

Teaching with Intentionality: Language Educators as Transformative Intellectuals and Reflective Practitioners

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The fall 2022 issue of *GATESOL Journal* provides its readers with insights into how language educators could create meaningful learning experiences for their students. The papers are connected with the core idea that language educators are vested in intentionally using pedagogical approaches that could have an impact on *how* and *what* students are learning. The papers position language educators as both transformative intellectuals (i.e., educators who strive not only for educational advancement but also personal transformation) and reflective practitioners (i.e., problem-solvers possessing “the ability to look back critically and imaginatively, to do cause-effect thinking, to derive explanatory principles, to do task analysis, also to look forward, and to do anticipatory planning” [Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 10]). This issue will showcase teachers’ intentions through their roles as transformative intellectuals and reflective practitioners.

Language Educators as Transformative Intellectuals

The primary goal of a language educator who can be seen as a transformative intellectual is one of a change agent, who strives to maximize sociopolitical awareness through problem-posing activities. In the opening article, Day and Prado ask their readers to reconceptualize advocacy in TESOL to take the focus off the educator and onto the learner so students gain a sense of ownership and empowerment through *self-advocacy*. They explain that it is our “job as teachers and practitioners [to] not only teach language development, but to lead students to find their own voice, so they can speak up, to be their own advocate, and change the world” (p. 12). In doing so, Day and Prado utilize Test et al.’s (2005) framework for self-advocacy, which consist of four primary components for instruction: knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership. From Test et al.’s (2005) framework, Day and Prado develop four lessons as a unit plan to be utilized in promoting self-advocacy. They take transformative roles as language educators because they view pedagogy not only for language learning but also as opportunities for transforming students’ lives both inside and outside the classroom space.

Language educators as transformative intellectuals not only support their students to gain a sense of ownership of their learning, but they also think in terms of developing both the emotional and logical sides of their students. Holman addresses these different sides in her article “Theatre as a Means for Teaching a Second Language.” She explains when we teach language through theatre, educators create a classroom that mimics the real world, which can provide a safe rehearsal

for real world scenarios that is as close to reality as possible: “This creation of a rehearsal space eases fears about using the [target language] in interactions with more proficient speakers and encourages them to take risks in this safe space. The creative nature of drama also establishes a more relaxed class environment where the rest of the class (the audience) may reward risk-taking that results in playful, humorous language or mistakes with laughter” (p. 24). Holman’s discussion emphasizes how theatre can create a supportive environment that could allow for risk-taking to occur.

Language Educators as Reflective Practitioners

The primary goal of a language educator who is seen as a reflective practitioner is one of a facilitator, where the primary orientation to teaching is grounded in an integrated approach within classroom spaces. The remaining three articles in the fall 2022 issue showcase language educators as reflective practitioners because the authors examine, frame, and attempt to solve the dilemmas of classroom practices in TESOL. Vicentini, de Oliveira, and Gui’s pedagogical practices piece reflects upon the vast amount of online learning tools available to language educators since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly tools that support a genre-based approach to writing instruction using the Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC): Deconstruction, Joint Construction, Collaborative Construction, and Independent Construction. By presenting specific technology for each of the phases of the TLC, Vicentini, de Oliveira, and Gui aim to discuss how technology can be integrated into genre-based writing instruction in both face-to-face *and* online environments. Their discussion and technological suggestions are grounded in their research in elementary, secondary, and tertiary classrooms.

Liu’s article entitled “Have you TILTed? Promote Student Success by TILTed Assignments” and Beard’s “Using a Modified Jigsaw Strategy in the Sheltered Multilingual Learner Classroom to Teach Genetics Vocabulary” are teaching technique manuscripts that reflect upon the learning experiences of the multilingual population and how to better support them to complete assignments and tasks. Liu introduces Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT), which is a teaching technique aimed to promote student success. In doing so, Liu not only explains the technique but provides guidance on creating TILTed assignments. Similar to Liu, Beard explains ways that science content teachers can support the multilingual population. She highlights a successfully implemented modified jigsaw vocabulary activity, which utilizes cooperative learning, graphic organizers, and peer-to-peer engagement in a sheltered multilingual secondary science class. In addition, Beard argues that “this strategy can be modified and used across content disciplines and grade levels, and abilities” (p. 51).

References

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