Beyond the Four Macro-Skills in Second/Foreign Language Education: Promoting Thinking Skills and Creativity through Language Arts

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Abstract
Since the revival of language arts (or, somewhat synonymously, literature) in the foreign language classroom circa the late 1980s, there has been increasing attention, scholarly discussion and research on this topic. A number of scholars and teachers have advocated the use of language arts for multifarious reasons among which the promotion of creativity and thinking skills are particularly pertinent and imperative to the present epoch of globalization, twenty-first century skills, and whole-person development. In this conference presentation, I first discuss how the four macro-skills in second/foreign language education, namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening, are insufficient in equipping learners of this day and age. I then expound on how language arts can be capitalized on in the second/foreign language classroom to facilitate learners’ development in cognitive dimensions, which are not only complementary to the four language skills, but also vital in a holistic education.