

Turnarounds to Transfer

DESIGN BEYOND THE MODES

By Jennifer Eddy

Quite often when a teacher asks a question and changes it, even slightly, from how the concept was originally taught, a student will say, "You never taught us this or we never learned this."

Experience with typical testing creates learners accustomed to plug in, memorized answers, therefore expecting to be assessed exactly the way they were taught. The danger here is a learner that will not be able to demonstrate the flexibility required when faced with new situations or deal with real-world contexts that are often ambiguous and require critical thinking and a repertoire thoughtfully engaged. Teachers still ask students to fill, drill and repeat, focusing on individual items rather than the concept that created the item.

When prompted exactly as they were taught, students might fill in the space. However, they cannot use the language with flexibility and security, engaging in tasks they will likely encounter in real life. Drills, fill-in and rote responses may give the appearance of understanding but not the reality of trans-

fer (Eddy, 2006).

Transfer is defined as using knowledge and skills in new and unanticipated situations different than how they were originally learned, on one's own, without many cues or supports (McTighe, J., & Wiggins, G. 2005). In the curriculum design model, Uncovering Content: Assessment Design Aligning Performance and Transfer (2006/2007), Understanding by Design is aligned with the World Readiness Standards (1996/2013), unfolding cultural perspectives with recursive themes along the lifespan within the three communicative modes assessing for Transfer. Using a language appropriately in a given culture requires high adaptability, tolerance of new situations and contexts, dealing with incomplete information and problem-solving without cues. Assessment tasks that most closely meet these criteria will be your best evidence of true performance. Teachers need to create these tasks for the learner as transfer will not occur by chance and never from drills alone. Communication is not only proof of transfer but proof you need transfer.

Transfer requires inference and nego-

tiation of meaning, not just collecting facts, repeating a skill and completing a drill. Without transfer, the language learner forgets, misunderstands a concept or only knows it in the rigid, predictable context in which it was taught. Transfer involves using materials the student may not have used before and solving a problem with complexities or variables. If students understand the concept, it should not matter if the teacher poses it differently or suggests different variations on the same. Unfortunately, most students when faced with a problem, posed slightly differently, cannot solve it, recognize it or reach for the concept to solve that problem. This is because there were no transfer tasks along the way to give students the tools for the inevitable unexpected. Transfer tasks should happen as soon as possible, early and often, however small, at all levels of proficiency.

ARE YOU PLANNING FOR PRACTICE OR DESIGNING FOR PERFORMANCE?

Even performance assessments (Glisan, et. al. 2003) can fall flat if students cannot transfer what they learned to a new situation or context, solve a problem or create some-

Turnaround to Transfer



Drills give the appearance of understanding but not the reality of transfer.

Without transfer tasks, the learner will not be able to demonstrate the flexibility required when faced with new situations in the real world cultural contexts.

Eddy/WLP (2006)

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Performance Tasks in the Three Modes Should Assess for Transfer

Transfer requires inference and negotiation of meaning, not just amassing of facts and completing a drill.

Without transfer, the language learner forgets, misunderstands a concept, or only knows it in the rigid, predictable context in which it was taught.

- Performance Assessment for Transfer
- START with the End in Mind
- Source
- Task
- Audience
- Role
- Transfer



Eddy/WLP (2007, 2014)

Complexity and Variation

Key Characteristic of Transfer

- The more complexities or variables the task contains, the more it demonstrates transfer.
- Thoughtful use of a repertoire as opposed to just cued, fill-in, memorized or rote responses.



Eddy/WLP (2009)

Activity: START with the End in Mind Turnaround for Transfer

- Take a task you already have and turn around

Key Characteristics for Transfer

- Go beyond self and own needs
- Move away from obvious in text
- Complexity and variation
- Solve problem, create a product of use
- Value beyond the classroom
- Source
- Task
- Audience
- Role
- Transfer

Eddy/WLP (2007, 2014)

Interpretive Task Travel

Using the different travel brochures and websites from various towns and cities in _____, categorize on your chart which towns or cities are the best places to visit for the following:

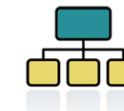
- Music
- Historic Sites
- Easy transportation
- Special Events
- Places great for families
- Shopping
- Low cost or free places to go
- Art or local crafts



Eddy/WLP (2007)

Interpersonal Task Travel

- Using the chart, tell your partner the towns or cities you would like or not like to visit, based on the information from the categories.



Eddy/WLP (2007)

START with the End in Mind Turnaround to Transfer

Source: Authentic Material you will use for your task.

Task: The problem the student will solve or product to create

Audience: Who will receive it

Role: The role in real life

Transfer: Characteristics of Transfer

- Source
- Task
- Audience
- Role
- Transfer

Eddy/WLP (2007, 2014)

Turnarounds for Transfer

- Theme: Travel
- Objective: To know the tourist sites in _____.
- Task: Matching column to test locations of tourist sites

Turnaround:

- Where people choose to travel depends a lot on their interests and needs.
- How do we choose where we want and need to go?

Eddy/WLP (2007)

Presentational Task Turnaround for Transfer

- You are a travel agent specializing in travel to _____. Your clients are all different. Create an itinerary suited for each group, keeping in mind the possible interests and needs of the client.

1. A family of 5 with young children.
2. A person who is a history buff.
3. Three students with a limited budget.
4. Grandparents who love small towns, local crafts, and music.



Eddy/WLP (2007)

ADVANCING STUDENT PROFICIENCY

thing relevant and culturally appropriate. In Turnarounds to Transfer, teachers design a collection of tasks toward the summative performance goal but go beyond the Communicative mode criteria: they must assess for transfer.

Transfer design criteria must include a complexity or variation that make learners engage critical thinking skills and call upon a repertoire of knowledge and skills. Learners also must move beyond themselves or immediate interests to solve the problem or create a product (Gardner, 1983/1993) that has value beyond the classroom with someone else's needs in mind. The task should move learners away from finding answers directly in the text, rather to use inference or create their own questions for an interpretive task. The more complexities or variables the task contains, the more it demonstrates transfer and moves students toward the summative performance goal. Drills and predictable prompts alone cannot do this no matter how often they are practiced; thus, they are the paradigm that wastes time.

To design for transfer, **START** with the end in mind: **Source**: find the authentic material you will use for your task, material made by and for the speakers of that language; **Task**: design the problem to solve or the product needed; **Audience**: who will receive it; **Role**: a role in real world; **Transfer**: *Incorporate the Criteria for Transfer*. (Eddy, 2014)

When designing new tasks in the three modes, always assess for transfer, particularly in the presentational mode. Teachers can also turnaround a tired, textbook task or give an

Turnarounds for Transfer (Eddy 2006)	
START with the End in Mind	Transfer Tips
Source	• Move away from text
Task	• Give students a role and audience
Audience	• Complexity and variation
Role	• Solve problem, create a product of use to someone else
Transfer	• Value beyond the classroom

“upgrade” to a task they designed that does not quite transfer on its own. Below is a typical textbook example. This task does not move students toward transfer and is not indicative of the thinking skills required for flexible language use:

Objective: To know the tourist sites in X.

Drill Task: Matching column to test locations of tourist sites

Below is a Turnaround for Transfer sample IPA requiring students to acknowledge and accept complexities and variables and plan to adjust accordingly. Also note the Enduring Understanding for the program theme of Travel.

Where people choose to travel depends a lot on their interests and needs.

Interpretive Mode Task: Using the different travel brochures and websites from various towns and cities in X, categorize on your chart which towns or cities are the best places to visit for the following: Music, Historic Sites, Transportation, Special Events, Family Fun, Shopping, Low Cost or Free Places to Go, Arts or Local Crafts.

Interpersonal Mode Task: Using the chart, tell your partner the towns or cities you would like or not like to visit, based on the information from the categories.

Presentational Mode Task: You are a travel agent specializing in travel to X. Your clients are all different. Create an itinerary suited for each group, keeping in mind the possible interests and needs of the client:

1. A family of five with young children,
2. A businessperson who is a history buff,
3. Three college students with a limited budget,
4. Grandparents who love small towns, local crafts, and music.

The following are examples of tasks that appear performance based but lack transfer criteria:

After reading some itineraries, share your travel plans with a partner.

This task doesn't move beyond simply reciting the travel plans. There is no exchange,

negotiation, or consensus. Consider this Turnaround: You have limited time on your trip. Come to agreement with your friend about how to balance the “must see's” (museums, monuments) with the “must do's” (music, events, adventures) during your visit.

Students read authentic menus and answer questions about the restaurant.

This task falls flat because students have not shown they can do anything relevant with the information. Consider this Turnaround:

Better—Near Transfer: Students read menus or hear menu options and write their choices based on a budget.

Best—Far Transfer: Students read several authentic menus and identify which dishes would be appropriate for different people based on likes/dislikes and special dietary needs: Vegetarian, vegan, no pork, dairy-free, low-carb, etc. (Eddy, 2014v2)

It is important to accompany transfer tasks with other learner supports, such as Can-Do statements (NCSSFL/ACTFL 2013) which the teacher derives from the performance assessments and transfer tasks. These coax the learner to shift their mindset to what they can do rather than a self-limiting mission of repeating mechanized forms. They help the learner to self-assess and adjust. Remind them of the summative performance goal at the end of the unit or course, so that they know every formative task you do moves them closer to transfer. Provide a variety of materials and variations on a task.

Transfer asks the learner to use judgment and strategies on what and how to use a repertoire of knowledge and skills. Students will realize that the call to use prior knowledge can have many faces and flexibility is required to tap reserves for use in any context. Students will understand that transfer is the goal of learning and the key to becoming a flexible, self-directed, lifelong language learner.

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by Peggy Boyles

As I was leaving an elementary Spanish classroom, an excited little girl named Emily bounded up to me and said, “Do you want to know what I can do in Spanish?” Before I could answer, she announced, “I can tell you about things I like to do after school.” Without skipping a beat, she told me, “Me gusta ir a la biblioteca para sacar nuevos libros y me encanta ver ‘Wizards of Waverly Place’ en la tele con mis amigas.” (I like to get new books from the library and I love to watch ‘Wizards of Waverly Place’ on TV with my friends.) The student had a clear understanding of what she should be able to do and was proud when she knew she could do it.

Emily's teacher beamed but later confided that a few years ago most of her students would only express themselves in words or phrases.

So what had changed in that teacher's classroom? The teacher reported that she used to focus on teaching students vocabulary and was thrilled when they could recite numbers from 1-100 or could list at least 10 food words.

However, the difference in her instruction now is her deliberate attention to the identified proficiency targets in her district's new curriculum and to the intentional use of strategies she now uses in her classroom to move her students towards the next sub-level of proficiency. Equally importantly to setting district proficiency targets, both students and teachers now have measureable evidence that progress is being made. Emily was tracking her progress with her personalized “can-do” statements and the teacher was measuring progress with formative assessments along the way.

The key to advancing student proficiency

throughout an articulated World Language program is to establish proficiency targets for each level of instruction and to create instructional units that intentionally provide pathways to meet proficiency goals. The 2012 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners can serve as the guiding principle for the development of communicative, proficiency-oriented curricula and assessment.

The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements can give teachers even more specific support when planning units throughout the year as students advance in their proficiency in all modes of communication. For example, teachers can clearly see the type of questions that are most representative of a particular proficiency sub-level. Whereas a Novice-Low student will be able to respond to yes/no questions or either/or questions, a Novice-High will be able to ask for and give simple directions.

By paying careful attention to the characteristics of each proficiency sub-level, teachers quickly realize that it is their responsibility to ask the right questions and to develop appropriate activities that advance their students to the next proficiency sub-level. For example, Emily's teacher is aware that to advance her students from Novice-Mid to Novice-High proficiency she needs to push her students with questions that elicit responses beyond one-word answers and phrases. She will not just ask students questions that require a list of single words or phrases, but rather she will pose questions that begin to push students to take charge of the conversation with more extended answers for a more interactive conversation. For example, Emily did not simply list words

or phrases such as “ver la tele” or “ir a la biblioteca” when telling me what she liked to do after school. She was beginning to put together simple sentences by combining words and phrases that she already knew to give me a more personalized account of what she likes to do.

Teachers now have the tools to plot a steady course to advance their students' proficiency through the resources provided by ACTFL and NNELL. Through teachers' collaborative planning and purposeful activity and assessment design, students will not only advance in their proficiency, but they will be more attuned to their ability to use language in real-life settings than to merely get a particular letter-grade for their course.

Peggy Boyles During her foreign language career of more than 35 years, Peggy Boyles has taught elementary, secondary and university students and has served as a K-12 district curriculum supervisor in World Languages. She served as a national consultant for Utah's Secondary Dual Language Immersion program. Peggy is currently the President of Peggy Boyles Consulting, a company providing assistance to schools, universities and other organizations of foreign language education in the areas of curriculum, assessment, professional development and program evaluation. She is a frequent presenter at national and regional conferences. Peggy is the 2004 recipient of the ACTFL Florence Steiner Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Education and is a past president of the National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Language.

