The UMass Dartmouth MA & PhD Program in Luso-Afro-Brazilian Studies and Theory

The Department of Portuguese, in collaboration with the Departments of Art History, Educational Leadership, History, Political Science, Sociology/Anthropology, Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, cordially invites you to the MA Thesis Defense

The Role of Strategies in Portuguese Language Learning

by MA candidate Analia Tebaldi
Friday, November 2, 2012, 3:00 PM
LARTS 397D (A&S Dean's Conference Room)

Abstract. Research in the field of second language learning indicates that proper use of language learning strategies leads to the improvement of overall second/foreign language proficiency as well as specific language skills. The goal of this study is to explore the language learning strategies used by students of Portuguese as a foreign language and Portuguese as a heritage language and determine whether there is a difference between the choices of strategies made, respectively, by heritage and foreign language learners. This study fills a gap in the literature on the use of learning strategies by foreign language students by determining what strategies are most commonly used by students of Portuguese. It also tests whether there are statistically significant differences in the choice of learning strategies used by (i) heritage language students and foreign language students, and (ii) by students who consider themselves proficient and non-proficient. This study shows that students of Portuguese make greater use of Social and Metacognitive strategies, average use of Cognitive strategies, and little use of Memory, Compensation and Affective strategies. This research demonstrates that there are differences in the use of strategies according to the level of proficiency in 18 of the 50 strategies of the SILL questionnaire. Finally, this work also provides evidence there are no statistically significant differences in the use of Memory and Affective strategies among students of Portuguese as a foreign language and as heritage language. However, there is evidence that there are differences in the use of some Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social and Compensation strategies among foreign-language and heritage-language students.

Analia Tebaldi holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the State University of Maringá, Brazil. Currently, she is a Portuguese Instructor at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, MA, and a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Portuguese at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

MA Committee
Prof. Gláucia Silva (adviser)
Prof. Anna M. Klobucka
Prof. Victor K. Mendes

Contact: Prof. Gláucia Silva, gsilva@umassd.edu, x8271

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