The Use of Comprehension-Based Readers for Learning Intercultural Skills in a TPRS Classroom

Rachel Emery
Michigan State University

Comprehension-Based Readers as a Springboard for Learning Intercultural Skills in a TPRS Classroom

Introduction of the Project

In the last two years, I wrote and published a comprehensible reader called *Pancho y las momias* for my students. It was challenging but I did it in part because of my love of the city of Guanajuato, Mexico and wanting to share some of the legends and history with my students. My great aunt, an anthropologist who has lived in Mexico for thirty years, shared them with me and I wanted to pass them on. In other words, I wanted students to think Mexico was "neat and interesting," and more than a beach destination. In the middle of reading an early version of the book with students two years ago, a student turned to me and said in an awed voice, "Wow...Mexico has a lot of culture!" In the moment I said, "Yeah, it does!" Later, I wondered if that was really the point of teaching this book. Was that really what I wanted students to take away from this? Didn't that student have "a lot of culture" as well? It was not until I took a course on intercultural language teaching in the Masters of Foreign Language Teaching program at Michigan State University that I had the language to describe my unease. By trying to make Mexican culture *neat and interesting*, I was exoticizing and essentializing it, downplaying my students' own cultures, and missing a real learning opportunity.

This problem might sound familiar to other teachers. When I taught using a textbook, I did not think I had enough time to teach the "culture" sections of the chapter. Often each chapter had a few facts, in boxes off to the side or a page in English at the end of the chapter. I did not have time to teach all of the grammar and vocabulary and so culture was not a part of my classes. Since I started teaching without a textbook and using TPRS and classroom novels as my

curriculum I worried that I was still not teaching culture. By learning more about culture and how to think and talk about it, I am starting to realize that these small cultural facts are not all that culture can be in a language classroom. Textbooks mistakenly treat culture as a timeless and stable set of facts, clear-cut and easy to teach and learn. I was doing the same thing with my teaching of *Pancho y las momias.* Sometimes by teaching culture this way, our students come away from our classes still holding stereotypes, though they may be more positive ones.

Learning about other ways of defining culture in the Masters of Foreign Language Teaching at Michigan State University made me realize that I have always taught culture in some form, but not the way a textbook would. I also see a way forward that avoids many of the pitfalls we face when teaching culture. By learning more about Intercultural Communicative Competence and aspects of interculturality, TPRS teachers can take resources they already have, like novels and techniques like Personalized Question and Answer, and use them build students' intercultural skills. The recent release of Intercultural Can-do statements and an Intercultural Reflection Tool by NCSSFL and ACTFL in 2017 also provided impetus for incorporating these types of skills into the teacher's guide.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICCC) is a concept that has been defined in different ways by different scholars, researchers, and institutions. When I first encountered the idea, I realized that ICCC described the outcome I had always wanted for my students—that through learning a second language they would develop more "awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures and self-awareness of one's own culture" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 247). I had hoped for these traits to develop in my students,

but did not know how to describe them, how to develop them intentionally, or how to assess their growth.

This paper is meant to serve as a resource on using a comprehension-based reader/classroom novel as a springboard for intercultural learning. I hope to show that Intercultural Communicative Competence is important to teach, and that it can be incorporated into a TPRS/CI methodology. TPRS/CI teachers can use the novels they already teach with their classes for intercultural learning. To demonstrate this, I will give examples of how to teach five aspects of interculturality using my book *Pancho y las momias* and its free teacher's guide available at *www.panchoylasmomias.weebly.com*. Many TPRS teachers already do activities before, during, and after reading; some slight changes will make them more relatable and engaging to students and hopefully lead to more powerful learning experiences.

In this paper, I will first provide a rationale for reading graded readers as a class in TPRS classrooms, discuss some common pitfalls of teaching culture, and finally discuss using graded readers to teach five aspects of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

Foundations of TPRS and Comprehension-Based Readers

I teach in a K-8 district where our curriculum is structured around comprehension-based readers and teaching the most high-frequency structures of Spanish through engaging stories and other comprehensible input. I use TPR Storytelling (TPRS) and TCI (Teaching with Comprehensible Input) methods in a middle school Spanish classroom. TPRS is a method developed by Blaine Ray, which he adapted from Asher's Total Physical Response. Both TPRS and T/CI rely heavily on Stephen Krashen's theories of language acquisition, including that comprehensible, compelling input is key to acquisition.

Appendix A has a glossary of key terms associated with TPRS that appear in this paper or the teacher's guide with links for further information for those who may be less familiar with the methodology. Words that appear in bold can be found in the appendix.

Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis argues that "learned knowledge is not helpful for spontaneous, communicative language use" (Loewen, 2009, p. 12). Krashen also argues that teachers should provide "profuse amounts of comprehensible input, which he termed *i*+1" (Loewen, 2009, p. 13). TPRS/CI teachers do not force students to produce grammatically accurate or "complete" sentences early on. Students answer simple questions chorally and can volunteer to provide answers or ideas for stories. Interaction and negotiation of meaning occur during these voluntary interactions with the teacher.

TPRS does not recommend teaching grammar explicitly, instead focusing on meaning over "rules". Each conjugated verb is treated as a vocabulary "structure". Rather than teach artificial "categories" of tenses, such as "all regular preterite verbs", then "irregular preterite", then "all imperfect", TPRS uses specific examples from each category and introduces them when they have the most meaning and usefulness in context. For instance, in contrast to most popular textbooks, common irregular verbs tend to be among the first structures introduced because of their frequency and usefulness. They are irregular often *because* they are so frequently used. N. Ellis (2009) writes, "constructionist approaches to language acquisition […] emphasize piecemeal learning from concrete exemplars" (p. 142). N. Ellis further states, "optimal acquisition should occur when the central members of the category are presented early and often" (p. 150). This supports TPRS/TCI's focus on specific highly useful and meaningful examples, instead of teaching all conjugations of an entire category of verbs at once. Ellis

explains Goldberg, Casenhiser, and Sethuraman's (2004) study which found that when learners are exposed to a new syntactic construction, a profile where one exemplar had "a particularly high token frequency (8-2-2-2-2)" (p. 150) was more effective than a relatively balanced token frequency. TPRS/CI takes a similar approach, teaching a few examples of different types of verbs and verb phrases and exposing students to a high frequency of those constructions. This will give students "verb islands" from which to generalize patterns to new verbs over time.

Other than **storytelling**, reading is a key component of TPRS. In many programs, comprehension-based or graded readers are used to guide the curriculum, rather than textbooks. Teachers might choose to read just one novel a year supplemented with other activities, or to read several novels per year. Some teachers also include Free Voluntary Reading during class a few times per week or every day. Perhaps most importantly, teachers select reading materials very carefully, preferring readers written by TPRS-associated publishers and other TPRS teachers. TPRS trainer and publisher Carol Gaab describes what makes these graded readers unique: they are written with "an exceptionally low unique word count and an unusually high frequency factor" (Gaab, 2018, p. 40). She uses the term "comprehension-based readers" to distinguish them from other kinds of literature for native speakers or graded readers written with different characteristics. Graded readers are abundant for English language learners from well-established publishers, but even those may be too challenging for very beginning students. The unfortunate reality is that in most foreign language programs in the U.S., students do not have enough time to develop the fluency needed to read graded readers by traditional publishers. Comprehension-based readers are written with a low type/token ratio. Authors of these readers also make heavy use of cognates between English and the target language. The goal is to

"mesmerize learners, lulling them into a story world that inconspicuously provides repeated exposure to high-frequency words and phrases" (Gaab, 2018, p. 40). One of Gaab's books, *Brandon Brown dice la verdad*, reports that it has just 75 unique words, (probably not counting cognates), making it ideal for true novices. Another important characteristic, mentioned by Gaab, is that the books are written with high-frequency words and phrases. This is key; there should not only be a low type/token ratio, but the words used (other than cognates) should be high frequency as well. The authors of these books recognize that time is precious; programs should spend time teaching the 1000 most frequent words in the language. In English, for example, the "1st 1000 different words [cover] between 70% and 90%" of the language, depending on the "content of the text and whether the text used is spoken language or written language" (Nation, 2016, p. 4).

There is evidence to suggest that a large amount of vocabulary can be learned incidentally from listening to stories, especially those that contain the right characteristics. Elley (1989) studied incidental vocabulary learning when preschool children were read stories in their first language (L1). Students learned more words when the teacher reading the story also gave short explanations of words they did not understand. Three variables in particular were shown to be the most predictive of learning a target word (in order of strength of correlation from highest to lowest): "strength of meaning cues [in the surrounding text], number of occurrences, and number of times illustrated" (p. 183). This was found repeatedly in different experiments conducted by Elley, including a preliminary study with English stories read to second language (L2) learners of English. Elley concludes, that if an "8- to 10-minute story, read three times, with only brief explanation of word meanings, can produce 40% gains in vocabulary for typical

children, there are clearly good linguistic grounds for increasing this activity" (p. 186). Many comprehension-based readers are written with these same characteristics for vocabulary acquisition. For that reason, some teachers choose not to "teach" a book, instead simply reading it aloud to students. This may be a valuable approach for some books, but does not provide much of an opportunity for intercultural learning and relies totally on the book to teach culture and other skills.

Overview of the Teacher's Guide and Teaching Classroom Novels

In the teacher's guide created for *Pancho y las momias*, in addition to activities that focus on intercultural communicative competence, teachers will find many familiar TPRS and T/CI activities used to pre-teach structures and engage students with the story. It is not the purpose of this paper to explain and defend how comprehension-based readers are typically taught in the TPRS classroom, or to defend every activity used in the teacher's guide, but a brief discussion of the process of teaching whole-class novels may be useful for those who are not familiar with it.

TPRS classrooms vary greatly in how they treat novels in the classroom. Some teachers do not teach whole-class novels. Teachers vary on how much they decide to pre-teach vocabulary and how many activities they do accompanying each chapter. Some teachers read one book every two weeks, some read one chapter per week, and some only read a novel after several weeks of pre-teaching and preparatory activities. There does not seem to be consensus on what is the "best" way to teach, among teachers or among researchers. One takeaway from English Language Arts (ELA) and Second Language research on whole-class novels is that novelty is key for maintaining student engagement and interest, an idea which should not be new to TPRS teachers. The teacher's guide for *Pancho y las momias* aims to provide teachers with options for

teaching, at the same time recognizing that few teachers will do every single activity in the guide with all of their students.

Many TPRS teachers begin preparing to read a whole-class novel with backward planning, or “beginning with the end in mind” (Sandrock, 2010, p. 2). “Each activity, each interaction, each question, and each learning check will be focused on what the students need in order to be successful” (p. 3). In this case, the end goal is comprehension of a novel such that the students are able to interact with the text in various ways and build their fluency more generally. What structures will students need to learn to understand this book with ease? Are there any cultural or historical topics that will be essential for comprehension that they may be unfamiliar with? How much to **pre-teach** and what to pre-teach depends on the text and on one’s learners. Many studies on L2 reading have recommended providing background knowledge and previewing or pre-teaching vocabulary for better text comprehension. One study suggests that for authentic (unadapted) reading, there was a higher positive effect for previewing and building background knowledge than for just background knowledge or no treatment (Chen & Graves, 1995). The literature review of Chou (2011) usefully summarizes and weighs research on the benefits of background knowledge and/or vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension. The study found that studying a vocabulary list was more helpful than background knowledge for reading comprehension with ESL Taiwanese students. Chou stated that the results may depend on the text (one study on reading about Halloween found that background knowledge was more helpful than vocabulary). Chou also mentions Hammadou (1991), which found that novice readers rely more on inference (from background knowledge) because their vocabulary levels are lower. It would seem that both are useful depending on the learner and the text. Based on these

studies, it seems reasonable to pre-teach some vocabulary and help students build some background knowledge before reading. However, by "pre-teach" TPRS teachers typically mean something different from providing a vocabulary list to look at or memorize. Learners need input and interaction using these structures in order to learn them. I prefer to pre-teach any vocabulary or background knowledge for several weeks using **Story Asking**, **Movietalks**, and other techniques, using topics and materials that appear mostly unrelated to the book we will be reading.

The teacher's guide for *Pancho y las momias* recommends reading the chapters of a whole-class novel aloud with students following along visually. Due to the complexity and difficulty of decoding and comprehending a text in a second language, reading along while a fluent reader reads the story aloud may be helpful to students. Chang and Miller (2015) suggest that by using audio-assisted reading "L2 readers may be pulled faster through texts and enjoy the benefits of reading quickly" (Chang & Miller, 2015, p. 100). Their study found that audio-assisted extensive reading of graded readers was enjoyable and led to greater reading fluency and comprehension over silent reading. This makes reading aloud as students follow along in the text a well-supported option.

Another controversial topic is whether to give comprehension questions after reading. ELA teachers (and students) know the dread associated with being handed a novel and a packet with dozens of questions, all to be completed at home. Most TPRS teachers read classroom novels together in class, to aid in comprehension, but whether to give comprehension questions at the end of a chapter is controversial, to say the least. Teachers know it is possible to "over-do" it. In a guide on developing comprehension questions for L2 reading, Day and Park (2005)

caution, "beware of the death by comprehension questions" (p. 68). Others say that these questions help teachers build accountability, or find out who needs assistance. Sometimes we just need something to give to a substitute teacher in an emergency. Macalister (2014) observes that many language teachers fail to treat reading as a “meaning-making activity” (p. 387), instead focusing too much on grammar points or vocabulary after reading. Painstakingly deconstructing a too-challenging text looking for “answers” is demotivating, and leads to what is called *efferent reading*. This contrasts with *aesthetic reading*, where “we are responding to what we read in a way that involves us in feelings and emotions about what we read” (Malley & Prowse, 2012, p. 166). There is surely a balance to be found here. A whole-class novel is not wholly aesthetic reading, or efferent reading, but teachers can also try not to create a reading experience that takes away any possibility of a personal/emotional connection with the text. Macalister (2014) helpfully reminds teachers that even in intensive reading, “we read to find out what a text says, so learning skills, strategies, vocabulary, and grammar should be embedded in a meaning focus” (p. 392). Teachers might select just two or three questions from the comprehension questions provided to give as a follow-up to reading, or use comprehension questions as suggestions for class discussion during/after reading. Using the text as something to connect with, make predictions, and wonder about may be the best way to check for comprehension. Macalister (2014) also suggests exploring **reader’s theater** as a way to re-read text, as re-reading has been shown to be beneficial to L2 reading comprehension and learning.

In many ways, the kinds of activities in the teacher’s guide for *Pancho y las momias* are similar to other teacher’s guides. There are **pre-teaching** ideas including **story scripts**, reader’s theater suggestions, and comprehension questions. What is different about this guide are some

examples of ways to use a comprehension-based novel as a springboard for teaching intercultural skills. Those who are familiar with other teacher's guides may recognize some of the activities that are suggested; the difference is that the guide I have created provides activities that illustrate a new way of building our students' intercultural communicative competence more explicitly.

Pitfalls of Teaching Culture

Next, how culture is typically taught (or not) in second language classrooms will be considered as well as how to avoid potential pitfalls of teaching culture. There have always been plenty of resources about what a person from "culture X is like and therefore how we should communicate with them" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010, p. 1). The textbook I was provided in my first years of teaching contained lots of "facts" about various countries, paired with static images that made the other cultures seem "interesting" and "exotic". As well-meaning as these resources often are, they sometimes fall into the trap of boiling a culture down into its essence, a too-neat package, emphasizing "exoticness" in a way that can imply inferiority and backwardness. (p. 35) I always had that uneasy sense with these resources, and therefore I thought I felt uncomfortable teaching culture. I did not want want students to walk away with *different* stereotypes than they had before taking my class. Culture also seemed to be treated as something to go out and get, like a souvenir. This way of approaching culture, as a set of facts or as a set of guidelines about how to interact with a huge group of people, is essentialist and reductive. It presumes "that there is a universal essence, homogeneity and unity in a particular culture [and reduces] cultural behavior down to a simple causal factor" (p. 1). It implies that an individual's actions are caused by their membership in a certain culture.

An *essentialist* view of culture treats it as a physical entity, and someone with this view might say, "I visited three cultures [...] Spain, Morocco, and Tunisia" (p. 3). Whereas a *non-essentialist* view of culture sees culture as a "social force, which is evident where it is significant. Society is complex, with characteristics that are difficult to pin down" (p. 3) The person with a *non-essentialist* view might say, "'There was something culturally different about each of the countries I visited'" (p. 3).

Another essentialist way of looking at culture might consider culture to be associated only with a country or a language, when really culture can describe "any type or size of group for any period of time, and can be characterized by a discourse as much as by a language" (p. 3). Therefore instead of only talking about "Japanese culture" or "Hindu culture," we can break cultures down into "the food culture in Japan" (p. 3), or the "culture of sport in British schools" (p. 3).

We should also try not to define people and predict their behavior only by their national culture: "People from Egypt cannot...when they arrive in French culture" (p. 3). Cultures can blend and cut across national boundaries; two international auto executives or two Olympic-level young athletes might have more in common than they realize if they look beyond their differing nationalities. People move through many cultures "both within and across societies" (p. 3).

As language teachers it is important that we describe culture conscientiously. We should not imply that "'a culture' behaves like a single-minded person with a specific, exclusive personality" as in statements like 'German culture believes that…' or 'In Middle Eastern culture there is no concept of…'" (p. 4).

We must also not imply that "to communicate with someone who is foreign or different we must first understand the details, or the stereotype of their culture," with statements like "When you want to greet a Swedish businessman, you need to know that in Swedish culture…" (p. 3). This is actually quite freeing: it means that our students do not have to be (and realistically cannot be) prepared to interact with everyone from every target language culture. We do not have to gather and disseminate every fact about every group of people. Students can instead learn to learn, and thus learn to interact more successfully. This view is more realistic: we have to be prepared to learn about the complexity of who someone is as an individual in order to best communicate with them. "Communication is about not presuming" (p. 23). This skill will serve our students beyond language learning and into their professional careers as well.

Like many teachers, I treated culture as a static set of facts, and fell back on "safe topics like 'daily life and routines, traditions, folklore, and tourist attractions'" (Sercu, 2006, p. 62 as cited in Menard-Warwick, 2009, p. 32). I set aside time to teach about culture, without integrating it into language instruction. However, "knowing about the practices and products of a culture is one thing; being able to reflect on and explain its multiple perspectives from both an insider's and an outsider's point of view is quite another" (Want, 2009, p. 285). Many teachers probably know someone who can do this; perhaps they themselves can. An intercultural person can understand and explain multiple points of view, without necessarily agreeing with either. I think we all hope that our students (or even just a few) will one day reach this level of interculturality with a target language culture.

Some teachers feel that teaching culture inevitably means time spent in English and takes time away from providing Comprehensible Input, and that may be true. However, the new

NSSCFL-ACTFL Intercultural Communication standards emphasize using the target language to learn about culture. Even if some of the foundational knowledge ends up being taught in the L1, I feel it is important enough to make time for it. Many activities, like the ones in the teacher's guide, are scaffolded for beginners. And if teachers end up explaining some difficult concepts or students need to clarify or reflect in their L1, I think that is valuable. Reflecting on and processing intercultural experiences will necessarily happen in the L1 for most beginners anyway, and is an essential part of the process. ACTFL-NCSSFL's intercultural learning reflection tool provides examples of target-language-maximized activities and even suggests using the L1 for reflection at home if time is not made available in class ("Intercultural Reflection Tool", 2017).

I understand that many teachers probably do avoid the pitfalls of teaching culture described in this section, and others are looking for answers and promoting dialogue. For example, Rachelle Adams and Anna Gilcher have presented popular sessions at national TPRS conferences on culturally-responsive and diversity-responsive language teaching, including how the stories we tell convey culture implicitly to listeners and language learners.

Intercultural Communicative Competence

Now that we have discussed how *not* to treat culture, what are some concrete ways to make "the teaching of culture" more inclusive, more diverse, and more effective for our students? If students cannot, and should not, be taught every "fact" about every target language culture, what does one teach? That is the focus of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICCC). For a quick definition of terms, Intercultural Communication (ICC) is a broad field that aims to teach intercultural skills to many people who come into contact with other cultures:

executives, politicians, etc. ICCC, more specifically, refers to teaching Intercultural Communication in a foreign language teaching context. It aligns with and extends other types of communicative competence that have typically been the goal of language classes.

In the teacher's guide, students are introduced to two ways of thinking about culture: large and small cultures, and surface and deep culture (Hammond, 2015, p. 22). Surface and Deep culture is a useful metaphor for introducing students to the "iceberg" of culture. (Hammond (2015) also describes it as a "tree.") There are the aspects that are easy to see and talk about: Food, Festivals, Flags, Fashion, High Culture. There are also unseen aspects beneath the surface: humor, attitudes about gender, race, and sexuality, pragmatics, proxemics, ideas about beauty, attitudes about different dialects, etc. These are shared understandings that individuals accept or reject, and use meaningfully to project belonging. "Different cultural resources can be drawn upon and invoked at different times depending on the circumstances" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2010, p. 13).

When learning intercultural skills, students

> *use* language to explore different cultures, and to mediate those situations where cultural misconceptions occur. They do this with increasing sophistication, drawing on their accumulating cultural knowledge and developing skill in using the resources of the target language. They are also encouraged to employ personal qualities such as empathy, open-mindedness and respect for others. (Corbett, 2010, p. 2)

Students start this process by interacting with their peers and discovering their own culture in order to be able to recognize how it influences them and explain it. Some students,

particularly students in homogenous communities or who are otherwise in a cultural majority, do not realize that *they too* have culture, and therefore cannot recognize how it may be influencing their reactions to other people and other cultures. "Through [intercultural] activities, learners look anew at their own community's behaviour, practices, and values and prepare to explain them to people whose behaviour, practices, and values differ" (Corbett, 2010, p. 2). Students must first learn to observe their own culture or cultures. This may be a good place in students' learning to have them write "cultural jewels," 5-10 sentence explanations about important aspects of their own culture (Adams & Gilcher, 2017).

What are the specific, teachable skills and knowledge that students need to become intercultural? Corbett (2010) refers to Byram and Gribkova's work in defining a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that make up ICCC: "(a) knowing the self and the other; (b) knowing how to relate and interpret meaning; (c) developing critical awareness; (d) knowing how to discover cultural information; and (e) knowing how to relativise oneself and value the attitudes and beliefs of others" (Corbett, 2010, p. 2). In the teacher's guide for *Pancho y las momias*, these five aspects will be referred to as *Background Cultural Knowledge*, *Attitudes*, *Skills of Interaction*, *Skills of Investigation/Discover*y, and *Critical Thinking about Culture*. Examples of how the activities of this guide are used explore and develop each of these aspects will be discussed later in this paper. For another definition of skills that build Interculturality, see the 2017 ACTFL-NCSSFL Intercultural Can-do Statements ("Intercultural Can-do Statements", 2017).

How Others Have Used Fiction/Readers as a Springboard for Intercultural Learning

There are other published accounts of teachers using novels as a resource for teaching culture, though perhaps not interculturality specifically, and studies are hard to find that use comprehension-based readers in a TPRS setting. One study (Nie, 2017) paired reading an authentic novel with completing reader-response journals. Students were instructed to read and write on intercultural topics outside of class. In the study, most students did not finish the book, and 0% said they “loved” the book. This makes it difficult to study the value of reader-response journals for intercultural learning. It also helps make the case for comprehensible and compelling reading material. With the right reading material and prompts, reader-response journals may be a good way to incorporate intercultural reflection when students are reading self-selected books. Lee Zoreda (2006) used adapted literary texts as a springboard to incorporate interdisciplinary language learning around the 3 Cs of Culture, Comparisons, and Connections, but did not specifically address interculturality. Price (2001) describes the author’s success telling folktales to her ESL students to teach English and culture. Beniko Mason and the Stories First Foundation are documenting and promoting incidental learning through stories using the activity of **StoryListening**. These are important examples of using stories as a conduit of culture and language, but are not sufficient for building the attitudes and skills that students need for intercultural communication. Students who do not have the necessary attitudes and skills already may not develop them through storytelling alone. Students need the opportunity to react to and reflect on the culture conveyed in stories, and need the opportunity to learn skills of discovery and interaction.

The Argument for Using Stories to Teach Intercultural Communicative Competence

TPRS provides many opportunities to build ICCC and is compatible with its goals. A TPRS lesson often starts with Personalized Question and Answer (**PQA**), talking to students about their experiences, their identities, their cultures, build to a story, either interactive and co-created ("story asking") or written. Finally, students can process and reflect upon the story either through **circling** or a written response. TPRS teachers already know how to keep their language comprehensible for students and constantly monitor comprehension. TPRS teachers know how to incorporate key structures into a lesson, to teach them relatively inductively and implicitly. TPRS teachers know how to make their lessons and discussions student-centered. They also regularly help their students make personal connections with whatever text they encounter. TPRS teachers know the value of stories, and stories are uniquely capable of building certain important intercultural skills and attitudes.

Mar & Oatley (2008) review studies on the effects of reading fiction (in one's first language) on the brain. They indicate that engagement in fiction may lead to increased empathy. They posit that fiction allows one to participate in diverse simulations of social interaction. This article provides support for the idea of using fictional stories as a springboard for reflection and intercultural learning. Because reading fiction allows one to enter the lives of others, and feel what they are feeling, it can change one's attitudes and stereotypes more effectively than a nonfiction expository text about the same topic or even a real-life interaction with the "other" (Katz and Zalk, 1978, cited in Mar & Oatley, 2008). Galinksy and Moskowitz (2000) suggests that indirect contact with "stigmatized others" through fiction may allow people to "approach these individuals with sufficient psychological distance and feelings of control to promote true empathy and perspective-taking" (Mar & Oatley, 2008, p. 181). If that is the case,

carefully-chosen fiction can and should play a central role in intercultural learning, where empathy, openness, and acceptance are powerful tools.

Now that the argument has been made for the power of stories to build empathy and understanding, what do we do with stories to help our students process what they experience in them? Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) suggest that language learning in an intercultural perspective involves experiential learning and can be taught through tasks. "Experiential learning expands the notion of 'task' by focusing on personal growth. This means understanding experience as meaningful to the learner and his or her development" (p. 66-67). By also expanding the concepts of PQA and circling in a TPRS classroom, I believe that intercultural tasks, including experiences, observations, and reflections, can be achieved without departing too much from the method.

Activities that explore and develop the five aspects of ICCC

In the following section, I will describe some of the activities from the *Pancho y las momias* teacher's guide and how they develop five aspects of Intercultural Communicative Competence.

First, it must be acknowledged that any interculturally-focused activity will likely involve and develop more than one of these five aspects at once, but for simplicity, they have been divided into categories by the skill that is the intended "focus" of the activity.

(a) Background Cultural Knowledge. Background cultural knowledge includes some of the knowledge that traditional culture lessons have always included, i.e. knowledge of some products, practices, and perspectives of a target-language culture. It also includes "'knowing the self and the other'[, which] depends on understanding the complex interactions between

individuals and groups, and how individuals actively negotiate their multiple identities in the context of different communities" (Corbett, 2010, p. 3). This domain as connected to Attitudes as well; the ability to describe oneself and see oneself from an outsider's perspective are connected.

In the *Pancho y las momias* teacher's guide, which is written with my young 6th grade students in mind, many of the activities build background knowledge. Older or more experienced students might not need as much support to understand the events of the book; they may pick up cues from the story to "see" what is happening more readily. The following "activities" are mainly short paragraphs with pictures that go along with the reading. Some are there for teachers to pull up before or during the chapter to help students "see" the places, practices, and products in the story, as in the case of *tortillerías, nichos,* and *charamuscas*. Within the text there is just enough explanation to *confirm* meaning, not to teach what it is. Other explanations in the teacher's guide might lead to discussions relating the product or practice to students' own culture; for example, learning about what a *chilango* is will not only help students understand the first conflict between the two main characters, but could lead to a discussion of regional stereotypes students are familiar with and a discussion that these stereotypes are not necessarily true. The activity "La Leyenda del Pípila" includes a StoryListening script about the legend behind this local hero so that students will know the importance of this character when the two main characters meet him.

"Background Knowledge" Activities:

- Tortillerías (How tortillas are made, sold fresh daily)
- ¿Qué son "chilangos"? (What are "chilangos"? (Regional stereotypes))

- Los nichos y las momias (Burial Niches and How the mummies were formed)
- El Mercado Hidalgo (A market the characters visit)
- La leyenda del Pípila (Story about local hero from Mexican War of Independence; characters visit the statue and “talk” to it)
- ¿Qué es cempasúchil? (What does the marigold flower symbolize in Mexico and in the book?)
- ¿Qué son charamuscas? (What are these mummy-shaped candies? Tourist items)
- La Mina la Valenciana (Pictures of tourists entering the mine as the characters do)

Many teachers will recognize the importance of building background knowledge; that is where most of us would have stopped when it came to “teaching culture”, though perhaps with some more comparisons or connections to other disciplines. Comparisons to one’s own and other cultures and connections to other disciplines will be treated mostly in section (e) on “Critical thinking about culture.” The remaining four sections (b to e) discuss activities that build other intercultural skills, ones that may be less well-formed in the minds of teachers new to the idea of “interculturality”.

(b) Attitudes. Intercultural competence seems to be possible only with some measure of curiosity and self-awareness. This attitude allows students to build cultural knowledge and skills that can be taken into new situations. By treating the teaching of culture as more than the act of transferring static facts to students, students can *learn to learn*, a much more useful skill.

Students can learn how to navigate new situations and discover, observe, reflect on, and negotiate their own learning, but only if they *want to*. Because this is most likely the first time my students are discussing culture (at least in a language class), some of the attitudes developed in the teacher's guide for *Pancho y las momias* are basic. Some of these assumptions may be too basic for other learners; I assume that mine have not quite realized that they, too, have culture, and that they are a part of many large and small cultures. They may not consciously realize that just as in their community there is much diversity of opinions, products, and practices, that there is the same diversity of opinions, products, and practices in other cultures.

Some of the attitudes I hope learners will take away from the teacher's guide are:

- "What is (my) Culture?"
- "What I see as 'common sense' may be influenced by my culture."
- "My identity is a complex mix of large and small cultures."
- "Other cultures are as diverse and complex as mine."
- "Though we may choose to eat different foods in different cultures, the reasons behind our choices may be similar."

My hope is to develop the first four attitudes in a preliminary activity about culture. These may be referred back to or continue to develop as the reading continues. For this initial activity about culture, first teachers will read a sentence or two about surface (visible) culture and deep (hidden) culture. As a class, students will come up with examples of each. This is where teachers may want to have a discussion (probably in the L1) about what we mean when we talk about culture; that we do not mean that everyone in a group does X. Teachers might ask a few questions to help tease out this issue: "What color do people wear to a funeral in your

culture?" Most students will answer, "Black." Some students will say, "*But*-!" The teacher can then explain that while one *can* wear a different color, it might require explanation, like "I just want this not to be such a sad occasion" or, "(The deceased person) would have wanted us to celebrate and be happy." The teacher might then ask, "Would you have to let people know in advance to wear black or to wear colors to a funeral?" The same discussion could be had for Thanksgiving foods, what to shout at a football game, or the kind of music adolescents "are expected" to listen to.

The teacher then tells a story (adapted from a personal anecdote found online) of a woman perplexed by the question "Paper or plastic?" This is an important anecdote to help students apply the new knowledge about surface and deep cultures and to help them see that the term "deep culture" is not reserved "deeply held and profound" beliefs, but rather, common understandings that members of a culture do not think much about and are not very visible.

Students then learn about large and small cultures, and how they are tied to identity. Students will recognize that they are a part of many cultures, such as "Chinese-American culture," which is different from being "just Chinese" or "just American". Some students will be delighted to learn that there is, indeed, a "gaming culture", with particular ways of doing things, inside jokes, etc. that other people really just do not get. Students write a list of the large and small cultures they are a part of. If this class period takes place in English, (or Spanglish), it may still be valuable for the way that it will help students become more aware of themselves and others in the coming lessons.

(c) Skills of Interaction. We know that we cannot possibly prepare students for every encounter they will have with a person of another culture. Students need to learn how to interact

with someone from a different culture to find out about their “beliefs, values and behavior” (Byram, 2002, p. 13), which may be unconscious for the other person and difficult to explain. Part of being able to find out this information and interact successfully is having control over how one’s speech acts are perceived. The skill of interaction may encompass pragmatic norms of language use, especially to politeness and honorifics. Pragmatic norms “encompass knowledge of the ways in which particular utterances are evaluated by a culture” (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, p. 27). Students can be taught to make choices about how they want to be perceived based on the language they use in different situations. The norms around interaction also refer to expected phrases, as in the “expected answer to a question such as ‘How are you?’ and the appropriate thing to say before eating, how acceptable it is to be silent or be talkative” (Béal, 1992; Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1993, as cited in Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013, p. 28). This skill is where the connection between the L2 and culture is perhaps the clearest. Many TPRS teachers already teach “expected phrases” as rejoinders in their classrooms; a TPRS student on the first day of Mandarin will likely learn phrases like “Hao ji le” (Great!), “Îmi place!” (I like it!) in Romanian, and “¡Qué lástima!” (Too bad/What a shame!) in Spanish. These rejoinders give novice students an easy way to insert their opinion and personality into a discussion where they otherwise might not have been able to communicate. They also help students to learn how and when to use these phrases at the “appropriate” times.

There are approximately 3 activities that specifically develop the skill of interaction in the Teacher’s Guide for *Pancho y las momias*. One activity that addresses interaction (and many other skills) is the activity about tortillerías and food choices. Students first learn about tortillerías, and that in Mexico it is common to buy fresh tortillas daily or almost daily from local

shops. Then it is important to take the "foreignness" out of that concept, by helping students to understand the reasons behind such decisions and that people in their community make the same decisions but with different foods. Rather than saying "Isn't it neat and different that they buy tortillas every day," we take the discussion further and say, "Are there any foods (or drinks) that people in your culture buy fresh every day?" This activity really involves background knowledge and attitudes as well; we ask students to decenter a bit. They have just looked at tortillerías from an outsider's perspective, now can they see their parents' (or their own) Starbucks obsession from an outsider's perspective as well? Students might come up with different regional foods that "must" be eaten fresh for best flavor or practicality; bagels, ramen, and specialty coffee drinks come to mind. Now, instead of thinking "isn't it neat and different," students are asked to think, why do we (and they) make these choices? (Taste, freshness, price, practicality.) And is there a diversity of opinion on these choices? (Yes, of course!) Finally, students must go outside of the classroom to interview someone they know about their food choices around these sometimes "fresh daily" items and report back to the class.

Another activity that deals with interaction is a debate that extends from an argument the two main characters have in the book. The debate asks: *Is it necessary that the (recently enlivened and escaped) mummies return to the museum where they were housed?* Each character has a different point of view. Students are assigned a side, rather than choosing one, to encourage expanding their thinking and using textual evidence. Students are also given several phrases that can be used to make forceful points without offending the other side. This helps them build the skill of interaction where they may need to explain their point of view and ask for others' without offending or pushing.

"Skills of Interaction" Activities:

- Food Preferences Interview (Goes with *tortillerías*)
- Debate: ¿Es necesario que las momias regresen al museo?
- How does Pancho convince Santi to change his mind on a strongly held belief? (Noticing phrases for convincing and conveying opinion)

(d) Skills of Investigation/Discovery. Because we can never know or teach everything a student will need to know in the future, students also need skills of investigation and discovery. These are interpretive skills. How can students use the target language to find cultural information in texts? Can they evaluate and choose sources depending on the kind of information they seek? How students go about finding more information on a historical event, a current political point of view, or slang/idioms will necessarily be different.

Before students read, it is important that they learn more about two of the cities mentioned in the book and which are important to the main character. Students may not be familiar with Mexican cities outside of resort towns or the violence they see on TV. With this activity, they notice and document the similarities and differences between Mexico City and Guanajuato, a smaller city with its own unique and colorful features. Finally, students compare one of these cities to a city they are familiar with. Students in Chicago compared the tunnels in Guanajuato to Lower Wacker Drive. They compared the shopping district in Mexico City to Michigan Avenue. Then fast finishers can "walk around" the downtown areas of these cities virtually using Google Maps Street View, if devices are available. I recommend beginning with tourism ads from Youtube (links are provided in the guide) and then either providing links or letting students seek information on their own (for older students). In the case of the city of

Guanajuato, teachers need to be aware that students given free range of the internet will find somewhat gruesome pictures of the mummies; teachers may want to exert more control over when students see these pictures, and which ones they see.

Another opportunity for students to seek meaning on their own is for students to look for more Spanish words of Nahuatl origin after they learn about *cempasúchil* (marigold flower). Finally, students use skills of reading for the main idea and supporting details by reading the fake newspaper article at the end of the book. Teachers can use the **embedded reading** to support students in reading the more challenging text. Students read the original text or embedded reading to find textual evidence to support true/false statements. Some statements could be true or false depending on the evidence the student uses. This kind of activity helps students learn to find textual evidence and learn to see shades of gray in statements that claim to be “True” or “False”.

All “Investigation/Discovery” Activities:

- City Comparison
- Look for more Spanish words of Nahuatl origin
- Read an imagined newspaper article for key information.
    - Evaluate claims for veracity and find textual evidence to support or refute them.

(e) Critical Thinking about Culture. However curious and ready to learn students may be, students need to become aware of “their own values and how these influence their views of other people’s values” (Byram, 2002, p. 13). The purpose here is not to change learner’s values, but to promote respect and make students “explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to

others" (Byram, 2002, p. 13). Critical thinking about culture involves evaluating critically "perspectives, practices, and products of one's own and other cultures" (Byram, 2002, p. 13).

Some of the activities in this section necessarily connect to other skills; once students learn what a *chilango* is, for example, they will discuss regional stereotypes they are familiar with and whether the main character is making a joke or being offensive. Teachers should help students express personal stories if they feel that they can do so without reinforcing stereotypes. Once students learn about how the mummies were formed, they compare this process with the process of creating Egyptian mummies. (My students learn about Egyptian mummies in 6th grade, and are eager to share the gruesome details while I help them to translate to Spanish using gestures and simple cognates.) After this discussion, students read short descriptive phrases about the two groups of mummies and classify them as describing Egyptian mummies, the mummies of Guanajuato, or both.

Students who have read Romeo and Juliet (often in 9th grade), may listen to the Legend of the Alley of the Kiss and compare this tragic story to the play they have studied. This legend is not essential to the understanding of the story, so teachers may reasonably leave it out if students have not recently studied Romeo and Juliet.

"Critical Thinking about Culture" activities:

- "Chilango": ¿Es una broma o es ofensivo? (Regional stereotypes and 'just kidding')
- Las momias comparison to Egyptian mummies
- La leyenda del callejón del beso (Legend; compare to Romeo and Juliet)

Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Assessment is difficult for any whole-class novel, and much more so for growth in ICCC. It is difficult to know if these skills and understandings are firmly enough in place that they could be shifted to learning about a different culture. By the end of learning about Mexican culture by reading this book, do students still have misconceptions? Will they more carefully examine their misconceptions of other cultures in the future? Will they continue the process of observation, reaction, discovery, and interaction on their own? One only hopes that over time and with multiple learning experiences like this, students will grow into the intercultural person that we hope they will become. In the teacher's guide, there is a pre-reading survey and a post-reading survey that asks students questions about their culture and Mexican culture. First, it asks them to describe their own culture. It is easy to see growth in this area, for my 6th grade students. In the pretest, most did not know what to say. In the post-test, they were able to list several large and small cultures they were a part of, as well as what they saw as important parts of those cultures. Then the survey asks them questions comparing cultures, like "My culture is similar to Mexican culture" with a Likert scale with 5 steps from Agree to Disagree. Then it asks students to explain their answer. It is in these explanations that we might observe growth. There are no right answers, and some of the statements are purposefully vague and perhaps wrong-headed, like "If you are from the same culture as someone, you pretty much agree on the most important things."

There is also an option in the teacher's guide for an extension activity after reading that consolidates some of the intercultural skills that have been learned. Students will watch an animated short episode that features Santo, the famed Mexican lucha libre wrestler, fighting

against villians from Mexican folklore, including the mummies of Guanajuato. Students have to write questions they have about the video short, do some research on their own, and share with each other what they found out. This task uses some of the skills they learned with the novel in a new context. Teachers should look for signs that students are thinking critically, making comparisons to animated tv shows they know, reflecting, and seeking information in appropriate places. Really, though this is an extension activity or even an assessment of sorts, it is still an opportunity to to continue to give students feedback and teach more skills.

Other options for assessment of ICCC are reflection journals and portfolios. For example, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)'s Linguafolio is a formative assessment tool for students to document learning experiences, including intercultural ones. Their intercultural experiences reflection form (found at http://ncssfl.org/lfmodules/module5-1/) could be a useful way to have students reflect on learning and self-assess their growth. Students describe a cultural interaction or experience, explain how they felt, what they already knew going into the experience and what they would like to know now, and what they would do differently if they were in the situation again. Students reflect on their feelings and their own reactions, and how they could make the interaction or experience more meaningful next time. This type of reflection form seems more suited to students who are studying abroad or in closer contact with the target culture than most students in the U.S. may be, especially younger students.

Conclusion

Growing in ICCC is a continual process. One is never fully "there", but we can get students started in the right direction and teach many of the attitudes and skills they will need in order to continue to grow. I believe that this process of moving beyond the dissemination of

"cultural facts," breaking down aspects of interculturality into named domains that can be worked on, will help us plan for building interculturality, rather than hoping it will happen automatically as a result of studying a second language.

This paper, along with the website and teacher's guide for *Pancho y las momias* provide an example of how to plan learning experiences for building Intercultural Communicative Competence using classroom novels. Teaching through story can be a good way to impart some aspects of cultural knowledge, but if we want our students to become intercultural, we must build other skills more deliberately. Being thoughtful about how we discuss culture to avoid furthering stereotypes is a good place to start. Next, teachers should look at the "culture" that is presented in their teaching materials and make choices about whether and how to use them in different ways. Involving students and helping them think about and describe their own culture may also lead to more engagement and understanding within the classroom.

In the future, TPRS teachers and creators of materials should begin to explore how to incorporate Intercultural Communicative Competence into a typical TPRS/TCI classroom using comprehension-based readers and other materials. Certainly this will not fill the same role as the usual story scripts, **Free Voluntary Reading**, or other staples of the TPRS classroom, but interculturality is an essential component of language learning if we want our students to leave our classrooms with the ability to communicate and connect with others successfully.

Appendix A: TPRS terms and Activity types

This appendix offers short explanations of terms associated with TPRS and links to more information. The most definitive resource on these topics is Ray & Seeley's *Fluency through TPR Storytelling*. Online links are provided for faster access to information.

- Circling
  - A structured way of checking comprehension and giving exposure to a new structure by asking questions about a statement in different ways: yes/no, either/or, and wh-. This is also useful for differentiating and scaffolding comprehension questions to students. Circling is a key component of storytelling, PQA, Movietalk, and picture talk in TPRS.
  - http://tprstories.com/methods/
  - https://martinabex.com/training/essential-strategies-for-tprsci-teachers/how-to-circle/
- Embedded reading
  - First presented by Laurie Clarq. A set of progressively more difficult texts that teachers can create that help students read a more challenging text than they would be able to read without support.
  - https://embeddedreading.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/embedded-reading-fp_-the-basics.pdf
- Free Voluntary Reading (FVR)
  - Also called Sustained Silent Reading (SSR). A short time in class (or at home) for students to read any material that is available to them in the target language silently and individually for their own enjoyment, ideally with little accountability.
  - https://fluencymatters.com/sustained-silent-reading-guidelines-by-bryce-hedstrom/
  - https://www.brycehedstrom.com/free-stuff (see section on Free Voluntary Reading)
- Movietalk
  - First presented by Michelle Whaley. Using a short silent clip, often one that is funny or has a lot of action, to teach a few new structures. The teacher shows the slip, pauses frequently to describe what is happening in the clip. The teacher should decide beforehand how much new language to present. Otherwise, the steps are the same as for a TPRS story (establish meaning, ask the story, read and discuss).
  - https://martinabex.com/2016/08/30/movietalk-tprs-magic/
- Personalized Question and Answer (PQA)

    - A short segment of a lesson or a longer activity in which the teacher asks the students questions about themselves using new structures. Questions may be to the whole class, or to one student in particular. Questions can be ridiculous and encourage students to make up imaginative answers or can be more serious.
    - http://susangrosstprs.com/articles/HOWtoPQA.pdf
- Picture talk
    - See MovieTalk, but using an interesting picture instead of a short video clip.
- Pre-teaching
    - A way to prepare for reading a class novel or do a larger story (like a MovieTalk). Pre-teaching usually involves teaching a few structures at a time using PQA and/or short TPRS story scripts (mini-stories).
- Storylistening
    - Developed by Beniko Mason. A method of providing comprehensible input by telling stories to students in a comprehensible way by defining words on the board and/or drawing the characters and events of the story. Called StoryListening as a way to distinguish from “Story Asking,” and emphasize that students do not provide details in this type of activity.
- Storytelling/“Story asking”
    - The process of creating a story collaboratively using target structures. Sometimes called “Story Asking” because the teacher asks the class for several details throughout the process of telling the story, so they are really “asking” the story.
    - Teachers often begin with a story script, with students filling in the story with bizarre, strange, and exciting details. (You might compare this to Mad Libs, but live with student actors and props). Some teachers create a story in the moment with students based on interesting things they found out about their students during PQA.
- Story script
    - A "skeleton" of a story to be told through Story Asking. The story includes the basic structure of the story with blanks or place-holder details that the teacher will decide with the students. Often the story script focuses on teaching certain target structures. Teachers might script out the circling questions they will ask as they "ask" the story with students, though ideally teachers get to the point where they do not need to reference this script and list of questions too much during Story Asking.
- Structure
    - A vocabulary word, conjugated verb/verb phrase, other type of phrase that is the targeted phrase for a lesson or story for students to acquire. Teachers should try not to target too many phrases per lesson (some say three is plenty).

References

Adams, R., & Gilcher, A. (2017, December). Building a Cultural Treasure Trove with the Culture in the Room. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 1*2(2), 38-41. Retrieved from http://ijflt.com/images/ijflt/articles-december-2017/TtT%20Article%204%20Building%20a%20Cultural.pdf

Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching. A practical introduction for teachers. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved April 12, 2018.

Chang, A. C. S., & Millett, S. (2015). Improving reading rates and comprehension through audio-assisted extensive reading for beginner learners. *System, 52,* 91-102.

Chen, H. C., & Graves, M. F. (1995). Effects of previewing and providing background knowledge on Taiwanese college students' comprehension of American short stories. *Tesol Quarterly*, 29(4), 663-686.

Chou, P. T. M. (2011). The Effects of Vocabulary Knowledge and Background Knowledge on Reading Comprehension of Taiwanese EFL Students. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 8(1).

Corbett, J. (2010). *Intercultural Language Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R., & Park, J. (2005). Developing reading comprehension questions. *Reading in a foreign language*, 17(1), 60.

Deardorff, D. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of studies in international education*, 10(3), 241-266.

Elley, W. B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading research quarterly*, 174-187.

Ellis, N. (2009). Ch 9: Optimizing the input: Frequency and sampling in usage-based and form-focused learning. In C. Doughty & M. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of language teaching* (pp. 139-157). Singapore: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gaab, C. (2018, April). Eureka!: Carol Gaab sees comprehension-based readers as the catalyst for second language acquisition. *Language Magazine*, *17*(9), 39-42.

Hammond, Zaretta. (2015). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Holliday, A., Hyde, M., & Kullman, J. (2010). *Intercultural communication: An advanced resource book* (2nd edition). New York: Routledge.

“Intercultural Can-Do Statements.” ACTFL.org, NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017, https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/CanDos/Intercultural%20Can-Do_Statements.pdf

“Intercultural Reflection Tool.” ACTFL.org, NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2017, www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/CanDos/Intercultural%20Can-Dos_Reflections%20Scenarios.pdf.

Lee Zoreda, M. (2006). The Adapted Literary Text as a Scaffold for the Development of Linguistic and Intercultural Competence in English as a Foreign Language. *Estudios De Linguística Aplicada, 24*(43), 31-54.

Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013, pp. 11-30). *Intercultural language teaching and learning.* Malden, MA: Wiley.

Macalister, J. (2014). Teaching reading: Research into practice. *Language Teaching, 47*(3), 387-397.

Malley, A. & Prowse, P. (2012). Reading. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development* (pp. 166-198). Huntington, Great Britain: Bloomsbury Academic.

Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 3(3), 173-192.

Nation, I.S.P. (2016). *Making and Using Word Lists for Language Learning and Testing.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Nie, Y. (2017). Facilitating Intercultural Study through Novel Reading—The Application of Reading Task Journals. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies,* 7(6), 436-442.

Price, Planaria. (2001). The magic of folk tales for teaching English and Culture. *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching*, (6), 20-26.

Sandrock, Paul. *The Keys to Assessing Language Performance: A teacher's manual for measuring student progress*. Alexandria, VA, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2010.