



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Second Language
Acquisition & Teaching

Graduate Interdisciplinary Program

SLAT COLLOQUIUM SERIES

April 17, 2026

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm AZ time

How Do We Get There from Here?! Our Professional Yellow Brick Road

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Dr. Paul A. García

Emeritus Professor - University of Kansas, University of South Florida

Please register for this event at:

<https://arizona.zoom.us/j/84956919601>

The Zoom link will be sent to you after registration.

If you don't receive the Zoom information by the date of the event, email

GIDP-SLAT@arizona.edu.

This presentation addresses several issues regarding PreK-12 language education practices, beginning with “Who we are, who we are not, and why.” I aim to describe teacher identities and serious practices, while also intertwining the characteristics of student achievement and inclusion by emphasizing “out of textbook” experiences through two strategies paramount to meaningful student language usage - information gap activities and thematic units. In doing so, I consider some of the complexities one faces as a teacher intern or an in-service educator - these in an attempt to challenge the notion that textbook sequentiality is obligatory. The presentation integrates “big picture details” with traditional aspects of language teacher development.



A Charter Member of ACTFL, Dr. Paul A. García is its first (and so far only) Latinx President (2000). He grew up in a New York immigrant family, speaking Spanish and Italian. He began his teaching career in Long Island, NY before enrolling in the doctoral program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Paul's professional journey includes faculty positions in Ohio and Kansas before moving to Kansas City, Missouri. He taught high school German and Spanish, and then served as the first supervisor of languages for his school district. In that capacity, he was responsible for creating, staffing, and developing the curriculum for 8 immersion K-8 language schools, serving 4,000 students.

Paul then joined the faculty at the University of Kansas's School of Education, teaching courses in language teaching methods (WL and ESL), and authoring and directing a major professional development grant for Topeka's ELL teachers. After moving to Florida, he was invited by the University of South Florida to be the interim director of the doctoral program in second language acquisition and instructional technology at USF's College of Education.

Paul is a mentor/editor to former students and continues to write research articles and give presentations at ACTFL's annual convention. His latest publication on diversity-related curriculum appeared in June 2025 in the Routledge Handbook of World Language Instruction. During his career, he has presented over 150 workshops and seminars on topics such as immersion program implementation, curriculum development, and classroom methods. He has served as the President of the Foreign Language Association of Missouri, a Board Member of ACTFL, and numerous professional committees.