Maximizing the Power of Proficiency

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Christina Huhn

2022 Report of the
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Report 2022

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Review and Acceptance Procedures

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2022 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Report Editorial Board

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The editors would like to thank the following professionals for their contributions to the review of the articles in this volume:

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Preface

Maximizing the Power of Proficiency

The 2022 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was held March 3-5, 2022, in a virtual format. The CSCTFL Board opted to continue with a second virtual conference to better support educators from across the region with flexible scheduling and no required travel, to honor the ongoing challenges faced by educators and schools during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The theme, "Maximizing the Power of Proficiency," is an homage to the important work that world language educators do every day. While each educator brings their own unique strengths and insights to the classroom, we also embody the Maximizer strength. According to the Clifton Strengthsfinder definition, a maximizer focuses on strengths to stimulate personal and group excellence and seeks to transform something strong into something superb. Having a can-do spirit and helping learners to focus on the progress they make (instead of on the negatives or their limitations) is an important way to do that. The continued challenges presented by teaching in a pandemic have required us to reconsider what and how we teach and have inspired our profession to place a renewed focus on making our learning environments welcoming and supportive places for all learners. While many educators have experienced personal and professional struggles, the professional development and networking opportunities presented by the conference offered a sense of connection and inspiration. Despite these challenges, our presenters, conference board, exhibitors and attendees stepped up to showcase cutting edge professional learning.

The 2022 conference offered 15 workshops and more than 140 sessions focused on diversity, activities and strategies, languages for specific purposes, curriculum development, assessment, intercultural competence, research, advocacy, and technology. Presentations from six of the 14 state organizations were featured as "Best of" sessions. The Delegate Assembly and Leadership Academy highlighted important elements of diversity, equity and inclusion, diverse voices and how to encourage greater representation of all groups among our educators and our state world language organizations. The CSCTFL Extension workshop featured presenter Celia Chomon Zamora, highlighting best practices for working with heritage language learners.

The 2022 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages again offered opening and closing keynote addresses to bookend the weekend's professional development experiences. The opening keynote, held on Thursday evening this year, was provided by Dr. Kim Potowski, of the University of Illinois. Dr. Potowski is a renowned expert in the field of heritage language education and her address invited attendees to consider a variety of micro- and macro-level strategies for better meeting the needs of heritage language learners, whether they are enrolled in classes that are specific to their learning needs or if they are part of mixed-level classes with non-heritage learners.

The closing keynote was a roundtable discussion featuring two experienced world language educators, Ying Jin (Chinese teacher and 2018 ACTFL Teacher of the Year) and Liz Matchett (Spanish teacher and Executive Director of California Language Teachers' Association). As district, state, and national professional development leaders, they shared

their journey toward using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to shape their language curriculum and to provide context to inspire their learners.

The Central States Conference *Report* 2022, *Maximizing the Power of Proficiency,* calls on educators to use their strengths to maximize language learning and to consider innovative ways to inspire learners on their language proficiency journey, even in challenging circumstances. Thank you to the authors for their work and for supporting language learning for all students.

Stacy Amling
2022 Program Chair

Maximizing the Power of Proficiency

Pamela M. Wesely
University of Iowa

Cassandra Glynn
Concordia College

We want to begin by recognizing that the 2021-2022 academic year has presented numerous challenges at all levels of education, from elementary to secondary to post-secondary education. We have spent this year navigating continued effects from the pandemic that have included significant mental health issues among students, complexity in transitioning from online learning to in person learning, and readjustment to social interaction as we have come back together in classroom spaces. Many of us have been acutely aware of our students' needs as we have made our way through this academic year, focusing more heavily than ever before on social and emotional learning. All of these challenges have led to unprecedented teacher burnout and attrition.

Therefore, the theme of the 2022 CSCTFL Conference, M*aximizing the Power of Proficiency,* is perhaps particularly fitting as many teachers have leveraged the power of proficiency to build relationships and opportunities for learning in the language classroom that can sustain students in the face of this year's challenges. In this volume, the authors have shared a variety of experiences and perspectives on the theme of proficiency, ranging from effective methods of building proficiency to navigating anxiety and other effects of the pandemic as teachers aim to build their students' proficiency. It is with sincere gratitude that we thank the many authors who have contributed to this volume by sharing their research, stories, and ideas, knowing that they have put significant work and thought into their pieces.

We begin the volume with an article by Pete Swanson, Jean-Philippe Peltier, Jean LeLoup, Darin Earnest, and Margaret Malone: "Proficiency Benchmarking in Spanish." In this article, the authors discuss The Language Flagship programs in higher education and the need to assess proficiency-based learning in well-established language programs. Their research study examined proficiency outcomes in first and second levels of Spanish language instruction using the Adaptive Listening Test and Adaptive Reading Test developed by Brigham Young University. The authors also discuss implications for programs, not only in higher education, but also at K-12 levels.

Carol Severino's article, "Writing to Build Vocabulary and Fluency during COVID: A Journal-Based Self-Study," shares a case study of her own experience of taking an online Journalistic Writing course in Spanish during the spring of 2021. The author concentrated on the potential for language growth through written discourse. In the course, Severino completed 15 writing assignments and kept

a journal of her vocabulary and fluency development, as well as her experience in an online Spanish course that had to adapt due to the ongoing pandemic. Severino shares her insight about what teachers can learn from their own language experiences that can be applied to the classroom.

In "Dual Domain: Benefits and Challenges of L2 Hybrid Instruction," an article authored by Elfe Dona, Melissa Doran, and Kirsten Halling, we continue the examination of the online experiences of language learners and teachers. The authors encourage readers to consider what we can learn from online teaching as we make the shift back to in person teaching. The authors posit that a hybrid model of learning may yield positive results in terms of student engagement, proficiency, and retention as it provides some flexibility through online learning while also providing much needed social interaction and hands-on practice in the classroom. Readers are encouraged to consider the benefits of hybrid learning, while also addressing possible challenges that can arise.

The article by Yan Xie and Laura Ziebart, "Transition to Online World Language Class During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Better or Worse?", details post-secondary students' perceptions of their experiences moving online in the emergency brought on by the pandemic. Their study employed a blended quantitative and qualitative survey that was completed by 96 Chinese and Spanish students and revealed fear and anxiety that the students harbored for the online format of their classes. However, due to course factors, the students' anxiety diminished, and they expressed lower anxiety for online classes versus face-to-face classes. The authors identified several reasons for this, and discuss pedagogical implications.

"One Year Later: Feelings of Anxiety in Emergency Remote Language Classes," by Teresa Bell and Julie Damron, provides another perspective on this transition. The authors compare students' questionnaire results at the end of the first Covid-19 semester with questionnaire results one year later as they have continued to take language courses online. The authors conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey to examine students' perceptions of their experiences in online language courses and their levels of anxiety. The authors also provide suggestions for helping students to manage their language learning in both online and face-to-face contexts.

Sean Hill's article, "Two Spanish Credits!? Teacher Attitudes about World Language Graduation Requirements," examines Michigan's high school graduation requirement of two years of world language study. In this article, Hill focuses on the attitudes of non-world language teachers at the high school level, using an abbreviated version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to explore correlations between teachers' attitudes about the language requirement and their own anxiety about language learning. Hill discovered correlation between the teachers' support for the requirement and their previous exposure to world language learning.

In "Maximizing Learning of L2 Adult Learners in Higher Education," by Gabriela Olivares-Cuhat, the author delves into the unique characteristics of adult learners and how teachers can leverage research about adult learners to provide effective learning opportunities in the language classroom. The author aims to

help the reader understand existing research about adult learners in order to better support adults' development of intercultural communicative competence. This article also outlines guidelines for L2 instructional practices that recognize the central role of the teacher in recognizing the unique challenges and strengths of adult learners.

The final article in the volume, "Two Decades of the Standards: Post-secondary Impact," by Christina Huhn, explores the potential connection between *The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (now *World Readiness Standards for Language Learning*) and post-secondary education via the research literature. Huhn references the 96 articles identified by the ACTFL 2011 Standards Impact Survey that address the Standards in post-secondary contexts. She then builds on that work through continued discussion of the research on the Standards in the last decade, exploring how that research suggests the role that the Standards could play in post-secondary language programs.

We hope that you enjoy reading these articles as much as we have, and that you gain new insights into the power of proficiency.

Sincerely,

Pamela M. Wesely and Cassandra Glynn
2022 Report Editors

Proficiency Benchmarking in Spanish

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Challenge statement

The paradigm in world language teaching and learning has shifted, prioritizing proficiency testing and setting benchmarks for language learners. However, many programs either lack the funds, choose not to measure learners' proficiency, or avoid benchmarking student progress through the proficiency ladder. The following empirical research provides results about learners of Spanish and their proficiency in higher education, allowing program faculty to reflect on their own benchmarks.

Abstract

The Language Flagship programs were established at the turn of the century with the goal of creating programs that would move language learners to

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advanced levels of proficiency in a select number of critical languages (Winke & Gass, 2019). Later, the Flagships called for institutions of higher education to create a viable process to assess proficiency learning in high quality, well-established academic language programs. To answer that call, the present study examines outcomes via end of year proficiency testing in Spanish at the first and second levels of Spanish instruction at the United States Air Force Academy using the Adaptive Listening Tests and the Adaptive Reading Tests developed at Brigham Young University. Results indicate differences in gender, years of study of Spanish, and the number of years of Spanish study prior to attending the Academy. Additionally, the results from the present study are compared to Tschirner's (2016) comprehensive analysis of student outcomes in higher education on ACTFL reading and listening tests. The findings have implications for programs in higher education as well as those in K-12 education.

Proficiency Benchmarking in Spanish

What are reasonable expectations of language proficiency for students to attain after a specific learning sequence of language study? This question has challenged the field of language teaching and learning for decades. Since Carroll's (1967) study of language majors at graduation, instructors, students and administrators alike have struggled to establish reasonable expectations, communicate them to students and faculty and attain them in formal learning situations.

Recent focus on the importance of world languages for business, diplomacy and national security underscores the need to develop proficient speakers. In a 2019 report, ACTFL emphasized that 90% of businesses surveyed reported a need for employees with skills in languages other than English; the continued global nature of business suggests that such a need will continue to grow (ACTFL, 2019). At the same time, the recent American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017) report shows that, despite this stated need in business, "the vast majority of American citizens remain monolingual" (p. vii). There is a strong need to set benchmarks for language proficiency and help learners develop this proficiency in many languages. Clearly, it is important to understand what can be and is attained after specific sequences of study. Without such data, students, instructors, administrators and other stakeholders cannot determine individual student and general program success, nor can they know when to intervene to improve programs and when to investigate practices that make some programs more successful than others. In addition, without benchmarks and data from other language programs, stakeholders may set goals that are too high or too low for their own groups. In the current study, the researchers investigated the baseline proficiency of cadets at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in first and second year Spanish.

Literature Review

Carroll's (1967) study represented the first major investigation of student outcomes in modern world languages. While more than 50 years old, the study is still exemplary; it investigated speaking, reading and listening outcomes in five languages (French, Italian, German, Spanish and Russian) from universities across

the United States (U.S.). Carroll (1967) also examined some of the factors that were related to student outcomes, including gender, age, years of previous language study, overseas experience (or study abroad) and current year in university.

Carroll's (1967) study employed the Modern Language Association test and aligned it to the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Scale. At that time, the ILR scale was newly used in government; in addition, the ILR scale was used because the study predated the development of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which are currently used in most academic and business contexts. The study is groundbreaking not only because it examined language outcomes on such a broad scale but also because it employed the relatively new ILR scale in this context. In addition, the use of the ILR scale meant that forthcoming research employing the not-yet-conceived ACTFL Guidelines could relate their results to this study in the future and thus establish benchmarks for university language majors. Carroll found the following outcomes among students studying French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish as a major:

- Average attainment of an ILR 2+ (approximately an ACTFL Advanced-Mid or Advanced-High);
- The following factors correlated with higher levels of proficiency attained
  - Heritage language background
  - Study abroad
  - Elementary school language study
  - Language study at a large institution
- No difference between males and females.

Since Carroll (1967) was published, a few studies have examined student oral proficiency in higher education (e.g., Isbell, Winke, & Gass, 2018) or different factors shown to affect outcomes, especially study abroad (e.g., DeKeyser, 2014; Dewey et al., 2012; Freed, 1995; Hernandez, 2010; Vande Berg et al., 2009). However, there was still limited research focusing on general language proficiency outcomes in higher education world language programs for nearly 50 years. Moreover, the original languages Carroll highlighted are no longer the only focus of world language study in higher education. While Spanish, French, German, Italian and Russian are still in the top 20 languages in higher education, they have been joined and, in some cases, replaced by enrollments in American Sign Language, Japanese, Chinese and Arabic (Looney & Lusin, 2018). Therefore, Carroll's study provided essential but increasingly outdated information for decades as research in outcomes in higher education became more specialized (focusing on specific factors) and less general (examining outcomes *writ large)* for a 50-year period.

This gap was noticed and eventually acted upon. In 2014, the Flagship Initiative (The Language Flagship, 2013), a nationally funded effort to transform the way U.S. students learn languages and build their proficiency in critical languages (e.g., Arabic, Mandarin), released a request for proposals to address this gap. The program provided funding to investigate student outcomes in several languages at three state universities in the U.S. During the three-year grant period, nearly 9,000 university students took one or more language proficiency tests in the areas of reading, listening and speaking in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and

Spanish (Winke & Gass, 2019). Specifically, the results of the studies showed a range of outcomes for student language learners across different institutions, in different levels of courses and with different backgrounds. For example, Isbell et al. (2018), in a study of oral proficiency outcomes, found that four semesters of language study at the university level yielded an outcome of Intermediate-Low to -Mid in Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish among learners at large state universities.

The resulting research from this effort has been remarkable, including dozens of research articles and book chapters as well as an edited volume. At the same time, it merely scratches the surface of research that needs to be conducted, published, disseminated and replicated. As Malone (2019) pointed out, while this work is necessary and important, it is not sufficient to represent the wide array of possible outcomes at different kinds of institutions studying languages under varying conditions. For example, Carroll (1967) documented that students at large institutions outperformed students at small institutions; the Flagship-funded research was conducted at three large, public universities.

Tschirner (2016) published a comprehensive report of student outcomes in higher education on ACTFL reading and listening tests; many of the participants were part of the Flagship study. With more than 6,000 subjects who took these reading and listening tests, Tschirner was able to identify average outcomes after two, three, four, five and six semesters. Over 1,600 subjects took both tests in Spanish, and second semester learners were found to reach about Intermediate-Low in reading and just below Novice-High in listening, while fourth-semester learners reached Intermediate-Mid in reading and almost Intermediate-Low in listening (Tschirner, 2016). Although additional research is needed to determine the outcomes of students in different types of learning environments, Tschirner's data, as well as the outcomes from the Flagship project, provide benchmarks for comparison.

The present study examines the outcomes of participants at USAFA after two or four semesters of Spanish language study. USAFA's students represent one part of the higher education system and are underrepresented in language outcomes research. As frequently highlighted in advocacy materials, world languages benefit many areas of U.S. life, including education, business, security and diplomacy. Obviously, future leaders of the military have great potential to influence security and even diplomacy issues; proficiency in a world language is critical for such populations. Given the dearth of research at military service academies, the present study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What level of proficiency in listening did participants in first-year and second-year Spanish attain?
2. What level of proficiency did first-year participants attain in reading?
3. What were the characteristics of participants who attained the highest and lowest levels of proficiency?
    a. Was there a difference in outcomes based on gender and years of study of Spanish prior to attending USAFA?
    b. How did participants differ at the upper and lower quartiles ofproficiency?
4. How did these results compare to Tschirner's (2016) study of students enrolled in language study?

Methods

Background and Setting

The mission of the Department of Foreign Languages and International Programs (DFFL) at USAFA is to produce culturally attuned and linguistically capable Airmen. Its graduates deploy worldwide in support of the U.S. strategic interests and engagements. Simply stating that USAFA is producing culturally and linguistically enabled officers, however, is insufficient. There is a need to continually assess and ensure that USAFA's programs are meeting the needs of the United States Air Force.

Faculty in DFFL teach eight languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Prior to 2020, faculty members in each language developed a set of outcomes aligned with a modified set of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015)—Communication, Cultures, Connections, and Careers, which replaced Comparisons and Communities. Faculty in each language community developed and established their own desired learning outcomes tied to these standards. At the end of a typical eight-semester program, or approximately 400 hours of instruction, DFFL administered the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)—the Department of Defense standard test for all linguists across all branches of the armed forces. Throughout the years, the DLPT served as the main metric in assessing cadets' second language proficiency although it only assesses ability in the receptive skills (i.e. listening and reading).

However, at USAFA, two issues emerged regarding the assessment of cadets' second language abilities. First, it was difficult to compare stated goals with progress across all eight languages. Each language developed its own set of outcomes based on DFFL's modified national standards goal areas of the 4Cs. Starting in the 2020-2021 academic year, DFFL's eight language communities developed Language Roadmaps, which were aligned with the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (ACTFL, 2012) and the *NCSSFL- ACTFL Can-Do Statements* (ACTFL, 2017). This alignment was used to set benchmarks for cadets at each language level. The alignment allowed DFFL faculty to set a foundation for comparison across its eight programs by allowing language communities to observe how one program might aim for Novice-High after 160 hours of instruction while another might set its sights on Intermediate-Low. Fundamentally, it aligned DFFL with established national standards while allowing various languages programs to compare, gain insight, and collaborate based on a mutually accepted foundation.

The second issue is that the DLPT did not provide faculty the feedback and gradation necessary to fine-tune DFFL programs. Because the DLPT was not aligned with the World-Readiness Standards, the faculty did not believe it could be used as a reliable measure for the each of the language community's stated objectives. The first step to bridging this gap was adopting Brigham Young University's Adaptive Reading Test and Adaptive Listening Test. These assessments are both clearly tied to *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (2012). The use of these tests allowed DFFL to assess all language programs and provide individual students

targeted feedback based on their results. Starting with the 2021-2022 academic year, DFFL randomly tested a subset of cadets across all levels of all eight programs to ensure that each language community was meeting its clearly defined goals as articulated in their language roadmap.

Although cadets cannot major in a language, language minors or a degree in foreign area studies (FAS) are commonplace. FAS majors can choose a language, a region, and a specific area of academic focus (e.g., Spanish, Latin America, and Political Science). Approximately 60 cadets graduate annually with a minor in Spanish. All first-year cadets are required to study a language during their initial year at USAFA. All cadets take the DFFL language placement test during basic training; they can test out of the requirement with Advanced Placement exam scores or via the placement test. Based on the results, they can validate one semester or the full year; they can also test into a higher level. Cadets who place into higher levels include those with a substantial school-based or heritage language background. Therefore, these cadets show a wide range of language backgrounds, not dissimilar to their counterparts at more traditional institutions of higher education. With respect to the present study, cadets in their first year at USAFA took both the Adaptive Reading and Adaptive Listening Tests created by Brigham Young University while cadets in the second level of Spanish took only the Adaptive Listening Test due to the testing budget. DFFL's proficiency expectation (i.e. benchmark) for cadets finishing their first year of Spanish is Novice-Mid to Novice-High and Intermediate-Low for those completing their second year of Spanish.

Participants

Seventy-five students in first-year Spanish (Spanish 132) and second-year Spanish (Spanish 222) participated in this study. The mean age of participants in the first year of Spanish (n=33), was 18.88 (SD=0.33). Females (82%) outnumbered males, and the majority of the participants reported being either Caucasian (67%) or Latinx (33%). All participants reported that they learned most and/or all of their Spanish (M=2.5 years of study) through the U.S. educational system prior to matriculating at USAFA, while only two participants reported that some members of their family spoke Spanish at home and/or with extended family on a regular basis. The participants reported that the last Spanish class they took, on average, was two years prior to enrolling at USAFA. No participants reported having dual enrollment (college) credit for Spanish.

For participants in the second year of Spanish study (n=42), the mean age was 19.95 (SD=1.14). The number of females was equal to the number of males (50%), and the majority of the participants reported being Caucasian (69%) or Latinx (29%). Two percent of the sample reported being African American. Like the first-year Spanish group, most reported having learned most and/or all of their Spanish (M=2.5 years of study) through the U.S. educational system prior to coming to USAFA. Again, none of the participants reported having dual enrollment credit for Spanish. The cadets in the second year of Spanish were a mix of first-year cadets who had tested into the second year of Spanish and second year cadets who had passed through the first year of Spanish at USAFA.

Procedures

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval for human subjects testing in April 2021, two DFFL Spanish professors volunteered four of their classes to participate in a baseline study of cadet proficiency in Spanish. Two of the classes were ending their first year of Spanish study at USAFA, and the other two classes were about to complete their second year of Spanish study. The Director of the DFFL Language Lab administered the listening and reading proficiency tests in the departments' language lab in late April 2021. Results from the tests were sent electronically and securely to the DFFL Director of Assessment, who forwarded the results to the two Spanish professors. Data collection ended in early May 2021 and data were analyzed using *SPSS 18*.

Instruments: Adaptive Reading Test and Adaptive Listening Test

The Adaptive Reading Test and Adaptive Listening Tests are computer adaptive, criterion-referenced tests of an individual's reading and listening proficiency, respectively. Because they are adaptive, the number of items to which individual test takers respond will vary, depending on performance. Test items are drawn from item pools at specified proficiency levels. Results can be used for multiple purposes including placement of higher education students in an appropriate course, measuring proficiency or learning gains (pre and post-tests), guiding instruction, or informing program evaluation. Results from these two assessments are reported according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior (for specified tests) language abilities and are currently available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish (ACTFL, 2012). Note that they are not official ACTFL tests.

In order to develop these tests, language subject matter experts and assessment professionals aligned the texts, passages, and items with the criteria described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012). Item development began with the selection of authentic texts and passages from real-world sources across a range of different fields. The item writing process included training item writers to create items that were aligned with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for each text or passage. Upon being developed, "the test development team reviewed the items for alignment with the targeted proficiency level and trial with a small representative sample of examinees" (Clifford & Cox, 2013, p. 52). Poorly functioning items were either revised and retested or removed altogether from the item development pool. The final step in the process was empirical testing of the items to determine whether their statistical difficulties clustered by levels on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (e.g., Intermediate-Mid, Advanced-Low). For the empirical testing portion of the development of the tests, the authors calculated Rasch person reliability coefficients for the tests and the items because it differentiates between people with higher abilities compared to people with lower abilities (Schumacker, 2016).

The Adaptive Reading Test includes up to 57 items: a maximum of 24 at the Intermediate level and a maximum 33 at the Advanced level. The authors reported a 0.80 Rasch person reliability coefficient, indicating a relatively high level of internal consistency. Item reliability is very high (0.98), which indicates that the items function at distinctively separate levels of difficulty. The developers of the test reported that they conducted an independent samples *t-test* between the Intermediate and Advanced items and determined that the two groups of items indeed differed in terms of item difficulty (Clifford & Cox, 2013).

The Adaptive Listening Test includes up to 74 items: a maximum of 35 at the Intermediate level and a maximum of 39 at the Advanced level. Much like the Reading Proficiency Test, a 0.85 Rasch person reliability coefficient was reported, again indicating a relatively high level of internal consistency. Item reliability measures are strong (0. 97), signifying that the items function at distinctively separate levels of difficulty. An independent samples *t-test* between the Intermediate and Advanced items and revealed that the two groups of items differed in terms of item difficulty (Cox & Clifford, 2014).

Results

The researchers collected baseline-testing data on cadets studying first and second-year Spanish at USAFA in the spring of 2021. Means to describe proficiency on the ACTFL Proficiency Scale were determined by labeling each level in a nominal sequence (e.g., Novice-Low = 1, Novice-Mid = 2).

Listening Proficiency Attained at the End of the First and Second Year of Study

With respect to the first research question about the level of proficiency attained by cadets in the first and second-year of Spanish study at USAFA using the Adaptive Listening test, as Table 1 shows, cadets in second-year Spanish showed greater listening proficiency overall than their counterparts in first-year Spanish. On average, first-year cadets earned a proficiency level of Novice-High in listening (M=3.06) while second-year cadets earned, on average, a score midway between Intermediate-Low and Intermediate-Mid (M=4.68).

Table 1
Adaptive Listening Test Results

Proficiency Rating	End of First-Year Spanish (Spanish 132)	End of Second-Year Spanish (Spanish 222)
Novice-Low	4	0
Novice-Mid	7	1
Novice-High	11	9
Intermediate-Low	5	7
Intermediate-Mid	6	11
Intermediate-High	0	10
Advanced-Low	0	1
Advanced-Mid	0	1
Advanced-High	0	0
Total (*N*)	33	40

The benchmark levels established for first-year Spanish for USAFA is Novice-Mid to Novice- High (between 2 and 3), and the average score was at the Novice-High level; 87% of participants earned at least the benchmark level. Similarly, the benchmark established for 222 was either met or exceeded for 39/40 (98%) at or above benchmark of Novice-High to Intermediate-Mid. Only one cadet did not attain the benchmark level, while 68% were in the benchmark range and 30% exceeded the benchmark range. Of the 42 participants in second-year Spanish, two did not receive a proficiency rating.

Reading Proficiency Attained at the End of the First Year of Study

With respect to the second research question regarding the level of proficiency cadets attained in reading near the end of the first year of Spanish study, Table 2 shows that while 33 first-year cadets took the reading test, two did not receive a score; therefore, the authors can only report 31 participants in the results. On average, the first-year learners received a score between Novice-Mid and Novice High (*M*=2.6), which indicated that 87% showed proficiency at or above benchmark of Novice-Mid to Novice-High.

Table 2

Adaptive Reading Test Results at End of First Year of Spanish Study

Proficiency Rating	***N***
Novice-Low	4
Novice-Mid	10
Novice-High	10
Intermediate-Low	3
Intermediate-Mid	3
Intermediate-High	1
Advanced-Low	0
Advanced-Mid	0
Advanced-High	0
Total (*N*)	31

Characteristics of those at the Highest and Lowest Levels of Proficiency in Reading and Listening

Gender

Turning to the third research question about the characteristics of students who attained the highest and lowest levels of proficiency in reading near the end of their first-year of Spanish study at USAFA, initial data analysis showed that 33 cadets participated in study and 31 received proficiency ratings. The females in the group showed scores of a mean proficiency of 2.33 (Novice-Mid) while the scores for the males were slightly higher yet still in the Novice-Mid range (M=2.84). Fifty percent of the females in the sample scored at the benchmark rating of Novice-High and Intermediate-Low whereas slightly more (61%) of the males scored at the benchmark rating of Novice-High rating or above (Table 3).

Table 3
Adaptive Reading Test Results at the End of First Year of Spanish Study by Gender

Proficiency Rating	Females	Males
Novice-Low	1	3
Novice-Mid	1	9
Novice-High	2	8
Intermediate-Low	1	2
Intermediate-Mid	0	3
Intermediate-High	0	1
Advanced-Low	0	0
Advanced-Mid	0	0
Advanced-High	0	0
Total (*N*)	5	26

Results of the Adaptive Listening Test results by gender for both groups showed that both females and males in Spanish 132 scored on average at the Novice-High level (*M*=3.17 and *M*=3.04, respectively), which was again at the benchmark set by the Spanish faculty.

Years of Previous Study

In reviewing the proficiency ratings according to years of study of Spanish prior to attending USAFA, it is important to note that some participants failed to respond to the some of the requested demographic questions. Nevertheless, all of the participants had taken either two or three years of Spanish previously. Table 4 (next page) shows that the participants at the end of the first year of study at USAFA who reported having taken two years prior to attending scored at the lower end of the scale (*M*=2.10, Novice-Mid). However, those who reported having taken three years prior to attending USAFA scored higher (*M*=3.07), a rating consistent with the lower end of the Novice-High rating. Taken collectively, the results show that participants with both relatively low and high levels of reading proficiency had at least three years of prior Spanish study.

Next, the researchers examined the relationship between the number of years studying Spanish prior to attending USAFA for both levels as related to one's proficiency ranking on the Adaptive Listening Tests. Table 5 (next page) shows that after two years of prior study, cadets at the first year of study (Spanish 132) were at the higher end of the Novice-Mid benchmark rating (*M*=2.81); yet, at the end of the second year (Spanish 222) scored at the Intermediate-Low level (*M*=4.00). When examining the data for those cadets in first-year Spanish who reported having studied Spanish for three years prior to matriculating at USAFA, their average rating was Novice-High (*M*=3.35) compared to the second-year Spanish cadets who scored a rating of Intermediate-Low level (*M*=4.85). None of the first-year cadets reported having taken four years of Spanish prior to matriculation; however, those in the second year who studied Spanish for four years prior to

Table 4

Adaptive Reading Test Results at the End of First Year of Spanish Study by Number of Years of Spanish Study Prior to Attending USAFA

Proficiency Rating	1 year	2 years	3 years
Novice-Low	-	3	0
Novice-Mid	-	3	6
Novice-High	-	4	3
Intermediate-Low	-	0	3
Intermediate-Mid	-	0	2
Intermediate-High	-	0	0
Advanced-Low	-	0	0
Advanced-Mid	-	0	0
Advanced-High	-	0	0
Total (*N*)	-	10	14

Table 5

Adaptive Listening Test results at the End of First and Second Years of Spanish Study by the Number of Years of Spanish Study Prior to Attending USAFA

	1 Year		2 Years		3 Years		4 Years	
Proficiency Rating	132	222	132	222	132	222	132	222
Novice-Low	-	0	1	0	1	0	-	0
Novice-Mid	-	0	2	0	5	0	-	0
Novice-High	-	1	6	1	1	2	-	4
Intermediate-Low	-	0	2	1	2	0	-	3
Intermediate-Mid	-	0	0	1	5	2	-	5
Intermediate-High	-	1	0	0	0	3	-	5
Advanced-Low	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Advanced-Mid	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Advanced-High	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Total (*N*)	-	2	11	3	14	7	0	17

attending USAFA scored similarly to those who studied Spanish for three years (Intermediate-Mid, *M*=4.74). Viewed collectively, the data show that most cadets had some previous study of Spanish. Those with the highest levels of proficiency (Intermediate-Mid) in first-year Spanish also had at least three years of prior study in Spanish. Similarly, those with the highest levels of proficiency (Intermediate-High) in second-year Spanish had at least four years of prior study in high school.

Quartile of Proficiency

The next research question focused on specific characteristics of participants in the highest and lowest proficiency quartiles of the tests. The researchers examined the data and compared two groups for those in the first year and those in the second year of study of Spanish. The participants were divided into three groups: those who demonstrate proficiency at the highest, mid and lowest levels. This section explores comparisons between those who scored on the lower end of the proficiency scale and those who performed at a higher level on the scale. The middle group was not examined for comparative purposes.

First-year Spanish results. With respect to results from the BYU Adaptive Listening Test, the lower group scored at the Novice-Low and Novice-Mid levels (*n*=11). Demographically, most (92%) self-reported as male and Caucasian (73%), while all of the participants in this group reported not having dual enrollment credit. Fifty-five percent reported taking at least three years of Spanish prior to attending USAFA while only one participant in this group reported speaking Spanish at home with family members. Ten of the 11 reported that they learned Spanish via the U.S. educational system. Similarly, those in the high achieving group in first-year Spanish scored at the Intermediate-Low and Intermediate-Mid levels (*n*=11); this group were mostly males (82%) and either Caucasian (64%) or Latinx (36%). Two reported speaking Spanish at home with family members. Nearly all (91%) learned Spanish in the U.S. educational system and 82% of the high achieving group took at least 3 or 4 years of Spanish in high school.

Next, the researchers examined the highest and lowest achieving students in first-year Spanish on the BYU Adaptive Spanish Reading Test. Data analysis showed similar results as those for the BYU Adaptive Listening Tests described above. For the lowest achieving group, which included the Novice-Low and Novice-Mid levels (*n*=14), most self-reported as males (86%), and either Caucasian (71%) or Latinx (36%). Almost half of the participants reported having taken only two years of Spanish in high school. None reported having dual enrollment credit, being heritage speakers of the language, or having any overseas experience using Spanish. Those who scored at the higher end of the proficiency scale (Intermediate-Low and Intermediate-Mid levels, (*n*=7) were mostly males (86%) who were Caucasian (100%) and had taken at least three years of Spanish in high school via the US educational system (100%). The participant who scored the highest on the test (Intermediate-High) reported taking five years of Spanish prior to attending USAFA.

Second-year Spanish results. Turning to the results from those in the second-year of Spanish at USAFA, similar comparisons were made for the BYU Adaptive Spanish Listening Test. The lower group consisted of those who scored at the Novice-Mid, Novice-High, and Intermediate-Low levels (*N*=17). Participants in the higher group scored at the Intermediate-High, Advanced-Low, and Advanced-Mid levels on the proficiency scale (*N*=12). The demographics for the two groups were very similar. The majority were females in both groups (59%) with all but one having learned Spanish in the U.S. educational system. Forty-one percent of the lower group had taken four years of high school Spanish. Twenty-nine percent of the same group reported having taken their last Spanish class either their

sophomore or junior year of high school. In the upper group, all had completed four years of high school Spanish and all but one had taken Spanish all four years in high school. The more recently and the more courses students took, the higher their proficiency levels. In other words, participants with the highest levels of proficiency had fewer interruptions to, in addition to more, Spanish language learning experience.

Comparison to Tschirner's Findings

With respect to the final research question regarding how the present study's findings compare to Tschirner's listening and reading outcomes, it is important to note that the population of this study, cadets at a military academy, were different from Tschirner's. Tschirner (2016) conducted a large study of the proficiency levels of college students enrolled in private and public institutions, with the majority coming from large public universities. He used the ACTFL Listening Proficiency and Reading Proficiency Tests administered by Language Testing International, an official ACTFL test and not the same test used in this study. Thus, while the results can be compared, the instruments are not identical. Table 6 shows how the results of this study compared to that of Tschirner's; it shows that, on average, USAFA's cadets attained a higher level of proficiency in listening than in Tschirner's study. Regarding Tschirner's reading outcomes compared to the present study, USAFA cadets scored at the higher end of the Novice-mid level (M=2.8) compared to Tschirner's participants, who scored at the lower end of the Novice-high level (M=3.11).

Table 6

Comparison of Tschirner's Listening Outcomes to Present Findings

Tschirner Second Semester	USAFA Second Semester	Tschirner Fourth Semester	USAFA Fourth Semester
2.05	3.06	2.83	4.7
Novice-Mid	Novice-High	Novice-High	Intermediate-Mid

Discussion

Establishing both rigorous and attainable outcomes for language learning sequences is critical to supporting programs in developing strong curricula and measuring their outcomes. While new data related to outcomes in four-year college language programs have emerged since 2016, there are little recent data on results from other types of programs. This study provides a first step in establishing benchmarks in second and fourth semester Spanish language courses at a military academy. Military academies are not only post-secondary institutions but also key players in providing language background to directly and immediately support national security and language endeavors.

The Department of Defense continues to place a premium on language and culture enabled military personnel, and this report provides important data for this emphasis as well as documentation of their success in this area. Consistent with previous

Department of Defense guidelines, cadets graduating from USAFA with a major in FAS or a minor in one of the eight languages taught at USAFA are required to take the Defense Language Proficiency Test, which, like this study, examines cadets' ability in the receptive skills (i.e. listening and reading). The results of this study showed proficiency attained in one language (Spanish) at two levels in listening (second and fourth semester) and at one level in reading (second semester). The data showed that participants with previous study of Spanish in high school had higher scores than those who had less high school study. However, there were not many differences with respect to attained proficiency by gender. The study has implications both locally, for the specific institution, for other military academies and for higher education in general by documenting these outcomes to contribute to the existing body of work on student outcomes.

As previously noted, USAFA's cadets scored similarly to the undergraduates at public and private universities in reading across the U.S. from Tschirner's (2016) study (approximately Novice-High). Glisan and Foltz (1998) focused on secondary school learners and oral proficiency outcomes; thus, the researchers cannot compare these results. Similarly, Carroll (1967) focused on language majors with more years of study than those in the present population. Because Tschirner's study includes not only Flagship reading and listening outcomes but also outcomes from additional post-secondary programs, the discussion will focus on comparisons between Tschirner's study and the present one.

Notably, USAFA's cadets scored much higher than those in Tschirner's study in Listening. There are a number of reasons that could account for this difference. First, the BYU test is not an official ACTFL test, as is Tschirner's and there may be differences between local interpretations and official ACTFL test items. Secondly, Tschirner had a much larger sample of a more diverse audience; thus, the USAFA sample may include more motivated students than Tschirner's. Finally, because so many cadets began Spanish language study with three or more years of prior study, they may have begun with higher levels of listening proficiency than those in Tschirner's study. Tschirner did not investigate number of years of prior study, so that comparison cannot be made.

Interestingly, the cadets scored slightly lower after two semesters in reading. It is possible that reading is emphasized less in the USAFA curriculum than in the programs included in Tschirner's. In addition, classes at USAFA are capped at 24; it possible that USAFA classes are smaller and more conducive to the development of listening than at the schools included in Tschirner's samples.

It is also important to highlight that cadets enrolled in a military academy may be different in their motivations and approaches to language learning than those at a four-year public colleges. First, approaches to teaching and learning at a military academy may be more homogenous than at a large, public institution of higher education where many introductory courses are taught by teaching assistants and part-time faculty who are responsible for teaching and learning but may not have input into course design and development. By contrast, all courses at a military academy are taught by full-time professors who are required to collectively plan, design and implement curricula. Such homogeneity may result in different teaching and learning contexts. At the same time, there are no language majors at a military academy, so no participating cadets are able

to pursue the language with the intensity of a university Spanish major.

This study adds to the body of work on proficiency outcomes in higher education and introduces a new but important subgroup: cadets at a military academy. Such students in higher education are well positioned to influence security and public policy within their careers and thus their inclusion in the general outcomes data provides both information to the field and incentives to the military academies to encourage language study and to document the results. On average, the cadets scored higher in listening than the students in Tschirner's 2016 study and slightly lower in reading. While the sample size of the present study is small, it represents an important effort in noting such outcomes.

Future research can both replicate this study and add more participants to determine how cadets' outcomes compare to other students enrolled in higher education. In addition, future studies could examine qualitatively why cadets score higher in listening than their counterparts at non-military schools, if such a trend continues. Conducting benchmark studies with the USAFA population of oral proficiency outcomes will allow for comparisons to other studies, such as Isbell, Winke and Gass (2018). In conclusion, the present study can also provide important information for curriculum development and new foci for continued improvement in the program. As language professionals, it is our duty to move our learners up the proficiency ladder. By examining proficiency benchmarks using reliable and valid tests we will know where our learners are and what we need to do to continue building their proficiency in the target language.

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Writing to build vocabulary and fluency during COVID: A journal-based self-study

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Challenge

What vocabulary- and fluency-building processes are activated when learners produce written discourse? A college English teacher who took an undergraduate Spanish journalism course during COVID and kept a learning journal describes her course experiences, analyzes her writing for evidence of vocabulary and fluency building, and shares her pedagogical insights with world language teachers.

Abstract

Many world language teachers believe that writing reinforces the learning of new structures, so they often assign sentence-level exercises or controlled compositions so that students use the new structures in a variety of contexts. However, they may not appreciate the potential of extended written discourse for language learning, specifically vocabulary and fluency building. One reason for insufficient awareness of writing's promise is that second language education has prioritized speaking over writing (Reichelt et al., 2012). In addition, researchers in instructed second language acquisition have only recently recognized the potential of writing extended discourses for language learning (Manchón, 2020). In this case study, I explain how during COVID in Spring 2021, when at my institution and most others across the country, most instruction was online, I took an undergraduate course in Journalistic Writing in Spanish. I kept a journal to record my course experiences, including the completion of 15 writing assignments. I analyze my vocabulary and fluency building in terms of outside-of-class and in-class conditions for writing and

their influences on sources for vocabulary use, processes of use, and whether the words were new to me or partially known. Outside-of-class conditions were found to build vocabulary, and in-class, timed conditions were found to build fluency. I apply what I learned from this experience to recommend best practices for using writing in world language classes. I also urge language teachers to take courses, keep journals, and apply the insights they acquire as learners to their teaching.

Although at this writing the pandemic is only two years old, applied linguists have begun documenting its effects—positive, negative, and neutral—on language learning and teaching (Sykes, 2020). The COVID crisis demanded a quick shift from in-person to emergency online learning, which scholars have noted was qualitatively different from planned online learning, especially the carefully developed hybrid or blended systems language instruction (Gacs et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2020; Rubio et al., 2018). Many teachers and students were unprepared for teaching and learning solely via Zoom and learning management systems. Adapting to the online setting has entailed a long learning curve, often accompanied by stress and anxiety on the part of both learners and teachers (Ross & DiSalvo, 2021; Russell, 2020).

I took an undergraduate course in Journalistic Writing in Spanish over Zoom and Canvas, a course management system, in Spring semester, 2021, when at my institution, like at others across the country, most instruction was online. I kept a learning journal and analyzed my course experiences and my writing to build vocabulary and fluency. Although I had used Zoom and Canvas the two previous semesters as a teacher of courses in English at the same university, I had never used either as a student in a course. Switching to the student role involved a learning curve for me both technologically and psychologically. This was also the first time that the course instructor taught Journalistic Writing in Spanish solely via Zoom and Canvas; he had to convert all course materials and activities to these online platforms.

In my state and community, Spring 2021 was marked by masking and mask-mandates, the fortunate availability of vaccines, and rancorous political battles over both, which exacerbated the battle fatigue of teachers and students. Although some were cautiously hopeful that vaccines would end the pandemic and return us to normalcy, the Delta variant of COVID later that Spring diminished those hopes. This COVID context affected both the content and delivery of Journalistic Writing in Spanish and my course experience in ways that I will explore in order to provide the course context for analyzing my writing.

Positionality Statement

Here I explain how my positionality and experiences as a teacher, writer, and Spanish user and learner predisposed me toward certain biases while taking and writing in this course. First, my writing and learning experiences were affected by my ambiguous status as a student learner of Spanish while also a teacher of English writing and language. I have taught English academic writing and tutored ESL

writing at my university for over three decades. For 15 years, I have also taught a creative writing course and have written creatively in English. Most importantly, I had already taken three Spanish creative writing classes with the Spanish journalism professor I will call Hernán (a pseudonym). I consider him not only a Spanish mentor, but also a faculty colleague.

My teaching and creative writing experiences sometimes predisposed me to judge the journalistic genres we learned in class for their seemingly strict conventions, boundaries, and inflexibility; at the same time though, many newspaper and magazine articles we read challenged those boundaries by combining the features of two or more genres. My accustomed role as a teacher of undergraduates and evaluator of their work and effort also made me inclined to judge my fellow students when I perceived they were cutting corners. In addition, I was predisposed to judge the frequency and nature of our quizzes. Because many English writing teachers do not give quizzes and since it had been decades since I had even taken a quiz, this form of timed evaluation, coupled with my unfamiliarity with Canvas functions from the student's online view vs. the teacher's online view caused anxiety for me, especially at first.

My original auditing arrangement with Hernán was that I would not take quizzes or the midterm exam (a longer quiz), but from the first day of class, despite my initial quiz anxiety, I realized that not taking the quizzes, the majority of which involved informal writing *(los ejercicios de práctica/*practice exercises) would deprive me of a crucial fluency-building experience. Also, to simulate the course experience of the students as much as possible and express solidarity with them, I realized I needed to do the same work and be graded the same way they were. Therefore, I was evaluated along with the matriculated students on every assignment.

I consider myself an experienced and motivated Spanish learner; I have studied Spanish on and off since the seventh grade. I was a Spanish major in college; after graduation, I became a welfare case worker with a Spanish-speaking caseload. When I left that job to study linguistics/TESOL in graduate school, I took Spanish courses to become temporarily certified to teach in high school bilingual programs. Instead, I became a college writing teacher and pursued a doctorate in rhetoric and composition.

When I became a rhetoric professor at my present university, I audited Spanish and Italian classes when I could, often keeping learning journals and doing self-studies to analyze language issues (Severino, 2002-3; Severino, 2017). I joined the community Spanish Book Club and did a Fulbright semester teaching in Ecuador. On the language evaluation for the Fulbright application, my speaking proficiency in Spanish was rated Advanced High according to the ACTFL Guidelines.

When one of my sons went into the Peace Corps and married an indigenous Ecuadorian who spoke only Spanish and Quichua, I communicated with her as best I could in Spanish and learned some Quichua (Severino & Thoms, 2007). When they lived with my husband and me for several years, we maintained a trilingual household. I rely on a mix of English and Spanish to communicate with my daughter-in-law and my two trilingual granddaughters. My attitude toward

and background in Spanish made me eager to learn more Spanish and more about Latin America. That mindset, plus the privilege of a research leave, and therefore more time than usual that semester, predisposed me to work diligently in the course. For example, I attended every class. I read most assigned articles twice. I studied hard for the announced quizzes and worked for more than a week researching and writing the final reportage assignment. Lastly, my participation on doctoral committees in applied linguistics-related educational fields and my own research in second language writing made me eager to study my own writing for evidence of writing to learn language, a recent strand of second language writing research (Manchón, 2020), to which I now turn.

Literature Review

Writing to Learn Language

Language teachers know that writing reinforces the syntactical and grammatical structures they teach; thus, they often assign sentence-level exercises or controlled compositions. However, they may not recognize how extended discourse can promote writing to learn language. One explanation is that second language teaching has prioritized speaking over writing (Reichelt et al., 2012).

Because writing is unique in relation to other modalities—speaking, reading, and listening—many applied linguists highlight its affordances for language learning. Cumming (1990) described L2 writing as a "psycholinguistic output condition wherein learners analyze and consolidate second language knowledge that they have previously (but not fully) acquired" (p. 483). Manchón (2020) identified writing's "intense meaning making activity" as "the necessary condition for writing to result in language learning gains" (p. 5). Byrnes (2020) cited writing's "textual expansiveness" (p. 75). Because the setting and the situation for writing are less obvious compared to those of conversation, Byrnes also argued that a written text must often create its context (2020).

Williams (2012) specified three special qualities of writing that enable language learning: its permanency, its self-controlled pace, and the expectations for precision. Unlike speaking, writing leaves a graphic record, prompting the writer to read, reflect on, and continue writing. As Emig (1977) observed, "information from the *process* is immediately and visibly available as that portion of the *product* already written" (p. 125; italics in original) and serves as feedback from and to oneself. Also, unlike most speaking performances, writing offers the gift of time; writers can pace themselves, analyze their output to decide whether it matches their intentions and, if not, revise to upgrade and refine it (Murphy & Roca de Larios, 2010). Depending on the composing conditions, writers can use dictionaries or other resources to confirm or change their choices, or to find an appropriate second language equivalent of a first language word or expression to fill a lexical gap the writer has noticed in their second language writing.

Writing to Build Vocabulary

These look-up behaviors toward vocabulary learning are one focus of this study. I say "toward vocabulary learning" because the criteria for thorough vocabulary learning, that is, for fully knowing a word, are numerous and demanding. Nation

(2013) presents 18 kinds of receptive and productive information a learner must possess to know a word or to claim to have learned it. He lists six each, three receptive and three productive, for 1) *word form* (spoken, written, word parts); for 2) *word meaning* (form and meaning, concept and referents, associations), and for 3) *word use* (grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints on use). Productive knowledge, knowing how to use a word in speaking or writing, he notes, seems more difficult for learners than receptive knowledge, that is, understanding a word when it is heard or read (Nation, 2013).

With these numerous criteria for full word knowledge and learning, especially knowing a word's multiple uses, associations, and constraints, second language learners who do not use their second language daily and receive feedback from interlocutors or instructors on comprehensibility and accuracy cannot confidently claim that they completely know a great many words used in more specialized domains such as journalism. However, based on the frequency and quality of their receptive encounters and productive uses, they can say they do know some of those words better than they do others. Being able to use a word accurately in writing helps a language learner advance in the direction of knowing a word. Using vocabulary in writing strengthens associations between form, meaning, and use in an intentional act of meaning making. Writers reinforce connections between form and meaning when they produce those less familiar forms graphically and visually in order to express themselves (Emig, 1977; Manchón, 2020; Williams, 2012). However, using unfamiliar or less familiar vocabulary in writing is no guarantee that one knows it fully; some knowledge of the word's associations, constraints, and contexts might still be missing (Nation, 2013).

A key ingredient for writing to build vocabulary is high-involvement tasks. Writing tasks are high involvement when, according to Huljstin and Laufer's Involvement Load Hypothesis (2001), they possess three features: the *need* to know a word, the *search* for it, and *evaluation* to assess different options—a process I repeated over a hundred times in writing journalistically in Spanish. In addition, writing is highly involved when it engages all our mental and emotional capacities and gives us "the opportunity to connect to major times of our experience—past, present, and future" (Byrnes, 2020, p. 125). In fully engaging me in those "major times," the plentiful, varied opportunities I had to formulate L2 prose accelerated my Spanish vocabulary and fluency building. Manchón and Roca de Larios (2007) could have been describing my course assignments when they advocated for "the language-learning potential of the problem-solving activity involved in frequent, repeated and guided practice in writing whole texts that form connected, contextualized, coherent, and appropriate pieces of communication" (Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2007, p. 117). Usage-based theories underscore how we learn language while communicating via repeated, powerful language experiences that form long-lasting linguistic memories (Ellis, 2019).

Writing to Build Fluency

Fluency in writing, often measured in total words or words per minute, is a component, along with accuracy and complexity, of both language development and writing development (Polio, 2017; Polio & Park; 2016). As it involves lexical retrieval from memory, it is also related to vocabulary building. As the productive

component of lexical fluency (Snellings et al., 2004), lexical retrieval is considered a measure of vocabulary development (Schmitt, 2020). To build fluency, online informal writing that values idea generation over grammatical accuracy has often been found effective. For example, González-Bueno and Pérez (2000) compared dialogue journaling via email versus pencil and paper and found that the electronic condition had a significant positive effect on language generation (i.e., fluency) and on students' attitudes toward learning, but did not improve lexical and grammatical accuracy. In addition, Lee's study of personal blogs in an advanced course (2010) showed that they increased fluency and audience awareness.

Writing and Language and Content Learning: Problems of Causality

As discussed above, despite the promising affordances of writing for language learning described in the literature, causality between writing and language learning has not been established. First, there is the aforementioned problem of fully knowing a word (Nation, 2013). Claims about writing and language or vocabulary learning still suggest potential rather than fact. Analogously, causality between writing and conceptual learning has not been proven either (Cumming, 2020). The good news is that conceptual and language learning, which often happen simultaneously, especially in thematic content courses such as my Spanish journalism course, are more likely to happen if writing is socially interactive, requires critical thinking; and has clear expectations spelled out in writing prompts and rubrics (Anderson et al., 2015). In other words, language and conceptual learning through writing is a matter of probability rather than causality.

Cumming has recommended the use of qualitative life-histories of significant learning during key incidents to investigate writing-to-learn claims (2020). My self-study of learning Spanish vocabulary as a teacher-student describes such a key incident.

Focus on Formulation

Writing-to-learn language research has two main strands focusing on different stages of the writing process, one toward the beginning and the other toward the end. The first strand has focused on formulation (Manchón, 2020): the initial stages of generating prose, of translating thoughts to language, which often involves an L1 mediating between those inchoate thoughts and feelings and the L2. Manchón and Roca de Larios (2009) have emphasized the importance of formulation by calling it "the only compulsory activity while writing" (p. 110). Writers can decide to plan or not or to revise or not, but they are always translating thoughts into language, or there is no writing at all. The second strand, which has been the focus of most of the writing-to-learn research, examines different feedback practices, especially written corrective feedback and its effects on writers' uptake. Byrnes (2020), however, recommended frontloading writing research to examine the initial stages of composing.

I took Byrne's advice to frontload those initial composing stages. Although I received some helpful feedback on my writing in the Spanish Journalism course—from the professor, from my fellow students, from the Spanish Writing Center

tutor, and from a retired Spanish professor friend—I examined this feedback only when it was given on vocabulary during formulation, thus enabling me to improve the wording of that particular text, but not when that feedback was on grammar or on the final evaluated product. My goals for the course were to increase my vocabulary and fluency. I was less concerned with my grammar even though I still made errors, especially under timed conditions and by not noticing them when my attention was consumed by formulation (Skehan, 2009).

Language Learning Diary Self-Studies

Keeping a language learning diary or journal follows in the tradition of Kathleen Bailey (1983; 1991; 2015; Bailey et al., 2001), who established the language learning diary as a viable research source. She called diary self-studies "first-person case studies" (1991, p. 62). Diary data, she said, "are a combination of learners' records of events and their interpretations of those events" (Bailey, 1991, p. 63). Anxiety as well as pedagogical conflicts with the teacher are two common themes of self-studies (Bailey, 1983; Schumann & Schumann, 1977). Other applied linguists such as Cohen and Li (2013), Casanave (2012), and Schmidt and Frota (1986) have studied their own learning to explore issues in second language acquisition.

Teacher-scholars attest to the many benefits of language learning and journal keeping. Because they involve teachers switching roles to experience and reflect on language learning from a student's perspective, journal-based self-studies enable teachers to build empathy with students (Bailey et al., 2001; Severino, 2017). Teachers describe the multiple pedagogical insights they gain from the experience (Spencer, 2009), which they then apply to their own classrooms. They also show how writing in a journal becomes a psychological tool—a mechanism for coping with the frustration, anxiety, or loneliness and isolation (e.g., during study or teaching abroad) that may accompany learning a language (Severino & Thoms, 2007). According to Duff et al. (2013), as a research method, language learning diary self-studies belong to the research genre of narrative inquiry and provide unique insights about the socio-affective aspects of language learning, thus compensating for their lack of generalizability.

Research Questions

Related to my language learning experiences and my writing in Journalistic Writing in Spanish during COVID in Spring, 2021, documented and reflected on in my learning journal, I ask the following research questions:

1. How did the COVID context influence course delivery and content and my perceptions of them?
2. How did the differing conditions for writing (outside-of-class, formal writing versus in-class, timed, informal writing; the availability of feedback; writing in different genres on different topics) affect the sources I used for vocabulary, the type of feature used (new or partially known words), the processes I used, and the lexicons elicited?

Methods

Setting

The Journalistic Writing in Spanish course under study in this paper focused on learning about and producing journalistic genres in Spanish: the news story, the interview, the profile, the chronicle, the editorial, the column, the blog, and reportage. The prerequisite for the course was at least one course beyond the intermediate level. The course met twice a week over Zoom for 75 minutes each session for 15 weeks during Spring 2021. The professor, Hernán, was a practicing journalist who had written and edited for newspapers in Latin America and Spain and founded an online publication, one of whose articles we read in class. He was also a well-known Latin American novelist.

Seventeen students, six of whom were heritage learners of Spanish, were officially enrolled in the class. Many were Spanish or Journalism majors or minors. The course was offered by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at a large public research university in the US.

To introduce the genres and issues of journalism, Hernán assigned multiple readings for almost every class session. Many articles focused on crime and corruption in Latin America. We read articles and watched videos on the assassination of Latin American journalists, on human and narco-trafficking, and on treacherous and deadly immigration experiences. The graphic violence and human tragedy of the course content was stark and often deeply disturbing.

The course also emphasized digital journalism; many articles featured photos and videos, and the multi-modality magnified the emotional impact of the horrific incidents reported. We read chapters from two journalism textbooks in Spanish as well as curricular materials about journalism from different pedagogical websites. Hernn presented PowerPoints, at least one for each genre, and then posted them to the course site so we could study them for the frequent quizzes and for the midterm.

The course featured two types of writing: 1) formal, outside-of-class writing in five of the seven genres; and 2) informal, in-class timed writing for three genres (we wrote both a formal and an informal chronicle) and about the readings and our perspectives on different issues. See Table 1 on the following page for the assignments and if open-ended, the topics I chose for them. For the Editorial, we all had the same topic of protecting cane workers against kidney disease based on a video we viewed in class.

Because the interview, chronicle, and reportage were major formal assignments worth a higher percentage of the final grade, we had more than a week to prepare them. The profile and editorial were less important to the final grade, so we had only a long weekend, Thursday to Tuesday, to complete each one. Each assignment had a clear prompt and a rubric explaining how points would be assigned or subtracted. Hernán said we would lose two points (out of 100) for each error in gender, number, or *ser/estar* (the two "to be" verbs) although sometimes he generously overlooked such errors in our informal writing. We could lose even more points though if we did not conform to the conventions of each genre, for example, if our profiles or reportage used "I" and our chronicles did not.

Table 1
Types of Course Writing in Journalistic Writing in Spanish

Formal, Outside-of-Class Writing: 5 Genres	Informal, In-class, Timed Writing in Online Quiz Format: 10 "Practice Exercises" about:
Interview: A Novelist	Our Expectations of the Course
Profile: My Husband	Qualities of a Digital Journalist
Chronicle: The Worst Day of My Life	5 news articles about Cuba and the US
Editorial: Protecting Caneworkers	An interview with Jon Lee Anderson
Reportage: US Aid to Central America	An interview with Fernanda Melchor
	An article about narco-trafficking murders (the Tamaulipas Massacre)
	Our own COVID chronicle
	An article, "My Weekend with Pablo Escobar"
	Our own column about not having a Spring Break
	Our own blog on our favorite TV show

RQ 1 Data Source: Learning Journal

After each class session (or at the end of each week if pressed for time), I described in my journal the highlights of the class session(s) and of my reading, writing, and viewing homework and how they affected me. Because I did not write in it every day (the connotations of "diary"), I use "journal" to describe these 15,000 words of recording and reflecting.

Coding

I read, re-read, and color-coded the journal according to themes, which emerged during the coding process. The themes were not pre-determined. The nine themes below in Table 2 (next page) correspond to class activities and issues and my thoughts and feelings about them. Journal material coded 1-6, especially 1, 2, and 5, helped me answer the first research question about the COVID context. Material about language and writing, coded 7-9, helped me answer the second textual analysis question about the vocabulary words and how I used them. Every line in my journal was in color unless it was about a subject that did not have to do with the course.

RQ 2 Data Source: My 15 Writing Assignments

Coding Written Texts

After reading my 15 pieces of writing immediately after the course ended, I identified the new and partially known words I used by underlining them and

writing tentative codes above them. Then I listed the words in charts that went through coding refinement, excerpts of which are provided in the tables in Appendix A. I include a sample coded paragraph from my reportage in Figure 1, where I am describing the anti-corruption terms of Biden's aid plan for Central America. New and partially known words are underlined. See Appendix B for an English translation.

Table 2
Themes that Emerged in My Journal

1	Observations stemming from my conflicting roles as a writing and language faculty instructor, but also a student
2	Anxiety about Quizzes and Technology
3	Focus on Genres
4	Classroom Activities Other than Breakout Sessions
5	Break-out Sessions for Task-Based Small-Group Discussions
6	Focus on Reading and Videos (course materials other than those on genre)
7	Focus on Writing
8	Focus on Language Use or Learning in speaking, reading, and listening.
9	Focus on Language Use or Learning in Writing

Figure 1
Sample paragraph coding new and partially known words, their sources, and the types of process employed

*Además, en una carta al Secretario del Estado Blinken y Consejero de Seguridad Nacional Sullivan, Norma Torres, una congresista Guatemalteca-Americana de California, también enfatizó la lucha anticorrupción (*the fight against corruption. Partially known noun phrase from reading; Receptive to Productive process). *No quiere que el gobierno despilfarre* (waste, a partially known verb from a class activity to prepare for a quiz) *el dinero de los contribuyentes americanos otra vez. Remarcó* (She pointed out, a new verb from WordReference.com approved by my tutor, filling a lexical gap; I hadn't known how to say "pointed out" in Spanish) *el abuso de esos fondos en el pasado: los militares de Guatemala usaron los fondos de EU para intimidar su embajada. Señaló* (She noted, same as *remarcó* above; I did not want to repeat *remarcó*/she pointed out or use *dijo*/she said again) *que las élites guatemaltecas están llenando las cortes con sus amigotes* (cronies, a new word from WordReference.com, I looked up to fill a lexical gap) *para proteger sus intereses políticos y económicos. Y el presidente de Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez, protegía a los narcotraficantes mientras se jactaba* (he bragged, same as *amigotes* above) *de llevar drogas a EU. Torres les rogó que los fondos humanitarios lleguen a las sociedades y las ONG a la gente pobre y no a los líderes corruptos.*

As can be seen in Figure 1, I analyzed and coded the new and partially known vocabulary I used in my five formal, outside-of-class writings and ten informal, in-class, timed writings in three major ways:

1. By Source(s) of Vocabulary Use from the various course materials and activities, kinds of feedback, and my go-to vocabulary source, WordReference.com (see Table 3).
2. By Type of Vocabulary Use, either brand new words or partially known words. (see Table 4, next page).
3. By the process illustrated in Table 5 (next page): filling a gap I noticed because I needed a Spanish equivalent of an English word; confirming or disconfirming a hypothesis I had about a word or word form; or by using in writing a word from my receptive vocabulary. I also noted when I was upgrading or correcting my wording in response to written feedback.

More detailed categorizations are shown in the tables in Appendix A. I identified the part of speech of the word to see if I was pursuing the learning of more nouns (N), verbs (V), adjectives (ADJ). Phrases (PHR) were categorized depending on whether they functioned in the sentence as nouns, verbs, or adjectives or on the part of speech that was upgraded or corrected by feedback. I also counted the number of cognates I was looking up or checking on. Most importantly, as my word choices were purpose- and meaning-driven, I noted the context of use as well as context for feedback; in other words, I explained *why* I used that particular word, or received that particular feedback. Translations of all Spanish words and expressions are supplied.

Table 3
Sources of My Vocabulary Use in Writing

Course reading
Course video
WordReference.com
Written feedback during formulation stages
Tutor approval during formulation stages
Class discussion
Quiz preparation

Results and Discussion

RQ 1: How did the COVID context influence course content and delivery and my perceptions of them?

The COVID context influenced both course content and delivery in multiple ways. First, COVID was a topic of our journalistic readings, as it was the most

Table 4
Type of Vocabulary Use: New vs. Partially Known Words

	New Words	**Partially Known Words**
	Those that had not been in my receptive vocabulary, words and expressions that through the course, I was encountering for the first time. I did not recall ever having heard or read them.	Words in my receptive vocabulary that I had heard or read before, before and/or during the course, including cognates, but did not remember ever producing in speaking or writing.
Examples	e.g., *desempeñar* un papel (to play a role); *desalentador* (discouraging)	e.g., *trayectoria* (trajectory): *rehusar* (refuse)

Table 5
Processes of Vocabulary Use

1) Filling a Noticed Gap	I looked up the Spanish equivalent of English words to use in my writing: e.g., *oligarca* (oligarchy), *entrecruzar* (intertwine).
2) Checking Hypotheses	I confirmed whether my guess about the form of a word or expression was correct by looking it up: e.g., *trabajo sucio* (dirty work), *regimen* (regime).
3) Producing in Writing a Word that had only been in my Receptive Vocabulary	e.g., *jornaleros* (workers), *cañaveral* (canefields), hipertensión (hypertension).
4) Upgrading in response to written feedback	I needed to make my meaning more clear or precise or my usage more idiomatic: e.g., *conocer a mis hijos* (to get to know my sons) to replace *ver a mis hijos* (to see my sons).
5) Correcting in response to written feedback	I needed to correct a word or word form. e.g., *mellizos* to replace *gemelos* for fraternal twins; *Neoyorquino* to replace *Nuevo yorquino* for New Yorker.

prominent issue in the news that Spring 2021 semester. We read and talked about how COVID policies kept Central American migrants out of Mexico while American and European tourists and spring breakers were welcomed to spend money, relax, and party; about how with schools closed due to the pandemic, children in Mexico City neighborhoods without internet struggled to find connectivity so they could do their homework on their cell phones; about how COVID was causing a hunger crisis in Brazil. For two of our genre writings, Hernán assigned us to write about COVID: 1) our own COVID chronicle about how we had first reacted to the arrival of the pandemic a year before in March 2020; and 2) an opinion column about the university's taking away our spring break in 2021 for safety reasons—so students would not travel to other places and bring COVID back to campus.

In addition, for other genres, the formal chronicle, the interview, the profile, and the reportage, students chose COVID-related topics. They interviewed or profiled their moms, dads, and friends about their new COVID-induced work arrangements. For the reportage, they investigated both sides of masking and vaccination controversies. Although I enjoyed writing my COVID chronicle, after a year of quarantining and social distancing, like almost everyone else I knew, I was overwhelmed by COVID's effects and the huge amount of attention paid to it in media, personal, and academic conversations. I perceived that the students were cutting corners for choosing these topics of convenience. I found myself judging them as if they were my own students. However, I felt conflicted, selfish, and guilty for feeling that way. Through reflecting in my journal, I realized I was "being insensitive and agist because they have been on earth a much shorter time than I, so Covid is a much bigger thing for them than for me even though… I am more vulnerable to it. They also needed to cut corners because they had work in 3 or 4 other classes." After all, if I could barely keep up with the workload in one undergraduate course during a research leave, how could they keep up with four or five courses?

COVID also affected course delivery because of the sheer number of Zoom break-out sessions (26) and quizzes (18), which would not have been the case in an in-person class; at least, it was not the case in the three in-person classes I had taken previously with Hernán. It is tedious for both students and teacher to stay on Zoom with the full class for 75 minutes, so to give students more interaction opportunities, Hernán dedicated a fourth of almost every class period to break-out rooms for small group discussions. However, because the assigned news articles we often discussed were long, challenging, and sometimes grim and disturbing, not all students had the time, mental or emotional energy, or language proficiency to read them thoroughly or comprehend them fully. They might also have been simultaneously suffering from too much exposure to both Zoom and to the psychological effects of the pandemic. Consequently, not all students were prepared for break-out discussions, or if they were, they seemed too shy to use their Spanish.

I did not want to act like a teacher and facilitate these discussions or explain readings, thereby taking leadership and language practice opportunities away from the matriculated students, but I also did not want us group members to waste time staring at one another, which happened in some, but not all, of the discussions depending on the preparation of students in my group. I also did not want Hernán to silently blame me when he popped into the break-out room if students were not talking or could not answer his questions. As Hernán's faculty colleague, I felt pressure to be a model student, if not a group or class leader, which created a tension between my desire for a functional discussion so as not to disappoint Hernán or myself, and my desire to express solidarity, empathy, and "peer-ness" with the students.

Secondly, to encourage students to keep up with the readings and PowerPoints on the similarities and differences between the journalistic genres, since staying motivated in a Zoom course was commonly considered by teachers and students more challenging than in an in-person course, Hernán gave us 18 quizzes: 8 were multiple choice, true or false, or short-answer; 10 were the aforementioned *ejercicios de práctica*/practice exercises that involved informal writing about the

readings or ourselves, as in the above two COVID related topics. Because of my lack of familiarity with what a student vs. an instructor sees on Canvas, especially the procedures for submitting timed quizzes, I experienced anxiety before I became more accustomed to choosing multiple choice answers or writing in that setting.

Writing in the quiz format on the disturbing readings on crime in Latin America was even more anxiety provoking, as illustrated from my journal entry from Week 6:

> *[To prepare for this quiz], "I read the Tamaulipas Massacre article again, crying like I did the first time I read it. I read it for structure in case we had to summarize it or write about what we learned from it. This timed exercise, in which I didn't know how much time we actually had, was the most panic-inducing evaluation experience so far. I was overcome by the emotions in the article and its pictures and video, and then I became overcome by the conditions of the quiz: we had to copy the questions again into a Word document and then upload it, which I had never done before…*
> *The first question was easy enough—to choose 5 vocabulary words from the article and provide their meaning in Spanish. I had to do some circumlocution for casquillo (bullet casing), but it was OK. Summarizing the story is where I overwhelmed myself since I remembered the names of the victims of the massacre whose stories were being told and many details about their lives and the names of the cartels responsible for their and other migrants' deaths…*
> *I did a cursory, frenzied proofreading and corrected a few errors, but I didn't know when the quiz would shut down and even feared that I had become untethered (disconnected) from Zoomland somehow, that the quiz was over, and Hernán and all the students had resumed class…"*

That Week 6 experience was the low point in my quiz-taking. I did have a few other techno-mishaps, such as not scrolling down and seeing there was a second quiz question on the "My Weekend with Pablo Escobar" article, not being able to enter the midterm at first because of a browser issue, and along with other students, and having to email Hernán our writing exercises after the quiz closed so we could not submit. However, the quizzes were so frequent that even though I was annoyed by their frequency, I became quite good at them; I was able to get perfect or near perfect scores in less than half the allotted time, which I saw because Canvas allows students to see their scores on the multiple-choice tests as soon as they submit. I was able to write over twice as much as what was required on the *ejercicios de práctica* (practice exercises). Had I been a matriculated student I would have received an A in the course.

RQ2: How did the differing writing conditions (outside-of-class, formal writing versus in-class, timed, informal writing; the availability of feedback; writing in different genres on different topics) affect the sources I used for vocabulary, the type of feature used (new or partially known words), the processes I used, and the lexicons elicited?

Conditions for Writing and Effects on Vocabulary Use

Table 6 shows that the writing conditions—outside of class formal writing vs. in-class timed, informal writing and whether feedback was available—dramatically affected the sources I used for vocabulary words, the type of words used (new or partially known), and the processes of use. First, the source use totals are over four times higher for the formal condition (127) than for the informal condition (27). The same is true for new words and partially known words used, 52 and 43 times respectively in the formal condition, but only five and thirteen times respectively in the informal condition. Time is the reason; with outside-of-class writing, the deadline was a week and a half or a long weekend away, providing more relaxed conditions with more time. Hence, with these five genre tasks totaling 5,354 words, I had time to consult a variety of sources, especially WordReference.com, the course readings, and feedback-givers.

Table 6

Conditions for Writing and Vocabulary Use: Sources, Type, and Processes

	Formal, outside of class writing	**Informal, timed, In-class writing**	**Totals**
Sources			
Wordreference.com	57 (29 cognates)	3	60
Readings	23	13	36
Videos	1	4	5
Class Discussion	6	4	10
Written Feedback	26	0	26
Tutor Approval	13	0	13
Quiz Preparation	1	3	4
Totals	127	27	154
Type			
a. New Words	52	5	57
b. Partially Known Words	43	13	56
Totals	95	18	113
Process			
1 a. Corrected	9	0	9
1 b. Upgraded	16	0	16
2. Filling a Gap	29	1	30
3. Checking Hypothesis	20	1	21
4. Receptive -> Productive	18	16	34
Totals	93	18	111

Formal, outside-of-class writing also provided the conditions for varied processes of vocabulary use. Table 6 shows a distribution of all four processes. First, I could access and use written feedback, both to correct (9) and upgrade (16) my vocabulary (only available for the two autobiographical formal genres, the profile and the chronicle), which was not possible in the informal, timed condition. Outside of class, I could look up words I knew in English but not Spanish to fill lexical gaps (29) and to check my hypotheses (20), whereas I did each only once in the informal condition. However, accessing receptive vocabulary to use in writing was almost equal between the two conditions: 18 uses, mostly in the source-based genres of the editorial and the reportage for formal writing, and 16 uses in informal writing via quick lexical retrieval from memory from the course, especially reading.

When the word-use totals in the two conditions are combined, I used almost equal numbers of new (57) and partially known (56) words. The most common source for my vocabulary use in the combined conditions was WordReference.com (60 words). I used it to check 29 English-Spanish cognates to see if they were true or false ones, illustrating the role of English as a mediator for me (Cumming, 2020). My second most used source was course readings (36), possibly because as an academic who has spent decades reading in English, I am more literacy- rather than orality-dependent. Likewise, videos had a low use count (5) because listening is my weakest skill. The most common type of process was converting a word from receptive to productive knowledge (34), clearly associated with using reading as a source. Filling a lexical gap was a second at 30, clearly associated with using WordReference.com. I used more new and partially known nouns (52) than verbs (39), or adjectives (20).

The autobiographical genres of the profile of my husband and the chronicle of the worst day of my life used more literary descriptive vocabulary, for example, *sus orígenes/*his origins), *da la impresión* (gives the impression), *luces cegadoras* (blinding lights), *ráfagas* (gusts), *calvario* (ordeal), and *insensible* (numb). The editorial on the caneworkers' disease required the use of health-related words: e.g., *deshidratación* (dehydration), *hipertensión* (hypertension), and their disease called *insuficiencia renal crónica* (chronic renal insufficiency). The most salient genre/topic-lexicon connection was my reportage on Biden's plan for Central America, for which I used 35 new and partially known words from foreign policy: for example, *políticas* (policies), *triángulo norte* (northern triangle), *asignación* (allocation), *desigualdad* (inequality), *sociedades civiles* (civic organizations), *la lucha anticorrupción* (the fight against corruption), *crisis fronteriza* (border crisis), *oligarca* (oligarchy), *régimen* (regime), and *aliados* (allies). Because this task for me was high-interest and high-involvement (Huljstin, & Laufer, 2001), as well as the longest piece I wrote at 1832 words, it fostered the highest vocabulary total of any of the assignments (almost 30% the 113 total words used), simultaneously enhancing my content and conceptual knowledge of foreign policy (Anderson et al., 2015). I therefore consider the reportage my most rewarding writing-to-learn-content-and-language experience in the course.

The lexical benefits to me of this foreign policy topic are difficult to disentangle from the lexical benefits of the reportage genre. The reportage genre tasks, which would also have also been challenging and thus motivating for me in English, involved describing the various positions on Biden's plan for Central America from the political left to the

right, but in a neutral way, and grouping news sources, my interviewees, politicians, and critics to represent leftist, liberal, moderate, and conservative stances. They also involved summarizing positions I read about in English into Spanish. Hernán had only asked the class to describe pro and con positions, but I wanted to embrace the complexity and nuances of this controversy. The challenge and complexity of the tasks combined with my curiosity about the topic propelled me to learn both the content and the language of the controversy at the same time, one reinforcing the other. The personal genres of the profile and the chronicle involved stories of my life I had told (not written) many times before in English, so the opportunity to tell them in Spanish writing was invaluable; however, because the reportage was a new topic, its novelty and the aforementioned complexity inspired both more lexical and content learning.

Fluency and Informal, Timed, In-Class Writing

My vocabulary use in timed, in-class writing was very different than in outside-of-class writing. The ten informal timed tasks totaled 2,189 words, less than half the total words of the five formal tasks. During these tasks, unless I anticipated the quiz question and looked up a word to prepare, for example, *desgarrador* (heartbreaking) for writing about the Tamaulipas massacre, I decided I did not have enough time to look up words during quizzes. It would have taken too much time away from expressing more of my ideas and also increase the quiz anxiety I described above.

As with the reportage assignment, my personal goals might have made the task more difficult than Hernán intended (Uzawa & Cumming, 1989). For these informal writings, Hernán often gave us a 100- or 150-word minimum, but I wanted to fully explore my thoughts and experiences on the autobiographical tasks (Expectations of the Course, Covid Chronicle, the Column about No Spring Break, the Blog on a Favorite TV Show) and do justice to the masterful pieces of investigative reporting on crime and corruption (the Interview with Jon Lee Anderson, the Investigation of the Tamaulipas Massacre, and Commentary on "My Weekend with Pedro Escobar"). These tasks had either higher words per minute (wpm) or higher word totals (see Table 7; higher totals are bolded).

Focusing on content by writing as many words as I could, despite and possibly fueled by my anxiety, it was possible to discover and generate many complex ideas and detailed scenes, descriptions, and emotions, some of which surprised and haunted me. During this informal writing, it seemed like my hands, eyes, and brain were connecting (Emig, 1978). Writing to *soltar las manos* (loosen one's hands), as Hernán called it, often known in English as freewriting, was highly effective for quickly retrieving Spanish words, as the studies of online informal writing show (González-Bueno & Pérez, 2000; Lee, 2010).

This experience of fast, intense lexical retrieval (Schmitt, 2020) compensated for the fact that I used only 18 new and partially known features in informal, in-class writing, but 95 features in formal, outside-of-class writing. The last three timed, in-class autobiographical writings, Covid Chronicle, the Column, and the Blog, involved no use of new or partially known words.

Table 7
Informal, In-Class Timed Writings: Fast Lexical Retrieval for Fluency-Building

Date	Topic for Writing Quiz	Number of words	WPM
1/26/21	Expectations of the course	**229**	11.3
1/28/21	Qualities of a Digital Journalist	126	12.6
2/2/21	Readings on Cuba and the US	131	18.7
2/18/21	Interview with Jon Lee Anderson	161	**20.5**
2/23/21	Interview with Fernanda Melchor	128	16.2
3/4/21	Investigation of Tamaulipas Massacre	**304**	15.2
3/25/21	Covid Chronicle (autobiographical)	**349**	17.3
4/1/21	Weekend with Pablo Escobar	**252**	16.7
4/8/21	Column on No Spring Break (autobiographical)	201	**20.1**
4/22/21	Blog on Favorite TV Show	**308**	15.4

Self-Assessment of Vocabulary Building

It is important to address exactly how much my knowledge of these 113 lexical features improved. For example, I am not certain how well I would perform on a cloze test at this writing eight months after the course when these words are now not as fresh in my mind as they were then. And if I did take such a test and obtain a perfect score, I am not sure to what extent that means I would use those words accurately in the future when I try them out in other contexts.

Upon reflection, there is a greater probability that I would accurately use words that were cycled through multiple sources as well as words associated with the powerful course content (*desgarrador*/heartbreaking, *escalofriante*/blood-curdling, *casquillo*/bullet casing, *extorsionar*/extort, *impunidad*/impunity). I will remember more words from the reportage, the highest involvement task. However, I might not remember more technical, less common and less compelling (to me) words, for example, those in my chronicle used to describe the plane's mechanical problem: the *grietas*/cracks in the *palas*/propeller blades.

I might fully know some of these words after using them in writing, especially some the 29 cognates I used. However, I would probably not fully know the least familiar of the unfamiliar words, such as a few of the upgrades from my feedback giver such as *desempeñar un papel* (to play a role). I would not feel confident using such an upgrade in other contexts. Even many words I used in my writing that I had heard, read, or spoken before were still partially known after I used them in

writing (*rehusar, monitorear, suministro*). I am still unaware of all the contexts for those words' uses, all their associations, and all their constraints. However, after I used them in writing, I did know them better, often confirmed if their uses passed the scrutiny of my feedback givers. It's important to recognize that second language vocabulary knowledge is better conceptualized on continuum of knowing. The long journey toward knowing and learning second language vocabulary might be better characterized as a life-long process, as learning to write itself has been depicted (Bazerman et al., 2017).

Implications for World Language Teaching

This journal-based self-study of vocabulary and fluency building in a Spanish Journalism course has many implications for teaching with writing, teaching online, and switching roles to become a world language student again.

Teaching with Writing

Many features of this course and my learning experience can be transferred to advanced high school and upper-level college world language, literature, and cultural content courses. First, teachers can vary writing task types to provide students with different kinds of vocabulary-building opportunities. They can assign higher-stakes at-home formal writing tasks to encourage students to use new words from the readings and from dictionaries. They can balance this formal writing with low stakes, in-class informal tasks so students practice retrieving already acquired words to build fluency. Students should have opportunities to freewrite to discover and generate ideas and language that they may not know they had. Depending on the personal and academic interests of the students in the class, teachers can vary genres and topics to promote the use of different lexicons, for example, the literary, political, and medical vocabulary I was encouraged to use by the autobiographical genres, the reportage, and the editorial respectively. They can have students identify and underline these new and partially known words in their writing and keep a log, using them in different contexts in sentences. The log could be a section of a learning journal, in which students reflect on their different class activities, including their writing, and on the course materials and their delivery and how much they perceive they contributed to their language and content learning. In this way, acquisition of new vocabulary and lexicons for both receptive and productive purposes would be prioritized in the course. In my course, we only needed to memorize definitions of vocabulary from the readings for quizzes on our receptive knowledge; we were never required or encouraged to produce these words in speaking or writing, which may have been missed opportunities for vocabulary learning. Class members were called on to contribute these words; they were of varying levels of difficulty, from cognates of English words students seemed not to know such as *arrogancia* (arrogance) or *usurpación* (usurpation), to less common words such as *calcinados* (burned) or *redada* (round-up of law-breakers by authorities.)

Second, world language teachers can repeat and recycle new terms and language through different modalities: readings, videos, classroom discourse,

PowerPoint presentations, and writing. They can use related and themed readings and videos on engaging contemporary issues. They can schedule the informal, in-class writing exercises after class discussions when ideas and vocabulary are fresh in students' minds and can be reinforced. They can provide most of their feedback and have students peer workshop during the formulation stages rather than on finished drafts when it is too late to use to improve that text. Most importantly, they can point out to students the affordances of writing to provide graphic self-feedback (Emig, 1977; Williams, 2012), to use their receptive vocabulary (Nation, 2013), and to reveal lexical gaps they can fill by looking up words. Teachers can demonstrate to students how writing complements and reinforces the other modalities.

Third, to build empathy with students and to improve the clarity and focus of their writing assignments, teachers themselves should perform the kinds of writing tasks they commonly give to students, but for a deadline and a grade and in my case, in a second language! For example, I frequently assign non-fiction essays like the chronicle and research-based essays like the reportage. Spending over 30 hours researching, reading, translating, organizing, writing, and revising for my reportage made me not only empathize with the students in our class and with my own students, but appreciate how many complex cognitive and linguistic skills that genre demanded. These skills should be made transparent and scaffolded by instructors; students should be given opportunities to workshop the intermediate steps of such the project: 1) the quality of their research sources for pro, con, and moderate stances; 2) their thesis paragraphs; 3) their translations of content and quotes from sources; and, finally, 4) their drafts.

Teaching Online

Even though COVID has helped acclimate students to online learning, it is important to make sure throughout the course that students understand how to use the features of the course management system, especially if teachers use the system to time or evaluate them. Teachers should choose to either time or evaluate students' informal writing, but not both, as that combination could unnecessarily elevate students' anxiety levels. Most importantly, they should be aware of when the features of the course management system may be over-influencing their choices of teaching activities; we Spanish journalism students could have had an equally powerful course experience with fewer quizzes and breakout sessions.

Becoming a World Language Student and Keeping a Journal

World language teachers could spend part of their summer or sabbatical taking a course in a language they do not know well, their third or fourth language, or a course focusing on writing in a second language they already speak. They can keep a journal on what they experience and learn about that language, about language learning and teaching, and how they might apply it in their own classrooms. They should not be surprised or disturbed when the teacherly critic in them surfaces (Garrett & Young, 2009), but can try to be as open as possible to the student learning experience. During the last week of class when I was studying for a quiz

at the same time I was preparing and rehearsing a PowerPoint and writing the reportage, with the help of my journal, I became acutely aware of when I pile too much on my students, making them work simultaneously on several projects for multiple deadlines. "Less is more," I have to remind myself. I cannot imagine what it was like for my fellow students who had multiple final assignments in three or four other courses as well. Finally, teachers should use their learning journal to write up their experiences in the courses they take and their reflections on them for the world language teaching community. If their language teacher is a colleague, they might collaborate on an article about a teaching or learning issue. They will be contributing to the long-standing research tradition of journal-based language learning self-studies.

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APPENDIX A

Excerpt from coding table: Formal, outside-of-class, writing

Date, Genre, Title, # words	Vocabulary Word(s) Used in My Own Writing: Part of Speech (N, V, ADJ, PHR) Cognate? (C)	Source(s) of Feature Wordreference.com (WRef), Course Readings (R), Video (Vi), Class Discourse (CD), Prep. for Quiz (Q), Written Feedback (WF), Tutor Approval (TA)	Context for Use of Word(s) or for Feedback	Type of Process Fill Noticed Gap (FNG), Check hypothesis (CH), Using again (UA), Receptive to Productive Vocab. (R->PVo) Upgrade? Correction?	Type of Use New or Partially Known?
2/25/21 Interview: A Conversation with ____. 635w (interviewee's emailed responses not counted)	trayectoria (N-C) trajectory	WRef	Introducing -interviewee	CH	Partially Known
	repregunta (N) follow-up question	WRef	"	FNG	New
	reflexivo (ADJ-C) reflective	WRef	Question for interviewee	CH	"

Excerpt from coding table: Informal, in-class writing

Date, Task/ Topic, words per minute (wpm), # words (w)	Vocabulary Words used in My Own Writing Part of Speech (N, V, ADJ, PHR), Cognate?	Source: WRef, R, CD, Vi, Q	Context of Use	Type of Process R->PVo FNG CH	Type of Use New or Partially Known
1/26/21, Expectations of the Course; 11.3 wpm, 229w	prensa (N), press	R, CD, Vi	The importance of the press	R->PVo	Partially Known
	periodismo (N), journalism	CD, R, Vi	"	"	"
1/28/21, 5 Qualities a digital journalist needs; 12.6. wpm, 4E, 126 w	hablar la verdad al poder (V-PHR) Speak truth to power	Vi	Quoting journalist from the video	"	"
2/2/21 Readings about Cuba and the US, 18.7 wpm, 131w	normalizar (V-C) normalize	R, CD	Obama wanted to normalize relations with Cuba.	"	"
2/18/21, Interview with John Lee Anderson (J-LA), 20.5 wpm, 161 w	musa (N) muse	R	J-LA said that Latin America was his muse.	"	"
	sicario (N) assassin/hit man	R	J-LA interviewed one.	"	"

Appendix B

English Translation of Figure 1

In addition, in a letter to Secretary of State Blinken and National Security Advisor Sullivan, Norma Torres, a Guatemalan-American congresswoman from California, also emphasized the fight against corruption. She does not want the government to waste the American taxpayers' money again. She pointed out the abuse of those funds in the past; the Guatemalan military used those US funds to intimidate their (the US) embassy. She highlighted that the Guatemalan elites are filling the courts with their cronies to protect their own political and economic interests. And the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernandez, protected narcotraffickers while he bragged about bringing drugs into the US. Torres pleaded that the funds go through civic organizations and NGOs to poor people and not to corrupt leaders.

Dual Domain: Benefits and Challenges of L2 Hybrid Instruction

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Challenge Statement

After a period of emergency online teaching, college world language teachers are faced with decisions about their future course offerings, anticipating what students want and which delivery modes work best. Is a hybrid second language course a possible solution? What does it look like? Is it effective for instruction, enrollment, and retention?

Abstract

As world language educators began to emerge from over a year of fully online instruction in many locations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, returning to the in-person classroom both posed challenges and opened possibilities. Three language educators in French, German, and Spanish sought to incorporate the lessons learned during the emergency switch to online instruction and subsequent online semesters in a way that capitalized on positive aspects of their experience in remote instruction. This paper reviews the return to the classroom in a hybrid format, which meets in-person one day a week for 80 minutes and utilizes asynchronous online learning for the other portion of contact hours. After experimenting with this model, the authors have determined that the hybrid method of instruction delivers positive results in terms of student engagement, proficiency, and retention because it combines

the appreciated flexibility of online learning with the much-missed personal interaction and active learning practice of the in-person classroom. These benefits, along with challenges and important considerations, are discussed in detail, and the authors provide suggestions for colleagues interested in preparing similarly structured courses at their own institution.

Dual Domain: Benefits and Challenges of L2 Hybrid Instruction

The COVID-19 pandemic upended educational systems at all levels worldwide at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year and continues to change the way we operate in subsequent semesters. The sudden shift to remote delivery in March of 2020 turned into multiple semesters of mixed delivery modes—some fully remote, some in-person, and some combining the two. In our department in particular, the Department of Modern Languages at Wright State University, we began teaching language courses at all levels fully online when the world seemed to close two years ago. In reflecting on the lessons learned throughout our obligatory switch to online course delivery, we collectively decided to experiment with a hybrid delivery mode that integrates online and face-to-face delivery modes. In fall 2021, the authors of this paper offered one section each of hybrid classes in French, German, and Spanish. In this paper, we present the transition to the hybrid model, our enrollment-based rationale for using this model, our process of hybrid class design, the challenges of teaching in the hybrid model, and the student data on hybrid course benefits. In doing this, we also compare hybrid sections of multi-section courses with other delivery modes offered at the same time for a more complete understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of teaching in the hybrid mode.

In 2020, the Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) published a guide book to hybrid teaching that has become a reference for other universities. Early results from the Iowa State University support the great potential for implementing the hybrid structure into the world language classroom. According to research from their Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, the hybrid format is extremely popular among students and produces excellent academic results: "not only do students tend to prefer it as their format of choice, but the learning outcomes and academic achievement are more substantial with a hybrid course than for either face-to-face or online teaching alone" (CELT, 2020, p.2).

Just as in the flipped classroom model, students prepared work online in order to participate in interactive practice during the face-to-face portion of the class. A study on the cognitive and motivational benefits of the flipped classroom model cites aspects of Self Determination Theory in defending the principles of reverse classroom structure (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2014). Highlighting students' need for a sense of accomplishment, self-determination, and application as part of an overall pedagogical approach, Abeysekera and Dawson (2014) postulate the flipped classroom "might improve student motivation if it creates a sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness" (p. 4), and "may allow better management of cognitive

load" (p. 9). The hybrid approach draws from these same principles by giving students the flexibility to apply knowledge in practical, meaningful exchanges with their peers.

To be clear: the hybrid model we have adopted is distinct from the "hyflex" or "flexible delivery" model, wherein students have the choice to attend classes with set meeting times in-person or online. In the hybrid model we followed, students were required to attend the in-person class meeting for hands-on language proficiency training and were fully online for the asynchronous second part of the course. In this format, students prepared the class content at their own pace using instructional videos, teacher-created podcasts, audio files, quizzes, texts, weblinks, and other pedagogical materials. This course was not designed for those unable or unwilling to return to campus. In order to appeal to the diversity of student learning styles and needs, we additionally offered face-to-face and fully online sections of many of our lower-level language courses, along with a selection of upper-level courses offered in multiple formats.

A hybrid course design recruits and retains active students who frequently hold down jobs, care for family members, and travel for military or athletic purposes. Long commutes are cut in half, and the time saved can be used for studying and preparing course materials prior to in-person class time. Since institutions of higher learning are under pressure to increase enrollment, offering the hybrid compromise has the potential for increasing the learner pool and offers students a wider choice of options. Researchers have also pointed out how pandemic era budget cuts affect many language programs (Bauman, 2020), thus offering courses in a variety of delivery modalities might accommodate a larger group of adult learners with busy schedules. Our hybrid courses met in-person one day a week for 80 minutes. Then, students completed online work remotely in an asynchronous format in lieu of the second 80-minute in-person meeting that week.

Transitioning to the Hybrid Model

With the emergency shift to online language instruction, instructors teaching synchronous classes did their best to teach their face-to-face courses in a new and unfamiliar mode of delivery by trying to replicate the classroom environment. Prior to the emergency switch to online teaching, researchers had already begun outlining various challenges associated with online course design and implementation. In a large pre-pandemic study that queried 147 online language teachers about crucial elements in effective online design, Meskill et al. (2020) pointed out that the first attempts to create online classes merely consisted of posting materials that were traditionally used in the live classroom, such as "duplicated textbooks, worksheets, and their recorded lectures" (p. 160). Similarly, at the beginning of the pandemic, when teachers were suddenly obliged to transition to an entirely online format, many educators simply transfered their materials from the traditional classroom to the online environment, at the risk of losing their personal connection to the students. In the above-mentioned study, the authors highlight valuable insights provided by instructors that point to the critical role of the educator in designing an interactive distance course that succeeds in engaging students. Researchers

(Palloff & Pratt, 2011) define the qualities of an excellent online educator as being "socially present" in the learner-oriented environment. Just as Meskill & Sadykova (2011) found in pre-pandemic teaching, those educators who transitioned to exclusively online teaching in the spring of 2020 had to quickly reassess their role and methodology in order to connect with students in a remote context, but often fell short of their desired objectives.

Just like teachers all over the world, world language instructors in our department muddled through, quickly learning to use an online course delivery system and trying our best to keep students engaged and communicating in the target language. The scrambling in spring 2020 was followed by a summer of planning and preparation, which included a mini-technology summit, one-on-one training with course design mentors, and a good deal of research into best practices and new methodologies, technologies, applications, and resources. The summer following the outbreak of the pandemic gave our faculty the chance to design sound online courses with clear expectations. Those emergency online courses of spring 2020 inspired the tight course design of the following fall. Where assessment had been a huge problem in the spring, the fall ushered in faculty-developed or publisher-provided online testing. Where narrated PowerPoints were still used in the spring, podcasts or filmed lectures became the norm in the fall. Where unfamiliarity with media and platforms had led to amateurish or even comical situations in the spring, the fall witnessed a team of newly trained professionals deftly sharing screens, monitoring group work, and videorecording classes and PowerPoint presentations.

Student evaluations from 2020-2021 online synchronous language courses indicated that, while they missed in-person interaction with their teachers, the students appreciated some pedagogical aspects of online courses, especially the accessibility of materials and the ability to re-watch instructional videos at their own pace. However, most of the instructors in our department were not satisfied with the results of online instruction. Many assignments and activities they had previously incorporated into their in-person teaching had been eliminated and social interaction was limited. In a study that corroborates our own findings, Associate Professor of Religious Studies Brandon L. Bayne echoed this sentiment, explaining that "We cannot just do the same thing online … Some assignments are no longer possible. Some expectations are no longer reasonable. Some objectives are no longer valuable" (Supiano, 2021, pp. 18–19).

For instance, in an online synchronous class, choral repetition for vocabulary pronunciation practice was no longer a possibility, so if the instructor required individual pronunciation checks, recordings, or mini–conversations, they had to be weighted at the expense of other activities or tests. This act of adding and subtracting assignments and assessments to fit the online format ended up radically changing the grade breakdown and, thus, the fundamental structure of the course. Moreover, in terms of expectations, our faculty quickly realized that the pace of online courses was different from that of face-to-face courses. Cramming the same volume of material into an online course was not feasible because "online instruction is not conducive to covering large amounts of content,

so you have to choose wisely, teaching the most important things at a slower pace" (Gonzalez, 2020, para. 16). Nowhere was this clearer than in beginning language courses where grammar points were eliminated and entire units were cut to avoid student saturation.

In addition to radically transforming social interactions with students and colleagues, the online environment stripped elementary and intermediate-level language teachers of basic resources such as the ability to use body language to communicate, role play, or play physical games to teach body parts, directions, colors, physical description, and actions. Lessons that involved movement were adapted to an online course format, which often meant hours of work creating image-based alternatives to illustrate vocabulary and concepts. And as in all disciplines, keeping students engaged was more difficult when students were off-site with muted microphones and were visible only as gray boxes instead of expressive faces. In addition, it soon became clear that minimizing distractions in the classroom was infinitesimally easier than online, where the instructor had no control over the learning space. Most importantly, keeping elementary language classes in the target language was more challenging in a distance-learning setting, especially when students were in breakout rooms because the instructor simply could not be everywhere at the same time. Indeed, the ability to gauge general student progress or comprehension during an activity is unparalleled in the classroom, where a quick glance around the room allows the instructor to view all of the groups simultaneously and assess or correct errors.

On the other hand, some of the innovations in online design proved to be highly effective, such as instructional videos, gamification, and student collaboration through platforms such as Flipgrid, discussion boards, meetings in the virtual space, and group or class chats. The accessibility and appeal of these new learning tools clearly indicated that some aspects of online teaching were worth retaining, especially when one considered the benefits of self-paced learning in terms of differentiation in second language acquisition. In a recent survey by the EdWeek Research Center, 87% of teacher-respondents stated that their "ability to effectively use education technologies had improved" (Bushweller, 2020, para. 8). After the onset of the pandemic, this technology became even more prolific (Bushweller, 2020, para. 23), allowing students to further develop their technological proficiency. Given our students' newly acquired comfort level with remote coursework, we adopted a hybrid format that allowed for both a mitigation of the challenges of online-only delivery and the leveraging of these newly mastered pedagogical innovations.

Enrollment as a Rationale For Hybrid Delivery

Initially conceived as a way to minimize exposure to Covid-19 and ease back into the in–person delivery of classes, the hybrid model showed great promise to meet the particular needs of our student body. Wright State University, the institution under study in this paper, is a regional public university serving a diverse student population that includes both traditional and non-traditional students, as well as active-duty military and veteran students, working professionals, and students

caring for family members at home. Most of the students do not live on campus and instead commute, some from nearby towns, and others from greater distances up to or surpassing an hour's drive. The Wright State Completion Plan (2020) gives data on our students, who enter the university with a wide range of educational backgrounds and levels of preparedness. We are proud to work with such a student body and recognize that, as it has with so many student populations worldwide, the pandemic exacerbated pre–existing challenges faced by many on our rosters. Offering classes in the hybrid mode offered a chance to minimize some of the struggles faced by these students, such as working off-campus or caring for family members, especially as the return to normal functions continued in an uneven manner.

Enrollment concerns also played an important role in our decision to implement a hybrid course structure. As we prepared to return to the classroom, we wondered whether students would truly be ready to once again attend in-person classes multiple times a week. Equally important, some economically disadvantaged students could benefit from different online delivery methods for practical reasons. For example, the asynchronous format was a more viable option than synchronous classes for students with connectivity issues, given that the flexible time frame allowed them to fulfill other responsibilities (such as work) or work around limited periods of internet access. Moreover, posted lectures were more accessible to students needing more time to review and rewind the class recordings.

In our university world language department, fall 2021 enrollment data showed that, in all three language programs offering a major, a majority of students in each of the languages chose to enroll in fully online classes. In the following table, we compare data from the three major languages of our department [French (FR), German (GER) and Spanish (SPN)] which show enrollment in the beginning through intermediate sections (101-202) offered during fall 2021, the delivery methods, the initial enrollment, and the 2-week census enrollment numbers in each section of the three languages.

When an online asynchronous format ("fully online no set meet time") was one of the possible course delivery choices, there was a clear student preference for this mode, followed by synchronous online classes ("fully online set meet time"), and then face-to-face or hybrid courses. The Spanish section, which tended to enroll more easily, limited most of their course delivery choices to online synchronous ("fully online set meet time") and hybrid ("partially online"). Results were the same with more students choosing fully online courses to those with a 50% face-to-face component. Upper-level classes revealed the same trend in even clearer terms; in one example, a traditionally popular face-to-face French Conversation class was canceled due to low enrollment (three students), while an asynchronous online French Composition class had a record enrollment of 23 students compared to 13 in fall 2019.

Table 1

Fall 2021 Enrollment Data in French, German, Spanish Beg. I through Int. 2

Level	Lang.	Fully online, no meet time		Fully online, set meet time		Face-to-face		Partially online, hybrid	
		Day 1	Wk 2	D 1	Wk 2	D 1	Wk 2	D 1	Wk 2
101	FR	28	20	15	14	12	11	n/a	n/a
	GER	13	10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	9
	SPN	n/a	n/a	48	43	n/a	n/a	41	37
102, off sequence	FR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	10
	GER	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	SPN	n/a	n/a	18	13	n/a	n/a	11	10
201	FR	24	19	n/a	n/a	13	11	n/a	n/a
	GER	21	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	SPN	24	16	28	25	n/a	n/a	15	9
202, off sequence	FR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	10	n/a	n/a
	GER	n/a	n/a	5	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	SPN	17	15	12	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

The above table also details the enrollment data at the end of week 2, which showed more retention in classes with set meet times. For instance, the FR 101 online asynchronous section reached its maximum capacity of 28 students at the start of the semester, but lost eight students by the two-week census date. The GER 101 online asynchronous course started with ten students, but lost 30%–or three students–after week two. On the other hand, only one student dropped the hybrid German 101 course after week two. Results in Spanish were slightly less conclusive; with a larger number of sections, the changes in enrollment presented with greater variation. The online asynchronous section of SPN 201, for instance, experienced the same drop in student enrollment as the above-mentioned French course, but other synchronous and hybrid offerings also saw higher-than-average drops. This may be explained by the fact that Beginning and Intermediate Spanish classes offered the online portion of their hybrid classes synchronously, unlike the hybrid model we had adopted.

While first semester language classes often experienced more attrition than other courses in the language sequence (102, 201, 202 in the above table), the comparative data reveal that students were even more likely to drop a class with no set meet time. One possible reason for this may be that students might have thought an asynchronous beginning language class involved no contact time or interaction, which was not the case in our department as it is not possible to learn a

language without interaction. A relatively large enrollment drop in 101 asynchronous courses occurred regularly over the last few semesters when students learned that they had to meet regularly with a group and one-on-one with the professor.

Designing a Hybrid Class

To guide our hybrid classroom design, the authors grounded their work in two seemingly contradictory second language acquisition theories that provided a broad perspective on linguistic growth and development: comprehensible input hypothesis (Krashen, 1981) and the comprehensible output theory (Swain, 1985).

Krashen's input hypothesis (1981, 1985) suggests the idea that one of the keys to language acquisition is providing rich, frequent, and authentic input. In the asynchronous portion of our hybrid class structure, the instructor needed to provide meaningful, age-appropriate input in the form of authentic readings, websites, instructor-created videos, written texts, stories, infographics, charts, statistics, songs, film clips, television shows, and chat conversations. Grammar and vocabulary were learned through themes rather than drills or detailed explanations. According to Krashen's theory, students must be able to understand the challenging but accessible input independently, making it perfect for inclusion in the asynchronous portion of the class. A concrete example of the type of comprehensible input provided in our hybrid classes was a unit on speaking and writing about the past, where students watched a short video narrated in the past and answered questions about it. The concept was then reinforced with a comic book where they had to match sentences to the images, a written short story, where they circled the appropriate verb, and a music video, where students described the setting, characters, and events in the past tense. Finally, they wrote a short two-paragraph story using past tense description and scene setting followed by chronological narration.

Krashen argued that students need only comprehensible input (1981, 1985) and gentle encouragement in order to become naturally proficient, but our stance is that comprehensible input is only one aspect of language acquisition as it does not seem to be sufficient to guarantee strong linguistic production. Merrill Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis (1985) focused on the concept of output, or the communicative production of language, as a necessary component of language development. Students must be obliged to produce language in order to develop proficiency. While these two theories seem to stand in sharp contrast to each other, our experience demonstrates that the two theories can be implemented and combined to create thoughtful, relaxed language learners. A hybrid format allowed the instructor to combine target-language input provided online in an asynchronous setting with the means to put theory into practice in a face-to-face classroom. In the online portion of the class, instructors assigned comprehensible input that students engaged with by reading, listening, viewing, and writing. In the face-to-face portion of the class, instructors addressed specific comprehension difficulties as they gauged and addressed the needs of lower and higher achieving learners in order to achieve a high level of language output. Here learners engaged in conversations, discussion, peer-to-peer activities, interviews, and interactions. The social contact with peers in the classroom increased motivation and reduced anxiety (Krashen, 1982).

In the hybrid class, learners achieved proficiency in the language as they had access to meaningful target-language resources which provided the tools for language production through constant interaction in the classroom. Students studying ways of speaking about the past prepared their lessons and activities online, and then in the classroom, they worked in groups to practice the past tense in creative activities, using the target language and the concepts learned in the asynchronous part of the course. For instance, they shared stories about their childhood or high school years, they interviewed each other about their weekend activities, and they played "find-a-person-who" games where they tried to find peers who did certain activities in the recent past.

The hybrid model we followed uses design elements taken from the flipped classroom concept. The flipped classroom model, pioneered by two high school teachers in 2007 (Bergmann & Sams, 2012) introduced a clean reversal of class expectations—homework was now to be done in class under the teacher's guidance and lectures were to be viewed at home. Their still popular methodology promised "more time for active learning" (Noonoo, 2017, para. 8), and has been shown to promote more teacher-student interaction and create self-directed learners who take charge of the learning process (Nouri, 2016). Studies have shown that students enjoy watching online instructional materials at their own pace and benefit from the interactive nature of the in-person activities (Nouri, 2016). Pedagogically, the hybrid structure has shown promise in responding to the individualized needs of our diverse student body in that it combined the best elements of the synchronous and asynchronous worlds. The asynchronous mode allowed for student-paced study, "potentially reducing anxiety" by providing differentiated instruction for our students' many different learning needs and levels (Moser et al., 2021, p. 3). On the other hand, the face-to-face mode supplied the missing link for many students: the in-person interaction, social connections, and contact with faculty as a resource and source of support. In addition, students benefited from more urgent prioritization of study given that in-person synchronous classes were less likely to slip to the bottom of the list because if students did not prepare outside the classroom, they would not be successful inside the classroom (Moser et al., 2021).

While the traditional flipped classroom implies a simple reversal of the homework/class lecture paradigm, the hybrid structure we used was slightly more complicated because we were replacing an in-person class session with a combination of asynchronous video instruction, authentic materials, guided homework, and testing. This dual instructional model required considerable advanced planning and a thoughtful instructional design to seamlessly combine both teaching modes. For the asynchronous portion of the class, instructors prepared engaging instructional videos with corresponding online homework and formative assessment quizzes to introduce vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and culture within a meaningful context. Students viewed the videos and prepare the accompanying homework to ensure comprehension prior to practicing the concepts in the classroom. Following the format of the flipped classroom structure, the subsequent in-person classroom time was now dedicated to language practice,

discussion, and real-life applications and activities. This combination of prior student preparation and hands-on practice in the classroom also served as a strong tool as we helped guide our students to higher language proficiency.

The flipped instruction model of the hybrid course offered students a flexible timeframe for accessing online instruction combined with an in-person experience that used established teaching strategies. Freed from technology issues, students could actively communicate in the classroom, interact with other students and the teacher, and participate in guided activities that allowed them to practice and improve their oral, aural, and written language proficiency. Importantly, the face-to-face portion of the class built a positive learning community. In this model, the social, emotional, and personal connection with the students remained intact, which had the potential to increase student motivation. In the hybrid world language class, students came to campus to actively practice oral and aural skills and develop proficiency through meaningful exchange; they were not traveling to campus to do something they could otherwise complete at home, such as listening to a lecture or viewing a slide presentation.

In our trial hybrid classes, our grade breakdown was altered to reflect the importance of in-class interaction: to encourage attendance, class participation represented a full 25% of the final grade; homework and formative assessment (quizzes) ranged from 20% to 25%; and summative assessment activities such as the oral interview, chapter tests, compositions, skits, and the final exam made up the remaining 50% to 55%. In order to account for attendance conflicts, students could receive an attendance "pass" for one class and could earn back participation points for up to two classes by working with a tutor. All of these rules were explained clearly on the syllabus and reiterated through a syllabus quiz, e-mail interactions, and postings to the LMS.

As with all classes, grading and expectations must be clear and regular so as to avoid confusion and frustration. In our experience, students appreciated and tended to remember regular due dates. Since the three of us taught in-person on Tuesdays, we collectively decided that the due date for all weekly homework and online work would be Sunday at 11:59 pm. This gave us the opportunity to grade the submitted homework to see where students needed extra help and practice before meeting with them in person. Common errors were then addressed and remediated in a group setting, with exercises that targeted problem areas. As such, the hybrid class provided a rigorous class structure that reduced technical barriers and ameliorated communication with students to facilitate language acquisition.

Hybrid courses offered the added benefit of simplifying formal and informal language assessment, such as in the homework activities described above. One of the great weaknesses of remote synchronous and asynchronous course delivery models is summative assessment of knowledge. While supervision during testing could be enhanced through lockdown browsers or monitoring equipment, these security platforms raised privacy issues and did not entirely prevent creative students from using secondary sources during exams. In the hybrid model, instructors got to know the students' work via their in-class practice and formative assessment activities, which could go a long way toward discouraging the use of secondary sources during later online assessments.

Our hybrid model gave instructors the flexibility to offer on-line or in-person assessment. In the asynchronous online portion of the class, language educators could choose to provide continuous assessment activities (short quizzes, homework, test reviews, other flexible assessment) and move high stakes summative assessment activities, like exams or final projects, into the classroom. Depending on their priorities, the reverse was also possible. This delivery method allowed for the greatest possible variety of assessment styles and types, harnessing the options provided by both in-person and online assessments.

Challenges of Teaching Hybrid World Language Courses

In preparing to teach a number of courses in the hybrid format, we tried to anticipate the potential drawbacks of this format so that we could address them during the planning stage. Here, we chose to use a Backward Design Approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998), where the learning goals were created first, as they aided in ensuring that the course design aligned with external standards, such as the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), while also meeting individualized course and program goals. As in both the in-person and online classrooms, the hybrid model proposed here did have some challenges. Addressing these issues began even before stepping into the classroom, in the planning phase, as instructors needed to establish a smooth connection between the online materials and the in-class activities. Instructors had to create interactive online materials that kept the students interested, and they had to offer enough technological variety to prepare students for in-class performance. As such, learning outcomes needed to align in the online instruction and in-class application, ideally building on each other. This challenge required instructional design skills, time, and a well-organized course design within the LMS.

Dividing the instructional hours between in-person sessions and online materials studied asynchronously required the careful incorporation of technology into the language classroom. While many faculty members had become familiar users—or even great fans—of many of the pedagogical and language applications in the design of their fully online classes, those technologies were only welcomed to the in-person meetings if they directly supported pedagogical goals such as communication in the target language, exploration of cultural elements, or development of students' written or oral proficiency. Students in a fully online class required a wide variety of these technological tools to reach their different learning styles and existing proficiency levels, and to support their learning in an often-isolated environment, practicing new vocabulary words or grammatical structures by themselves. Returning to the in-person classroom, however, required instructors to take a conscious break from the screens and dust off some of the communicative activities that have been languishing in their toolboxes. For instance, a pre-recorded video works well for an online asynchronous class, but if used in a face-to-face setting, it runs the risk of becoming a replacement for in-person teacher-student interaction. Thus, while incorporating some collaborative, interactive, and entertaining apps did enhance in-person class sessions, instructors could not default to holding an online class in an in-person classroom.

Another challenge was that, given the proliferation of new modes of course delivery, students were sometimes confused about course expectations, especially in terms of attendance and deadlines. At our institution, there was no pre-existing format for accurately describing the hybrid schedule, which initially caused student confusion. Since the course format was first introduced, the description was clarified, correctly listing the sole in-person meeting time. Additionally, students were simultaneously taking classes in multiple modalities across various departments, including in-person and asynchronous online courses. It was, therefore, essential to establish a course structure and guidelines regarding the level of flexibility within the hybrid course. Students needed to understand that although they were free to view the online instructional materials during their ideal time and space and at their own speed, there were still deadlines for these activities. Above all, students needed to clearly understand the importance of class attendance and that instructors assigned a certain class time when all students had to meet in person, as this was where the active language learning practice would occur. If students could not come to class due to illness, personal or business reasons, or unexpected life situations, they were penalized for missed class time and, above all, they missed the active practice that instructors knew to be key to their language progression. Students accustomed to the flexibility of hyflex or asynchronous online classes were told to more consciously plan their time in order to accommodate external obligations, bearing in mind that the hybrid model still provided more flexibility than the traditional, fully synchronous in-person class. Explaining the rationale for these in-person meetings and the expectations for attendance was critical to ensure students prioritized regular attendance and target-language participation. Further, instructors increased accessibility in the curriculum by providing ways for students to complete some in-class activities, such as providing credit for tutoring sessions or permitting students to make up a certain amount of the activities during the instructor's office hours.

Student Data on Hybrid Course Benefits

Preliminary data from our own classrooms during the fall semester has corroborated other findings in the field about hybrid teaching. In mid-term evaluations, student reaction to the format was overwhelmingly positive. Students were asked two simple questions in an anonymous questionnaire: 1. What do you like about the hybrid class format? 2. What do you dislike about the hybrid class format? Table 2 gives a breakdown of the students' anonymous responses to the class format, with a breakdown on what students chose to include in their written answers. This survey reflects mid-term evaluation responses from 75 world language students in hybrid course sections (11 French; 9 German; 55 Spanish).

Out of 75 students enrolled in a hybrid section, only 24 students were enrolled in hybrid courses with an asynchronous component given that most Spanish hybrid courses did not follow this format. Of the 24 student respondents, 20 liked the format overall and four students contributed partially negative comments about the hybrid mode. Four students cited a conflict between the class format and their lack of time management skills. Two of those students also longed for a

return to fully online classes. One student explained the challenge in turning in the weekly homework, "I appreciate the lax due dates (with assignments being due on Sunday by midnight), however, I feel no urgency to get them done until 11:30 pm Sunday night. It's easy to procrastinate." This is certainly a situation that arises in all classroom modalities.

Table 2

Anonymous Student Responses in Hybrid Classes (N=24)

Question	Number	Summary of Written Comments
Advantages of the hybrid schedule	19	Convenience, flexibility, best of both worlds, works with work schedule, comfort
Disadvantages of the hybrid schedule	2	Prefer face-to-face; prefer all online
Face-to-face: Relationship building	16	Professor interaction, meeting classmates, enjoy group work
Face-to-face: Interaction with professor	2	Instant answers to questions
Not enough instructor contact	2	Prefer face-to-face classes
Asynchronous online work Positive comments	10	Less stressful; accessibility; work/life balance
Asynchronous online work Negative comments	4	Easier to get distracted; Procrastination; Time management
Covid	2	Better schedule for those with autoimmune disease or vulnerable family members

On the other hand, many students mentioned scheduling flexibility in their answers. For example, one student wrote, "I prefer hybrid classes over all in-person or all online. The flexibility of only meeting one time a week made it much easier to schedule classes. I love online classes, but the in-person time makes it easier to learn." Most students liked the availability and accessibility of the online content, with comments such as "I like the flexibility: being able to see the teacher and classmates sometimes, but also having content online with easy accessibility." Many students appreciated the flexibility in scheduling, and one particular student explained:

> …it provides the opportunity to connect in class once a week, ask questions, communicate in Spanish, etc. But I like that for Thursday I don't have to leave my day job (like I do on Tuesdays) to be in class so it allows me the opportunity to gain the credits but not have to arrange my day schedules as much. I like the flexibility in completing the assignments in a hybrid fashion without the pressure of exact time frame of the day.

Other students cited comfort as a primary reason for liking the hybrid format, noting that "learning from the comfort of my room is a major benefit. Getting to

learn and participate in class while my kitten cuddles me is too perfect for words." Clearly, some students felt less anxiety learning in their home environment. After multiple semesters of online learning, this new combined approach is one that students might expect to continue.

Additional positive elements of the hybrid structure were linked to health and economic concerns. As we had predicted, our commuter students appreciated saving time and gas money. One student wrote that the hybrid format "saves me a lot of money on gas since I don't have to drive to campus." For students driving a good distance to and from campus, making only 15 trips instead of 30 certainly seems to add up. Given the ongoing pandemic, two students mentioned Covid as a reason for appreciating the hybrid mode, with one commenting that "it's really nice to have such a balance. It makes me comfortable knowing I have minimal exposure (I have an extremely high-risk family.) while also receiving a more effective education." Having seen the benefits of reduced exposure for the transmission of contagious diseases, this is a concern that will potentially be a higher priority for students going forward, even as it relates to diseases such as the flu. Some students even expressed a desire for more hybrid classes, with one writing:

> I am highly satisfied with this and honestly wish it could be an option for more classes. I like to be able to interact once a week but not have the pressure to rearrange my schedule for a second day. As a full-time employee, rearranging isn't impossible, it's just harder. I appreciate this being an option this semester.

Another student said, "After experiencing the hybrid model, I really love it and wish that my other classes could be the same way." Over 83 percent of students responded positively to the hybrid class experience, and these comments provide invaluable insight into the particular elements of this modality that appealed to them.

Conclusion

After a semester of teaching one hybrid class each, we have been able to compare our student perceptions and progress as well as our personal experiences on the realities of hybrid teaching and have collectively seen the benefits of the format first-hand. This hybrid model of instruction delivered positive results in terms of student engagement, proficiency, and retention. Students came to class prepared, having engaged in the online lessons we provide for them in the LMS. They viewed the online videos and turn in corresponding homework and quizzes prior to the in-person class. The face-to-face portion was dedicated to oral and aural practice, with the exception of a brief review of vocabulary and grammar points when needed. Students interacted in target language tasks, interviewing each other, giving each other directions, playing charades, and solving problems. To reinforce the learning community, students spent equal time with each of their classmates, switching groups and partners as they went from activity to activity. The atmosphere was dynamic and warm, and the students appreciated the chance to interact in the target language. This delivery mode truly combined the best of both worlds as instructors who were previously relegated to fully online teaching

were once again able to use gestures, movement, and visual clues to communicate meaning in class while giving students unlimited access to course materials online.

In terms of instructor workload, the hybrid course required a dedicated approach to balancing in-class and online activities and in some cases felt like teaching two separate classes. Each week, instructors were required to prepare multiple face-to-face activities that would keep the students actively engaged and motivated, making the most of their limited in-person time. On the other hand, supplying and creating the many varied activities for the online portion of the class required many hours of organization, filming, and constant postings to the LMS. In addition, online grading was more time-consuming than traditional paper grading, although it was easier to keep track of what students submitted and when. Now, that we are repeating this structure, we have benefited from the initial design work and content creation, which we must now simply edit instead of creating it from scratch. However, despite the extra work, we all agreed that the end result was well worth the effort and we plan to continue using this format in the future.

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Transition to Online World Language Class During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Better or Worse?

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The Challenge

The sudden transition to the distance learning mode in many American schools under the global pandemic in the spring of 2020 left students with no agency in the choice regarding their class formats. Did the emergent transition increase class anxiety? How can the findings be used to cope with emotional issues in the future?

Abstract

World language classes at many universities across the United States transitioned to an online mode after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring semester of 2020. This study probed the emotional impacts including worries, concerns and fears of postsecondary world language learners caused by the abrupt transition. This study also compared the anxiety levels experienced by postsecondary world language learners in face-to-face classes who transitioned to the emergent online environment. A blended quantitative and qualitative survey on 96 language learners (Chinese and Spanish) revealed that the students had certain worries, concerns, and/or fears about the online classes. These emotional impacts had diminished by the end of the semester due to various course factors that contributed to a smooth transition. However, the students perceived that learning outcomes diminished in online classes. The study also found that the students experienced lower anxiety in online classes than in face-to-face classes, although the majority of each group still claimed a preference for the face-to-face mode. Several reasons were identified. Pedagogical implications of the findings were also provided.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an abrupt transition from face-to-face classes to a blended or purely online format at nearly all educational institutions across the United States. Around mid-March of 2020, teachers rushed to make use of any resources at hand to make the transition as smooth as possible. This unexpected change left students with many uncertainties about the second half of the semester. Uncertainties and worries were presumably more palpable among world language learners because face-to-face interpersonal communications are crucial for learning another language. Understanding the anxieties students experienced under such overwhelming circumstances can increase knowledge about students' needs in urgent situations. An investigation of what concerns occurred to students, if their worries and anxiety lessened after they settled down, and if class anxiety increased after transitioning because the transition was unexpected can hopefully inspire language educators to better take into account students' emotions into teaching online and/or face-to-face classes. This type of study is in dire need since there are only a few studies about online language class anxiety (Russell, 2020), and there are even fewer about the impact of COVID-19 on world or second language learners. The present study is critically different from the existing studies in three aspects:

1. Previous studies primarily focused on post hoc learning environments and the consequent results. For example, they investigated online anxiety after classes had started. This study also probes worries before classes started, adding new insights into language anxiety and expanding knowledge in this area.
2. The students in the study lacked agency in the choice of an online or a face-to-face learning mode. Investigating this particular situation will shed light on how to reduce world language learning anxiety.

Review of the Literature

Second and World Language Anxiety

Language anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Previous studies investigated the influences of anxiety on learning another language and what factors could cause anxiety. However, because the findings in earlier studies lacked consistency, evaluating anxiety through consideration of the learning environment was advocated. As an example of this inconsistency, Chastain (1975) reported inconclusive results about anxiety's relationship with achievement, and how it, whether significant or insignificant, positive or negative, corresponded to the different target languages (Spanish, French, and Arabic). Capturing the situational nature of language anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed three types of anxiety corresponding to specific situations: communication anxiety, negative evaluation anxiety, and test anxiety. They constructed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to evaluate each type.

In Horwitz's study (1986), test anxiety was found to be significantly related to achievement. Atef-Vahid and Fard Kashani (2011) investigated high school students

from a private school in Iran and discovered a significant and moderate negative correlation between English language learning anxiety and academic achievement, especially in regards to final course grades. Further relationships were found regarding language output. For example, Kleinmann (1977), in a study of Spanish and Arabic learners of English, claimed that, depending on whether it is facilitating or debilitating, anxiety can influence willingness to take a risk. An example of this was the use of expressions contrastive to one's native language, which the students found to be difficult and avoided under debilitating anxiety. Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) similarly found that students who displayed higher levels of anxiety spoke fewer words in the target language and scored lower on the correctness of output as well as in the use of complex grammatical structures. Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) suggested that anxiety led to a withdrawal of personal information in student speech, stating that the salubriousness of the learning environment could encourage language output. More recent studies revealed that anxiety had a negative effect on language performance (Elkhafaifi, 2005). Elkhafaifi (2005) reported a negative correlation between world language anxiety, listening comprehension scores, and final grades among Arabic language learners.

Factors Related to Language Class Anxiety

The existing studies reported a range of factors related to language class anxiety. The difficulty level of the target language played a role. According to the study conducted on more than 100 college students in America (Zhao et al., 2013), Chinese language reading anxiety was mediated by the familiarity with topics and scripts, indicating that the higher level of familiarity lessened anxiety. Chen and Chang (2004) investigated over 1,000 English as foreign language learners in Taiwan, demonstrating that language anxiety was related to students' perception of the difficulty of English. Saito and Samimy (1996) investigated American university students learning Japanese, French, and Russian, and found no group differences in general language anxiety. However, what these researchers did find was a significant difference in reading anxiety, which was stronger in French and Japanese. Other factors in understanding world language anxiety included learners' perceptions about themselves and teachers, size of the learning group, age they began learning, experience with the target-language-speaking areas, and difficulty level of classes. Bailey (1983) found that students who compared themselves with others determined the degree of anxiety, a finding that was later corroborated by a study conducted on 216 Spanish university students (Arnaiz & Pérez-Luzardo, 2014).

Teacher factors, such as teacher approval (Bailey, 1983) and positive teacher influence (Young, 1990), could attenuate anxiety. Learners doing small group work were reported to experience less anxiety as well (Young, 1999). This discovery was reflected in the later work of Frantzen and Magnan (2005) who, while investigating language learning anxiety in French and Spanish learners, found that students felt more comfortable and less intimidated about speaking when they had the chance to work in small groups together. Those who started learning a language at an earlier age (Dewaele et al., 2008) and those who had overseas experiences

(Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999) were less anxious as well. Saito and Samimy (1996) compared the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels and claimed the advanced level experienced higher anxiety than the intermediate level, which was higher than the elementary level.

Language Anxiety and Online Learning

Language anxiety is a real experience for online learners, yet there have been scant studies on this topic (Russell, 2020). Pichette (2009) compared the face-to-face and online learning of American students studying English or Spanish at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. He reported that, with all of the levels combined, there were no significant differences; however, at specific levels, the anxiety of the online advanced learners was reduced, while the anxiety of their face-to-face counterparts did not change. However, the anxiety level of beginning learners was not clear in this study. For this reason, the present study will compare the anxiety of beginning level students with that of the intermediate level students.

These studies have shown that learning another language online is still stressful, even though learners may have security in anonymity, flexibility in space and time (if asynchronous), and no stage fright of physically speaking in front of peers. One study asked distance learners studying English which problems had become more serious over the course of four months of learning. Among these problems were concerns about having opportunities to practice the language, being able to talk with others, and feelings of isolation (Hurd, 2007). Research conducted by Hurd and Xiao (2010) similarly uncovered that productive skills, such as speaking and writing, induced the most anxiety. Another noted challenge was the diminished amount of nonverbal communication, including gestures and facial expressions, during audio calls and synchronous discussions (Hurd & Xiao, 2010). A study by Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) investigated 104 college ESL learners in Bangladesh and showed that most students had anxiety in virtual classes because the lack of interactions with peers and instructors reduced learning outcome. However, Russell (2018), in a study of 33 Spanish language learners, demonstrated that the anxiety from speaking with native speakers online was diminished by the end of the semester. This was accomplished through instructional interventions, such as increasing learner connection, correcting false concepts about language learning, and discussing anxiety openly. According to Russell (2020), additional studies are urgently needed before any definitive conclusion could be drawn.

These studies about online classes all investigated the learners who chose to take online classes as an act of free will, but none were about the students who lacked agency in the selection. One such study (Majid et al., 2012) found a strong relationship between online language learners' readiness and confidence, demonstrating that the lack of agency in transitioning to online mode can make students feel unready. This feeling of unreadiness may cause a lack of confidence, leading to anxieties about the change. In addition, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the previous studies have not compared the language class anxiety of the same students in online and face-to-face classes. Therefore, the present study will investigate if students lacking agency experienced higher anxiety in spite of

the anxiety-reducing features of distance learning, and compare their anxiety in face-to-face and online classes.

Comparing Online Language Classes with Face-to-Face Classes

Researchers have also investigated the efficacy of online classes compared to face-to-face classes, and the factors related to a positive learner experience. Many studies have shown that online classes yield outcomes comparable to, or even better than, face-to-face classes. According to Blake and Delforge (2007), beginning online Spanish learners achieved significantly higher scores in a grammar test and better scores in composition writing than those enrolled in the face-to-face courses. Cahill and Catanzaro (1997) as well as Soo and Ngeow (1998), surveying Spanish and English beginner learners, respectively, concluded that online learning was more effective. Salcedo (2010) compared the results of the homework and exams of Spanish learners, showing that, although the differences were not significant, online students performed better. A study by Blake et al. (2008) measured the oral proficiency level of Spanish learners and found that the same level was reached by online, face-to-face, and hybrid class students. Enkin and Mejías-Bikandi (2017) examined the improvement and achievement of advanced Spanish language learners, 12 online and 16 face-to-face, and demonstrated that the pre- and post-test scores were not significantly different in each group. The quiz scores were not significantly different between the two, but the results should be cautiously generalized because of the small quantity of participants.

Some other studies found factors that contribute to positive online experiences by comparing synchronous and asynchronous modes (e.g., Offir et al., 2008; Hrastinski, 2008). Interactions were a frequently recognized factor. Carr (2014) claimed that students regarded interactions as an exceptionally important attribute in successful virtual learning and suggested that instructors create multifaceted interaction methods, such as video and text. Compared to the asynchronous mode, Offir et al. (2008) reasoned that teacher-student interaction accompanying teaching affected the results of teaching methods. In synchronous online classes, both direct and immediate teacher feedback, as well as peer communication, was available. Nonetheless, in the asynchronous format, more space for processing materials was appreciated by the students (Hrastinski, 2008). The other factors found thus far include the organization of courses and efficacy of learning tools, such as PowerPoint and Blackboard (Enkin & Mejías-Bikandi, 2017). According to Reisetter and Boris (2004), graduate students with education majors rated four elements as highly influential on the virtual class: course coherence, clear goals, teacher voice, and teacher feedback. Teacher feedback was found to be a central factor for small group work (Coll et al., 2014). On the other side of the coin, the study by Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) showed that some factors had negative influences on virtual experiences, such as the lack of group work, less frequent interaction with teachers and peers, limited feedback, and the feeling of isolation.

In conclusion, the factors that related to online learning experiences were associated with class operation, such as interactions, teacher feedback, communication, group work, and connection. These factors could likewise

influence learning outcomes, as linked with assignment and course completion (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020). Therefore, the present study will investigate if the students had worries in four areas: class operation, course completion, assignments completion, and learning outcome.

Research Questions

During the COVID-19 pandemic, learners transitioning to online learning had to lose face-to-face connections with their peers and teachers and forsake face-to-face target language interactions. Investigating the concerns that students experienced, whether the concerns disappeared as students adjusted, and whether class anxiety increased in the online environment will provide invaluable insight into the learners' attitudes toward changes in the learning environment. The present study will probe the emotional experiences of Spanish and Chinese language learners, at the beginner and intermediate levels, at American universities in the wake of the course transition to online learning. Additionally, the study will also compare their class anxiety in face-to-face and online settings. The present study attempts to answer three questions:

1. In the week before the transition from face-to-face to online classes under the pandemic, did Chinese and Spanish language learners experience worries about class operation, course completion, learning outcomes, and assignment completion? How can these worries be compared at the beginner and intermediate levels?
2. If they had worries mentioned in the first research question, did the students still worry by the end of the semester in each language group? If not, what course factors were helpful?
3. How can language anxiety be compared in face-to-face and online classes in the Chinese group? How can it be compared in the Spanish group?

Methods

Participants

Spanish is the most commonly taught language in the U.S., and Mandarin Chinese is a less commonly taught language with a high enrollment. An MLA study reported that since 1958, the Spanish enrollments topped other world languages in the U.S. (Looney & Lusin, 2019) while Chinese has stayed as one of the most-enrolled less commonly taught languages. The present study investigates Spanish and Chinese learners to produce largely applicable results that also benefit the teaching of other languages. Moreover, the study of Kong et, al. (2018) showed that the motivations of Spanish and Chinese language learners presented different relational patterns and since motivation correlates to language anxiety (McEown & Sugita-McEown, 2020), it is necessary to find out the differences in anxiety for the two groups.

The researchers sent invitations to instructors through two professional social media, asking them to recruit their students to complete the survey. Unfortunately, they received no response. As a result, the researchers contacted five instructors they had met before, by sending a social-media message to one instructor and

a separate email to each of the rest. In total, 99 students, including 37 Spanish and 62 Chinese language learners from four American universities, participated in the survey. Three of them were removed because two of the learners did not finish their answers, and one was a native speaker of the target language. Therefore, 96 participants were counted (see Table 1). They were all non-heritage learners, learning Chinese or Spanish at the beginner or intermediate level. They came from various majors, including TESL, education, computer, global studies, business, international relations, engineering, environment, history, psychology, and filmmaking. Eighty-eight of them spoke English as L1, and eight spoke other languages: Korean (5), Spanish (2), and Hmong (1).

Table 1
General Information of the Participants (N=96)

	Male	Female	Beginner	Intermediate	Mean of Age
Chinese (n = 59)	23	36	33	26	20.64
Spanish (n = 37)	11	26	31	6	19.69

Setting

Upon the outbreak of COVID-19 in America, the four universities (three public and one private) where the participants were recruited had transitioned their world language classes to a synchronous online mode in the second half of the 2020 spring semester—around the middle of March. Therefore, each participant had a roughly equal number of weeks spent in the face-to-face and online classes. The five instructors received doctoral degrees (two Chinese) or master's degrees (two Chinese, one Spanish) in their respective professional fields, and each prioritized speaking proficiency and highlighted a learner-centered approach. Before transitioning to online teaching, they completed technological and pedagogical training provided by their home institution or professional organizations in the United States. Their training included how to use Microsoft Teams or Zoom to launch a class; how to integrate the online tools for language input, output, and assessment, such as Flipgrid, Pear Deck, Padlet, Quizlet, ThinkLink, Edpuzzle, and Katulra; and how techniques and activities can be utilized to promote interpersonal interaction and classroom management. The Chinese language learners in the study took classes using Microsoft Teams or Zoom, and the Spanish learners used Microsoft Teams. The two platforms are similar in most teaching functions, and the participants were allowed the freedom to turn their cameras on or off during their classes.

Procedure

As mentioned, the researchers sent an individual invitation to five instructors. As a result, five instructors were willing to invite their students to be a part of the survey. They informed their students that participation was voluntary and that the data would be collected anonymously and stored as credentials. The participating students received the survey in an e-mail attachment or via a hyperlink on

SurveyPlanet at the end of the semester. After completing the survey, they sent it back to their instructor through e-mail attachments or submitted it on the survey website. The instructors, or their teaching assistants, forwarded the email attachments to the researchers.

Instrument

The transition to online was abrupt, so class operation, course completion, learning outcomes, and assignment completion were presumably four concerns for the students. Therefore, the study focused on these four aspects and investigated if the learners had worries about these aspects. The instrument (see Appendix) includes six parts. Part One is about general information. The researchers developed the items of Parts Two, Three, and Four since an established survey instrument appropriate for the investigations of Research Questions One and Two was not available. Part Two consists of four statements, one for each concern, connecting the concern to a worry about the transition to online. For example, "In the week BEFORE the online classes started…I feared that the online format will reduce Chinese-learning outcomes." Part Three consists of four statements, one for each concern, connecting the concern to a source of confidence at the end of the semester. For example, "By the END of the semester…I think that the online format does not reduce Chinese-learning outcomes." The eight statements were developed by the researchers.

Part Four contains 12 items developed by the researchers about student attitudes toward four online class elements. Each element has three items. The four elements, based on previous studies, are determinants of learning experience. The four elements are small group work (e.g., Young, 1999), visual support (e.g., Carr, 2014), student participation (e.g., Kahn et al., 2017), and teacher feedback (e.g., Coll et al., 2014). The internal consistency of small group work items (No. 11, 16, 18; $\alpha = .919$) and student participation items (No. 14, 17, 19; $\alpha = .605$) was strong, while that of visual support (No. 9, 12, 20; $\alpha = .569$) and teacher feedback (No. 10, 13, 15; $\alpha = .426$) was not. However, the items of visual support and teacher feedback were significantly correlated. In "visual support," $p = .000$ (item 15 and 18) and $p = .001$ (items 15 and 26). In "teacher feedback," $p = .000$ (item 10 and 15), and item 13, despite no correlation, addressed the value of obtaining teacher feedback through questions and answers, which, in reality, strongly supports learners who seek feedback. Thus, the researchers reasoned that the items tapped into the underlying construct and that "visual support" and "teacher feedback" should be retained.

Part Five adopts ten items from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986), five investigating face-to-face classes and five investigating online classes. Part Six concludes the survey with three open-ended questions to probe further; the first question was directed to Research Questions One and Two; the second question to Research Question Three, and the third question applied to all of the research questions.

Analysis

The study blended quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. The quantitative survey adopted the six-point Likert scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3), slightly agree (4), agree (5), and strongly agree (6). The normality test

showed that the data distribution was normal ($p > .05$) for the items of "negative emotional impacts" of Chinese and Spanish learners before transitioning, and was normal for the items of "the decrease of emotional impacts" of Chinese and Spanish learners after transitioning. The data distribution was also normal for face-to-face class anxiety and online class anxiety of the Spanish learners. However, it was not normal (Shapiro-Wilk $p < .05$) for the face-to-face and online class anxiety of the Chinese learners. The first research question probes the negative emotional impacts caused by the urgent transition and compares them at the beginner and intermediate levels. The mean values were adopted to locate impact level, that is, a mean value from one to three was regarded as no impact, a mean value of four was regarded as moderate impact, five as strong impact, and six as very strong impact. For the second research question—if the emotional effects decreased by the end of the semester—the paired sample *t*-test was applied. The Spearman correlation was performed to address the factors associated with a decrease (if any was found). For the third research question, the paired sample *t*-test was run to compare the online and face-to-face class anxiety of Spanish learners while the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed for comparing the Chinese learners. The effect size of Cohen's *d* was applied for the two independent *t*-tests and the paired sample *t*-test. Additionally, r, suggested by Pallant (2007), was used for the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (r = z divided by the square root of the total number of scores). All of the tests were completed on SPSS 26.

The answers to the open-ended questions were analyzed manually. Ninety-six responses were received for each question. The length of the responses to the first question was between 2 and 115 words, with most responses ranging from 20 to 50 words; the length of the responses to the second question was between 1 and 105, with most responses ranging from 20 to 50 words; the length of the responses to the third question was between 1 and 169 words, with most responses from 30 to 50 words. The researchers read the answers independently. They identified repeated themes, highlighted corresponding words or phrases, and wrote annotations. For each rereading, they added, reduced, and/or combined the themes. After completing an independent analysis, the researchers compared their results. They resolved the differences and revised the themes as necessary.

Results

Research Question One: In the week before the transition from face-to-face to online classes under the pandemic, did Chinese and Spanish language learners experience worries about class operation, course completion, learning outcome, and assignment completion? How can these worries be compared at the beginner and intermediate levels?

The descriptive data showed that, at the time of knowing about the transition, the students of combined Chinese and Spanish groups, and each group separately had undergone moderate worries, concerns, and fears as described in the survey questionnaire (Part Two). The mean of the concerns of all items (class operation, course completion, class operation, and completing assignments) is 4.05 for the combined group, 4.021 for the Chinese group, and 4.034 for the Spanish group.

A close look at each survey item showed that, in the combined group or within each language group, the result is the same: the greatest concern was about class operation (item one), followed by concerns about learning outcomes (item three). The concern about course completion (item two) and completing assignments (item four) was less apparent (see Table 2).

Table 2
Specific Negative Emotions (Item-Based)

	Combined (N =96)		Chinese (N = 59)		Spanish (N = 37)	
	Mean	SF	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Class operation	4.45	1.186	4.440	1.290	4.486	1.017
2. Course completion	3.78	1.437	3.745	1.603	3.838	1.143
3. Learning outcome	4.29	1.288	4.355	1.374	4.189	1.151
4. Completing assignments	3.69	1.576	3.542	1.653	3.946	1.432

The independent sample *t*-tests showed that, combining the two languages, the beginner-level students (N = 64) experienced notably higher concern about course completion than the intermediate-level students (N = 32) (p <.05) by a large effect size (d = 0.528), and about completing assignments (p <.05) by a medium effect size (d = 0.425). However, there was no difference in class operation and learning outcome (see Table 3).

Table 3
Negative Emotions by the Levels (B=Beginner; I=Intermediate)

	Mean	SD	*t*	*P*	*D*
Course completion	4.016 (B) 3.333 (I)	1.397 (B) 1.429 (I)	2.240*	.029	0.528
Completing assignments	3.920 (B) 3.272 (I)	1.619 (B) 1.420 (I)	2.021*	.047	0.425

*p < .05

Since readiness and confidence in online language classes are positively correlated (Majid, etc., 2012), the beginner-level students, being not as experienced as the intermediates, could feel less ready and less confident, which could cause more concern about completing the assignments and the course.

Research Question Two: If they had worries mentioned in the 1st research question, did the students still worry by the end of the semester in each language group? If not, what course factors were helpful?

This question highlighted four course factors that support language learning: group work, teacher feedback, student participation, and visual support. The

results of Part Three of the survey showed that, by the end of the semester, the combined group and each language group was optimistic (from "slightly agree" to "agree") about their online class. The mean of the values of the concerns presented in Part Two of the survey (class operation, course completion, class operation, and completing assignments) is 4.55 for the combined group, 4.635 for the Chinese group, and 4.432 for the Spanish group. A close look at the specifics showed that the combined group was optimistic (from "slightly agree" to "agree") with all items except for the learning outcome (see Table 4). A close look at each language separately showed that the Chinese group agreed that they could finish the course smoothly ("course completion," item six, mean = 5.169) and were able to complete assignments ("doing assignments," item eight, mean = 5.050). To a degree, the Chinese students were comfortable with how online classes had been going ("class operation," item five, mean = 4.779). However, they did not agree that the online format did not reduce Chinese-learning outcomes ("learning outcomes," item seven, mean = 3.542). A similar but lower mean-value trend was seen in the Spanish group (see Table 4). This finding about learning outcome did not support the previous studies (e.g. Blake & Delforge, 2007; Salcedo, 2010).

Table 4
Descriptive Data of Concerns by the End of the Semester (Item-Based)

	Combined (N = 96)		Chinese (N = 59)		Spanish (N = 37)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
5. Class operation	4.76	1.083	4.779	1.175	4.729	0.932
6. Course completion	5.06	.926	5.169	0.931	4.891	0.909
7. Learning outcome	3.46	1.436	3.542	1.500	3.351	1.337
8. Completing assignments	4.93	.868	5.050	0.839	4.756	0.894

The Spearman correlation test revealed that each course factor presented in Part Four of the survey had a significant positive relationship with the general optimism of the combined group: visual support (p = .000), group work (p = .000), teacher feedback (p= .000), and student participation (p = .000); and for the Chinese group: visual support (p = .000), group work (p = .000), teacher feedback (p = .000), and student participation (p = .000; see Table 5). In the same vein, not only for the combined group but also for the Chinese group, each factor had a strong positive relationship with every specific optimism (i.e., class operation, course completion, learning outcome, and doing assignments; see Table 6). The Spearman correlation test showed that the general optimism of the Spanish group was related to teacher feedback (p = .006) and visual support (p = .004), but not group work or student participation (see Table 5). Delving into the specifics showed that visual support had a significant positive relationship with course completion (p = .010), learning outcomes (p = .032), and completing assignments (p = .002),

while teacher feedback (p = .022) had a significant positive relationship with learning outcomes (p = .033) and completing assignments (p = .010; see Table 6).

Table 5
Correlations Between Course Factors and General Emotional Improvement

	Mean			SD			Correlation Coeff.		
	CO	CH	SP	CO	CH	SP	CO	CH	SP
Visual support	5.034	5.000	4.977	.841	0.920	0.833	.497*	.529*	.329*
Teacher feedback	5.288	5.344	5.159	.563	0.587	0.549	.534*	.602*	.411*
Group work	4.527	4.875	3.583	1.386	1.228	1.755	.361*	.475*	.149
Student participation	4.559	4.757	4.075	1.040	1.059	1.058	.407*	.556*	.218

**p < .05.; CO stands for "combined" (N =96); CH stands for "Chinese" (N = 59), and SP stands for "Spanish" (N = 37).*

Table 6
Correlation Between Course Factors and Specific Emotional Improvements

	Class operation			Course completion			Learning outcome			Completing assignments		
	CO	CH	SP	CO	CH	SP	CO	CH	SP	CO	CH	SP
Visual support	.44*	.51*	.18	.39*	.39*	.41*	.32*	.41*	.35*	.42*	.41*	.49*
Teacher feedback	.51*	.61*	.28	.42*	.48*	.19	.40*	.45*	.35*	.44*	.47*	.41*
Group work	.28*	.46*	-.02	.32*	.37*	.02	.34*	.47*	.16	.28*	.26*	25
Student participation	.38*	.56*	.07	.36*	.39*	.19	.29*	.46*	.10	.32*	.39*	.27

**p < .05.*
CO stands for "combined" (N =96); CH stands for "Chinese" (N = 59), and SP stands for "Spanish" (N = 37).

The comments confirmed that the students' worries, concerns, or fears tapered off by the end of the semester. Their comments shed light on the aforementioned quantitative results, revealing three reasons for their reduced anxiety: small group work (Chinese), teacher help (Chinese, Spanish), and visual support (Chinese, Spanish). The small group work carried out in Microsoft's Channels or Zoom's Breakout Rooms was greatly appreciated. In Channels or Breakout Rooms, the students recognized that they were still able to communicate and interact with their peers to practice the language, which noticeably appeased the concern they had about practice shortages before the advent of the online class. For example, "Our Chinese class relies on a lot of in-class conversational practice. Therefore, I thought that it would be difficult to transition this class to an online format.

However, the small group channels seem to solve this problem" (Chinese). Notwithstanding, it was shown that students could not use this advantage when team members did not actively participate. One student explained, "My partner doesn't speak Chinese much in the channel, so it inhibits my learning and frustrates me" (Chinese). Acquisition of a language hinges upon one-on-one practice, so the emphasis on peer communication was extremely visible in the present study. Group work was found to be of minimal importance in the Spanish learners' comments. However, after the survey was completed, one of the researchers had a social media interaction with the Spanish professor and found that the Spanish students did not start to use the channels until the week of the final exam.

The second factor is teacher assistance, including teacher feedback and encouragement. Both groups appreciated teacher feedback and the learning environment, which their teachers aimed to make supportive and nonjudgmental. One student explained, "I think, in some ways, this fear doesn't exist anymore in that I am constantly receiving feedback from my instructor that is helpful, rather than receiving it when I choose to ask for help" (Chinese). Another one offered praise, "My professor did a fantastic job of creating an environment that fosters growth without judgement" (Spanish). As previously mentioned (see Table 6), the Spanish group placed higher appreciation on teacher feedback than on other course factors, and for this group, teacher feedback improved learner confidence in completing assignments.

The last outstanding factor was visual support. The students felt more comfortable in online classes because they could use their notes and look up words when answering questions. For example, "I felt most of the time I have the security of looking the answer up previous to being called on" (Spanish). This fact was notably attached to the spontaneity of being called on at random, which was a widespread cause for anxiety. The pressure of having to come up with an immediate answer would be understandably lower with the newfound ability to look up answers. The interpretation is that visual support, by reducing pressure, promoted learner optimism about online class. In conclusion, the qualitative data confirmed a reduction in worrying and an increased optimism about online class related to the group work, teacher feedback, and visual support provided. Nonetheless, none of these factors correlated with optimism about the learning outcomes.

Research Question Three: **How can language anxiety be compared in face-to-face and online classes in the Chinese group? How can it be compared in the Spanish group?**

To ascertain if the anxiety level that each group experienced in face-to-face and online class was significantly different (Part Five of the survey), a paired sample *t*-test was run with the Spanish group and a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was run with the Chinese group. The results showed that the Chinese group reported less anxiety in the online class by a small effect size ($r = -0.196$). However, the contrast was not significant with the Spanish group (see Table 7).

Table 7
Comparison of Face-to-face and Online Class Anxiety Within Each Language Group

	Mean		SD		Sig. (two tailed)	Z	R
	Face-to-face	online	Face-to-face	online			
Chinese n = 59	3.081	2.874	1.329	1.304	.033*	-2.133	-0.196
Spanish n = 37	3.351	3.421	1.300	1.169	.327	N/A	N/A

*$p < .05$.

While recording the different levels of anxiety displayed in online versus face-to-face classes, the vast majority of Chinese participants and some Spanish counterparts reported less anxiety in the online format. Two reasons stood out across the languages. First, the students did not have to show their faces or be physically present and, thus, experienced less judgement from their peers. "I felt more comfortable in an online setting because I did not feel as put on the spot as I had in the face-to-face classes" (Chinese). Nevertheless, a couple of students felt more anxious with these visual limitations because it is "intimidating to speak when you cannot see your classmates or classroom in front of you" (Chinese). This translated back to one noted difficulty of being unable to "read nonvisual verbal cues" (Chinese). Second, online support was once again recognized. The students in the online class were able to use typed-out notes and text and claimed that this helped reduce their anxiety, "When it is done through online class, I was more confident in speaking because I could look up what I do not know, and this basically helps me study deeper" (Chinese).

It is worth noting that 89% of the Spanish group and 76% of the Chinese group still preferred face-to-face class in spite of the higher anxiety levels. They were looking forward to studying on campus the next semester and had several convincing reasons. The first is about motivation. Being in the classroom was described as "fun," "engaging," "spontaneous," "less distracting," and "connecting." One student lamented, "I miss really connecting with my classmates and teachers in a personal setting. I miss seeing all my classmates . . . I miss learning together as a group and laughing" (Chinese). Many also emphasized that the appropriate amount of pressure in face-to-face class had stimulated motivation. A Spanish learner noted that, although anxiety decreased in online class, "I do not mind being a bit anxious, however, because that is how you learn."

Another reason related to the amount of practice. The students agreed that, in a face-to-face class, there was more language practice. The word "more" constantly popped up, such as "more" speaking, listening, conversing, asking, writing, and helping. One student explained that, in a face-to-face class, "it is a lot easier for me to focus and pay attention as well as get much more practice with speaking than doing class online" (Spanish). Consequently, the third reason was a better learning outcome. The students found themselves "more productive in class than online" (Chinese) and noted that the class was "not able to get as much done or move as fast over the computer" (Chinese). There were also fewer "communication

barriers" (Chinese) and "more opportunities to practice speaking" (Spanish) in a face-to-face class. Likewise, the face-to-face setting also made it "easier to receive one-on-one help" and allowed students to hand in physical copies of handwritten assignments (Chinese). One student commented, "I would like Spanish classes to be face-to-face because it definitely helps me learn better. I am able to speak more, and the comprehension level is altogether higher" (Spanish).

Discussion and Implications

This study demonstrated that the emergent transition from face-to-face to online class under the pandemic had caused worries, concerns, and fears among postsecondary Chinese and Spanish language learners. These negative emotional impacts were associated with the perceptions of the shortage of interpersonal practice, less prompt teacher assistance, and the reduction of learning outcome. Nevertheless, the Channels on MS Teams and Breakout Rooms on Zoom enabled the students to conduct interpersonal communications through group work and get immediate feedback from the instructors. Visual assistance, such as student-taken notes and instructor-shared screens, were also very helpful. Therefore, the negative emotional impacts decreased after the students adjusted. However, the perception about learning outcomes showed that the students, by the end of the semester, still believed the learning outcomes were not as strong. This result demonstrates that an emergent transition to online class can arouse students' concerns about learning outcomes, and that preventing outcome reduction needs specific consideration. The issue about learning outcomes has been reported by the study of Al Shlowiy, et al. (2021). In their study, Arabic ESL Learners were most concerned that the emergency remote teaching under the pandemic was not as effective as face-to-face mode. More specifically, they were worried that in remote learning, they could not comprehend the materials completely, and thus lose points and eventually reduce GPA.

Additionally, the students reported lower anxiety in online class than in, although they lacked agency in selection of learning mode. This was because many were afraid of public speaking and cared about what their fellow classmates thought of them, reverberating the ego-threatening nature of the L2 learning proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986). In online class, "stage" fright was no longer an issue. The other reason was that they could use visual assistance in online class, which lowered the anxiety of answering questions. However, the majority of the students still preferred face-to-face class since they felt more motivated, could cover more material, and could learn better. Conclusively, while transferring to online language class, the students most desired to keep the group work, teacher feedback, and motivation they had in the face-to-face class. This desire underlined the importance of interpersonal connections for achieving a good learning outcome, both in virtual (Al Shlowiy et al., 2021) and face-to-face classes.

Classroom Implication One: Group Work and Connection

This study established that online language learners worried about practice quantity and quality and the learning outcomes, however, small group work

provided the desired practice opportunities and lessened their concerns (Kaisar, M.T. & Chowdhury, S. Y., 2020). Moreover, this study showed that student connection can either render group work pleasant or become a stalemate. To make group work successful, trust-based connections must be established among students. Well-connected learners feel secure in a group and are not afraid of making mistakes. Based on this study, three approaches to connecting students online are suggested for group work.

The first one is asking "who am I" and "who are you?". This approach necessitates sharing appropriate information about oneself to allow the class to get to know each other. The activities should aim to let students know that they are different and that they should prepare to work with people who have such differences. Becoming familiar with each other brings students closer together and makes them more supportive so they are not afraid of exposing weaknesses or making mistakes during group work. The second approach is strategic grouping. Instructors should strategically group students because students vary in language command, learning strategies, and personality. It is necessary to consider the student's cultural background, proficiency level, and personality, as well as many other factors. Strategic grouping is not necessarily grouping similarities or differences. Instead, strategic grouping can be based on similar characteristics or a blend of characteristics, whichever maximizes enjoyment and participation. The third approach is to build up a contribution-based learning community. Asking students to post or talk about how they overcome difficulties in learning, how they apply grammar structures, how they use vocabulary, as well as what effective learning strategies they use, are all important topics to discuss. Other questions could include what changes they have experienced as a person through learning another language and culture, how the changes are reflected in them as language learners, and how they handle school when it is stressful.

Classroom Implication Two: Teacher Feedback and Visual Support

This study demonstrated that teacher feedback significantly helped mitigate student concerns arising from the unexpected change in learning environment. Online learning may cause concerns about the efficacy of teacher feedback because the physical distance can make instant feedback less accessible. Reisetter and Boris (2004) also reported that the college students in their study recognized extensive and personalized teacher feedback as an important element for completing their assignments and connecting with their instructors. Meanwhile, the present study demonstrated that visual support helped lower anxiety in online classes.

Given these results, using visual support and teacher feedback together to enhance the learning outcome will be effective. When it comes to visual feedback, writing utilities, such as a whiteboard, paper, pens, and markers, come to mind. Beyond these methods, technology (e.g. audio and video) can provide additional support and promises better results in face-to-face and online instruction. How these techniques may be used can be explained through an example of grading handwritten assignments. While grading writing assignments, instructors can record the whole process of grading, including typing out and speaking the

feedback such as what, why, and how an expression, structure, or grammar error can be corrected. The screen recording can be done through Kaltura, Pear Deck, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or other app platforms. Then, the instructors can send the video link to the students to watch. Compared to regular pen and paper feedback, the videos may draw more attention because students will need to watch the whole video to get all of the comments, making them study the material deeply.

Classroom Implication Three: Anxiety and Motivation

The present study confirmed a finding by an earlier study (Kleinmann, 1977) that language class anxiety can facilitate learning. Many students appreciated and missed the stress that they had in face-to-face classes because they learned more and learned better with it. Despite the lower anxiety in an online class, some students commented that they had less language development because of reduced practice. Since students had concerns about learning outcomes, improving learning outcomes will certainly diminish their worries. Therefore, it is argued that, since it boosts the learning outcomes, facilitating anxiety can potentially reduce general anxiety levels. It is recommended that instructors allow facilitating anxiety to exist to keep students motivated (Scovel, 1978).

Having the camera on could trigger so-called stage fright in language learning (e.g. Horwitz, et al., 1986), but it allows students to see speakers' mouth shape, which is helpful for learning pronunciation and for comprehending speech. Having cameras on is favorable for connecting students and can increase engagement. Therefore, despite triggering anxiety, turning cameras on can certainly promote learning and motivation. Instructors should check if turning on cameras is an issue in the area that students live. If it is not, they should recommend it. However, they need to secure willing consent from the students.

This study showed that beginner learners were more likely to worry about their own responsibilities, including completing their courses and assignments. The teacher feedback must cater to this concern when students are at the beginner level. Clear instructions and rubrics about assignments will be needed, and the difficulty level and number of assignments should be appropriate. Instructors should also get feedback from their students on how they feel about the course and assignments because this will allow for prompt intervention and support.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact on postsecondary Chinese and Spanish language learners of the unexpected transition from face-to-face to online class under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. It identified certain course factors that helped decrease negative impacts. The study demonstrated that anxiety was reported as less influential in online class even though the students lacked agency in choice. However, most of the students still preferred face-to-face class because they were concerned about learning outcomes before transferring to online class, and, by the end of the semester, they still perceived that the learning outcomes were reduced. These findings shed light on what elements of face-to-face class the students perceive to be most needed in an online class, and

pedagogical suggestions were provided accordingly. However, generalizing these results beyond the context particular to the present study must be done cautiously. This study used convenience sampling, which could fail to represent students learning the same languages (Spanish and Chinese) at other schools, or learners of other languages. This study can be repeated with random, larger samples. In the future, research about other levels and languages is necessary. Also, perceptions of instructors and between-language comparisons are needed to advance knowledge in this field.

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Appendix

Survey on Students' Anxiety Related to Format Transitioning and World Language Classroom

(The word "Chinese" is replaced by "Spanish" for Spanish learners)

Part I: General information

Your age:	Your gender:	Your major:	Your school:
Your native language:	Your language course level (e.g. elementary, intermediate, advanced):		

In Part II, III, IV, and V, choose the number most true to you.

1 = strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree

Part II: Transitioning-related Anxieties

In the week BEFORE the online classes started,

1. I was uncertain about how online Chinese classes will work.
2. I was concerned that my Chinese class might not finish smoothly after transitioning to online.
3. I feared that the online format will reduce Chinese-learning outcomes.
4. I worried about being able to complete assignments we would normally do in residential classes in the online format.

Part III

By the END of the semester,

5. I feel comfortable with how online Chinese classes work.
6. I think that I will finish my Chinese classes smoothly.
7. I think that the online format does not reduce Chinese-learning outcomes.
8. I am able to complete assignments we normally do in residential classes in the online format.

Part IV: Perceptions about your online-class elements

9. The screen sharing by the instructor in online class time helps me to learn.

10. The feedback that the instructor provides during the online class time is helpful.
11. I like to work with partner(s) in "Channel"/ "Breakout session" or other formats of small group work.
12. It is helpful that the instructor types words on shared screens at the time of teaching.
13. It is important for learning the materials that the instructor answers questions during online teaching time.
14. I practice the language actively during the online class time.
15. The instructor provides one-on-one feedback during the online class time.
16. The feedback I receive from my peers during "channel"/"breakout Session"/ or other types of synchronous small-group-work time is helpful.
17. I enjoy participating in the class-time activities of my online Chinese classes.
18. Participating in small group work in online class time helps me to learn.
19. I like the synchronous teamwork such as collaborative writing, editing and others.
20. I like to interact with my classmates and instructor through texting in "Chat" or other likely tools.

Part V: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

21. In residential Chinese classes, I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation.
22. In online Chinese classes, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.
23. In residential Chinese classes, I feel very self-conscious about speaking the language in front of other students.
24. In online Chinese classes, I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation.
25. In residential Chinese classes, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.
26. In online Chinese classes, I feel very self-conscious about speaking the language.
27. In residential Chinese classes, I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the language.
28. In online Chinese classes, it embarrasses me to volunteer answers.
29. In online Chinese classes, I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the language.
30. In residential Chinese classes, it embarrasses me to volunteer answers.

Part VI: Open-ended questions:

1. Please write about any concerns/worries/anxieties/fears you had had before your Chinese classes were transitioned to online, and which of them still exists now (if so).
2. How do you compare the classroom anxiety you have experienced in online and residential Chinese classes?
3. Do you like your Chinese classes in the next semester to be online or face-to-face? Why?

One Year Later: Feelings of Anxiety in Emergency Remote Language Classes

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The Challenge

The study compares student feelings of anxiety toward emergency remote university language classes at the end of the first pandemic semester in spring 2020 with their experiences one year later. Instructors believe that they have adapted well during that time, but how well have language students adapted to remote learning?

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a questionnaire that sought to discover how university language students felt one year following the abrupt switch from in-person to emergency remote language classes. These results are compared with results of a similar questionnaire following the first COVID-19 semester one year earlier. Quantitative analysis of Likert-scale items and qualitative analysis of open-ended questions provided information about student anxiety when learning a language online. The findings contribute to the knowledge base of anxiety in online language learning and in the abrupt switch from in-person to emergency remote classes at the onset of COVID-19. Based on the results, suggestions are given for helping students manage language learning experiences in person and online.

The emergency switch from in-person to remote teaching as a result of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 has had and continues to have a

large effect on how university students around the world attend classes and learn new subject matter (Husky et al., 2020). Across the globe, 1.6 billion students had schooling interrupted because of the pandemic (Asanov et al., 2020). Shortly after the onset of the pandemic, studies confirmed that feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and stress increased for university students from September 2019 to April 2020 (Bourion-Bédès et al. 2,021; Elmer et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). One study found that 60.2% of university student participants felt an increase in anxiety, and students who did not return home reported higher levels of stress than those who did (Husky et al., 2020). Another study found that 71% of university students reported that their stress levels had increased due to the pandemic, 44% had an increase in depressive thoughts, and almost all the participants (97%) said they felt that their peers' stress had also increased (Son et al., 2020).

In the context of the pandemic, different causes were mentioned in studies regarding students' feelings of stress. In the early months of the pandemic, most students spent either no or little time outside their home (Asanov et al., 2021; Son et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). While some anxiety due to fear of missing out decreased with the pandemic, anxiety due to other factors such as social isolation and uncertain financial situations increased (Bourion-Bédès, 2021; Elmer et al., 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Eighty-two percent of university students reported their concern about their academic success, and most students reported that the biggest reason for that concern was the immediate switch to emergency remote learning (Son et al., 2020).

While many studies have investigated student anxiety in general as a result of COVID, to date, the researchers are not aware of any study that has examined university student anxiety related to learning languages other than international students in an ESL program (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). One year following the onset of COVID and the ensuing abrupt shift to remote university language classes mid-semester, many instructors and researchers are wondering how students are faring in their language classes regarding anxiety. The purpose of this study is to compare the results of a questionnaire given to university language students regarding anxiety from April 2020 with results of an identical questionnaire given one year following the abrupt switch to emergency online language classes.

Review of the Literature

World Language Anxiety

World language anxiety has been studied since the 1980s as a separate type of anxiety than other type of classroom anxiety based on pressures and psychological affective factors surrounding speaking a new language (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 1982). In 1986, Horwitz introduced the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) that was based on American classroom language learning (Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2016). The 33 questionnaire items on the scale relate to three categories of language performance anxiety—nervousness of communication, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) pilot tested the scale with 75 university students whose first language was English in four intact introductory Spanish classes during their

scheduled class time three weeks into the semester. The researchers discovered that many students experienced language learning anxiety in at least some aspects of language learning and that world language anxiety was a separate and distinct type of anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986).

In language classrooms, students have been shown to experience the combination of academic stresses and the social stresses of interacting and speaking with peers, all while in an unfamiliar language (Pichette, 2009), and this anxiety has been depicted as specific to classroom-based language learning as compared to naturalistic learning approaches outside the classroom (Russell, 2020). Subsequent studies also using the FLCAS have found the scale to be reliable (Aida, 1994), and several studies have adapted the FLCAS to their own environment (Al-Saraj, 2014; Appel & Garcia, 2020; Liu & Yuan, 2021; Park, 1994).

The Effect of World Language Anxiety in Classroom Settings

Studies differ on whether anxiety levels have a positive or negative correlation with performance (Aida, 1994; Appel & Garcia, 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). In a study conducted with Japanese learners, students with lower anxiety scores were more likely to receive an A while the students with higher anxiety scores were more likely to receive a B grade or lower (Aida, 1994). In the same study, Aida also found that anxiety negatively affected pronunciation but not overall oral communication.

The studies about the effect of anxiety on performance have not addressed the question of whether anxiety is the cause of performance differences or a consequence of it (Appel & Garcia, 2020; Resnik & Dewaele, 2020). Sparks and Ganschow (2007) tested this idea by adding the variable of language learning aptitude before students begin learning a world language. The study tracked students' native language reading and listening abilities from first to fifth grade. Then in ninth grade after two years of a world language, their world language aptitude and world language anxiety were tested. The study found that scores on the FLCAS matched with differences in students' first language long before the students started learning a world language. Students with lower anxiety had tested higher in their ability to learn languages based on their L1 from second to fifth grade, showing that while performance and anxiety in a world language classroom may be connected, there were other variables involved in the correlation (Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Similar results were found in Resnik and Dewaele's 2020 study with German students where enjoyment and anxiety in their German class had a positive correlation with enjoyment and anxiety in English class. The researchers noted that ability to learn languages and general academic ability may have been the cause of differences in performance and anxiety in participants' world language class (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020).

Planned and Unplanned Online Learning and World Language Anxiety

Understanding that learning languages in a classroom setting can cause anxiety became a bigger concern when emergency remote teaching was required for all teachers and students. Teachers and administrators were concerned about increased

student anxiety in the context of the nature of unexpected quarantine and the abrupt, unplanned move to remote teaching. Gacs et al. (2020) and Russell (2020) pointed out that there was a lack of sufficient time, training, and resources to prepare instructors and students to have a successful, low anxiety learning experiences.

The emergency switch from in-person to remote learning has been shown to affect how students perceived online courses. At first, students appreciated online learning so they could quarantine and not be exposed to the virus (Maican & Cocoradă, 2021; Odriozola-González et al., 2020). In May 2020, two studies revealed that most undergraduate students in India were satisfied with emergency online learning (Chandra, 2020) and that undergraduate students in Australia reported a positive perception of online learning (Scull et al., 2020). Studies on the unexpected switch to online classes indicated that students were content with their online classes at that time but that they were not interested in taking online classes for the rest of their college careers (Maican & Cocoradă, 2021).

Student anxiety in language classes was affected by the sudden switch from in-person to online classes. For instance, Resnik and Dewaele (2021) studied the effect of emergency remote learning on world language anxiety and enjoyment in a study of English language learners at universities across Europe They discovered that students found the online classes to be "a bit more boring" and even "less interesting" than in-person classes (p. 22) and that there was a positive correlation between world language anxiety and language learning enjoyment. The authors used questions from Horwitz's FLCAS (1986) and Macaskill and Taylor's (2010) Autonomous Learning Scale and asked students to self-report levels of anxiety before and during the pandemic. Surprisingly, the researchers found only slightly lower levels of world language anxiety during emergency remote learning. Students who reported the highest levels of anxiety also reported that their anxiety had decreased since the beginning of the pandemic. The researchers did not view this drop in anxiety as positive, however, and they attributed it to the students' ability to hide and remain mostly anonymous in online courses, neither of which would contribute to successful online language learning (Resnik & Dewaele, 2021). Liu and Yuan (2021) found higher levels of world language anxiety among Chinese undergraduate students in emergency online learning than those in traditional classrooms and in distance learning before the pandemic. Liu and Yuan attributed this to lack of access to libraries and materials, loss of communication with peers and professors, and the possibility that some students lost access to internet and technological resources (2021).

Some studies indicated that students found attending class through Zoom and accessing materials online not to have been as bad as they had anticipated (Guillén et al., 2020). New resources became more common, and instructors and students were found to be becoming more comfortable with these resources (Lomicka, 2020). Egbert (2020) reminded teachers that student task engagement in remote environments should be meaningful, valuable, enjoyable, and social. Researchers anticipated that students and instructors would continue to have this positive view toward online classes and resources (Egbert, 2020; Gacs et al., 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Lomicka, 2020; Maican & Cocoradă, 2021). Although researchers

have found that students have been positively and negatively affected by the switch to emergency online teaching, the question regarding the impact of the abrupt change on student anxiety levels one year later remains.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the overall relationship between a crisis midsemester change in class type (from in-person to synchronous online classes using Zoom) and student anxiety among undergraduate university language classes one year following the onset of the pandemic. Using 12 items adapted from the FLCAS, results from students studying a language during the initial COVID semester of 2020 are compared with results from students one year later in April 2021. Results explain how student anxiety with online language learning has changed since the end of the initial COVID semester.

Materials and Methods

Participants

Participants in the 2020 study were 101 undergraduate students enrolled in a language class. About one-third (34.41%) identified as male, about two-thirds (63.73%) as female, and one as non-binary. More than half were enrolled in a Korean course (53.54%), 23.76% in German, and 10.89% in ASL. Six students were enrolled in a different language (Akkadian, Arabic, Russian, or Spanish). Prior to the onset of the pandemic, 45.1% were enrolled in introductory classes, 17.65% in intermediate classes, and 35.29% in advanced classes. Three students were already enrolled in fully online language classes, 26.73% were in blended classes with reduced in-person class time to allow for online learning, 46.53% were enrolled in face-to-face classes with very little or no online activities or engagement, and 23.76% were enrolled in an in-person class with online activities but no online meetings. All courses that were moved from in-person to emergency remote courses in March 2020 are referred to as *emergency remote courses*. With the exception of the few who were already enrolled in an online course, students were forced to join their classes remotely. Some of these language courses were synchronous, some were asynchronous, and some were a combination of the two.

Participants in this current study were 88 university students enrolled in language courses during April 2021. All students enrolled in German, Korean, and Japanese were invited to participate, and no incentive was given for participation. These are not the same students who completed the questionnaire in 2020. in this study, about 30% of participants were freshman, 28% were sophomores, 23% were juniors, 17% were seniors, and 2% were graduate students. About 41% identified as male, and 59% as female. About 65% were enrolled in introductory classes, 13% were enrolled in intermediate classes, and 23% were enrolled in advanced classes. Regarding language enrollment, 65% were enrolled in Korean, 23% in German, 10% in Japanese, and 2% in other languages (one in Spanish, and one in ASL). Almost half of the students were enrolled in blended classes (48%), 26% in live remote delivery (or online) classes, and 26% in traditional in-person classes.

Data collection

Data were collected through a Qualtrics questionnaire. Twelve Likert-scale questionnaire items were adapted from the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) and related to language learning anxiety in the context of the unexpected switch from in-person to emergency remote classes mid-semester in March 2020. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each item twice--once in relation to their in-person class and once in relation to that same class after it had moved online. The survey also included one open-ended question where respondents were invited to comment on their experiences and feelings about the abrupt switch to online learning. Descriptive statistics for the Likert-scale questions are presented. Open-ended responses were organized according to participant, coded according to emergent themes, and summarized in the context of the Likert-scale items.

Results

The twelve questionnaire items focused on student anxiety in the context of mode of course delivery during and one year following the initial COVID semester. The purpose of these items was to determine the extent to which students agreed with statements relating to their own personal language learning anxiety and if the abrupt mid-semester change affected their anxiety. Responses to the questionnaire given at the end of the initial COVID semester are compared with responses given one year following the initial COVID semester to discover how students felt regarding their online language learning experiences. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the questionnaire items students related to questionnaire items in 2020 and in 2021.

Student Responses about Classmates, Teachers, and Learning

The majority of the students at the end of the initial COVID semester in 2020 (64.36%) and almost all students (93.75%) in 2021 agreed that they felt a personal connection with their classmates and teachers. The fact that almost all students felt a personal connection with their classmates and teachers one year following the initial COVID semester gives us hope that many university students are resilient and will to connect regardless of the mode of class delivery following months of quarantine. Guillén et al. (2020) explained that this sudden loss of human physical contact with teachers and classmates left students longing for their in-person classes but that teachers learned to use digital tools to create similar interactions virtually.

In 2020, a slight majority of students (51.48%) disagreed that they felt fully engaged during class time, and one year later, almost all students (93.61%) agreed that they felt fully engaged during class time. In 2020, one student explained the reason for lack of engagement, "There was far less involvement, no speaking opportunity." Then in 2021, one student observed, "The method of delivery is fantastic and engaging. I prefer online and blended as opposed to the pressure of being in class physically." And another student reflected, "It is much more engaging

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for questionnaire items

Strongly Agree %		Agree %		Total Agree %		Disagree %		Strongly Disagree %		Total Disagree %	
2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
I feel a personal connection with my classmates and teacher.											
11.88	58.33	52.48	35.42	64.36	93.75	26.73	5.21	8.91	1.04	35.64	6.25
I feel fully engaged during class time.											
9.90	64.89	38.61	28.72	45.51	93.61	40.59	4.26	10.89	2.13	51.48	6.39
I clearly understand the feedback that my classmates or my teacher give me.											
36.63	68.75	41.58	28.13	78.21	96.88	16.83	2.08	4.95	1.04	21.48	3.12
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language.											
23.0	9.47	33.0	35.79	56.0	45.26	33.0	41.05	11.0	13.68	44.0	54.73
I worry about making mistakes in my language class.											
17.82	23.96	39.6	30.21	57.42	54.17	27.72	30.21	14.85	15.63	42.57	45.84
It makes me nervous when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.											
20.79	16.67	33.66	30.21	54.45	46.88	29.70	28.13	15.84	25.0	45.55	53.13
I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.											
32.0	4.21	50.0	27.37	82.0	31.58	11.0	34.74	7.0	33.68	18.0	68.42
I worry that I won't do well in my foreign language class.											
19.8	10.42	36.63	23.96	56.43	34.38	27.77	27.08	20.79	38.54	48.56	65.62
Even if I am well prepared for my language class, I feel anxious about it.											
17.82	6.25	35.64	30.21	53.46	36.46	23.76	23.96	22.77	39.58	46.53	63.76
I often do not feel like going to my language class.											
22.0	3.16	25.0	13.68	47.0	19.99	26.0	29.47	27.0	53.68	53.0	81.15
I always feel that the other students speak the language better than I do.											
21.78	16.67	28.71	33.33	50.49	50	35.64	33.33	13.86	16.67	49.5	50.0
It feels difficult to raise my hand and make a comment.											
21.78	5.21	34.65	21.88	56.43	27.09	32.67	27.08	10.87	45.83	43.54	72.91

to be learning with students and a teacher together, even on Zoom." It is reassuring that so many students felt so engaged one year later. This result corroborates Egbert's (2020) suggested model of learner task engagement to use during the pandemic and beyond. Egbert explained that at times when students are experiencing anxiety in their lives, focusing language learning on tasks could engage students and provide some stability for them in at least this aspect of their lives (2020).

In terms of clearly understanding feedback students receive from classmates or teachers, the majority (78.21%) in 2020 agreed that they did, and a larger percentage (96.88%) in 2021 agreed. Feedback in this context referred to corrective feedback during speaking activities or discussions during class time and on writing assignments submitted through Canvas. In 2020, one student mentioned the difficulty of understanding written corrective feedback, "On written assignments it is more difficult to understand feedback because my teacher can't just circle it on the paper and correct it." In 2021, a student in an in-person class wrote about her preference for in-person classes for improving language ability and receiving helpful feedback:

> The past two semesters I have had more structured classes that were overwhelming and almost decreased my language ability rather than increased. However, this semester [the initial COVID semester] I feel that the online classroom environment is very safe, open, and fun with helpful feedback.

In this sense, the structured class during the initial COVID semester meant a more teacher-fronted class with less student participation. This result indicates that almost all students clearly understand feedback they receive.

Student Concerns and Worries

When asked if they did not feel sure of themselves when they spoke in the target language, levels of agreement were divided: 56% agreed in 2020, and 54.73% disagreed in 2021. One student in 2020 stated, "I prefer being one on one with the professor and the TAs [in person] when they teach instead of doing everything online, but I'm comfortable in both environments." Another student in 2020 mentioned, "And I didn't get to practice speaking the language much at all in class once the class went to completely online which made me less sure of myself." Then in 2021 a student commented, "I took French in a classroom before Covid, and I was much more confident in my speaking abilities." Even though a slight majority agreement was reached in 2020 that students were not sure of themselves when speaking the language and a slight disagreement was reached in 2021, this is an area of research that deserves more attention.

When asked if they worried about making mistakes in language classes, 57.42% agreed in 2020, and 54.17% agreed in 2021. In 2021, one student taking Japanese observed:

> Language classes are scary in general, preparing is hard, and I feel stress before each class. HOWEVER, I think this is all for good! It drives me to work hard and not forget Japanese. I love my teacher and how he teaches. I know I'm not being judged, even though messing up in front of anyone is always a scary thing.

Even though a slight majority agreed that they worried about making mistakes in language classes in 2020 and 2021, some researchers have argued that this type of worry can be helpful in improving language proficiency (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Park, 2014).

During the initial COVID semester, most students (82%) found themselves thinking about things that had nothing to do with the course. During that semester, one student explained, "Online classes through Zoom are not great. It's harder to stay focused and motivated to get work done." In 2021, most students (68.42%) disagreed with this statement. This makes sense in light of what students were worrying about during the quarantine and abrupt switch to online classes (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Son et al., 2020).

When students were asked if they worried that they might not do well in their language class, 56.43% agreed they were worried, and even though in 2021, only 34.38% disagreed that they were worried, one Korean student still admitted, "I have been really struggling with Korean and getting more and more overwhelmed to the point I fell behind and never really caught up because the class gives me anxiety."In 2020, a slight majority of students (56.43%) agreed that it felt difficult to raise their hand and make a comment in language class. One student wrote, "You can't comment casually on Zoom which makes it more intimidating." This result endorses findings by Moser and her colleagues who found that synchronous interaction increased learner anxiety and decreased learner outcomes in emergency contexts (2021). Then in 2021, 72.91% disagreed with this statement, but one student still lamented, "It feels difficult to raise my hand and make a comment, not because of Zoom but when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language." It makes sense that the majority found it difficult to make comments during online classes in the beginning because they were not accustomed to class being held on Zoom. A year later most students no longer found it as difficult because students had grown accustomed to raising their hand to make a comment during an online class. Teachers had also learned more about student engagement in online classes since the emergency shift to remote teaching the previous year.

Implications for Teaching and Future Research

Results of this study have demonstrated that more than half of university students experienced some type of world language anxiety during the pandemic. Based on these results, there are recommended pedagogical implications for teaching on Zoom and in-person. First, the findings offer insights into teaching on Zoom. One year following the initial COVID semester, almost all students felt a personal connection with their classmates and teacher (93.75%), felt fully engaged in class (93.61%), and clearly understood feedback from their teacher and classmates (96.88%). Teachers can still have a personal connection with students, keep them engaged during a Zoom class, and provide helpful feedback. One of the major differences between teaching on Zoom and teaching in-person is planning and adapting materials designed for in-person learning to suit virtual online learning (Hodges et al., 2020; Lomicka, 2020; Mizza & Rubio, 2020). Training

for students should also be provided so they understand how to be engaged in language learning even though their class is held on Zoom. If teachers receive professional development and learn effective approaches to teaching languages on Zoom, they will likely be able to successfully teach remotely.

The most reassuring result we found was that student anxiety associated with remote language classes diminished. One important reason for these changes is possibly because in 2021 students were allowed to choose the course format they preferred for their language courses. Whether teaching on Zoom or in-person, teachers can seek to understand their students' world language anxiety and offer approaches to help students deal with their anxiety. Using the FLCAS at the beginning of a new class might provide information to the teacher about each student. Teachers can be sensitive to students who experience different types of anxiety and make recommendations for students who experience world language anxiety. For students who worry about making mistakes or who do not feel sure of themselves when speaking the language, teachers can promote the attitude that everyone makes mistakes when learning a language. If students are concerned about understanding the target language during class, teachers could create a positive learning environment so students' affective filter will be low enough for them to understand what is being taught and could teach in ways students learn.

Future research studies could investigate additional aspects of student world language anxiety by looking at different languages, at different levels of instruction, various modes of classroom delivery, gender identification, and experience learning previous world languages. Longitudinal studies could follow individual language learners or cohorts of learners over a sequence of courses to gain nuanced knowledge of how and when anxiety affects learners over time.

Conclusion

This study revealed some changes that have taken place in the field of language teaching and learning from March 2020, when emergency remote teaching began mid-semester, through April 2021, one full year after the onset of the pandemic. The background literature on learner anxiety before and at the beginning of the pandemic indicated high levels of anxiety for university students across the world. Questionnaire results from students who participated in this study in 2020 confirmed these results. Many of these students experienced high levels of anxiety in their newly remote language classes. Over that year, however, student engagement, motivation to attend language classes, and focus during language classes improved considerably. The ease students felt making comments during online language classes increased from 2020 to 2021, and students worried less about making mistakes in class. Students experienced less anxiety in their language courses than they did during the initial COVID semester. As language teachers move forward and begin teaching in whatever modality may become necessary in the future, understanding students' backgrounds, reasons for learning a language, concerns about learning a language, and unease in certain learning modes can make students' language learning experience more enjoyable, rewarding, and successful.

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Two Spanish credits!? Teacher Attitudes about World Language Graduation Requirements

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The Challenge

World language high school graduation requirements have been hotly debated in states that have adopted them. World language educators often champion these requirements, but what do other teachers think? These teachers influence the educational choices of students, and it is important to examine their views and potential reasons for them.

Abstract

Michigan implemented the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) in order to create a more rigorous standard for high school students (Michigan Department of Education, 2017; Shakrani, 2006). As part of the graduation requirements, a two-year world language (WL) requirement was included. Although delayed, Michigan expected school districts to add capacity to ensure that all students would be able to complete two credits in a world language. This investigation surveyed teachers in one small, rural school district in Michigan about their attitudes toward the MMC and the WL requirement. A number of demographic questions and a shortened form of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz et al., 1986) were administered to 36 non-world language teachers to determine whether factors such as sex, age, hometown, exposure to WL, and FL anxiety were related to attitudes they toward the WL graduation requirement of the MMC. Results indicated that teachers who believed that WL instruction was beneficial to all were in favor of the WL requirement. WL anxiety was not related to support of the requirement but was negatively correlated

with WL exposure of the teachers. Older and more experienced teachers tended to not support the WL graduation requirement, as well as those that had grown up in rural areas. Younger teachers and those that originated from small towns and suburban areas tended to back the requirement, although most preferred the requirement be only one year instead of two.

Washington State Senator Pam Roach wrote an opinion in the *Puget Sound Business Journal* in 2006 decrying the lack of world language education for students in the United States relative to other countries. She stated:

> Look at the experience of language instruction in other parts of the world. In Portugal, students learn English from grades four through 10, and they study French in 11th and 12th grades. In Honduras, children of means are placed in foreign language schools by their parents, who can choose from Japanese, Arabic, Italian, Chinese and American (English) schools. Students there begin a total immersion experience in first grade and quickly speak their second language fluently and without an accent. The U.S. system ignores the fact that our country's current and future economic and security needs include bilingual individuals. (Roach, 2006, para. 4)

According to Rosenbusch (2002), world language (WL) programs in the elementary schools experienced a large surge in growth in the 1950s and 1960s. However, after this period there was a reduction in the amount of funding and importance placed on these early WL programs. There was not any major renewed interest until the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed in 1994 and WLs were to be considered part of a national core curricular area. At this time, the strategy of competence in a WL included a long continuous period of instruction from elementary through secondary and university education. Indeed, from the period of 1987 to 1997, investigators documented a 10% increase in the number of elementary schools offering early WL instruction, up to 31% (Rhodes & Branaman, 1999). However, states do differ in terms of their WL course offerings and Michigan's state curriculum and high school graduation requirements accommodated a push towards world language education more recently.

The current investigation seeks to examine the relationship among various factors to explain educators' attitudes toward the world language requirement in the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). It is expected that demographic variables, in addition to factors of anxiety and beliefs about world language instruction have a significant and quantifiable influence on the attitudes that teachers at one rural Michigan school district have about the statewide two-year WL graduation requirement. This research is important because there has been little investigation with non-world language elementary and secondary educators about mandated WL requirements. Most Michigan students will need two years of a WL to graduate from high school and as the prior research has illustrated, educator beliefs can shape student attitudes and public policy. One attitude was explicitly stated during a staff meeting in the district when one teacher stood up

and announced that she "did not understand why a student in [this town] should learn another language." Therefore, it is pertinent to examine what non-WL educators' beliefs are regarding the high school language requirement and what factors contribute to these opinions. The research questions for this study were:

1. Do WL anxiety or demographic variables (gender, age, hometown, WL study, teaching experience, and education level) relate to teachers' attitudes toward the benefits of WL study?
2. Do WL anxiety or demographic variables relate to teachers' attitudes toward the WL requirement of the MMC?

Review of Literature

World Language Graduation Requirements

Michigan released the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) High School Graduation Requirements in 2006 (Michigan Department of Education [MDE], 2017). Prior to the MMC, Michigan's Department of Education only mandated that high school students complete a government or civics class. The remainder of the high school graduation requirements were left to local districts to decide based upon the needs of their students and community. The MMC, therefore, represented a large change and a more centralized effort to prepare students for the 21st century. It mandated four credits of both English language arts and mathematics education, requiring students to complete Algebra 2 (MDE, 2017), among other requirements for physical and social sciences. This was not the first time that a state set more rigorous graduation requirements.

According to Lillard and DeCicca (2001), when states implemented minimum course requirements in the past, there was an increase in the high school dropout rate. Years later, Plunk et al. (2014) reached the same conclusion. They indicated that when mathematics and science course graduation requirements were raised in the 1980s and 1990s, there was an increase in the number of students that dropped out of high school. Indeed, "[s]tate-wide mandates could disadvantage some students in the short-term, especially those from resource-poor districts that may struggle to implement large-scale curricular changes" (Plunk et al., 2014, p. 231). Similarly, state-mandated testing also tended to have more negative unintended consequences for schools serving students lower socioeconomic and lower-performing schools. The rates of college attendance for these students declined (Perna & Thomas, 2009). Regardless, Michigan's goal was to create a more rigorous curriculum to better prepare students to be college and career-ready (MDE, 2017; Shakrani, 2006).

Further, students were required to complete two credits in a WL or have an equivalent experience in a student's K-12 education with the expectation that students reach a proficiency of novice high (MDE, 2017). Equivalent experiences include, but are not limited to, formal programming in K-8 that meets the same curricular guidelines as the first- and second-year high school courses, as well as study or schooling abroad, and proficiency in home or heritage languages. The curriculum document indicates multiple configurations of potential K-8

schedules and testing required to validate course or proficiency expectations (MDE, 2014). In many Michigan school districts, a mandated WL requirement was not new. Under local control, many high schools had previously made this part of their own graduation requirements. However, many school districts were not prepared or equipped to immediately meet the WL requirement, in part due to the lack of available teachers (Commission on Language Learning, 2017). Despite the introduction of the MMC in 2006, the world language component was not implemented at the same time as the other requirements of the MMC. Michigan students graduating in 2016 were the first cohort that needed to meet the graduation requirement, which by that time had been modified to substitute a credit of fine or industrial arts in place of the second credit of the WL requirement (MDE, 2017).

Many state residents were initially supportive of the more rigorous curriculum and graduation requirements. A statewide survey found nearly 80% of a stratified sample of 603 Michigan adults somewhat or strongly supported the new Michigan Merit Curriculum (Walker, 2006). However, not all requirements were met with the same support. When asked to rank the most important required subjects and standards, WL education fell second to last. WL was only considered more important than education in the fine arts. In spite of the overall support that the MMC survey reported, only 35% of the respondents were aware of the new state curriculum.

Nationally, a public opinion poll conducted by the American Council on Education found that public support for WL education was strong across different age groups, income groups, and ethnicities (Siaya et. al, 2002). In fact, in 2000 the poll found that 71% of people either somewhat or strongly agreed with having a WL requirement. The same percentage was found in 2002, but the strongly agree category had increased from 40% to 51% in that two-year time frame. It appeared that many Americans considered a WL requirement an integral part of general education. Despite this public support, language programs across the US have decreased and there is a marked perpetual shortage of world language instructors (Commission on Language Learning, 2017).

Other states have followed different strategies regarding a WL requirement. Hendrie (1997) reported that the New York State Board of Regents dropped a three-year graduation requirement in WL and now only requires one year of WL study for its standard Regents Diploma. However, New York offers three tiers of diplomas. Its more rigorous graduation option, the Advanced Regents Diploma, maintained the three-year WL requirement and requires passing the WL Regents exam (New York City Department of Education, 2022). On the other hand, in 2002 there were 30 states that did not have any world language component in their graduation requirements (Jonsson, 2002) and Georgia was considering removing the required two years of WL from its merit (college-bound) curriculum. By the mid 2010s, 42 states had no WL requirement at the state level (O'Rourke et al., 2016). The elimination of WL requirements appears to coincide with the general decline of schools in the US that offered world languages from the mid 1990s to the late 2000s (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). Certainly, it is more difficult for schools to mandate language requirements when they do not offer WL classes.

Attitudes Toward World Language Education Programming

Many researchers have investigated attitudes toward WL classes and instruction. Some of the groups that have been investigated include students, parents, college professors, and world language teachers, both in the United States and abroad (Klayman, 1975; Marsh, 1995; Morello, 1988; Price & Gascoigne, 2006; Thogmartin, 1971; Wilkerson, 2006; Zamir, 1981). In addition, attitude toward world language education has also been examined in regard to urbanicity/rurality and though a geopolitical, partisan lens (Fennelly & Federico, 2008; Hawley, 2011; Pavlenko, 2003; Shedivy, 2004). For instance, Pavlenko (2003) discussed how the use of the word "foreign" rather than the current "world" in foreign languages was used "to other" German-Americans and Spanish-speaking populations in the United States. Similarly, both views about world language education programming and immigration policy can be related to political partisanship and patriotism, as well as views on foreigners and languages other than English (LOTE) (Hawley, 2011), especially post World War I and II (Pavlenko, 2003). Politics and rurality appear intricately tied to attitude regarding LOTE. Indeed, Fennelly and Federico (2008) found that rural residents tended to have the most restrictionist views on immigration relative to more urban areas. It is nearly impossible to divorce immigration and foreign policy from a discussion of languages (Shedivy, 2004).

Attitude is an important concept in world language education because a more positive attitude towards a WL often coincides with a more positive attitude toward both the language and cultural group that speaks the WL (Acheson, 2004; Neuman, 2017; Tuttle et al., 1979). In a study regarding the attitudes of middle-class high school students, Zamir (1981) found no correlation between students' opinions of world language study and their parents' educational background. Indeed, parents of different backgrounds have been shown to seek to enroll their children in elementary immersion programs (Craig, 2013). For example, Cortés (2002) found that students from households that spoke languages other than English had more favorable attitudes toward WL learning and perceived parental support of the WL program. While some parents hoped their children would maintain their heritage language while learning English, other parents pushed for enrollment in immersion programs as a way to engage in an extra-curricular and build an advantage over monolingual students (Williams, 2017). Parents may have also hoped that exposure to WL as a child or to diverse populations would lead to higher critical thinking and a more nuanced view of other cultures and languages in general (Maad & Ridha, 2020). There are many factors that have been shown to determine both parents' and students' attitudes toward WL study and graduation requirements.

Many universities in the United States have traditionally required a world language component for graduation, although fewer than 30% to 40% of the universities in this country have a WL entry requirement (Goldberg et al., 2004; Huber, 1992; Neuman, 2017). Lusin (2012) noted that over the period from 1994-1995 to 2009-2010, the number of institutions requiring WL study increased from 20.7% to 24.7%, a recovery from a low of 14.1% but nowhere near the 70% required a century ago (p. 1-2). Likewise, Brod and Huber (1992) found that only

10% of students in post-secondary institutions took WL classes, and the tertiary WL course enrollment per 100 students indicates a steady decline from 9.1 in 2006 to 7.5 in 2016 (Looney & Lusin, 2019, p. 31). However, Lusin (2012) had indicated that nearly half of colleges and universities required two semesters of study, whereas 23.7% required four semesters. She also noted that there were marked differences between the requirements in degree structure. Bachelor of Arts programs were more likely to require language study than Bachelor of Science programs for graduation. The decline in WL class enrollment coincides with the finding that only 11.7% of colleges and universities in the United States require "at least three semesters of college-level study in any foreign language" for graduation (American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2021, p. 11).

Morello (1988) investigated the relationship between a WL graduation requirement and students' attitudes toward the requirement at the university level. With a sample of 106 participants, most of whom were students in the fourth required semester of French at University of Rhode Island, he found that they had an overall positive attitude toward WL study. Likewise, Morello reported that student opinions of French improved with the amount of required WL courses they completed. Finally, the students "expressed a surprisingly strong conviction that the study of a world language should be a required part of a university education" (Morello, 1988, p. 435). In addition, the participants' attitude toward French was correlated to their own sense of progress towards proficiency in the language. Similarly, Awad (2014) examined students that persisted in the WL study beyond their college's language requirement. In her qualitative interviews and observations, she noted that students stayed because of initial interest in the language, either because of the opportunity to examine culture or with games played in class, peer, family, and teacher support, and their own goals to become proficient speakers. While this research did not look at the question of a high school graduation requirement of four semesters of WL education, perhaps the findings can be generalized to the secondary level as well.

While it appeared that students who took more required WL courses enjoyed those courses more, class size in world language classrooms in high schools has often been described as a pyramid when it comes to years of the language. There are often many students in beginning language classes, but fewer students continue through four years of study. Speiller (1988) examined the factors that led to retention and withdrawal after the second year of language study in a New Jersey high school. The students that remained in the upper-level courses cited "practical, utilitarian reasons as prime motivators for continuing (enhancement of college applications and language usage)" (Speiller, 1988, p. 535). The students that withdrew from further WL study cited conflict with other courses, difficulty, and progress as the leading factors. Perhaps as Morello (1988) stated, attitudes of language mastery appear to be a large contributor to whether a student remains in a WL class, or they lacked the connection to a particular teacher or peer and family support (Awad, 2014). Successfully interacting with the culture and speakers of the target language community can help to build and build upon an intrinsic motivation, especially when the content of what is taught goes beyond grammar

instruction and contrasts with the hidden curriculum (Shedivy, 2004). On the other hand, the competing interests of high school in Speiller's (1988) study can be extrapolated to also be competing interests at the college level, even though there can practical, or instrumental (Shedivy, 2004), reasons for continued WL study. For example, Neuman (2017) examined universities with and without WL requirements and reported similar levels of proficiency and enjoyment of language learning among students between the two classifications after controlling for language majors/minors and household language use. Regardless of the outcomes presented, students in universities with WL requirements took more language courses than students in universities without WL requirements.

Often, advisors and professors at the university level and teachers and counselors at the high school level have an increased influence in a student's course of study. Wilkerson (2006) surveyed non-WL college faculty perceptions about the importance of WL education that are important to the current study. First, she noted that attitudes regarding world "languages are formed during an individual's initial language learning experience (usually during adolescence) and remain unchanged during the span of an individual's professional career" (Wilkerson, 2006, p. 311). The attitudes those faculty held may therefore be a holdover from experiences in language learning 20 to 30 years prior. Similarly, Roebuck and Wagner (2007) examined academic advisors' beliefs about WL learning at the university level and also noted some disconnect between faculty and staff advisors' attitudes. Surprisingly, however, both groups coincided in the message that a few semesters of WL study would lead to meaningful language, vastly underestimating proficiency goals (Magnan et al., 2012). Therefore, the attitudes of non-WL teachers and professors can greatly affect programs and student attitudes toward WL study. The college faculty that had an unpleasant initial world language experience:

> [They] told students not to take a language if it was not required for their major; they reported telling students that college is too late to learn another language; they advised students that certain programs of study are too demanding to spend time taking a foreign language; and they said that foreign languages are hard. They told students whose programs of study require they take a language to take as little language as possible. (Roebuck & Wagner, 2007, p. 315)

The faculty also held the belief that language instruction was only about grammar and vocabulary, with little emphasis on culture and intercultural communication. Similarly, non-WL faculty at West Virginia University thought that the WL requirement did little to increase students' cultural knowledge and oral competency (White, 2007). Non-WL faculty insisted that the classes at the university focused too heavily on literature, and students needed a more practical focus of their language skills. White's (2007) qualitative study indicated that non-WL faculty believed that college students should know a language other than English, but not require specific WL study at the university level. In order to understand another culture, some faculty expressed support for culture classes taught in English, because it would help students work outside of the United States

and stand out to future employers. It appears counterintuitive that the having greater intercultural communicative competence and the elimination of WL requirements are juxtaposed.

In contrast, one faculty member from the 27 respondents in Wilkerson's (2006) survey argued that the study of a WL is important to the university program and asked, "What is more central to the role of the liberal arts than exposing students to the reality that more than 80% of the world does not speak English?" (p. 314). Regardless, many colleges have still moved to drop WL requirements (Neuman, 2017) and Wilkerson (2006) indicated that the most reported reasons concerned that study of a WL in college was too late, time-consuming, difficult, and of little overall value. White echoed similar results from his interviews with non-WL faculty:

> Yet, even with the advantages that the study of a foreign language can offer students, participants were hesitant to suggest that foreign language study, as it is currently operationalized at the university level, can help students gain these skills (White, 2007, p. 113)

The faculty, many who taught engineering and business, recognized the importance of being able to speak with others and to understand how to act appropriately within another culture. In their minds, the emphasis on literature was of little practice value relative to the needs they saw manifest in their students.

Although seemingly disparate, people that suffer from math anxiety avoid situations in which they will be required to perform calculations and even avoid math courses and related fields (Choe et al., 2019; Pizzie & Kraemer, 2017). Another potential reason that might not have been explicitly stated in regard to discounting WL study may have been the teachers' own anxiety with prior WL education. In psychological research, the role of the transfer of anxiety between parents and children by modeling and reinforcing avoidant behaviors seen with instructional learning and information transfer may inform the argument that teachers with higher levels of WL anxiety may inform the advice they provide students and attitudes they hold toward a mandatory WL graduation requirement. According to Fisak and Grills-Taquechel (2007), "parents may communicate messages to their children regarding safety, wellbeing, and situations that should be avoided due to potential harm" (p. 221). It is worth determining if the advice teachers provided to students was based in their own implicit anxieties.

Anxiety in World Language Education

Many people experience anxiety in a world language classroom, partly due to the use of the target language (TL) (Horwitz et al., 1986). As most WL teachers will contest, student contact with the TL is very important and ACTFL (the national organization for world language teachers) recommends at least 90% of classroom instruction be conducted in the TL (ACTFL, 2010). For many, it appears that not knowing what the teacher is saying causes stress and anxiety in students. Horwitz et al. (1986) theorized a special type of anxiety that students face in the WL classroom:

> related to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, and they defined foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128)

In order to evaluate individual differences in this type of social anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) created the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) with an internal consistency ($r = .93$) and a test-retest reliability ($r = .93$). Many researchers have confirmed that WL anxiety relates to student performance since the publication of the FLCAS (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Philips, 1992; Price, 1991). These confirmations have recently been summarized. Indeed, both Zhang's (2019) and Teimouri et al.'s (2019) meta-analyses calculated the relationship between WL anxiety and WL performance/achievement at $r = -.39$ and $r = -.36$, respectively. Regardless, Sparks and Ganschow (2007) proposed that the FLCAS in truth only measures a student's perception of his or her own language skills, even in the native language. This anxiety may become part of a negative feedback loop for negative experiences with the WL instruction and could theoretically account for negative attitudes toward a WL requirement as Wilkerson (2006) had indicated. Similar to the way people with social anxiety experience "excessive worry, negative affect, and avoidance of social situations" (Maner & Kenrick, 2010, p. 111), those with high WL anxiety may avoid situations that require WL usage and advise others to do the same.

Further, Chen and Chang (2004) found a significant correlation between students with more difficulties learning a WL and the sensation of greater anxiety. They stated that "this is especially true for those with a history of foreign language learning difficulties; that is, students whose learning experience has been negative and who have suffered low grades" (Chen & Chang, 2004, p. 284). Specifically, WL learning history had a correlation coefficient of .58, $p < .01$ with anxiety. Chen and Chang (2004) determined that learning difficulties in WL accounted for 36.8% of the variance in anxiety scores. Moreover, they found that anxious students were characterized as having continual difficulties with the WL, in addition to factors associated with at-risk students, like poor developmental skills, low grades, and difficulty with classroom learning. These difficulties can follow high school students into college WL courses.

There is an interesting phenomenon with false beginners that takes place in 101-level WL courses. False beginners enroll in 101 classes designed for students that have never had a world language class before, the true beginners. Frantzen and Magnan (2005) reported that false beginners suffer less world language anxiety than the true beginners and often have higher scores. This is not surprising due to their prior instruction. In addition, the perceptions that these students have of the class and of the professor are related to their anxiety levels. Those with more negative perceptions experience significantly more anxiety and receive lower grades. When this is their first experience with a WL, their levels of anxiety in and about the class may contribute to more negative attitudes about WL study in the future.

While most research has examined the anxiety of world language students in beginning courses as a factor determining either their retention or withdrawal from continued WL study, Ewald (2007) investigated the phenomenon of world language anxiety experienced by advanced students in upper-level university courses. Many of these students did report feelings of anxiety, but these were mitigated in many ways by the professor. This is similar to the finding that the relationship with an instructor that helped lower the affective filter was a factor that helped students persist in WL education (Awad, 2014; Shedivy, 2004). A professor that was able to establish relationships with the students was also able to help keep anxiety levels from becoming defeating. Ewald (2007) also noted that students' self-confidence in language use was related to how much anxiety they experienced. Another major contributor to anxiety was how students compared themselves with other students. An upward comparison (the other students are more proficient than me) tended to result in more anxiety in language performance. When the non-WL college-level faculty in Wilkerson's (2006) study advised students to refrain from taking WL courses, it is plausible, therefore, that their own anxieties were influencing the advice they provided students (Fisak & Grills-Taquechel, 2007).

Despite White's (2007) concerns about the paucity of research regarding non-WL professors' attitudes toward WL requirements, there has been less investigation of the attitudes of high school teachers toward the WL requirement at the secondary level. This lack of investigation is important because the advice these teachers provide students may influence those students' choices with WL education. A dated study by Klayman (1975) reported on the attitudes of secondary school educators regarding the WL requirement at the university level and reported that 99% percent of administrators, school guidance counselors, and WL teachers that responded "consider[ed] the study of foreign languages important to the liberal arts education of students" (Klayman, 1975, p. 169). While this might appear to portray the importance that secondary school personnel place on the importance of WL study, it is worthwhile to illustrate that only WL educators were chosen from the teaching body. WL educators probably have a very high bias toward an WL requirement at the university level, whereas other educators may not carry a similar attitude. The likelihood that WL educators favor a WL requirement at the secondary level is also high. Once again, however, WL educators represent a very small minority of teachers and WL teachers' attitudes may differ greatly from the attitudes of non-WL educators. Therefore, it is necessary to examine non-WL teachers' attitudes toward WL study and the possibility that WL anxiety may influence those opinions. If WL anxiety can be viewed through the lens of a state anxiety or specific phobia, much like math or social anxiety, then avoidance is a typical behavioral response. Whether that avoidance relates to advice given to students and attitudes toward WL study remains to be seen.

Method

Before the implementation of the Michigan Merit Curriculum, the district had a one-year requirement that involved a student taking either a year of WL, fine arts, or industrial education. Many students graduated high school without ever having had a

world language class. Further, only one of the 78 teachers in the district taught WL until additional hiring began in preparation for the class of 2016's statewide requirement. As explained above, how the non-WLs teachers felt personally toward the education they had had in WL classrooms during adolescence may have included high levels of anxiety. Therefore, demographic variables and WL anxiety were included in order to determine effects on attitudes toward the MMC WL requirement and WL study.

Participants

All teachers from one rural Michigan school district were asked to participate in a survey of attitudes and WL anxiety. Thirty-six teachers out of 77 provided consent and agreed to participate in the survey: 8 (22.2%) were from the elementary; 9 (25.0%), the middle school; and 19 (52.8%) worked in the high school. The researcher decided not to randomly sample the group in favor of soliciting responses from the entire population, due to the small population size. Email addresses of the participants were generated by the "teacher group" listing in the school district's email settings, as provided by the administrative assistant to the superintendent. The first email attempt at data collection resulted in six returns (7.8% response rate). The investigator solicited all non-respondents once again with a second email, this time yielding a total of 12 participants (15.6%). Due to the low response rate, the researcher called as many of the non-responders as could be contacted, resulting in a total of 36 participants. This resulted in a response rate of 46.8% of the teachers from this rural school district.

Demographic questions of the questionnaire revealed that 17 (47.2%) of the respondents were male and 19 (52.8%) were female. In regard to age, three (8.3%) were under 30, 15 (41.7%) indicated they fell within the age range of 31-40 years old, 7 (19.4%) as 41-50, and 11 (30.6%) were between the ages of 51 and 60. All 36 participants reported their racial or ethnic background as white and stated that they preferred the exclusive use of English at home. As children, five (13.9%) reported that someone in their household spoke a language other than English, whereas 31 (86.1%) reported that everyone in their household spoke English as their first language. In their formative years, 14 (38.9%) reported being from a rural area, six (16.7%) from a village, four (11.1%) a small town, 10 (27.8%) a suburban area, and two (5.6%) replied that they were from a large urban area.

In regard to education level, two participants (5.6%) had a BA/BS, 17 (47.2%) had a BA/BS with additional graduate coursework, nine (25.0%) had attained a MA/MS, and eight (22.2%) had additional coursework beyond the graduate degree. The respondents also reported different degrees of work experience as teachers: three (8.3%) had worked five years or less; nine (25.0%), 6-10 years; nine (25.0%), 11-15 years; five (13.9%), 16-20 years, two (5.6%) 21-25 years; and eight (22.2%) had worked as a teacher for 26 years or more. Because of the low number of respondents in some categories, experience was condensed to the following: 10 years or less, 12 (33.3%); 11-20 years, 14 (38.9%); and 21 years or more, 10 (27.8%).

As for the amount of WL instruction they had received, 30 (83.3%) reported that their elementary or middle schools had offered no WL instruction, whereas six respondents (13.9%) had received WL instruction at either the elementary or middle school level. As high school students, eight (22.2%) had not taken any WL classes,

eight (22.2%) had taken one to two semesters, 15 (41.7%) had taken three to four semesters, four (11.1%) five to six semesters, and 1 (2.8%) had taken seven semesters or more. Due to low numbers of participants across all categories, the upper levels were collapsed into a level of five or more semesters. As college students, 19 (52.8%) had not taken a WL class, 13 (36.1%) had taken one to two semesters, two (5.6%) had taken three to four semesters, one teacher (2.8%) had taken five to six semesters, and one teacher (2.8%) had completed seven or more semesters of WL study. Similar to the respondents' high school WL exposure, the college-level exposure levels had to be collapsed as well. By creating a level of three semesters or more, there were now four participants (11.1%) in this category. Lastly, most participants 15 (41.7%) had never visited another country for a period of a week, 13 (36.1%) had visited one to two countries, five (13.9%) three to four countries, two participants (5.6%) had visited five to six countries, and one teacher (2.8%) had visited seven or more countries.

Instrumentation

A 29-item survey was constructed by the investigator to measure demographic data, attitudes toward graduation requirements, and attitudes toward world language study, and a modification of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used to determine an anxiety rating (see Appendix). The modification of the 33-item FLCAS consisted of eight randomly chosen items. These items were selected from the FLCAS to shorten the total survey from 54 to 29 items in an effort to increase response rates. The original FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) had a high reported internal consistency (r = .93) and a test-retest reliability (r = .93). However, it is important to note that these eight items do not necessarily have the same consistency or reliability. Recently, a separate, shortened, eight-item version of the scale, S-FLCAS, was validated with 370 participants (Botes et al., 2021). However, the eight items used in this instrument were different from the ones validated by Botes et al. (2021). Within this study, the variables that made up the category of high WL anxiety correlated well with the summed category considering only 32 participants completed this section of the survey. Six items correlated highly with total WL anxiety at p <.001 with r values of the following: never sure of myself (r=.688); not worry about mistakes (r=.708); frightened me (r=.712); felt confident, (r=.806); comfortable around native, (r=.680;) and enjoyed class, (r=.640). Moderate correlations were reported for two variables: felt that others spoke better (r = .501, p < .01), and enjoyed listening to the WL (r = .403, p < .05).

Four variables were computed from individual items: total WL Anxiety; WL instruction as beneficial for all; WL as a mandatory graduation requirement in Michigan; and total WL instruction/exposure. A total score was computed for the 8 FLCAS items for WL Anxiety using a 5-point Likert scale (range 8 - 40). In addition, a total score was compiled for the participants' belief that WL instruction was beneficial to all using a 5-point Likert scale (range 4-20). A composite score was created to measure the respondents' beliefs that WL should be a graduation requirement in Michigan using two 5-point Likert scales (range 2-10) based on how much WL instruction should be required. A final additional variable was the amount of total WL instruction/exposure that participants had received. This variable was composed by combining the following binary and ordinal variables: exposure to a person in

the household as a child whose first language was not English; what language was preferred at home; whether or not either their elementary or middle school offered a WL; how many semesters of WL the participants took in high school and college; and the amount of countries they had visited for a week.

Results

Opinions about Graduation Requirements

Table 1

Opinions about Graduation Requirements (n=36)

Survey items	Strongly Disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Undecided *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly Agree *n* (%)
Graduation requirements at the district high school were appropriate.	2 (5.6%)	12 (33.3%)	5 (13.9%)	15 (41.7%)	2 (5.6%)
The state of Michigan should set graduation requirements for Michigan public schools.	1 (2.8%)	10 (27.8%)	5 (13.9%)	19 (52.8%)	1 (2.8%)

Table 1 indicates that 47.3% of the district's teachers believed that the graduation requirements at the high school prior to the MMC were appropriate. However, 14 of the 36 (38.9%) teachers disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, 55.6% of respondents agreed that Michigan's graduation requirements be determined by the state whereas 30.6% disagreed.

Opinions about World Language Education

The majority of teachers in the district (61.1%) agreed that WL education should be a mandatory state graduation requirement; however, 30.6% of the participants disagreed as illustrated in Table 2. Instead of the current two-year requirement, nearly half of the respondents (47.2%) believed that the requirement should be one or two semesters. As indicated in Table 3, only 16.7% of respondents agreed with the two-year requirement and only one teacher believed that study beyond a third year should be mandatory. Table 4 presents semester groupings as ordinal options and were treated as a five-scale Likert response similar to the data in Table 3. When the data from Tables 3 and 4 were summed, a total score for mandatory world language education was obtained. These two measures provided a range from two to ten. The average response demonstrated a tendency toward requiring one year of WL study in the high school graduation requirements ($m = 5.31$, $SD = 1.89$): most teachers agreed with a a requirement but thought one to two semesters was sufficient. However, 30.6% of teachers expressed that Michigan should require no WL study.

Table 2
Responses to Statement: Foreign Language Education Should be a Mandatory State Requirement

	Frequency (*n*=36)	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	5.6%
Disagree	9	25.0%
Undecided	3	8.3%
Agree	18	50.0%
Strongly agree	4	11.1%

Table 3
Responses to Question: How much Foreign Language Education Should Michigan Require for Graduation?

	Frequency (*n*=35)	Percent
0 semesters	11	30.6%
1-2 semesters	17	47.2%
3-4 semesters	6	16.7%
5-6 semesters	0	0.0%
7 semesters or more	1	2.8%

When the teachers were asked to respond about the utility of learning a WL with four 5-point Likert scales, responses demonstrated that over 83.3% of teachers disagreed that there was little need in the small town of the school district to learn a WL (Table 4). Further, 88.9% of the participants disagreed that students in Michigan had little need of learning a WL. The same sentiments were expressed in the last two statements in Table 4 where the respondents overwhelmingly indicated that WL education was beneficial for all students. It is important to note that the first three items were reverse-scored. A total score for the benefit of WL study was calculated and scores could range from 4 (low) to 20 (high), although the actual responses ranged from 8-20. The average response indicated a strong tendency to believe in the benefit of WL study (m = 16.22, SD = 2.85).

Modified FLCAS as a Measure of World Language Anxiety

Eight survey questions examined participants' levels of WL classroom anxiety during their WL study and the responses are displayed in Table 5. Again, the form was shortened in order to increase the likelihood that more teachers would respond to the entire survey

Table 4
Responses to Statements Addressing WL Instruction Being Beneficial for All (n=36)

Survey items	Strongly Disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Undecided *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly Agree *n* (%)
There is little need for a student in [this town] to learn a FL.	9 (25.0%)	21 (58.3%)	1 (2.8%)	5 (13.9%)	0 (0.0%)
There is little need for a student in Michigan to learn a FL.	13 (36.1%)	19 (52.8%)	1 (2.8%)	3 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Only college-bound students should enroll in FL classes.	9 (25.0%)	21 (58.3%)	4 (11.1%)	2 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)
All students, regardless of career objectives, benefit from FL instruction.	0 (0%)	3 (8.3%)	1 (2.8%)	22 (61.1%)	10 (27.8%)

and the eight items were chosen at random. It was assumed that the shortened form would still yield results that could differentiate those with high levels of WL anxiety from those with lower levels. Although factor analysis was not computed for the 32 completed surveys, a similar analysis recently found a shortened form to be highly reliable over 370 participants (Botes et al., 2021). Lastly, it is important to note that four teachers (11.1%) did not answer the questions because they had never studied a WL. Lastly, all teachers that responded to the survey were not WL instructors nor did they have a WL certification in the state of Michigan.

A total score for FLCAS was computed and the scores had a possible range from eight (low) to 40 (high) using a five-scale Likert rating. The last four items were reverse scored. A tertiary split differentiated low anxiety (8.0-18.6), average anxiety (18.7-29.3), and high anxiety (29.4-40.0). The WL anxiety of the group was average relative to the range (m = 24.09, SD = 5.31), although 52.8% of the teachers indicated that they never felt quite sure of themselves, 61.1% did not feel confident using vocabulary in conversation, and 61.1% would be uncomfortable around native speakers. Similarly, 44.4% worried about making mistakes in the WL classroom. Despite this, only 22.2% of the teachers reported they felt frightened when they did not understand the teacher in the WL classroom and only 27.8% thought that other students spoke the WL better than they did. When questioned if they enjoyed listening to someone speak a WL and whether they enjoyed their WL classes, the majority (63.8%) agreed.

Table 5
Responses to FLCAS Statements (n=32)

Survey items	Strongly Disagree *n* (%)	Disagree *n* (%)	Undecided *n* (%)	Agree *n* (%)	Strongly Agree *n* (%)
I never felt quite sure of myself in my FL classroom	1 (2.8%)	8 (22.2%)	4 (11.1%)	15 (41.7%)	4 (11.1%)
I did not worry about making mistakes in my FL classroom	4 (11.1%)	12 (33.3%)	5 (13.9%)	10 (27.8%)	1 (2.8%)
It frightened me when I did not understand the teacher in my FL classroom	2 (5.6%)	15 (41.7%)	7 (19.4%)	7 (19.4%)	1 (2.8%)
I felt that others spoke better than me in my FL classroom	1 (2.8%)	13 (36.1%)	8 (22.2%)	9 (25.0%)	1 (2.8%)
I enjoyed listening to someone speak the FL	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)	9 (25.0%)	17 (47.2%)	4 (11.1%)
I felt confident using the vocabulary in a conversation in my FL classroom	7 (19.4%)	15 (41.7%)	3 (8.3%)	5 (13.9%)	2 (5.6%)
I would probably have felt comfortable around native speakers of the FL	9 (25.0%)	13 (36.1%)	4 (11.1%)	6 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)
I enjoyed my FL class(es)	0 (0.0%)	3 (8.3%)	6 (16.7%)	17 (47.2%)	6 (16.7%)

Note. Four respondents had never taken a WL course.

World Language Exposure

A variable was calculated for the amount of total WL instruction/exposure that participants had received. As stated above, this consisted of the following variables: exposure to a person in the household as a child whose first language was not English; what language was preferred at home; whether or not either their elementary or middle school offered a WL; how many semesters of WL the

participants took in high school and college; and the amount of countries they have visited for a week (Table 6). The possible range was from six to 22, where the average score was very low (m = 9.08, SD = 2.01), indicating that the staff at this rural school district have had little overall experience with WL. Due to the low response rates in the upper limits, the last three response choices were collapsed into one response. This reduced the range from 22 to 15.

Table 6

Responses to the Components of the WL Exposure Variable (n=36)

	Score				
	1	2	3	4	5
Did someone in your household speak a LOTE?	No 31 (86.1%)	Yes 5 (13.9%)			
Preferred language spoken at home	English 36 (100%)	LOTE 0 (0.0%)			
Was FL offered at elementary/middle school?	No 31 (86.1%)	Yes 5 (13.9%)			
How many semesters of FL in high school?*	0 8 (22.2%)	1-2 8 (22.2%)	3-4 15 (41.7%)	5-6 4 (11.1%)	7+ 1 (2.8%)
How many semesters of FL in college? *	0 19 (52.8%)	1-2 13 (36.1%)	3-4 2 (5.6%)	5-6 1 (2.8%)	7+ 1 (2.8%)
How many countries visited for at least a week?+	0 15 (41.7%)	1-2 13 (36.1%)	3-4 5 (13.9%)	5-6 2 (5.6%)	7+ 1 (2.8%)

*These items were condensed into three levels (0, 1-2, 3+) because of low responses in the upper limits.

The computed variables were examined for normality in order to conduct inferential comparisons among groups. Table 7 indicates that skew, in particular, remained with +/- 1.00. QQ plots for FL anxiety indicated deviations fell within z = 0.8 to -1.8. The expected values of the all benefit variable fell between z = 1 to -2.3. The FL state requirement variable held deviations between z = 0.4 and -0.6. The Total FL instruction and exposure variable, collapsed, indicated expected values z = 0.7 to -0.4. However, only FL Anxiety satisfied the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test for normality (Mertler & Reinhart, 2017). Visual inspections of histograms confirmed the need for more participants and caution should be used when interpreting the validity of results.

Table 7
Characteristics of Calculated Variables

	N	*M*	*SD*	Absolute Min/ Response Min	Response Max/ Absolute Max	Skew	Kurtosis
WL State Requirement	35	5.31	1.89	2/2	9/10	-0.21	-0.94
All benefit from WL instruction	36	16.22	2.85	4/8	20/20	-0.59	0.65
WL Anxiety	32	24.09	5.31	8/15	34/40	-0.06	-0.52
Total WL instruction and exposure*	36	9.03	1.75	6/6	13/15	0.43	-0.74

*This category includes the collapsed responses.

The calculated categories were correlated with each other and the results are presented in Table 8. According to the results, there were only two significant results among the four variables. The scale "All benefit" indicated a strong positive correlation with more agreement that there should be a WL state graduation requirement. Contrarily, there was no significant relationship between the "All benefit" variables and either WL exposure or WL anxiety. WL anxiety, on the other hand, demonstrated a significant moderate negative relation to WL exposure. As WL exposure went up, WL anxiety went down. However, WL exposure was not related to either the state requirement or the attitude that WL instruction was beneficial to all.

Table 8
Correlations among Calculated Variables

	WL Anxiety *r (n)*	All Benefit *r (n)*	WL State Requirement *r (n)*
All Benefit from WL Instruction Total	.004 (32)		
WL as State Requirement Total	-.068 (31)	.756** (35)	
WL Exposure Total	-.349* (32)	-.156 (36)	-.113 (35)

Note. * $p = .050$, ** $p < .001$.

Group Differences

A series of *t* test analyses and ANOVAs were computed to determine significant mean response differences between and among groups on the four calculated categories: WL exposure total; WL anxiety total; WL instruction is beneficial for all total; and the WL state requirement total. There was no significant difference for gender across these four categories. Neither educational level nor household language was significant across the four categories. Likewise, the buildings where teachers worked (elementary, middle, or high school) were not significant either. Similarly, WL experiences in elementary or middle school and the semesters of study in high school or college were not significant factors in determining anxiety, support of the WL state graduation requirement, or the belief that WL study was beneficial for all. Contrarily, if a LOTE was spoken at home when the teachers were children (n=5), then those teachers were more likely believe that WL instruction was beneficial for all, $t(34) = 1.95$, Cohen's $d = .95$, $p < .05$ using a one-tailed test. A two-tailed test still approached significance, $p = 0.59$. Again, if teachers were exposed to WL in as elementary or middle school students, there was no difference among the variables.

Many variables were differentiated by age and the closely related variable years of experience. Because of the conceptual overlap between these demographic characteristics (collinearity), only differences relative to age are reported. In regard to WL anxiety, the youngest teachers (30 and under) had the lowest average anxiety (n = 3; m = 17.33, SD = 4.04). The age groups 31-40, 41-50, and 51-60 all indicated higher levels of WL anxiety: ages 31-40 (n=13; m=24.69; SD=5.25); ages 41-50 (n=5; m=25.60; SD=2.88); ages 51-60 (n=11; m=24.55; SD=5.66). An ANOVA was not calculated for these groups due to low representation across two groups. When age was collapsed to a group that included ages up to 40, there were no longer notable differences among the three groups (m = 23.31).

Table 9

Average Responses to Selected Items

	FL study is beneficial for all		FL state requirement and semesters		High school had appropriate graduation requirements	
Teacher age (n)	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
To 40 (18)	17.22	2.34	5.89	1.78	2.78	1.06
41-50 (7)	17.57	1.99	6.50	0.84	2.57	1.13
51-60 (11)	13.73	2.61	3.73	1.49	3.91	0.70

There were significant differences between age groups for attitudes that all benefit from world language study and how much WL study should be required in a state requirement. Similarly, the appropriateness of the high school's graduation requirement varied by age. These analyses indicated differences particularly between teachers whose ages ranged between 31-50 and teachers aged 51-60 and

are reported in Table 9. A one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference among means for the variable WL study is beneficial for all, $F(2,33) = 8.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .35$. A Scheffe post hoc test confirmed that teachers up to age 50 believed that WL is more beneficial than do teachers 51-60, $p < .01$. The attitude toward WL as a state requirement and the amount of semesters for graduation was also significant, $F(2, 32) = 8.47$, $p < .01$, with older teachers endorsing less mandatory WL study. A Scheffe post hoc test confirmed that the eldest teachers are statistically different from their younger colleagues, $p < .01$. A one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference among means for the appropriateness of the prior graduation requirements at the high school, $F(2,33) = 5.73$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .26$. The appropriateness item had the following characteristics, $m = 3.08$, $SD = 1.11$, skewness = -0.17, kurtosis = -1.19. Older teachers indicated that prior requirements were more appropriate than did younger teachers. A Scheffe post hoc test confirmed that teachers to age 40 and teachers aged 41-50, disagreed with older teachers, $p < .05$. Teachers ages up to 40 and those 41-50 were not statistically different from each other in any analysis.

WL anxiety and WL instruction/exposure may have related to where teachers grew up. Table 10 indicates the average scores, standard deviations, and samples sizes for each grouping. However, inferential statistics were not computed for three variables because there were only four participants in the small towns group. However, teachers that designated growing up in either rural areas or villages appeared to reflect higher anxiety than those that grew up in suburban and urban areas. Similarly, these teachers also had the lowest level of WL study and exposure.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics on WL Anxiety and WL Instruction/Exposure by Where Teachers Grew Up

	WL anxiety score			WL instruction/exposure		
Where teacher grew up	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Rural areas and villages	26.00	4.87	17	8.75	1.74	20
Small towns	22.25	5.44	4	12	2.71	4
Suburban and urban areas	21.82	5.21	11	9.58	2.23	12

Discussion

The current investigation examined various factors that sought to explain educators' attitudes toward the WL requirement in the MMC. It was hypothesized that demographic variables, such as rurality and prior WL exposure, in addition to factors of anxiety and beliefs about WL instruction had a significant and quantifiable influence on the attitudes that teachers at the rural Michigan school district had about the two-year graduation requirement in WL. This research is important because there has been little research with non-WL elementary and secondary educators about the mandated WL graduation requirement. The MMC

provided school districts a timeframe of six years beyond the implementation of the other requirements for districts to build capacity to implement the requirement (MDE, 2017). Therefore, it is pertinent to examine educators' beliefs regarding the requirement and what factors contribute to these opinions. The research questions sought to determine whether WL anxiety or demographic variables were related to attitudes about the benefits of WL study and the WL graduation requirement of the MMC.

To begin, it is interesting to note that teachers indicated mixed agreement that the graduation requirements at the high school were appropriate and expressed more agreement that the state should provide a top-down approach of mandatory requirements. This finding represented a dramatic change in the power of the local school district to decide the most appropriate offerings for their students. Further, the majority of teachers also agreed that WL education should be a part of those requirements, although they centered around the completion of one year instead of two. Similarly, most teachers agreed that all students, regardless of career path and even those from the rural district, could benefit from WL instruction. Unfortunately, it is implausible that one year of WL instruction will lead to the intermediate proficiency levels associated with actionable career-ready language skills. Therefore, these two beliefs are not practically compatible with each other, which mirrored the results of White (2007). This finding, however, is not inconsistent with how students' WL proficiency goals outpace the expected outcomes from limited study (Magnan et al., 2012). Because the teachers in the study largely did not complete much language study, their expectations associated with such limited study are implausible.

There were key factors that appeared related to attitudes about WL study. The first research question examined the WL anxiety of the non-WL teachers. According to the analyses, WL anxiety was not related to either the attitude that WL study is beneficial or to attitudes regarding the WL requirement of the MMC. On the other hand, anxiety levels tended to be higher for teachers that had less exposure to WL. It may also be that those who experience more WL anxiety self-select out of WL classes (Shedivy, 2004). In addition, it seems that those with early WL exposure in school or at home were more likely to take WL classes, mirroring Awad's (2014) findings, perhaps resulting in less WL anxiety. In this case, it appears that there is less anxiety experienced when WL is a regular component of the elementary and middle school experience.

In addition, age may be related to the experience of WL anxiety, although it is difficult to draw a correlation between anxiety and age because only three respondents were from teachers under 30. When age groups were not collapsed, the youngest teachers also had the highest mean WL instruction and exposure, with more likelihood of elementary or middle school WL exposure, as well as having taken more high school and college WL classes. They had also visited at least one foreign country for a minimum of a week, which was similar to the average of other age groups. Perhaps the level of instruction or the type of instruction gave the older teachers a potentially higher WL anxiety. The popular Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual Methods, mainly consisting of the memorization of rules

of grammar, translation, and finally scripts, principally guided WL instruction throughout the latter 1900s (Terrell, 1990) and had coincided with declines in WL enrollment and graduation requirements in higher education (Lord, 2020). This is a stark contrast to the more current contextualized and communicative language approaches of today.

Still, of the demographic variables, the most salient effect appears to be from age. It appears the older the staff and the more years of experience teaching they had, the less they seemed to see a benefit for all students of WL study. Indeed, younger teachers reported a significantly different attitude toward the benefits of WL study than older teachers. Likewise, the data suggest that the oldest teachers were less likely to support WL as a requirement for graduation from high school and that WL requirements should be limited to one year. Staff that held these opinions were also likely to hold opinions that there is little need in both the local district and Michigan for a student to learn a WL, and that WL instruction is better left to college-bound students. On the other hand, older teachers likely have seen multiple iterations of curricular reform throughout their careers and were wary of new changes. The older teachers were less supportive of the MMC in general with its very specific course requirements for graduation, perhaps from experience having seen unintended negative consequences from curricular reforms in the past (Lillard & DeCicca, 2001; Perna & Thomas, 2009; Plunk et al., 2014).

The rurality of the home community may have been a particularly important demographic variable as well. Where teachers had grown up seemed to influence attitudes toward world language instruction. Those who grew up in more rural areas tended to express more anxiety toward WL learning, potentially signaling that WL learning may also have been a proxy variable for feelings toward immigrants and LOTE in general (Fennelly & Federico, 2008; Hawley, 2011). Within the school district's county, only 5.4% of people aged five or higher spoke a LOTE, but only 1.3% were foreign born and 2.1% identified as Hispanic or Latino (USCB, 2022). Although this may appear counterintuitive, there are many Amish and Mennonites in the community that speak Pennsylvania (German) Dutch. Hence, many of these speakers of a LOTE are not perceived as foreigners in the county.

Interestingly, those that grew up in a small town were more likely to have more WL courses than did those that grew up in either rural or urban areas. Growing up with a family member whose first language was not English was also useful in reducing the stranger anxiety component of WL anxiety (Maad & Ridha, 2020). People from more urban areas tended to feel more confident in their ability to use the WL, which may be related to an increased amount of opportunities to use the WL in a natural setting or simple exposure to a more diverse population. This can relate to less aversion to immigrants and LOTE (Hawley, 2011).

Personal beliefs also affected the outcomes of the importance of world language study. In general, a very strong effect was seen for the belief that all can benefit from WL study. Those that saw a large benefit were more likely to support a mandatory WL requirement for graduation as well as more coursework required for graduation. In general, those that saw more benefit to WL education

also tended to be less satisfied with the graduation requirements at the rural high school before the MMC. Those who saw a need of students in Michigan to learn a WL also expressed these same trends. Teachers who generally held advanced degrees believed that the school district's graduation requirements had not been sufficient either. Although many in Michigan agreed with the new requirements (Walker, 2006), many older teachers in the district did not. In an analysis of the impact of MMC on mathematics education, it was found that the least prepared students and those from lower socioeconomic status drove most of the additional 0.2 years of mathematics course completion, and that those students tended to complete more difficult levels of courses. However, the most-prepared students were largely responsible for the increase in college attendance (Kim et al., 2019). The only discernible effect on the ACT was in science, although that was only an increase of 0.04 *SD* (Jacob et al., 2017). Unfortunately, there is no published data on the results on world language enrollment of students and there is no statewide assessment data for world languages in the state.

Limitations

Obviously, there is not a simple answer to the question of which factors affected teachers' attitudes toward WL instruction, and the low number of participants makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. In addition, the results presented in the current study need to be carefully considered due to multiple limitations. For example, this investigation only surveyed the attitudes of teachers in one rural school district in Michigan. Therefore, the results from the current study are only pertinent to Michigan teachers as a function of how closely teachers in this rural school are representative of Michigan teachers. There is no presumption that this district is representative of all teachers in the state. Further, the study's conclusions are based on the responses of 36 participants, of whom four had never taken a WL class in their entire educational preparation. Future research would benefit from expanding the survey statewide in order to better represent all Michigan teachers.

A large, randomized sample would help to address another flaw in the current investigation, low power. There is a large chance of a type II error because of potential non-significant results that were not reported. Similarly, it is possible that spurious type I errors were also reported. In addition, a larger field of participants could help three of the computed variables: WL as a benefit for all, WL state requirement, and WL instruction/exposure reach normality with the K-S test. For these reasons, all conclusions drawn in this survey would benefit from further research and greater participation.

Although a first look at non-WL teachers' attitudes, it is important to note that the instrument itself has weaknesses. For example, although another eight-item shortened form of the FLCAS has recently been validated (Botes et al., 2021), the eight items in this instrument have not been separately validated. The shortened FLCAS did meet the K-S test for normality. The shortened form did help to decrease the length of the overall survey and helped return a 46.8% response rate. Similarly, the other items in the questionnaire were created by the author and are an attempt to ascertain specific characteristics and attitudes. The other three variables, as

mentioned above, did not meet the K-S test for normality. While regressions were not computed, the ANOVAs need to be considered carefully and the descriptive statistics are provided. The items and computed variables were piloted with a separate group of teachers from another school district, but questions arose after data had been collected. For example, the item that asks whether the graduation requirements at the high school had been appropriate before the introduction of the MMC failed to consider or offer a way for respondents to discuss how they were inappropriate. Further, the state-mandated graduation requirements may have triggered more animosity in older teachers for myriad reasons. It is difficult to ascertain these reasons without further qualitative investigation.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

When the MMC was introduced in 2006, the rigorous graduation requirements were expected to prepare students to be career- and college-ready. The two-credit (two-year) WL requirement or novice-high proficiency score rating was included as part of the MMC, but not required until the graduating class of 2016 to provide time for school districts that did not have adequate staffing in place. Although many WL teachers supported the requirement, it was unknown what non-WL teachers thought of the requirement and what they believed to be the appropriate amount of language instruction. Because non-WL teachers constitute the vast majority of teachers in Michigan, it is important to understand the advice they give students and others when their opinions are considered. While many teachers reported supporting the inclusion of WL in the MMC and stated that all students could benefits from WL, most teachers believed a one-year requirement was sufficient for graduation. It is impractical to believe that actionable skills will be learned within such a brief time-frame, and WL educators must lobby for sustained WL programming. Today, the two-credit requirement remains, but students may opt to for one year to be replaced with visual, performing, or industrial arts. The remaining credit continues to come under attack with multiple attempts for computer programming languages to substitute for WL.

To continue, MDE (2017) acknowledged that WL exposure and instruction should be given from earlier ages in order to build proficiency and actionable language skills. When students begin instruction early, they have more time to gain mastery and increase their proficiency in order to use their skills. As noted above, this prolonged exposure can also lead to greater inter- and cross-cultural understanding and eventually impact the attitudes and advice these current and future students provide to others. Additionally, earlier WL instruction would ease the pressure that other non-mandatory high school classes felt to maintain their programs despite decreasing enrollment availability. Presumably, the potential waiving of the second credit of WL education in lieu of vocational or industrial education, or classes in performing or visual arts helped to alleviate those concerns. As other states have implemented top-down curricula, it would be vital to examine non-WL teachers' attitudes of either required or non-mandatory WL graduation requirements. The implications from a larger study will perhaps lead to more intriguing relationships among the different factors that affect educators' attitudes toward the study of a WL.

In addition, the watering down of the WL graduation requirement in Michigan serves as a stark reminder of how important language advocacy is insofar as opportunities for students are concerned. The first graduating class of 2016 did not even need to fulfill the second credit of WL to graduate, as long as they completed the second credits in the arts. Without strong advocacy from WL teachers, programs and requirements will be discontinued amid other competing pressures. If WL anxiety or another factor underlies unfavorable opinions toward WL study, it is important to the profession to understand these factors in order to mitigate their effects so students will continue to have valuable language programming that can lead to actionable skills and cultural understanding.

Lastly, given the hyper politically divided atmosphere in the United States, future research should also probe whether political partisanship and attitudes toward immigration indicate a demonstrable relationship to WL anxiety or belief in the importance of including WL as a graduation requirement. These attitudes are important to consider because educators often find themselves in the position of academic counselors and their experiences and understanding of the utility of WL study can greatly impact the careers of not only their own students, but also affect American economic and geopolitical interests (Rifkin, 2012).

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Appendix

Attitude Toward State Requirements and Foreign Language Survey

Demographic Information

1. Please identify your gender.
   - o Male
   - o Female
2. Please identify your age range.
   - o 30 or younger
   - o 31 – 40
   - o 41 – 50
   - o 51 – 60
   - o 61 or older
3. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic background?
   - o Asian
   - o Black / African American
   - o White / Caucasian
   - o Hispanic (may be of any race)
   - o Native American / American Indian
   - o Other. Please specify: _____
4. What is your highest level of education?
   - o Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Arts
   - o Bachelor of Science / Bachelor of Arts and some graduate courses
   - o Master of Science / Master of Arts
   - o Master of Science / Master of Arts with additional graduate coursework
   - o Doctoral degree
5. How many years have you been employed as a teacher, including any previous employment at other districts?
   - o Five years or less
   - o 6 – 10 years
   - o 11 – 15 years
   - o 16 – 20 years
   - o 21 – 25 years
   - o 26 years or more
6. In what building do you teach a majority of your classes?
   - o Elementary
   - o Middle
   - o High
7. What language do you prefer to speak at home?
   - o English
   - o A language other than English
   - o Bilingual English / Additional language

8. Choose the description of the area that most closely describes where you grew up?
   - o rural area
   - o village
   - o small town
   - o suburban area
   - o large urban area

9. Did one of your parents or other person in your household speak a first language that was not English?
   - o No
   - o Yes

10. Did either your elementary or middle school include study of a foreign language as part of the required curriculum?
   - o No
   - o Yes

11. Please indicate how much foreign language education you took in high school? Please note that 2 semesters is the equivalent to 1 year.
   - o 0 semesters
   - o 1 – 2 semesters
   - o 3 – 4 semesters
   - o 5 – 6 semesters
   - o 7 semesters or more

12. Please indicate how much foreign language education you took in college?
   - o 0 semesters
   - o 1 – 2 semesters
   - o 3 – 4 semesters
   - o 5 – 6 semesters
   - o 7 semesters or more

13. How many foreign countries have you visited for at least a week straight (7 days) in your lifetime?
   - o 0
   - o 1 – 2
   - o 3 – 4
   - o 5 – 6
   - o 7 – 8
   - o 9 or more

Opinions about graduation requirements

14. Prior to the Michigan Merit Curriculum, I believe that the graduation requirements at local high school were appropriate.
   - o Strongly disagree
   - o Disagree
   - o Undecided

- o Agree
- o Strongly Agree

15. The state of Michigan should set the requirements for graduation in Michigan public schools.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

16. Foreign language education should be a mandatory state high school graduation requirement.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

How much foreign language education should Michigan require for high school graduation?

- o 0 semesters
- o 1 – 2 semesters
- o 3 – 4 semesters
- o 5 – 6 semesters
- o 7 semesters or more

Opinions about foreign language education

17. There is little need for a student in this district to learn a foreign language.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

18. There is little need for a student in Michigan to learn a foreign language.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

19. Only college-bound students should enroll in foreign language classes.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

20. All students, regardless of career objectives, can benefit from studying a foreign language.
    - o Strongly disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Undecided
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

Opinions about my foreign language study (adapted from the FLCAS, Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986)

For the following questions, think back to when you were a student in a foreign language class.

21. I never felt quite sure of myself when I would speak in my foreign language class.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
22. I didn't worry about making mistakes in my foreign language class.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
23. It frightened me when I didn't understand what the instructor was saying in the foreign language.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
24. I always felt that other students spoke the foreign language better than I did.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
25. I enjoy/ enjoyed listening to someone speaking a foreign language.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

26. I felt confident that I could easily use the foreign language vocabulary that I knew in a conversation.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
27. I would probably have felt comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree
28. I enjoyed my foreign language class(es).
    - o Strongly Disagree
    - o Disagree
    - o Neither agree nor disagree
    - o Agree
    - o Strongly Agree

Maximizing Learning of L2 Adult Learners in Higher Education

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The Challenge

With a third of the students enrolled in higher education being above the age of 25, second language programs should better integrate learning components that consider their specific challenges and strengths. How could current college classroom practices be adapted to better support the second language development of this group of students?

Abstract

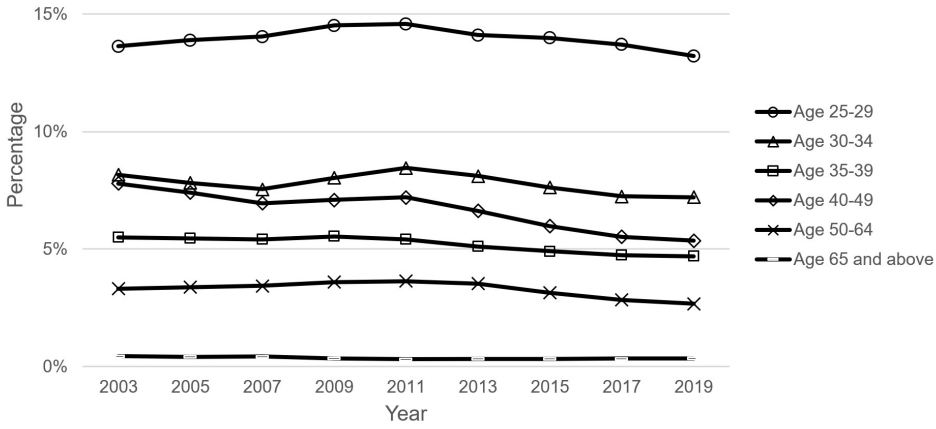
In the fall of 2019, the age of 33.5% of students enrolled in US institutions of higher education was 25 and above. However, research in the fields of adult learning, developmental, cognitive, and socio-cognitive theories suggests that this group of students presents L2 instructors with a set of strengths and challenges. One specific concern is that empirical studies have indicated a steady decline in L2 success along with the age of the adult learners (Hakuta et al., 2003). The aim of this article is to examine how teaching practices may be derived from research findings, with a view to better supporting the development of L2 communicative competence among adult learners. As a result, guidelines for L2 instructional practices are proposed in alignment with the macro-strategies theoretical framework suggested by Kumaravadivelu (2006). In doing so, this study also recognizes the central role played by teachers, as they are uniquely positioned to identify challenges and strengths facing adult learners and adapt their instruction accordingly.

A commonly-held view is that higher educational institutions mostly cater to students who have freshly graduated from high school, and that these students seek to acquire skills that they plan to apply subsequently in their professional life.

In reality, over the past decades the number of postsecondary US students age 25 and above has been remarkably high and remains so in spite of an overall decrease in general enrollment (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Number of Students, by Age Group, Enrolled in US Postsecondary Institutions in the Fall (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003-2019)



In view of older adult students' high participation in higher education, one must consider if commonly used instructional strategies and curricula are adequate for their second language (L2) development. In general, the notion that this portion of the student body presents educators with unique demands was well summed up by Kegan (1994):

> … adults go to school. And when they do … They are asked to leave the mental homes they have furnished and made familiar. Whether those who design their schools and teach in their classrooms fully understand it or not, what they are asking these adult students to do is to go out of their minds (Kegan, 1994, p. 272).

As it happens, the learning of a second language in adulthood also brings its own challenges. Indeed, empirical data has shown that adult learners find it increasingly more difficult to learn an L2 as they grow older (Hakuta et al., 2003). The goal of this paper is thus to review existing learning theories and research findings in order to propose high-impact teaching practices for L2 adult learners. To this end, this article takes the following steps:

1. Review the learning profile of adult students in terms of adult learning, cognitive development, cognitive aging and socio-cognitive theories.
2. Review second language acquisition (SLA) theories, as they contribute to explaining the observed decline in L2 success with age and suggest techniques that mitigate these effects.

3. Make recommendations for the implementation of high-impact teaching strategies for adult language learners.

Learning Profile of the Adult College Learner

It has been recognized for many years that the learning characteristics of adult students gradually changes over the years. Various educational theories may account for these trends.

Adult Learning Theory

Insights may first be gained from adult learning theory, which studies processes and practices by which adults learn in ways that are fundamentally different from children (Knowles et al., 2015). While these principles are proposed in contrast to the teaching of children (pedagogy), it is assumed within this framework that they focus on trends that become more prominent as students grow older, thus making its findings relevant to this discussion. A way to better understand the contributions of this field is to divide it into the following key concepts proposed by Merriam and Brockett, 2007:

- **Andragogy,** as defined by Knowles (1980, 1984), relies on several tenets (Merriam & Bierema, 2014), namely: as students mature, they move from dependency to self-direction; adults grow a reservoir of experiences from which they can draw; adults show a readiness to closely relate their personal development with their social role; adults tend to focus more on problems rather than subjects in their learning; adult learning activities are usually internally motivated; and adults feel the need to understand the reasons for their learning.
- **Self-directed learning (SDL**) is an approach that recognizes that adult learners tend to adopt a "process in which [they] take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975, p.18).
- **Transformative learning** is a movement based on adult education, which is defined as … the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits of mind, meaning perspectives) sets of assumption and expectation to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change (Mezirow, 2009, p. 22).
- **Adult development** is a group of loosely connected theories that consider "physical changes, cognitive or intellectual development and, personality and lifespan role development" (Knowles et al., 2015, p. 86).

Within the framework of this study, the concept of SDL appears especially fruitful in defining how a learning environment may be adapted to match the strengths of L2 college students above the age of 25. There are several reasons to support this viewpoint. First, while andragogy makes the claim that adults are more inclined to learn independently, this assumption is not based on empirical results. In contrast,

SDL research relies on studies that demonstrate and exemplify its links with learning success. For example, a meta-analysis study conducted by Boyer et al. (2014) concluded that "self-directed learning can also lead to improved performance" and "implementing SDL may help students improve their self-efficacy" (2014, p. 28). As another example, Yarahmadzehi and Bazleh (2012) carried out a quasi-experimental design study in an ESL classroom, which pointed to the potential benefits of learning the class material autonomously (2012).

Secondly, SDL has been used by many L2 researchers, who recognized that this concept is well-suited to their field. In addition to the two studies mentioned in the previous paragraph, Gan (2004) used the notion of self-directed learning to describe positive attitudes in EFL, and Hawkins (2018) submitted that SDL was an essential component to be integrated in an English learning program taught at the college level.

Finally, the promotion of SDL skills in language learning is aligned with current pedagogical guidelines, as formulated in the *21st Century Skills Map*, published by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) (2011), which states that "students as life-long learners are motivated to set their own goals and reflect on their progress as they grow and improve their linguistic and cultural competence" (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011, p. 15).

Based on the work of previous scholars, Grow (1991) developed a model for self-directed learning that is especially well-suited for a formal education setting and is referred to as Staged Self-Directed Learning (SSDL). A central aspect of this approach is that it offers the view of a dynamic relationship between teacher and students that reflect different levels of progress. This gradation was described in terms of four specific stages (Grow, 1991). In Stage One, the learning process is centered around the teacher, who acts as an authority on the subject matter: "Many students at this stage expect discipline and direction" (Grow, 1991, p. 130). In Stage Two, learners display a natural interest, which is reinforced by the enthusiasm and expertise of the teacher in the subject matter: "Learners at this stage go along if they understand why and the instructor provides direction and help" (Grow, 1991, p. 131). In Stage Three, learners are actively involved, while the teacher becomes more of a facilitator: "Teachers and student share in decision-making, with students taking an increasing role" (Grow 1991, p. 133); and in Stage Four, learners pursue their goals independently while teachers act as their mentors: "Stage 4 learners can learn from any kind of teacher, but most Stage 4 learners thrive in an atmosphere of autonomy" (Grow, 1991, p. 134). In sum, as it is recognized that self-direction is an important skill to be capitalized on and fostered among L2 adult students, it is essential for instructors to be cognizant of the stage of self-direction of the students in the classroom in order to "prepare the learner to advance to higher stages" (Grow, 1991, p. 129).

Cognitive Development Theories

Cognitive theories consider a mode of learning that examines how new information is integrated into a learner's preexisting mental network of assumptions and ideas (Horwitz, 2013), which may be described as a framework that provides a wide perspective to explain the impact of age in the pursuit of higher education by adult learners. Such an approach is found in cognitive development theories.

As a pioneer in this field, Piaget identified four stages from birth to the age of twenty (Merriam et al., 2008; Piaget, 1972). A later phase enabling the use of more complex abstract thinking by the age of thirty was subsequently proposed (Knight & Sutton, 2004). Building on this and other works, Kegan (1982) identified levels of conceptualization that are well-suited to differentiate traditional college-age students (order 3—interpersonal) and adult learners (order 4—institutional). Based on this insight, Kegan (1994) suggested that the latter stage of development is a condition of success in the pursuit of a higher education, seeking "the cognitive sophistication to construct complex systems, the structure of the fourth order" (Kegan, 1994, p. 286). Accordingly, the higher likelihood for the adult learner to have reached this phase may be viewed as an asset that may support them in their post-secondary studies. As with SSDL, the teacher plays a key role in identifying and accounting for the level of development reached by the adult learners.

Cognitive Aging Theories

Another insightful perspective stemming from the field of cognitive learning is derived from investigations on the impact of aging on cognitive functions. This field of inquiry emerged with the proposal of the dual concepts of crystallized and fluid intelligences (Cattell, 1963), where the former "reflects consolidated knowledge gained by education, access to cultural information and experience" and the latter one refers to "the capability to solve problems for which previous experience, learned knowledge and skills are of little use" (Hong et al., 2016, p. 76). Critically, research has shown that fluid intelligence decreases with age, while crystallized intelligence tends to increase or vary little over time (Horn & Cattell, 1967; Schaie, 2005). A range of empirical studies have demonstrated that several essential cognitive functions decline with age. For instance, in a study involving 301 participants, Park et al. (1996) found that speed, working memory, free recall, cued recall and spatial memory all correlated negatively with age. Critically, the onsets of such cognitive losses coincided with the typical transition period into an adult learner status. Indeed, as reported in a meta-analysis conducted by Salthouse (2004), reasoning, spatial visualization, episodic memory and perceptual speed all dropped significantly between the ages of 20 and 30. Within the framework of a longitudinal study including 1500 participants, Cansino et al. (2013) observed a similar trend among students in their twenties and thirties engaged in various memory tasks A useful categorization within this framework is the distinction that can be made between declarative and procedural learning. The former category refers to the acquisition of factual information (i.e., the "what"), while the latter relates to the learning of routines and behaviors (i.e. the "how"). As pointed out by Cox (2013), research has found that declarative learning is linked to the cognitive decline experienced by older learners, while procedural processes are more immune against this influence, so that the impact of aging on the learning accomplishment depends on the nature of the task at hand (Cox, 2013), thus reaffirming the abovementioned ideas about fluid and crystallized intelligence. In sum, studies have demonstrated a general decline of important cognitive learning functions as adult learners grow older.

Socio-Cognitive Theories

Yet another view explores the social context, and how students interact with their environment (Merriam et al., 2008). These parameters have been studied within the framework of social cognitive theories, which posit that individuals are not spurred by internal and/or external learner factors, but instead that their learning path is derived from reciprocal experiences encountered at the personal and collective levels (Bandura, 1976). Accordingly, it leads to the ability to comprehend and assimilate a large body of knowledge by observing how it is being used rather than laboriously reconstructing it step by step (Bandura, 1976). These ideas have been further articulated into teaching practices, such as implicit learning opportunities and collaborative-interactional approaches, which have been found to be beneficial to young and old learners alike (Howard & Howard, 2013; Laal & Ghodi, 2012; Lindberg, 2003; Wismath & Orr, 2015). Yet another critical aspect of the learner's social environment linked to age may be inferred from Cross' work (1981) on adult learning, which further divides learner characteristics into personal and situational categories. The latter one is especially relevant to this discussion, in that it is associated with a social reality that can have a significant impact on the academic performance of adult learners. Such situational barriers may include: cost of living (such as tuition, books, childcare and transportation), available time, home / job responsibilities, and family support (Osam et al., 2017). Thus, adult learners face the challenge of securing the benefits of a socially stimulating learning environment while coping with situational barriers. Consequently, the following guidelines could help mitigate these effects: first, flexible schedules and deadlines should be afforded; second, various delivery modes of instruction (such as synchronous and asynchronous) should be made available; and third, alternate opportunities for social interaction and collaboration should be provided (Aud et al., 2012; Dolch & Zawacki-Richter, 2018; Romero et al., 2012; Kara et al., 2019).

SLA Theories for Adult Learning

While learning theories presented in the previous section are generally valid, it is critical to recognize the specific nature of L2 learning and its relationship with aging in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). First, it is important to dispel the misconception that the acquisition of a new language may only occur at an early age. Indeed, while it is widely accepted that the learning of a first language (L1) must be initiated before a critical period that ends around puberty, these views cannot be transposed to the acquisition of an L2. On this topic, Bley-Vroman (1990) formulated an influential Fundamental Difference Hypothesis suggesting that L2 adult learners do not rely on inherent L1 learning abilities, but make use instead of acquired knowledge and problem-solving skills that allow them to make use of specific components of the L1 into the L2. An implication of this hypothesis is that cognitive abilities (and their interaction with the aging process) are central to the learning of an L2, an assumption that is confirmed by studies showing a strong correlation between cognitive abilities and L2 achievement among adult learners (e.g., Sawyer & Ranta, 2001; Serafini & Sanz, 2016). Nevertheless, many studies have shown that an adult's ability to develop proficiency in an L2 gradually

decreases with age (Scott, 1994; Schultz & Elliot, 2000; Hakuta et al. 2003). How may SLA theories account for this trend?

In this regard, an essential contribution in the field of cognitive theories was made by McLaughlin, who considered L2 learning to be "the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill" (1987, p. 113) and viewed it from the perspective of information processing. As an implication, he proposed that several processes were required to enable L2 learners on their path to proficiency, which involve practice, automatization, integration and internal organization of the acquired information (McLaughlin, 1990). Among these categories, automatization, which refers to "the process of making a skill routine through practice" (Hadley, 2001, p. 70), is of special relevance to adult learners, as it relies on their attentional capacity, which is a cognitive ability that is affected steadily with age. As explained by Horwitz (2013):

> At first, learners must pay close attention … as they produce the language, searching their memories for vocabulary words and remembering to use grammatical rules correctly … At this stage, learners' capacity to produce language is limited because the amount of information they must process exceeds their attention capacity (2013, p. 32).

An instructional implication is that L2 material should not be presented to older students in ways that overly tax some of their attentional resources. For instance, studies have shown that older adults do not perform as well as their younger peers with respect to selective attention, which relates to the ability to solely focus on the information relevant to a single task while disregarding other content, and divided attention, which denotes the ability to carry out more than one task or process more than one source of information at once (Hawkins et al., 1992; Zanto & Gazzaley, 2014).

Another interpretation of the automatization of L2 learning refers to the process of implicit learning, which may be defined as "learning without awareness of what is being learned" (DeKeyser, 2003, p. 314). Among such processes, the subset involving incidental learning, i.e., ones that take place without the intent to learn, may be especially helpful to the older L2 learner, as they would give them a way to recognize language structures just by being exposed to them (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). For example, within the framework of a study that trained adult learners in the use of an artificial language under incidental conditions, it was found that an automatic usage of grammatical structures in an L2 was gained by witnessing how they were used, implying that some implicit learning had occurred in the course of the study (Rebuschat & Williams, 2012). In this regard, it is then worthwhile pointing out the lesser role played by attention in this learning mode, as studies suggest that this mode of learning does not rely on the type of focused thought mechanisms that are involved in explicit learning processes (Williams, 2009). It can thus be inferred that implicit learning conditions have the advantage of not putting older students in a position of cognitive overload with respect to their attentional capacity.

Another strand of research related to L2 information processing is concerned with working memory (WM). Generally, WM can be defined as a multicomponent

mental system consisting of central executive, phonological loop, and visuospatial sketchpad elements that "combine(s) the temporary storage and manipulation of information in the service of cognition" (Baddeley & Hitch, 2013, p. 3015). It has been submitted by several researchers that the task of acquiring an L2 is very demanding from a cognitive point of view and is thus highly dependent on WM (Wen, 2015, p. 60). Several studies have also shown significant links between L2 performance and measures of WM, such as phonological memory and working memory capacity (O'Brien et al., 2006; Hummel & French, 2010; Juffs & Harrington, 2011). On the other hand, several investigations also established that there is a significant negative correlation between WM processes and age (Borella et al., 2008; Cansino et al., 2013; Kirasic et al., 1996). The logical implication is that of an unfavorable relationship between L2 learning and aging (Olivares-Cuhat & Ploof, 2017).

Otherwise, a central aspect of SLA theories focuses on the importance of interactions between speakers and listeners in the L2 learning process. Rationales that support the role played by social interactions stem from different research perspectives. From a cognitive point of view, an Interaction Hypothesis was formulated by Long (1983), which stresses that such a communication level is necessary to induce modifications of the language as a way to promote acquisition and achieve mutual comprehension. Another approach emphasizes the sociocultural dimension of L2 learning (Vygotsky, 1978), suggesting that while social interaction facilitates the assimilation of knowledge, the negotiation of meaning is associated with assuming command of and restructuring the cognitive process (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 47). Accordingly, these insights may shed light on difficulties encountered by L2 adult learners in finding a sustaining educational environment. First, they may have reached a higher stage of maturity than their younger peers, leading to a lower willingness to engage in interactions framed in a context they could deem to be below the level of self-directed learning and developmental growth they have already attained. For instance, in an analysis by Schultz and Elliot (2000) on diaries entries of an older L2 learner in a Spanish immersion setting, it is observed that: "it is frustrating, challenging, exhilarating, tiring, rewarding and sometimes discouraging for a relatively articulate adult to have to regress linguistically to an infantile level in terms of topics and style of discussion" (p. 113). Second, a cultural mismatch may be experienced by older participants in an L2 classroom, who may feel that they do not fit in and, as a result, may not seek to participate fully in conversations.

In summary, SLA theories may account for the gradual decline observed in the ability to acquire an L2 as adult learners grow older. They suggest adverse effects in the automatization process, attention capacity, working memory capacity and participation to interactive activities on the older students' development of their communicative ability in the L2. All in all, the insights obtained from SLA theories are generally consistent with the principles of adult, cognitive and socio-cognitive learning presented in the previous section. Next, it is examined how an awareness of these factors may shape instructional practices in the post-secondary L2 classroom.

Current L2 Instructional Practices

Over the years, many methodologies have been applied to the field of L2 instruction, which encompass a spectrum of approaches ranging from non-communicative to collaborative. Nowadays, a general consensus has emerged among L2 educators to view the development of communicative competence as the primary goal of language instruction (Celce-Murcia, 2014). As suggested in the *21st Century Skills Map* (2011):

> The language classroom in the U.S. has been transformed in the last 20 years to reflect an increasing emphasis on developing students' communicative competence. Unlike the classroom of yesteryear that required students to know a great deal of information about the language but did not have an expectation of language use, today's classroom is about teaching languages so that students use them to communicate with native speakers of the language. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011, p. 4)

With this goal in mind, a next logical step would be to identify a language teaching method that would best serve this purpose. At this stage, one is faced with a large variety of choices, including (Klee, 2000; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Horwitz, 2013; Duff, 2014):

- **Direct method:** also known as the Berlitz method, which emphasizes listening and speaking abilities, while the teacher relies on the use of various teaching aids (e.g. gestures, props) and the content is solely provided in the target language.
- **Natural approach:** which relies on listening and reading as the main mode to induce the acquisition of the language, as it provides students with a diversity of input of different types.
- **Communicative language teaching (CLT):** which focusses on learning the language for the purpose of communication and applies techniques such as the use of authentic materials, language games and role-plays.
- **Proficiency-oriented instruction:** which complements CLT with explicit content devoted to grammar explanations and error correction.
- **Content-based instruction (CBI):** which is also part of the family of communicative approaches and incorporates the learning of other topics (e.g. geography, history, social studies) into the content of language instruction.
- **Language for specific purposes (LSP):** which is similar to CBI but concentrates on the preparation of language students to meet their specific professional needs.
- **Task-based language teaching (TBLT):** which takes advantage of CBI while centering on the execution of tasks that simulate real life situations involving ongoing communications between peers.

However, it is widely recognized today that no single method is sufficient to address all pedagogical needs that L2 students may encounter under their various circumstances (Celce-Murcia, 2014). As stated by Prabhu (1990, p, 175): "There may be some truth to each method, but only in so far as each method may operate as one or another teacher's sense of plausibility, promoting the most learning that can be promoted by that teacher" (p. 175). Following this lead, Kumaravadivelu

(2006, p. 201) submitted that the teaching profession may be entering a post-method era, which could be defined by three characteristics, namely, i) the recognition that no method may perfectly address the actual situation encountered in the L2 classroom, ii) the belief that teachers ought to be empowered to apply in the classroom their own understanding of how the class should be taught, while using their classroom experience to further shape this understanding, and iii) the reliance on the idea on principled pragmatism, by which teachers may find the resources to adapt their teaching based on an honest assessment of their work and informed instructional decisions (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). On this basis, Kumaravadivelu (2006) proposed a practitioner strategy-based framework relying on a set of ten macro-strategies, which are instructional guidelines that are not specific to any given teaching method:

1. maximize learning opportunities;
2. facilitate negotiated interaction;
3. minimize perceptual mismatches;
4. activate intuitive heuristics;
5. foster language awareness;
6. contextualize linguistic input;
7. integrate language skills;
8. promote learner autonomy;
9. ensure social relevance;
10. raise cultural consciousness.

In sum, the post-method condition seems to provide the best framework to address the challenges of L2 postsecondary classroom encountered by older adult learners.

Inclusive Core Practices for Teachers of L2 Adult Learners

Using Kumaravadivelu's model (2006) and the abovementioned research findings about the profile of the L2 adult learners, this section makes recommendations for the integration of core practices intent on making the L2 classroom more inclusive for adult learners. Accordingly, guidance is provided with a view to supporting and/or capitalizing on the adult students' stage of cognitive development, self-directed learning, cognitive constraints, and socio-cognitive environment.

Stages of Cognitive Development and Self-Directed Learning

With respect to these categories, the guiding principle to be followed by the teacher is to prevent the occurrence of mismatches between the role of the teacher and the developmental stage of the students. Along these lines, Cox (2013) discussed the need to adapt teaching materials to the maturity of the audience:

> Older adults are likely to not feel included in activities that relate to girl/boyfriend since they may have moved beyond that stage of life … On the other hand, topics that pertain to older adults' lives such as their children and grandchildren may not be relevant to younger adult students (Cox, 2013, p. 103).

Accordingly, it is necessary to match the topics of the lesson and mode of interactions to the cultural and intellectual stage of the learners. As was mentioned by Grow (1991), instructors should also be able to modulate their teaching style in function of the learner's SSDL stage. As described in an example given by Hawkins (2018), a teacher may initiate a lesson with a Stage Three activity, for instance by directing the students to analyze a text by taking advantage of verb tenses to infer meaning. Then, the teacher could revert to a Stage Two lecture-style activity, in which the use of new tenses is explained and subsequently practiced under their close guidance.

Spurred by the feedback from the classroom, the teacher may then switch to Stage Four activities that could involve independent projects or let the students initiate discussions (Grow, 1991). These practices align well with the following macro-strategies from Kumaravadivelu's concept of the post-method condition (2006): maximize learning opportunities, minimize perceptual mismatches, promote learner autonomy, and ensure social relevance (in that an accurate assessment of the developmental stage of the learners goes hand in hand with an awareness of their social circumstances).

Cognitive Constraints

As demonstrated in many studies, adult learners experience on average a gradual decline of essential cognitive functions as they grow older. As suggested by Hakuta et al. (2003), this process of mental aging could explain this slow but steady degradation in the capacity to acquire proficiency in an L2. Specific effects of aging that interact with the L2 learning process include a weakening of attentional capacity, working memory, processing speed and retrieval processes (Olivares-Cuhat, 2018). From a teaching point of view, the main counter-strategy is to prevent occurrences of cognitive overload for the older adult learners participating in the L2 class. Among such countermeasures, classroom activities could be presented more incrementally, additional visual and oral support could be provided, information that is not relevant to the content could be removed, other distractions and activities that require multi-tasking could be avoided, and more time for repetition of content and practice could be afforded in language activities (Gathercole & Alloway, 2008). Effective practices also include a simplification of complex tasks, the signaling of specific linguistic items to focus students' attention, the minimization of grammatical explanations, and a general decrease in the pace of the activities (Cox, 2013; Olivares-Cuhat, 2018). It should also be noted that the inclusion of technology-enhanced language learning tools (TELL) is beneficial to avoid cognitive capacity overload through compensatory strategies such as utilizing bimodal modes of instruction, omitting redundant information, and better controlling the timing of the activities (Pass et al., 2005; Mayer at al., 2019). To be able to react to these constraints, the teacher must first be able to read related signs of impairment from the students who experience such issues. In a typical classroom situation, it could be noticed from the following signs: a difficulty to stay on task, the inability to follow complex instructions, a lack of perseverance, and an inability to concentrate (Gathercole & Alloway, 2008)

A different strategy to limit an overload of attentional capacity is to rely on providing more implicit/incidental learning opportunities. In this regard, Marsick and Watkins (2001) have listed a number of conditions that characterize environments favorable to this mode of learning, which include the integration of daily classroom routines, the use of reflection and action to spur the process, and peer collaboration. As it happens, these features are congruent with practices promoted by the task-based language teaching approach, which would typically involve the following procedure: An instructor provides students with the linguistic material needed to complete the task. Such tasks are characterized by having clear outcomes, being relevant to the students' lives, and promoting collaboration and real-life skills. Upon completion of the task, the learners engage in reflective practice and analysis of the outcome, which further reinforces their learning process (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

The practices suggested in this section are well aligned with the following macro-strategies from Kumaravadivelu's post-method condition (2006): maximize learning opportunities, activate intuitive heuristics, foster language awareness, contextualize linguistic input, and integrate language skills (since they are being used concurrently in the process of completing the task).

Socio-Cognitive Issues

Given the very beneficial role played by social interactions in the L2 learning process, it is critical to ensure that older adult learners are well integrated into these activities and fully committed to participate. Accordingly, teachers must be cognizant of how possible developmental and SSDL mismatches may impede this goal, and they must seek instead to achieve a good balance in all these interactions. To this end, it is first helpful for the teacher to be able to draw from a variety of interactional patterns ranging from teacher-led to student-initiated activities (Ur, 1996). A task-based language teaching approach offers a good foundation to promote such communicative exchanges, as it includes problem-solving activities and meaningful and collaborative assignments (Eastment & Dooly, 2008).

One should not underestimate the potential impact that situational barriers may exert on the ability of nontraditional students to be fully integrated in classroom activities (Cross, 1981). To alleviate this type of difficulty, one option is to offer more blended learning opportunities, e.g. through computer-mediated communication such as chats, e-mails, tele-collaboration and video conferencing events.

Looking back at Kumaravadivelu's post-method condition (2006), the macro-strategies that are embodied in these practices consist of: maximize learning opportunities, facilitate negotiated interaction, activate intuitive heuristics, integrate language skills, ensure social relevance, and raise cultural consciousness—as the learners may find more reason to be fully engaged in class by being assigned the role of "cultural informant" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 208).

Conclusions

Reviews and analyses were conducted to identify college classroom practices that would best support older adult learners enrolled in post-secondary L2 courses. This effort brought forward a number of important considerations.

First, it is important to recognize that a large proportion of students in higher education are 25 and older, a situation that has essentially not changed over the last 20 years. Second, multiple studies have shown that the success in the acquisition of an L2 decreases steadily with age, which may be explained by various theories of learning (adult, cognitive development, cognitive aging, socio-cognitive factors, and SLA). Thus, there are good reasons to pursue the development and implementation of instructional practices that aim at fully integrating and supporting older adult students in the L2 classroom. The argument proposed in this paper is that this goal may be achieved by developing communicative competence through the implementation of well targeted and effective teaching practices. A central finding of this inquiry is that teachers must play a central role in this undertaking, as they are uniquely positioned to recognize specific challenges and strengths of the adult learners and devise effective measures to mitigate and/or reinforce these attributes. To do so does not require teachers to adopt new language teaching methods. Rather, they are encouraged to further capitalize on existing approaches, such as task-based language teaching and implicit learning conditions.

All the while, teachers ought to be especially attentive to the risk of alienating older adult students as a result of mismatches that may arise with respect to self-directed learning and socio-cognitive developmental stages. Teachers should attempt to minimize the impact of social barriers. They should remain aware of specific learning difficulties that are linked to a gradual decline of cognitive functions associated for instance with working memory capacity, attentional resources, and processing speed, and therefore use a body of teaching practices specifically devised to mitigate such challenges. As a guiding principle, classroom interactions may be articulated in terms of practices that remain consistent with a large framework of macro-strategies, as set forth by the post-method condition framework. With all these factors in mind, what emerges is a system where teachers may increase their impact by continuously changing the perspectives on which their decisions are based, i.e., to be alternately focused on the macro-strategic level and fine-tuning a set of specific classroom procedures aimed providing highly effective and inclusive L2 instruction.

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Two Decades of the-Standards: Post-secondary impact

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The Challenge

National Standards for Foreign Language Learning have been part of our professional dialogue for decades at the national level, as evidenced by the Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011). However, post-secondary impact has received less attention. This article aims to explore current research and continue professional dialogue on these valuable standards in a post-secondary context.

Abstract

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning, most recently revised and published as the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), have great potential to influence post-secondary language education. A decade ago, the ACTFL Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011) identified 96 published articles related to the Standards in post-secondary contexts, but did not explore the content of those articles. This article builds on that work and explores the continued discussion of these Standards in the last decade. A thematic review of the published articles shows a continued professional dialogue, an increase in published research on these Standards with regard to some Standards Goal areas (in particular Communication and the use of IPAs), and a significant focus on proficiency. It also provides suggested avenues for expanded future research.

Language and communication remain at the heart of the human experience and have great potential to support an evolved curriculum and the future careers of our students. In our diverse and complex world, the ability to understand and

communicate with other humans is essential. The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) provide a well-established framework to support the development of communicative and cultural competence in the language classroom at all levels. The five goal areas of the Standards establish an inextricable link between Communication and Culture, which is applied in making Connections and Comparisons and in using this competence to be part of local and global Communities. The concepts behind the Standards allow students to develop insights into themselves and their own culture and provide a way to deepen understanding of others and the ability to communicate appropriately is an essential element of global competence (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). In many institutions and classrooms, part of the curriculum includes humanities, cultural studies or critical thinking outcomes, which research tells us is supported by language learning.

Knowing a second language can set students on a strong path within their chosen career field; students need functional proficiency for workplace needs (ACTFL, 2019), regardless of their chosen profession. A university curriculum designed around the goal areas of the World-Readiness Standards supports a rich curriculum and a broad range of experiences, (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and has the potential to bridge the long-standing divide between language-focused lower division language courses and upper-division literature or linguistics courses identified in the 2007 MLA Ad Hoc report (ACTFL, 2019; MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007).

Further influencing post-secondary curricula is a lack of articulation with the work in the K-12 classrooms (Byrnes, 2012). Given the growth of the Seal of Biliteracy at the state level, universities must be prepared for students who arrive at universities with higher levels of proficiency and broader experience in a proficiency-driven classroom. Students who were engaged in Standards-based, proficiency-driven K-12 classrooms may find that a traditional university classroom driven by a textbook scope and sequence or a heavy focus on grammatical exams lacks opportunities to continue to build their proficiency and causes them to lose interest in further language study. At a time when language skills are among the top abilities sought by employers (ACTFL, 2019), having students decide to terminate their language study is not in the best interest of Generation Z students and fuels the issue of declining enrollments.

From their inception, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, now World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), have held great promise for our profession and have been seen by many as a catalyst for change (Glisan, 2012). This framework has been part of our professional dialogue for decades, as detailed by Allen (2009) and Byrnes (2012). Allen (2009) reiterated Tesser's (2002) suggestion that it is the dialogue on meaningful and coherent ways to teach language that is of primary value as it supports world language learning research and classroom applications.

The promise of a broader implementation of the Standards into the post-secondary curriculum has been considered by some to have the potential to drive some of the necessary change in the College and University environment. We have

long acknowledged that College and University language programs must consider what they do, how they do it, and why they do it, lest they be considered obsolete, irrelevant, or too costly. Post-secondary institutions lost a daunting 651 language programs between 2013 and 2016 and experienced a notable decrease in courses at the more advanced levels (Looney & Lusin, 2018). While the reasons are not fully known for these losses, we do know that teaching remains at the heart of the long-standing two-tiered system (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007), and it is believed by some that the Standards continue to provide great potential as university departments and faculty consider how they teach.

Considering these ideas, under the premise that the framework and content of the Standards continue to have the potential to influence post-secondary language instruction, it seems worthwhile to explore the professional dialogue that has been occurring in the past two decades. This exploration is guided by 2 questions:

Q1. What is the state of the discourse around standards for language teaching as suggested by the 96 articles in the ACTFL Standards Impact Project?

Q2. Given the continuing nature of research, what additional evidence is now available with regard to the influence of the Standards in post-secondary language curricula? What direction is suggested for the next decade?

Methodology

As part of the Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011), the task force identified 96 articles as applicable to post-secondary institutions (Appendix A). This grant-funded research addressed published literature from 1998 – 2009. The survey investigated the extent to which the Standards appeared in published literature. At the time of the Standards Impact Survey, no additional exploration of the impact of the Standards in College and University contexts was undertaken. To develop a more detailed view of the articles from the original project, the researcher located and reviewed each of the 96 articles and completed a thematic analysis (Mills et al., 2010) with a goal of gaining insight into the content of the previously identified research.

Once the original 96 articles were reviewed, the researcher then conducted a thorough literature search of pieces published from 2009-2021 using similar criteria to those used for the Standards Impact Survey. To be included in this study, the work was required to a) be written in English b) be related to world languages other than English (ESL and TESOL were not included), and c) be directly connected to a U.S. post-secondary classroom or student context. A thorough search of published literature was conducted using the following Boolean search terms:

- "national foreign language standards" and "post-secondary" or "university" or "college"
- "world-readiness standards and "post-secondary" or "university" or "college "
- "national foreign language standards" and "content-based instruction"
- "world-readiness standards" and "content-based instruction"
- Each of the goal areas was also searched individually, (e.g. "Communities standard" and "post-secondary")
- "Integrated Performance Assessment" and "post-secondary"

- "ACTFL Proficiency guidelines" and "post-secondary" or "university" or "college"

These searches yielded 186 works that directly related to the Standards in a post-secondary context. All 186 works were located and reviewed, and citations were downloaded for categorizing. Appendix B provides a full bibliography of the results of this review of the literature. Due to the ongoing nature of research and changing availability of published research and the evolution of research available electronically, the bibliography contains several selections that may have been overlooked during the original Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011).

A Decade of Standards: ACTFL Standards Impact Survey

Nearly a decade ago, the ACTFL Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011) investigated the impact that the Standards had across the profession in the first decade the Standards existed. Table 1 provides the breakdown from the original survey (ACTFL, 2011, p. 46).

Table 1
References to Standards by Level of Instruction in Standards Impact Survey

Level	Quantity
K-12	121
Postsecondary	96
FLES/FLEX	2
Elementary	31
Middle/Jr High	28
High school	60
All levels	117

While this is an encouraging finding, the scope of the original survey did not permit further in-depth exploration of the content of the referenced articles focused specifically on a post-secondary context, nor did it offer disaggregation of these categories of the database by post-secondary versus K-12. Additionally, likely due to the lag that exists between research, publication, and application, there was research that surfaced after the publication of the 2011 survey results.

Subsequent to the dissemination of the 2011 survey, Glisan (2012) further explored research on the goal areas of the Standards, finding that oral interpersonal communication had been less effectively applied in the classroom and suggested it may be that teachers did not understand the premise of interpersonal communication, nor how it develops. Second, Glisan also noted that the Communities Standards could be described as the "lost C", despite its potential to enrich the post-secondary classroom (2012). Most notably, she identified a lack of extended sequences of language instruction, meaning that many students had

to restart their language study at the college level due to gaps in study, limited opportunities in K-12 schools, or other factors. On a more positive note, Glisan (2012) commented that authentic texts had found their way into many classrooms. This may have been because of the availability of authentic texts and ease of direct application by a classroom teacher. Neither the Standards Impact Survey nor Glisan's (2012) evaluation disaggregated these observations specific to the post-secondary context. Glisan (2012) also noted that "standards" may have been somewhat of a buzzword – which can result in matching classroom activities with the Standards. This phenomenon could often be seen in textbooks where every activity was given an icon attached to a standard (Huhn, 2018).

Despite the details provided by the Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL 2011) and subsequent publications, it is important to understand what those 96 articles represented for the first decade of our Standards. Building on the results of the original research, each of the articles was reviewed for its overall focus, allowing the topics of the articles to dictate the categories. The initial review of the 96 articles identified as containing at least a mention of the post-secondary context revealed two broad categories: *professional dialogue* (54%, n=52) or *research* (46%, N=44/96).

Professional Dialogue

This first category included articles that comprised a professional discourse on the topics of the Standards in post-secondary contexts; in other words, these pieces were think-pieces and discussions *about* standards and the implementation of standards, and calls for programmatic level change, rather than empirical research showing how or when the Standards were used to support language teaching. Among the original 96 articles, much of the research considered for the original survey was published in journals such as *Foreign Language Annals*, the *Modern Language Journal*, and the *ADFL Bulletin*. The primary audience of these journals is post-secondary faculty and department leadership, and it is not surprising that position statements would make up a significant portion of those articles. These articles included those that formed part of a special issue of the *ADFL Bulletin* and *the Modern Language Journal* that was specifically designed to stimulate discussion of the Standards and the post-secondary environment, as well as the professional dialogue surrounding the release of the MLA committee report (MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007). The articles dedicated to professional dialogue within the original 96 articles did not reach a definitive conclusion regarding the Standards in post-secondary environments, but rather contributed to the professional dialogue.

Research Articles

Among the original 96 articles, 52 (54%) were articles that focused on research. To better understand what research had been carried out, these articles were broken down by the five goal areas of the Standards, and two common themes that appeared during the initial re-reading of the 96 articles: technology in general and the IPA. Table 2 shows this breakdown.

Table 2
Research Articles in the Five Goal Areas

	Goal Area[a]						
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	Tech	IPA
Number of Articles	29	25	8	8	12	15	1
Percentage	30%	26%	8%	8%	13%	16%	1%

Note: some articles included multiple themes.

[a]C1=Communication; C2=Culture; C3=Connections; C4=Comparisons; C5=Communities; Tech=Technology.

Similar to Glisan's (2012) observations, articles connecting to the Communities, Connections, and Comparisons goal areas were limited at the post-secondary level, with Communication and Culture Standards receiving more representation in this first decade of standards.

The Second Decade of Standards

The research on the first decade of standards was completed in 2011, and another decade has passed since that work was completed. In that time, access to research has changed; much more is available electronically now than in the years of the Standards Impact Survey (ACTFL, 2011). Research by its nature is evolutionary and the topic of the Standards continues to be visible in the professional dialogue.

Among the salient findings of this exploration were the contrast in the publication sources between the original decade and subsequent decade, which provides insight into where the professional dialogue is occurring (Table 3, next page; see also Appendices A and B).

As illustrated in Table 3, many of the articles included in the Standards Impact Survey were part of the *ADFL Bulletin*, *Foreign Language Annals*, and *Modern Language Journal*. In the subsequent decade, articles appeared in a notably wider variety of venues. It is not known if dissertations were included in the Standards Impact Survey, and the *ADFL Bulletin* may not have been included in the review of the articles from prior to 2009 due to access and searchability issues. Coupled with the significant increase in the quantity of published articles on the Standards, these observations could be taken to mean that the professional discussion has expanded to a larger audience within our profession. The inclusion of dissertations in this analysis is an area for further exploration, as it ties directly to what current scholars in language education may be experiencing in their graduate programs.

Professional Dialogue

To begin, it is interesting to note that much of the literature on the Standards in post-secondary contexts remains professional discourse about the Standards (44%, N = 81), only slightly less than the 46% of the original 96 articles. This trend

Table 3
Publication Venues of Articles on the Standards

	ACTFL Standards Impact Survey (prior to 2009)	Second Decade of Standards (9-2021)
ADFL Bulletin	19	N/A
American Association of University Supervisors, Coordinators and Directors of Foreign Languages Programs (AAUSC)	0	10
Foreign Language Annals	15	7
Southern Conference on Language Teaching (Dimension)	7	3
Hispania	9	1
Modern Language Journal	9	1
Central States Report	5	20
Die Unterrichtspraxis	3	
Canadian Modern Language Review	2	1
Dissertations	N/A	31
Other Professional Venues, including book chapters and textbooks	27	112
Total	96	186

suggests that the Standards remain an important topic of debate and discussion in our professional research.

Post-secondary world language program structure has long focused on a language-versus-content dichotomy that defines the lower-division versus upper-division courses. Many university curricula are rooted in a textbook-driven *coverage model* (Chaffee, 1992) and/or closely coordinated curricula, coupled with long-standing traditions that stem from the history and practices attached to the study of literature and culture at the university level. In more recent research, these traditions are evidenced in classroom observations (Huhn 2021; Martel, 2017) and commonly used textbooks (Martel, 2017). A predominance of textbook content that drives curriculum has proven limiting to a broader expansion of the Standards in driving post-secondary curriculum (Al Masaeed, 2014; Boubaya, 2020; Cubillos, 2014; Huhn, 2018; Martel, 2013, 2016; Padilla & Vana, 2019). Martel (2016) suggested that there remains a significant emphasis on "Present -> Practice -> Perform" in textbooks (Martel, 2016, p. 115), and Al Masaeed (2014) found through faculty focus groups that "… that SFL instructors feel enormous pressure to engage in explicit grammar instruction in order to prepare students for exams that place a rigorous focus on de-contextualized exercises covering a wide range of grammar points" (Al Masaeed, 2014, p. 141).

Troyan (2012) also suggested that the Standards have not been widely implemented in post-secondary curricula, citing the long-standing divide present in post-secondary curricula. Paesani and Allen (2012) added that the Standards have received limited attention in post-secondary contexts, in particular in the advanced-level curriculum, and noted that some still question their applicability for post-secondary work. They emphasized the need for continued scholarly discussion on this important topic in order to bridge the language-content divide and realize the full potential of the Standards in the post-secondary curriculum (Paesani & Allen, 2012).

Research Articles

Using the same thematic analysis method as for the publications on the initial Decade of Standards, the researcher reviewed each of the articles. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the remaining articles and their general focus.

Table 4

Published Standards-based Empirical Research in Post-Secondary Contexts (2009-2021)

	Topic [a]						
	C1	C2	C5	Tech	IPA	CBI	Heritage
Number of Articles	24	22	6	17	14	7	13
Percentage	13%	12%	3%	9%	8%	4%	7%

Note: some articles were selected for more than one category.
[a] C1 = Communication and Proficiency; C2 = Culture; C5 = Communities; Tech=Technology; IPA = IPA and Performance Assessments; CBI = Content-Based Instruction; Heritage = Heritage Learners

This research draws some interesting comparisons between the original research (Table 2) and a decade later (Table 4). To begin, there has been a notable increase in the number of Standards-related publications since the original ACTFL study (from n=96 to n=186). This increase may indicate the roots of a shift in the application of the Standards in post-secondary contexts. Some of the topics of investigation offer unique insights into the status of the Standards at the post-secondary level today.

Drilling down further in the emergent themes of the Standards articles, it is interesting to pinpoint an increased focus on communication and proficiency, including Integrated Performance Assessments (IPA) at 20% (n=37). IPAs connect closely to the Standards in how they are structured and conceptualized. IPA studies increased from 1% (n=1) in the Standards Impact Survey to 8% (N=14) in the recent decade. These percentages represent a small amount of studies, however. One possible explanation for a slow progression in the implementation of IPAs may be that College and University educators are uncertain about the implementation

of the IPA into the post-secondary classroom. Sedor (2020) presented a pilot study that identified numerous factors in the implementation of IPAs at the university level, which could serve as a model for expanded implementation of the IPA. It may also be that faculty are concerned about student perceptions of incorporating IPAs into their courses. Zapata (2016) suggested that student responses to the IPA may have varied depending on their proficiency level and their reason for enrolling in the course. Relatedly, Altstaedter and Krosl (2018) investigated student responses to the IPA, finding that students had a generally positive response to IPAs. Darhower and Smith-Sherwood (2021) and Smith-Sherwood and Rhodes (2019) showcased projects that integrated the IPA into upper-level courses, and both studies demonstrated positive proficiency gains in those courses.

There were a significant number of articles that specifically connected their research to proficiency development 92% (n=22). This trend was not seen in the Standards Impact Survey. Among the research on the Communications goal area, for example, one such program that evidenced the connection between research and program outcomes was the work of the Language Flagship Initiative (Gass et al., 2016). Under this program, three institutions were awarded grants to assess language proficiency development and to show the impact that introducing assessment practices into established language programs had on pedagogical practices and, ultimately, on proficiency outcomes. In total, three grants were awarded, one to Michigan State University (MSU), one to the University of Utah, and one to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. These institutions investigated proficiency levels, listening, and reading levels, using the Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer (OPIc), for consideration of their program goals. The institutions considered the OPIc results for their students which were then used to establish program goals and to encourage faculty to teach for proficiency (Gass et al., 2016; Winke et al, 2020). Similarly, Rubio and Hacking (2019) investigated speaking, listening, and reading levels, finding that college students (at the participating universities) were not reaching intermediate proficiency after two, and sometimes four semesters. More research of this nature would support movement towards a consensus on language proficiency and showcase the Communication Standard in post-secondary environments.

Discussion

This article continues the professional dialogue on the integration of the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning into post-secondary contexts, as seen in the response to the questions that guided this exploration:

Q1. What is the state of the discourse around standards for language teaching as suggested by the 96 articles in the ACTFL standards Impact project?

The content of the original 96 articles (through 2009) contained numerous position statements and professional discourse about the Standards and curricular matters, including program-level discussions, and less focus on research. The research applying the Standards that did exist showed a heavier focus on the Communications and Cultures goal areas and corroborates previous research (Glisan, 2012). However, it would be inaccurate to conclude that the small number of articles that contributed

to each emerging theme demonstrated the broad incorporation of Standards-based research in post-secondary contexts in the first decade of our Standards.

Many of the articles were published primarily in the major journals for our discipline, and perhaps represented the roots of the professional dialogue on the Standards into post-secondary contexts. The relatively large number of publications in the *ADFL Bulletin* may have represented those roots and the initial debate as to whether the Standards have their place in post-secondary language education.

Q2. Given the continuing nature of research, what additional evidence is now available with regard to the influence of the National Standards in post-secondary language curricula? What direction is suggested for the next decade?

A review of published research from the subsequent decade yielded a similar conclusion: 45% (n=70) of the selected articles represented professional discourse on the Standards and post-secondary curriculum amid continued calls for change in how we approach post-secondary language education. From this, it could be concluded that our professional dialogue and research incorporating the Standards into the post-secondary realm is ongoing and progressing, and that it has, to some extent, found its way into the research base.

The remaining articles, when broken down similarly, while demonstrating an increase in the overall number of articles contributing to research on the Standards in post-secondary contexts, continue to represent primarily the Communications and Culture Standards. The increase in studies on the IPA in post-secondary contexts is a valuable contribution, but here too, the number of actual studies remains small, and remains focused primarily on Communication Standards.

The 96 articles identified by the Standards Impact Survey, plus the 186 articles identified in the next decade, have provided 282 published articles since the inception of the Standards for approximately 25 years. The published research continues to focus primarily on Communications (20% in the most recent iteration), with the other three goal areas less visible in the published research. Glisan (2012), Huhn et al. (2021), Martel (2019), and others have called for the profession to continue to engage in Standards-focused projects and studies that can bring these classroom practices that utilized the concepts of all five goal areas into the published literature.

To put the descriptive numbers presented above in perspective, a search for "World-Readiness Standards" without specifying post-secondary context for period from 2012 to 2021 yields over 950 possible articles. Even if some of those possible articles are eliminated based on the criteria listed above, there is clearly not a complete and consistent implementation of the Standards in the research on post-secondary instruction. In sum, there continues to be opportunities to showcase research on the Standards in post-secondary contexts, especially as we move past the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations and the Next Decade of Standards

Every study has limitations, and this exploration is no exception. In the published literature, there is often a significant lag between research activity and publication, which could affect the availability of research. It is also possible that

there are conference presentations that were not considered for this project, and it is unknown if conference presentations and dissertations were explored as part of the Standards Impact Survey. A number of contributions to the most recent decade are dissertations, which may indicate a shift in the content of doctoral programs. As technology evolves, this could fuel an expanded presence of the Standards in post-secondary contexts.

In sum, this project aimed to provide additional supporting details on the original 96 articles identified as contributing to the research literature on the implementation of the Standards in a post-secondary context, as well as present details of the current professional discourse on the Standards in post-secondary contexts in published research. The significant amount of ongoing professional dialogue suggests that the question of *if* the Standards are appropriate for post-secondary is less in question than the *how* and *when* the Standards can be harnessed to address the need for change in university language programs. Future research could explore the *how* and *when* through studies that focus on individual faculty classroom methods and showcase student success using proficiency-focused methods. Upper-level courses must continue to improve language skills (Paesani & Allen, 2012; Phillips, 2009; Rodgers, 2015), along with focusing on content through incorporation of classroom activities supported in the Standards, in particularly the Communications goal area.

Further research could drill down into each article in more detail with a fully annotated bibliography, in-depth content analysis, statistical analyses, or meta-analyses, and/or details broken down by language or language type, type of researcher (tenure track faculty, adjunct, PhD Candidate, etc.) or other factors. Work such as the Flagship study has the potential to greatly influence curricular change at the post-secondary level, and additional studies of that nature will further support the proficiency focus at the post-secondary level. Likewise, the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy, the use of proficiency tests, and the increased use of proficiency tests and performance assessments provide concrete measures that would demonstrate this shift for both programs and students.

In considering these questions, it will also be valuable to consider how the Standards are presented to university faculty. Allen (2009) commented that in the 1999 Standards, which were the current iteration at the time of her publication, the introductory materials referred to K-12 educators only and did not mention university educators. In the conclusion to the World-Readiness Standards there are now several references to the university context, including language-specific parts of the task force and references to K-16 education (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). For example, the first bullet point of the conclusion of the World-Readiness Standards states "Standards now apply to PreK-16," suggesting that this is a significant change from the original Standards (2015, p. 241). Furthermore, there are program models included in the World-Readiness Standards for K-16 learning contexts. The introduction also lists the progress that has been made in broader dissemination of the Standards. However, other items mentioned such as AP and National Board Certification are specific to secondary rather than post-secondary contexts, therefore, the university educator

who reads this could still interpret that the Standards are aimed more at the K-12 environment. The outstanding question is how to change that perspective.

The research base would benefit from studies that explore how and when university and college faculty are employing the Standards and studies that show how the Standards interact in a tenure-driven environment. In other words, more in-depth investigation is needed into exactly how faculty incorporate the concepts of the goal areas into their teaching Do university faculty truly understand the Standards and professional tools such as the Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2017) and Performance Descriptors (ACTFL, 2015)? If not the Standards, what resources do college and university faculty use when making decisions about their classroom instruction?

Furthermore, research on training for graduate teaching assistants (TAs) has not provided a clear picture of how graduate TAs (future university faculty) have been trained in the Standards (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010). Scholars have shown that graduate students were often prepared via a single methods course that may not have deeply engaged them in discussion of the Standards. Lower-division courses may also be taught by non-tenure-track adjuncts, instructors, or graduate TAs, who may not have had extensive pedagogical training (Brown & Thompson, 2018; Byrnes, 2012; Paesani & Allen, 2012). This may have influenced publications on lower-level language courses. University educators have limited incentives to change their teaching methods, as classroom effectiveness is traditionally evaluated for promotion and tenure decisions via means of student evaluations and faculty observations. The impetus to shift to a standards-based, and/or proficiency-driven approach arises primarily through personal motivation (Huhn, 2021).

A review of the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (ACTFL, 2017) and Performance Descriptors (ACTFL, 2015) shows that the inclusion of post-secondary education is part of some components, but what needs to be investigated is how to reach post-secondary faculty. Unlike for PK-12 educators, there is no next step such as National Board Certification for post-secondary professors. Steps taken to improve post-secondary educators' knowledge and skills might take a backseat to matters of tenure, promotion, and the demands of a post-secondary position. It would be beneficial to engage in professional discussions on how to normalize the use of the Standards in university classrooms and how to encourage "buy in" among university educators for implementing the Standards. Similarly, it would be useful to explore how the realities of the university teaching context support or hinder proficiency-focused instruction and communication-driven classroom environments. Finally, more in-depth research is needed that investigates how university faculty actually teach and how they are evaluated so we can better understand post-secondary contexts, especially in our post-pandemic world.

Conclusion: Looking Forward

In 2020, with the onslaught of changes due to the COVID pandemic, post-secondary institutions and their faculty once again found themselves confronted with a need to consider every aspect of their work in the classroom. While the

detailed effect of the pandemic is well beyond the scope of this project, nearly all faculty and departments were forced in some way to reconsider what they do and how they do it within the confines of pandemic restrictions. One might wonder what kind of lasting effect that may have on university classroom instruction.

As post-secondary world language education seeks to redefine itself and find its place in a post-pandemic world, the Standards continue to have the potential to support long-lasting change in the post-secondary language classroom. Without continued and broader use of the concepts presented by the Standards, lower-level language courses may continue to be divorced from the upper-level courses and have the potential to put enrollments at risk if students do not continue into those upper-level courses. Projects such as the Language Flagship Initiative, and the use of IPAs and other performance assessments have the potential to stimulate language proficiency development in content courses. Likewise, curricular projects that involve the Communities, Connections, and Comparison Standards would serve to move toward a curriculum that prepares today's students to develop language proficiency and cultural competence that is essential to their future careers. The Standards continue to have the potential to serve as a unifying force at a time when it may be needed most.

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Appendix B: Research on the National Standards 2009 – 2021

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