

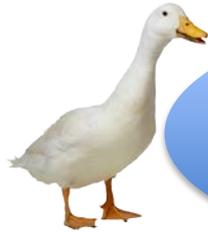
Differentiating Instruction: Focus on mixed Classes

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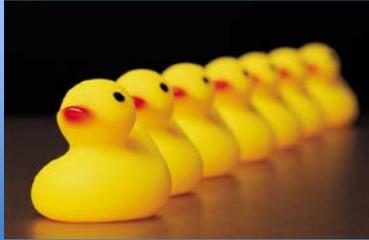
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A mixed class (HL + L2 learners)



Juan: 3rd generation
immigrant

Past
tense



Pedro: 1st generation, no
education in Spanish



Mixed classes



Why?

- Most challenging and complex of instructional contexts
- Least studied/developed of instructional formats

Making mixed class work: The non-negotiables

Both student populations matter:

- Both learner-types benefit instruction
- Both learner-types contribute to the learning process
- There is positive student interdependence

WHAT NOT TO DO....

Students see themselves as being in opposition, not interdependent



Both types of students felt ill-at-ease in mixed classes - L2Ls were intimidated by the oral proficiency of the HLLs and the HLLs were intimidated by the grammatical knowledge of the L2Ls Potowski (2002).

Students see themselves as being in opposition, not interdependent



I felt like I had to hold back in order to get her to participate. She didn't understand some of the words that I wanted to use and I felt bad using words that she wasn't familiar with so I tried to keep it very simple so she wouldn't feel like the story wasn't hers just as much as it was mine. (Henshaw, 2015, p. 262)

I hated the fact that I knew more Spanish. It felt uncomfortable because I think I made my partner feel uncomfortable (Henshaw, 2015, p. 262).



WHAT TO DO

Both student populations matter



The large majority of HLLs and L2Ls preferred mixed classes over separate (HLL-only or L2L-only) classes Ribadeneira (2014).

Ribadeneira (2014) (cont.)

- “The advantages was the combination of dialect, formal, informal and [slang] used in all the different forms and allowed for second language learners to see the more informal speaking while helping others to learn the more formal speaking.”
- “Being a native speaker I do not focus on grammatical rules. It is good to be exposed to an environment where others can help me focus on these rules.”

With this, let's look at a scenario

- Second year of high school Spanish (second semester college);
- Teach and review the past tense (preterit and imperfect);
- Communicative activities + focus on form;

How many times has this happened to you?

- You want to practice the past tense...
- You ask students...What did you do last night?
- The L2L answers...
I studied, I had dinner, I talked to my mom...
- The HLL answers...
Oh, I don't know – not much, I'm always tired in the evening. I prefer to work early in the morning.

Other activities

- In paired groups, review the different uses of the subjunctive using typical book-type explanations (repetitive actions preterit or imperfect?):

Who will do better at that HLLs or L2Ls?

- In paired groups, students talk about a childhood experience:

Who will do better at that HLLs or L2Ls?

- Write a short personal essay on a childhood experience:

Who will do better at that HLLs or L2Ls?

How to improve on this

- Bring HL and L2 learners together for collaborative learning where they can take advantage of each other's strengths;
- But before that, separate them as needed to prepare them to work together without feeling like they are in competition.
- Plan: two grouping strategies and tools for managing those strategies.

WHY AND HOW TO BRING STUDENTS TOGETHER

A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT HLLS AND L2LS

HLLs linguistic strengths and needs are a function of

- The context of learning: **naturalistic setting, primarily the home,**
→ informal, home register, perhaps non-standard
- The timing of learning: **early years, diminished or discontinued upon starting school (with individual variation)**
→ similar to the language of children, with regard to early - acquired features (e.g. phonology, some vocabulary and linguistic structures, functional skills)
- The amount input: **less than native speakers but more than L2Ls**
→ Missing features are those acquired by children during the school-age years e.g. complex syntax, different spoken and written registers)
- The type of input: **oral, informal, spontaneous,**
→ implicit knowledge of the HL, aural language

L2Ls linguistic strengths and needs

- The context of learning: **school**
 - formal, standard, academic, rehearsed, controlled
- The timing of learning: **adolescence, early adulthood**
 - adult-like with respect to certain features (e.g. vocabulary, register)
- The amount input: **less than both native speakers and HL learners**
 - incomplete with respect to features acquired early in life e.g. phonology, every day registers, etc.
- The type of input: **formal, focused on form, written**
 - explicit knowledge of rules and the written language

HLLs and L2Ls tend to have complementary skills and needs

HLLs

L2Ls

The context of learning: **primarily, home**
→ **informal, home register, non-standard, spontaneous**

The context of learning: **school**
→ **formal, standard, academic, rehearsed, controlled**

The timing of learning: **early years, diminished or discontinued upon starting school**
→ **in some ways similar to the language of children (e.g. phonology, functional skills)**

The timing of learning: **adolescence, early adulthood**
→ **adult-like with respect to certain features (e.g. vocabulary)**

The amount input: **less than native speakers but more than L2 learners**
→ **incomplete with respect to late-acquired items, e.g. relative clauses**

The amount input: **less than native speakers and HLLs**
→ **incomplete with respect to certain features, e.g. phonology**

The type of input: **oral, informal, spontaneous**
→ **implicit knowledge of the HL**

The type of input: **formal, focused on form**
→ **explicit knowledge of rules**

**Two studies highlight the
pedagogical significance of this
information**

Two studies of paired interactions between HLLs and L2Ls (Bowles, 2011; Bowles et al. 2014)

- HLLs and L2Ls worked together on a two-way information gap activity (also called jigsaw);
- In terms of linguistic benefits, in the first study L2 learners benefited more from the activity than HL learners;
- In the second study, both types of learners benefited equally from the activity.

First study:

L2Ls benefited more from the activity



Second study:

Both learners benefited from paired interactions



What made the difference?

Material + task

First study: Mostly L2Ls benefited



Materials: A picture of a kitchen (home vocabulary)

Tasks: Information gap activity involving only oral tasks;

HLLs already knew this, so they did not gain new knowledge. L2Ls benefitted from HLLs' expertise.

Second study: Both HLLs and L2Ls benefited

Materials: A picture of a school cafeteria (general vocabulary)

Tasks: Information gap activity involving oral and written tasks;

Vocabulary was unknown to both learner types, so both benefitted.

Oral task benefitted L2Ls.

Written task benefitted HLLs.



Take home lesson from these and other studies

- Take advantage of the complementary strengths and needs of HLLs and L2Ls;
- When designing activities, include tasks that:
 1. are challenging for L2Ls and that HLLs can help with, and
 2. are challenging for HLLs and L2Ls can help with.

But this is not enough...

- You have to assign the harder task to each learner;
- Hold both students accountable for contributing to the activity by using their expertise to help the other learner;

Aiming for *positive student interdependence*

Students:

- facilitate each others' efforts to achieve
- exert coordinated effort to achieve mutual goals
- strive for mutual benefit
- forge caring and supportive relationships

(Johnson, D., Johnson, R. and Smith, K. (1991). *Cooperative Learning: Increasing College Faculty Instructional Productivity*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 4)

**ACTIVITIES IN KEEPING WITH THIS
PLAN**

Cloze activity: HL-L2 learner groupings

My great-grandmother. I _____ liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she _____ marry. Until my great-grandfather _____ a sack over her head and _____ her off. Just like that, as if she _____ a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it. And the story goes she never forgave him. She _____ out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she _____ the best with what she got or was she sorry because she _____ be all the things she wanted to be.

Say it	Write it

Basic activity	Linguistic knowledge needed to complete the basic activity and learner comparison	Add on to create learner inter-dependence
Talking about a childhood memory		

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		Easier for L2Ls, harder for HLLs

The general idea

- ✓ Heterogeneous/mixed groups (HL + L2 learners together) for collaborative teaching and learning;

Collaborative learning

- Doesn't just happen when diverse students come together. The instructor must carefully structure instructional activities and prepare students to work together.

The general idea

- ✓ Heterogeneous/mixed groups for cooperative teaching and learning;
- **Homogeneous groups** (HLL-only and L2L-only) to create the conditions for both types of learners to participate in and derive benefit from all instructional activities.

WHEN TO SEPARATE THEM

Recall: How many times has this happened to you?

- You want to practice the past tense...
- You ask students...What did you do last night?
- The L2L answers...
I studied, I had dinner, I talked to my mom...
- The HLL answers...
Oh, I don't know – not much, I'm always tired in the evening. I prefer to work early in the morning.

HLLs and L2Ls approach learning tasks in very different ways (Torres, 2013)

HLLs are oriented primarily to the content of the task – i.e. are concerned with interpreting the meaning of the prompts rather than learning language (grammar).

L2Ls focus on form. In this particular study, they recognized that the task presented contrasting forms of the subjunctive and indicative.

The essence of the problem



Why this matters

HLLs' orientation to content over form, reduces their reactivity to language-focused instruction, particularly as compared to L2Ls.

There is also the issue of *Disciplinary literacy*

- The knowledge and skills associated with particular school subjects (Moje 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan 2008).
- In the foreign languages, disciplinary literacy includes knowledge of **grammatical terminology and rules**, as well as the **ability to derive benefit from common pedagogical interventions** such as task-based activities and grammar explanations and drills.

Disciplinary literacy in mixed classes

- L2Ls have more of it than HLLs...
because L2Ls tend to have more experience with the target language in a formal context.
- This puts HLLs at a disadvantage, relative to L2Ls.
This disadvantage is compounded by HLLs' lack of attention to form-function instruction.

Why this matters

- Research indicates that form-focused instruction and explicit grammar instruction is beneficial to HLLs (as well as being beneficial to L2Ls).

Song, O'Grady, Cho, & Lee, 1997;

Song et al. (1997);

Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan Short, 2009;

Montrul & Bowles, 2009

To make mixed classes work for HLLs

We need to address these two issues of learning or reactivity to instruction:

- Orientation to content over form
- Disciplinary literacy

Homogeneous grouping+ the mini-lesson

The teacher meets with a part of the class to provide targeted instruction and practice.



What would go into a mini-lesson for HLLs?

- Orientation to content over form;
- Disciplinary literacy

- Use the mini-lesson to focus HLLs' attention on the instructional objectives and give them the background knowledge they will need to participate in the activities of the class.

Recall

- You ask students...What did you do last night?

- The L2L answers...

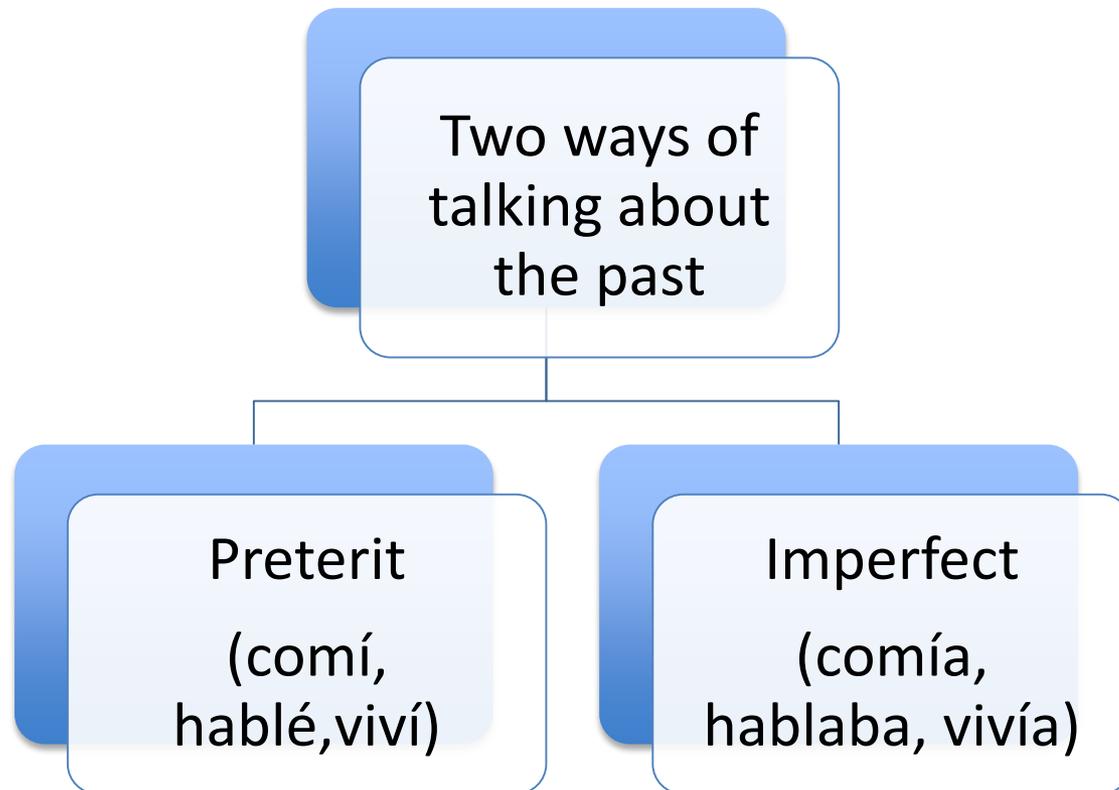
I studied, I had dinner, I talked to my mom...

- The HLL answers...

Oh, I don't know – not much, I'm always tired in the evening. I prefer to work early in the morning.

What to do: *This discussion will give us the opportunity to practice using verbs that refer to past actions.*

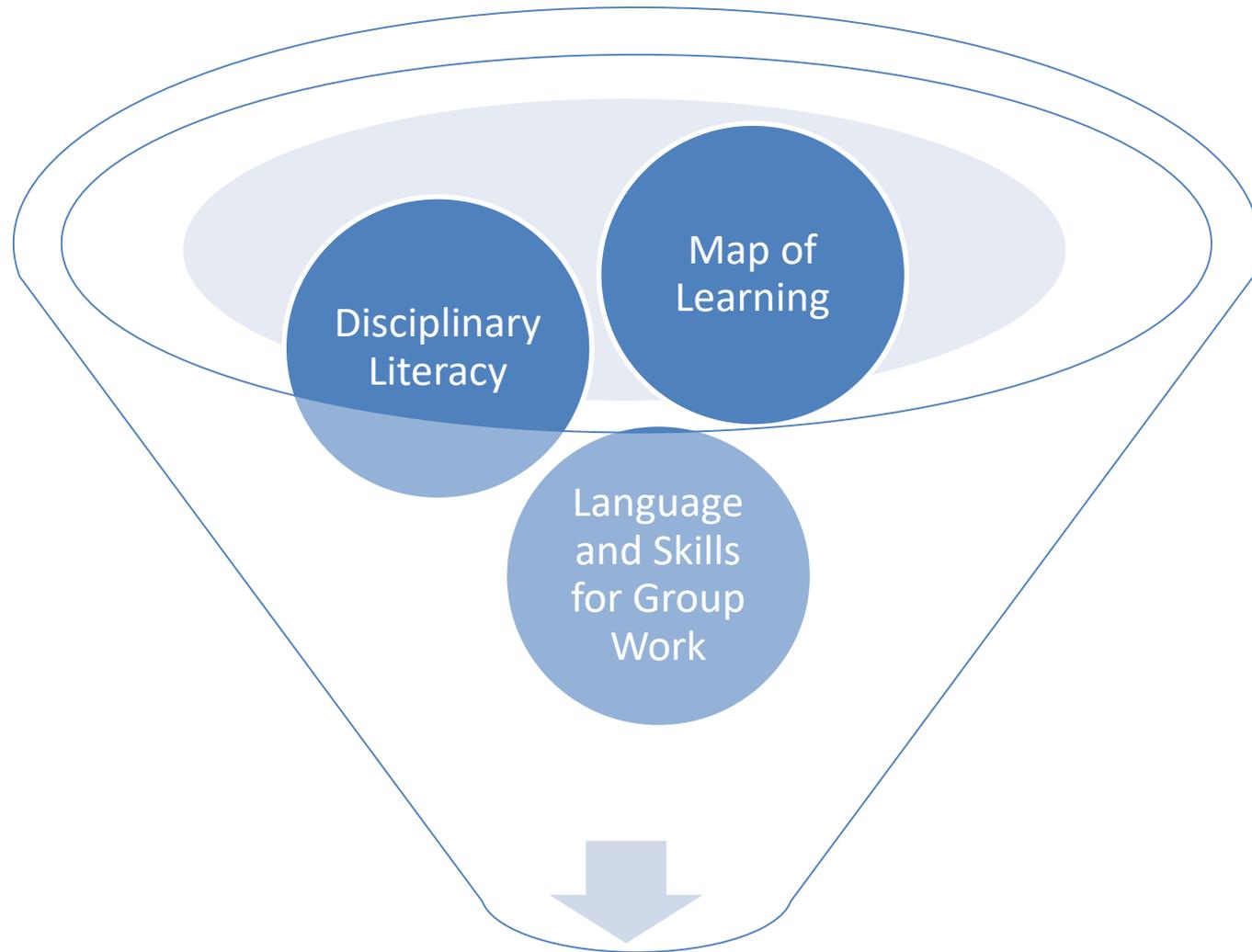
For disciplinary literacy: Teach grammatical terminology



To get HLLs to focus on form: Give them a map of learning

- In this unit, you should focus on the past tense (**preterit and imperfect**).
- In particular, you will need to know how to (1) **conjugate irregular** verbs, (2) spell the verbs on the list, and (3) understand the rules that govern the use of the preterit and the imperfect, and (4) be able to use the two verb forms.

In short, pre-teach



To prepare HLLs to work with
L2Ls

**WHAT ABOUT A MINI-LESSON FOR
L2LS?**

Recall: Students in opposition, not interdependent



Both types of students felt ill-at-ease in mixed classes - L2Ls were intimidated by the oral proficiency of the HLLs and the HLLs were intimidated by the grammatical knowledge of the L2Ls Potowski (2002).

Basic activity	Linguistic knowledge needed to complete the basic activity and learner comparison	Add on to create learner inter-dependence
Talking about a childhood memory	<p>Informal register, familiar vocabulary, oral</p> <p>Easier for HLLs/challenging for L2Ls.</p>	<p>Formal register, written</p> <p>Reading a short story where someone narrates a childhood experience and writing a short narration.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↑</p>	<p>Easier for L2Ls, harder for HLLs</p>

A mini-lesson for L2Ls

To prepare L2Ls for semi-authentic, communicate activities. Use the mini lesson to give them the knowledge and skills they will need to work alongside HLLs, e.g. pre-teach:

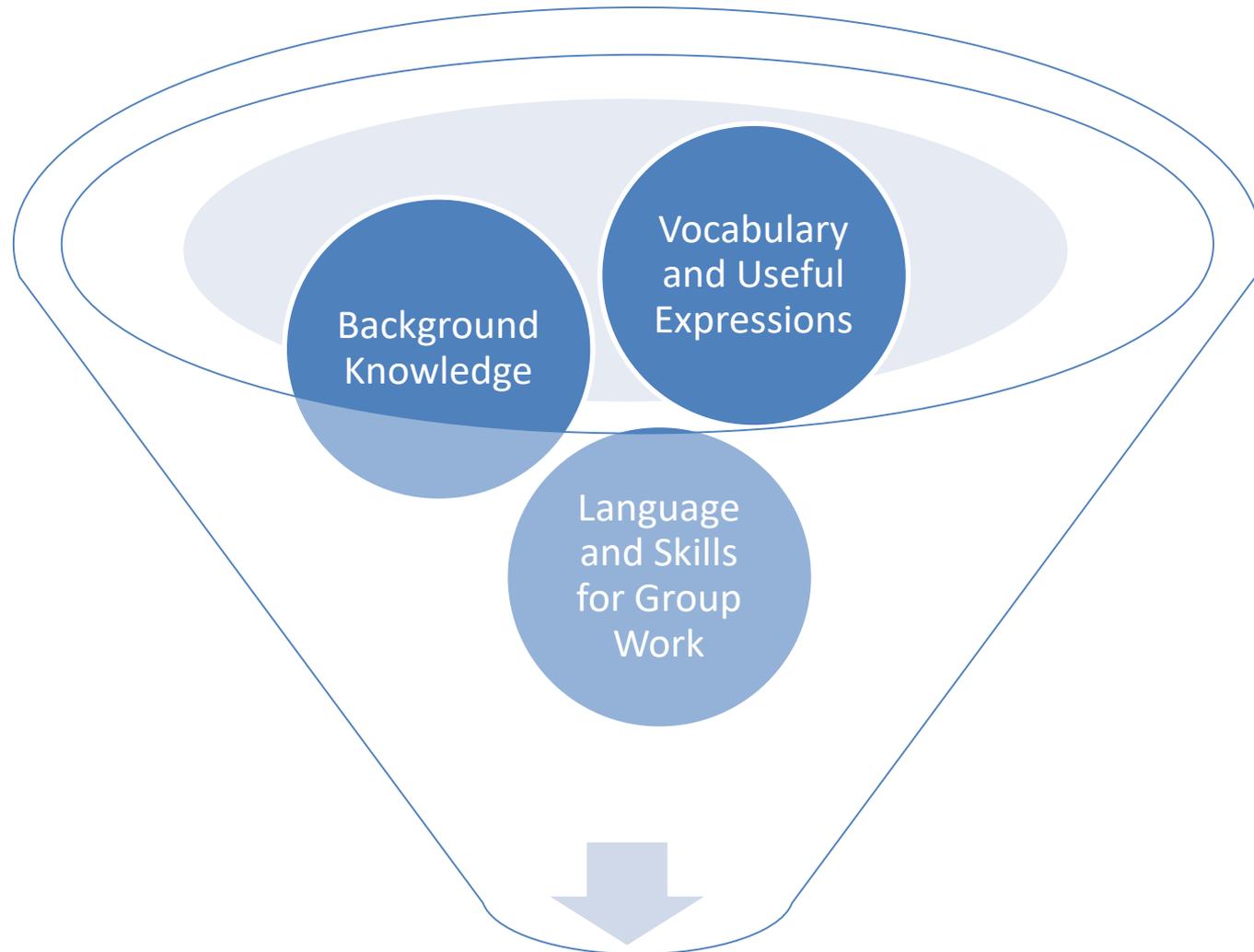
- vocabulary and useful expressions;
- background knowledge of the target culture.



Another option

- L2 learners work in groups (L2 + L2) and practice what they are going to say before they interact with HL learners.

In short, prepare them by giving them



To prepare L2Ls to work with
HLLs

The idea behind homogeneous groups is

- Use them to create the conditions for both types of learners to participate in and derive benefit from instruction, either in cooperative learning groups or whole-class format;
- Mini lessons are a useful tool.

MANAGING MINI-LESSONS

Without the proper tools...

What can happen while you're giving a mini-lesson to a group of students...?



Agendas

- **What it is:**

A to-do list

- **What it does:**

Support mini-lessons/flexible grouping

Make it possible to vary pacing

Sample agenda from my class (an HL class)

Date due: (usually in 1-2 weeks)

Work to be completed:

- Workbook # 7, 8, 9, 10 (HOMEWORK)
- Textbook, read “Mi nombre” and answer questions 1-7. Use a spell check. (HOMEWORK)
- Prepare a “Sum it up” card for this unit. (HOMEWORK)
- Blackboard, #1, 2. Must be completed with a grade of 90% or better. (ONLINE EXERCISES, CENTER)

Agendas

- **What it is:**

A to-do list

- **What it does:**

Support mini-lessons/flexible grouping

Make it possible to vary pacing

**ANOTHER REASON TO SEPARATE
THE TWO POPULATIONS**

In high school I was one of very few Latinos. My friend and I were called the "Mexican kids". This was always funny to me because my Dad's family always told me I was American. In school I was labeled Mexican, but to the Mexicans, I am an American. I am part of each, but not fully accepted by either. In high school, I was considered Mexican because I spoke Spanish but I was considered "Pocho" by my Dad's family because my Spanish was not up to their standard. It's this weird duality in which you are stuck in the middle. Latinos are often told that they are not Americans but also that they are not connected to their heritage. **You take pride in both cultures and learn to deal with the rejection. You may never be fully embraced by either side. That's why you seek out other people like yourself. Socializing with people who share a common experience helps you deal with this experience.**

(Carreira and Beeman, 2014, p.88)

These issues are very important for HLLs

- According to He (2006) identity is “the centerpiece rather than the background of HL development” (7).
- Carreira and Kagan, 2011:
Top three reasons why HLLs study their HL:
 - Finding identity
 - Communicating with family and friends in the U.S.
 - Communicating with speakers of the HL outside the U.S.

See also: Feuerverger (1991), Schwarzer and Petrón (2005), Beaudrie, Ducar, and Relaño-Pastor (2009)

The reason for separating HLLs:

- To give them a forum to address issues relating to group membership (i.e. affect, motivation, culture, etc.) among themselves.

- Does this mean that we should always separate HLLs and L2Ls when issues of this type are involved?
- No, this would squander one of the most valuable resources of mixed classes → the variety of perspectives.

The text-to-self connection

A tool for knowing when and how to separate

Sample text-to-self connections

(Harvey and Goudvis 2000:266)

Passage from the text

This reminds me of...

Passage from the text

I agree or disagree because...

Passage from the text

I find this interesting because...

Summarizing

- The greatest promise of mixed classes:
Collaborative learning
- The greatest threat to their success:
Differences between HLLs and L2Ls that prevent each type of learner from fully participating in the activities of the class and that make them feel inadequate.

Summarizing (cont.)

- To contend with these differences: separate learners, i.e. form HLL-only and L2L-only groups. Think in terms of giving each type of learner what they will need to (a) fully participate in and benefit from instruction and (b) work in a cooperative learning task.
- Tools that support the two grouping strategies, and more broadly the general vision outlined here, include: mini-lessons + flexible grouping + agendas + text-to-self connection

For more information:

Carreira, M. (2016). Approaches and strategies for Teaching Heritage Language Learners: Focus on mixed classes. In D. Pascual y Cabo (Ed.) *Advances in Spanish as a Heritage Language*. John Benjamins [Studies in Bilingualism Series], 159-176.

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