



FOUNDATIONAL READING FOR WORLD LANGUAGE LEARNING & INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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In an era of increasing accountability within U.S. higher education, it is strategically important that international higher education professionals not view research and scholarship as a burden or an addition to an already demanding workload. Rather, we must recognize that professional success is tied to our willingness and ability to identify, access, and utilize research and scholarship to inform our collective practice.

The following is a brief list of five major knowledge areas within the broader field of world language learning in postsecondary education and essential reading relevant to all international education practitioners and scholars. This foundation reading provides insight into the existing research and scholarship that informs our practice. This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive and will be adapted and expanded over time.

1. GENERAL READING ON SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNING

The development of proficiency in more than one language has been found to yield numerous benefits, among them improved cognitive functions, enhanced executive control through more objective decision-making, as well as multi-perspective evaluation of situational and cultural challenges. At the same time, demographic shifts have resulted in increased racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity within our borders, making the study of multiple languages a 21st-Century imperative. As Roberts et al. (2017) have stated, “monolingualism is the illiteracy of the twenty-first century.”

- ◆ American Academy of Arts & Sciences. (2017). *America's languages: Investing in language education for the 21st century*. AAA&S.
- ◆ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2015). *World-readiness standards for learning languages* (4th ed.). ACTFL.
- ◆ Fox, R., Corretjer, O., & Webb, K. (2019). Benefits of foreign language learning and bilingualism: An analysis of published empirical research 2012–2019. *Foreign Language Annals*, 52(4), 699-726.
- ◆ Garrett-Rucks, P., & Jansa, T. (2020). For whom are we internationalizing? A call to prioritize second language learning in internationalization efforts. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(1), 7-19.
- ◆ Roberts, G., Leite, J., & Wade, O. (2017). Monolingualism is the illiteracy of the twenty-first century. *Hispania*, 100(5), 116-118.

2. LANGUAGE LEARNING AND INTERNATIONAL STUDY

International study is revered as one of the most effective methods for enhanced development of one's pursuit in second-language acquisition. Immersion in a realistic day-to-day context, access to colloquial speech and various accents, as well as offering a structure for measurable success are among a number of reasons as to how international study can play a fundamental role in advancing one's skills in foreign language. After conducting multiple studies on the relationship between language learning and international study, Davidson, et al, (2016) found that there is clear evidence to support that "early- and middle-stage students of language in the immersion context demonstrate significant competencies in their abilities to shift cognitive frames and to switch behavioral codes in response to local cultural contexts" (p. 171) in comparison to their counterparts who studied a foreign language at their home university.

- ◆ Allen, H. W. (2013). Self-regulatory strategies of foreign language learners: From the classroom to study abroad and beyond. In C. Kinginger (Ed.) *Social and Cultural Aspects of Language Learning in Study Abroad* (pp. 47-74). John Benjamins.
- ◆ Howard, M. and Schwieter, J. W. (2018). The development of second language grammar in a study abroad context. In C. Sanz and A. Morales-Front (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Study Abroad Research and Practice* (pp. 135-148). Routledge.
- ◆ Isabelli-García, C., Brown, J., Plews, J. L., & Dewey, D. P. (2018). Language learning and study abroad. *Language Teaching*, 51(4), 439-484.
- ◆ Jackson, J., Howard, M., & Schwieter, J. W. (2020). Language proficiency: Developmental perspectives and linguistic outcomes of education abroad. In A. C. Ogden, B. Streitwieser, & C. Van Mol (Eds.), *Education abroad: Bridging scholarship and practice* (pp. 92-105). Routledge.
- ◆ Kinginger, C. (2009). Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research. Palgrave MacMillan.
- ◆ Schwieter, J. W. and Klassen, G. (2016). Linguistic advances and learning strategies in a short-term study abroad experience. *Study Abroad Research in Second Language Acquisition and International Education*, 1(2), 217-247.

3. LANGUAGE LEARNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Although the concept of *global citizenship* continues to elude a definitive and holistic delineation, it is widely recognized that second-language learning fosters various social and civic responsibilities necessary for an informed citizenry. As global interconnectedness and complexities grow, 21st-Century challenges can only be addressed effectively through a global mindset and related functional competencies, international awareness, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and proficiency in more than one language. As noted by the U.S. Department of Education in a 2018 study entitled *Succeeding globally through international education and engagement*, such competencies are not isolated, but rather "interrelated skills and areas of knowledge that are used together to enable individuals to understand the world and take action" (p. 3).

- ◆ Aktas, F., Pitts, K., Richards, J. C., & Silova, I. (2017). Institutionalizing global citizenship: A critical analysis of higher education programs and curricula. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 21(1), 65-80.
- ◆ Cantón, A., & Garcia, B. I. (2018). Global citizenship education. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 160(Winter), 21-30.
- ◆ National Education Association. (2010). *Global competence is a 21st century imperative* (Policy Brief PB28A). <https://tinyurl.com/y2yz7sve>

- ◆ Tochon, F. V. (2009). The key to global understanding: World languages education — Why schools need to adapt. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(2), 650-681.
- ◆ U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *Succeeding globally through international education and engagement*. <https://tinyurl.com/yad7em7o>

4. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Beyond the cognitive benefits of acquiring a second or third language, continued language learning and the concomitant acquisition of intercultural awareness and proficiency have been shown to enhance critical thinking skills and create a broadened and more diverse worldview. These factors are considered critical components in the development of globally competent graduates who are able to integrate and communicate adequately and appropriately in a wide range of 'foreign' cultural contexts.

- ◆ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2011). *21st century skills map: World languages*. <https://tinyurl.com/y66gd7am>
- ◆ Fantini, A. E. (2019). *Intercultural communicative competence in educational exchange: A multinational perspective*. Routledge.
- ◆ Fantini, A. E. (2012). Language: An essential component of intercultural communicative competence. In J. Jackson (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of language and intercultural communication* (pp. 263-278). Routledge.
- ◆ Risager, K. (2006). *Language and culture: Global flows and local complexity*. Multilingual Matters.
- ◆ Risager, K. (2015). Linguaculture: The language-culture nexus in transnational perspective. In F. Sharifian (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of language and culture* (pp. 87-99). Routledge.

5. EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Multilingual skills paired with cross-cultural competency have been identified as significant assets in an increasingly competitive job market. Multiple studies have shown how employers prefer candidates not only with specialized professional skill set but also with proven language and intercultural proficiency. Although some employers attribute less salience to world languages compared to intercultural awareness, Tochon (2009) has found that monolinguals are likely to experience a "competitive disadvantage for a growing number of jobs" (p. 656) compared to multilingual and multicultural practitioners.

- ◆ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2015). *Oral proficiency levels in the workplace*. ACTFL. <https://www.actfl.org/resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>
- ◆ American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2019). *Making languages our business: Addressing foreign language demand among U.S. employers*. <https://tinyurl.com/uocty2k>
- ◆ Damari, R. R., Rivers, W. P., Brecht, R. D., Gardner, P., Pulupa, C., & Robinson, J. (2017). The demand for multilingual human capital in the U.S. labor market. *Foreign Language Annals*, 50(1), 13-37.
- ◆ Grosse, C. U. (2004). The competitive advantage of foreign languages and cultural knowledge. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(3), 351-373.
- ◆ Porras, D., Ee, J., & Gándara, P. (2014). Employer preferences: Do bilingual applicants and employees experience an advantage? In R. Callahan & P. Gándara (Eds.), *The bilingual advantage: Language, literacy and the U.S. labor market* (pp. 234-257). Multilingual Matters.



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