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on theme:

"ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS"

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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that traditional pen-and-paper methods of learning and teaching do not sufficiently reach all students with varying learning backgrounds, styles, and preferences. Thus, a shift toward multimodal instruction has occurred in which traditional methods are augmented by the viewing, listening and watching of a variety of technologies and media. This research work explores how to implement multimodality within online spaces, utilizing social media platforms as instructional spaces for Advanced English Language Learners. The research presented shows that employing these platforms may supplement in-class work to give students opportunities and space to utilize English rhetorical tools, cultivate and express their second language identity, and connect with native speakers in collaborative exercises. A thorough review of relevant teaching pedagogy and theory of both English composition and English as a Second Language fields is presented before the author discusses best practices in collaborative learning and reflects on previous attempts to utilize online learning during previous coursework in introductory and advanced English composition classes. Finally, this thesis concludes with the author's final remarks on the challenges and limitations of this study as well as possibilities for future research and instructional design.

Aspects here are considered as necessary components yielding good results of students. Most of all teachers like to provide students with a lot of knowledge-words, phrases, grammar, usages and so on. Yet, students do need these, but many teachers forget to teach them how to study English and how to use it. The actuality of this work consists in giving teachers tools to teach students all the abilities of the four skills (reading, writing , listening, speaking) as well as grammar.

The target group is advanced language learners of English. The constant need to satisfy language (especially English) demands stipulated by potential employers affect everyone. Nowadays children usually start with English or some other languages in very young age. Sometimes they acquire a relatively high level before the end of their compulsory education. On the other hand older generations are in a huge language disadvantage. Learning English is not easy at all for them unless they dispose of at least basic knowledge of it or of general talent for languages. It is not easy at all to learn in mature age. Certain psychic barriers might negatively influence learning. To avoid that it is necessary to select the right and efficient learning strategy for advanced students taking into consideration various important aspects arising out of their specific needs.

The aim of this work is to reveal devices with the help of which teachers can design communicative language learning tasks yielding a foreign language lesson for advanced language learners, but not a lesson about a foreign language. The purpose of the work is to show how all four main skills should be interwoven into a single whole and can be taught to advanced language learners. In other words, this research work deals with online courses for advanced English language learners and the difficulties and challenges that can arise while teaching online.

To achieve the set goal we must determine the following tasks:

1)   to find appropriate approaches to teaching English for advanced language learners;

2)   to characterize the essence of main aspects of an online lesson;

3)   to determine what language interaction is;

4)   to present practical hints for developing main skills among advanced language learners.

Methodological base of the work consists in admitting the necessity of all four main skills, grammar and comfortable atmosphere as factors providing a successful online lesson.

Scientific scrutiny of the research. The given topic has been investigated by a lot of scientists throughout the world and correspondingly in our country. As the topic concerns the methodology of teaching English the works of Jamol Jalolov, Zoltan Dörnyei, Rod Ellis and others served as the main resources for making the research. Just "Foreign language teaching methodology" (2012) by can prove that in our country the topic of teaching foreign languages in our country is highly evaluated. In this book the author suggests different approaches to teaching languages both for young and adult learners. The author tried to give solutions to the problems like teaching foreign languages to the learners whose language sentence structure is different from the one that's taught. Also, language teaching was investigated by great scientists of abroad. Rod Ellis' "Understanding Second Language Acquisition" (1996) is dedicated to the methodology of language teaching. The author mostly emphasizes the ways of speaking to adult learners in her book.

Methods used in the research are

- the analysis of scientific literature

- the description of main aspects

- the analysis of existing online language courses

- the comparison and contrast of different models of lessons.

- the distribution of practical approaches to improving main aspects of a lesson.

The object of the work is communicative model of an online foreign language lesson for advanced English language learners.

The subject is the investigation of different ways, approaches and even difficulties in teaching online English to advanced language learners and their solutions.

Hypothesis: provided we develop devices of interweaving the online lesson components into a single unit, we are to progress in terms of accomplishing communication.

The scientific novelty of the research is that, according to the presidential decree 18/75th nowadays in our country almost everyone should freely communicate in any foreign language, especially in English. Because English is considered to be the most widely-spoken language in the world. Regardless of the age everyone is studying English. Finding effective ways and approaches to teaching adults is the novelty of the research.

Theoretical value: some theoretical theses of new approaches to organizing an online lesson for advanced language learners are developed.

The practical value of the work is providing teachers with practical hints for developing main skills, including our own experience from our practice.

Structure. The research consists of Introduction, three chapters, conclusion and the list of used literature. The first chapter determines a lesson as a way of developing the main components of successful communication.

The second chapter proposes practical hints for developing main skills of mastering a language.

The third chapter deals with the analysis of existing online English courses for advanced language learners.

Conclusion is the part where all the information in the research summed up and logically comes to the end.

CHAPTER I. GENERAL IDEA OF ONLINE COURSES. ASSUMPTIONS, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1. Literature review, Rhetorical Situation: Audience

Teaching approaches as well as discourse community values invariably differ across cultures and languages. Yet while this diversity is something to honor and preserve, it poses a challenge for students who have learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL) and transfer into mainstream English composition courses at the college level. Such students have gained considerable skills in their second language, English, but may be puzzled by the expectations therein. These discourse community differences include critical thinking and rhetorical components like audience, tone, purpose, as well as more interpretive features like self-expression and writer's voice. Like many students around the world, international students studying in the US have been found to regularly engage with online media both for personal and academic purposes. It seems that these online platforms may present opportunities for these students to

practice and develop their English writing skills in a low-stakes, semi¬realistic context.

Research Questions

In attempting to determine possible solutions, or tools, to develop, the following research questions have surfaced:

1.   How can English composition instructors provide opportunities for international students to develop the skills necessary to later succeed in mainstream English composition courses?

2.   Do students feel more comfortable taking risks and expressing themselves

in online settings?

How can online and multimodal activities provide opportunities for

students to develop rhetorical awareness and the skills needed to meet the expectations of English composition as a whole?

Definition of Terms

The term "discourse community values" refers to the changing expectations of different communicative communities. This variation can occur across languages and within differing social circles within one language. For example, academic language expectations versus informal, conversational expectations.

By "mainstream English composition courses," I am referring to college classes that are not designed for English Language Learners but rather designed for students with native or native-like language abilities.

"Rhetoric" is the use of all or select aspects of a message in order to convince or persuade one's audience. These aspects include the audience with whom the writer is communicating, the writer's purpose, their stance, and the context in which the writing in taking place or responding to. This is a reflection of the English values of being explicit and taking responsibility as writers for how the reader will interpret and understand our messages.

"Rhetorical awareness" is therefore the ability to gauge what the rhetorical components of a given situation are in order to effectively arrange all important aspects in a logical, convincing manner.

"Critical thinking", also from a Western perspective, is the questioning of content presented and the probing into its presentation, intention, and ultimate meaning. To think critically is to demonstrate original thought as a result of skeptical investigation and exploration. This is the opposite of rote memorization in that there is no one correct answer and this response must be developed individually. Rhetorical thinking and awareness fits under the umbrella of critical thinking.[1]

By "international students", I am referring to those who have passed the necessary exams in their home country and the United States and are now taking courses with native-English-speaking students. In addition, ELL may also be used to describe this group, although it is a more generic term to describe those any are currently learning English.

"Self-expression" is the using of self-focused terms like I, my, me, etc. in writing. This also includes writing from a first-person perspective, rather than a more distant, implicit perspective. Connected to this is "voice": an authentic express of the writer's personality, feelings, and ideas.

"Success in composition courses" is considered developing and expressing a unique voice in writing and applying critical and rhetorical thinking to writing situations.[2]

By "multimodal activities", I am referring to the inclusive of several media types (videos, online activities, visual representations, and artistic forms of writing). This method meets the needs of students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and helps to contextualize their learning in real-world situations.

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[1] Slavin, R. E. (1995). Research on cooperative learning and achievement: What we know, what we need to know. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21(1), 43-69. https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1996.0004
[2] Martinez, A. L. (2008). Self-reported reading strategy use among Spanish university students of English. Revista Espanola De Linguistica Aplicada, 21, 167-179.

"Metacognition" is the awareness and control of one's own thinking process. It may also include the understanding and awareness of one's emotions, perceptions, and other internal processes that affect one's learning.

By "audience", I am referencing those who will receive the message of any form of communication whether that be spoken or written.

"Identity formation" refers to the creation of one's true or authentic self that will later be expressed within an educational and/or social setting.

"Collaborative learning" refers to a variety of pedagogical approaches in which students at various levels are grouped and paired for the purpose of achieving one, common goal. In this scenario they are responsible and held accountable for all of the group's learning, including their own.

"Target language" refers to the additional language that the students are intentionally attending a class in order to learn.

"Epistemic space" is a term offered by Chalmers to refer to the space that needs to be created within an educational setting for the discussing, sharing, and creating of knowledge with others.

Assumptions

The professional organization for ESL teachers is Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and they require us to disclose our assumptions as we discuss our research. The following are my assumptions before I began this project:

1.   One of my assumptions is that because students are accustomed to technology, social media, etc., they will find it easy to get started on assigned work but may struggle to adjust to the academic angle that will be imposed.

2.   Along these lines, I anticipate that online writing activities will dramatically highlight the need for identifying appropriate word choices, tone, stance, etc. for students.

3.   When comparing online writing assignments and in-class assignments, I predict that students will write more online but the in-class assignments may reflect their actual abilities since they have the chance to edit and revise online.

4.   For online and otherwise multimodal activities, I believe students may find it easier to express themselves, using self-centered language, and take calculated risks.

5.   My assumption is that students will feel less pressure in expressing themselves with the online activities, regardless of cultural background or individual personality.

Many students coming into these English composition courses have received extensive training in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at home, but their previous educational systems may not have perfectly matched up with the teaching styles and philosophies of American English classrooms.[3] Loosely defined, multimodality is the incorporation of several modes of teaching and learning that go beyond traditional reading and writing to include listening, watching, and using a variety of technology and media. A multimodal curriculum itself may be centered around specific themes (Ruefman, 2015) or may bring digital media into the classroom through video essays, blog work, social networking sites, and threaded discussion posts. As Ruefman (2015) notes

While writers still use textual components... these components are often insufficient to meet the needs of a 21st-century audience.. In many ways, digital media create unique rhetorical situations that transcend the parameters established by traditional printed texts.[4]

Integrating these different modes of learning and writing in the classroom could create more realistic communication scenarios in which students may engage. By implementing multimodal components such as blogs, instructors can help struggling students to become more aware of the unique rhetorical situation of a particular context, engage in critical and metacognitive thinking, become aware of their audience, and connect with classmates through guided peer review and collaboration online (Chen, 2013; Choi & Yi, 2015; Gardner & Davis, 2013;

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[3] Grami, G. A. (2012). Online collaborative writing for ESL learners using blogs and feedback checklists. English Language Teaching, 5(10), 43-48. doi :10.5539/elt.v5n10p43
[4] Ruefman, D. (2015). Bridging the gaps: Multimodal theme-sets in the global composition classroom. The CATESOL Journal, p.95.

Grami, 2012; Kitchakarn, 2014; Iida, 2010; Oztok, 2016; Ruefman, 2015; Shahri, 2017).

Similarly, by the creative use of "multimodal theme-sets" (Ruefman, 2015; Plutino, 2017), including multiple genres of writing like the haiku (a Japanese form of three-line poetry totaling 17 syllables), students can gain greater rhetorical awareness of their audience, how to express themselves appropriately in that particular context, and connect with their native English-speaking classmates. Although it may seem like quite the undertaking, another multimodal tool instructors may use is social networking sites (SNS), like Facebook or Twitter. These platforms offer valuable tools, as Chen (2013) indicates, "literacy learning.. .is understood as a social process in which language learners/users actively participate, enacting particular social roles and negotiating their situated identities"[5]. In this sense, multimodal activities, SNS included, serve not only to help students access and understand the rhetorical situation of that given context, but also to grant students opportunities to collaborate with others in creating knowledge and meaning (Brindley, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009; Chen, 2013; Plutino, 2017; Ortega, 2009; Oztok, 2016; Zhang, 2013) .

Rhetorical Situation: Audience

As students begin working with these integrated, multimodal activities, they are able to explore and expand their awareness of the rhetorical situation, at least the one according to the American English system, as rhetoric does vary "from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture" (Kaplan, 1966). Specifically, they may increase their awareness and accuracy of communicating to a specific audience beyond their immediate surroundings (Alhamami, 2018; Grami, 2012; Kitchakarn, 2014; Ruefman, 2015; Shapiro et al., 2016; Oztok, 2016; Plutino, 2017; Vincze & Joyce, 2018), for a specific purpose (Kitchakarn, 2014; Zhao, Ying, & Lin, 2012), and within a specified context (Grami, 2012; Kitchakarn, 2014; Oztok, 2016; Shapiro et al., 2016; Zhao, Ying, &

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[5] Chen, H. I. (2013). Identity practices of multilingual writers in social networking spaces. Language Learning & Technology, 17(2), p.143

Lin, 2012). The collaborative nature of many multimodal activities helps students practice their audience-awareness and critically think of ways to effectively communicate with that audience. This is extremely important in a writing class. Grami discusses this within a Saudi Arabian context: "Identifying and addressing the audience accordingly is a skill that most writing tasks ignore as students usually consider the teacher to be their only audience"[6]. The large-scale nature of practices like blogging, project-based tasks (Hafner, 2013), or Twitter (Plutino, 2017) present realistic models of authentic audiences. Students are acutely aware that their work will be received by an audience far beyond the context of their classroom; this promotes a heightening of awareness (Chen, 2013; Grami, 2012; Hafner, 2013; Kitchakarn, 2014; Plutino, 2017; Shapiro et al., 2016). Because of this heightened awareness of audience, students tend to show a greater sense of purpose when they write, knowing that their work will go out into the blogosphere and hoping that it will be meaningful to those who receive it (Kitchakarn, 2014; Oztok, 2016). By engaging in a variety of activities, students also have the opportunity to notice the rhetorical decisions of other writers, use these as a model, and finally practice these as they develop their own writing style (Grami, 2012; Kitcharkarn, 2014; Shapiro et al., 2016). These are some of the many reasons multimodal activities can improve student writing.

1.2. Identity Formation, Self-Expression, and Community

While multimodal activities can serve to heighten student-awareness of effective rhetorical moves within a given context and provide examples of how to do so in the work of others, this social component may also aid students in the formation of their L2 identity and future expressions of self and voice. Fortunately, both composition and second language acquisition theory maintain that meaning is

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[6] Grami, G. A. (2012). Online collaborative writing for ESL learners using blogs and feedback checklists. English Language Teaching, p.46

constructed socially rather than in a vacuum (Hafner, 2013; Iida, 2010; Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Plutino, 2017;

Shahri, 2017). Similarly, identity and the resulting expression of self or voice are also said to be socially-constructed (Elbow, 2007; Chen, 2013; Choi & Yi, 2015; Iida, 2010; Oztok, 2016; Prichard, 2015; Shahri, 2017; Zhang, 2013). That is, learners develop and create identities in their second language for specific discourse communities they wish to be a part of (Chen, 2013; Oztok, 2014; Prichard, 2013; Shahri, 2017; Vincze &Joyce, 2018). This creative aspect suggests that incorporating multimodal components in a composition class can greatly aid students in their identity formation. The fluid, self- directed nature of many online activities creates a space in which students can explore and create their second language identity, express their self and voice, and create opportunities to practice rhetorical awareness.[7] In fact, many second language learners tend to use these spaces more for identity formation and maintenance than other face-to-face or "non-digital forms of communication"[8]. Vincze & Joyce (2018) identify the Internet as a "more powerful component of the linguistic social context than past researchers have given it credit" (p. 96), as students have reported greater confidence in using and identifying with English through the use of online-learning activities. Informally, media like television series or social networking sites (SNS) can provide a window for the ELL to observe the patterns and styles of a particular discourse community, experiment with those elements, appropriate them for their own use, and gain a sense of belonging and community.[9]

Similarly, SNS like Facebook can provide students with a platform to experiment with their identity, altering features like their "about" pages, photos, videos, or links in an effort to create a specific self for the community they wish to be a part of (Chen, 2013). For formal, in-class purposes, on the other hand, online

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[7] Elbow, P. (2007) Reconsiderations: Voice in writing again: Embracing contraries. College English, 70 (2), pp. 168-188

[8] Hafner, C. A. (2014), Embedding digital literacies in English language teaching: students' digital video projects as multimodal ensembles. TESOL Quarterly, 48 (4) p.656

[9] Clement, R., Baker, S.C., Josephson, G., & Noels, K.A. (2005). Media effects on ethnic identity among linguistic majorities and minorities: A longitudinal study of a bilingual setting. Human Communication Research, p.31

activities such as blogging can also allow students to form their identity on their own time. As Kitchakarn notes, "blogs provide increased communicating opportunity for shy, quieter students to have more time to consider what to express and to write their reflection or feedback"[10]. These online activities create space for students to engage in mental rehearsal which leads to increased feelings of self-efficacy, decreased anxiety, and a stronger inclination towards future in-person partner-and-group work (Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011). Varying personalities may also be honored through the creation of elaborate video essays. These highly edited, well-crafted videos and similar creative projects can provide opportunities for students to express their ideas—their voice—in low-stakes scenarios; instead of preparing for a high-stress performance such as a classroom presentation, they are able to focus their energy on just communicating their ideas. Overall, these activities may grant students the time to complete the work at their comfort level and at their own pace, ultimately producing reflective, autonomous, and personally-responsible students.

1.3. Collaborative and Cooperative Learning in online lessons

Branching from the works of renown theorists such as Lev Vygotskii , Jean Piaget, and John Dewey, modern scholars have adapted their observations into what it now referred to as "collaborative learning" and "cooperative learning". It was Soviet psychologist Vygotskii who proposed the concept of the "zone of proximal development"[11] in which a student is aided by a "more knowledgeable other" (MKO) (Plutino, 2017) whose academic acumen or natural talent lifted the lower achieving student to a more level playing field. Vygotskii's Swiss

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[10] Kitchakarn, O. (2014). Developing writing abilities of EFL students through blogging. Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education. p.37
[11] Vygotskii, L., & Cole, M. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge: Harvard University. p.218

contemporary, Jean Piaget, had also begun to observe this phenomenon with regard to the development of speech among young children, noting that,

Our experiments brought to the fore another important point overlooked so far: the roe of the child's activity in the evolution of his thought processes. We have seen that egocentric [self-focused] speech is not suspended in a void but is directly related to the child's practical dealings with the real world [12].

By building on Piaget's observations, Vygotskii began a movement towards collaborative, cooperative work with the intention of bolstering students' individual progress by pairing them with other students who had already mastered the skill or content in question. During the late 1880s, American psychologist and philosopher John Dewey was also exploring these ideas. It was Dewey's belief that "The principle that development of experience comes about through interaction means that education is essentially a social process"[13]. These ideas, that education is to be social, that all benefit from the experiences of those engaged in the learning process, and that we create knowledge and understanding together, have become the prevailing model for collaborative education at all levels in the United States.

Thus, the terms collaboration and cooperation have become "God terms" in all levels of educational circles. Collaborative learning may actually be used to refer to several different-though-related pedagogical approaches. One is focused on students: the grouping and paring of students at various levels for the purpose of achieving one, common, academic goal (Brindley, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009; Gokhale, 1995; Plutino, 2017). The second definition focuses on teacher methodology: an instructional method in which the students are responsible and held accountable for not only their learning but also that of others (Gokhale, 1995; Rau & Heyl, 1990).

Similarly, within the composition realm, collaborative writing can be defined as a method that divides the composing process into distinct parts in order to help

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[12] Vygotskii, L. S. (1962). Thought and language. Cambridge: MIT Press. p.22
[13] Dewey, J. (1998). Experience and education: The 60th anniversary edition. West Lafayette, Kappa Delta Pi. p.65

writers improve their writing performance, or writing in which two or more writers with equal responsibility work together to create a joint product.[14]

In its ideal application, collaboration results in the creation of something new and dynamic, a co-constructed product resulting from several voices rather than an attempt at finding the one "right" answer. As Karis reflects, "Collaborators must remember that a context of shared meaning must not remain frozen or static; indeed, it is illusory to suppose that it can remain frozen or static"[15]. A truly collaborative scenario is one that invites the students into a conversation, activity, or assignment as active participants who, through these collaborative mechanisms, emerge more independent and able to accurately self-reflect and self-assess. It is through this interaction and sharing of diverse ideas and perspectives that students are enabled to grow in their reflective and problem-solving skills. Settings such as these are said to be "perfect complements to the Socratic approach to teaching" [16], preparing and empowering students with the skills need to engage in classroom discussion or debate. These benefits, however, can only be accomplished through the establishment of a constructive social support within the classroom. As Rau & Heyl note, educators hoping to utilize collaborative learning must ensure that they have humanized the learning environment "by creating informal social organization among students"[17] (p. 144).

Research on collaborative learning has pointedly proven its ability to increase benefits more than both individualistic or competitive methods of instruction and learning. It has been proven that a) "isolated" students do not learn as well as those involved in collaborative grouping (Rau & Heyl, 1990) and b) through collaboration, students help each other learn and, in particular, write better as opposed to working alone or with a teacher (Bruffee, 1972).

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[14] Harris, M. (1992). Collaboration is not collaboration is not collaboration: Writing center tutorials vs. peer-response groups. College Composition and Communication, 43 (3). p.112
[15] Karis, B. (1989). Conflict in collaboration: A Burkean perspective. Rhetoric Review, 8 (1), p.115
[16] Rau, W. & Heyl, B. S. (1990). Humanizing the college classroom: Collaborative learning and social organization among students. Teaching Sociology, 18 (2) p,148
[17] Rau, W. & Heyl, B. S. (1990). Humanizing the college classroom: Collaborative learning and social organization among students. Teaching Sociology, 18 (2) p.144

In addition to collaborative learning, scholars and educators alike often reference an additional group-oriented pedagogical approach, cooperative learning. While there are few differences among these two approaches, it is important to make the distinctions clear as these differences impact how educators and students implement and use this method. In defining cooperative learning, the following descriptions appear:

Groupwork of less than six students requiring "cooperation and positive interdependence among the individuals"[18].

A cooperative social situation in which all individuals contribute to the group's final product[19].

A scenario in which the individual's goals are positively correlated with the group's goals; the individual can only win if the group's or other person's goals are also accomplished.

Through engaging in cooperative learning, students are given an opportunity to learn skills in problem solving, in explaining and listening to others, and working with others to accomplish a specific goal. The underlying goal of cooperative learning was emphasized by Coleman in that this type of learning meets the "primary intent of schools" that they "make responsible, productive persons who can effectively participate in cooperative situations[20].

Similar to that of collaborative learning, research on cooperative learning proposes that learning accomplished in group settings leads to greater results than that carried out individually (Johnson, Brooker, Stutsman, Hultman, & Johnson, 1985; Johnson D.W., Johnson, Roy, & Zaidman, 1985; Smith, Johnson & Johnson, 1981;

Yager, Johnson, R., Johnson, & Snider, 1985; Yager, Johnson, & Johnson, 1985). Collaborative vs. Cooperative Learning

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[18] Jacob, E. & Mattson, B. (1987). Cooperative learning with limited-English-proficient students. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, p.3
[19] Jacob, E. & Mattson, B. (1987). Cooperative learning with limited-English-proficient students. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, p.4
[20] Johnson, D. W. & Johnson, R. T. (1974). Instructional goal structure: Cooperative, competitive, or individualistic. Review of Educational Research, p.221

It appears that the only distinction between collaborative and cooperative learning is the intention. While in collaborative learning students are encouraged to discuss and debate possible routes or answers, learners in cooperative scenarios are encouraged to unite toward a common purpose with little to no academic "sparring" meant to sharpen critical thinking or problem-solving skills. Both are geared toward group work and the learning of "soft" social skills such as teamwork; however, collaboration appears to strengthen individual skills through collaborative activities while cooperation focuses on creating collectively-minded members of a team.

Benefits of Collaborative & Cooperative Learning

One of the major goals and outcomes of both collaborative and cooperative learning is an increased awareness and ability to work productively with others. For this to proceed successfully, social psychologists have indicated that a) students must be aware of others, and b) they must be able to identify and respond to others' actions as well as the consequences of their own actions for themselves and others[21]. These requirements are actually not too difficult to meet; however, as Rau & Heyl (1990) reflect on the social nature of human beings, "When stripped of its ideological trappings, the heart of the human relations argument is that informal social organization emanates from a need for association with others"[22]. Thus, collaborative and cooperative learning scenarios utilize this inclination of human beings to behave, as Aristotle put it "social or political animal[s]," forming "voluntary or informal associations as expressions of their nature"[23].

Cooperative learning responds to this social inclination, creating opportunities for students to interact face-to-face. These face-to-face interactions have shown to improve relationships among group members as well as individual self-esteem.

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[21] Johnson, D. W. & Johnson, R. T. (1974). Instructional goal structure: Cooperative, competitive, or individualistic. Review of Educational Research, p.216

[22] Rau, W. & Heyl, B. S. (1990). Humanizing the college classroom: Collaborative learning and social organization among students. Teaching Sociology, 18 (2) p.144

[23] Rau, W. & Heyl, B. S. (1990). Humanizing the college classroom: Collaborative learning and social organization among students. Teaching Sociology, 18 (2) p.144

For cooperative/collaborative learning to be effective, the students must become aware of the consequences of their behaviors, that of others, and their implications for the group as a whole (Johnson & Johnson, 1974). When they come to the realization—if we win, I will win too—they will begin to see the potential individual rewards of positive group interdependence (Jacob & Mattson, 1987; Slavin, 1983). Having discovered the potential personal gains from engaging in collaborative projects, students will naturally create a social support system for group members, environments which are "conducive to trust". Within composition coursework, for example, establishing this safe group dynamic is key to the writing process which involves, "difficult reformulation in structure, clarity, and organization"[24]. In order for meaningful work to be done, the group members must know and trust one another. Overall, collaborative and cooperative learning experiences help students develop transferable skills for real-world situations, strengthen positive personality traits and social skills, reduce stress, lessen anxiety towards complex problem-solving, create a positive, friendly dynamic and offer support to students with more reserved personality types .

Although collaboration reduces competition among individual students, setting them up to gain more through the learning experience, there is still room within collaborative and cooperative scenarios for competition. A combination of cooperative activities and group competition has been shown to result in higher achievement. While group rewards (i.e. "winning" in a competition with other groups) appears to work best as motivation for lower-level students these group goals function as incentives for any group's members to work together and for those members to put forth their best efforts[25]. If groups lack the external motivation created by group goals and individual accountability to the group, one or two members may carry the burden of the group, a phenomenon known as "social loafing" which ultimately becomes "an insidious injustice that saps

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[24] Clifford, J. (1981). Composing in stages: The effects of a collaborative pedagogy. Research in the Teaching of English, p.50
[25] Slavin, R. E. (1995). Research on cooperative learning and achievement: What we know, what we need to know. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21(1), p22

collective morale and undermines norms of reciprocity and cooperation"[26]. If set in place properly, group goals will serve to strengthen group ties, increase concern for each other, and increase personal responsibility for the group's success. While some have indicated that cooperative and collaborative activities can proceed successfully without any competition among individuals or groups, these interactions serve to sharpen the contributions of individual members, furthering the group's agenda as well as the individual student's later work. As literary theorist Kenneth Burke reflected, competition can lead to an effective exchange of ideas and perspectives,

Put several such voices together, with each voicing its own special assertion, let them act upon one another in co-operative competition, and you get a dialectic that, properly developed, can lead to views transcending the limitations of each.

Thus, for Burke and others, competition leads to a cooperative and collaborative exchange of ideas as students are brought together by a common goal: to "win". It is through this dialectical exchange of ideas that students will also learn how to function productively within a group setting, to offer ideas and receive responses, to lead in a group setting to see others' perspectives more empathetically, to develop positive attitudes towards group members, and to cultivate greater self-esteem. Students develop these social skills, as first proposed by Piaget, through their work and interactions with one another, acting as one another's "models and/or instructors for skills yet to be acquired".[27]

1.4. Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving in online lessons

Another key component of collaboration that leads to individual, academic gains is the opportunity for discussion among students with varying perspectives and abilities. In conversing with others, students are exposed to differing viewpoints as well as false conclusions which lead to greater decision-making as well as critical-thinking skills. They are enabled to consider other perspectives and

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[26] Clifford, J. (1981). Composing in stages: The effects of a collaborative pedagogy. Research in the Teaching of English,174
[27] Webb, P. K. (2001). Piaget: Implications for teaching. Theory into Practice, 19 (2) p.96

examine information from all sides. Thus, a willingness to disagree and to discuss all possible options within a cooperative or collaborative group is essential, as "a predetermined commitment to compromise.. .at the beginning of a collaborative project restricts and constrains the dialectical process which might permit the group members to discover or create the best possible solution"[28]. One approach offered to aid students in this process is Rogerian rhetoric, a type of rhetoric which promotes group discussion to overcome interpersonal conflict within a group by emphasizing the acceptance of one another. In this model, the student is encouraged to accept themselves and ease into interactions with others:

The more I am open to the realities in me and in the other person, the less do I find myself wishing to rush in and to 'fix things'. As I try to listen to myself and the experiencing going on in me, and the more I try to extend that same listening attitude to another person, the more respect I feel for the complex process of life. So I become less and less inclined to hurry in to fix things, to set goals, to mold people, to manipulate and push them in the way that I would like them to go. I am much more content simply to be myself and to let another person be himself.

This level of openness can facilitate sincere attempts within the group to negotiate the best solution or answer to the activity at hand, which allows an engaging "iron-sharpens- iron" dynamic of group discussion to play out and also further solidifies the group's unity and sense of direction.

In addition to sparking critical-thinking skills and unifying group work, collaborative learning scenarios increase students' scores on the critical-thinking portions of post-tests (Gokhale, 1995) and may help bring less-advanced students up to the formal operations stage of development. It is within this stage of cognitive development that students acquire the ability to think abstractly, "manipulating] concepts through the use of propositions and hypotheses.. .[a skills which] research shows.. .25-75 percent of adolescents and adults have not yet reached"[29]. Collaborative learning can thus provide valuable opportunities to such

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[28] Karis, B. (1989). Conflict in collaboration: A Burkean perspective. Rhetoric Review, 8 (1), p.119
[29] Webb, P. K. (2001). Piaget: Implications for teaching. Theory into Practice, 19 (2) p.94

students to work among those who have progressed to this stage of development, their MKOs, increasing their capacity for empathy, critical-thinking, and decision-making skills all at once.

1.5. Online Learning and Collaboration

In the 40th edition of the TESOL quarterly, educator and linguist Canagarajah identified online, digital technologies as "[a] social movement which has transformed language and communication practices, altering the scope of English language teaching and learning"[30]. Others carry this sentiment further by indicating that "literacy is a shifting target, and we have to prepare our students for their future rather than our past"[31]. This is true, not because the latest technologies are superior to the former, but because language is dynamic, not fixed, and is influenced and changed by those who use it (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). Digital technologies offer tools that create classwork that is both meaningful and challenging but should not be cast as a replacement for an experienced teacher, an in-classroom experience (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Prichard, 2013), or face-to-face interactions with speakers of the target language (Vincze & Joyce, 2018). Incorporating technology allows opportunities for "greater individualization, social interaction, and reflection on language"[32] (Larsen-Freeman, 2011, p. 201) and can increase language-users' confidence under the right circumstances.

Scholars agree that digital, online learning technologies present educators and students with the epistemic space (Chalmers, 2011) for collaborative and cooperative learning experiences (Gardner & Davis, 2013; Plutino, 2017; Vincze & Joyce, 2018). In fact, online-learning activities not only honor but also build on traditional collaborative and cooperative learning theory by enabling learners to

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[30] Hafner, C. A. (2014), Embedding digital literacies in English language teaching: students' digital video projects as multimodal ensembles. TESOL Quarterly, 48 (4) p.655

[31] Schetzer, H. & Warschauer, M. (2000). An electronic literacy approach to network-based language teaching. In M. Warschauer & R. Kern (Eds.), Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. p.172

[32] Larsen-Freeman, D. & Anderson, M. (2011). Teaching & principles in language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.201

share and co-create knowledge (Brindely, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009; Gardner & Davis, 2013; Prichard, 2013; Plutino, 2017; Vincze & Joyce, 2018), gain a deeper understanding of the material (Brindely, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009) develop higher-level-thinking skills such as critical-thinking and problem-solving (Brindely, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009) and metacognition (Tsai, Lin, Hong,Tai, 2018), learn from others through an online version of Vygotsky's MKO (Hafner, 2013; Prichard, 2013; Plutino, 2017; Toetenel, 2014), and develop greater communication skills (Prichard, 2013) and an ability to work with others.

Due to the remote nature of online-learning activities, an equal-if-not-greater effort to build a sense of community is essential in order for these collaborative activities to proceed successfully (Brindley, Walti, & Blaschke, 2009). Additionally, because many of these online platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) are considered open educational resources or "technology-enabled educational resources that are openly available for consultation, use and adaptation by users for non-commercial purposes" (UNESCO, 2002; Toetenel, 2014, p. 150), educators need to train students in their proper use. To ensure that these platforms are used effectively and productively, educators must pay special attention to training of students in safe, appropriate, ethical, and legal usage as well how to meet utilize the technology in culturally and socially appropriate ways.[33]

Whether or not online learning activities are "successful" depends largely on the attitudes and beliefs of students towards the use of online media. This itself is influenced by students' past experiences with online learning, the attitude and beliefs of others around them, as well as their perceived abilities with regards to the learning tasks. Not surprisingly, it has been observed that students who engaged actively and consistently in online learning have shown improvement in tasks related to speaking when compared to those who did not participate as frequently. This confirms what is already known about motivation and L2 learning;

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[33] Prichard, C. (2013). Training l2 learners to use Facebook appropriately and effectively. CALICO Journal 30(2) p.38

motivated students experience greater success in learning a second language and this success acts to further reinforce their motivation to learn.[34]

Learners are influenced not only by the attitudes and perceptions of others near them, but also by the attitudes and perceptions of the culture in which they belong. While collaboration may meet some resistance from individualistic, American students, it is a natural dynamic found among more collectivist cultures such as those of the Chinese education system. The students within this system are familiar with the need to work together toward a common goal and to learn from others, even though the educational system may foster competition with its high-stake testing practices. However, while they are comfortable with collaboration, students tend toward more a relationship-oriented approach than their Western counterparts, focusing on maintaining face and minimizing potential loss of face of their interlocutors. Thus, intercultural collaboration may result in confusion as participants' individual cultural expectations may be challenged, but this conflict ultimately leads to increased understanding and awareness of such differences as well as increased abilities to shift towards a different system of collaboration.

For example, through intercultural collaboration, students will be exposed to different approaches of learning, thinking, and collaborating. They become aware of other learning strategies such as generating questions, disagreeing or challenging information, and preparing for tasks by first talking about personal issues in order to develop rapport with online-interlocutors. By inviting learners to engage with these alternative approaches to communication online, they are given opportunities that, while not the most comfortable or familiar, enable them to practice meeting the expectations of their L2. The online setting removes many of the nonverbal cues that many language backgrounds rely on to create and decode meaning, thereby orchestrating a scenario in which the analytical, deductive communication style of English alone must be practiced.

While some cultures feature a high-power distance, clearly delineating those high and low on the social hierarchy, Western societies operate under a much

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[34] Ortega, L. (2009). Understanding second language acquisition. New York, NY: Hodder Education. p.55

lower-power distance. Students of a high-power distance educational system will show great respect for their educators and defer to them as the ultimate source of knowledge and wisdom.

Conversely, Western education, most notably that of America, subscribe to social constructivist theories in which all participate equally, freely, questioning and critiquing knowledge and input in an effort to create meaning together. It is possible that by utilizing online spaces for learning that students unfamiliar—and perhaps uncomfortable—with social construction of knowledge may become more familiar. This semi-removed arrangement may allow them the practice ground needed to adopt a more direct, questioning approach while potentially minimizing the risk of losing face or causing the loss of face of another. Additionally, these online spaces could also be utilized to teach all students these cultural differences by thoughtfully considering other perspectives and leanings on these factors. That is, students could be granted opportunities to adopt other methods of discussion and communication, not just that of American English.

Within the cultural lens lies an intricate puzzle that is personality. While researchers have attempted to reduce personality to a handful of types or leanings, these remain mere factors affecting the learning process and not necessarily informing how it will go definitively. Among the various degrees of "openness to experience, extraversion, concerns towards communication or accuracy"[35] is the question: which experiences will a learner seek or avoid? Understanding this informs the educator of which activities, how, and where they might lead to the most effective learning for the student. On one side of the pendulum, scholars have noted that for some students, language-learning anxiety is a result of a lack of practice within instructional settings while others contend that it is the pressure of directly communicating with speakers in face-to-face settings that shake these learners' confidence. This appears to be related to perceived abilities, such that students who believe they cannot achieve a task will not or may not do so as successfully as others. Online learning exercises may potentially offer the

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[35] Ortega, L. (2009). Understanding second language acquisition. New York, NY: Hodder Education. p.200

introverted student or the student from a high-power distance culture alike a safe space to practice what their L2 demands of them. Here they may practice the direct, deductive self-expression of English, collaborate and debate with peers, and explore their L2 identity. When designed, facilitated, and monitored effectively, online learning spaces can offer students with varying personalities, attitudes and motivation, and cultural backgrounds the space to practice without the same pressure of maintaining face, performing, or communicating in front of others. They may use this space to build their confidence, then put it into practice in the face-to-face classroom.

CHAPTER II. ONLINE LEARNING, MULTIMODALITY AND WAYS FOR ACTIVATING LEARNING STRATEGIES

2.1 Collaborative Online Learning of advanced learners

Part of the issue with collaborative learning is that students may feel apprehensive about relying on others for their grade or final product, or they may feel that they are in no position to "add to a conversation" as they are not an expert in the topic. Collaborative learning indeed asks much of the students as it "often calls us to leave the safety of our own figured worlds and venture into unknown territory" [36]. While the impetus in incorporating online media is that it gives the student the space to practice at their own pace and in their own way, these online

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[36] Martorana, C. (2017). Through the lens of figured worlds: A heuristic for productive collaboration. Composition Studies, 45(1), p.71

scenarios do also offer opportunities for collaboration. In keeping with Vygotsky's principles of the more knowledgeable other, students can observe the posts and other contributions of other students and benefit from this. Together, they can construct knowledge. The fact that these interactions are not face-to-face will only sharpen students' communicative and rhetorical skills, especially for those from high-context cultures. It is understood that no one will know what the online-writer means, nor understand their train of thought, unless the author explains it explicitly; thus, it is essential that the students employ the rhetorical moves of English.

Multimodality

The use of online activities may not only benefit students from varying educational backgrounds and learning preferences but may also create a practice space for them. These activities ought not to be assigned in isolation but rather should build on classroom instruction and likewise be referenced in the classroom after students complete them. For instructors, this will demand creativity, forethought, and possibly additional planning. For students, this will be another online activity among those they already engage in. For us educators, this is a chance to "capitalize" or appropriate already- existing technology for academic purposes. Prichard (2013) aptly captures this scenario: While SNSs have taken a significant role in the social lives of many learners, educators have been slow to specify appropriate SNS-mediated communication as a learning objective in L2 courses and materials. To maximize the potential of SNSs for language learning, instructors need not only to enhance their presence in various aspects of the L2 curriculum but, more importantly, incorporate training mechanisms to supports learners' effective use of such tools[37].

This appropriation of social media and other online platforms may be seen as unconventional as technology and online behavior of young people are polarizing topics. Additionally, the concept of digital literacy (how, when, where to use

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[37] Prichard, C. (2013). Training l2 learners to use Facebook appropriately and effectively. CALICO Journal 30(2) p.221

technology appropriately and effectively) is not a shared norm, even among politicians and world leaders. The dark side of online media—cyberbullying and the damaging of people's self-esteem, self-worth, and even safety—ought not be ignored. This is precisely why we as educators ought to engage with these platforms. If we in higher education do not step in to teach the young adults how to apply their language and rhetorical skills to each new media and mode of communication, who will? If they can compose an adequate five- paragraph essay for an academic audience, but cannot transfer these skills to engage appropriately and effectively online, have they learned the communication skills that they need for their increasingly online world?

Although such multimodal activities would not be carried out in face-to-face settings, the social benefits of collaboration are not completely lost in cyberspace. It has been noted that any collaborative sharing of viewpoints and knowledge is beneficial, whether it occurs in person or online[38]. Within each context, individuals must effectively create messages that others will receive well. Students are familiar— perhaps to an obsessive degree—with online social media. The skills are already in place; now, the goal is not to simply "like" or "follow" an ambiguous figure, but to combine the skills of using social media with academic and rhetorical skills to meet an academic goal. Ideally, the benefits from this online work would transfer to the face-to-face classroom environment. Students would become acquainted voluntarily and discover unique as well as familiar things about their peers, gains that could lead to more engaged in-class discussions and chatting before or after class. While the current "app generation" exhibits questionable patterns and, at times, disturbing, apparently declining social skills, this is the reality of this generation of college students. For most young people, much if not the majority of their communication occurs through an online technology. To demonize their mode of communication while insisting on methods from times before the explosion of technology would be ineffective. As educators, we are

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[38] La Torre, N. (2017). Teaching the biography of Pearl S. Buck: Developing collaborative reading strategies for multilingual writers. EWU Masters Thesis Collection. p.59

tasked with preparing students for a number of scenarios, depending on one's educational philosophy. Surely, there is a happy medium between preparing students to join the work force and preparing individuals to responsibly and critically engage with the world at large. Unfortunately, with the explosion of social media technologies, many young people have forged ahead without us, and likewise, without an understanding of how to communicate effectively.

The most effective instruction should enable them to utilize the long-standing principles of rhetoric and communication for their reality, not a paper-only world fueled by ideologies created and upheld by those who did not grow up in our current society. To cling to the past—at least the methods of the past—would be incredibly limiting.

This suspicion of change has always been a factor: for example, the panic of the classical scholar Socrates towards the transition from an oral-only language towards a written language[39]. But these shifts in technology in and of themselves have not wreaked havoc, as Gardner and Davis (2013) reflect on the increase of digital "apps":

The birth of writing did not destroy human memory, though it probably brought to the fore different forms of memory for different purposes. The birth of printing did not destroy beautifully wrought graphic works, nor did it undermine all hierarchically organized religions. And the birth of apps need not destroy the human capacities to generate new issues and new solutions, and to approach them with the aid of technology when helpful, and otherwise to rely on one's wit.

In each of these cases, the new innovation did not replace but instead furthered the goals of the previous technology. In the same way, the use of online technology for language learning is meant to augment, not to replace the traditional in-class models—this includes the guidance and discretion of an experienced teacher.

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[39] Gardner, H. & Davis, K. (2013). The app generation: How today's youth navigate identity, intimacy, and imagination in a digital world. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. P.102

Certainly, the spoken word, the human voice, the human touch—no machine could ever replace these. Y et to denounce the current technologies would be to turn our backs on the students we meet, to give them keys to doors without keyholes, to leave them vulnerable and easily manipulated by the fodder that politicians, celebrities, and other mere-mortals produce and publish online. This is the modern-day version of what Aristotle referred to as sophistry, an unethical application of rhetoric:

If it is urged that an abuse of the rhetorical faculty can work great mischief, the same charge can be brought against all good things.. .Rightly employed, they work the greatest blessings; and wrongly employed, they work the utmost harm.

It is for this rightful employment of rhetoric, as well as development of an L2 identity and the ability to express one's authentic written voice, that I consider the use of online media essential. It is within these contexts that students will engage and utilize their first or second language skills. In order to do so effectively and benefit from the contributions of others, we educators must prepare them.

2.2 Activating Learning Strategies and preferences

The concept of individual learning styles or preferences has circulated educational contexts for many years. More specifically for TESOL purposes, this concept is a part of what scholars refer to as strategic competence, or the memory structures associated with the brain's information processing system[40]. Invariably, there are several additional factors that play a part in language learners' success, such as motivation, necessity for learning the language, age, or maturity; however,

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[40] Purpura, J. (2014). Language learner strategies and styles. In C. M., M. B., D. M., & S. M. A (Eds.) Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, (532-549). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning. p.533

from the cognitive standpoint, strategic competence is a major factor leading to learner success. As Purpura (2014) notes:

Success in learning a SFL [second or foreign language] depends on students' ability to plan, ask questions, make associations, remember, prioritize, distinguish main ideas from details, monitor progress, reflect on successes, and flexibly shift their approaches to language learning or use[41].

Working alongside of strategic competence to ensure success is metacognition, the awareness and control of one's thinking processes. Thus, it is of great importance that students not only understand how they learn and learn well, but that they also develop conscious methods to effectively utilize this information as a tool for each given situation.

Learner Strategies and Preferences

In order for learners to develop effective strategies, they must first understand themselves as learners and determine what their individual learner-strategies actually are. These critically important thoughts and actions related to language learning and use may be divided into affecting/social learning strategies or cognitive learning strategies. Within the affecting learning strategies, we examine learners' feelings, beliefs, attitudes, impulses, motivations, as well as interest in social interactions and relationships with other learners. Perhaps they are extremely open to new experiences, prefer to learn in engaging social contexts, and are therefore considered extroverted. On the other hand, it may be that they prefer to learn in quiet, reflective, individual settings and are considerably more introverted. Of course, these inclinations towards or away from collaboration depend on several factors and may actually change for some learners within certain contexts.

When exploring cognitive learning strategies, we are examining the behaviors learners utilize to understand, remember, retrieve, or use new information. This aspect of learner-strategies can be further categorized into perceptual and information-processing preferences. Perceptual preferences, a familiar concept for

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[41] Purpura, J. (2014). Language learner strategies and styles. In C. M., M. B., D. M., & S. M. A (Eds.) Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, (532-549). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning. p.533

both students and educators, include learning by listening (auditory style), by seeing (visual style), or by doing things (kinesthetic style). In addition to perceptual processing preferences, language acquisition is also influenced by individual students' information-processing inclinations. On one side of the continuum, learners may tend toward a global-oriented style, focusing on the "big picture" when taking in new information. Student with a global-oriented style may also tend toward an inductive style, deciphering the rules from example and a synthetic style, gathering the parts together in order to assemble the whole. On the other end, they may possess a detail-oriented style, preferring to focus on the specifics of the situation one at time. They may also possess a deductive learning style and feel the need to learn rules explicitly in a step-by-step manner as they progress through a task. Additionally, they may prefer a less exploratory process than the synthetic style and rather gravitate towards an analytic style in which they break down the whole in order to understand the individual pieces. After examining inclinations, styles, and preferences, metacognitive strategies as a whole can give the student direction in what to use, how, and when, creating opportunities for "acting on what [they] know"[42]. By employing metacognitive strategies as a final step, a learner may be able to pinpoint behaviors that do or do not work, replacing these with more effective choices. Raising Awareness of Strategy Use

Recently, I had the pleasure of working among graduate students, fellow teachers- in-training, as well as a few experienced in-service teachers. From our roundtable discussion, it was clear that, as a group, we were well-versed in the common learning styles as well as our own preferences and strengths. Later on, I asked them to participate in an activity (how to tie a simple knot for a neck tie) in which I assigned them the learning style modes with which they would tackle the task as a group.

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[42] Boghian, I. (2016). Metacognitive learning strategies in teaching English as a foreign language. Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education & Didactics, 20(1) p.58

Prior to this activity and during my presentation on learner styles and preferences, my colleagues completed a quick writing activity. In the first part, I asked them to identify their learning styles and preferences according the categories and layers previously outlined. Next, I asked them the following questions:

1.   Do you feel these definitions perfectly describe you as a learner?

2.   Reflect on your teaching. Do these connect?

The responses demonstrated that, as I had suspected: we feel as educators that individual learning styles are not as easily defined as the literature asserts they are. As one colleague shared, these fairly extensive categories of learning styles and preferences do not capture the essence of the entire learning experience perfectly, and certain elements of individual learning do not always fit into these categories. In fact, recent research has shown that the traditional concept of learning styles may actually be considered a "neuromyth", leading students and educators to believe that students possess one distinct learning style and thus one distinct mode in which they can learn effectively. The results of these recent studies have shown that regardless of a student's perceived learning style, appealing to multiple learning styles, especially the inclusion of visual aids, strengthens students' second-language vocabulary recall significantly more. Regardless of current trends, increasing students' awareness of these learning styles and preferences and perhaps the fact that they possess more than one dominant style, may grant the learners with tools to be successful and monitor their own language learning.

Simply raising students' awareness alone is not, however, sufficient, as Purpura notes, "Practice without timely feedback may result in learners' practicing and internalizing incorrect language"[43]. This internalization of incorrect language, or fossilization, can lead to non-target forms becoming fixed in the learner's language use[44]. Presenting students with effective learning strategies alone is not

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[43] Purpura, J. (2014). Language learner strategies and styles. In C. M., M. B., D. M., & S. M. A (Eds.) Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, (532-549). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning. p.544
[44] Ellis, R. (1995). The study of second language acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.353

enough; we must also facilitate opportunities for the students to practice the strategies. This is where online activities can shine.

Promoting Strategy Use

The task for us educators is clear: we must provide these opportunities. To encourage student-use of strategies, we "can design tasks that require learners to provide feedback, reflect on feedback given to them, and figure out how feedback can serve as input for further processing"[45]. One practical way to stimulate strategy awareness and use is to give students the opportunity to create their own goals in addition to the established course goals presented in the beginning. Along these lines, I have discovered that giving out self-assessment sheets to students also achieves this goal. At the start of a new term, I hand out Weekly Self-Evaluation Sheets. Students are given boxes to fill in for each day that our class meets. They must give themselves up to two points daily. Every Friday, they tabulate their score (out of ten points) and write a brief sentence explaining why they have awarded themselves that score.

After completing the short lesson on how tie a necktie, my colleagues and I reflected on the experience as it related to learner styles and strategies, awareness of metacognitive-strategy use, and how to instill these skills in our own students. By engaging in an unfamiliar task, and being assigned the modes in which to learn, we had the opportunity to view learning through the eyes of a novice-after all, most of us were true novices in the art of tying neckties. It is evident that, had we been able to decide on the circumstances in which to learn this new skill, we could have utilized our learning styles, preferences, and metacognitive strategies to our benefit.

As some participants noted, there are students who prefer to repeat an activity alone until they have mastered the skill. Other students who shared their experiences were able to identify how the affective, personality, processing, and perceptual learning styles were either not considered or at a disadvantage by

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[45] Purpura, J. (2014). Language learner strategies and styles. In C. M., M. B., D. M., & S. M. A (Eds.) Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, (532-549). Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning. p.544

having to adhere to just one mode of learning. In this case, they felt that the required collaboration in this activity hindered the individual students' progress in completing the task. Still others had an opportunity to reflect on their teaching methods as they relate to their personal learning styles, noting that they would opt for writing the instructions onto the board. The participants noted that, by doing this, they were teaching in the same manner as they would learn, expecting students to learn in the same fashion as they do. Others felt more aware of disparate learning strategies and felt that they did their best to inclusive of all, especially since their "loner" techniques were not for everyone.

While frustrating for some, this activity served to raise awareness of strategic use among my fellow novice teachers as well as to provide a model of a possible extension activity (requiring students to attempt a learning strategy that they did not often use). For intermediate to advanced English Language Learners, this same activity could be used as a starting point of a lesson on strategy use. The students could be placed into groups, given a specific learning style to utilize, and later write reflective journals on their experiences. Building on this, the instructor could give an overview of the learning styles and preferences and finish by giving the students a short survey, so that they determine their own preferences. Extension activities that allow for more variety among the learning styles and preferences could also be included, such as time to complete the activity alone for the more introverted, detail-oriented, deductive, or analytical styles. Perhaps the assignment could even be completed outside of regular class time, and the students would complete an in-progress journal of the methods and strategies they used during the learning experience. In this scenario, the students could also divide the task into smaller subtasks that may be more manageable for them as an individual[46]. The key to any approach is allowing the learners the time and epistemic space required for them to engage metacognitively with the learning experience in order to identify and use the strategies and approaches most beneficial for them. They must

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[46] Boghian, I. (2016). Metacognitive learning strategies in teaching English as a foreign language. Journal of Innovation in Psychology, Education & Didactics, 20(1), p.59

also receive timely and meaningful feedback to help them monitor their progress as they advance their skills.

CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF ONLINE COURSES AND PEER EVALUATION

3.1. Identity Formation, Self-Expression, and Community

While the benefits of collaboration are impossible to deny, there is a pressure that comes from constantly learning among others, regardless of the individual students' degree of extroversion-introversion. There exists a need among language learners to integrate, sort out, and reflect upon their learning, and for many, this be

done alone. At the same time, engaging in online learning activities does present opportunities for collaboration with others, yet this can be on the individual's terms. When allowed a chance to think and process, a learner may then participate in these online scenarios. For some students, those leaning toward introversion or the potential perfectionism of a detail-oriented or analytical learner, this arrangement is much more approachable. An online discussion board with an open-ended prompt may serve as an equalizer: students may feel more welcome to share or that they have the right to do so among their peers, some of whom may be native English-speakers. I have often observed such feelings of inadequacies, especially during activities such as peer reviews. Once, after an in-class peer review session, one student (a high-achieving ELL from Japan) commented on the difficulty of the activity-wondering how were they to correct or comment on the quality of their peer's work when they were still "learning". Unfortunately, such encounters are common, and I believe this may actually reveal some stereotyping on the part of the other students. While this kind of behavior is unacceptable, it does bring up the intriguing dynamic of performance versus competence. While competence refers to the students' knowledge of correct or effective language behaviors, performance is more concerned with the actual use of these matters within a communicative exchange (Ellis, 1995, p. 13). Performance may be affected by external factors such as anxiety, nervousness to perform, or other inter-personal pressures-especially a fear of not meeting an interlocutor's expectations as in the case of the peer review. During face-to-face activities, ELL students may feel unconfident, exposed, and perceived as "less capable"; thus, their performance may suffer. On the other hand, online activities may grant them a protective shield of sorts. Their "otherness" is less obvious, and this allows them to shine, demonstrating their competence as they engage in the tasks at hand and strengthen their L2 identity.

Obviously, the protective shield offered by online learning activities is only a part of students' learning experiences as a whole. These online activities complement and work with face-to-face classwork and in-person activities so that

the student may improve their communicative skills. Since many students will return home after one or two years of studying abroad, enabling them with the practice, tools, and feedback on using online platforms to use their English and express themselves remains invaluable. Perhaps they will return home to become a travel guide at their city's airport or become an English consultant. In these scenarios, the formal English they learn in introductory and advanced composition classes is excellent, yet they also need and want the know-how of communicating informally as well as how to establish and maintain friendships with English-speakers in America and other English-speaking countries. By making this a priority, we help them extend their skills beyond academic or career-related purposes.

Although online learning can offer many students the space and opportunity necessary to become comfortable and competent expressing themselves and their L2 identity, some researchers have noted contrary effects. Gardner and Davis (2013) have found that an overreliance on online media can actually sabotage an individual's sense of identity:

New media technologies can open up new opportunities for self¬expression. But yoking one's identity too closely to certain characteristics of these technologies—and lacking the time, opportunity, or inclination to explore life and lives offline—may result in an impoverished sense of self (p. 91).

While this concept of an "impoverished" self, negatively yoked to online technologies, may be true for a typical online technology user, it may not be as applicable for English language learners. For many students who return home after studying abroad, the only English speakers they have access to are their online contacts. When they return home, they may have limited access to speakers of their target language, and therefore maintaining close ties via online technologies may actually help them preserve their language skills as well as their L2 identity.

Attitude, Motivation and Cultural Factors Culturally speaking, students may find it easier or more challenging to jump into de-contextualized conversations online, yet it is this very inclination of English that they must master in order to

become proficient in communicating in English. If they come from high-context and high-power distance cultures, they can experiment with the less similar English-language context, knowing that a loss of face or a sense of hierarchy is far less emphasized in American English. They can observe and mimic the moves of their native English-speaking counterparts without as much concern for losing face. Their peers act as models, and in an academic setting, grant them a chance to practice this in real life, perfectly demonstrating Vygotsky's concept of a more knowledgeable other.

3.2. Class Information and Design Rationale Online Discussions

Within this English 101 class 50% of the students were "native" English speakers and the remaining 50% were advanced English language learners. While the class was actually designated as an "second-language" section, many American freshmen were placed into it. Early on, therefore, the class dynamic was palpably tense and uncomfortable; the American students felt they were in an unnecessarily "slow" course while the ELLs were hesitant to engage fully among their native-speaking peers. This tension came to a head when the students conducted their first in-class peer review, which ended only in confusion and with hurt feelings, a negative result that is all too common among writers in multilingual classes (La Torre, 2017). I created this discussion

board in response to this lack of unity. Within the prompt, I addressed the need to offer feedback in constructive, friendly ways in the hopes of establishing a healthier classroom environment. The discussion board itself required that the students watch a short clip from the sitcom Parks and Recreation in which the main characters attempted to convince members of a public forum to vote for putting fluoride into the public drinking supply. To counter their opponents' bland, fear-mongering approach, the main characters of the sitcom team created an exciting video clip of what happens to people who drink water with fluoride in it. In using this clip from American TV show Parks and Recreation, I was able to meet two design objectives: 1) pull from American students' background/ cultural

knowledge to engage them in the process and 2) give ELL students the opportunity to gain cultural insights by viewing American satirical humor and gain some everyday conversation practice.

Of the twenty-five students assigned this activity, twenty responded, and several went beyond the assignment's required number of posts. Several of the quieter students (from both backgrounds) expressed their ideas on the discussion board, providing well- reasoned, elaborate answers. Most if not all students engaged in constructive commenting and disagreeing. Several students offered alternative interpretations of the video, indicating that they saw appeals to pathos in additional to ethos appeals. Others then saw this same appeal being used and offered additional evidence for this claim in their comments. One ELL student refuted an American student's claim about the video showing no ethos, and was supported by several ELL students, each offering additional evidence that the video demonstrated ethos. Another student followed up with additional evidence and a reflection saying that this activity was meant to show student how to use multiple appeals in writing essays so that the audience is interested in reading.

At the end of the thread, a different ELL student settled the discussion, stating that there is evidence for both appeals. As the last student to comment, they offered solid evidence for the use of ethos: the fluoride promoters use pathos and a high-energy presentation to establish their ethos or credibility because they know what the audience needs, and they can offer that. The audience can trust them to meet their needs. The prompt of this discussion board certainly created an opportunity for students to engage in collaborative learning. Many responding students offered a balanced response, agreeing with one students' take, and then offering an additional interpretation with evidence. In-class post-discussion observations

After completing the discussion board online, we watched the short clip again in class. Students showed consistent interpretations of the video's appeals, yet when some shared their ideas, others appeared visibly confused. This created an opportunity for us to define each appeal — ethos, logos, andpathos—and thereby solidify their understanding. We concluded that no logos was used, as no statistics,

data, or scientific evidence was offered, and as the one reflective student mused, we ought to employ all three appeals in a balanced, thoughtful manner in our written work in order to reach our intended audiences.

During this discussion, students appeared to feel more comfortable offering their interpretations than in other discussions centered around a class reading. Whether or not each student who participated in the discussion board spoke in class, it appeared that most were interested in finding out if they were "right". For engaging in activities that are collaborative, con-constructions of knowledge, this type of discussion board may not be the most fruitful as the students will be seeking the "right" answer, assuming that there is one of three options.

For self-expression purposes, activities such as this may work well, as students have had the opportunity to think through their ideas, practice them on the discussion board, and receive feedback from others. I believe this rehearsal time and space enabled several students to actively join the in-class discussion, working past any self-consciousness or fear of judgment from their American peers.

3.3. Peer reviews

For the first essay of this course, English 101 for second-language learners, I assigned students their peer-review partners, matching native speakers with ELLs. This as a whole did not go well, despite giving explicit instructions to focus on the whole rather than the small details such as grammar. Distressed ELL students approached me, disheartened by the severity of their peer-responder's comments (mostly on grammar), and likewise, native-English speaker students asked for additional feedback as their ELL partners wrote very little besides some generic praise. For the next essay, I allowed students to gather into either self-selected groups for casual "peer-review circles" or to choose to complete the review online on Canvas outside of regular class-time and ELL students, the quality and specificity of their comments was notable. Going beyond the perfunctory, "Good job", they probed into the content, thesis statement, and organization of their peer's

work. In this setting, ELLs appeared to move past feelings of inadequacy not being a "native" speaker-writer and engaged in the process. While most of the remaining ELLs in this class chose peer-review groups—and usually with their friends—the results of this online peer review spoke to the need for a less face- threatening space to review others' work, not only for ELL students but also for more introverted, detail-oriented American students. Face-to-face collaboration may simply not meet the needs or learning preferences of all types of students, and online activities may offer the alternative and solace needed.

Although a majority of the students chose the in-person peer review groups, I was able to utilize the online space for post reflections (Figure 4). After completing the in¬person group peer reviews, I asked students to reflect on the experience and write a two- sentence response:

1)   What did you gain from the peer-review?

2)   What could be improved for next time?

Students recommended several practical things such as requiring all to bring paper essays next time, allowing for more time in groups, and increasing the size of groups in order to receive more and varied feedback.

Although this group of students did not engage in the online peer-review activity, this online post-review reflection gave them opportunity to collaborate with me, their instructor, and provided a safe space to express their opinions and communicate their observations.

While I believe that educational platforms such as Canvas do offer opportunities for online collaboration, as well as a feasible way to grade and monitor such activities, there are some clear limitations. First, students do behave differently in discussion boards within a class page than they do on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat. Thus, much of the authentic flavor is missing from the use of sites like Canvas as students interact with others as they perceive they ought to due to assignment instructions or what they perceived to be "A-worthy" decorum. To truly

benefit from what social media and social networking sites have to offer, activities need to be conducted within these platforms. The undertaking may seem daunting—yet another login to remember and system to master—but the gains are certainly worthwhile. Additionally, the use of online platforms has to be supplemental rather than the sole focus of a given course. For the time being, students in introductory and advanced English composition classes still need to master the formal forms of academic writing to be successful within the academy. They need these traditional skills for additional coursework outside of the English department. By including online media in our English classrooms, we are not replacing the old, but simply appropriating the current.

The question that remains is which platform is best? In keep with the idea that one size does not fit all, I do not feel there is an answer. It would not be feasible to insist that all educators carve out time to learn and master each platform. More importantly, each group of students will be more or less familiar with certain sites and applications. What I do suggest is to observe the current trends among social media usage and classroom use. For instance, I have seen some language instructors use Twitter for short posts in Spanish, Canvas for responses to short video clips, and Snapchat as both a quiz and polling tool. They have utilized those technologies within their reach and applied them to be in touch with their students. To insist on any one method negates the driving idea of flexibility and personal responsibility in instruction. Technology advances in leaps and bounds, and the youth of today appear to have no problem keeping up. As these technologies change and perhaps become more intuitive, there ought to be a more marked focus on teacher training with these tools. The skills needed to use one may transfer to another and open instructional doors never thought of. This is what I am advocating for: exploration. It is possible that as soon as we educators learn, master, and appropriate these digital technologies for our purposes that others may emerge, replacing those we have learned and thereby shifting the attention of the younger generation. In response to this fear, I reiterate the idea of transfer and adaptation. We want our students to utilize and generalize the concepts we teach,

to employ effective communicative and rhetorical strategies in each mode of communication. We must do the same. As the world becomes more complicated, our purpose needs to remain simple and clear: to enable students to use language effectively and appropriately within the contexts they find themselves. For now, their contexts may be at least partially online—on their laptop, tablet, or phone screens.

Teaching approaches as well as discourse community values differ across cultures and languages. Yet while this diversity is something to honor and preserve, it poses a challenge for students who have learned English as a foreign language or second language and then transfer into mainstream English composition courses at the college level. Such students, while skilled in their second language, may be puzzled by the expectations of mainstream English composition courses. A comparison of language systems might reveal drastically different patterns of critical thinking, rhetorical components, and interpretive features such as self-expression and writer's voice. Due to the frequency with which many international students studying in the U.S. utilize online media, an opportunity to integrate academic skills among these platforms is available. From the literature presented, it has been determined that these online platforms present opportunities for students to practice and develop their English writing skills in low- stakes, semi-realistic contexts. When properly utilized and monitored, these online spaces honor individual students' differences with respect to personality and culture, all the while engaging in a modernized version of traditional collaboration.

The majority of the research conducted within this study is based on secondary sources, with very little primary investigation or data collection. By focusing on online activities and social media at large, the results are quite broad. Qualitative data in the form of firsthand observations have been offered, but only a few concrete examples are given to be implemented. A more thorough study, employing quantitative methods on a designated sample, would yield fascinating insights that other educators could then explore or use in their own classrooms.

Recommendations for Further Research According to the research, there have been many studies on the use of social media and other online platforms for the teaching and learning of English. A possible area to explore could be teacher training in the use of online media, particularly in those applications and websites that are more recent additions and more frequently used by college-age students: Twitter, Snapchat, and others to be released. Technological trends are difficult to anticipate; however, these technologies display similar interfaces and features. Teacher-training would then focus on how to use the different technologies on a basic level to include posting options as well as privacy and sharing options. This aspect seems to be of great importance, especially within educational settings, as students could benefit from understanding how to use their technologies effectively in a communicative, rhetorical, and social sense.

CONCLUSION

Students who enroll in composition courses with a desire to learn and use English for communication purposes may initially meet a few challenges. Many countries tend to focus their pedagogy on form rather than function and mastering the language for standardized examinations rather than for communication and self-expression. While honoring students' previous educational experiences, personalities, and motivation, English instructors would also be wise to continue integrating new methods and refining old ones. Incorporating more multimodal activities in and out of the classroom can act as a bridge between students' first language patterns and expectations and that of the English language. By including opportunities to connect with their audience through multimodal, online media, students can expand their rhetorical awareness. This authentic social context connects student with a community or several communities with which they may seek belonging. As Shahri indicates, quoting Canagarajah, the motivation behind learning a language is "[the] construction of identities we desire and the communities we want to join" (p. 18). Investing in such a community, no matter how temporary, spurs student-formation of identity, leading to empowerment and expression of self and voice (Iida, 2010; Shahri, 2017).

While it is important to develop skills for face-to-face and pen-and-paper settings, these low-stakes, online arrangements may act as the bridges students need. By creating or joining online communities, students explore different aspects of themselves, including ways to express their developing identity. The majority of students already use these multimodal forms of communication and are captive audiences; therefore, it is important that we allow them these spaces to explore and practice the language and also provide support and guidance for these efforts. By integrating multimodality into the classroom, we could encourage the use of these spaces for real-life practice and exploration, build on students' bases of knowledge and experience, and also help them further develop the rhetorical tools needed for mainstream English courses while preparing for future in¬person partner-and-group work.

In the present paper we attempted to investigate all aspects of a foreign language lesson. To achieve the mentioned aim we studied the main aspects of lesson such as developing four man skills necessary for mastering a language: reading, speaking, writing, auding, grammar as a very important condition for achieving literacy, atmosphere in the classroom. In our days the problem of definition of lesson comes to be one of the main problems for educatory as it is no longer regarded as a teacher centered process, but as a means for preparing students for real interaction, the process in which the teacher is not a ruler but a facilitator advisor, sometimes even a participant of certain activities.

The present work proves that all four skills should be developed simultaneously as imperfection of one of the skills results in students' uncertainty. This paper proposes some ways of developing main abilities such as steps to effective listening, reading techniques, writing strategies, interactive approach as a means of developing speaking skills here, we also presented some practical hints of planning a lesson including a great amount of detail, but at the same time encouraging improvisation and departing from the script when appropriate we also defined functions of the teacher and learners and came to the conclusion that teaching may be defined as the stimulating of learning, and learning is an active process carried out through doing, reacting and undergoing.

We came to the conclusion that the lesson itself isn't only the process of obtaining knowledge, it is also some kind of psychological intercommunication, and the classroom is the place where students feel that they are loved and regarded as individuals. If the teacher wants his lesson to be a success he /she should vary his/her lessons with various exercises: grammar tests, recognition and drill exercises but the most attention should be paid to creative exercises as the main aim of any lesson is not only to provide students with knowledge and skills but also awaken their inner potential. If the teacher is responsive to students' difficulties and shows faith in their abilities, they will try harder to succeed in mastering a foreign language. We hope that teachers and students might use the

results of the present work for their further investigations. Teacher's personality and outlook may provide students with fresh motivation.

With the explosion of technological advances in the past few decades, education and society as a whole have been changed. While some of the consequences— cyberbullying, obsession with one's devices, antisocial behaviors—have been discouraging, technology does offer us much. As Gardner and Davis have noted, the advent of the writing system did not destroy human language but rather advanced it; in the same way, these online spaces can also advance human thought and language. That being said, including social and other online media will only work when utilized in addition to rather than in replacement of current, in-person instruction. Dystopian fiction has always presented "the future" as one in which humankind relies on robots and machine for all, rarely interacting in real, personal, or human ways. By allowing technology into our classrooms more, we do not foresee this kind of future. For analytical, introverted students, and those from high-power distance, face-concerned cultures alike, WE believe these online spaces can augment the good work educators do during in-person classes. A practical application could resemble that of a hybrid class, which routinely meets a set number of hours in person with the rest online. WE would like to suggest a much more blended version than this. The allure of online work is the safe, rehearsal space that it offers the student to explore, to practice, and to prepare. It has also been shown that it is the autonomous English language learner who maintains their L2 when returning home where few "native" English speakers can be found (La Torre, 2017). By incorporating the use of online media, the learner is granted a space to become this autonomous learner, away from the distractions and pressures of other people with a place to make self- directed connections and experience those "Aha!" moments critical to language acquisition. Thus, WE believe it is the consistent usage of online media in addition to in¬class activities that makes these platforms so beneficial. Instead of devoting an entire class day to online work, WE propose that homework itself be online. To enforce this, points or other credit would need to be awarded in order to ensure the

students' participation initially. Much more research is needed to understand effective ways to implement online activities for language learning, though the potential benefits are evident.

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