

Effective Instruction in multi-level classes using material from CBC Radio

REALize Conference

January 24th 2014

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Acknowledgements:

Marian Rossiter, University of Alberta

TCDSB – Sharon Rajabi & Anne Marie Kaskens

Moving Professional Learning to the Classroom: An Instructor Handbook (2013) tutela.ca

CBC Edmonton: Jessica Chan, Gillian Rutherford and Don Bell

NorQuest College LINC RDP

Government of Alberta Jobs, Skills and Labour



Outline

- What is a multilevel class?
- What can an instructor do?
- Differentiated instruction
 - CBC Radio materials
- Bias Tasks
- Tiered Tasks

What do we mean by MLC?

What are the variables?

- Language proficiency level
- Previous experience with education
- Cultural expectations for the classroom
- Individual differences, age, motivation



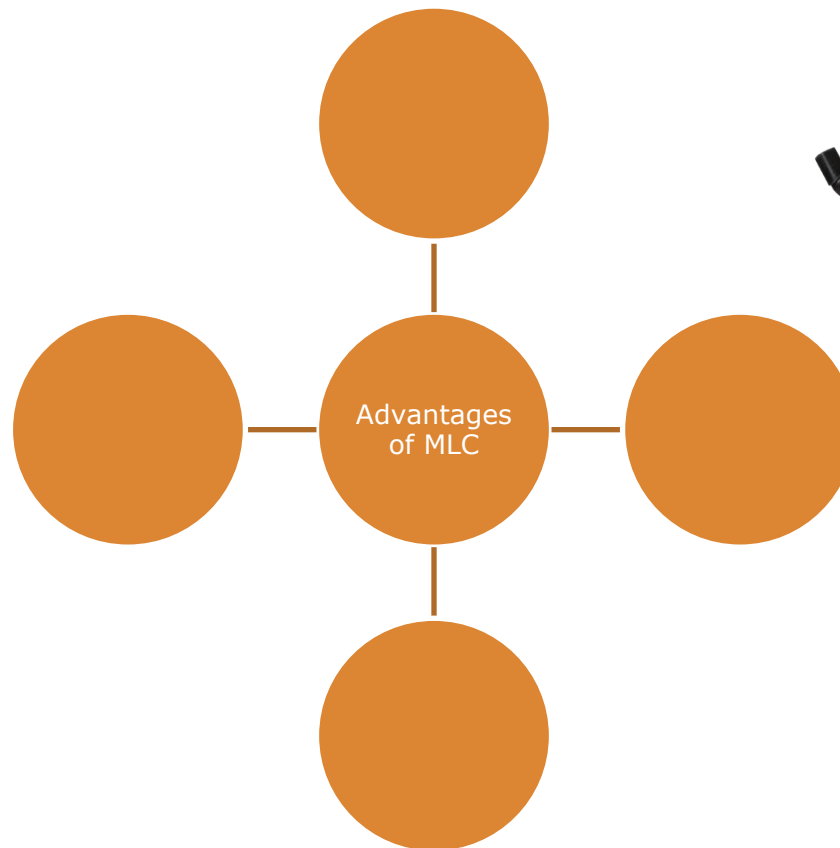
Today's focus:

Language proficiency level

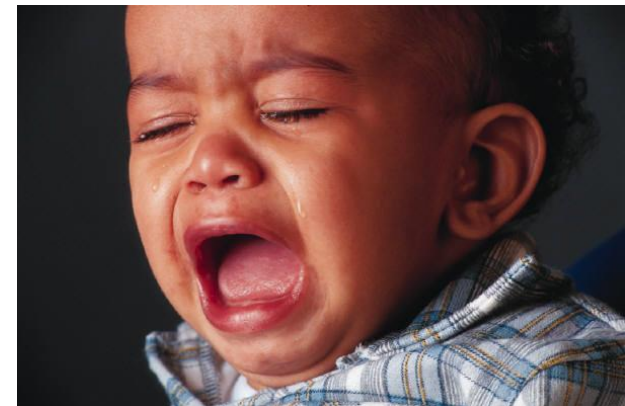
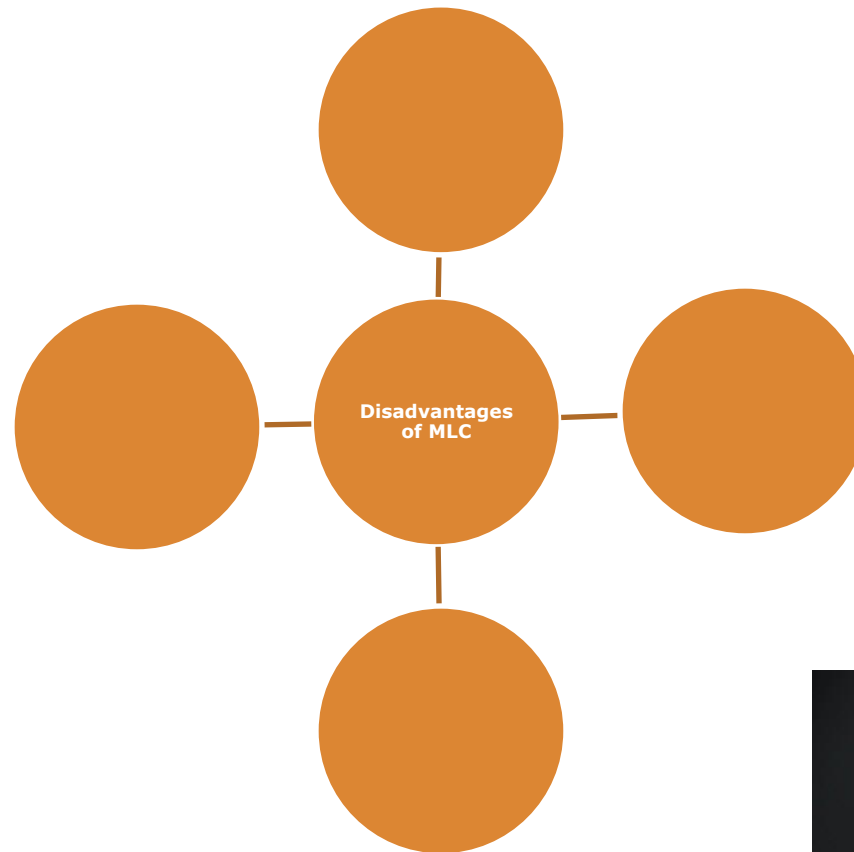


The upside of MLC

Yes – there can be upsides to this challenging situation!



Multi-Level Classes - the downside





Multi-Level Classes

- **Instructor's role in MLC**
 - **Responding to all students**
 - **Feedback**
 - **Motivation**
 - **Interaction**
 - **Planning for success**
 - **Being inclusive**
 - **Flexible groupings**

Strategies for instructing multi-level classes*

- **Differentiated teaching (Skehan)**
- **Bias Tasks (Bowler & Parminter)**
- **Tiered Tasks (Bowler & Parminter)**
- **Grading Tasks (Lynch)**

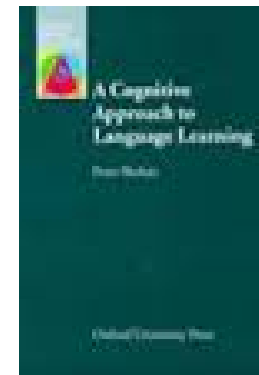
*Rossiter, M. & Abbott, M. (2008) *Planning for and Instructing Multi level Classes Using the CLBs*. Retrieved from ATESL Resource Database, February 22, 2011

Differentiated instruction*

The difficulty of tasks for language learners can be analyzed and modified by considering the following:

- **Linguistic complexity**
- **Cognitive complexity**
- **Communicative stress**

(*Skehan, 1998)



Linguistic complexity:

The difficulty of language used to:

- **Explain the task**
- **Complete the task**
- **Support the task**

- **Example task**
- **Learners complete a medical form**
 - **A questionnaire that asks for name, address, phone number, emergency contact**
 - **A questionnaire that asks for personal information, and previous medical history**

(*Skehan, 1998)

Cognitive complexity:

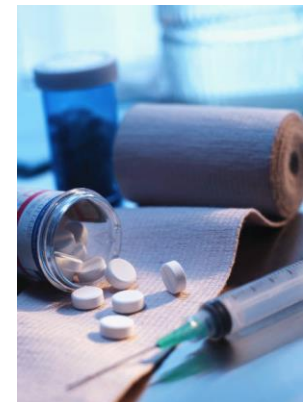
Instructors can work with:

- **The familiarity of the task**
- **Cognitive processing demands**

Example task: Learners role play a discussion with a nurse about an illness

- **Learners list what they have eaten in the last 24 hours**
- **Describe symptoms of a food allergy**

(*Skehan, 1998)



Communicative Stress:

Instructors can adapt:

- **Time limits & pressure**
- **Length and type of responses required**
- **Number of participants**



Example task – Identifying the dangers of the Internet for children:

- **Based on a reading, complete a table on the dangers of the Internet**
- **Based on a reading, give a mini-presentation on the Dangers of the Internet**

(*Skehan, 1998)

Listening with authentic materials

- Listening has been described as the 'Cinderella skill'
- Particularly challenging in a MLC – R/W are much easier to individualize to the range of learner levels
- Authentic .v. abridged
- Focus today s on listening but strategies and approaches apply to all skills

Learning English with CBC

<http://cbc.ca/edmonton/learning-english>

<http://cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english>



CBC

Linguistic complexity:

The difficulty of language

- **Example task**

Easier	More difficult
Vocabulary explanations for 8 words	Vocabulary explanations for 3 words
Questions = True/False	Questions = Short answer

(*Skehan, 1998)

Linguistic complexity:

The difficulty of language

- **Australian wildfires**
- **January 11**

Words and Definitions
wildfires – fires in the wild that are difficult to control or put out.
on record – files or documents kept about the history of events
relief – to remove or decrease difficulty or pain
risk – serious chance or possibility of a bad thing happening
expected – believe will happen

Linguistic complexity:

The difficulty of language

- **Australian wildfires**
- **January 11**



1. ____ Australia has been having record high temperatures this summer.
2. ____ On Wednesday the temperature cooled.
3. ____ The cool temperatures increase the risk of wildfires.
4. ____ The hottest day on record in Australia was 33.4 degrees Celsius.
5. ____ Already this year Australia has had 4 out of 10 of its hottest days on record.
6. ____ Firefighters are fighting around 200 fires in the north east of Australia.
7. ____ Four years ago fires killed 173 people and destroyed more than 2,000 homes.

[Jan11 Australian Wildfire](#)

Cognitive complexity:

Cognitive processing demands

- **Horsemeat in burgers**
- **February 15th**



From a list of countries/nationalities provided select which ones are mentioned in the audio

Learners list all of the countries/nationalities named in the audio

Learners list all of the countries/nationalities named in the audio & then put them in order of most important to the story to least

[Feb 15 Horsemeat](#)

Communicative Stress:

Length and type of responses required

Canadian dies on Everest

May 24th



Easier	More difficult
Answer short answer questions about the audio	Explain three things that could have contributed to this accident

(*Skehan, 1998)

[May24 Everest](#)





Bias task and tiered task strategies*

Bias tasks: require varying level of learner responses

Tiered tasks: provide varying levels of support to learners' responses

*Bowler, B., & Parminter, S. (2002).

Bias tasks - 1

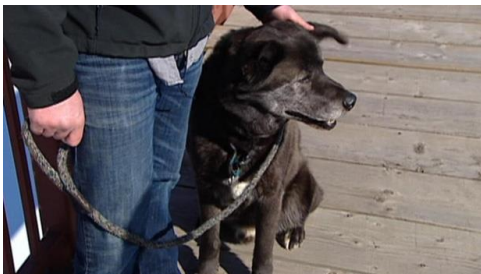
- Question Combinations:
- In **Task A**, learners with **lower proficiency** answer questions about an audio
- In **Task B**, learners with **higher proficiency** formulate questions for answers provided by the instructor
- The tasks are complementary, so when they have finished, learners can pair up (AB) with a learner from the other group for peer feedback. This type of feedback is very motivating for less proficient learners.



Bias tasks - 1

April 05/Man and dog are heroes

1. How many girls were saved from the river? Two
2. Who saved them? A man and his dog
3. What was the dog's name? Rocky
4. How long did the struggle last? 10 minutes
5. What reward did the dog get? A bone



[April 5 Man and dog](#)

Bias tasks - 2

- To prepare this activity, make 2 copies of a listening text. Label them A and B.
- On **copy A**, blank out...nouns
- Building skills at listening for the main idea and supporting catching the gist
- On **copy B**, blank outgrammatical feature – articles
- Building grammatical understanding through noticing how native speakers use the target item
- Copy and distribute to the appropriate groups. When learners have completed the listening activity, have them pair up (AB) to provide feedback to each other.

Note: This can also be done with 3 groups, varying demands. Because the gaps are in different places, differentiation is not necessarily obvious to the learners.

Biased tasks: Listening 2

- **Nov 29/Selfie = word of the year**



- **Version A**

SELFIE, the popular _____ used to describe a _____ taken of yourself, usually with a _____, is the word of the year says the Oxford Dictionary. Research from the famous _____ says usage of the word 'selfie' has increased by an incredible 17,000 % in the past _____. One of the most famous selfies was taken by Pope Francis posing with teenagers at the Vatican earlier this year. The picture went viral as it was shared many times on _____.



[Nov 29 Selfie](#)

Biased tasks: Listening 2

- **Version B**

SELFIE, the popular word used to describe _____ picture taken of yourself, usually with _____ smartphone, is _____ word of _____ year says the Oxford Dictionary. Research from _____ famous dictionary says usage of _____ word 'selfie' has increased by _____ incredible 17,000 % in _____ past year. One of _____ most famous selfies was taken by Pope Francis posing with teenagers at _____ Vatican earlier this year. _____ picture went viral as it was shared many times on Twitter.

Note: This can also be done with 3 groups, varying demands. Because the gaps are in different places, differentiation is not necessarily obvious to the learners.

Tiered Tasks - 1

- For the following task, all of the learners will be provided with the same audio:
- October 11th Migrants drown trying to reach Lampedusa
- Sequencing
- [Oct 11 Lampedusa](#)



Tiered Tasks – 1 Easiest

When the flames spread, the passengers moved to one side of the boat.	
The rickety fishing boat was on its way to the Italian island of Lapedusa	
The boat capsized.	
The boat began to take on water.	
500 African migrants left Africa on a smuggler's boat looking for a better life in Europe.	1
Someone on the boat started a fire to get the attention of passing ships.	
The boat sank and more than 300 people died.	
Only 155 people survived this tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea.	

Tiered Tasks – 1 More difficult

500 African migrants left Africa on a smuggler's boat looking for a better life in Europe.

The rickety fishing boat was on its way to the Italian island of Lapedusa.

When the flames spread, the passengers moved to one side of the boat.

The boat sank and more than _____ people died.

Only _____ people survived this tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea.



Tiered Tasks – 1 Most difficult

500 African migrants left Africa _____	
The rickety fishing boat was _____	
The boat _____ and more than _____ people died.	
Only _____ people survived this tragedy in the _____ Sea.	



How does the CLB framework support an instructor with a multi level class?



Canadian Language Benchmarks
Can Do Statements



Canada

How does the CLB framework support an instructor with a multi level class?

The frameworks suggested in this presentation are ideally suited to a CLB-based classroom.

An approach that allows for differentiated outcomes in task completion is well-supported by the CLB framework, which describes specific conditions “under which a learner can demonstrate competence in performing a task (including factors such as time constraints, length of task/text, assistance given); ... listed in the Profile of Proficiency for each CLB level” (p. x).



How does the CLB framework support an instructor with a multi level class?

Indicators of ability appear under each competency statement, and provide examples of behaviours and skills a learner demonstrates when proficient in a CLB competency.

This allows an instructor to design one core task for a multilevel class while planning for a range of outcomes for different levels of proficiency within that class.

How does the CLB framework support an instructor with a multi level class?

CLB sample indicators of ability, then, can provide instructors with support as they tier the language required to complete tasks in response to a text.

An instructor is well-supported by these CLB sample indicators of proficiency to deliver CLB-based programming in a multilevel setting.

How does the CLB framework support an instructor with a multi level class?

- Listening – IV: Comprehending information
 - **CLB 3** Gets the gist. Identifies factual details, key words and expressions as required.
 - **CLB 4** Gets the gist. Identifies factual details, some implied meanings, key words and expressions as required.
 - **CLB 5** Gets the gist. Identifies key words and phrases. Identifies factual details and some implied meanings. Identifies facts from opinions.



Questions??

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