



PENNSYLVANIA STATE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

PENNSYLVANIA LANGUAGE FORUM

*Connecting Languages.
Cultures. Communities.*

VOLUME 103 - FALL 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PSMLA MISSION STATEMENT.....	3
ABOUT	4
CONTACT PLF.....	4
SUBMISSIONS	4
EDITORS' CORNER.....	7
<i>Nathan Campbell & Christina Huhn, Pennsylvania Language Forum</i>	
PRESIDENT'S CORNER.....	8
<i>Mike Bogdan, PSMLA President</i>	
2026 PSMLA AWARD RECIPIENTS	
<i>Christine Yardley, Souderton Area High School</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Dr. Carmen Alicia Martínez, Duquesne University.</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Jennifer Campbell, Manheim Central High School</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Dr. Rich Madel, Colonial School District</i>	<i>12</i>
FALL CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS	
<i>Klett World Language</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>American Council on Education (ACE)</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AVANT Language</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Wayside Publishing</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Gamehut</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>VISTA</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>EF Tours</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Lingco.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Duquesne University.....</i>	<i>27</i>
KEEPING FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED.....	14
<i>Member Survey, Nathan Campbell</i>	
2025-2026 PA SEAL OF BILITERACY STATISTICS	21
<i>Cherie Garrett, PSMLA Vice-President</i>	
THEY SAID MY NAME?! REFLECTIONS ON A YEAR AS ACTFL TEACHER OF THE YEAR.....	22
<i>Nathan Campbell, Manheim Central School District</i>	
PEER REVIEWED CONTRIBUTIONS	
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS: A FOOD-BASED EXPERIENTIAL PROJECT TO ENHANCE MOTIVATION IN SPANISH STUDY	29
<i>Lucía Osa-Melero, Duquesne University</i>	
FROM ROUTINE TO RESULTS: CORRELATING DAILY STUDENT BEHAVIORS WITH SUCCESS IN A COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE CLASS	49
<i>Rich Madel, Colonial School District & Saint Joseph's University</i>	
APPLYING GENRE-BASED PEDAGOGY (GBP) TO FACILITATE STUDENTS' CREATIVE WRITING: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY	76
<i>Hui-Chun Cheng, World of Learning Institute (AIU8)</i>	



Pennsylvania State Modern
Language Association

*INSPIRING MULTILINGUAL
COMMUNICATION AND
INTERCULTURAL
UNDERSTANDING*

**The mission of the Pennsylvania
State Modern Language Association
(PSMLA) is to enhance world
language education throughout
Pennsylvania by:**



Promoting the teaching
and learning of world
languages and culture at
all levels (Pre-K through
university)

Providing
opportunities for
professional growth
and networking



Recognizing excellence
in the field

Collaborating
with local, state,
and national
organizations



ABOUT

Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF) is the semiannual online publication of the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association. It features articles on teaching strategies, lesson plans, project ideas, and research by and for world language teachers in Pennsylvania.

PSMLA Members will receive an invitation to view the journal online through the publications section of our website. A digital archive of previous issues is also available online. Visit <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum> to access *PLF* online.

SUBMISSIONS

Article submissions are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received by February 15 to be considered for publication in the Spring issue of *PLF* or by August 15 for the Fall issue.

Contributors have the option of submitting their article for peer review. To learn more about that process, please see back pages for further details. All other submissions should follow the guidelines outlined below.

Submission Guidelines

- PSMLA members may submit titled articles related to teaching and language education.
- All submissions must be written in English, though examples of lessons or student work may be in the target language.
- All articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or a Google Doc, formatted using Times New Roman 12-point font and be double-spaced. PDF article submissions will not be considered for publication.
- Scanned documents and photographs that accompany the article submission must be clearly identified and labeled. They must be submitted as a JPG or PNG.
- All documents of the submission must include the following information:
 - o Name(s) of author(s)
 - o Affiliation(s)
 - o Language(s) taught
 - o Intended levels, when relevant
 - o Release Form(s) for any photographs (available at [online](#))

Submissions must be submitted online using the submission link on the [PSMLA website](#).

All authors and any co-authors must be current PSMLA members or a member of a NECTFL reciprocal state organization at the time of publication. PSMLA members whose work is chosen for publication will be notified via email. All formatting and final edits are at the discretion of the editors.

Contact PLF

PSMLA and the *Pennsylvania Language Forum* invite vendors and organizations to submit advertisements that share our mission. Vendors wishing to advertise should consult the Ads & Exhibits page on the PSMLA website (www.psmla.org). All other questions may be directed to Christina Huhn or Nathan Campbell, Co-Editors of *PLF*, at PALanguageForum@psmla.org.

Call for Submissions – Peer Reviewed Articles

Pennsylvania Language Forum: Peer Review Process

Aim and Scope: *Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF)* is PSMLA's annual publication. The journal features a selection of original scholarly articles that are chosen by a peer review process.

The Editorial Board of *PLF* welcomes original scholarly, research-based articles that address issues directly related to world language teachers in Pennsylvania. Peer Reviewed articles should maintain a classroom relevance for world language educators at all levels in Pennsylvania. Dissertations should be refined and re-focused, as dissertations are too long and detailed for a published article. Research conducted in the K-12 classroom is highly encouraged.

Potential Topics may include:

- **Empirical research studies** and application of high-leverage practices in the World Language Classroom in the state of PA. Submissions of ***empirical research*** for the peer-reviewed section of the journal should generally include the following sections
 - ✓ Introduction
 - ✓ Literature Review
 - ✓ Methodology
 - ✓ Discussion or Results
 - ✓ Implications for the Classroom
 - ✓ Conclusion
 - ✓ Acknowledgements (optional)
 - ✓ Works Cited
- Literature reviews of published scholarship on ***Technology in World Language Education, including AI, classroom applications, etc.*** The reviews of literature should include research with a classroom focus, and focus on research completed within the last 10 years”
- Scholarly research focusing on ***language proficiency development.***
- Scholarly articles on ***literary topics, cultural topics, or interdisciplinary topics*** are welcome, provided the article is focused on classroom applications.
- Literature reviews or scholarship on ***World Language Advocacy.***
- Scholarship on ***unique learning contexts, such as content-based instruction, heritage language learners, special needs, or social-emotional learning, among others with a classroom connection to the PA World Language Classroom.***



All submissions should follow the general constructs of academic research and be applicable to the World Language Classroom in Pennsylvania.

Peer-Review Process: All manuscripts follow a blind review process and are first reviewed by the editor(s) of the journal and then sent for blind review by members of the Editorial Board. Manuscripts must follow the submission guidelines below.

Manuscript Preparation Guidelines

1. Submissions must be original work that has not been previously published or be presently under review by another journal.

2. Submissions must be written in standard academic English. Authors should follow APA guidelines consistently. Use https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html as a reference as needed.
3. All submissions are initially read by the Editor(s) (first review) and then if deemed appropriate and *all* guidelines were followed, sent out to a group of appropriate experts for blind review. Submissions should include a title page as a separate document that includes:
 - a. Article Title
 - b. Article abstract
 - c. Name(s) of author(s)
 - d. Affiliation(s)
 - e. Language(s) taught
 - f. Intended level(s), when relevant
 - g. Release Form(s) for any images or materials (available at <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum>)
4. The anonymity of the author(s) *must be ensured* by removing all identifiers from the manuscript. This can be done by referring to any identifying information as “Author X, University X, etc.)
5. All manuscripts must be submitted as .doc, docx, or rtf files. Use Times New Roman 12 point, double space.
6. All in-text quotes require page numbers or paragraph sources for nonpaginated sources. Use *italics* for emphasis; not quote marks.
7. Word limitations are as follows: Title [15 words]; Abstract [150 words]; Key Words [5]; full article, [approximately 5,000 words (roughly 15 pages)].
8. Submissions must be submitted online using the submission link on the [PSMLA website](https://psmla.org).
9. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Editor(s) within 2 weeks of receipt.
10. Authors are responsible for completing Human Subjects and IRB requirements and securing publication rights when using images.

Rubric for peer-reviewed submissions:

	Exceeds	Meets Expectations	Further Development Required
Relevance	Article is very relevant and timely both to the Aim and Scope of the PLF and World Languages.	Article is relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF but some improvements should be considered by the editor(s).	Article topic not relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF.
Citations	Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines as identified in the Author instructions.	Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines, but there are a few errors that will require attention from the editors,	Article is missing citations or citations are largely inaccurate.
Mechanics	Article is very well-written, free of typographical or structural errors.	Article is well-written and free of typographical errors but may have a few sections that will require the editor(s) attention.	Article contains significant typographical errors or structural errors beyond what the editorial process can support.

Editors' Corner



Nathan Campbell & Christina Huhn

Editors

Pennsylvania Language Forum

Pennsylvanian has long enjoyed the moniker, *The Keystone State*, not just for its historic importance in holding the union together during the early years of our nation's history, but as a leader in industry and education. Global commerce, education, and international peace depend on clear communication and mutual understanding. As language educators we know that developing strong world language programs is key in preparing our students to become partners and innovators at local, state and national levels. The PSMLA Advocacy team has proudly published the **PA Language Roadmap**. A document whose aim is to expand and improve language programs across the state of Pennsylvania. If you haven't already, please make sure to look at this well-developed plan.

The work of our Advocacy team, led by Cherie Garrett, has seen the realization of an important goal through the passing of [legislation](#) that requires that PDE develop official criteria and a toolkit for schools to offer the Seal of Biliteracy. As we see more schools begin to offer the **PA Seal of Biliteracy**, PSMLA continues to collect data from participating schools to have a clearer

understanding of how many students are achieving this credential. Look at this past year's numbers on page 21.

As we prepare for conference season, our own Nathan Campbell will be speaking at the PSMLA Fall Conference. To gain insight into his year as the **ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year**, see his reflection on page 22.

PSMLA is proud of our educators and will honor this year's **PSMLA Award recipients** at our annual conference. Learn about this year's winners on page 10.

Finally, we take great pride in providing a space for academic publishing and have three peer-reviewed articles in this edition. Be sure to read the works, which have strong classroom connections, in the peer-reviewed section of this issue beginning on page 29.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the Pennsylvania Language Forum.

President's Corner



Michael Bogdan
President
PSMLA

Greetings!

A new school year brings both excitement and anticipation. Whether this is your first year of teaching, your forty-first, or you're stepping into a new classroom, curriculum, or team, world language education is a profession in which we never grow bored. We are always learning, adapting, and refining our craft. I wish you a rewarding and successful school year.

With that spirit of growth in mind, I invite you to join us for the PSMLA Annual Conference, November 6-7, at the Wyndham Garden State College. Guided by the pillars of our strategic plan, our conference theme, **"The Roadmap Forward: Advancing Proficiency, Programs, and the Profession,"** highlights strands designed to strengthen our teaching, enhance our programs, and elevate our profession. We have assembled an outstanding lineup of sessions covering topics ranging from assessment and artificial intelligence to advocacy and the arts. Be sure to bookmark our [conference page](#) for all details and to register.

We are especially honored to welcome PSMLA's 2024 Teacher of the Year and ACTFL's 2026 National Language Teacher of the Year, Nathan Campbell, as our keynote speaker. Don't miss the opportunity to learn from Nathan during the

keynote luncheon and two additional conference sessions. After spending the past year traveling the country as an advocate for world language education, Nathan returns to Pennsylvania, and PSMLA is thrilled to welcome him home for this year's conference. You can learn more about Nathan on our [Conference Keynote](#) page.

While our presenters are at the heart of the conference, we also know that reconnecting with colleagues, building new professional relationships, and exchanging ideas are among the most valuable aspects of gathering in person. To encourage these conversations, coffee breaks and buffet lunches are included each day of the conference—an amenity that many conferences no longer provide. The Wyndham's comfortable, walkable layout also offers inviting spaces throughout the hotel where attendees can meet informally, recharge, and discuss ideas they'll take back to their classrooms. In addition, we'll offer "Ask Me Anything" sessions, giving members the opportunity to ask questions or join informal discussions on PSMLA initiatives, including the Seal of Biliteracy, as well as other timely topics.

I look forward to seeing you in State College this November!

Meet the Reporters Series from Klett World Languages

The Same Project-Based Approach to Learning,
Across Four Languages



SPANISH



FRENCH



GERMAN



ITALIAN

One project-based methodology across Spanish, French, German, and Italian with real-world projects at every level.

A consistent approach that works across your department, no matter how many languages you offer.

Visit **klettwl.com** to explore the full Reporters series and request a free sample.

2026 PSMLA Award Recipients



PSMLA Teacher of the Year

Christine Yardley



The PSMLA Teacher of the Year award honors a PSMLA member who has demonstrated excellence in world language education and is willing and able to represent the profession regionally or nationally. The awardee will participate in the NECTFL Teacher of the Year selection process and, if chosen, advance to the ACTFL level.

Christine Yardley is a dedicated world language educator, advocate, and champion of global learning. Since 2014, Christine has served as a Spanish, French, and Global Studies teacher and World Languages Coordinator at Souderton Area High School, where she combines rigorous instruction with opportunities for students to connect language learning to the world. As coordinator, Christine advocates for world languages, supports colleagues, manages department resources, and leads curriculum development.

A passionate advocate for global and cultural understanding, Christine has created opportunities that extend beyond the classroom. She leads the district's Seal of Biliteracy Committee, helped establish an International Culture Fest, organized educational experiences with the Chinese Consulate, coordinated international exchanges and performances, and regularly leads field trips to museums, workplaces, and the United Nations. She has also chaperoned international student travel and developed world language career programs featuring professionals from diverse fields.

Christine is equally committed to supporting educators and strengthening the profession. She serves on the PSMLA Advocacy Task Force, contributed to the Pennsylvania World Language Summit and Language Roadmap, mentors novice teachers, and presents professional development for language educators. Her extensive international experience—including living and teaching abroad and volunteering on six continents—continues to shape her approach to language education.

PSMLA Outstanding World Language Educator of the Year

Dr. Carmen Alicia Martínez



The PSMLA Outstanding World Language Educator award recognizes PSMLA members whose careers have exemplified excellence in world language teaching and who have made significant contributions to the world language profession.

Dr. Carmen Alicia Martínez is an accomplished Spanish educator, curriculum developer, and advocate whose work spans higher education, professional language instruction, community engagement, and study abroad. Currently serving as Faculty Leader for Study Abroad Programs at Duquesne University's Center for Hispanic Studies, Carmen has taught Spanish at Duquesne, Washington & Jefferson College, the University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University for more than two decades.

A leader in Spanish for Specific Purposes, Carmen has designed innovative courses including Spanish for Healthcare Professionals, Spanish for Therapists, Spanish for Business Managers, and Beyond Words and Expressions. Her Spanish for Healthcare Professionals course became a required course for nursing students and contributed to the development of Duquesne's Micro-credential in Spanish for Healthcare Professionals. Her work emphasizes not only language proficiency but also cultural humility, empathy, and effective communication in professional settings. As a practicing medical interpreter, Carmen brings firsthand experience of the importance of language access and culturally responsive communication to her teaching.

Carmen has also developed community-engaged learning opportunities connecting university students with Spanish-speaking communities, including the award-recognized Reading to Play, Playing to Read program. She has led study abroad programs in Spain and Costa Rica and has presented her innovative work at ACTFL, NECTFL, AATSP, PSMLA, and other professional conferences. Through teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and professional service, Carmen demonstrates a sustained commitment to using language education to foster meaningful human connection, cultural understanding, and greater access for all.

The Frank Mulhern Leadership Awards

The Frank Mulhern Leadership Award honors a PSMLA member who has demonstrated exceptional leadership in the world language profession and made significant contributions to the work of PSMLA. This year we have two winners of this prestigious award.



Jennifer Campbell

Jen Campbell is a German and Spanish teacher at Manheim Central High School. She served six years on the PSMLA Executive Council and co-chaired the 2022 annual conference. She currently represents PSMLA as its Representative to NECTFL and has continued as chair of the Professional Development Committee for an additional year beyond her term. Jen has developed processes and templates to support future conference committees, established the successful fall and spring PSMLA professional development webinar series, and continues to contribute to PSMLA as a frequent presenter.



Dr. Rich Madel

Dr. Rich Madel is a Spanish teacher and Chairperson of the Department of World Languages in the Colonial School District. Rich is a frequent presenter at PSMLA events, co-chaired the virtual annual conference in 2021, and served a term on the PSMLA Executive Council. In 2022, Rich developed the PSMLA Peer Mentoring Program to support the recruitment and retention of early-career world language educators. Rich led the program for three years before mentoring the next coordinator. The program has fostered professional relationships between experienced and novice educators, introduced PSMLA membership as an essential component of professional growth, and contributed to published research in the field.

Recognize PA Multiliteracy

Award Credit and Unlock Career Opportunities



Credit by Exam

Create opportunities for language learners to receive recognition for their skills learned in or out of the classroom. Avant's assessments are used to award credit by exam at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

College Credit

Inspire learners to continue their language acquisition journey by giving them a head start toward a college minor or major. Avant STAMP 4S, WS, ASL, APT, and SuperLanguage tests are recommended for college credit by the American Council on Education (ACE). Test takers are eligible for **4 to 16 university credits** based on proficiency level.



State Seals of Biliteracy

Celebrate your learners' language skills with State Seals of Biliteracy. Avant STAMP tests qualify in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Proficiency Level	ACE Credit Recommendation
Novice-High (STAMP Level 3)	4
Intermediate-Low (STAMP Level 4)	6
Intermediate-Mid (STAMP Level 5)	8
Intermediate-High (STAMP Level 6)	12
Advanced-Low (STAMP Level 7)	14
Advanced-Mid (STAMP Level 8)	16

*Discover how Avant powers
Pennsylvania proficiency*



shellene.swamy@avantlanguage.com | karol.marulanda@avantlanguage.com



Member Survey

Keeping Families and the Community Involved

How do you involve parents/guardians in their children's language learning process?

"I share about our events at Meet the Teacher Night and Conferences."

"Assign students to teach their parents a specific communicative task."

"I email a monthly newsletter, sending the first one before the first day of school to welcome everyone back. I share important events and recognition."

"I create a flier for Open House and send quarterly emails highlighting our progress."

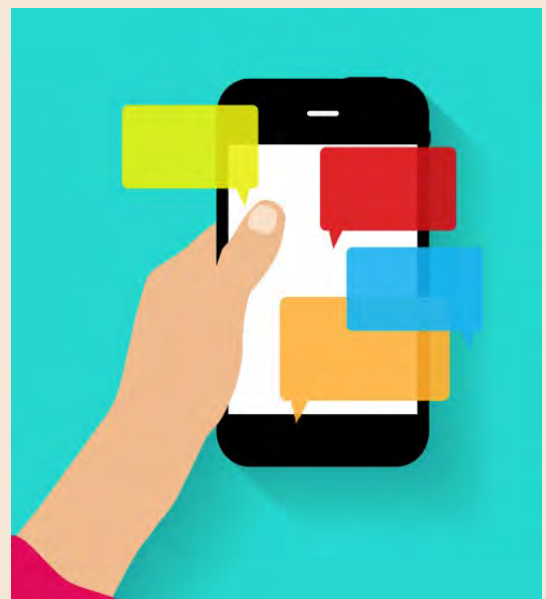
"We send a Monday Morning Message to preview the material for the week ahead and reminders for support. (virtual school)"

"I like to send written notes home."

Family engagement in the learning process improves outcomes for our students and creates community understanding and appreciation for the work that goes on in our classrooms and schools. As we continue to focus on advocating for our programs, we wanted to ask our members how they involve these important stakeholders to be a part.

Here are some of the responses we received from our members.

— Nathan Campbell, co-editor, *PLF*



What are the different ways that you engage or invite the community to participate or partner with your language program?

"We offer a World Language Career Symposium, an Intermediate World Language Program, and a Multicultural Night. Each event invites community members to participate and partner with students. These events often showcase the richness of our community and the value of language study."

"Leading student trips abroad, language club activities, and our honor society induction ceremony and reception."

"A community-engaged program called *"Niños y Niñas Bilingües"*. Students in Let's Talk About Food class complete projects based on Hispanic grocery stores in the city. Participation is required."

"I send emails to the whole staff, reach out to local businesses, and involve upper administration as needed for communication."

"I have reached out to the German American Chamber of Commerce, and invited school board members to hear kids recite poetry they have memorized, for example."

"I invite community members to the school to see what is being done"

"We have connected with local speakers in various fields to come connect with students about how to use the language in their lives."

"We send our students into the community as part of a monthly assignment to help them discover and document the ways that diverse languages and cultures are thriving all around them."

How do you communicate important events or news with families?

"We advertise all language events on the video announcements."

"We include major events in the Principal's weekly newsletter to all high school parents/guardians."

"We send emails blasts for reminders and invitations to events."

"We take advantage of the district social media accounts to recognize achievement and advertise our events."

"Email. Newsletters. Phone calls."

"I have a classroom website where I can post important announcements."

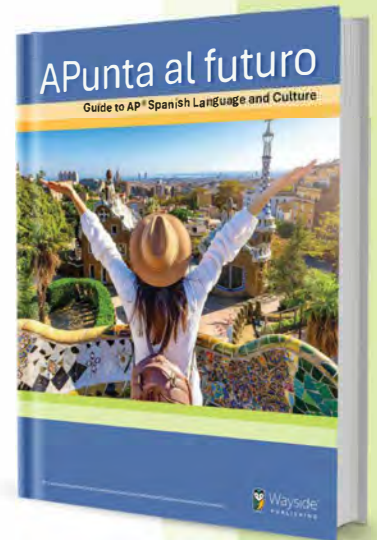
APunta al futuro

Guide to AP[®] Spanish Language and Culture

The **ONLY** Spanish program built **FOR** the new 2027 AP[®] Language and Culture Course.

- Designed for the revised AP[®] framework
- Emphasis on course project preparation
- AP[®]-style tasks featuring current authentic resources
- Focus on a variety of target cultures

Access the sampler!



Wayside[®]
PUBLISHING

AP[®] is a trademark registered by the College Board, which is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, this product.

gamehut

gamehut.org

Access game-based learning for your world language classroom

Raise. More. Hands!

Transform your lesson objectives into **high-energy, game-show moments**. Keep your standards intact while students stay **engaged, challenged, and excited to learn**. Instant setup, real-time tracking, powerful insights.

DIFFERENT TASKS. DIFFERENT GAMES. ONE GOAL: PARTICIPATION.



Thredzy

Connect words, categories and ideas while building vocabulary and conversation.

Vocabulary +
Critical Thinking



Buzzrs

Turn questions into live game-show moments built for speaking and conversation.

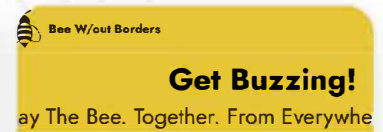
Speaking + Team
Play



DiceKrush

Turn grammar and review activities into strategic multiplayer challenges.

Grammar +
Assessment



Vocabee

Build vocabulary through live and self-paced retrieval, mapping and play.

Vocabulary +
Retrieval p. 20

2025-2026 PA Seal of Biliteracy Statistics

Compiled by Cherie Garrett, PSMLA Vice-President

Currently, the Pennsylvania Department of Education does not collect any data relating to the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy. PSMLA endeavors to expand awareness of the Seal of Biliteracy and collect data from participating schools.

PA Seal of Biliteracy by the numbers PA ...

90

School
Districts

57

High
schools

55

Tested
Languages

743

Total
recipients

To learn more about the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy visit the [PSMLA website](#). See a full listing of the collected results [here](#).



Learn more about our
world language solutions.



WORLD LANGUAGES

LANGUAGE • LITERACY • CULTURE

Inspiring and empowering K–12 language learners—those learning a new language, improving a second language, or perfecting their native language.

NEW FOR 2025–2026

SPANISH 6–12

Descubre ©2027

Lengua y cultura del mundo hispánico

Designed to prepare students for AP® from the start, now with new resources to foster even deeper cultural connections



SPANISH 9–12

Imagina 6e

Español sin barreras

Featuring even more authentic films, diverse voices, interactive media, as well as literary and cultural readings and activities



SUPPLEMENTAL FRENCH AND SPANISH 6–12

AI-Powered Speaking Partner

Unlimited low-stakes practice, personalized instant feedback, real-time data insights

MY
CONVERSATION
TRAINER

SUPPLEMENTAL SPANISH 6–12

Comprehensible Input (CI) Readers

Authentic, high-interest stories carefully aligned to student proficiency levels



p. 21

AP® is a trademark registered by the College Board, which is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, this product.

*"They Said My
Name?!"*

Reflections on a Year as ACTFL Teacher of the Year



Nathan addresses the 2025 ACTFL attendees.

Nathan Campbell **Manheim Central School District**

"And the 2026 ACTFL Teacher of the Year is..."

I'll be very honest: I did not expect my name to finish that declarative sentence. Many who saw my face on camera asked me, "What was it that you said when you won?" My response was simply, "They said the wrong name!" Please don't misunderstand me. I was thrilled. Excited. Maybe even a little nervous as to what would come next. As I walked up to the stage, I couldn't help but feel a little intimidated by the throng of people before me as I accepted the trophy and then delivered my notes of appreciation. After that, it was a bit of a whirlwind.

I was invited to come back out and listen to the keynote address from Miguel Cervantes, the Broadway actor who has played Alexander Hamilton more than anyone else. As the freshly named TOY, Miguel invited me to sing a song with him. A moment that was unexpected and completely unforgettable.

The rest of my time at the 2025 ACTFL National Convention in New Orleans was filled with hundreds of congratulations, countless selfies, and many opportunities to meet amazing educators from all over the United States and beyond.

As my year in this role comes to an end, I have finally had a chance to reflect on all the great opportunities that I have had and note some key takeaways from this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Takeaway Number 1: Sometimes our biggest fears end up being our biggest successes.

As the ACTFL Teacher of the Year, I attended all five regional conferences and the JNCL-NCLIS Language Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. This meant that my spring was full of travel, presentations, and speaking engagements. While I had presented many times in the past, speaking formally and professionally to a room of fellow world language educators was new. My very first speaking engagement was to deliver a forty-five-minute keynote speech to the Southwest region in Colorado. To say that I was a little nervous about this is quite the understatement.

Thankfully, with inspiration from my son, I drafted an outline and filled it with anecdotes, insights, and strategies. Delivering that first speech, that very long speech, empowered me in a way that I never would have predicted. I went on to deliver several more, thankfully

shorter, speeches at the remaining regional conferences.



*JNCL-NCLIS Language Advocacy Days, March 2026;
PA Delegation posing with Senator McCormick.*

Takeaway Number 2: Even though it seems dim right now, there is hope.

Falling enrollment numbers in world language courses at all levels seem to be telling us that the necessity to acquire another language is passé or that the utility of learning another language is futile, particularly when advancements in technology seemingly can substitute not just for our ability to communicate, but even for our ability to think. These are concerns I have heard a lot here in Pennsylvania, but also as I traveled to each region.

Ironically, at the same time, I spoke with many creative and inspiring practitioners who continue to find ways to promote their programs. They have learned how to adjust or repackage our powerful educational product in an attractive way. While it's easy to see a dismal future with all the hype about how AI and teacher robots will replace us, after seeing what others are doing in our field, I have hope.

I have hope because what we teach is more than language. We teach true interpersonal skills. We teach students how to communicate with each other in a way that demonstrates care for each other. We train our students to listen for key information so that they can respond thoughtfully. We present our students with diverse opinions and perspectives so that they can better understand the world. We provide our students with opportunities to experience a new culture and expose them to a new way of thinking that stretches them and challenges them to see the world differently.

I have hope. I have hope that if we learn to market ourselves in such a way that people value strategic communication and personal relationships, learning a new language and learning about other cultures will once again be à la mode.

Takeaway Number 3: Don't be afraid to depend on your team when you need them.

"Hey, do you think you could help me out with...?"

Admittedly, my pride often gets in the way of my ability to seek help from others. I'm often the I can do this all on my own type of guy. Busy is my normal speed, but the spring semester was the busiest semester of my life.

My amazing wife, Jen, was the first to step in. Maybe that isn't remarkable to some, but without her, there is no way that I would have been able to balance work, travel, trip planning (for students and myself), and all the normal family life events. She quickly helped me update



N. Campbell stands with PSMLA President Michael Bogdan and NECTFL Rep. (and wife) Jennifer Campbell at the NECTFL 2026 Conference.

my wardrobe, listened to me practice my speeches, and held down the fort each time I left for another weekend away.

My colleague, Kiana, willingly took on the responsibility of managing our exchange teachers and students the week that I had to be

in both D.C. and Chicago. I might add that it was only her second year teaching. Her support was invaluable in keeping our program running smoothly and allowed me to attend my TOY duties without worry.



N. Campbell, posing with five other past ACTFL Teachers of the Year at SWCOLT, Denver, CO.

Finally, one of the best rewards in this role is joining the ACTFL TOY family. I discovered an entirely new network of people that I could rely on and call upon for advice. People who had the perspective that I lacked because they had lived it all. Leaning on them when I needed insight helped me navigate my duties and be the best TOY that I could be.

All in all, this year has been one of the best. Yes, it was a lot of work, but it was good work, and I am so appreciative of having had the opportunity to serve in this role. I look forward to passing the torch in November and supporting the next ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year.

Opening the world through education

Every EF tour expands students' perspectives, prepares them for success in an ever-changing world, and is thoughtfully designed to align with what you are teaching in your classroom. Our compelling language & culture itineraries stretch across the globe, and they're packed with experiential learning opportunities that spark curiosity and unlock potential. Explore our educational tours at [eftours.com](https://www.ef-tours.com) and make learning come to life.



Go where learning meets life, contact:

Claire Puntill
claire.puntill@ef.com
412-746-7677



The Roadmap Forward: Advancing Language Proficiency, Programs, and the Profession



PSMLA Annual Conference
Wyndham Garden State College
November 6-7, 2026



LINGCO IS
DELIGHTED TO BE A
SPONSOR OF PSMLA

Lingco combines digital-first
innovation with print textbooks and
workbooks to offer a complete World
Language Curriculum for Spanish,
Spanish for Spanish Speakers, French,
and German.

Lingco for German,
French, and
Spanish 1-4/AP



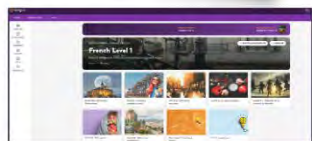
Updated AP
materials for
2026-2027



Print Textbooks
and Workbooks



Ready-made
curriculum, easily
customizable



Scan to request trial access
or contact:
Antonia Schmidt Lapierre
antonia@lingco.io
207.710.1144



PENNSYLVANIA LANGUAGE FORUM

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA STATE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Share Your Expertise!

The Pennsylvania Language Forum invites you to submit to our journal!

We welcome contributions from
world language educators at all
levels. Help us build a resource
that inspires, informs, and
supports our community of
language teachers.



LESSONS

Share what
works in your
classroom.



PROJECTS

Showcase creative
and engaging
ideas.



STRATEGIES

Offer practical
approaches for
student success



RESEARCH

Contribute to
the growing body
of knowledge.



SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS TODAY!

*Together, we can keep the conversation
about world languages going.*

PENNSYLVANIA LANGUAGE FORUM • CONNECTING LANGUAGES, CULTURES, COMMUNITIES.



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

PEER REVIEW CONTRIBUTIONS

The following section contains contributed articles that have undergone our blind peer-review process.

Special thanks to our authors and peer reviewers for their contributions to this issue!

Interested in submitting an article for Peer Review?

**View our submission guidelines:
<https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum>**



Beyond the Classroom Walls: A Food-Based Experiential Project to Enhance Motivation in Spanish Study

Lucía Osa-Melero

Dr. Lucía Osa-Melero is an Associate Professor of Spanish at Duquesne University, where she teaches Spanish language, culture, and Spanish for Healthcare Professionals while directing the Center for Hispanic Studies. Her teaching and research focus on experiential learning, community-engaged learning, and Spanish for Specific Purposes. She has developed and researched community-based learning initiatives that connect the study of language and culture with meaningful engagement beyond the classroom, both in local communities and in international contexts.

Abstract

This classroom-based study examines how experiential learning beyond the traditional classroom can support language learning in a university advanced Spanish as a second language (L2) course. Fourteen undergraduate students participated in a project that combined out-of-classroom experiential activities, structured class meetings, and synchronous video-computer mediated communication (SVCMC) with a native Spanish speaker. Students researched the history of a selected dish, visited a local Hispanic grocery store, purchased authentic ingredients, prepared Spanish tapas at home, recorded the cooking process, and produced a video infomercial modeled after a cooking television program. As part of the project, students also engaged in an SVCMC interaction to gather cultural information related to their selected dish. Drawing on student reflective essays and Likert-scale survey responses, the study examines students' perceptions of their linguistic and cultural engagement and their motivation to continue studying Spanish. Findings indicate that students responded positively to the integration of authentic food practices, out-of-classroom experiences, and interaction with a native Spanish speaker. Students' reflections and survey responses also suggest that the project increased interest in and willingness to pursue further Spanish coursework. Findings highlight the potential of combining experiential learning, project-based activities, and SVCMC to extend language learning beyond the classroom.

Introduction

In recent years, enrollments in Spanish and other world languages in U.S. higher education have declined substantially, despite Spanish remaining the most widely studied language in U.S. colleges and universities (Lusin et al., 2023). This decline has raised concerns about how

language programs can sustain students' engagement and motivation throughout their undergraduate studies. At the same time, Spanish continues to have significant social, professional, and communicative relevance in the U.S. This contrast between the continued relevance of Spanish and declining participation in language study underscores the need to consider pedagogical approaches that connect language learning to meaningful and personally relevant experiences.

Research on L2 motivation has emphasized the importance of authentic, purposeful, and socially situated language use in fostering sustained engagement with language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). Learning experiences that allow students to use the language for meaningful purposes, interact with others, and connect classroom learning to their lives and communities may provide opportunities for students to develop a stronger sense of relevance and agency as language learners. Such approaches are particularly important in university language courses, where students' opportunities to use Spanish may otherwise remain largely confined to the classroom. Experiential learning provides one framework for extending language learning into contexts in which students can engage directly with cultural practices and communities. Grounded in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, experiential learning involves cycles of concrete experience, reflection, and conceptualization. In language education, experiential approaches have been used to create opportunities for learners to participate in culturally and socially situated activities beyond conventional classroom instruction. These experiences can include community engagement, collaborative projects, encounters with authentic cultural practices, and interaction with speakers of the L2. By positioning learners as active participants rather than solely recipients of classroom instruction, experiential learning can connect linguistic development with cultural exploration and lived experience.

Project-based learning can further extend these possibilities by organizing learning around a culminating product. Rather than treating language as the object of study alone, project-based activities require learners to use the language to investigate, create, collaborate, and communicate. Food-related projects are particularly well suited to this approach. Researching a dish, locating authentic ingredients, preparing food, and communicating about the process can therefore create multiple contexts for meaningful language use while connecting classroom learning to students' everyday experiences.

Technology-mediated interaction offers an additional way to extend experiential learning beyond the physical classroom. SVCMC allows language learners to interact directly with speakers of the L2 and to access cultural knowledge that may not be readily available through classroom materials. Previous research has documented the potential of SVCMC for increasing opportunities for authentic interaction and supporting learners' linguistic and intercultural development. However, much of this work has examined SVCMC as a distinct instructional activity rather than as one component of a broader experiential learning sequence. Less is known about how students experience SVCMC when it is embedded within a larger project that connects classroom instruction with community-based exploration, authentic cultural practices, and reflective learning.

The present study addresses this intersection by examining a food-based experiential project implemented in an advanced undergraduate Spanish course. The project extended learning across classroom, community, home, and virtual contexts. Students researched the history of a selected dish, visited a local Hispanic grocery store, purchased authentic ingredients, prepared Spanish tapas at home, recorded the cooking process, and produced a video infomercial modeled after a

cooking television program. As part of the project, students also participated in a SVCMC with a native Spanish speaker to gather cultural information related to their selected dish.

Drawing on students' reflective essays and Likert-scale survey responses, this study examines students' perceptions of this integrated experiential learning experience, with particular attention to communicative confidence, engagement with Spanish-speaking cultural practices, and motivation to continue studying Spanish. Specifically, the study asks how students perceive the combination of out-of-classroom experiential activities, project-based learning, structured classroom instruction, and a single SVCMC interaction as contributing to their language learning experience.

Literature Review

Experiential Learning, Community Engagement, and Intercultural Learning

Experiential learning connects classroom instruction with meaningful experiences through a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). In L2 education, experiential approaches position learners as active participants in purposeful, socially situated language use and connect classroom knowledge with real-world contexts (Knutson, 2003; Moreno-López et al., 2017). Community-based learning extends these opportunities by allowing students to apply classroom knowledge, interact with speakers of the L2, and encounter language and culture in local contexts (Grim, 2010; Pellettieri, 2011). Osa-Melero et al. (2019) similarly demonstrate how community-engaged learning can connect language study with meaningful community participation and linguistic and intercultural learning. Such experiences suggest that meaningful engagement with Spanish-speaking

communities need not depend exclusively on study abroad; locally situated activities can also create opportunities to use language and engage with cultural practices. Experiential and community-based approaches are particularly relevant to intercultural learning because cultural understanding develops through encounters with language, practices, perspectives, and reflection rather than through the acquisition of cultural information alone (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Byram's (2021) model of intercultural communicative competence likewise emphasizes linguistic knowledge, cultural knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. Food provides a particularly accessible context for bringing these dimensions together because food practices are embedded in social, historical, and cultural contexts. Food-based language learning can connect linguistic forms with meaningful tasks and contextualized cultural knowledge while requiring learners to interpret authentic materials, follow procedures, interact with others, and accomplish concrete goals. Studies by Preston et al. (2015) and Park (2022) illustrate how cooking-based activities can support language learning through task-based interaction. Food can serve as a medium through which learners investigate cultural practices while using language for purposeful activity.

Synchronous Video-Mediated Communication

SVCMC can further extend learning by providing real-time interaction with speakers of the L2 beyond the physical classroom. Research on telecollaboration and videoconferencing has documented opportunities for linguistic and intercultural learning through online interaction (Belz, 2003; O'Dowd, 2007; Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020). More recent work has examined SVCMC in Spanish language pedagogy, including its potential to support noticing, transcription, and learner reflection (Kessler et al., 2023). When integrated into broader pedagogical

sequences, SVCMC can provide learners with opportunities to gather cultural information, encounter perspectives not available through classroom materials, and connect the virtual interaction with their conversational partner with subsequent reflection.

The present study brings these strands of research together through a food-based experiential project that connects classroom instruction, community engagement, home-based food preparation, and SVCMC. Students research a selected dish, visit a local Hispanic grocery store, prepare Spanish tapas, conduct an SVCMC with a native Spanish speaker to gather cultural information, and produce a final video project. Thus, rather than treating community engagement, intercultural learning, food-based learning, and SVCMC as discrete activities, the project integrates them into a connected sequence that extends language learning across classroom, community, home, and an international virtual spaces. In the present study, the food project provides the organizing context through which these experiences are connected.

The Present Study

Although experiential, community-based, and technology-mediated approaches have demonstrated value in language education, limited research has examined their integration within food-based projects in university Spanish courses. This study addresses this gap by examining a food-based experiential project that combined cultural and linguistic preparation, SVCMC, community engagement, collaborative cooking, and reflective practice.

Methodology

This study examined students' perceptions of an experiential teaching project and their reported motivation to continue studying Spanish. Data were collected over a four-week instructional

period as the project was implemented as part of the regular coursework of an advanced Spanish language course. Two sources of data were used: a post-project Likert-scale survey and a 350-word reflective personal essay. The activities and surveys were integrated into the regular course activities. Following the appropriate Institutional Review Board's determination that the study was exempt, students were invited to participate voluntarily in the research component after final course grades had been submitted. Students who provided consent permitted the researcher to analyze their course-generated written reflections and survey responses. All research data were de-identified prior to analysis to protect participants' confidentiality.

The study addressed the following research questions:

- (a) What are students' perceptions of the experiential teaching food-based project in an advanced Spanish language course?
- (b) How do students describe the experiential teaching food-based project in relation to their motivation to continue studying Spanish?

The post-project Likert-scale survey provided descriptive data on students' perceptions and their reported motivation. The reflective essays provided qualitative data on students' experiences and interpretations of the learning process. Together, these data sources offered complementary perspectives on students' responses to the food-based project.

Participants

Participants were 14 undergraduate students enrolled in a 300-level advanced Spanish course at Duquesne University, a mid-sized private university in Western Pennsylvania. All students were majoring or minoring in Spanish and participated in the experiential learning project as part of regular course instruction.

The sample included 12 female and 2 male students. Nine students were pursuing majors in the liberal arts, while five were enrolled in health sciences programs. One participant identified as a Spanish heritage speaker. Regarding racial and ethnic background, 11 students identified as White/Caucasian, two as multiracial (non-Hispanic), and one did not report their racial or ethnic background.

Procedures

The study was grounded in a required food-based experiential learning project titled *Las Tapas*, embedded in Chapter 4, *Las tapas en España: Interacciones en un bar*, of an advanced Spanish course. The project unfolded over Weeks 7–11 of the semester. The chapter was developed by the course instructor through funding provided by an Open Educational Resources (OER) grant. Instructional materials included two educational videos and a newspaper article addressing the history, cultural significance, and social dimensions of the tapas tradition in Spain. Guided comprehension activities and class discussions prepared students for the project.

During Week 7, students explored the historical and cultural significance of tapas through class materials, videos, and readings, followed by comprehension activities and class discussion.

Students were required to complete a 15-minute synchronous video-computer-mediated communication (SVCMC) session through the *Boomalang* platform with a native speaker from Spain. During the interaction, students asked several questions about tapas culture and gathered information about the cultural significance and preparation of *tortilla de patatas*, the tapa selected for the project.

During Week 8, students participated in a guided field experience at a local Hispanic grocery store. The instructor organized the visit, including group assignments, role distribution, and

guidelines for the collaborative project. Students purchased ingredients for *tortilla de patatas*, interacted with store employees in Spanish, and purchased lunch from the store's taco/quesadilla stand. Following the visit, students coordinated plans for ingredient storage, cooking, and video recording.

During Week 9, students worked collaboratively to prepare *tortilla de patatas* while recording the cooking process. Drawing on information from the SVC MC interaction, course materials, and independently located recipes, they developed an informational video (infomercial) in Spanish. The video required students to document and narrate the preparation process, provide step-by-step instructions, and explain the cultural significance of tapas within Spanish society. Students edited and organized their recordings into a final 6- 8-minute infomercial.

During Week 10, students presented their infomercials in class. Following the presentations, students completed an individual 350-word reflective essay in Spanish and a post-project Likert-scale survey addressing their perceptions of the experience and their reported motivation to continue studying Spanish. The use of English was not permitted at any stage of the project

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Analysis: Survey Responses

Responses to the post-project Likert-scale survey were analyzed descriptively to examine students' perceptions of the experiential learning project and their reported motivation to continue studying Spanish. Table 1 presents the distribution of responses for each survey item, highlighting students' evaluations of the project and their interest in continuing their Spanish

language studies beyond the course. The survey was originally written in Spanish and completed by students as part of the course.

Table 1: Perceptions Related to Experiential Teaching Food-Based Project (N = 14)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. The experiential activity enhanced my understanding of course content.	13	1	0	0	0
2. The experiential activity helped me connect classroom learning with real-world contexts.	14	0	0	0	0
3. I found the experiential components in the project engaging and meaningful.	11	3	0	0	0
4. The experiential activity improved my ability to communicate in Spanish.	10	4	0	0	0
5. The experiential activity increased my confidence in using Spanish in community settings.	9	4	1	0	0
6. The SVCMC assisted me to understand the cultural practice of tapas in Spain.	5	8	1	0	0
7. I would recommend including similar experiential projects with the SVCMC in future Spanish courses.	13	1	0	0	0
Impact on Motivation to Pursue Spanish Studies					
8. This experience increased my interest in continuing to study Spanish.	0	12	2	0	0
9. The project motivated me to seek additional opportunities to use Spanish outside the classroom.	2	12	0	0	0
10. The project increased my interest in working/meeting with Spanish-speaking communities.	2	10	2	0	0
11. I am more motivated to improve my Spanish proficiency after this experience.	3	7	4	0	0
12. This experience influenced my professional goals related to Spanish.	0	0	7	7	0

Note. Values represent the number of participants selecting each response option.

Qualitative Analysis: Reflective Essays

At the conclusion of the project, students completed a 350-word reflective essay in Spanish describing their experiences with the experiential learning activity. The instructor provided guiding questions to support reflection on the SVCMC, community engagement, collaborative cooking, and infomercial production. For analysis, the prompts and essays were translated verbatim from Spanish into English. All essays were submitted through Canvas as part of the course assessment and served as the primary qualitative data source for examining students' perceptions of the experiential learning project and their reported motivation to continue studying Spanish. The qualitative findings provide a complementary perspective to the quantitative survey responses.

An inductive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to identify recurring patterns in students' reflections. The analysis involved four stages: (1) two close readings of all essays to become familiar with the data and identify initial patterns; (2) generation of preliminary categories from meaningful excerpts related to students' perceptions and motivation; (3) organization of representative excerpts within categories; and (4) refinement and consolidation of categories into broader themes aligned with research questions.

Because the analysis was conducted by a single researcher, coding consistency was assessed through intra-coder agreement. The researcher independently coded the same dataset at two different time points and compared the coding decisions, yielding 96% agreement. No external coder was involved. Through this iterative analysis, four overarching themes emerged. Table 2

presents these themes, the number and percentage of students whose reflections included each theme, and representative quotations.

Table 2: Recurring Themes Identified in Students' Reflective Essays with Representative Quotations

Theme	Students mentioning the theme, n (%)	Representative student quotations
Value of authentic language use	14 (100%)	S.8: "Me encanta usar el español para hacer algo práctico y real" [sic]. S.13: "Hablar español para comprar los ingredientes y el almuerzo fue increíble. Valoro la oportunidad de hablar con personas de Las Palmas (<i>the name of the grocery store</i>)".
Enjoyment and engagement with the activity	14 (100%)	S.5: "Cocinar en el apartamento de A. es divertido y me gusta conocer más a K. y C." S.8: "Quiero tener más actividades como Proyecto Tapas. Me gusta mucho viajar a Las Palmas y conocer las personas Latinas." S.9: "Cuando hablo con Jesús para mi almuerzo me siento bien y puedo entender su pregunta y su respuesta. Estoy sorpresa" [sic]. S.10: "Es muy divertido cocinar con mis compañeras y trabajar en el video. Hay risas y felicidad cuando termina la tortilla."
Application of classroom content in real-world contexts	12 (85.7%)	S.9: "Las palabras que aprendemos en clase para los ingredientes y el peso, uso las en la tienda" [sic]. S.12: "Explico la vendedora qué voy a cocinar y todos los ingredientes que necesito. Aprendo en clase con la profesora" [sic].

Enhanced motivation for continued Spanish language study 11 (78.6%)	S.1: “Me preparo mucho para ir al supermercado y estoy motivado para más actividades como este” [sic]. S.3: “Quiero hago más proyectos así y más clases de Español con proyectos similar” [sic].
--	---

Note. Participant identifiers are pseudonyms. [sic] indicates an error or unusual wording in the original student quotation.

Discussion

Findings from the survey and reflective essays indicate that students responded positively to the *Las Tapas* project. Across both data sources, students emphasized the value of applying classroom learning in real-world contexts, using Spanish for practical communication, and participating in a collaborative activity with purpose.

Positive Perceptions and Meaningful Language Use

Overall perceptions of the project were favorable. All students agreed that the activity helped them connect classroom learning with real-world contexts, while 92.9% strongly agreed that it enhanced their understanding of course content and that they would recommend similar experiential projects in future courses. Similarly, all 14 students described the experience as engaging and meaningful in their reflective essays and emphasized the value of using Spanish for practical purposes. These findings are consistent with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and research on collaborative learning, which emphasizes opportunities to apply academic knowledge in meaningful contexts (Wehling, 2008). Students also described the project as enjoyable and engaging. These responses suggest that the combination of interaction with the community, collaborative cooking, and video production contributed to positive perceptions of the learning experience. Because the study did not directly measure changes in proficiency, these

findings can only be understood as evidence of students' perceptions rather than linguistic development.

Application of Classroom Learning and Communicative Confidence

Evidence of applying classroom learning emerged across both datasets. All participants reported that the activity improved their ability to communicate in Spanish, while 92.9% reported increased confidence using Spanish in community settings. In their essays, 85.7% described applying classroom vocabulary and structures in situations such as purchasing ingredients and interacting with native speakers. These reflections illustrate connections students perceived between classroom instruction and subsequent language use in community contexts.

Findings are consistent with research on collaborative learning, which emphasizes opportunities for learners to interact and construct knowledge through meaningful communicative activities (Lightbown & Spada, 2021). The project required students to draw on language introduced in class while navigating community-based interactions, reinforcing the relevance of their Spanish language.

Motivation to Continue Studying Spanish

Quantitatively, 85.7% of students reported increased interest in continuing their Spanish studies, and all participants agreed or strongly agreed that the project motivated them to seek additional opportunities to use Spanish outside the classroom. Qualitatively, 11 of 14 students explicitly mentioned increased motivation to study Spanish or participate in similar experiential activities. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that experiential and community-based learning can enhance perceptions of the relevance and usefulness of language study (Bringle et

al., 2010) and resonate with the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009). Students' reflections frequently connected the food project with a desire for additional opportunities to use Spanish, suggesting that experiential activities may support motivation by making future language use more tangible and personally relevant. Because motivation was assessed only after the project, these findings represent students' reported responses rather than evidence of a measurable change in motivation.

SVCMC and Cultural Learning

The SVCMC provided students with an opportunity to interact with a Spanish speaker and gather information relevant to the food project. Most participants agreed that the interaction enhanced their understanding of tapas culture in Spain, and most strongly recommended including SVCMC in future iterations of the project. Students also described connecting information obtained through the interaction with subsequent cooking and video-production activities. These findings are consistent with research documenting the potential of SVCMC and telecollaboration for linguistic and intercultural development (Helm, 2015; Tecedor & Vasseur, 2020; Bagheri & Zenouzagh, 2021; Kessler et al., 2023) and with scholarship emphasizing the relationship between language, culture, and situated experience (Kramsch, 2006; Byram, 2021). Importantly, SVCMC was embedded within a larger sequence rather than implemented as an isolated activity.

Professional Goals

One survey item produced a different pattern. When asked whether the project influenced their professional goals related to Spanish, responses were evenly divided between *Neutral* (n = 7) and *Disagree* (n = 7), with no agreement responses. The reflective essays likewise contained no

references to changes in professional goals or career plans. This finding contrasts with students' reported interest in continuing to study and use Spanish. Although students generally valued the project, they did not connect the experience with changes in their longer-term professional goals. Because the study did not investigate students' existing career plans, the reasons for this pattern cannot be established.

Pedagogical Implications

A central implication of the study is the potential value of connecting language learning across multiple contexts. The *Las Tapas* project extended learning from classroom preparation to SVCMC interaction, community engagement, collaborative cooking, video production, and reflection. Students' responses suggest that this sequence helped them recognize Spanish as a language for practical communication and participation in culturally situated activities.

These findings are consistent with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and previous research on community-engaged and intercultural learning (Paige et al., 2009; Pellettieri, 2011; Osa-Melero et al., 2019). The project demonstrates how experiential learning can be incorporated into regular university Spanish coursework through a series of relatively modest but interconnected activities rather than requiring an extended community placement or study-abroad experience.

The findings should nevertheless be interpreted considering several limitations. The sample was small ($N = 14$), drawn from a single advanced Spanish course, and the study relied primarily on post-project self-reported data and reflective writing. The design therefore does not permit direct

conclusions about causal changes in motivation, language proficiency, or communicative competence.

Conclusion

This study suggests that integrating community-based experiential learning with SVCMC can provide students with meaningful opportunities to apply classroom Spanish in practical and culturally situated contexts. Across the survey and reflective essays, students reported positive perceptions of the *Las Tapas* project, increased communicative confidence, and motivation to continue studying and using Spanish. The findings also highlight the value of embedding SVCMC within a broader sequence of connected experiences rather than treating it as an isolated activity. Although students did not report changes in professional goals, the overall findings support the pedagogical value of integrating structured collaborative projects, community-based experiences, and SVCMC into university Spanish instruction. Future research should examine similar projects across multiple sections and incorporate pre- and post-project measures to investigate changes in motivation, communicative confidence, and linguistic development over the semester.

References

- Bagheri, M., & Zenouzagh, Z. M. (2021). Comparative study of the effect of face-to-face and computer-mediated conversation modalities on student engagement: Speaking skill in focus. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 6(1), 123. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00103-0>
- Belz, J. A. (2003). Linguistic perspectives on the development of intercultural competence in telecollaboration. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7(2), 68–99.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bringle, R. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Muthiah, R. N. (2010). The role of service-learning on the retention of first-year students to second year. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 16(2), 38–49.
- Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters & Channel View Publications.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self system. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9–42). Multilingual Matters.
- Grim, F. (2010). Giving authentic opportunities to second language learners: A look at a French service-learning project. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(4), 605–623. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01104.x>
- Helm, F. (2015). The practices and challenges of telecollaboration in higher education in Europe. *Language Learning & Technology*, 19(2), 197–217.
- Kessler, M., Loewen, S., & Trego, D. (2023). Synchronous VCMC with TalkAbroad: Exploring noticing, transcription, and learner perceptions in Spanish foreign-language pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, 27(3), 642–659. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820954456>
- Knutson, S. (2003). Experiential learning in second-language classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v20i2.948>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

- Kramsch, C. (2006). From communicative competence to symbolic competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(2), 249–252.
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2021). *How languages are learned* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Lusin, N., Peterson, T., Sulewski, C., & Zafer, R. (2023). *Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, fall 2021*. Modern Language Association of America.
- Moreno-López, I., Ramos-Sellman, A., Miranda-Aldaco, C., & Gomis Quinto, M. T. (2017). Transforming ways of enhancing foreign language acquisition in the Spanish classroom: Experiential learning approaches. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(2), 398–409. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12267>
- O'Dowd, R. (2007). Evaluating the outcomes of online intercultural exchange. *ELT Journal*, 61(2), 144–152.
- Osa-Melero, L., Fernández, V., & Quiñones, S. (2019). Building bridges and creating pathways: A mixed methods study of community-engaged learning in foreign language pedagogy. *Hispania*, 102(3), 357-372.
- Paige, R. M., Fry, G. W., Stallman, E. M., Josić, J., & Jon, J.-E. (2009). *Study abroad for global engagement: The long-term impact of mobility experiences*. University of Minnesota.
- Park, J. (2022). Vocabulary learning through a daily task of cooking in the Digital Kitchen. *Language Learning & Technology*, 26(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73494>

- Pellettieri, J. (2011). Measuring language-related outcomes of community-based learning in intermediate Spanish courses. *Hispania*, 94(2), 285–302.
- Preston, A., Balaam, M., Seedhouse, P., Kurhila, S., Kotilainen, L., Rafiev, A., Jackson, D., & Olivier, P. (2015). Can a kitchen teach languages? Linking theory and practice in the design of context-aware language learning environments. *Smart Learning Environments*, 2(9). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-015-0016-9>
- Tecedor, M., & Vasseur, R. (2020). Videoconferencing and the development of intercultural competence: Insights from students' self-reflections. *Foreign Language Annals*, 53(4), 761–784. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12495>
- Wehling, S. (2008). Cross-cultural competency through service-learning. *Journal of Community Practice*, 16(3), 293–315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705420802255080>

From Routine to Results:

Correlating Daily Student Behaviors with Success in a Communicative Language Class

Rich Madel

Rich Madel (Ed.D., Saint Joseph's University) is a distinguished teacher of Spanish and Chairperson of the Department of World Languages in the Colonial School District in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, as well as an adjunct professor in Saint Joseph's University's Department of Educational Leadership. His professional work focuses on research-informed language teaching, classroom-based action research, teacher learning, and bridging scholarship with classroom practice. He was named the PSMLA Teacher of the Year in 2018 and has published and presented widely on world language education, research-informed instructional practice, and professional learning.

Abstract

This classroom-based action research study examined whether students' self-reported engagement in recommended daily micro-practices was associated with academic performance in an honors-level communicative language course. Micro-practices were defined as small, observable, repeatable learner behaviors supporting readiness, attentiveness, interaction, and follow-through. Of seventy-seven students enrolled in Spanish 3 Honors, sixty-seven completed a mid-semester reflection on Before Class, During Class, and After Class practices. Performance was measured through a proficiency-oriented weighted gradebook emphasizing interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication, quizzes, and participation. Correlations were uniformly positive and ranged from weak to moderate ($r = .14$ to $.45$). Total micro-practice engagement was significantly associated with final course grade, $r(65) = .32$, $p < .01$. During Class practices showed the most consistent significant relationships across performance measures, while After Class practices also showed positive associations and Before Class practices were weaker. Findings suggest that routine engagement behaviors, particularly during instruction, are associated with greater performance. Opportunities for further exploration and study limitations are also discussed.

From Routine to Results:

Correlating Daily Student Behaviors with Success in a Communicative Language Class

What student behaviors promote success in a communicative language class? What practices should teachers be actively recommending and reinforcing to their students? This action research project set out to explore these questions by seeking to find a relationship between recommended *micro-practices* and students' performance in a gradebook weighted for target language communication. Micro-practices, in the context of this project, are defined as relatively small, observable, and repeatable student behaviors that are intended to directly support readiness, engagement, and follow-through in a language learning environment. Each micro-practice is concrete enough to be monitored, practiced, and reinforced daily, yet flexible enough to allow for individual differences and readiness.

This exploration focused specifically on students enrolled in a Spanish 3 Honors course. This course is an honors-level language class and, consistent with district expectations regarding course weight designations, is designed for students who demonstrate academic motivation, independence, and a willingness to engage in deeper learning. In the district, this course is often the first honors-designated Spanish course that students experience in the sequence of their language study.

As articulated in the district's Student & Parent Handbook, honors students are expected to "submit high-quality assignments that reflect thought, care, and consistent effort" and exhibit a "genuine commitment to academics." To support students in meeting these expectations, the Spanish 3 Honors course syllabus developed and outlined a set of daily micro-practices - categorized as Before Class, During Class, and After Class - intended to reinforce the skills, behaviors, and habits associated with success in an advanced language-learning environment.

The following are the practices suggested to all students in writing as a part of the course syllabus and repeated informally throughout the course:

BEFORE CLASS

1. Review the posted agenda to anticipate learning activities and expectations.
2. Ensure that all work needed for the day's lesson is completed and proper evidence has been shared.
3. Ensure that you have all necessary materials and communicate ahead of time if not.
4. Practice/Review independently with class Quizlet set to gain familiarity with targeted expressions.
5. Arrive to class on time.
6. Place your cell phone in your assigned pocket and remove headphones as soon as you enter the classroom.

DURING CLASS

1. Attempt to use as much Spanish as you can (using Spanglish to help fill in any gaps) on assignments, with your teacher, and with your classmates.
2. Listen and read with the intent to understand.
3. Signal/communicate when there is something you don't understand and it is impacting your ability to follow along, complete an activity, or otherwise feel successful.
4. Ensure that when one person is speaking, you and others are listening.
5. Track the speaker with your eyes, body, and attention.
6. Support the flow of the class by participating, offering ideas/comments/reactions, and asking questions.
7. Stay on task and avoid distracting others.

8. Use free reading time effectively and prioritize books that you find interesting and comprehensible.
9. Seek permission to use bathroom sparingly, avoiding times that may be less appropriate to leave class.
10. Use technology appropriately and only with permission/as instructed.

AFTER CLASS

1. Complete any unfinished tasks from the class session.
2. Review the posted agenda to confirm learning activities and expectations regarding how to be prepared for the next class session.
3. Share evidence of classwork on Canvas before the posted deadline.
4. Communicate via e-mail with any questions, concerns, or to provide notice for upcoming absences.
5. Engage regularly with posted anchor activities and suggested practice opportunities/resources.

This report analyzes the relationship between student engagement with these recommended micro-practices at the mid-semester checkpoint and final gradebook-based performance metrics. Specifically, it investigates whether students who report consistent commitment to these micro-practices tend to perform better in key areas such as interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication, participation, quizzes, and overall course grade.

Considering the above, this project aligns with the call and guidance by leading institutions concerned with effective language teaching, namely the *Action Research Guide* published by the Professionals in Education Advancing Research and Language Learning

(PEARLL). In their guide, classroom-based action research is described as “a form of critical exploration, often by a teacher, to inform a specific, immediate, and practical aspect of one’s teaching” (Madel, 2025a, para. 2). Step-by-step guidance is provided to support language teaching practitioners in their efforts to be reflective and responsive to their classroom practices.

Student Performance

Understanding how student performance is operationalized is a critical feature of this analysis. This study’s participating district’s Department of World Languages uses a standardized weighted grade system that seeks to emphasize students’ communicative ability in their respective target languages. As such, students’ final grades are a product of the following weighted categories:

24% Interpretive Assessments

24% Interpersonal Assessments

24% Presentational Assessments

14% Quizzes

14% Participation

In the context of the course used for the current action research analysis, these categories are described as follows:

1. Interpretive assessments refer to students demonstrating written or aural comprehension of course material. This weighted category includes two summative interpretive benchmark assessments along with some smaller, formative checks within this communicative mode.

2. Interpersonal assessments refer to students participating in a spontaneous, two-way interaction in order to complete a real-world task. This weighted category includes two such summative benchmark assessments.
3. Presentational assessments refer to students engaging with a real-world task designed for an audience beyond the classroom. This weighted category includes two summative benchmark assessments in addition to some smaller, more formative tasks.
4. Quizzes are generally vocabulary-based, reflecting a growing set of targeted expressions throughout the semester, in which students demonstrate both receptive and productive ability in the target language.
5. Participation is subdivided into two smaller categories in Spanish 3 Honors: 7% is dedicated to participatory behaviors and another seven percent is dedicated to showing evidence of completing regular classwork tasks. Regarding the former, since every student is expected to make an effort during class time to use and engage in good faith with the language and lesson activities, each student begins the semester with twenty-five points. Points are deducted at the teacher's discretion for non-participation, talking in English without permission, disrespecting others in class, sleeping, not following reasonable instructions, excessive lateness and/or absences, or otherwise detracting from the community environment. Repeated offenses incur progressively increased point deductions. Regarding the classwork portion of this weighted category, evidence of meeting lesson objectives is collected regularly in the form of adequate progress and/or completion of assigned classwork. Full credit is withheld in the event of incomplete, insufficient, and/or erroneous work until completed according to expectations.

Summative benchmarks in modern world languages in the district are modeled fundamentally after the Integrated Performance Assessment protocol (Troyan et al., 2023). For each of the summative benchmark assessments mentioned above, the Department of World Languages leverages a standardized rubric for each communicative mode, designed specifically for students at each proficiency sub-level targeted for assessment. The performance criteria for the productive modes include Task Completion, Comprehensibility, Discourse Quality, and Impact (in the presentational mode) or Interaction (in the interpersonal mode). In the interpretive mode of communication, students are evaluated according to the following criteria: Key Word Recognition, Main Idea Detection, Supporting Detail Detection, Organizational Features, Guessing Meaning from Context, Inferences, Purpose, and Cultural Perspectives. Students are given an evaluation for each criterion on a four-point scale ranging from exceeds expectations, meets expectations, approaches expectations, to does not meet expectations. These raw score evaluations are then converted to a score congruent with the gradebook wherein just meeting all expectations affords students at least a B+. Exceeding expectations in one additional criterion provides access to a letter grade of A.

Related Literature

While empirical scholarship does not typically use the label *micro-practices* as they are framed in this action research study as applied to learner-controlled behaviors, a related conceptual distinction appears in the literature on high-leverage teaching practices. Glisan and Donato (2017) employed the concept of grain size to distinguish broader teacher practices from smaller-grain practices and instructional moves through which those practices are enacted. They offered as an example a comprehensive high-leverage practice such as leading a class discussion and explained how it can encompass smaller practices involving scaffolding, questioning,

encouraging participation, and otherwise supporting the interaction as integral components of the successful broader practice. Although their framework concerns teacher practice rather than student behavior, the distinction provides a useful parallel for the present exploration. That is, complex educational behavior, performance, or ability can be examined at a finer grain size by identifying the observable actions through which they are enacted to achieve broader success.

This distinction aligns with scholarship on student engagement, which likewise treats the construct as multidimensional, expressed through behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social participation in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004; Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Across general education research, engagement has also been associated with learning and achievement outcomes and conceptualized as malleable and responsive to classroom contexts rather than as a fixed learner characteristic (Fredricks et al., 2004). This perspective is especially relevant to the present study because it supports attention to engagement-related behaviors as potentially responsive to instructional conditions. In language-learning contexts specifically, Philp and Duchesne (2016) emphasized that engagement must be understood in relation to particular tasks and interactional settings and may be reflected in behaviors such as responsiveness, participation, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative problem-solving. All told, these perspectives provide a conceptual basis for the present action research project's examination of learner engagement through smaller, observable units of behavior and, in particular, demonstrate that observable behaviors enacted during classroom interaction warrant particular attention in language-learning contexts (Philp & Duchesne, 2016).

Research on communicative classroom interaction reinforces the plausibility of During Class behaviors as particularly high leverage. Studies of feedback and uptake in communicative/immersion contexts show that interaction can generate sequences in which

learners receive feedback, respond, and potentially reshape their language forms; implying, then, that learners must be attentive and participatory for these learning opportunities to occur (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Complementing this, scholarship on the construct known as “willingness to communicate” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 545) emphasized that learners can have sufficient linguistic knowledge yet still avoid using the language. One can conclude, therefore, that routines that normalize participation and reduce the social risk of speaking can be consequential for communicative development.

The Before Class and After Class micro-practices described in this project are also consistent with the learning-science findings that are especially relevant to vocabulary and form-intensive language coursework. Retrieval practice (e.g., self-testing) produces stronger long-term retention than additional restudy, even when restudy feels easier in the moment. This finding supports micro-practices such as frequent low-stakes review and active recall (e.g., Quizlet review of classroom vocabulary) (Karpicke & Roediger, 2008). Likewise, distributed practice, or spacing, (see Kang, 2016) is repeatedly associated with more durable learning than massed, back-to-back review, a finding that can easily apply relevance to a language learning context as a promising way to structure repeated encounters with language forms over time.

The current action research project’s emphasis on reducing distraction (e.g., placing phones away) is also supported by meta-analytic evidence linking non-instructional mobile phone use to small but reliable negative associations with academic outcomes across large samples (Kates et al., 2018). In other words, attention protection routines may be more valuable than simply compliance mechanisms; they have empirical plausibility as supports for sustained cognitive engagement. Recent discussions about students’ cognitive and social aptitude in

environments with constant tech-based disruptions have also concluded the benefit from attention proactive classroom measures (Haidt, 2024; Twenge, 2017).

Finally, the inclusion of practices supporting purposeful participation in free choice reading routines is sustained by scholarship on free voluntary and pleasure reading. Scholarship in this area emphasizes opportunities for learners to engage regularly with self-selected texts that are both interesting and appropriately accessible (Krashen, 2011; Mason, 2019; Vogrinčič Čepič et al., 2024). Such reading has been associated with language and literacy development in second- language learning contexts (Cho & Krashen, 2019; Krashen, 2024; Mason & Krashen, 2017), while classroom-oriented scholarship similarly highlights the value of free voluntary reading with novice and intermediate language learners (Hunt, 2022). These principles provide a rationale for encouraging students to use brief free reading intervals purposefully and to prioritize material they find both interesting and comprehensible. Of note, this approach to free choice reading has also been examined in prior action research with the same Spanish classroom context (Madel, 2020) and later throughout the program (Madel, 2025b).

Action Research Intentions

The goal of this action research project was to analyze and interpret Spanish 3H student performance (i.e., final grade) in relationship with self-reflections according to recommended micro-practices for success in an honors-level language class to determine if the recommended practices are, in fact, associated with student performance. The specific research questions were:

- RQ1 - To what extent are students engaging regularly in the suggested successful practices at the midway point of the semester?

- RQ2 – What is the relationship between the total amount of suggested successful practices that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?
- RQ3 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices before class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?
- RQ4 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices during class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?
- RQ5 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices after class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?

Methods

The chronology of the current action research project began first and foremost with express written administrative approval to conduct classroom-based action research as per the guidance offered by PEARLL (Madel, 2025a) and further with the subsequent supervision throughout a beginning, middle, and end structure throughout the project. As students ($n = 77$) began the course, a course syllabus was distributed that detailed the micro-practices above. Students were tasked with reviewing the syllabus document with a parent and both demonstrated that they understood and agreed to the information. Throughout the course, certain micro-practices were specifically mentioned in the natural context of instruction. That is, students were not necessarily reminded of the list of micro practices as their own specific focal point but instead were reminded as relevant and/or necessary. At the midway point of the semester,

students completed a reflection (see Appendix) during which they identified how many of the micro-practices they engaged in routinely, communicated as “each day.” Students tallied the total number during the Before, During, and After timeframes. Sixty-seven students completed the midway point check-in, representing an 87% participation rate.

These totals were then used as the basis of the correlation analysis at the end of the semester once final grades were reported for the course itself and within the individual weighted categories. The aforementioned correlation analysis was conducted using JASP statistics software (Version 0.19.3; Goss-Sampson, 2022). Moreover, ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2026) was used as a data-processing aid to tally the frequency with which individual micro-practices were selected in the student-response dataset. These counts were subsequently reviewed against the original response data for accuracy.

Summary of Findings

Overall, all correlations were found to be positive, meaning that increased engagement with daily micro-practices is associated with higher academic performance. In terms of magnitude, the strength of these relationships is generally weak to moderate (correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0.14$ to 0.45). Despite these modest effect sizes, though, many are statistically significant, indicating meaningful patterns and associations in student behavior and language-learning performance. The correlations are listed in Figure 1, and the strengths of their relationships are further presented in the heatmap in Figure 2.

Figure 1

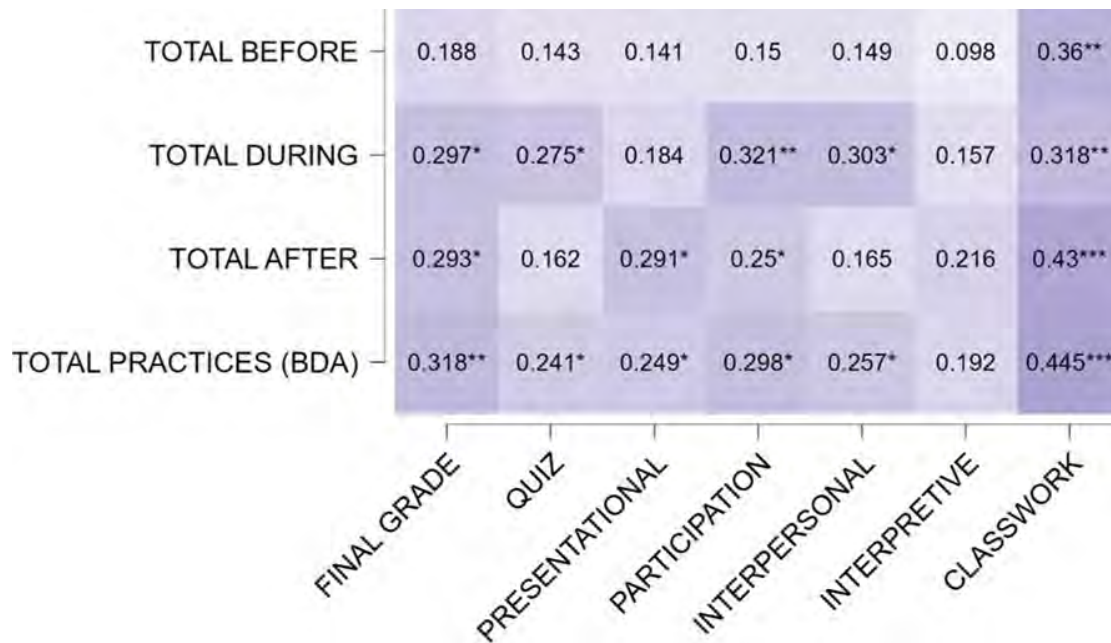
Pearson Correlations between Action Research Variables

Variable		FINAL GRADE	QUIZ	PRESENTATIONAL	PARTICIPATION	INTERPERSONAL	INTERPRETIVE	CLASSWORK	TOTAL BEFORE	TOTAL DURING	TOTAL AFTER	TOTAL PRACTICES (BOA)
1. FINAL GRADE	n	—										
	Pearson's r	—										
2. QUIZ	n	77	—									
	Pearson's r	0.73***	—									
3. PRESENTATIONAL	n	77	77	—								
	Pearson's r	0.87***	0.48***	—								
4. PARTICIPATION	n	77	77	77	—							
	Pearson's r	0.64***	0.34**	0.61***	—							
5. INTERPERSONAL	n	77	77	77	77	—						
	Pearson's r	0.78***	0.46***	0.52***	0.42***	—						
6. INTERPRETIVE	n	77	77	77	77	77	—					
	Pearson's r	0.82***	0.66***	0.55***	0.32**	0.70***	—					
7. CLASSWORK	n	77	77	77	77	77	77	—				
	Pearson's r	0.77***	0.49***	0.70***	0.49***	0.60***	0.50***	—				
8. TOTAL BEFORE	n	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	—			
	Pearson's r	0.19	0.14	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.10	0.36**	—			
9. TOTAL DURING	n	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	—		
	Pearson's r	0.30*	0.27*	0.18	0.32**	0.30*	0.16	0.32**	0.50***	—		
10. TOTAL AFTER	n	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	—	
	Pearson's r	0.29*	0.16	0.29*	0.25*	0.16	0.22	0.43***	0.65***	0.42***	—	
11. TOTAL PRACTICES (BOA)	n	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	67	—
	Pearson's r	0.32**	0.24*	0.25*	0.30*	0.26*	0.19	0.45***	0.85***	0.80***	0.82***	—

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 2

Heatmap Showing Strength of Associations between Action Research Variables



The specific findings according to each research question are as follows:

RQ1 - To what extent are students engaging regularly in the suggested successful practices at the midway point of the semester?

According to self-reported data, on average, Semester 1 students engaged in 4.13 of the six (68.8%) suggested micro-practices before class, 8.52 of the 10 (85.2%) micro-practices during class, and 3.34 of the five (66.8%) recommended micro-practices after class. Overall, students reported regularly engaging in sixteen of the 21 (76.2%) suggested micro-practices.

Examination of item-level endorsement frequencies revealed additional patterns. During Class practices were reported particularly consistently across students: each of the ten individual practices was reported by more than 70% of respondents. The most frequently reported behaviors included listening and reading with the intent to understand (95.5%), using technology appropriately (95.5%), tracking the speaker (92.5%), and listening when another person was speaking (91.0%). Before class, placing phones in the assigned pocket and removing headphones was reported by 92.5% of students, while independent Quizlet review was considerably less common (35.8%). After class, completing unfinished tasks was reported by 91.0% of students, whereas regular engagement with posted anchor activities and suggested practice resources was reported by 40.3%. Overall, practices embedded directly within the classroom routine tended to be reported more frequently than practices requiring additional self-initiated review outside of class.

RQ2 - What is the relationship between the total amount of suggested successful practices that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the total suggested micro-practices that students self-reported doing on a regular basis and students' final grade. There was a positive, statistically significant correlation between the two variables, $r(65) = .32$, $p < .01$, indicating a medium to essential dependence according to de Vaus' (2002) interpretation.

RQ3 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices before class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the suggested micro-practices before class that students self-reported doing on a regular basis and students' final grade. There was no significant correlation between the two variables, $r(65) = .19, p > .05$.

RQ4 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices during class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the suggested micro-practices during class that students self-reported doing on a regular basis and students' final grade. There was a positive, statistically significant correlation between the two variables, $r(65) = .30, p < .05$, indicating a medium to essential dependence according to de Vaus' (2002) interpretation.

RQ5 - What is the relationship between the amount of suggested successful practices after class that students communicate engaging in regularly and students' final semester grade?

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationship between the suggested micro-practices after class that students self-reported doing on a regular basis and students' final grade. There was a positive, statistically significant correlation between the two variables, $r(65) = .29, p < .05$, indicating a low-to-medium dependence according to de Vaus' (2002) interpretation.

Key Trends by Micro-practice Phase

Above and beyond the relationships with the final grade, interesting trends emerged among the associations with the quantity of self-reported micro-practices and the various phases (i.e., before, during, and after class).

During Class Micro-Practices

Of the three categories, the number of During Class practices a student reported engaging in regularly showed the strongest and most consistent statistically significant correlation with performance across nearly all grading categories. Notably:

- Final Grade ($r = 0.30, p < 0.05$)
- Participation ($r = 0.32, p < 0.01$)
- Interpersonal Communication ($r = 0.30, p < 0.05$)
- Quiz Scores ($r = 0.28, p < 0.05$)

These results suggest that active engagement during instruction, such as using as much Spanish as possible, tracking the speaker, participating actively, and avoiding distractions, is positively associated with both communicative performance and overall academic success.

After Class Micro-Practices

Students who consistently completed After Class micro-practices, such as reviewing agendas, finishing classwork, or submitting assignments on time, also tended to perform better in certain areas. Significant correlations include:

- Final Grade ($r = 0.29, p < 0.05$)
- Presentational Communication ($r = 0.29, p < 0.05$)
- Participation ($r = 0.25, p < 0.05$)

This suggests that follow-through and reflection after class reinforce student learning, particularly for higher-level tasks that require synthesis and preparation (e.g., presentational mode of communication).

Before Class Micro-Practices

While positive, the correlations between Before Class practices and gradebook metrics were weaker and not statistically significant in most cases. For example:

- Final Grade ($r = 0.19$, $p > .05$, not significant)

This may suggest that preparatory habits, while important, are perhaps most effective when paired with active engagement during and after class.

Discussion

The results of this action research project provide meaningful insight into the role of daily micro-practices in supporting student success in Spanish 3 Honors. The overall pattern of positive correlations aligns closely with established engagement research, which consistently frames engagement as a flexible construct associated with academic outcomes rather than a fixed learner trait (Fredricks et al., 2004). Interpreted through this lens, the findings reinforce the proposition that small, repeatable learner behaviors, or micro-practices, are associated with measurable differences in target language performance. This interpretation is further supported by language learning-specific scholarship emphasizing that engagement in communicative classrooms is inherently interactional and situational, making concrete behavioral indicators especially appropriate for educators' and researchers' attention alike (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). While the strength of the observed relationships was generally weak to moderate, the statistical significance of many associations suggests that routine classroom behaviors represent a plausible instructional lever rather than merely a peripheral feature of learner disposition.

The strongest relationships were observed with During Class micro-practices, specifically those emphasizing target language use and active attentiveness and participation. This pattern conforms with research on communicative interaction that highlights how learning opportunities emerge through feedback, negotiation of meaning, and learner uptake during classroom exchanges (Gass, 2003; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Accordingly, this action research underscores that learners are well-advised to be cognitively and socially engaged for interaction-driven learning sequences to occur and educators are justified to explicitly expect as much during their instruction. Furthermore, the present findings also resonate with the construct of willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998), which suggests that even though students may possess sufficient linguistic proficiency, they nevertheless vary in their likelihood of participating. From this perspective, micro-practices that encourage and normalize risk-taking, sustained and active attention, and target language use may indirectly facilitate conditions under which communicative competence can flourish. The consistency of correlations between During Class practices and performance indicators such as participation, interpersonal communication, and quizzes reinforces such an interpretation.

Similarly, the positive associations observed with After Class micro-practices emphasize the value of follow-through behaviors, such as completing unfinished tasks, reviewing posted agendas, and engaging with assignments. These patterns are no surprise to the findings from the learning sciences broadly (Whitman & Kelleher, 2016), particularly research on retrieval practice and distributed practice. Retrieval-based activities strengthen long-term retention more effectively than passive review (Karpicke & Roediger, 2008), while spaced encounters with material promote more durable learning than massed study (Kang, 2016). Although this action research project did not isolate specific cognitive mechanisms, the observed relationships suggest

that behaviors promoting repeated, active engagement with the target language and classroom content outside of the dedicated class time may contribute to improved performance, especially in capacities requiring synthesis and preparation (e.g., presentational communication). Notably, the phase-level relationships discussed above warrant some caution in the interpretation given the overlap between the behaviors represented in the micro-practices and certain grading criteria, particularly participation and classwork.

Of notable contrast, Before Class micro-practices, although generally positive in direction, showed weaker and often nonsignificant relationships with gradebook measures and communicative outcomes. It would be unfounded to interpret these results as preparatory behaviors lacking instructional value, though. Instead, it may point to the influential role of what happens during class. Since engagement research suggests that learning behaviors do not function in isolation but tend to work together (Fredricks et al., 2004), it implies that preparation may matter most when it is paired with sustained attention and participation during instruction. In communicative classrooms, where learning unfolds often through real-time interaction and meaning-making, behaviors enacted during class may, therefore, show stronger connections to performance. From this perspective, the comparatively weaker Before Class correlations can be understood as consistent with, rather than contradictory of, broader engagement emphasis.

From a practical standpoint, these findings reinforce the instructional significance of shaping classroom behaviors that encourage and protect active attention and promote interaction within a classroom discourse community. The evidence from Kates et al.'s (2018) meta-analysis – among others' works on the topic more broadly (see, for example, Haidt, 2024, and Twenge, 2017) – linking non-instructional mobile phone use with negative academic associations provides an example of a sufficient rationale for micro-practices aimed at reducing distraction,

suggesting that such routines may support cognitive engagement rather than just reinforce classroom management. Collectively, the results support the idea that engagement-supportive classroom norms, especially those enacted during instruction, may represent high-leverage points for teachers seeking to enhance communicative performance and a communicative classroom experience overall.

This study raises important opportunities for further inquiry consistent with action research expectations. Expanding the analysis to additional levels of Spanish (e.g., introductory or non-honors sections) could reveal whether the same patterns hold for a wider range of learners. Future projects might also disaggregate practices by type. For example, separating language-use behaviors from organizational or attentional behaviors may help to identify which subsets matter most for performance. A quasi-experimental design, in which one group receives targeted reinforcement of a specific set of practices while another does not, could also help explore causality more directly. Finally, longitudinal studies that track the persistence of micro-practice engagement across courses could illuminate whether these habits carry forward and impact long-term proficiency growth.

Several limitations of the present study should be acknowledged. First, the data on micro-practice engagement were self-reported by students, which introduces the possibility of bias or inaccuracy in recall. Second, it deserves to be mentioned that the correlational design does not allow for causal conclusions. That is, while micro-practices are associated with higher performance, other unmeasured variables (e.g., overall motivation, prior achievement, etc.) may account for part of the observed relationships. Relatedly, some overlap exists between certain micro-practices and the criteria used to determine course grades. In particular, several During Class practices correspond with behaviors reflected in the participation grade, while some After

Class practices overlap with expectations represented in the classwork component. This shared content may strengthen correlations involving those outcomes and may also contribute, to some extent, to associations with the final course grade. Third, the study was limited to a single course at one high school with academically motivated honors students, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Fourth, the analysis focused on one semester of data; additional semesters would provide stronger evidence of consistency and reliability.

A final measurement limitation concerns the construction of the micro-practices score. The Before Class, During Class, and After Class categories contained unequal numbers of practices (i.e., six, 10, and five, respectively). So, the summed score afforded proportionally greater representation to categories containing more individual practices. At the same time, it is unclear that the present action research report establishes a sufficient theoretical basis for treating the three interval categories as inherently equivalent or for weighting them equally within an overall engagement construct. The summed score was therefore interpreted as a count of individual micro-practices rather than as an equally weighted measure of three equivalent domains. Relatedly, the study did not establish that all individual micro-practices are equivalent in their importance or relationship to performance. Therefore, further research could examine alternative weighting approaches and develop more differentiated scoring models accordingly.

References

Cho, K.-S., & Krashen, S. (2019). Pleasure reading in a foreign language and competence in speaking, listening, reading and writing. *TEFLIN Journal*, 30(2), 231–236.

<https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v30i2/231-236>

de Vaus, D. A. (2002). *Surveys in social research* (5th ed.). Allen & Unwin.

- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59-109.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>
- Gass, S. M. (2003). Input and interaction. In C. J. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 224-255). Blackwell Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470756492.ch9>
- Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices*. ACTFL.
- Goss-Sampson, M. (2022). *Statistical analysis in JASP: A guide for students* (5th ed.). University of Greenwich. <https://jasp-stats.org/jasp-materials/>
- Haidt, J. (2024). *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin Press.
- Hunt, S. (2022). Novellas and free voluntary reading: An overview and some starting points for further research into practice. *Journal of Classics Teaching*, 23(46), 176–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S2058631022000186>
- Kang, S. H. K. (2016). Spaced repetition promoted efficient and effective learning: Policy implications for instruction. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(1), 12-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732215624708>
- Karpicke, J. D., & Roediger, H. L. (2008). The critical importance of retrieval for learning. *Science*, 319(5865), 966-968. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1152408>
- Kates, A. W., Wu, H., & Coryn, C. L. S. (2018). The effects of mobile phone use on academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Computers & Education*, 127, 107-112.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.08.012>

- Krashen, S. (2011). *Free voluntary reading*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Krashen, S. (2024). Language acquisition and the power of pleasure reading. *Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education*, 5(1), 19–25. <https://doi.org/10.63529/ajpe.v5i1.11211>
- Lyster, R., & Ranta, L. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263197001034>
- MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82(4), 545-562. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x>
- Madel, R. (2025a). *Action research guide*. Professionals in Education Advancing Research and Language Learning. <https://pearll.nflc.umd.edu/action-research-guide/>
- Madel, R. (2025b). Evaluating the impact of free reading classroom libraries in high school world language classes. *Pennsylvania Language Forum*, 100(1), 29-39. https://psmla.org/sites/default/files/fdm_general/2025/PLFSpring2025.pdf
- Madel, R. (2020). Evaluating the impact of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) in Spanish class. *Pennsylvania Language Forum*, 91(1), 50-63. <https://www.psmla.org/sites/default/files/PLF2020Fall.pdf>
- Mason, B. (2019). Guided SSR before self-selected reading. *Shitennoji University Bulletin*, 67, 445–456. <https://www.benikomason.net/content/articles/2019-gssr-before-ssr.pdf>
- Mason, B., & Krashen, S. (2017). Self-selected reading and TOEIC performance: Evidence from case histories. *Shitennoji University Bulletin*, 63, 469-475. <https://tinyurl.com/yc9tc8ha>
- OpenAI. (2026). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

Philp, J., & Duchesne, S. (2016). Exploring engagement in tasks in the language classroom.

Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 36, 50-72.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190515000094>

Troyan, F., Adair-Hauck, B., & Glisan, E. W. (2023). *The integrated performance assessment:*

Twenty years and counting. ACTFL.

Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious,*

more tolerant, less happy—and completely unprepared for adulthood. Atria Books.

Vogrinčič Čepič, A., Mascia, T., & Aerila, J. (2024). Reading for pleasure: A review of current

research. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, 59, 49–71.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40841-024-00313-x>

Whitman, G., & Kelleher, I. (2016). *Neuroteach: Brain science and the future of education*.

Rowman & Littlefield.

Appendix

Honors Expectations Mid-Semester Check-In

Spanish 3H is an honors-level language class and course and student expectations are adjusted to reflect as much. The Plymouth Whitemarsh High School Student & Parent Handbook describes honors level courses as follows:

Honors level courses are appropriate for a student who learns well through verbal and abstract methods of instruction, reads thoroughly and insightfully, demonstrates understanding and insight, works well both independently and in groups, understands and follows directions with little or no difficulty, demonstrates a sound grasp of the writing process and can express themselves well in writing, demonstrates perseverance and motivation, has a genuine commitment to academics and is committed to doing the necessary academic study, submitted in a timely fashion high quality assignments that reflect thought, care, and consistent effort; and asks questions thoughtfully and carefully.

Considering the above description and expectations, the course syllabus recommended a set of reasonable, level-appropriate practices and behaviors to facilitate success in Spanish 3H. At this mid-semester checkpoint, take a moment to reflect and quantify how many of the practices do you engage in each day?

Class

Block 1

Block 2

Block 3

Block 4

Block 5

BEFORE CLASS

Please check each of the recommended practices that you engage in each day BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Review the posted agenda to anticipate learning activities and expectations.
- ☐ Ensure that all work needed for the day's lesson is completed and proper evidence has been shared.
- ☐ Ensure that you have all necessary materials and communicate ahead of time if not.
- ☐ Practice/Review independently with class Quizlet set to gain familiarity with targeted expressions.
- ☐ Arrive to class on time.
- ☐ Place your cell phone in your assigned pocket and remove headphones as soon as you enter the classroom..

How many boxes did you check in this section?

DURING CLASS

Please check each of the recommended practices that you engage in each day DURING CLASS

- ☐ Attempt to use as much Spanish as you can (using Spanglish to help fill in any gaps) on assignments, with your teacher, and with your classmates.
- ☐ Listen and read with the intent to understand.
- ☐ Signal/communicate when there is something you don't understand and it is impacting your ability to follow along, complete an activity, or otherwise feel successful.
- ☐ Ensure that when one person is speaking, you and others are listening.
- ☐ Track the speaker with your eyes, body, and attention.
- ☐ Support the flow of the class by participating, offering ideas/comments/reactions, and asking questions.

- ☐ Stay on task and avoid distracting others.
- ☐ Use free reading time effectively and prioritize books that you find interesting and comprehensible.
- ☐ Seek permission to use bathroom sparingly, avoiding times that may be less appropriate to leave class.
- ☐ Use technology appropriately and only with permission/as instructed.

How many boxes did you check in this section?

AFTER CLASS

Please check each of the recommended practices that you engage in each day AFTER CLASS

- ☐ Complete any unfinished tasks from the class session.
- ☐ Review the posted agenda to confirm learning activities and expectations regarding how to be prepared for the next class session.
- ☐ Share evidence of classwork on Canvas before the posted deadline.
- ☐ Communicate via e-mail with any questions, concerns, or to provide notice for upcoming absences.
- ☐ Engage regularly with posted anchor activities and suggested practice opportunities/resources.

How many boxes did you check in this section?

Applying Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) to Facilitate Students' Creative Writing: An Action Research Study

Hui-Chun Cheng

Hui-Chun holds a Master of Education (M.Ed.) from the University of Pittsburgh, specializing in World Language Education with a focus on Asian Studies. She currently works at the World of Learning Institute (WOL) at Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 (AIU8) in Pennsylvania as a Chinese instructor and virtual learning facilitator. She has experience teaching both in person and remotely, working with children, teenagers, and adults, as well as both foreign- and heritage-language learners. She is also actively involved in PSMLA, NECTFL, ACTFL, and CLTA. Her research interests include language pedagogy, intercultural competence, and research-informed teaching.

Abstract

The study examines how to implement Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) to facilitate students' creative writing development and enhance their writing skills. Genre-based writing emphasizes explicit instruction that helps students understand and apply the purpose, functions, and language features of specific genres. GBP encourages learners to analyze texts and co-construct meaning with teachers and peers through collaborative interaction, promoting presentational written communication in alignment with the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages developed by ACTFL (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The findings of this action research provide insightful perspectives into the effectiveness of GBP in facilitating creative writing among Chinese language learners.

Key words: Genre-based pedagogy, Creative writing, Collaborative interaction, Presentational written communication, Chinese language learners

Introduction

This study applies Chinese children's literature and modern poetry as the genre to support two elementary students' creative writing development in a Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) classroom. Using the proposed GAPss Model (**G**enre selection, **A**nalyze the text, **P**urposeful writing, and **A**ssess), which is based on Martin (2009) and Derewianka and Jones (2016) and inspired by Glisan and Donato (2017), this study investigates how students develop writing competence through a sequence of structured teaching and learning activities.

Literature Review

I. The Importance of Collaborative Interaction in Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP).

According to Donato (1994), learners co-construct knowledge through social interaction, enabling them to perform beyond their individual capabilities. Students negotiate meanings, discuss language choices, and jointly construct texts. Through collaborative dialogue, GBP is often implemented through the Teaching and Learning Cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Westerlund, 2024), which gradually moves students from supported to independent performance. The cycle typically includes “Building knowledge of the field,” “Text deconstruction,” “Joint construction,” “Independent use of the genre,” and “Reflection and feedback.” “Building knowledge of the field” refers to developing background knowledge of the selected genre. “Text deconstruction” involves analyzing and deconstructing the text both linguistically and contextually. “Joint construction” refers to collaborative interactions and activities between teachers and peers. “Independent use of the genre” enables learners to progress from collaborative writing activities to independent writing tasks through the process of scaffolding. Finally, “Reflection and feedback” emphasizes that providing students with appropriate feedback and effective assessment can help them become better writers. This gradual release of responsibility provides learners with structured support to understand how language functions within specific genres before producing their own texts (Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

II. Scaffolding Learners’ Development from Collaborative Writing to Independent Writing

Scaffolding is essential in supporting language learners as they move from guided participation toward greater independence. Kibler, Walqui, and Bunch (2015) emphasize three key concepts that can be applied in second language classrooms. First, teachers need to engage students with complex and amplified texts through high expectations and high levels of support. For example, when teaching students creative writing through genre writing, teachers can seek an authentic and unmodified text to engage learners with complex and amplified language. This allows students to experience an appropriate level of challenge while learning new concepts. Second, teachers must understand language acquisition as a social and developmental process. During discussions of the text and its genre, teachers can guide students in analyzing language use and grammar and encourage them to co-construct textual and contextual meanings, thereby fostering a discourse community that engages with the social and cultural contexts of the text. Finally, teachers scaffold students' development from collaborative writing activities to independent writing tasks, supporting their language and cognitive development while increasing their autonomy as writers.

III. Teachers' Responsibility to Develop an Inclusive Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)

When designing writing assessment, teachers should focus on the purpose, functions, and language features of specific genres, make expectations explicit, and provide constructive feedback highlighting strengths and areas for improvement, as well as provide students opportunities for growth (Schleppegrell and Go, 2007). In addition, based on the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners (ACTFL, 2012), performance-based assessment (PBA) evaluates students' ability to use language meaningfully in authentic contexts, whereas

proficiency-based assessment measures overall language ability across contexts. The performance-based assessment (PBA) was revised and designed to describe language performance resulting from explicit instruction and reflect how language learners perform across a variety of learning contexts, including classroom instruction, online learning, or independent project-based learning. PBA also combines immediate classroom observation and formative feedback, providing learners a more supportive and inclusive learning and writing environment and encourage students' ongoing development (Tai et al., 2023; Singer-Freeman et al., 2019).

Research Questions

Although Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) has been widely discussed and applied in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts for teaching English writing, few Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) teachers have applied GBP to teach writing in their Chinese classrooms. Moreover, there is limited research on the application of GBP for Chinese writing instruction that includes detailed classroom observations and instructional processes. Therefore, this study addresses the following questions, which can contribute to further discussion and improvement of GBP through an action research cycle to foster students' writing skills:

1. How effective is the selection of age-appropriate and proficiency-level-appropriate authentic literary texts in supporting Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) in Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) classrooms?
2. What impact does integrating language, content, and culture through Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) have on students' creative writing and presentational written communication, aligned with the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages?

3. What impact does Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) have on evaluating students' writing development and providing effective feedback?

Methodology

The study applied an action research design to investigate the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy (GBP) in teaching two elementary students creative writing by using Chinese children's literature modern poetry. I implemented a four-phase instructional practice, and collected evidence from classroom observations, peer interactions, student writing samples, and assessment feedback.

Participants' Background and Learning Profile

Two sixth-grade female students, Student A, and Student B, enrolled in a Level 2 beginning Chinese language course at a Chinese school in Pittsburgh. They have been learning Chinese at the school for one to two years during the fall and spring semesters of each academic year. The class meets once a week on Sundays. Both are Asian Americans who were born and raised in the US. They rarely travel to and stay in China or Taiwan during their summer or winter vacations. At home, they hear their parents speaking Chinese, but they primarily speak English themselves. As a result, their listening proficiency in Chinese is stronger than their speaking proficiency. They use Pinyin and have learned Simplified Chinese characters. Both students demonstrate positive attitudes toward learning to write Chinese characters.

To apply Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) to the teaching of writing, this study proposes the GAPss Model, an instructional model adapted from the "Teaching and Learning Cycle" described by Martin (2009) and Derewianka and Jones (2016), and informed by High-Leverage Teaching Practice (HLTP) #9, "Engaging Learners in Purposeful Written Communication,"

outlined by Glisan and Donato (2017).

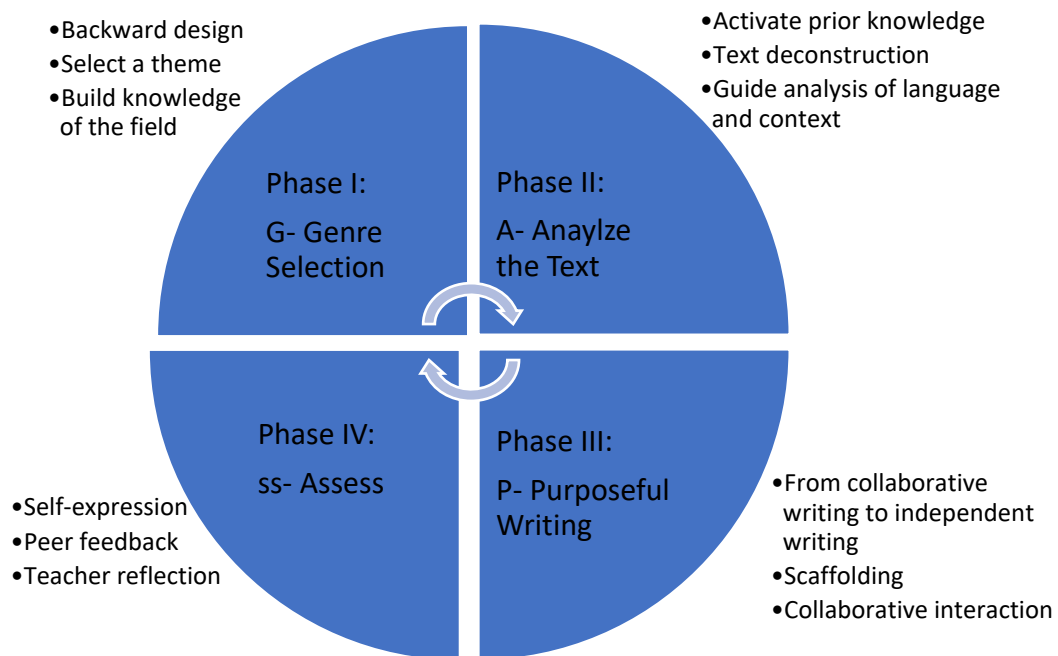


Figure 1. GAPss Model

Phase I. G- “Genre” selection

Backward design

Since it was almost at the end of the semester and the students have already completed the textbook lessons in *Chinese Made Easy for Kids Book 2* (Ma, Y., 2015), I wanted to design a project that allowed them to review themes and vocabulary covered from the textbook throughout the semester. Often, students acquire a large amount of vocabulary but have limited opportunities to use it in authentic contexts. The academic goal of this project was for students to analyze the selected genre and use its characteristics as a model for their own creative writing. Through this process, students applied the language and writing skills they had learned to compose an original essay (see Table 1, Lesson Plan). I hope after this writing project, they will gain a sense of accomplishment and feel more confident in learning and writing in Chinese.

Table 1. Lesson Plan

Learning Goal/ Lesson Objective	Students will be able to (SWBAT) understand the genre narrative and function of the Chinese modern poetry and apply those features in creative writing.
Content Objective	• SWBAT observe and investigate the model text and conduct linguistic and contextual analyses. • SWBAT demonstrate the ability to interpret the meaning of the model text and communicate effectively through written texts. • SWBAT engage in collaborative interactions and writing activities, developing listening, speaking, reading, and, most importantly, writing skills (presentational written communication). • SWBAT demonstrate the ability to grow and develop as independent writers.
Language Objective	• SWBAT implement what they have learned in their regular Chinese curriculum classes and apply knowledge from the textbook to the real context. • SWBAT co-construct meaning and understand the functions of the specific grammatical structures presented in the original modern poem and apply them in their own writing. • SWBAT examine the organization and coherence of their own writing and communicate their ideas effectively to others.
Genre Focus	Chinese modern poetry serves as a model text, offering rich opportunities for exploring imagery, symbolism, metaphor, emotion, and personal expression.
Assessment Goal	Students compose an original poem demonstrating understanding of: (1) Creativity and originality, (2) Genre awareness, (3) Organization and coherence, (4) Communication of meaning, (5)

	Vocabulary use and grammar, and (6) Language accuracy.
Anticipated Challenges	I was wondering whether writing the poem in Chinese characters would be too challenging for them, so I did not ask them to do so and instead let them choose. Both voluntarily chose to write it in Simplified Chinese characters with Pinyin.

Select a theme

During lesson planning, the poems of Lin Wu-Hsien (林武憲), a Taiwanese children's literature poet, came to mind because they are simple, charming, and rich in repetition and rhythm, making them particularly suitable for elementary school students. Many of his poems can be adapted into songs, and they contain vivid imagery that engages young readers. Although the language is accessible and appropriate for students at this level, the poems often convey deeper meanings while remaining easy to understand. These characteristics make them well suited to my students' age (sixth grade) and Chinese proficiency level (Beginning High to Intermediate Low).

Build knowledge of the field

Drawing on the concept of “preparing learners” (Kibler, Walqui, & Bunch, 2015), I selected the poem *Fishing* 〈釣魚 Diào yú〉 (See Image 1.) by Lin Wu-Hsien because it contains elements that align with students' learning in *Chinese Made Easy for Kids Book 2*, including animals (*Chinese Made Easy for Kids Book 2, Lesson 4, pg.27*), recreational activities (*Chinese Made Easy for Kids Book 2, Lesson 16, pg.116*), and other familiar topics. Through this lesson, I hoped students would connect their prior knowledge with new learning experiences and use Chinese in meaningful and authentic ways while creating their own texts.

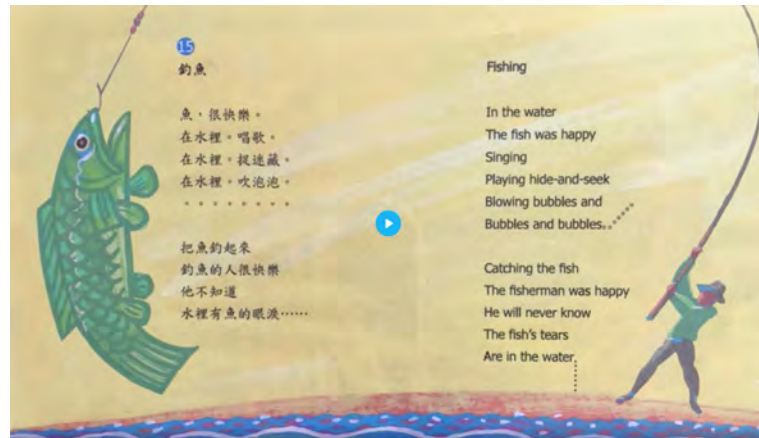


Image 1. Original Text from Lin Wu-Hsien's Poetry Collection

The text < 釣魚, Diào yú > with Simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin is provided below:

“鱼，很快乐。Yú, hěn kuài lè。

在水里。唱歌。Zài shuǐ lǐ。Chàng gē。

在水里。捉迷藏。Zài shuǐ lǐ。Zhuō mí cáng。

在水里。吹泡泡儿。 。 。 。 。 。 。 。 Zài shuǐ lǐ。Chuī pào pào er 。 。 。 。 。 。 。 。

把鱼钓起来 Bǎ yú diào qǐ lái

钓鱼的人很快乐 Diào yú de rén hěn kuài lè

他不知道 Tā bù zhī dào

水里有鱼的眼泪……Shuǐ lǐ yǒu yú de yǎn lèi……”

Phase II. A- “Analyze” the text

Activate prior knowledge

As Lily Wong Fillmore stated, “Prior experience becomes a context for interpreting the new experience . . . prior experiences serve as the contexts within which the language being used is to be understood” (Gibbons, 2015, p.79). Therefore, during the lesson, I first introduced the

title of the poem in Simplified Chinese characters, accompanied by visuals (see Table 2), to activate students' prior knowledge and personal experiences related to the topic. I began by asking, “What does 鱼 (yú, fish) mean?”, “What does 钓 (diào) mean?”, and “What is a 钓鱼的人 (diào yú de rén, fisherman)?” Both students understood the meanings of these words. I then continued by asking, “你钓过鱼吗? (nǐ diào guò yú ma?) Have you ever gone fishing?” and “你喜欢钓鱼吗? (nǐ xǐ huān diào yú ma?) Do you like fishing?” We spent some time discussing their personal experiences before moving on to the main theme of the poem. It is also important to note that in our Chinese classroom discussions, we did not follow a total-immersion approach; instead, we frequently employed translanguaging practices to facilitate communication and learning.

Table 2. Simplified Chinese Characters with Visuals

  <i>yú</i>	
  <i>rén</i>	

Text deconstruction and Guide analysis of language and context

I first read-aloud each line slowly, using pauses and emphasizing rhythm and rhyme. I stopped after each line to ask students questions and frequently check their comprehension. I guided students in analyzing the vocabulary and grammatical features of the poem, as well as

exploring its functions and purposes within the text. The students examined the poem and co-constructed meaning through two lenses: Language and Context analysis. In the Language analysis, the students learned to analyze “text organization” (two paragraphs, each containing four sentences), “grammatical structures” (for example, in Chinese grammar, adjectives can function as stative verbs; what is 在 zài; what is 把 bǎ with an action), as well as “figurative language” (for example, 。。。 is period in Chinese, however, it also represents blowing bubbles in this poem; ……… in the second paragraph represents a fish’s tears). In the Context analysis, the students explored the author’s purpose, the audience, as well as the socio-cultural contexts and literary significance. This contextual understanding helped the students interpret the text more deeply and informed their own writing. After we analyzed the poem’s context, Student B said, “So the fisherman is happy, but the fish is sad.” I was pleased that the students were able to draw their own conclusions after co-constructing meaning.

The two Tables below provide a more detailed description of each analysis:

Language analysis

The first paragraph contains four sentences, and the second paragraph also contains four sentences, each with a different subject. I then introduced and explained several rhetorical devices, such as subject omission, parallel sentence structures, and personification. Given their sixth-grade level, the students were able to recognize these writing techniques because they had already learned about them in their English Language Arts classes at school. I explained the forms and functions of these rhetorical devices, and we co-constructed meaning. The students then asked about the grammatical structure 在水里 (zài shuǐ lǐ, “in the water”), which appears three times in the first paragraph. We discussed and co-constructed the meaning and function of

the pattern 在... (zài...), using examples such as 在森林 (zài sēn lín, “in the forest”). Through the discussion, the students understood that 在... is a prepositional phrase used to describe the location or setting of an action or event. In addition, another important clue was provided in the poet’s video: <https://stv.naer.edu.tw/watch/330014> (National Academy for Educational Research & I-FunLearning, 2018), in which he mentioned that periods marked in the first paragraph metaphorically represents the image of a fish blowing many bubbles. This was an interesting point for the students, as it also helped them explore linguistic and literary comparisons across different languages.

Table 3. Language Analysis

Subject (The Participant)	Circumstance (The Place)	State Verb or Action	Meanings
1. 鱼 (yú, fish)		很快乐 (hěn kuài lè, very happy) .	The fish is very happy.
2. (鱼)	在水里 (zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water) .	唱歌 (chàng gē, sing) .	The fish is singing in the water/under the sea.
3. (鱼)	在水里 (zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water) .	捉迷藏 (zhuō mí cáng, play hide-and-seek) .	The fish is playing hide-and-seek in the water/under the sea.
4. (鱼)	在水里 (zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water) .	吹泡泡儿 (chuī pào pào, blow bubbles)	The fish is blowing bubbles in the water/under the sea.

5. (钓鱼的人)	把鱼钓起来 (bǎ yú diào qǐ lái, catch the fish)	(Someone) catches the fish.
6. 钓鱼的人 (diào yú de rén, fisherman)	很快乐 (hěn kuài lè, very happy)	The fisherman is happy.
7. 他(tā, he)	不知道 (bù zhī dào, does not know)	He does not know+ <u>Complement</u>
8. <u>Complement:</u> 水里(shuǐ lǐ, water)	有鱼的眼泪 (yǒu yú de yǎn lèi, has the fish's tears)	There are the fish's tears in the water/under the sea.

Context analysis

Table 4. Context Analysis

Author's purpose (What is the poet's purpose in writing the poem <i>Fishing</i> <釣魚, Diào yú >?)	Lin Wu-Hsien (林武憲) is a Taiwanese poet known for writing poetry for children. He believes that a great poem must create vivid “images” for its readers. The poem <釣魚, Diào yú > provides opportunities for student discussion and encourages critical thinking. For example, the poem may be read as a fairy tale, a tragic narrative, or even an advocacy piece that raises awareness of environmental and ecological issues. The open-ended nature of the poem encourages readers to consider multiple perspectives and meanings.
Audience (Who is he writing for?)	Lin Wu-Hsien writes primarily for children, encouraging them to imagine the world and develop their creativity and critical thinking. However, his audience is not limited to children; it also includes teenagers, adults, and learners of the Chinese language. His poems have been incorporated into the elementary school curriculum in Taiwan and are widely used as teaching materials.

Socio-cultural contexts (What may be the socio-cultural background of the poem?)	• Who is the main character in this poem—the fish or the fisherman? • Is this poem a narrative, or does it recount and describe a specific event? • What is the field of the text? What are the circumstances? The fish is in the water, but where is the fisherman—by a lake, a river, or at a fishing pond? • What is the tenor of the text? What is the relationship between the fish and the fisherman? • What is the mode of the poem? How does the fish express its emotions through personification? If the fish’s tears are hidden in the water, can anyone see them or know that they exist? • Although the title of the poem is <i>Fishing</i> and the fisherman is the one whose actions affect the fish, can the fish still be considered the main character of the poem? These questions allow readers to discuss, explore, and wonder more deeply about the context and meaning of the poem.
Literary significance	This poem is included in Taiwan’s elementary school Chinese language curriculum, highlighting its literary and educational value. Thus, I motivate my students by emphasizing that successfully completing this writing project is an achievement that reflects Chinese language and literacy skills comparable to those developed by elementary school students in Taiwan or China.

Phase III. P- “Purposeful” Writing: from “collaborative” writing to “independent” writing

Scaffolding and Collaborative interaction

In phase III, I scaffolded students’ transition from collaborative writing to more independent writing, helping them achieve the goal of composing purposeful and meaningful texts. I provided differentiated support and linguistic scaffolding, including modeling, guidance

on vocabulary selection and use, instruction in sentence structure and coherence, and opportunities to engage in collaborative activities such as shared brainstorming and joint writing.

First, I showed the students a writing sample about a 狮子 (shī zi, lion) and asked them to choose an animal as the main character of their poems. We also discussed everyone's favorite animal. Student A chose a panda, and Student B chose a turtle (see Table 5). Next, I asked them to brainstorm and choose a setting (place or location) for the animals they had selected. For example, in the original poem, the setting is 在水里 ((zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water). I provided another example: 在森林 (zài sēn lín, in the forest). Student A then said that she wanted her panda to live in the jungle. I provided linguistic support and taught her how to write the Chinese characters 雨林 (yǔ lín, jungle). Student B wanted to keep the same setting as the original poem because her character was a water animal. Therefore, she wrote that the turtle is 在水里 (zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water). After deciding on their animals and settings, the students moved on to thinking about three actions their animals could perform in those settings. For example, in the original poem, the fish 唱歌 (chàng gē, sings), 捉迷藏 (zhuō mí cáng, plays hide-and-seek), and 吹泡泡儿 (chuī pào pào, blows bubbles). During our discussion of the themes and plots of their poems, we also chatted about their favorite activities, which allowed them to review vocabulary from *Chinese Made Easy for Kids Book 2* (Lesson 16, p. 116). I asked whether they wanted to use an emotion other than 快乐 (kuài lè, "happy") to describe their animals, such as 开心 (kāi xīn, "happy"), which has a similar meaning. However, both students chose to keep the original

wording from the original poem. At this stage, they completed the first paragraph of this poem and moved on to the second paragraph, which was more challenging because it involved deeper contextual meanings and more complex sentence functions.

Table 5. Vocabulary Selection (of the First Paragraph)

	My example	Student A	Student B
Animal	狮子 (shī zi, lion)	熊猫 (xióng māo, panda)	乌龟 (wū guī, turtle)
Field (place, location, or circumstance)	在森林 (zài sēn lín, in the forest)	在雨林(zài yǔ lín, in the jungle)	在水里(zài shuǐ lǐ, in the water)
Action 1	玩耍 (wán shuǎ, play)	唱歌(chàng gē, sing)	跳舞(tiào wǔ, dance)
Action 2	打架 (dǎ jià, fight)	跳舞(tiào wǔ, dance)	画画(huà huà, draw)
Action 3	咆哮 (páo xiāo, roar)	拉小提琴(lā xiǎo tí qín, play the violin)	骑马 (qí mǎ, horse-riding)

In the second paragraph, the students needed to learn different verbs used to express the meaning of “catch”. For example, Student A planned to write about catching a panda. In the original poem, “to catch a fish” is 钓鱼 (diào yú). In Chinese, we would use 把熊猫抓起来 (bǎ xióng māo zhuā qǐ lái) to describe to catch a panda; the verb 抓 (zhuā), which has the meaning of “to grab” or “to hold.” This example highlights several grammatical points that Chinese teachers need to provide scaffolding during writing activities. On the other hand, Student B chose to write a very creative but less realistic scenario: 把乌龟吃掉(bǎ wū guī chī diào, to eat the turtle). We had some discussions about whether she really wanted to include this idea in her story, but she was very confident in developing this plot. Since this was a creative writing activity, I did not want to change or correct the students’ opinions and ideas, even if they were somewhat highly imaginative. For the last sentence of the second paragraph, Student A wanted to describe that the panda is crying 哭泣 (kū qì) rather than using “tears” 眼泪 (yǎn lèi) as in the original poem. I

then provided language support by teaching her this new vocabulary. The most important part of the second paragraph they had to learn and understand is the context coherence that leads to meanings. They had to understand who the Subject is and to do the action, and who is the Object, to be affected or influenced by what the Subject does. Student B then made a conclusion about her theme, “The person ate the turtle and felt happy, but the turtle in the water was sad and crying.” I was very happy with her conclusion because it shows how she understands the whole context and what she was writing about.

The most interesting part was that the students learned from one another through “chit-chat,” demonstrating that social interaction provides opportunities for them to share ideas, clarify their understanding, and learn from different perspectives. This observation led me to consider how collaboration work and student-centered instruction can contribute to language learning and cultural understanding. I asked the students if they wanted to draw a picture related to the theme of their stories, and both showed interest in doing so. Student A drew a panda trapped in a jungle and used arrows to point to the panda, indicating that it was sad. She also drew an evil girl who had locked up the panda and labeled her “evil.” On the other hand, Student B drew a turtle with tears in its eyes and a person who wanted to cook the turtle (*see Image 2. Students’ Original Works*). Since Student A and Student B are close friends, they began chatting and playfully teasing each other. Collaborative and social interactions allow them to negotiate meaning, refine language choices, and develop confidence as writers. I was pleased with their drawings because they once again demonstrated an understanding of the text they had written. Their illustrations showed that they had a clear picture of the scenario they were writing and were able to connect their ideas from writing to visual representation. They then became one step closer to becoming

writers who can independently compose original poems that demonstrate both genre awareness and personal creativity.

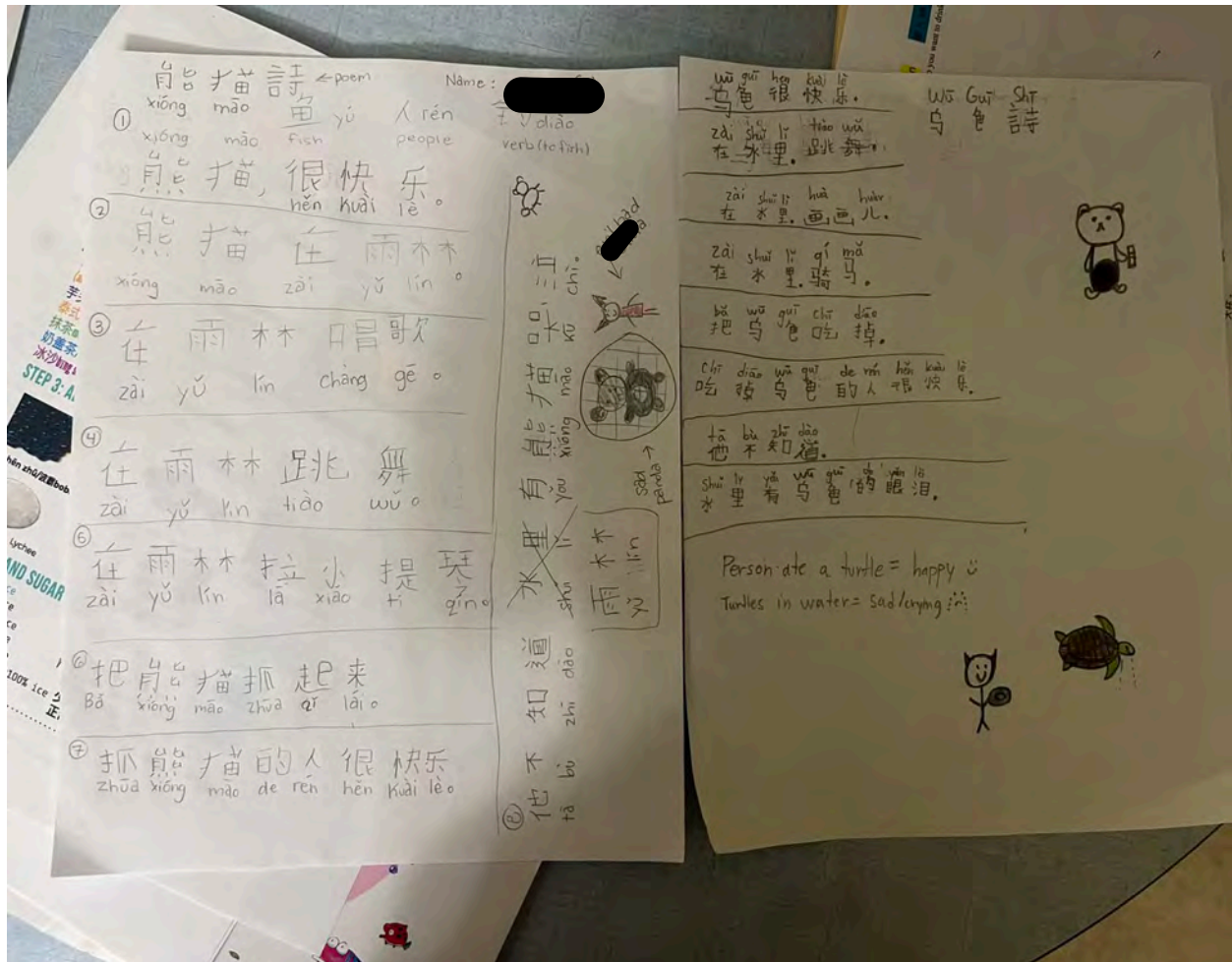


Image 2. Students' Original Works

Phase IV. ss- "Assess" students' "whole" development and provide effective feedback

Self-expression

Student A and Student B independently created original pieces of writing inspired by the target genre through collaborative activities. I then asked them to read-aloud their poems and explain their creative themes to the class. This opportunity for self-expression helped them build confidence in Chinese writing and increased their motivation to learn Chinese.

Peer feedback

They also participated in think-pair-share activities, interpreting each other's work, and providing peer feedback on their classmates' poems. I felt that I had created a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment in which they felt comfortable speaking and sharing their opinions. Through the lesson, the students not only learned about writing but also developed their listening, speaking, and reading skills by engaging with the original poem and one another's compositions.

Teacher reflection

I aimed to encourage the students to move progressively from the levels of approaching, adequate, and effective writers; thus, I chose to use a performance-based assessment (PBA) and decided not to assign grades. The teaching and learning cycle, along with the writing activities, served as formative assessments that allowed me to observe how students learned and improved through scaffolding and collaborative interaction. Moreover, they developed skills beyond writing alone. I then guided the students through an inclusive performance-based reflection process. My assessment criteria included: (1) Creativity and originality, (2) Genre awareness, (3) Organization and coherence, (4) Communication of meaning, (5) Vocabulary use and grammar, and (6) Language accuracy (see Appendix I). I placed particular emphasis on "Creativity and originality" and "Genre awareness" because the lesson objective focused on helping students understand the genre narrative and function of the Chinese modern poetry and apply those features in creative writing. In addition, "Organization and coherence" and "Communication of meaning" were especially important because I wanted the students to demonstrate an overall understanding of the context of their writing and use language to construct meaning and communicate with others. For "Vocabulary use and grammar," I hoped that the students would

connect what they had learned in their regular curriculum, including vocabulary and grammar, and apply the knowledge in their writing. This allowed them to transfer classroom learning to authentic contexts. “Language accuracy” is also important, particularly when assessing language proficiency. However, in this case, I did not want to diminish the students’ motivation or undermine their confidence as developing writers. Therefore, my feedback focused on their strengths and avoided excessive correction of every linguistic error. For example, I did not correct Student A’s mistake when writing the Chinese character 舞, in which she omitted one stroke. Student A’s strength is her willingness to experiment with new vocabulary and incorporate it into her writing. Student B’s strength is her ability to focus on the overall coherence and context of a text and draw her own interpretations and conclusions. Through teaching, I have learned that recognizing each student’s strengths in language learning can help teachers refine and improve their instructional practices.

This reflection connects to the teaching and learning cycle and to the principles of action research, which seek to refine pedagogy and instructional approaches, such as Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP), through ongoing classroom practice. As an effective Chinese teacher, I would emphasize helping students communicate meaning effectively and develop the confidence needed to become independent writers. At the end of the Chinese class, Student B enthusiastically remarked, “I can’t wait to tell my mom what I learned and did in Chinese class today!” This comment reflected her engagement in the lesson and her pride in sharing her learning experiences with her family.

Results

- **Effectiveness of age- and proficiency-appropriate authentic literary texts in supporting Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP)**

Through effectively incorporating authentic literary texts to integrate language learning with cultural and academic content, students promote deeper engagement and higher-order thinking (**the Connections standard**) and gain cultural awareness and competence (**the Cultures or Comparisons standards**).

- **Impact of integrating language, content, and culture through GBP on students' writing**

By integrating Chinese language, content, and culture through GBP, the students engage in meaningful communication within authentic contexts and develop the ability to write more effectively. Through **scaffolding and collaborative interaction**, the students gradually progress toward greater independence as writers.

- **Impact of performance-based assessment (PBA) on writing development and effective feedback**

Last but not the least, effective feedback should be timely, meaningful, and clear without overemphasizing linguistic errors. While technology and AI tools may support brainstorming and revision, world language teachers should continue to encourage students to take responsibility for producing original writing and demonstrating their own understanding of genre and language, consistent with the Presentational Written Communication Standard for 21st-century World Language Learning (ACTFL, 2017).

Discussion

This action research study suggests that teaching writing through Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) contributed to three major outcomes for Chinese language learners by nurturing their

abilities to become **collaborative**, **active**, and **critical** learners. First, students engaged in collaborative dialogue and co-constructed their understanding of language, imagery, and genre conventions. Second, students became active participants in language analysis and creative expression, using poetry as a meaningful tool for communication and self-expression. Finally, students demonstrated an increased ability to analyze literary texts, make interpretations, justify their language choices, and develop critical thinking skills. Overall, the students showed growth in their presentational writing skills and achieved grade-level expectations in their Chinese language learning.

Implications

There are several pedagogical implications from this study that can immediately be ready for world language teachers to implement practices in their classroom, such as “differentiated scaffolding” and “prioritizing social interaction.” Differentiated scaffolding should be personalized and responsive to individual learners’ needs while maintaining an appropriate level of expectations. In addition, prioritizing social interaction means that language and writing instruction should be embedded throughout discussion, co-construction, and peer review. That means, writing development benefits from collaborative interaction.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates how Genre-Based Pedagogy (GBP) can support students’ presentational writing, creative writing, and critical thinking through scaffolding, collaborative interaction, and inclusive performance-based assessment (PBA). By incorporating authentic materials, such as children’s literature and poetry, language and content teachers can create meaningful learning experiences that connect linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional

development within the curriculum. Furthermore, this study proposes the GAPss Model, which provides a practical instructional framework for Chinese language teachers seeking to implement genre-based writing in their classrooms. This means, through appropriate **Genre** selection, **Analyze** the text explicitly, conduct **Purposeful** writing, and opportunities for **Assess** such as self-expression and reflection, Chinese language learners can become more confident, capable, and creative writers.

Ethical Considerations

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, all student data were thoroughly de-identified. Pseudonyms are used for all students, teachers, and the school in this paper. In addition, ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2026) was used as a supplementary writing and language-support tool to assist with grammar checking and wording refinement. It was not used as a primary source of evidence. All research findings, interpretations, citations, and final content were reviewed and verified by the teacher-researcher.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the participating students and colleagues whose collaboration and feedback contributed to this action research project.

References

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2012). ACTFL performance descriptors for language learners. ACTFL.
- Cab Calloway School of the Arts. (2019). Creative writing rubric [Rubric]. <https://cabcallowayschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CREATIVE-WRITING-RUBRIC-2019.pdf>
- Derewianka, B., & Jones, P. (2016). *Teaching language in context* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Donato, R. (1994). Collective scaffolding in second language learning. In J. P. Lantolf & G. Appel (Eds.), *Vygotskian approaches to second language research* (pp. 33–56). Ablex.
- Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom* (2nd ed.). Heinemann.
- Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices* (Vol. 1). ACTFL.
- Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2021). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices* (Vol. 2). ACTFL.
- Kibler, A. K., Walqui, A., & Bunch, G. C. (2015). Transformational opportunities: Language and literacy instruction for English language learners in the Common Core era in the United States. *TESOL Journal*, 6(1), 9–35. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.133>
- Ma, Y. (2015). *Chinese made easy for kids 2: Textbook* (2nd ed.). Joint Publishing (Hong Kong) Co., Ltd.
- Martin, J. R. (2009). Genre and language learning: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2009.01.003>

- National Academy for Educational Research, & I-FunLearning. (2018). 為孩子寫詩的人～林武憲 [Video]. NAER. <https://stv.naer.edu.tw/watch/330014>
- National Council of State Supervisors for Languages, & American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2017). NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements: Performance indicators for language learners. NCSSFL/ACTFL.
- National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages* (4th ed.). ACTFL.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., & Go, A. L. (2007). Analyzing the writing of English learners: A functional approach. *Language Arts*, 84(6), 529–538.
- Singer-Freeman, K., Hobbs, H., & Robinson, C. (2019). Theoretical matrix of culturally relevant assessment. *Assessment Update*, 31(4), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/au.30176>
- Tai, J., Ajjawi, R., Bearman, M., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Jorre de St Jorre, T. (2023). Assessment for inclusion: Rethinking contemporary strategies in assessment design. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(2), 483–497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2022.2057450>
- Westerlund, R. (2024). Teaching writing in the content areas: Research to practice. Colorín Colorado. <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/teaching-writing-content-areas-research-practice>

Appendix I. Creative Writing Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)

	Effective	Adequate	Approaching
Creativity And Originality	The story contains numerous creative details and descriptions that enhance the reader's enjoyment. The plot is original, and the writer's voice is clear, distinctive, and engaging throughout the piece.	The story contains some creative details and descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The plot demonstrates originality, and the writer's voice is generally evident throughout the piece.	The story contains limited creative details and descriptions that may distract from the overall narrative. The plot lacks originality, and the writer's voice is difficult to distinguish throughout the piece.
Genre Awareness	The text effectively fulfills the purpose and conventions of the target genre. The writer demonstrates a strong understanding of the genre's functions and meanings.	The text generally fulfills the purpose and conventions of the target genre. The writer demonstrates some understanding of the genre's functions and meanings but may need further development.	The text does not adequately fulfill the purpose or conventions of the target genre. The writer demonstrates limited understanding of the genre's functions and meanings.
Organization And Coherence	The story is exceptionally well organized. Ideas flow logically, and coherence effectively supports the tone and meaning of the text.	The story is adequately organized, with only minor issues in sequencing or structure. Coherence generally supports the tone and meaning of the text.	The story lacks clear organization. Several elements may be out of place, and coherence does not effectively support the tone or meaning of the text.
Communication Of Meaning	The overall meaning is clear, and the main ideas are fully developed. The writer effectively expresses personal ideas, reflects on their writing, and communicates meaning to the audience.	The overall meaning is generally clear, but some ideas require further development. The writer expresses personal ideas and reflections but may not consistently communicate meaning to the audience.	The overall meaning is unclear, and the main ideas are insufficiently developed. The writer demonstrates limited ability to express ideas, reflect on writing, or communicate meaning to the audience.
Vocabulary Use And Grammar	Vocabulary is varied and appropriately used throughout the text. Grammatical structures, including subject-verb-object patterns and word order, are used accurately and consistently.	Vocabulary is generally appropriate, with only minor errors in usage or word choice. Grammatical structures, including subject-verb-object patterns and word order, are used with some accuracy.	Vocabulary usage and word choice are often inappropriate or inaccurate. Grammatical structures, including subject-verb-object patterns and word order, are frequently incorrect.
Language Accuracy	Simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin are written accurately with few or no errors.	Simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin are generally accurate, with only minor errors.	Simplified Chinese characters and Pinyin contain frequent errors that interfere with readability and meaning.

Adapted from Creative Writing Rubric, by Cab Calloway School of the Arts (2019) [Original rubric and Gibbons \(2015, pp. 129–132\).](#)