

The principle of the four strands basically says that you should spend equal amounts of time on meaning focused input, meaning focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. Ideally, the content across those four strands should be integrated, so that the very important learning condition of repetition has the maximum opportunity to occur. The idea of 25% for each strand is an arbitrary decision. There's no research to support it. I've adopted it because it is simple. It seems to work in the sense that three-quarters of the time should be spent on actually using the language through input, output, and fluency development, and about one-quarter of the time should be spent focusing on deliberate learning. It also provides a roughly equal amount of time for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Even in the beginning, the first few lessons of a language course, should include fluency development. You should be learning those first items to a level that you can use them fluently. It's no good knowing it unless you can actually use it in production.

How about when people are at the other end of their language learning journey?

I might have trouble defending it there. You could see that language-focused learning could be about a quarter of the time. But you could be trying to develop fluency in new topic areas, for example. So if you are a very advanced student reading texts about a technical subject that is important for you, you probably need to develop fluency in that area. When it comes down to it, it's an arbitrary decision. What lies in the back of my mind of being rather doctrinaire about keeping the strands balanced is that I don't want language-focused learning to start creeping up to 50% or 75% like it is in some classes. And I don't want fluency development to disappear from some courses because teachers feel that their learners still have a lot to learn before they can use anything with fluency! There needs to be opportunities for learning across all four strands.

Thank you for this opportunity to understand your work further.

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For our second interview, we feature a thought-provoking discussion with Dr. Nicholas Subtirelu, an Assistant Professor in the Applied Linguistics concentration at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. His interests are educational linguistics, ideology, critical discourse analysis, social justice, globalization, and the spread of English(es). His recent publications have appeared in Applied Linguistics, Language in Society, and System. He was interviewed by Daniel Dunkley who hails from the UK and has been a full-time lecturer in English at Aichi Gakuin University, Nagoya from 1991 to 2018. Now, to the second interview!

An Interview with Dr. Nicholas Subtirelu Daniel Dunkley Aichi Gakuin University

Daniel Dunkley: *Dr. Subtirelu, what is the general area in which you work?*

Nicholas Subtirelu: My work is in critical applied linguistics. This is an emerging field in applied linguistics that takes the position that research and educational efforts are not neutral; they are inherently political, and it often takes as its object of study, the politics of language learning and language teaching.

Why are you interested in this field?

I've always been interested in the way that power works in society, and I've always been politically active since I was in college. I came to language teaching later. I did a master's in TESOL thinking that it would be a practical way to live wherever I wanted and meet people from all over the world. Then, as I

became more interested in TESOL, I decided I was going to do a PhD, and as I became more involved in research on applied linguistics. I became concerned about the politics of TESOL—about things like colonization and the ideologies I saw presenting the value of language teaching and learning solely through narrow economic lenses. I found myself becoming an agent of these things and so my research became a project in trying to uncover those ideologies and better understand them.

You use critical discourse analysis in your work. What is it?

Critical discourse analysis is an approach to discourse analysis which, like critical applied linguistics, rejects the idea that research is a neutral or objective pursuit; instead, it thinks of it as a political endeavor. So, the goal of critical discourse analysis is to consider the political implications of texts. For example, I recently did a study of job advertisements which aren't obviously political. I examined how they construct the need for bilingualism. By that I mean the way in which they present bilingualism as a job qualification—the need for Spanish-English bilingualism. They are presenting Spanish-English bilingualism as something that is needed in the workplace and essentially naming or implying a particular type of person who might have that skill. This is political in the sense that it has to do with power, especially between different types of groups. When we're talking about Spanish-English bilingualism in the United States, in part, we're talking about relationships between white people and Latinx people or other groups.

It seems that language and race come into your study. Is it necessary to be concerned with race?

I would say that race is a necessary element to this particular question of how valuable Spanish-English bilingualism is on the labor market because Spanish-English bilingualism can effectively function as a way for employers to signal that they are looking for Latinx employees who may accept less pay, especially given that their labor market options are limited by employment discrimination.

Many people study languages because they think it will improve their job chances. Are you saying that this isn't true?

I'm suggesting that we reexamine the common refrain that we as language educators use: "Studying a language is going to lead to better labor market outcomes for you. You'll have more opportunity

for employment or higher pay." That narrative, I believe, is in need of more nuance. This is especially true of Spanish in the United States, which is easily the most widely-spoken language other than English. It's obviously a very important language in the US, and yet it doesn't seem to carry with it any kind of capital on the labor market. More specifically, it does seem to be in demand by employers. They are obviously advertising for it, but according to my research, it is associated with a wage penalty. This suggests that employers are using it to find people who have a skill that they want, but they know that they can pay them less.

What does this mean for teachers?

The implications for language educators are first, to ask ourselves, "Should we be saying these things about higher pay for language learning?" Secondly, we need to be talking about what we can do to make that more of a reality for some of our students. Not necessarily what we do in the classroom, but what can we do as a profession to help them use what we think is a valuable skill on the labor market in order to advance themselves economically.

What could be done to improve the situation?

One thing that people are starting to explore is what we can do to credentialize students' existing bilingualism developed outside of formal educational settings, especially the Spanish-English bilingualism of the Latinx community in the US. This is a linguistic repertoire that has been undervalued both by language educators and also employers for decades. So the question is what can we do as a profession to come up with ways of signaling to employers that these bilingual students have a skill, which we think is valuable, that they should value as well. One possible route is a recent program called *the seal of biliteracy*. The seal of biliteracy is now law in many US states.

What exactly is the seal of biliteracy?

The idea is that high school students who have graduated, have demonstrated through proficiency testing that they are biliterate—they have proficiency in English and another language across the range of skills. They would earn this seal of biliteracy on their diploma. One of the purposes that advocates for this give is that it will allow us to signal to employers who is an accomplished bilingual. It will hopefully show who has the bilingual skills that they are clearly looking for when they set out these job advertisements. My team is currently investigating this policy; we're cautiously opti-

mistic about the idea. However, we are concerned that it's not taking the purposes of the project as seriously as it could be.

Is this seal of biliteracy for English monolinguals or for children who arrive as immigrants?

In theory, it's for both of them, and it should serve different purposes. You have different groups coming to the table with different expectations of what the seal of biliteracy will accomplish. What I'm suggesting is that the interests that are apparently winning out are those interests that are focused on giving an incentive to English monolinguals to continue studying a world language, and essentially giving them some kind of marker of their achievement.

How about your future research?

Our work on the seal of biliteracy will be published soon. What we're hoping to show with this analysis of the seal of biliteracy is, first, that it has been promoted primarily towards world language education as opposed to credentializing ESL students in public schools, who are biliterate because they have learned English, and also have their home language. They may not receive formal instruction in that home language. The promotion and the policies related to the Seal of Biliteracy don't seem to be targeting them. One of the ways we argue for

this is that the standards for them demonstrating their English proficiency are higher than native English speakers demonstrating their proficiency in a second language. An additional concern we have is that the seal is not evenly implemented across all schools. Schools have the option of deciding whether or not they want to participate in the program. This has to do with the fact that states don't want to provide funding, so it's incumbent on the local schools to decide if they are going to put forth the resources. The problem we can see is that the schools that will participate are those with greater resources who serve students who are already privileged along the lines of race and social class.

That seems to be a very worthwhile practical result of your academic interest in the politics of language learning and language teaching. Thank you for the interview.

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[JALT PRAXIS] MY SHARE



Steven Asquith & Lorraine Kipling

We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 600 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used that can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see the guidelines on our website below).

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Hello, and welcome to our first My Share column of 2020! We hope that your year has started well, and wish you all the best with any plans and resolutions. For those who see the end of another academic year fast approaching, this is also a good time for reflecting on teaching practice and experience. What went well during the past year, and what could be improved for future use? Do you have any activities or lesson ideas that you are particularly proud of? If so, why not share them with your peers in the teaching community and build your writing portfolio in the process? We are always interested in receiving new submissions. Whether you have contributed to My Share before or are hoping to do so for the first time, we encourage you to get in touch!

In this edition, we have four quite different activities designed to encourage students to actively engage with the lesson content while having fun with each other. In the first article, Daniel Hooper and Tim Murphey offer a simple but effective format for mixing classes that encourages students to take an active role in learning in order to prepare for a peer-teaching experience. Then, Aziz Krich outlines how news stories can be incorporated into the classroom to help students form, develop, and express opinions. Davey Young's activity is an adaptation of the game "hot potato" that gives students controlled practice of an often-tricky grammar form. Finally, Niall Walsh describes a collaborative con-