

Learning by Design and Second Language Teaching

Theory, Research, and Practice

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Second Language Teaching and Learning in Today's World: Frameworks, Perspectives, and Foci

In this chapter, my objective is to explore the theoretical and pedagogical connections between *Learning by Design* (*L-by-D*) and second language (L2) teaching and learning in today's world. My work with the framework started almost ten years ago, when I was assigned to teach a Spanish as a heritage language (HL) class at the institution of higher education where I was working. While planning my curricular materials based on my students' needs, I realized that the existing commercial textbooks did not have much in common with my learners' identities, lifeworlds, and communities. Additionally, research at that time (e.g., Potowski et al., 2009) had shown that the methodologies on which these books were based (e.g., processing instruction and output-based approaches) were not appropriate for heritage learners. I looked for a different approach, and I discovered first multiliteracies (NLG, 1996) and then *L-by-D* (Kalantzis et al., 2005). I immersed myself into the framework, and I was inspired by the studies that had incorporated it in Australia, where *L-by-D* had been developed, with English learners belonging to minoritized groups (e.g., Mills, 2010; Neville, 2008; Zammit, 2010). These works not only offered me instructional guidance for the class I was about to teach, but they also changed my path as an HL and L2 instructor, researcher, program director, and materials developer.

I saw a variety of parallels between HL/L2 instruction¹ and *L-by-D*. For example, for me, there was a clear connection between *L-by-D*'s principles of *belonging* and *transformation* (Kalantzis et al., 2005), and Norton's (2010, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2011) and Pittaway's (2004) work on L2 learner identity and investment. This literature has emphasized the crucial need for L2 pedagogy to not only recognize learners as multidimensional beings but also to engage them with instruction at a personal level, fostering both their investment in the learning process and their own legitimization as L2 meaning-makers (Pittaway, 2004). *L-by-D*'s emphasis on the pedagogical use of a variety of multimodal texts also mirrored L2 researchers' call (e.g., Allen & Paesani, 2010; Byrnes, 2006; Kern, 2000) for a more comprehensive, discourse-oriented L2 instructional approach. These scholars see the need for L2 instruction to move beyond

limited approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to offer L2 instructional contexts that will allow learners to work with and produce a variety of multimodal texts. That is, rather than limiting target language use to just transactional interactions, a common feature of current iterations of CLT, it is essential to create opportunities for students' active use of the target language in diverse social environments through engagement with and production of texts representative of different kinds of genres and incorporating a variety of modes. In other words, in order to be effective meaning-makers in contemporary society (i.e., to become multiliterate), L2 students need to work within the "dynamic, culturally, and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse ... [multimodal] texts to fulfil particular social purposes" (Kern, 2000, p. 6).

More recently, some of these ideas were incorporated into the framework for language learning and teaching proposed by the **Douglas Fir Group** (2016). Even though this work focuses mostly on SLA research, the framework does address L2 pedagogy. Indeed, through their proposal, these scholars seek to "respond to the pressing needs of additional language users [i.e., L2/HL learners], their education, their multilingual and multiliterate development, social integration, and performance across diverse globalized, technologized, and transnational contexts" (p. 24). The framework integrates, from an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), three different dimensions or levels of sociocultural/sociohistorical contexts and activities that play a crucial role in the learning process. At the base of the model is, of course, situated human communication, which in today's world can take place in a variety of contexts (including digital environments) and is not limited to language use, but instead might involve other semiotic resources (e.g., images, music, etc.). This is what the group calls the "micro level of social activity." The next component, "the meso level of sociocultural institutions and communities," makes reference to aspects connected to learners' identities, life-worlds, and the communities and institutions of which they are part (e.g., places of work and worship). In the third level of the framework, "the macro level of ideological structures," the scholars in the group place

the society-wide ideological structures with particular orientations toward language use and language learning ... that both shape and are shaped by sociocultural institutions [level 2] as well as by the agency of individual members within their locally situated contexts of action [level 1].

(p. 24)

The Douglas Fir Group's (2016) framework and *L-by-D* (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis et al., 2005, 2016, 2019) are not theoretically related. However, they share a similar vision of learning in today's globalized, diverse, and technology-driven society, and the need for students to be "engaged in *learning* semiotic systems [including the L2] and literacies, *using* [them] to learn about other things, and *learning* about how [they] operate and function in our society" (Anstey & Bull, 2004, p. 13, emphasis in original).

In recent years, teacher organizations have also offered their vision of L2 learning in the 21st century, and their foci bear similarities to both the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) framework and *L-by-D's* (Kalantzis et al., 2005) principles and pedagogical vision. For example, in the United States, in 2011, the **National Education Association (NEA)** partnered with the **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)** in what was called the **Partnership for 21st Century Learning or P21** (NEA, 2011) to develop a guide that would help instructors integrate L2 learning with skills that will prepare learners to be part of the future workforce. The result was the *21st Century Skills Map* (Partnership for 21st Century Skills [P21], 2011). Four skills (the Four Cs) were at the center of the proposal—critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. In Table 2.1, I describe what L2 students are expected to accomplish when these skills are integrated with L2 learning.

Even though I present these skills separately, they are always integrated in the learning process. For example, in today's world, critical thinking and problem

Table 2.1 21st Century Skills in the L2 Classroom

| Skills | Expected Learner Outcomes |
|--|--|
| <i>Critical thinking (and problem solving)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise sound reasoning in understanding • Make complex choices and decisions • Understand the interconnections among systems • Identify and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions • Frame, analyze, and synthesize information in order to solve problems and answer questions |
| <i>Communication</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts • Use communication for a range of purposes (e.g., to inform, instruct, motivate, and persuade) • Communicate effectively in diverse multilingual environments |
| <i>Collaboration</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing • Demonstrate the ability to work effectively with diverse teams • Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal |
| <i>Creativity (and innovation)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work • Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work • Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others • Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives • Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the domain in which the innovation occurs |

Table based on information in *21st Century Skills Map*, by Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011, pp. 6–11 (<https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/resources/21st%20Century%20Skills%20Map-World%20Languages.pdf>).

solving might rely on communication, collaboration, and creativity, as much of our work is carried out in teams and might involve working in digital environments with different types of media/digital tools (NEA, 2011). Our current reliance on new, collaborative media and technologies is also recognized by the scholars in P21 (2011). The skills map integrates the Four Cs with information, media, and technology literacy, as well as with the need to develop learners' flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, leadership, and responsibility. Other crucial aspects of L2 learning included in the P21's document are social and cross-cultural skills, which entail students':

- Working appropriately and productively with others,
- Leveraging the collective intelligence of groups when appropriate, [and]
- Bridging cultural differences and using differing perspectives to increase innovation and the quality of work.

P21 (2011)

When the skills in the *21st Century Skills Map* (P21, 2011) are combined with ACTFL's standards for language learning, delineated in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), and the organization's guidelines for performance-based instruction and assessment,² described in *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* (ACTFL, 2012), L2 instructional contexts need to incorporate pedagogical elements such as the ones presented in the following list. I have adapted them from the skills map (P21, p. 4), and I have also further developed them taking into account existing literature. In today's L2 classrooms:

- Students learn to use the target language in three modes of communication:
 - *Interpersonal*: Learners interact with other learners in a variety of ways (e.g., orally; in signed, written, or multimodal conversations in contextualized, socially appropriate situations [e.g., to share information, express emotions, discuss different viewpoints/opinions, etc., as well as in "collaborative interactions" when using the target language to complete a variety of tasks; e.g., when working in the other two modes of communication; Allen & Paesani, 2019, p. 45]).
 - *Interpretive*: Learners are exposed to and analyze multimodal texts in order to critically understand meaning-making (i.e., in terms of what is communicated, how it is done [language and other semiotic resources; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kern, 2000], and why it is done in that way [author's objectives and motivations/ideology, connections to community sociocultural discourses]).
 - *Presentational*: Learners present content (e.g., ideas, information, concepts, etc.) in a variety of multimodal ways (i.e., target language + other semiotic resources) to diverse audiences on topics related to their life-worlds and/or in connection to curricular subjects.

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- Instruction is centered on the learner. The learner's role is that of a *doer* and *creator* (emphasis on active language use). Instructors act as facilitators/collaborators.
- Curricular content is developed following an iterative *backward design* (Richards, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) that involves:
 1. The determination of instructional outcomes. Instructors outline curricular priorities in terms of desired
 - Attained performance (i.e., what students will be able to do with the target language in the three modes of communication based on their level of performance—novice, intermediate, or advanced).
 - Knowledge (linguistic, cultural, discipline-specific, and/or multimodal).
 2. The determination of evidence of learning (assessment—what students will be able to do with the target language and other semiotic resources).
 3. The planning and development of instructional moves, materials, activities and tasks, and learning experiences.

Glisan and Donato (2021) characterize this process as “iterative” because instructors will revisit it and, if needed, modify it, while reflectively assessing their practice and their students’ learning experiences.
- Content is based on thematic units and authentic, socially diverse multimodal resources.
- Instructional moves and materials allow learners to critically analyze the relationship among the perspectives, practices, and products of target culture(s).
- New media and digital tools are incorporated into instruction to enhance learning and develop students’ multiliteracies, as well as information, media, and technology literacy.
- The target language is used in the teaching of academic content (cross- and interdisciplinary connection).
- Educators create instructional moves that mirror students’ diverse ways of interacting and learning, and that answer their personal and academic needs.
- Tasks are connected to both language use in the real world and to learners’ lifeworlds.
- Instructors develop opportunities for students’ active use of the target language beyond the classroom. Learners share their products with diverse audiences (not just the instructor).
- Instructors discover what students can do with the target language through formative and summative assessment tools.
- Students actively participate in their learning process by having explicit knowledge and in-depth understanding of the ways in which they will be assessed (e.g., by reviewing and discussing assessment criteria with their instructor).

The enactment of practices that integrate these elements can result in the establishment of *meaningful* and *purposeful* pedagogical contexts, two essential aspects

for the success of the L2 learning process (Glisan & Donato, 2021). An instructional context is *meaningful* when it is directly related to learners' identities and personal experiences, and it "involves topics and interactions to which [they] can relate and that they perceive as useful to their learning and future use of the target language outside of class" (Glisan & Donato, p. 18). In *purposeful* L2 instruction, learners feel that their learning has a particular authentic (i.e., real, social) objective to be achieved. That is, "students ... understand that there is a concrete outcome to their participation in the lesson beyond simply 'getting the right answer'" (Glisan & Donato, p. 18).

One way in which L2 instructors and curriculum developers are currently creating meaningful and purposeful L2 learning environments is by developing materials or adapting existing ones for the specific group(s) of learners they serve. For many L2 educators, these activities are directly connected to **open education** and the creation/adaptation and use of **Open Educational Resources (OERs)**. OERs can be defined as instructional materials (e.g., multimodal texts, images, curricular units, etc.) "that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or license fees" (Butcher, 2011, p. 5). There exist clear connections between open education and the utilization of OERs and the kind of L2 instruction we have been delineating in this chapter. For example, the emphasis we have been placing on our students' identities, life-worlds, and communities is reflected in the definition of open pedagogy offered by Jhangiani and DeRosa (2017, p. 14) as "an access-oriented commitment to learner-driven education." The use of OERs also facilitates the creation or adaptation of socially and linguistically authentic multimodal resources, grounded in pedagogies such as *L-by-D* (as it is shown in Chapter 5 of this volume), with which our students can identify and connect, and which can "foster [both] critical awareness raising and self-reflection" (Blyth et al., 2021, p. 165), and creative uses of the L2 for meaning-making. Existing research on OER and L2 learning (e.g., see studies in Blyth & Thoms, 2021 and in Comas-Quinn et al., 2019) has also shown that incorporating tasks and content that move instruction beyond the one-size-fits-all approach often found in commercial textbooks has the potential to "lead to the creation of a collaborative learning environment where learners ... are provided opportunities to co-create and/or co-curate L2 content, which may lead to increasing motivation to learn and/or make use of the L2 in meaningful ways" (Blyth & Thoms, 2021, p. 1).

Another important affordance of open education is the chance to integrate L2 use in tasks connected with issues related to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the target culture(s) and learners' community(ies). The social movements awakened in recent years (e.g., the #MeToo and Peoples Climate Movements, Black Lives Matter, etc.) have reminded us of our responsibility to incorporate socially relevant issues in L2 curricula, and to offer students opportunities for what Osborne (2006) characterizes as **critical inquiry**. For Osborne, this approach to L2 teaching entails a cycle of collaborative "exploration [of a sociocultural/sociohistorical issue] that can be entered into by students, community members, and teacher as learners together in their individual contexts" (p.

33). The critical inquiry cycle involves informed cooperative, in-depth investigation of the issue, followed by inductive analysis, tentative conclusion, and mutual critical reflection, where participants “explore [their] own privilege ... power, and powerlessness” (Osborne, p. 35). When considering curricular content, Osborne proposes four thematic areas (which he calls “pillars”) that can constitute a first step toward the establishment of L2 teaching for social justice. The proposed pillars are *identity*, *social architecture*, *language choices*, and *activism*, and they include the following sub-themes:

- *Identity*: Identity (Who am I, who are we?); affiliation (Who are we? Who are they?); conflict, struggle, and discrimination; and socioeconomic class.
- *Social architecture*: What we believe: ideology; historical perspectives: to the victors...; school and languages: hidden curricula; and media: entertainment.
- *Language choices*: Beyond manners: Register and political or power relations: Whose culture is whose? Hybridity; media: journalism and politicians; who is in control? Hegemony.
- *Activism*: Law, rights, resistance, and marginalization.

Osborne (2006)

Osborne’s (2006) work bears similarities to that of other scholars interested in critical L2 teaching and learning. For example, Kubota (2003, p. 84) has posited that, when focusing on target cultures, “teachers and students need to explore multiple perspectives and to critically examine plural ways of representing perceived cultural facts,” including those related to learners’ own (and local) cultures. This implies that students need to be provided with opportunities to analyze the “why” behind representations of both target cultures and socially relevant issues, focusing on discovering how they have been constructed discursively (through the use of language and other semiotic resources); what political, ideological, and social forces have constructed them; and to achieve what purposes. Nieto (2009) has also embraced this view of L2 teaching and learning by suggesting that

classrooms should not only simply allow discussions that focus on social justice, but in fact welcome them ... These discussions might center on issues that adversely and disproportionately affect disenfranchised communities—poverty, discrimination, war, the national budget—and what students can do to address these problems. (pp. 77–78)

Both the democratizing, equity, and social justice ideals embedded in open education (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020) and the development of OERs can facilitate the practices and goals that Osborne, Kubota, and Nieto envision for L2 education. That is, instead of relying on the sanitized, homogeneous, main-stream representations of target cultures offered by most mass-produced

textbooks, which not only ignore cultural and ethnic diversity (Canale, 2016; Chisholm, 2018; Elissondo, 2001), but also avoid socially relevant issues related to Osborne's pillars (Apple, 2004; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991), educators can develop or adapt resources that do offer diverse and comprehensive social and thematic representations, and can incorporate a diversity of authentic, inclusive voices.

When developing curricula, units, and/or tasks that integrate topics pertaining to target cultures and issues within Osborne's (2006) four pillars, L2 educators and material developers can also take advantage of existing pedagogical resources offered without charge by non-profit organizations that work on education for social justice. One of the most relevant groups is *Learning for Justice*, founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center in 1991 "to be a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people" (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/about>). Learning for Justice's instructional materials focus on race and ethnicity, religion, ability, class, immigration, gender and sexual identity, bullying and bias, and rights and activism. To facilitate the incorporation of these topics in educational contexts, the organization provides classroom resources (e.g., lessons, learning plans, tasks, teaching strategies, etc.) as well as professional development opportunities such as workshops, webinars, and podcasts. In 2018, Learning for Justice created a set of social justice standards and learning outcomes to serve as "a road map for anti-bias education at every grade level" (Teaching Tolerance, 2018, p. 2). The proposed standards and outcomes are organized in four different domains—identity, diversity, justice, and action—and even though they apply mostly to K–12 educational contexts, they can also be adapted for use with university students.

Recently, ACTFL identified the Learning for Justice's (Teaching Tolerance, 2018) standards (summarized in Table 2.2) as a resource for L2 educators, and it is clear to see why this was the case. First, language(s) and cultures play a central role with respect to the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors learners are expected to develop when immersed in instruction based on social justice. Second, Learning for Justice offers grade-level outcomes and scenarios in general terms, which allows instructors to adapt them to address their students' personal and academic needs. Third, the anchor standards (i.e., identity, diversity, justice, and action) are compatible with Osborne's (2006) four pillars and, if enacted, the stages of his critical inquiry cycle could result in the attainment of the outcomes in the Learning for Justice's document. Therefore, it is no surprise that ACTFL has chosen to highlight them as useful for the integration of socially relevant issues into L2 teaching and learning.

My goal for the first section of this chapter was to review what I consider the most important developments, in terms of theoretical perspectives, pedagogical frameworks, and instructional approaches, we have seen in recent years in L2 pedagogy. My next objective is to explore how *L-by-D* fits with the vision of L2 teaching and learning I have delineated.

Table 2.2 Summary of Social Justice Standards and Outcomes

| <i>Standards</i> | <i>Expected Learner Outcomes</i> |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Identity</i> | <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop positive social identities based on their membership in multiple groups in society; • Develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups; • Recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals; • Express pride, confidence, and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people; [and] • Recognize traits of the dominant culture, their home culture, and other cultures and understand how they negotiate their own identity in multiple spaces. |
| <i>Diversity</i> | <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express comfort with people who are both similar to and different from them and engage respectfully with all people; • Develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups; • Respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way; • Respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding, and connection; [and] • Examine diversity in social, cultural, political, and historical contexts rather than in ways that are superficial or oversimplified. |
| <i>Justice</i> | <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups; • Recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination); • Analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today; • Recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics; [and] • Identify figures, groups, events, and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world. |
| <i>Action</i> | <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias; • Recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice, and injustice; • Speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias; • Make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and do so despite negative peer or group pressure; [and] • Plan and carry out collective action against bias and injustice in the world and evaluate what strategies are most effective. |

"Anchor Standards and Domains," by Teaching Tolerance, 2020, p. 3 (<https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-Anti-bias-framework-2020.pdf>).

Learning by Design and Second Language Teaching and Learning

In this part of the chapter, I will examine how *L-by-D* can contribute to L2 teaching and learning. The focus of my discussion will be both theoretical and methodological. However, I offer a variety of concrete examples in Chapter 5. Let's start with the learner. As we saw in Chapter 1, *L-by-D* bestows great importance upon the premise that transformative learning is not possible without the incorporation of students' lifeworlds, funds of knowledge (including informal learning; Moll et al., 1992), personal and academic needs, and communities into the curriculum (Kalantzis et al., 2005, 2016, 2019). This resonates both with the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) model and the P21's (2011) *21st Century Skills Map*. Another point in common between *L-by-D* and these two proposals is the need to provide students with opportunities to be exposed to, work with, and produce authentic multimodal ensembles, making use of the target language *and* other contemporary semiotic resources. This also entails the development of learners' multiliteracies in terms of the effective use of new media and digital tools.

The pluralistic, equitable goals of *L-by-D*'s transformative curriculum are also compatible with the democratizing nature of open education and the goals of organizations such as Learning for Justice. First of all, the use of instructional resources that are freely available can have the "intended equity effect of [a] transformative curriculum" (Kalantzis et al., 2005, p. 63), as all learners, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to the same educational opportunities. Second, open practices and OERs often rely on the utilization of multimodal material that can be digitally reused, retained, redistributed, revised, and remixed to answer the needs of specific student populations (Blyth & Thoms, 2021; Wiley & Green, 2012), which mirrors the tenets of *L-by-D*'s principle of *belonging*. A third aspect shared by *L-by-D* and open education is the emphasis that they both place on learners as *active* meaning-makers, and "co-producers on their lifelong learning path" (ICDE, 2011). The use of resources (and, of course, instructional moves and tasks) that directly answer specific learners' needs can result in L2 practices that are both meaningful and purposeful (Glisan & Donato, 2021). Additionally, OERs grounded in *L-by-D* can incorporate socially relevant topics, and the standards for social justice developed by Learning for Justice (Teaching Tolerance, 2018) can be part of the outcomes set for specific instructional units, lessons, or tasks.

Clearly, there exists a number of connections between *L-by-D* (Kalantzis et al., 2005, 2016, 2019), the Douglas Fir Group's (2016) model, the *21st Century Skills Map* (P21, 2011), and open education. However, I believe the most significant link between *L-by-D* and L2 learning and teaching lies in the framework's knowledge processes and the five metafunctions (i.e., reference, agency, structure, context, and interest) recently brought forward by Cope and Kalantzis (Cope & Kalantzis, 2020, Cope et al., Forthcoming; Kalantzis & Cope, 2022; see page... [add page #]). These framework components offer a blueprint to enact

the type of L2 teaching and learning discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Additionally, they can facilitate the incorporation of the kind of critical inquiry and socially relevant content recommended by Osborn (2006), Kubota (2003), and Nieto (2009), and educational groups such as Learning for Justice. Also, Kalantzis et al.'s (2005) concept of transformative curriculum can inform L2 teachers' iterative process of backward design (Richards, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

Let's take this as our starting point. An L2 educator is designing instruction for a group of L2 students. The first question to be answered is who the learners are, which, for Kalantzis and Cope (2012, p. 139), involves the consideration of the following three dimensions of learner difference, as well as the "identity [that is] shaped from living at the intersection of many group-related experiences." The proposed identity dimensions include:

- Corporeal attributes: Differences of age, sex and sexuality, physical and mental capacities;
- Material conditions: Differences of social class, geographical locale, family, [and community]; [and]
- Symbolic differences: Differences of culture or ethnicity, language [or dialects], gender [identity], affinity, and persona.

Kalantzis and Cope (2012, p. 139)

Also important are learners' existing knowledge (the result of informal and formal learning), their academic (linguistic, and also discipline-specific) and personal needs, and their level of L2 performance (e.g., novice, intermediate, or advanced). These factors will determine the instructional outcomes to be achieved in terms of L2 performance, academic content, and multiliteracies (meaning-making and the use of new media and digital tools). Additionally, the learner difference dimensions will guide the choice of materials to be included in the curriculum and the development of instructional moves that will result in the attainment of outcomes. Of utmost importance is the need to integrate socially relevant issues into the curriculum, remembering that it is essential to always find a personal connection with regards to learners' identities and/or local communities. That is, even when the focus is on target cultures, there needs to exist some type of link to who the students are (e.g., thematic similarities with learners' lifeworlds or lived experiences). The incorporation of socially relevant themes into the L2 curriculum can be guided by Osborne's (2006) cycle of critical inquiry and Learning for Justice's standards and outcomes for social justice (Teaching Tolerance, 2018).

Once curricular content and outcomes have been designed, instructors (and/or curricular developers) can create tasks for students to carry out within each knowledge process, considering also how they will be guided in the analysis and understanding of each meaning-making metafunction (i.e., what the text is about [reference]; who has created it [agency]; how meaning is organized and conveyed [structure]; what it is connected with [context, e.g., social, cultural, historical];

and what its objective is [interest; meaning-maker's motivation and intended audience]). In order to illustrate how this can be accomplished, I will resort to a practical example based on materials Maybel Mesa Morales and I developed for L2 Spanish students in a fourth-semester university class in 2017 (Zapata & Mesa Morales, 2018). At that time, Maybel was a graduate student with a specialization in Latin American literature, and she was teaching in the Basic Spanish Program I was directing. She was passionate about both literature and L2 teaching, and she wanted to create an instructional opportunity that would allow her students to actively and meaningfully use the target language in the three modes of communication—interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational—to critically analyze and produce literary and multimodal texts.

Our point of departure was Maybel's learners. She and I first considered their social identities, lifeworlds, and level of L2 performance, as well as curricular themes and expected outcomes. Based on the information we gathered, we agreed on the topic of environmental pollution and destruction. Maybel chose to develop her instruction around two authentic texts: The multimodal animated short film *Man* by artist Steve Cutts (2012), and the digitally published poem *Bosque...jas* (Ramos Aranda, 2013). The poem became the main instructional text. To facilitate students' collaborative construction of knowledge and their use of the target language in both the interpersonal and interpretive modes of communication, Maybel and I organized learners' work in the open, digital social-reading platform *eComma* (Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning, n.d.).³ Social-reading platforms and tools have become quite popular in both academic and social circles because they allow people to interact virtually, either synchronously or asynchronously, while reading a text (written or multimodal) to comprehend and interpret it. In the case of L2 learning, while participating in social-reading activities, students can help one another gain a deep understanding of the content and language of a given text by using digital annotation tools, and sharing their thoughts, queries, and views with their classmates (Blyth, 2013). For example, based on his research on L2 French and social reading, Blyth (2014) has shown that these kinds of tasks can provide learners with opportunities to “evaluate the meaning of foreign words, reflect upon cultural differences, interpret the meaning of textual features, connect reading to personal experience, and co-construct meaning” (p. 215).

When planning our social-reading instructional move, Maybel's and my work was guided by existing studies with L2 students (e.g., Blyth, 2014; Thoms and Poole, 2017) and on social-reading practices in other instructional environments (e.g., Mendenhall et al., 2011; Wu & Wu, 2017; Zarzour & Sellami, 2017). Once we had chosen the topic, resources, and digital platform to be used, we organized students' work within *L-by-D*'s eight knowledge processes, also incorporating activities that would allow for the analysis of the five meaning-making metafunctions (i.e., reference, agency, structure, context, and interest). In Figure 2.1, I offer a schematic presentation of the tasks we developed for each epistemic move. I also provide information about the modes of communication of focus. The figure illustrates how *L-by-D* can be tied to L2 teaching and learning to facilitate:

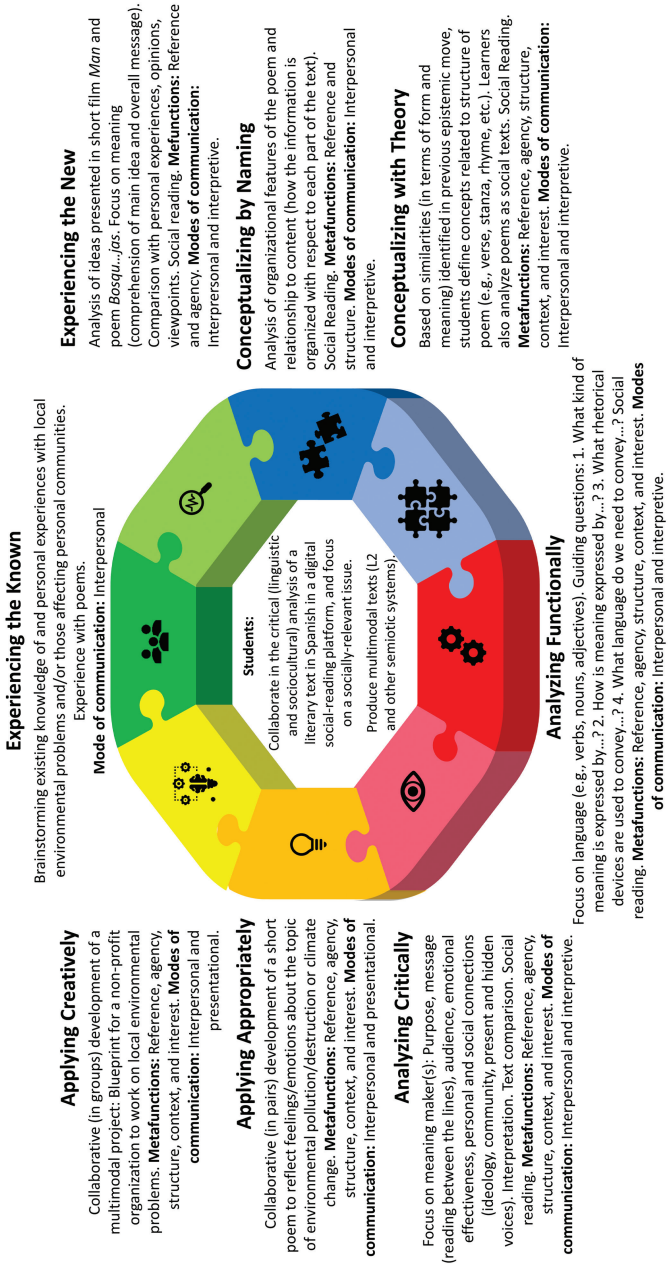


Figure 2.1 An L2 social reading task grounded in Learning by Design.

- The critical examination of a socially relevant issue connected to learners' lifeworld (in this case, climate change, environmental pollution/destruction).
- Students' collaborative work with authentic L2 texts, and their active use of the target language in the three modes of communication—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational, including the use of specific L2 terminology and grammatical structures.
- Learners' work with new media and digital multimodal tools.
- Language learning tied to authentic texts and critical inquiry.

Figure 2.1 serves as an introduction to show how *L-by-D* can guide L2 teaching and learning (the activity presented will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). In Chapter 5, I delve into this relationship in more depth, presenting a variety of tasks for L2 learners of different ages grounded in Kalantzis et al.'s framework. Before I do so, however, in the next chapter, I discuss pedagogical practices that, based on existing research, I deem essential for the successful integration of *L-by-D* in L2 classes.

Summary

My goal for this chapter was to start exploring the relationship between current L2 teaching and learning and *L-by-D*. To do so, I chose the frameworks, perspectives, and foci (in terms of themes and language use) that I believe are the most relevant for our profession, and that I see as connected to *L-by-D*. Since I live in the United States, and my work as an L2 educator has been guided by evidence-based practices advocated by ACTFL, my discussion only included terminology, standards, and outcomes developed by this organization. The same can be said about my recommendations for the incorporation of socially relevant topics in L2 classes (e.g., Osborne's four pillars), and my reliance on Learning for Justice's standards and outcomes.⁴ Based on the discussion I presented (grounded in existing literature), I envision current L2 learning and teaching as entailing:

- L2 learners as legitimate, active L2 users and L2 educators as facilitators and collaborators.
- Curricular connections with learners' diverse identities, personal experiences, and the community/institutions to which they belong.
- Instructional sequences, outcomes, multimodal content, and tasks based on L2 level of performance, specific discipline (when L2 is connected to academic content), and learners' linguistic, academic, and personal needs.
- L2 active use in the three modes of communication—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational—in diverse social contexts and for diverse audiences beyond the language classroom.
- The development of the Four Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation) and learners' flexibility, adaptability, initiative, self-direction, leadership, and responsibility.

- The incorporation of socially relevant issues into instruction and the creation of tasks that offer opportunities for the integration of Osborne’s cycle of critical inquiry and/or Learning for Justice’s social justice standards and outcomes.

In the second part of the chapter, I began to establish theoretical and methodological connections between this vision of L2 learning and teaching and *L-by-D*. I did so by resorting to an example from an L2 Spanish class. In the remaining chapters of this volume, this connection will be made more explicit through the presentation of a variety of examples. To prepare for the ensuing discussion, in the next chapter, I examine some of the pedagogical practices that I consider essential for the successful blending of *L-by-D* and L2 education.

Notes

- 1 In this book, I center my discussion on L2 teaching and learning. For information on *L-by-D* and HL Spanish learning, see Zapata (2017) and the studies in Zapata & Lacorte (2017).
- 2 In this volume, my focus will be on L2 *performance*, instead of *proficiency*. That is, my objective is to explore how *L-by-D* can contribute to L2 development in instructional settings, where students are exposed to and use the target language to discuss specific topics related to both their needs and language use in a globalized society (ACTFL, 2012). L2 performance-based instruction can result in proficiency development—a person’s ability to use their target language(s) beyond instructional settings, in real-world contexts. However, my interest is in L2 language development and use in the classroom.
- 3 *eComma* has been recently retired. For instructors who wish to use a free, social-reading platform, I recommend *hypothes.is* (see Appendix B).
- 4 The information presented in this chapter is also compatible with the descriptors, guidelines, and goals for L2 education developed by the Council of Europe (2001, 2020).

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