

## WL: Data Practices

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### 8.1 Collecting Data in World Language Courses

Data can inform all parts of your teaching. It can help students see their own progress and areas that need improvement but it can also help you, as a teacher, understand what specific students need and where knowledge gaps can exist. It can provide information both students and teachers can use in setting and evaluating goals. Technology has greatly expanded the way data can be recorded, collected, organized, and used in a timely and efficient way. Because of technology, teachers can easily and quickly collect and use data to change and enhance their pedagogy, group students, plan remedial and extended activities for students who need it, and target specific needs of individuals, groups, and the whole class. In the following video Stephanie Pryce shares how she uses data to inform her blended practices.

## Using Data to Inform Practice–Stephanie Pryce (3:54)



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In order for data to be helpful, you have to organize it in a meaningful way. You may want to use subjective and objective data, observations, performance criteria, and areas of a rubric aligned with a certain learning objective.

In the video below, German teacher Herr Van Orden offers a few ways in which he collects data to better guide the instruction of his students. As you watch, ask yourself if any of these methods sound familiar and are something you might have tried or be willing to try in your own classroom.

## How I Collect Data—Stephen Van Orden (1:53)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Did these suggestions spark any new ideas? Or, were you least able to begin considering how simple it is to collect data on your students that can enrich your blended World Language teaching?

As you continue to consider these points, here are some additional examples of how we can collect data in the World Language classroom:

Table 1

### Collecting Data—Some Ideas

Desired Data	Ways to Gather the Data Using Technology
Students' personal characteristics	<p>These are teacher-made resources that help you get to know your students. You might use a Google Form survey to have students answer questions about their learning preferences (alone, in groups, reading, watching, writing), their best times of day for studying, hobbies, pastimes, their perceptions of their strengths and weakness in the subject area, what they want from the class, what they are nervous about in the class, types of assessments and activities they prefer, etc. It is also important to ask about the students themselves, to get a better understanding of who they are as a person.</p> <p>Notice and take notes on students' participation, interest in reading materials, friends, attention, outside interests, interaction with others, clues about home life, etc. In a world language setting, in particular, this information can be used to make cultural connections between what students are familiar with and the new cultures they are studying.</p> <p>Training/resources needed to obtain/access data: How to create a Google Form and find the results. A system for compiling observations.</p>

Desired Data	Ways to Gather the Data Using Technology
Mastery data	<p>This data may be in your LMS or an outside mastery tracker that you create. It may include data from activities and assessments. This data can include a student's overall comprehension of the target language, fluency, vocabulary, decoding, sentence construction, reasoning skills, application of grammar, punctuation, spelling conventions, writing composition abilities, etc.</p> <p>Training/resources needed to obtain/access data: Training in using the grade book or other grade tracker.</p>
Goals and progress towards goals	<p>You can keep track of goals and the progress students are making in spreadsheet or goal sheet you create.</p> <p>Training/resources needed to obtain/access data: Training in excel or google sheets.</p>
Collaboration skills	<p>You can collect data on how well students are developing the ability to collaborate through student self-reflections on the process of collaboration and their contributions, your own observations, working with students on a shared document so you can see the contributions of each student, and reports from the team members.</p> <p>Training/resources needed to obtain/access data: A system for compiling observations.</p>
Help-seeking strategies	<p>Observe how your students seek help and record what you see. Do individual students seek help online, from other students, from you? Are they afraid to ask for help? Do they seek help when they might figure it out on their own?</p> <p>Training/resources needed to obtain/access data: A system for compiling observations.</p>



### **Blended Teaching Workbook**

In your blended teaching workbook, you have a blank table like the one above. Decide what sources of data you would like to use in your classroom. Fill out the chart based on what data you want to collect. You may have to ask others for ideas on types of technology and what you need to learn to use the technology.



## **8.2 Utilizing Data in World Language Courses**

Tracking data can help WL teachers both improve student learning and their own teaching. Because data can help you know your students' skill levels in a large number of WL objectives, it can help you in creating curriculum, differentiating and personalizing activities and assessments, helping students set goals, and tracking progress. It can also help you see strengths and weaknesses in your curriculum and approach to teaching, allowing you to improve your teaching. As you continue to read through this chapter and watch the accompanying videos, notice how these teachers are using data. Think of ways you could improve your class by collecting and analyzing data.

## Confirming Practice with Data–Daniel McGraw (3:12)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

"How do you know students are learning? Funny you should ask!"

Magister McGraw does make an excellent point here as well, that data can not only inform your teaching, but can, as well, assist administration in understanding student achievement in the world language classroom.

### 8.2.1 Mastery levels in a World Language class

World Language mastery can be difficult to judge, because there are a number of factors to consider when taking into account the mastery of a world language. The most basic factor is usually thought to be the student's ability to communicate successfully in the target language, preferably in an area where they do not have the ability to find another English speaker. However, true World Language mastery goes beyond this; we as World Language teachers want students to not only be able to function at a basic level in the target language, but also to have a deep understanding and appreciation of the cultures from which these languages originate.

This is where both data practices and personalization can help. A close analysis of such things as student writing samples or speaking practice can let you know where students are struggling in terms of their fluency in the target language and how to hone in on these errors to personalize an intervention. For example, a student may be able to effectively communicate in the present tense, but struggles in expressing what happened in the past. Another may be strong in grammar, but they revert to English instead of trying to talk their way around an unknown vocabulary word in the target language. Maybe you notice that the student's replies to questions or writing prompts demonstrate confusion about what is being asked, concluding that the student needs to improve in reading or listening comprehension. Maybe they need help with subject/verb agreement. Using this type of information to help students set measurable goals and create mastery paths can help both you and the student decide what mastery looks like and how to measure it for that student.

Consider the video from Magister McGraw above. He used the data, collected from his district LMS Schoology, to not only demonstrate the alignment of his lessons and student performance with learning objectives, but also to guide the

development of his assignments, including altering due dates to alleviate student anxiety.

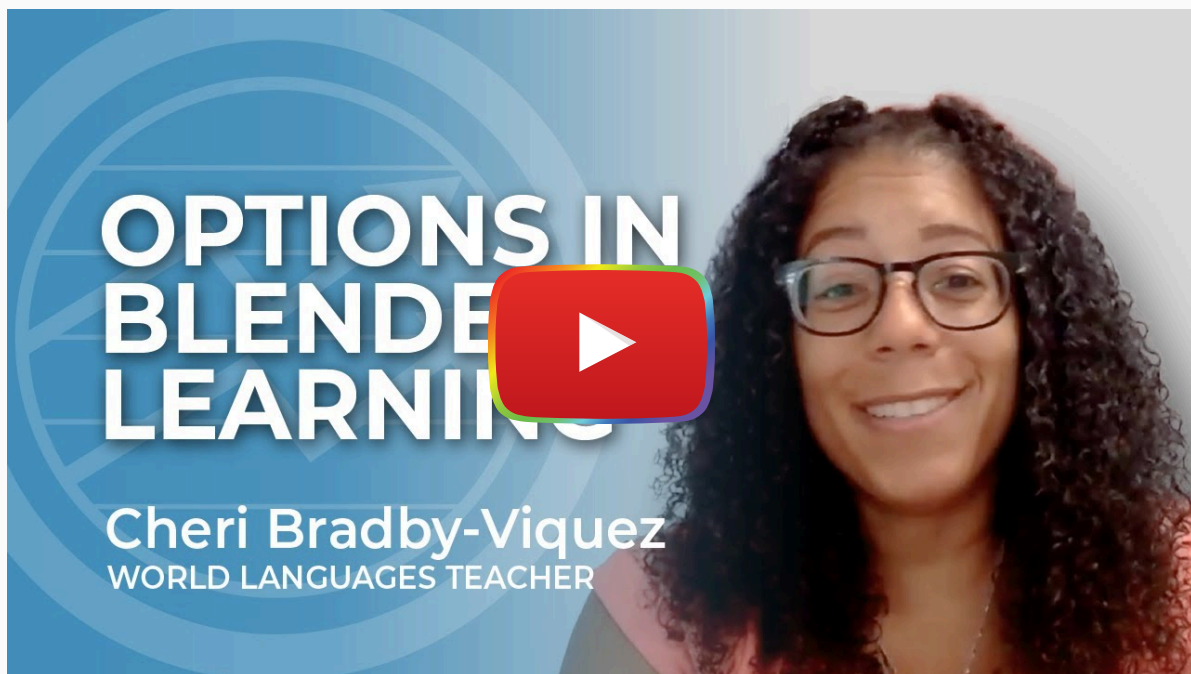
Additionally, some students have similar problems and can be grouped together to learn and offer support. Students who excel can become mentors for those who need help and in turn can have students strong in areas in which they are weak become mentors for them. Such groupwork is especially valuable in the World Language setting as communication is the primary goal, and groupwork can be a first step in creating learning communities and encouraging students to take risks in working with their second, third, or fourth language.

## 8.2.2 Using data to help improve pedagogy

Because data often comes from student performance and student activity, paying careful attention to student data, can help you learn about how to best teach your students and what pedagogies to use. What activities lead to the best results for different learning outcomes? What confuses your students? When are they most engaged? Does their engagement also lead to understanding and mastering learning outcomes?

The video below, from Spanish teacher Señora Bradby-Viquez, outlines questions that she asks herself when exploring student data and shows how this informs her instruction.

### Options for Blended Learning—Cheri Bradby (0:59)



[Watch on YouTube](#)

Reflecting on questions like these can help you evaluate yourself as a teacher and your students as learners. They can lead to insights that can strengthen your pedagogy and help students achieve mastery as well as their goals.

Quizzes are a common source of data. How can you best use quiz data to improve your teaching and student learning? Here are some ideas:



1. Check to see if your LMS lets you align questions to specific learning outcomes. If it does, you can determine in which outcomes students need more help.
2. If many students miss the question, check to see if there is a problem with the question (miskeyed, difficult wording, unclear answers or expectations). If there are no problems with the question, check the standard to which the question is aligned. Pinpoint specific areas of confusion, analyze your instruction, and modify where needed.
3. If most students answer correctly, check to see if the question is too easy. If it isn't, review your teaching strategies for strengths that you might be able to use for similar learning objectives.
4. If just a few students miss the question, you may want to pull those students out in a small group and reteach, remediate, give extra practice, etc.

Teachers use data in all sorts of ways. Here are some examples of ways teachers have used data in a WL classroom. What ideas do their experiences give you?

## Example 1: Using Data to Help Students Get Extra Help

In a world language classroom, especially in more intermediate levels, it can be difficult to determine how much students have retained from previous lessons, as well as their current level of proficiency. Using blended learning practices can help teachers evaluate where their students are and how to best get them additional support, such as tutoring or 1:1 support from their teacher.

For example, there are a number of online language learning sites where teachers can create classroom accounts for students, such as the popular website *Conjuguemos*. Using online tools such as this, a world language teacher can create a classroom account and an account for each student, that, on the teacher's end, allows them to hone in on student problem areas, looking for trends in groups of students as well as in students. This may allow for a French 3 teacher to notice that a few students are struggling with French 2 level verb conjugations, and those students can be identified for additional intervention such as 1:1 classroom help, peer mentoring, or even after school tutoring. Such tools can also be developed by the world language teacher in the district learning management system (LMS), and though this may be a more time intensive option for the teacher, would allow for even more personalization in both the identification of needs as well as interventions to help meet the need.

## Example 2: Using Data to Determine How to Make Questions Better

As noted above, the tools in the LMS can provide a world language teacher with an abundance of data not only in identifying where students need assistance, but also in how assessments can be improved. For example, on a unit test a teacher may discover that a large majority of the students have gotten question #10 incorrect. Examining that question can help you discern if the students don't understand the concept or if the question is confusing. Using the data in the LMS can help you make these determinations quickly and accurately.

## Example 3: Using Data to Answer Questions

Using data, a World Language teacher can ask and find answers to a number of different questions:

- Q: Why did every single student miss this question?
- A: The question included two blanks to be filled instead of one. The students were confused as to how they needed to enter these answers since it used a comma instead of two empty boxes.
- Q: Why did this class understand some concept and another class didn't?
- A: We didn't have time for the online activity in one class. When I went back and did it with that class, their scores improved.

- Q: The data shows that my afternoon class struggles to understand concepts. Why?
- A: This answer can go beyond the data, but research does show that the 'afternoon slump' is a very real phenomenon that has been researched by health professionals for decades. If the data is showing this in your World Language students, the likelihood of their being able to understanding complex grammatical concepts during such a slump is low. Take this time to incorporate movement, and, if possible, use movement that can be culturally relevant. An impromptu dance lesson can go a long way to waking up student brains and teaches them about the culture of the target language.

## Example 4: Using Data to Group Students

LMS and other online data can also be used to group students. As noted in Example 1, an analysis of an activity might demonstrate trends in student performance. You may discover that a small group of students in your German class is struggling with sentence structure. Or, you might find that some of your Latin students are having difficulty with cases. This data might be utilized to group these students to give them extra interventions and/or personalized practice to help them improve in these areas. You also may discover that some students excel in a certain area, and you might be able to pair these students with students that are struggling to help both students better understand the target language.



### Blended Teaching Workbook

Think of one source of data that you are not using but that you could use in your classroom. In your workbook, outline a way to collect that data and ways you can use it.

If you haven't already opened and saved your workbook, you can access it [here](#).

Collecting and using data may feel uncomfortable. You may think you can't do it. But if you think about it, you are collecting data all the time. You are watching your students, reading their papers, interacting with them, listening to them. You are ready to take the next step and find more formal ways to include data in your understanding of your students, their learning patterns and needs, and your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. Data collection can open new ways of seeing.

## Previous Citation(s)

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