SLIFE Reframed:

From Achievement Gap to Cultural Dissonance

Helaine W. Marshall, Ph.D.
Long Island University-Hudson
MALP, LLC

NJTESOL/NJBE Annual Conference
New Brunswick, NJ
May 29-31, 2019
Dictionary definition of schema:

An abstract structure representing concepts stored in memory
Linguistic Schema

FMJEOTPYX

ABCDEFHI

(James, 1987)
The batsmen were merciless against the bowlers. The bowlers placed their men in slips and covers. But to no avail. The batsmen hit one four after another with an occasional six. Not once did a ball look like it would hit their stumps or be caught.
The men were at bat against the bowlers. They did not show any pity. The bowlers placed their men in slips. They placed their men in covers. They hit some sixes. No ball hit the stumps. No ball was caught.

(Tierney & Pearson, 1985)
Please name the months of the year:

(James, 1987)
TYPES of SCHEMATA

- Linguistic Schemata
- Content Schemata
- Formal Schemata
The Power of Prior Knowledge

When information is missing or confusing, we compensate by accessing our familiar schemata.

Observe the following:
Ths sntnc s wrtttn wth th vwls smbls lft t.
“I pledge a lesson to the frog of the United States of America, and to the wee puppets for witches’ hands; one Asian in the vestibule, with little rice and just tee for all.”

(Betty Bao Lord’s childhood understanding of the Pledge of Allegiance)
Compensating Strategies
Example #3

(Adapted from Peregoy & Boyle, 2005)
TYPES of SCHEMATA

- Linguistic Schemata
- Content Schemata
- Formal Schemata
Two Learning Activities

FAMILIAR SCHEMATA

Describing your favorite game in your native language or dialect

UNFAMILIAR SCHEMATA

Writing a science lab report on buoyancy in academic English
Guidelines for Designing Classroom Activities

- **Identify** the unfamiliar linguistic, content and formal schemata

- **Balance** familiar and unfamiliar schemata in conducting the activity

- **Build associations** between the familiar and unfamiliar, developing new schemata
Create Fertile Spaces

Equity

Engagement

Enrichment

Leading to Empowerment
Layers of the Instructional Context

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teaching

Societal Factors

Bedrock Layer
Teachers and learners assume that

1. The goals of instruction are to
   a) produce an independent learner
   b) prepare the learner for the life after schooling

2. The learner is ready to
   a) participate and demonstrate mastery on an individual basis
   b) engage in literacy-based, classroom tasks

(Adapted from DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2013)
To think about:

- decor
- souvenir
- place of prayer
Three Underlying Cultural Differences

- Oral transmission vs. written word
- Collectivism vs. individualism
- Informal ways of learning vs. formal education
• Personal efforts praised, rewarded
• Personal interests, desires, primary
• Personal responsibility
• “Self-actualization”

(Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001; Lee & Oyserman, 2008; Triandis, 1995)
• “We” rather than “I.”
• People see themselves as part of an interconnected whole
• “Web” of relationships
• Group is more important than any single individual

(Triandis, 1995)
Formal vs Informal Ways of Learning
Academic Ways of Thinking and Decontextualized Tasks

- **Definitions**
  - What is a tree?

- **True/False**
  - Trenton is the capital of New Jersey.
  - New York City is the capital of New York State.

- **Classification**
  - Categorize these objects
Sample Question

What is the group?

Which ITEM does not belong in the group?

(Luria, 1976)
Teachers and learners assume that

1. The goals of instruction are to
   a) produce an independent learner
   b) prepare the learner for life after schooling

2. The learner is ready to
   a) participate and demonstrate mastery on an individual basis
   b) engage in literacy-based, classroom tasks

(Adapted from DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2013)
Cultural Dissonance

(Ibarra, 2001)
Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm
Culturally responsive teaching approach

Elements from student’s learning paradigm

Elements from Western-style education

Transitional model to address the achievement gap through focusing on cultural dissonance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Learning</th>
<th>Familiar Cultural Settings</th>
<th>U.S. Classroom Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONDITIONS</strong></td>
<td>Immediate Relevance</td>
<td>Future Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interconnectedness</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESSES</strong></td>
<td>Shared Responsibility</td>
<td>Individual Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Transmission</td>
<td>Written Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td>Pragmatic Tasks</td>
<td>Decontextualized Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>based on</em> Socio-Cultural Experiences</td>
<td><em>based on</em> Academic Ways of Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Two Different Learning Paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Learning</th>
<th>Familiar Cultural Settings</th>
<th>U.S. Classroom Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONDITIONS</strong></td>
<td>Immediate Relevance</td>
<td>Future Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interconnectedness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESSES</strong></td>
<td>Shared Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Transmission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
<td>Pragmatic Tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>based on Socio-Cultural Experiences</td>
<td>Decontextualized Tasks based on Academic Ways of Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© MALP, LLC
malpeducation.com
Our Education System

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

- Albert Einstein
**Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm® MALP®**

**SLIFE**
- Immediate Relevance
- Interconnectedness

**U.S. Classrooms**
- Future Relevance
- Independence

**ACCEPT CONDITIONS**

**COMBINE PROCESSES**
- Shared Responsibility
- Individual Accountability
  - Oral Transmission with Written Word

**FOCUS on NEW ACTIVITIES with familiar language & content**
- Pragmatic Tasks based on Socio-Cultural Experiences
- Decontextualized Tasks based on Academic Ways of Thinking
Playing Games

Like soldiers of all wars, games of chance and the exchange of money were popular in both armies. A successful gambler could send money home to help in the hard times shared by many.

Soldiers could pass several hours away playing games with friends. Many games from the Civil War era are still popular today. Soldiers played board games including checkers or draughts, chess, dominoes, and cards, and other games of chance.
Battling Boredom: Carol’s Bar Graph

Title: Activities for Battling Boredom

X-axis = Bars
Y-axis = Scale

Legend:
- VG = Video Games
- CP = Cell Phone

Yes, I have three bars the same height: music, chines, CP.
- And two bars the same height: music, movies.
- The bar is the tallest one: music, movies.
- The bar is the shortest one: VG, chines, CP.
## MALP Teacher Planning Checklist

**Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm®**

**MALP Teacher Planning Checklist**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Accept Conditions for Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. I am making this lesson/project immediately relevant to students’ lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. I am helping students develop and maintain interconnectedness with each other and with the instructor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Combine Processes for Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1. I am incorporating shared responsibility and individual accountability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. I am scaffolding the written word through oral interaction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Focus on New Activities for Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. I am developing academic ways of thinking using familiar language and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. I am teaching students to engage in decontextualized tasks to demonstrate mastery of these new ways of thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H.W. (2011). *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools.* p. 68. For terms and conditions of use, contact: information@malpeducation.com
Class Survey: Crossing the Mekong

- Interviewing at home
- Sharing data in class
- Drawing map & flags
- Entering data
- Using sentence frames
- Responding to questions
Attendance: Martha’s Absence Chart

I was absent because:

- It was raining
- I don't have an umbrella
- I wanted to see my Dad’s friend.
- I was asleep so late I couldn’t come
- It took too long at the pizza place.
- My mother had to go to an Immigration meeting
- I had to go to the airport to say goodbye to my cousin
- My mother had a toothache and I went to the dentist with her
- I helped my mom take our dog to the vet.
- I had to help my brother when he went to the eye doctor.
- I threw up
- I had a fever
- I had a toothache. I went to the dentist
- I had a sore throat
- I had a sore throat and a headache
- My stomach was hurting
- Teacher: Martha McGloin
Reframing the Conversation

From

The Achievement Gap

To

Cultural Dissonance

© MALP, LLC

malpeducation.com
Ways of Learning Continuum

Dissonance View
they are starting from a different paradigm

Deficit View
they know what to do but lack ability

Informal Learning
Oral Transmission
Collectivism

SLIFE and Other
Struggling English Learners

U.S. Mainstream Formal Education

© MALP, LLC
Hallmarks/Deal Breakers of U.S. Mainstream Classrooms

- Promise of future reward from education
- Individual participation – the hand raise
- Display of mastery – standardized testing
The farther a student is from the “me” of the culture, the less credible the promise of future reward from education will be for the student.

(Crumpton & Gregory, 2011; Noguera, 2003)
The less comfortable a student is with mainstream processes of individual accountability and the written word, and the less familiar a student is with academic tasks, the less successful the student will be on standardized testing.

(Menken, 2008; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000)
The farther a student is along the continuum of individualism to collectivism, the less invested the student will be in the individual hand raise.

(Littleton & Howe, 2010)
MORE MALP PROJECTS in Our Books

Class Surveys: Immigration
Collections: Mystery Bag
Mapping Time: Timelines
Autobiographies: Transitions
Bookmarking: delicious.com

Class Surveys: Crossing the Mekong
Mapping Time: Calendar
Theme Booklets:
  Curriculum - Fire Prevention
  Procedures - Driver’s License
  Language - Comparison/Contrast
Murals: Our Community