new courses.

Project Coordinators: Gabriela Appel (Penn State) and Brody Bluemel (Delaware State).

HLTPs for Underserved Urban School Districts

The Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Pittsburgh is a unit that strives to positively transform educational opportunities and experiences of educators and students in urban school districts.

Focusing on language education, CALPER is partnering with CUE to identify underserved school districts in Pittsburgh, and will work with language teachers in these districts to determine specific instructional needs and support activitites that will enhance culturally responsive pedagogical practices. In addition, the project team will develop concrete procedures, including in-service workshops and mini-courses that will support language educators to strengthen classroom relations between educators and diverse student populations.

Project Coordinators: Richard Donato (University of Pittsburgh) and James P. Lantolf (Penn State)

Heritage Speakers in Study Abroad

This new CALPER project builds on data gathered of heritage Spanish speakers in study abroad contexts obtained in the previous CALPER grant cycle. The objective of the project is to develop a functional guide for administrators and for students that will provide activities to enhance the language learning experience of this unique student population. The guide is to a) help to better understand heritage speakers and their particular needs when going abroad, and b) provide guidance to implement initiatives that effectively foster language development and cultural adjustment. The guide will initially be used by the California State University System in their state-wide study abroad program for heritage Spanish speakers.

Project Coordinator: Antonio Jimenez-Jimenez (Cal State, Channel Islands)

Our Partners

California State University System for our heritage study abroad project

Delaware State University for our dual-language immersion project

Center for Urban Education (Pitt) and the **Pittsburgh Public School District** for our metro school project

Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (Monterey) for our Korean teaching materials

University of Oklahoma for our Chinese CBLI materials

CALPER
Center for Advanced Language
Proficiency Education and Research
at Penn State

Corpus-based Vocabulary Units

To know words is essential for any language learner, and critical for learners to move towards more advanced levels of proficiency. Oftentimes in classrooms, teaching of new words is not the focus of instruction, but is relegated to homework or incidental learning. Recognizing that learners do not build up their knowledge of words "on the side", this CALPER project will create explicit vocabulary teaching units in *Chinese, Korean and Russian* based on corpus data.

Since our first Title VI grant in 2002, where we introduced corpus-oriented approaches to language learning to the teaching community, we have continually been conducting projects that employ such a framework.

Corpora are ideally suited data sources for identifying core and peripheral vocabulary used in a given language, as determined by frequency of use in spoken language, genres or text types, and content or thematic areas. They are also quite useful in teasing out polysemous meanings and collocational patterns, i.e. the affinities certain word have to other words in the lexicon. Corpus data also allows us to relatively

effortlessly compile examples of authentic language that illustrate how the vocabulary items are used.

In this new CALPER cycle, we will concentrate on developing useful vocabulary units or modules on essential vocabulary items for intermediate/advanced learners that embed learning in a rich context.

Project Coordinators: Edie Furniss (University of Pittsburgh), Susan Strauss (Penn State), Jungoh Eun (Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Monterey), and Haiyang Ai (University of Cincinnati).

Corpus Portal ▸ website