

# Bringing perspectives and representation to the Spanish mixed-classroom



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Received 20/12/2021. Accepted 15/02/2022

## Abstract

This article details the use of the Voice and Choice protocol (Sheya, 2018) as a practical tool to implement critical pedagogy and thus empower both teachers and students in the Spanish language mixed-classroom (second language and heritage language). First, we offer the theoretical background and a summary of basic concepts; then, a description of a step-by-step guideline to implement the protocol; and finally, three recommended activities that reflect its potential implementation in the classroom. Voice and Choice promote social transformation using linguistic components while igniting the opportunity to critically analyze the content, explore its complexities and find opportunities to include language learners' voices and perspectives. In addition, the protocol provides a direct and practical link to develop ACTFL's 5 goal areas of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities).

**Keywords:** mixed classroom, critical pedagogy, student agency, voices, perspectives.

### Resumen

Este artículo detalla el uso del protocolo Voz y Decisión (Sheya, 2018) como una herramienta práctica para implementar pedagogía crítica y así empoderar tanto a profesores como estudiantes en el aula de español mixta (segunda lengua y lengua de herencia). Para ello, se presenta primero el trasfondo teórico y un resumen de conceptos básicos; después, una guía detallada para poner en práctica el protocolo paso a paso; y finalmente, tres actividades recomendadas que ejemplifican la puesta en práctica en el aula de lenguas. Voz y Decisión promueve la transformación social al poner en práctica aspectos lingüísticos y, al mismo tiempo, analizar de forma crítica el contenido, explorar sus complejidades y encontrar oportunidades para incluir voces y perspectivas propias de los estudiantes de idiomas. Además, el protocolo ofrece una conexión directa y práctica para desarrollar las 5 metas de AC-TFL (*American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*) de los denominados *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities)*.

**Palabras clave:** clase mixta, pedagogía crítica, agencia del estudiante, voces, perspectivas.

## 1. Background

Heritage language (HL) education requires an understanding of who the students are, their sociocultural background, their linguistic profiles, as well as the teaching skills necessary to educate this particular population. Regarding the development of teaching skills, different scholars have offered some suggestions in terms of pedagogical theory to teach heritage language learners (HLLs) (e.g. Valdés, 2001); while others have focused on specific professional development

for HL teachers (Kagan & Dillon, 2008; Lacorte, 2016; Schwartz, 2001). However, beyond general frameworks to teach HL learners, more practical teaching strategies should be further developed in order to address the needs of these students.

Potowski and Carreira (2004) advocated for differentiating traditional foreign language methodology and instruction from heritage language pedagogical approaches to teach heritage-speaking populations. Fourteen years later, Carreira and Kagan (2018) continued to push for further development of qualified HL teachers and materials. In spite of these efforts and scholarship presented so far, most Spanish language classrooms still consist of an array of students with multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds; including heritage language speakers as well as second language (L2) students. For this reason, pedagogical approaches need to be flexible in order to address all of the students' needs in a language class/mixed classroom, while at the same time incorporate the development of 21st century skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, among others, in a hands-on fashion. The idea of offering more hands-on strategies and activities to develop more effective pedagogical skills, supported by content and practical knowledge of effective teaching, as suggested by Schwartz (2001), resonates with a new world-wide 21st century educational tendency to "encourage the development of critical reflection and student agency" (Lacorte, 2016, p. 110), together with the imminent need to innovate through student's involvement as a way to promote this agency (Fairclough & Beaudrie, 2016).

As reported by Scott (2015a), there is a strong need to move from content knowledge to transferable skills like critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity. The method presented here particularly seeks to offer strategies so students can develop critical and creative thinking when engaging with content regardless of their proficiency level. Moreover, this method is an invitation to rethink pedagogy and explore learning environments that contribute to the development of life-long skills, thus, advancing the quality of learning. Scott (2015b) also argues for fostering student participation, personalizing and customizing learning, emphasizing project and problem-based learning, encouraging collaboration and communication, engaging and motivating students, cultivating creativity and innovation, and employing appropriate learning tools.

These learning tools find light shed from critical pedagogies to teach lan-

guages. Correa (2011) recommends that instructors working with mixed-classroom students should take on a critical approach to pedagogy to maximize their learning potential.

Similarly, Leeman (2005) acknowledges the idea of bringing students' experiences to the center by reflecting on topics relevant to them and making connections to the larger social context by asking students to critically examine various institutional practices, artifacts, and representations such as newspaper articles, political advertisements, style manuals, or official and unofficial language policies.

In order to be sensitive to problems, situations, injustice, among others, students must develop a sense of agency: "a sense that it's possible to reshape the way things are by directing one's actions purposefully" (Tishman & Clapp, 2017, p. 1).

Therefore, the present methodology uses the protocol Voice and Choice, associated with the Agency by Design framework for maker-centered learning to look critically at content; considering perspectives and representation, and then redesigning or reimagining that content from the language learner's own perspectives. Maker-Centered Learning (Clapp, Ross, Ryan & Tishman, 2016) is a framework that seeks to help young people develop "agency" in a complex and unknown world. This framework describes both the maker (someone who is responsible for shaping his or her own world) and the development of two maker capacities: sensitivity to design and maker empowerment. Sensitivity to design is defined as "being attuned to the designed dimension of objects and systems, with an understanding that the designed world is malleable" (Clapp, Ross, Ryan & Tishman, 2016, p.117). Maker empowerment refers to "seeing the world as malleable and not being subject to the constraints of a particular situation"(p.124). Thus, in the present method, sensitivity to design and maker empowerment are ignited when students have opportunities to closely look at language or language related content (e.g. a poem, a poster, a video) as a system, explore the complexities of these systems and find opportunities to redesign the existing dimensions of them. We refer to language or language related content as a system, since they have parts, purposes, interactions, and other environmental factors such as people who participate in or with them, culture, historical viewpoints, among others. For instance, a poem (as a system) has different parts, stanzas, verses, tenses, but also an author, intentions, cultural values, representation, meanings, and so on. These systems are malleable and subject to change

with the students' own voices and perspectives in a student-centered language classroom, rather than a grammar-centered or teacher-centered class.

The protocol in which teachers and students in the present method will engage considers the development of these interrelated capacities (looking closely, exploring complexity and finding opportunity) so HL/L2 learners can engage with content (as a system) and feel empowered in the language learning process. The protocol seeks to bring students' perspectives to the classroom, and thus empower them to shape their own worlds. As Potowski (2001) suggests, instructors need to listen to their students' voices to help them better understand their realities.

Once students bring their voices and perspectives into the social act of learning a heritage, second or foreign language, then a sense of empowerment can arise.

Since most language teachers face the reality of having mixed-classrooms, we support the idea that successful mixed activities “instill a sense of individual and collective empowerment through mutually beneficial partnerships between HLLs and L2Ls”(Carreira, 2016, p. 166) and therefore argue that a properly designed activity (like the protocol presented below) can empower HL/L2 students to initiate interactions, help others and feel a sense of accomplishment through the use of the target language. Also, L2 learners can benefit from HL speaking classmates, lowering their anxiety and building community (Edstrom, 2007). The protocol, as previously mentioned, finds its roots under the work of Agency by Design, a research group that presents the concept of maker empowerment and defines it as “students' discovery of their own passions, their capacity to pursue them, and the confidence and resourcefulness developed as they learn with and from others” (Design, P. Z., 2015, p.4). It is our belief as linguists, educators and practitioners, that heritage language, second language and foreign language learners and teachers may be served with a 21st century framework that seeks to empower all the stakeholders to bring voice and perspective to their own processes and learning.

For this reason, we are implementing the protocol Voice and Choice by Agency by Design into the foreign and heritage language classroom, as a suitable 21st century tool that ignites critical pedagogy, in order to empower L2 and HL learners alike.

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**Summary of basic concepts**

**Artifact:** An object crafted by a human being as opposed to a natural object. Artifacts are usually of practical, cultural, educational or historical interest and can be used as authentic material in the classroom.

**Content:** Whenever the word content is used, you can replace it with a specific material for your class/ lesson. Content could be any artifact: a poem, work of art, historical essay, social media post, news article, piece of digital media, environmental plan, etc. ( “Voice and Choice,”n.d.).

**Critical pedagogy:** A teaching philosophy that promotes students’ questioning of dominant societal ideologies and practices, and therefore student empowerment through comprehension and action (Freire, 1970). Teachers are seen as facilitators of student inquiry and problem-solving.

**Maker empowerment:** “Students’ discovery of their own passions, their capacity to pursue them, and the confidence and resourcefulness developed as they learn with and from others”(Design, P. Z., 2015, p.4).

**Multimodal texts:** Written pieces that include two or more semiotic systems (i.e. linguistic, audio, visual, gestural, and spatial) to enhance communicative purposes. They can be delivered live (e.g. a theater play that includes gesture, music and scrip) via paper (e.g. a picture book that includes text, pictures and fabric), electronically (e.g. a blog post with sounds, text, and videos), etc.

**Probing question:** Powerful open-ended questions used to extend the students’ thinking into deeper levels.

**Sensitivity to design:** “Being attuned to the designed dimension of objects and systems, with an understanding that the designed world is malleable.” (Clapp, Ross, Ryan & Tishman, 2016, p.117).

**Student agency:** When the student has agency, the student has an active role in their learning. The student is the agent in the learning process, whereas the teacher is the facilitator or guide that raises their awareness of what is possible. The students have agency when they make, create, share, collaborate, etc. in ways that are meaningful for them. Also called *student-centered* or *student-focused* learning.

***Translanguaging:*** New approach to language use, bilingual acquisition and bilingual education that sees all acquired languages (or in the process of been acquired) as components of one bi/multilingual repertoire (García & Wei, 2014). When using translanguaging, speakers draw linguistic resources from various languages in order to communicate effectively according to contextual needs: the characteristics of the communicative context, their interlocutors, the intentional force they wish to convey, the power structures that underlie each communicative encounter, etc. (Velasco & García, 2014).

#### DESCRIPTION

The present description offers a step by step guideline to use the protocol Voice and Choice, associated with the Agency by Design framework for Maker-Centered Learning. This protocol is accompanied by a user-friendly workbook, so students can easily engage with content and document their learning. See appendix 1.

Students will look critically at language related content, considering perspectives and representation, and then redesigning or reimagining that content from their own perspectives. Students will be prompted to look closely at an artifact (e.g. art, writing, culture, etc.), explore its complexities, and find opportunities to enact change in the Spanish mixed-classroom, as well as their own language learning process. They will then develop a plan to redesign that content and will be asked to document their work and develop a display that they will later share with their peers.

Divide your students in groups of 4. The groups should have representation of different proficiency levels (novice, intermediate, advanced, superior and/or distinguished) among your students. Ideally, each group should have at least one or two heritage speakers.

Give a copy of the Voice and Choice protocol workbook to each group and a copy of the content they will engage with. For example, if you use a poem as your content, you can give a copy of the poem to each member of the group. If you use an image as your content, you can provide the group with a large version of the picture, give each member a copy, or project the image on a screen if all groups in the class are using the protocol with the same image. You can have all groups working with the same content or you can give groups different contents to apply the protocol. The steps in the protocol will not vary depending on the context, but the way to approach it might.

Start facilitating the use of the protocol once groups have received the work-book and the content.

Allot time to carry on the following steps of the protocol. ( “Voice and Choice” n.d.).

- a. **Consider the context:** Where was the content made? When was it made?
- b. **Who made it?** What else was going on at this place and time?
- c. **Maker choices:** What choices do you think the maker (author) made when creating the *content*? Why do you think they made these choices?
- d. **Voices present:** Whose voices are present in this *content*? What perspectives are represented?
- e. **Voices missing:** Whose voices are missing from this *content*? What perspectives are not represented? Why do you think that is?
- f. **My voice:** What’s your voice? What perspectives can you bring to this *content*?
- g. **My choice(s):** What could you do to redesign or reimagine this *content* to better represent your perspective(s)? Why? How might it look differently? (Participants could re-create the *content*, changing or adding parts; they could also create a representation of it, a picture, a sculpture, a song, etc.)
- h. **Interact:** Share your redesign with a peer or peers. Ask them to answer the questions: Whose voices and perspectives do they see represented in this content? Whose voices and perspectives do they think are missing? Ask yourself is there anyone else you might share your redesign with to get a different perspective?
- i. **Reflect:** Now that you have received feedback, look closely at your redesign and consider whose voices and perspectives are missing from the redesigned content. If the feedback from your peer(s) is not what you intended or expected, is that okay with you? If not, how might you continue to redesign this content? Finally, and importantly, ask yourself: what do you think the author would think of your redesign?



## **Implementation**

In order to offer an in-depth step by step recommendation to implement the present method, the following section is divided in three parts: input, filter and competence. The “input” will provide considerations regarding materials and classroom management, content, building on language to address the content, timing, facilitation procedures, and evaluation outcomes. The “filter” will expand on those elements from the affective perspective as it offers considerations regarding lowering the affective filter of the students to provide a safe and inviting environment to engage with the protocol. Finally, the “competence” part will address how this method is connected to the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages from ACTFL (American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages).

## **INPUT**

### Materials and classroom arrangement

- You may choose to print an individual copy of the protocol workbook for each group member or provide each group with a poster size version of the workbook. It is recommended to use the latter option in order to document the students’ responses in a single template.
- Provide each group with a set of markers and Post-it Notes to complete the different steps of the protocol. Writing their responses on Post-it Notes and then sticking them on the workbook allows for (re)arranging ideas as students engage with the protocol.
- Make sure you arrange the classroom in a way that the four students face each other in order to facilitate communication. You may also have the students working on the floor, or outside the classroom. Regardless of your individual setting, make sure students are able to face each other to promote interaction.

### *Content*

As indicated on the summary of basic concepts table above, content refers to

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any specific work related to your class or for the purpose of teaching something related to your class. The possibilities are endless, and we offer certain suggestions as follows.

- You may choose an image that represents a specific characteristic of the Spanish speaking world, a social issue related to Spanish language or culture, or some material that represents the students' community. For example, a picture of a "mercado" in Spain, murals in Colombia, a demonstration against the economic crisis in Venezuela, or a linguistic landscape of your town where bilingual or multilingual signs are present. Be mindful about stereotypes, you want your students to engage with the content rather than been told or taught what the image represents.
- You may choose a written piece such as a poem, a short story, a tale, a newspaper headline, among others, in the target language. If you use authentic material, you may want to make sure you pre-teach vocabulary and that you check for language-level appropriateness. A good rule of thumb is the 10-word rule. If there are more than 10 words in the text that students would not know, then the text is too difficult for their level.
- You may also choose multimodal texts such as digital stories, short clips from films, YouTube Videos, and Social Media posts. In the case of videos, using captions will aid students to make connections between meaning and language structures.
- You may use a particular language structure. For example, students may use the protocol to analyze sentences, phrases, mood, or the use of other language features like sentences with code-switching, translations or the use of loan words. For example, a dialogue between a person from Mexico and a person from Chile; two sentences to contrast the use of indicative vs. subjunctive mood in adjectival subordinate clauses (e.g. "Cuando llego a casa" vs. "Cuando llegue a casa" ).
- You may also choose an artifact like a sculpture, a piece of art, a souvenir, a machine, as well as everyday objects like a food item or tools. For example, a llama magnet from Peru, a carving tool to make wooden spoons from Nicaragua, or a painting by Frida Kahlo.

### Building on language to address the content

- Since the protocol seeks to engage the students with voice and representation, language production should not stop them from reflecting and generating their responses. Consider the following:
  - a) Prompt the students to use a particular tense according to your language unit. For example, if you are using the protocol in a beginner level and are teaching *ser/estar*, students can say: “está la voz de \_\_\_\_\_ y no está la voz de \_\_\_\_\_”( \_\_\_\_\_ voice is present and \_\_\_\_\_ is missing) for the steps: “Voices present”and “Voices missing” .
  - b) Teach word chunks (phrases) to introduce the ideas they want to express in the different steps of the protocol. For example: “Yo cambiaría (I would change) \_\_\_\_\_ porque (because) \_\_\_\_\_”to respond to the “Reflect” step of the protocol. What is important is to make the right language teaching decisions based on the unit (s) where you want to implement the use of the protocol, so your students can express themselves and bring their voices to the learning process.
- You may also want to build on the vocabulary and grammatical structures throughout the unit before you engage the students in the protocol. This may include vocabulary lists, pre-readings assignments, reading strategies, etc.

### *Timing*

- There are multiple possibilities to use the protocol. You may use it in a single class period, during a week, a whole unit or even the entire semester.
- Deciding on timing will allow you to go deeper into the students’ critical response toward the content.
- It is suggested to use the protocol at the end of a unit or content, with a minimum allotting time of 50 minutes, and never less than that. Also, you may choose to work only on certain parts of the protocol if you provide

the students with the information for the sections or steps they did not complete. For example, you can provide the information considering the first two steps ( “Consider the context”and “Maker Choices” ), so students engage right away with the steps “Voices present”and “Voices missing” . This will allow students to dedicate more time to bringing their own perspectives if you have time constraints to conduct the protocol.

### Facilitation moves

- In order to facilitate the use of the protocol rather than teaching with the protocol, reinforce the idea that there is not one correct answer, but multiple perspectives.
- Since time is allotted per step (depending on the timing you choose to apply the protocol), avoid gathering the class so every group presents their answers at the end of each section because the students will not come together as a class until they share their redesigns after the “Reflect”step. Remember that the students are documenting their responses in the workbook, and therefore after time per each section is up, direct the class to move on to the next section while you go group by group providing feedback.
- As you give students feedback, offer probing questions such as: What makes you say that? What connections are you making? How does X relate to Y? And so on.
- Make constant decisions regarding student voices throughout the use of the protocol rather than following a prescriptive lesson plan. This may include extending time if students are not finished with the different steps or teach more vocabulary or grammatical structures as needed by students.
- You can always go back to a previous section or idea in order to help reinforce students’ connections among the steps of the protocol as you respond to student voices.

### Evaluation outcomes

While and after you implement this protocol, students will:

- Use contextualized language structures and vocabulary pertaining the units in which the protocol was implemented.
- Understand how teachers and students can come together to co-create a new design of the content to maximize the language learning process with a sense of agency and empowerment in the Spanish mixed-classroom.
- Look closely and explore the complexities of content as a system (e.g. art, writing, culture, etc.)
- Identify the various parts of the system, the various people who use it, and how the parts of the system and people interact with one another.
- Consider the perspectives of the people who interact with the system and the missing voice of those who are not represented. These considerations will be triggered as the participants engage with the different steps of the protocol.
- Redesign an aspect of the system to maximize learning from the learner's own perspective.

### **FILTER:**

The following section will address the different moves teachers can take to deal with potential reactions of students when engaging with the protocol. Accordingly, this section will discuss how to facilitate the learning process by lowering the affective filter of the students. As VanPatten and Benati (2010) articulate, the affective filter, pertaining to Krashen's monitor theory:

Is a metaphor that the theory uses to talk about why language (input) enters or does not enter the head of the learner. The theory would say that learners with high affective filters block out language due to attitudes, emotions, and so on, while those with low affective filters do not. (p. 62)

To identify if the filter is high or low, carefully observe how students react

to your instructions and the content when you are presenting the protocol, and how they are communicating with each other while they are working in groups as you walk around the classroom. This section is organized by following the same structure presented in the previous section.

### **Dealing with materials and classroom arrangement**

- Students may be benefited if they have a copy of the protocol for themselves apart from the poster sized version to take notes or read some of the prompts/instructions the teacher is facilitating. This will give them more confidence and will be able to monitor if they are understanding the oral instructions from the teacher. If you decide to give them a copy, it is important to remind them that their collective answers should be documented on the poster size version each group receives.
- Since it is suggested that the organization of the teams contains a variety of proficiency levels, the teacher should previously arrange the teams to avoid social pressure or student disappointment if grouping the teams in situ. This previous arrangement seeks to connect L2 learners with HS so they can learn from their peers' different backgrounds. This can decrease fears and feelings of judgement and help both students build up self-confidence throughout the protocol. Also, the teacher should use an icebreaker before starting the protocol so teams can get accustomed to working with each other at this early stage. Students can feel more comfortable working with at least one peer they are friends with or with whom they have been paired up before.
- It is important that the sitting arrangement gives easy access to team members to look at each other, and work with the poster size workbook. No student should feel left out from the team because of not being able to reach class materials or hear their classmates' opinions and discussions.

### **Dealing with content**

- The protocol can be used with an array of different contents (like images, texts, language structures, artifacts, among others) without losing sight on

the importance of bringing the students voices and perspectives as they engage with content in the target or heritage language. Therefore, the content selected to trigger student response must be emotionally, socially or linguistically appealing to get students easily engaged. To avoid negative feelings towards underrepresentation of their backgrounds, teachers should select content that implies different representations of the Spanish speaking world and not only peninsular or Mexican Spanish.

- It might be a good idea to present different content options, and have the teams decide, as a group, the content they want to work with to conduct the protocol, based on the familiarity or interest that draw them towards a particular content. If more than one team wants to work with the same content, they should be allowed to do so since different teams may bring different perspectives to the same content.
- If you plan to implement the protocol throughout the year, ask for students' opinions about what they would like to work with/ explore next time. Another possibility would be to have them research for content and propose it to the class as a previous assignment, individually or with the aid of an adult; ideally their parents or caregivers.

### **Dealing with language to address the content**

Promoting critical thinking among students is a challenging endeavor when using a less fluent or dominant language. Therefore, the following actions should be considered (beyond practical language teaching strategies mentioned in the previous section) to support students' production in the target or heritage language. The main goal is to lower students' anxiety and frustration for not being able to communicate their ideas:

- Remind students to not take too many risks. The teacher should reinforce the idea that they already know language they can use to engage in the class. Praise them when communicating ideas with language they are studying in class.
- If you have heritage speakers with a higher proficiency level than L2 students, invite these more advanced speakers to aid the L2 speakers enunciate the ideas they want to communicate.

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- Tap into their prior knowledge: previous to working with the protocol have them reflect on the words *voice* and *choice* by providing visual and tangible examples of a topic that is being covered in class. Ask them to describe ways of expressing their voice and their choices in order to engage them as individuals. Then, have them describe how to recognize others' voices and choices. For example, they can watch and analyze an episode of *Dora and friends* to identify the different characters' voices and choices. With this information, students can create a poster divided into four squares (other voices, my voice, other choices, my choice) where students arrange their ideas and examples of voices from and choices by other people in specific scenarios. It can then be put up on the wall and referred back to on the day you work with the protocol. You may want to select other ways to present the concepts voice and choice according to grade level.
  - Be mindful of error correction. Explain students that it is okay to make mistakes, to experiment with language and to keep on trying to express their ideas.
  - As “many heritage learners bring into the classroom important feelings of stigmatization about the way they speak, which challenge not only the use of their languages but also their sense of identity” (Parra, 2016, p. 166), openness to linguistic variation is capital. We advise not to make any correction while stigmatized words are used orally, and if they appear in students' writing, not to focus on them while the students are working on the protocol, but to have them critically analyze those words at another point where focus on vocabulary or grammar is the main goal.
  - Providing feedback in English, particularly on advanced linguistic structures, will allow students not to feel stressed about not understanding what the teacher is communicating.
  - Support how language is articulated. Sentence starters, frames and chunks written on index cards or vocabulary banks are handy to help students better articulate their thoughts and avoid unnecessary struggles to find how to start a sentence or say one specific word. Allow students to use their vocabulary lists. Also, offer opportunities to use dictionaries or online websites.
  - Having multiple ways to express something can also help reduce the fear of



not being able to verbalize or write their responses correctly. As students become familiar with previously provided sentence starters and vocabulary, you can lead them to use newer ones in order to expand their communication skills. You can first offer them three index cards with one sentence starter and one vocabulary bank. As the protocol goes along, hand out one more set of three index cards and one more vocabulary bank so students start to include new structures and vocabulary. Continue to do this as long as you consider it necessary to include the target structures and vocabulary.

- Ask each team to document new words on the board so the whole class has access to those words. This move will also show students that all teams may need new words, and not having enough language is not something that is happening only to their team. Observing participatory language learning will reduce their individual and team anxiety.

### **Dealing with time**

As previously mentioned, using this protocol at the beginning of a unit may rise the students affective filter since they won't have enough vocabulary or understanding of certain content; feeling unprepared to deal with the task. Therefore, the recommendation to conduct the protocol during or at the end of a unit should be highly considered. Then, students will feel more attuned to engage in the task.

Be mindful of managing time to avoid pressuring students to finish a step of the protocol to continue with the next one. It is better to set timeframes to complete the different parts at the beginning of the tasks and monitor student progress throughout the class.

### **Facilitation moves**

- By reinforcing the idea that there is not only one correct answer, but multiple perspectives, you make sure that students do not feel pressured to produce what they believe it is expected from them. You want your students to feel they can express themselves more freely and with more confidence. Motivating them to find missing voices and bring their own not only will lower the affective filter but will motivate them to actively participate in the completion of the protocol.

- The idea of not gathering the whole class until the end of the protocol, i.e. the “Reflect”step, intends for lowering the affective filter by not placing any student at the center of the classroom having to present an idea that is not fully developed. While working in groups, students are focused on the few members that make up their group, and they can choose to dialogue with one, two or three different members of the group at different points of the process. This environment allows them to focus on meaning (what they are trying to communicate) rather than on form (proper use of language).
- Depending on students’ proficiency level, you and your students may use English or translanguaging to extend their thinking when probing questions, connections, extensions or challenges are presented.
- Tone and body language are good allies to help students feel at ease in the working process. A caring and understanding tone shows that we are open and receptive to what students have to say. Sitting down next to them and communicating at eye level lets them know that we see them as equals and shows true interest in them as individuals.
- The Agency by Design team has also suggested the following considerations for a better implementation of the” My Voice” step as well as the teacher’s facilitation of student inquiry:

*The My Voice step*

In order to scaffold the “my voice”step, students may need support considering their own perspectives and sensitivities. We suggest working with the Agency by Design *Think, Feel, Care* thinking routine between the “voices missing” and” my voice” steps. Or, you may want to offer some prompts for students to consider their own perspectives. Some suggested prompts include: What people or communities do I represent? What do I care about? What’s important to me? What’s my point of view? What aspects of my identity, background, and experiences influence my point of view?

*Keep on asking “Why?”*

It is important to embed opportunities for learners to ask Why? throughout

the protocol. Asking why is emphasized in the following steps of the protocol: maker choices, voices missing, my voice. Why questions can be inserted into other parts of the protocol, especially during the *Think, Feel, Care* routine (see above). Support learners to think about why by routinely using the following prompts: “What makes you say that?” and “Why do you think that is?” (Voice and Choice,” n.d.).

### COMPETENCE:

The use of this method seeks to shift the focus of instruction from a teacher-centered or language-centered classroom to student-centered teaching and learning practices in order to develop communicative competence in a holistic way. By holistic we mean the development of the four language skills, but under the scrutiny of critical and creative thinking. In order to achieve this, students engage in deep analysis of content in the target language in order to connect, extend and challenge ideas regarding representation of missing voices and their own voice. Thus, to fulfill the appropriate completion of the protocol, students must use the L2 or HL in a step by step process to effectively communicate ideas that go beyond the use of language drills but imply student agency and empowerment by connecting language, culture and communities and their own voices. To that end, the role of the instructor would be to help students learn, understand and reflect upon the meaning, attitudes, values and ideas, so they can describe a pattern of social interaction in real life products such as books, laws, music games and create their own artifacts to show their understanding of them, as suggested by Potowski (2005).

The use of this method mirrors the expectations presented by the American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) which articulated the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages to “establish an inextricable link between communication and culture, which is applied in making connections and comparisons and in using this competence to be part of local and global communities” ( “ACTFL, 2018, World-readiness standards for learning languages section,” n.d.).

These standards are reflected in the students’ language production throughout the protocol (in conversations, discussions, and written documentation of answers) in an inquiry-based format. This method embraces what Belpoliti and Fairclough (2018) propose regarding the implementation of an

“inquiry-based approach as the foundation of projects especially designed for specific proficiency levels [that] allows students to expand their language abilities in the interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational modes while working on a topic of personal interest.” Then, “the projects highlight the cultural and affective connections between learners and their communities while fostering a deeper understanding of the Hispanic cultures in the United States and abroad, and their social relevance in all aspects of life.” (p.269).

By developing communication (oral and writing skills) in the classroom through assignments that focus on the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes, students will become aware of what they can do with the language they have and the one learned in the classroom. If students are shown how communication brings language, agency and identity together, they will be able to take that knowledge outside of the classroom and make informed decisions about when to use what in each specific situation (e.g. Leeman 2012).

#### 4. Recommended activities

The following section is divided into three recommended activities that reflect the implementation of the protocol in four different parts.

<b>Part 1: CONTEXT AND CHOICES</b>	
<b>PROFICIENCY LEVEL</b>	The protocol Voice and Choice can be used at any proficiency level; therefore, the level of difficulty will depend on the unit or level in which the teacher decides to use it. For this reason, the language used throughout the protocol may vary.
<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>	Students should work in groups at all times. They will complete pages 1-3 of the workbook. Allow students to self-pace their answers.

<b>GOAL</b>	<p>Students will look closely at <i>content</i> as a system (e.g. art, writing, culture, etc.) and will start exploring the origins of the content, people participating in its creation and the decisions the makers/authors made when creating it.</p> <p>Use contextualized language structures and vocabulary pertaining the units in which the protocol is implemented.</p>
<b>COMPETENCE:</b>	<p>In this part the students will interact with the content both visually and graphically. They will also interact with their group of peers orally in the target language, as well as their co-inspiration when writing responses.</p> <p>Written: the students will identify and describe a context for one specific content. The students will describe the choices others made in order to create specific content.</p> <p>Oral: the students will discuss and negotiate aspects of content making and justify their answers with the language structures provided in the unit of study.</p>
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<p>Chosen content.</p> <p>Workbook, pages 1-3.</p>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<p>*See activity workbook, pages 1-3.</p>
<b>VARIATION</b>	<p>The protocol can be hacked, tweaked, or changed according to the content and context. For more ideas, refer to the Filter section, subheadings Dealing with Content and Dealing with Language.</p>

<b>HANDOUT PROVIDED</b>	YES
<b>Part 2: VOICES PRESENT/MISSING - MY VOICE</b>	
<b>PROFICIENCY LEVEL</b>	The protocol Voice and Choice can be used at any proficiency level; therefore, the level of difficulty will depend on the unit or level in which the teacher decides to use it. For this reason, the language used throughout the protocol may vary.
<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>	Students should work in groups at all times. They will complete pages 4-6 of the workbook. Allow students to self-pace their answers.
<b>GOAL</b>	Students will explore the complexities of the content by analyzing the voices present and missing. Students will find opportunities by bringing their own voices to a potential redesign of the content. Use contextualized language structures and vocabulary pertaining the units in which the protocol is implemented.
<b>COMPETENCE:</b>	In this part the students will interact with the content both visually and graphically. They will also interact with their group of peers orally in the target language, as well as their co-inspiration when writing responses. Written: the students will identify and describe voices present and missing within the content. The students will describe how

	<p>they could redesign content in order to bring in their own perspectives.</p> <p>Oral: the student will discuss and negotiate aspects of voice representation, as well as their ideas to redesign the content with the language structure provided in the unit of study.</p>
<b>MATERIALS</b>	<p>Chosen content.</p> <p>Workbook, pages 4-6.</p>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	*See activity workbook, pages 4-6.
<b>VARIATION</b>	<p>Refer to the section Filter, subheading Facilitation Moves for further variation on how to scaffold the My Voice Step with the aid of the thinking routine Think, Feel, Care.</p>
<b>HANDOUT PROVIDED</b>	YES

<b>Part 3: MY CHOICE</b>	
<b>PROFI- CIENCY LEVEL</b>	<p>The protocol Voice and Choice can be used at any proficiency level; therefore, the level of difficulty will depend on the unit or level in which the teacher decides to use it. For this reason, the language used throughout the protocol may vary.</p>

INS-TRUCTIONS	Students should work in groups at all times. They will complete page 7 of the workbook. Allow students to self-pace their answers.
GOAL	After looking closely and exploring complexities of the content, students will come together to physically redesign the content, making sure their voices are present. They will design a new piece of content (artifact).
COMPETENCE:	In this part the students will work collaboratively to produce a new piece of content. Written/ Graphically: students will document their redesign contents to present their personal perspectives. Oral: the students will discuss and negotiate aspects of the redesign with the language structures provided in the unit of study. Since this collaboration may require language above their level, English could be permitted, if need be.
MATERIALS	Chosen content. Workbook, page 7.
PROCEDURE	*See activity workbook, page 7.
VARIATION	The protocol can be hacked, tweaked, or changed according to the content and context. The redesign may take extra time. This work could be carried in a different class or assigned as homework.
HANDOUT PROVIDED	YES



<b>Part 4: INTERACT AND REFLECT</b>	
PROFI- CIENCY LEVEL	The protocol Voice and Choice can be used at any proficiency level; therefore, the level of difficulty will depend on the unit or level in which the teacher decides to use it. For this reason, the language used throughout the protocol may vary.
INS- TRUC- TIONS	Students should work in groups at all times. They will complete pages 8-10 of the workbook. Allow students to self-pace their answers.
GOAL	Students will share their redesigned content with the whole class and the teacher to receive feedback from them. Afterwards, they will go back to their original groups in order to finalize their content, based on the new ideas or perspectives gained from the class discussion.
COM- PE- TENCE:	Written/ Graphically: students will document their redesign contents to present their personal perspectives. Oral: the students will discuss and negotiate aspects of the redesign with the language structures provided in the unit of study. Since this collaboration may require language above their level, English could be permitted, if need be.
MATE- RIALS	Chosen content. Workbook, pages 8-10.
PROCE- DURE	*See activity workbook, pages 8-10.

VARIATION	Instead of sharing their redesigned content with the whole class, each group can share it with another group in order to receive feedback from them. The “reflect” section can be completed as a whole group with the teacher facilitating further probing questions.
HAN- DOUT PROVI- DED	YES

## 5. Conclusion

This section will be divided into two parts. First, we will offer some suggestions on how to wrap-up the implementation of the protocol, and second, some final thoughts about the process.

### Wrap-up

After the protocol has been implemented in one or more than one class and/or content areas, the students will have explored the content from different perspectives, including their own. The teacher should thank the students for investing themselves in such an insightful way. Also, reinforce the following ideas:

1. Always consider that content does not take place in isolation. All pieces of content belong to broader and humanly designed systems.
2. Acknowledge the different voices and perspectives represented within the content and look closely at them and explore them to gain full understanding.
3. Offer your own perspectives and make sure your voices are heard. This is a life skill that will aid students in their future educational, work-related and societal endeavors.
4. Even with little language we can communicate in the L2.
5. We need to value the power of collaborative work.

### Final thoughts

Nowadays, regardless of the teaching contexts, whether you have only L2 learners, only heritage speakers or a mixed classroom, you should promote critical pedagogies to deal with content. These critical pedagogies must bring the students' backgrounds to the table and thus empower them to shape their own worlds. These specific worlds must embrace the development of 21st century skills such as critical and creative thinking, collaboration and communication. Sometimes, teacher and students may think they do not have enough language proficiency to engage in deep conversation and reflection regarding special topics. However, we hope you can experience first-hand how students can engage with content with a guided protocol and scaffold their discovery process with your linguistic support.

By implementing the protocol Voice and Choice, the teacher and students are able to put into practice the language learned according to their units of studies, while at the same time, they look closely and critically at content, explore the complexities of content, and find opportunities to bring their own voices and perspectives to the content they engage with.

We encourage you to tweak, change and adapt this protocol according to your needs as an educator, and customize it to your students' needs. The use of the protocol offers a novel opportunity to personalize learning and develop student agency and empowerment in an unknown and complex world.

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