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Fusing Language Learning and Leadership Development: Initial Approaches and Strategies

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A White paper¹ for Fawzia Ahmad, Mark Braun, Robert Carriedo, Alexandra Core-Barbosa, Angela Henderson, Salah Hammoud, Verónica Haun, Haning Hughes, Kelly Kafeyan, Alice Meyer, Mohamed Nouri, James Rasmussen, Olga Scarborough, Ismênia de Souza, and Jue Wang

During a recent visiting professorship at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), it became clear that language faculty— both military and civilians— stated that they included leadership while teaching foreign languages and cultures.² However, many of the same educators could not explicitly spell out their approach to doing so. This gap launched a line of inquiry about the relationship between teaching languages and leadership development. Subsequently, it sparked a grassroots effort by the faculty of the USAFA Department of Foreign Languages (DFF), including the Office of International Programs (DFIP), to form a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) to focus explicitly on the relationship between language learning and leadership development through discussion, reflection, and exploration to advance strategies and develop related resources (see Cox, 2004, and “What is a faculty and professional learning community,” n.d.).³ One of several FLC outcomes is to produce a white paper to share our experience with the greater language profession. The purpose of this white paper is to advocate for the explicit inclusion of leadership development in foreign language learning (all levels/languages), expand the rationale, move toward a definition, and share some foundational examples to help catalyze more dialog, experimentation, and research on the topic.

Background: Language and Leadership

Professional and societal priorities fueled our FLC's inquiry into languages and leadership as well as the institutional mission. The USAFA mission is to develop leaders of character (Department of Foreign Languages, 2011). The aim of USAFA's DFF— that currently instructs across eight languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) at beginning through advanced levels— is to prepare leaders with a global perspective by providing instruction and fostering learning in foreign languages and cultures.⁴ The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) includes leadership development as a component in the language curriculum in its recently published *ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map P-21* (2011). The map for foreign language education names “leadership and responsibility” as a critical skill for the future. Languages-for-specific-purposes educators (Crouse, 2013; Long, 2013) who are focused on languages for careers suggest leadership development as sufficiently broad to frame the type of interdisciplinary language and culture programming advocated by the Modern Language Association as a future direction for the profession (2007). Indeed, language instructors at a variety of educational levels are beginning to experiment with leadership focused curricula (Doyle & Fryer, 2013; Long, 2013; see also interviews with educators Bless and Risner in Crouse, 2013). Leadership and responsibility in the broadest definition is useful for all citizens to foster civility, mutual understanding and responsibility, intercultural communication and good global citizenship. There is a general societal consensus that future international leaders— civilian and military— need to be both multilingual and culturally adept to be able to produce and lead in the 21st century (Committee for Economic Development, 2006; *ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map P-21*, 2011; Western, 2011; Air Force Culture, 2012; American Academy, 2013).

The content-based movement in language learning (Stryker & Leaver, 1997; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh 2010; for summary see CARLA, 2011) underpins the integration of languages and leadership development. Foundational work on culture in language learning supports our approach as well (for summary see Henrichsen, 1998). Also it is important to bear in mind that teaching and exemplifying leadership is not done in the same way throughout the world. Indeed, the idea of instilling leadership in other cultures may differ greatly from the direct approach taken in the U.S. educational arena. It may, in fact, simply permeate an entire educational structure without ever being mentioned explicitly, as is the case in the Spanish Air Force Academy (J. P. Velázquez-Gaztelu, personal communication, April 16, 2013).

The FLC

The outcome of a prior study at USAFA suggested that knowing foreign languages and cultures helps produce good leaders (Long, Uribe, Derby, & Scharff, 2013). This premise underlays all activities of the FLC. Sponsored by the USAFA Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), our FLC met throughout the semester in spring 2013. The content of the FLC sessions was principally determined by discussion among the FLC faculty members as Phase II of Long's research the semester prior. With the guidance of SoTL Director Lauren Scharff, the FLC participants set the semester's agenda during the first meeting. As the term

unfolded, the FLC members explored the concept of leadership development within the context of our institution, shared numerous cultural scenarios that had leadership embedded in the learning of languages and cultures, invited presentations of other on-going related research projects, and examined and exchanged ideas about informal and formal experimentation that took place during our spring classes. Our culminating activity was to suggest a definition and produce a vision statement of what leadership development in the language-learning curriculum looks like. (See Appendix A for an annotated agenda of FLC activities.)

Vision, Definition and Observations

Educators want students to be responsible leaders who use their language and cross-cultural skills to motivate others to be fair, tolerant, open-minded and understanding in a variety of contexts (*ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map P-21*, 2011). There is no one-size-fits-all definition of leadership development in the language-learning context simply because working definitions must be adapted for situational relevancy. However, we did find that there are essential elements to include in an operational vision/definition in one's own curricular context.

As the semester progressed the FLC investigated the essential elements of leadership development in the language-learning environment. FLC members made the following key observations with regard to proposing a vision statement and definition for the intertwining of leadership and languages.

- 1) Leadership development and language learning possess a parallel relationship.
 - Just like learning languages and cultures, leadership and responsibility suggest a life skill.
 - A leader steps up, takes risks, analyzes the situation, determines the best course of action, and proceeds accordingly. A language learner must do precisely this, both in linguistic and cultural terms (J. W. LeLoup, personal communication, April 26, 2013).
- 2) Leadership development can be visible in the language curriculum and should be stated directly.
 - The integration of leadership development in language-learning settings should be deliberate (e.g., appear in course goals, objectives and/or learning outcomes) (R. J. Reyes, personal communication, April 26, 2013)
 - Assessments to validate leadership development embedded in language learning should follow.
- 3) Leadership development approaches and strategies can be generic to any educational setting.
 - Just as in other academic/experiential learning environments, foreign language learning (K-16+) fosters non-discipline specific leadership development by building in presentational opportunities for class leaders, assigning oral presentations and reports, designing group or team activities, promoting critical thinking, and praising student leadership.
 - Another generic method of teaching leadership resides with the instructor who serves as a role model by providing and fostering leadership/mentor-

ship. An educator's sensitivity toward foreign cultures is a key component of role modeling. The tone is set through the teacher-leader as role model and his/her behavior, approaches to critical thinking and analysis and attitude toward the subject (O. Scarborough, personal communication, April 26, 2013). Additionally, role-modeling/mentoring can occur instructor-to-student or student-to-student.

4) Leadership development strategies can be unique to language learning and therefore discipline-specific. The language-learning environment provides an insider's view to an outsider because of the linguistic window into the foreign culture. Because of this, language learning is essential for developing leaders with international expertise (S. S. Long, personal communication, April 26, 2013).

- Particularly specific to language learning is the prospect of learning about leadership constructs (leaders, followers, etc.) within their cultural context. This can be achieved both in the traditional classroom and experientially (e.g., service learning, internships, study abroad, foreign immersion). Experiential learning can provide opportunities to observe and interact with leaders in their milieu.
- In the classroom, contextualized activities that interweave linguistic/cultural expertise and leadership such as cultural scenarios, simulations, role-plays, capsules, situations, mini-dramas, problem solving, critical incidents, and the like (Henrichsen, 1998) also serve to apply leadership constructs to real-life situations. (See Appendix B for extended examples.) These are effective ways of constructing activities that target the development of leadership, language skills and cultural sensitivity in tandem. To be effective, these situational activities should highlight contrasting products, practices and perspectives. Such application activities typically culminate in problem solving, solution/resolution and/or reflection. Reflection might ask "what did you learn" or "how could we do this better" so as to not overlook the student's perspective.

While the FLC members considered elements of the definition and vision, they agreed that the most unique aspect of the fusion of leadership development and language learning is to provide opportunities to examine leaders, followers, and leadership in general and to explore how they might look different and behave differently in foreign cultures. The intertwining of culture and leadership variations (over time and across cultures), such as leadership style, is undeniable (e.g., a 20th Century Latin American dictator is likely to have a palpably different leadership style than a 21st Century British Prime Minister). Careful selection of materials, examples and face-to-face encounters will help guide learners toward observing cultural-specific interactions that highlight leaders, followers and positive/negative global citizens. In addition, it is precisely this variation and differentiation in the meld of culture and leadership that necessitate critical thinking on the part of learners grappling with the challenge of finding the best ways to effect appropriate intercultural interactions.

Leadership, National Standards and Implementation

Several of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2006) provide points of departure for teachers to incorporate the construct of leadership in the FL curriculum. Addressing the standards listed under the Cultures goal area and purposefully targeting culture (2.1 and 2.2) can include efforts at identifying connections with leadership as well. Leadership development can be a significant component of a language-learning environment, particularly vis-à-vis the integration of cultural knowledge (products, practices, and perspectives). The products and practices, also termed behaviors and artifacts, of the target language culture (C_2) can differ considerably from those of the native language culture (C_1). Additionally, the most compelling part of these standards (2.1 and 2.2) is the inclusion of the explanatory perspective piece: the “why.” Individuals in contact with other cultures routinely wonder “*why* do they do it that way” and the answer to the question typically reveals a different perspective. The recognition that such products and practices have underlying reasons for their existence that are specific to the C_2 is crucial. In order to grasp the significance of a certain product or practice, one must also understand or at the very least acknowledge the perspective(s) that serve as its origins.

A language student who desires to improve language and cultural skills and expertise realizes that the process requires a combination of language acquisition and cultural knowledge to be successful. Indeed, part of achieving success in a second language environment is navigating the cultural waterways, acting appropriately in interactions with native speakers, and integrating as much as possible into the culture. Often language learners are reluctant to take on aspects of the C_2 and frequently miss out on intercultural communication opportunities as a result. When presented with new cultural and/or linguistic situations, the proactive student will analyze, make informed conjectures about appropriate behaviors and actions, and then proceed toward hypothesis confirmation. These steps eventually entail risk-taking, which is a strong characteristic of a good language learner and a decisive leader. The ACTFL position statement on Languages as a Core Component of Education for All Students (2013) underscores the importance of this ability to “function in new and unfamiliar situations” and “to think and interact in a global community.” These abilities are also foundational in research and materials on study abroad (e.g., Mikk, Cohen, Paige, Chi, Lassegard, Meagher, & Weaver, 2009; Montgomery, & Vasser, 2011). The study abroad community has also created cultural scenarios that are interactive and reflective in nature. Our leadership-focused scenarios share some of the same characteristics as those authored by the study abroad educators. However, the scenarios developed by language educators will generally engage language acquisition more directly.

Scenario #3 for French or Arabic, titled A Moroccan Souk Visit (see Appendix B), is an example of how these linguistic, cultural, and leadership skills can be leveraged to effect a positive outcome in a C_2 situation. In this scenario, having the linguistic skills to negotiate the necessary arrangements is essential. Concomitantly, understanding the perspectives underlying the C_2 vendor/representative’s positions throughout the negotiations certainly helps maintain congenial, if not collegial, rela-

tions. Thus cultural competence is of equal value in these transactions. The language student/leader will assess the situation, weigh the options, and initiate the course of action most beneficial to all. Clearly, a lack of leadership coupled with inferior language and cultural proficiencies could lead to an insufficient conclusion or even a disaster in terms of relationships among the interlocutors. Standard 3.2 in the Connections goal area of the Standards champions the ability of language learners to “acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures” (Standards, 1999). Here again we see the importance of accessing and understanding those C_2 perspectives that differ from our own. Furthermore, the ACTFL position statement on languages in the core avers that language study helps learners to become “more adept in understanding diverse cultural perspectives.” Without this understanding, little effective communication can take place and meaningful interaction falls by the wayside. A developing leader will recognize this necessity and will actively seek out target language sources that can provide the information required for successful completion of a particular task. In Scenario #2, Presentations on Cultural and Political Responses for Chinese (see Appendix B), using the second language (L2) to gain an understanding of the C_2 perspective on many of these sensitive issues proved to be of significant value. Without crucial (or critical) information about viewpoints held by the Chinese, meaningful conversations and communication could not have taken place. In addition, having garnered the important information from appropriate Chinese sources prior to meeting with the visiting delegation, the students were able to assume a leadership stance in subsequent conversations and presentations. They were not following the lead; they were taking the lead. They were able to accomplish this due to their linguistic, cultural, and leadership training.

The Comparison goal area of the Standards provides a culmination of efforts to infuse cultural knowledge into the foreign language (FL) curriculum with Standard 4.2. Not only are language learners directed toward the products, practices, and perspectives of the C_2 , they are also encouraged to reflect on analogous situations in their C_1 and make fruitful comparisons between the two. Such comparisons can often effect a deeper understanding or, at the very least, an acceptance of the target culture’s perspective vis-à-vis a particular product or practice. Scenario #5, Dressing Etiquette in Brazil (see Appendix B), offers a case in point. Differences in dress code between U.S. culture and Brazilian culture are marked and even striking in many instances. An initial negative reaction on the part of the L2 language learner can be tempered by the realization that such cultural surprises and consternations do work both ways. In other words, Brazilians will find anomalies and cultural shocks in the U. S. relating to dress code that would not bother a native of that country. The language learner who is also developing leadership skills will spot this conundrum, identify it as a potential trouble area, point this out to fellow language learners or colleagues, and make an effort to circumvent any potential disruption or discord. Inculcating students with the requisite cultural knowledge to enable them to act appropriately in a myriad of C_2 situations is a major aspect of leadership development. If/when they know how to act and interact suitably, they can serve as role models/leaders for their peers in these situations.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The educational potential of the language-learning environment to provide a unique and powerful mechanism for personal leadership development in a global cultural context is unique to our discipline (O. Scarborough, personal communication, April 26, 2013). The conceptual framework of including leadership and responsibility to enhance global citizenship across languages, instructional and proficiency levels is a value-added feature to the foreign language curriculum that meshes nicely with our curricular goal areas that are already in place (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). It also complements the focus on careers in many language curricula. In foreign language (FL) classes, the leadership skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes being developed in the nation's classrooms as part of 21st century skills directive can be effectively taken advantage of, built upon, and nurtured in a *connections, comparisons, and cultures* approach and spirit (American Academy, 2013; Assessment and Teaching, 2013). Leadership development can be creatively intertwined with each of these goal areas.

We acknowledge that leadership teaching and learning can be intuitive or intentional. In this white paper we advocate a more intentional approach at all levels and across languages because of our desire to promote life and career skills to enhance our central mission as language educators. It is useful to summarize what we want our students to know and be able to do in cross-cultural situations locally and globally. As educators we want our students to act ethically, to use their strengths to accomplish common objectives, to behave responsibly for the good of the entire community, and to use their interpersonal and problem-solving abilities to influence and guide others toward a common goal (*ACTFL 21st Century Skills Map P-21*, 2011).

Although the lessons learned in the USAFA FLC were in the unique instructional context of the Air Force's future officer education, many of the "lessons learned" are generalizable to the broader language teaching community. We acknowledge that our "sample populations" were students at the tertiary level, but we believe the infusion of leadership can be made at all language levels and in all language contexts. So many of the goals held across these venues are remarkably similar, such as the desire to produce students with cross-cultural expertise that can enhance international communication and cooperation.

In spite of the leadership studies movement, there is scant evidence of curricular design and classroom activities that explicitly aim to relate the fields of foreign languages and leadership. This is all a strong indication that language learning and leadership education need to be converging in conventional FL curricula and classrooms in the future. This white paper provides a growing rationale to inform other language programs that want to cultivate leadership development as a core value.

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Notes

- 1 The concept of a white paper and what it offers the reader evokes a variety of definitions. Although the paper may contain research, it is not a traditional research paper. A white paper is an original, authoritative report that enhances the understanding of a particular issue—in this case the integration of language learning and leadership development. A white paper can also advocate for a policy issue.
- 2 Sheri Spaine Long served in the USAFA Department of Foreign Languages as Distinguished Visiting Professor (DVP) of Spanish (2011-2013). According to the position description for visiting professors, they provide educational leadership to their academic department, and they are to engage in research of mutual interest while in residence. The project described herewith describes some of Long's recent experiences. Additionally Jean W. LeLoup served as DVP of Spanish twice (during the 1995-1996 and 2007-2009 academic years), prior to joining the USAFA faculty in a regular full-time capacity.
- 3 The DFF FLC included instructor input from most languages at all levels taught at USAFA.
- 4 According to the department background statement, the Department of Foreign Languages and International Programs is one of 20 departments within the Dean of the Faculty. It is one of the largest USAFA departments in total number of faculty and staff and also boasts the richest cultural diversity with members with a variety of ethnic, religious and national backgrounds. The department also has the largest number of civilian faculty members and the highest civilian to military ratio of any other department. This faculty combination provides long term stability of the curriculum with our civilian and senior military faculty members, and a fresh operational perspective with a rotational military component. The faculty composition also provides cadets a unique opportunity to be exposed to a variety of perspectives and professional backgrounds, which greatly contributes to an overall positive and productive learning environment. In addition to the core mission of teaching foreign languages and cultures, the department is also responsible for the execution of field education programs at the Air Force Academy to include language and cultural immersions, foreign academy visits, semester exchanges and study abroad. These programs are designed to provide an experiential learning opportunity as an extension of classroom instruction. The Department's rich diversity and breadth of impact at USAFA and beyond make it a unique and dynamic environment

at USAFA and it is this strength that will propel it as a top tier foreign language and culture education program in the nation (Department of Foreign Languages, 2011).

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Appendix A

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Language Learning and Leadership Development

2013 Meeting Agenda, DFF, USAFA

January 23

Dr. Sheri Long convened DFF faculty volunteers to form the working group. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Director, Dr. Lauren Scharff, was the FLC's invited guest who explained the purpose of a FLC as a venue to share good teaching and learning practices. The goals of the FLC were agreed upon including producing the white paper, creating a resource file with examples of cultural scenarios and developing a vision/definition of how to intertwine leadership and language.

February 6

Four faculty volunteers shared a specific cultural scenario related to leadership development with comments and open discussion from the group.

February 19

Invited speaker Dr. Lauren Scharff, presented a summary of the content from the required course titled "Foundations for Leadership Development" for all juniors at USAFA. The class is focused on behaviorally based theories of leadership but also applying them. The discussion and examples related elements of the course to cross-cultural situations.

March 5

Lt. Col. Basik (PhD), Assistant Director of the USAFA Cadet Development Center for Character and Leadership Development (NCLS), presented the vision behind 'living models of virtues' which could be capsuled as the practicalities of leadership including a) live honorably in the culture of integrity, b) lift others to the best of their possible selves and c) elevate performance. The virtues are taught as required training to all cadets, so students typically possess this background when taking languages. This presentation offered the FLC faculty a vocabulary for talking about leadership.

March 19

The FLC discussed the previous two guest speaker sessions and suggested applications of the material presented in our teaching. Also, three volunteer faculty members shared cultural scenarios that were each followed by group discussion.

April 16

Two on-going SoTL projects were presented that are related to leadership development and languages: The first is a student-driven project titled Mission Statement Presented in Language Class Syllabi directed by faculty members Drs. Scharff and Long. Cadets David Heaphy and Jasmine Leyro presented their research project with regard to the placement of the leadership focused mission statement on the syllabus. The second project, Integrating Foreign Languages and Leadership Development at the Advanced Level, was explained by faculty members Drs. Rasmussen and Long.

April 26

FLC members completed homework to write mission/vision statement drafts to use as the basis of our final discussion. Elements of the final discussion were targeted for inclusion in the white paper.

Appendix B**Faculty Learning Community (FLC)
Leadership-focused Cultural Scenarios**

The following scenarios intertwine leadership development and language learning and represent the collective work of the FLC. The purpose of including this collection of scenarios is to provide a variety of concrete models to illustrate how a language educator might go about teaching leadership in the FL classroom. Although the contributor identifies language and level, many of these scenarios can be calibrated to different educational and skill levels and adapted to other languages and cultures. Additionally, some scenarios suggest varying levels of target language use that can be modified by level and language. Also some of these scenarios are specific to military settings and with modification can be generalized (e.g., ranking foreign military officials can be recast as CEOs from important foreign businesses, a military logistics operation can be recast as a humanitarian organization carrying out relief work abroad, and so forth). Finally, the terms *cadet* and *student* are used interchangeably throughout.

- 1) Arabic (any level), contributed by S. Hammoud
Describing Leaders: Military Officer Ranks and Insignia

- 2) Chinese (intermediate/advanced), contributed by H. Hughes
Presentations on Cultural and Political Responses
- 3) French or Arabic (any level), contributed by L. Derby
A Moroccan Souk Visit
- 4) Portuguese (novice), contributed by A. Meyer
The Brazilian Office
- 5) Portuguese (intermediate), contributed by I. de Souza
Dressing Etiquette in Brazil
- 6) Russian (novice), contributed by O. Scarborough
Presentations on Russian-speaking Regions and Cultures
- 7) Spanish (novice), contributed by R. J. Reyes
Multi-national situations (Argentina, Spain, Japan and Afghanistan: What would you do?)

Scenario 1: Arabic (any level), Describing Leaders: Military Officer Ranks and Insignia

Goal: To provide students an opportunity to acquire the basic vocabulary associated with military ranks in Arab armies, using Egypt, Jordan or Syria as examples; to familiarize them with the differences between these countries in terminology used to refer to these ranks; and to have students describe military leaders in simple though not simplistic ways (Standards: 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2).

Set-up: Students complete an on-line search for insignia and terms denoting military officer ranks in the Arab world. They also look up the etymology for these words, preferably in a root- entry- bilingual dictionary, such as the Hans Wehr *Dictionary of Written Arabic*. They read in English a biographical summary of historical and contemporary figures like Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and Moammar Gaddafi of Libya, paying attention to how they are described (the adjectives used) and any clues as to their leadership styles.

Execution:

- 1) Using a slide visual, students study shoulder board insignia for officer ranks of Egyptian Air Force officers and their equivalent in the U.S. Air Force. For lower level students, some contextualized grammar practice of various irregular adjectival forms is required as well as a review of noun adjective agreement. For the advanced level students, work with derivations for each of the rank titles along with a discussion of what each rank means; determine if those meanings reflect actual responsibilities carried out by officers in the real world.
- 2) Have students learn the referent terms by using them in meaningful practice: What does a lieutenant do in a unit? Where do you think you will be when you are (promoted to the rank of) a Captain; What kind of a house and car will you be able to afford as a Major? What rank comes after a Colonel? Will you remain in the Air Force thirty years to make that rank? What do you suppose the salary of a Lieutenant Colonel is in Egypt? In Saudi Arabia? How many officers at the rank of General are left in the Syrian Army? How many have defected to the opposition?

- 3) Have students view a vintage speech, a YouTube clip of a speech by Colonel Nasser (Egypt), and discuss the kind of military officer we think he was from the video. Now using adjectives denoting positive and negative leadership qualities (e.g., caring, effective, inspiring, blind-sighted, cool, tyrannical, etc.) have students discuss real world examples.
- 4) If there is an international student available from one of the Arab-speaking countries, invite him/her to speak about the military hierarchy in his/her home country. Have students ask the guest speaker lots of questions!

Assessment: Students present to the class the profile of the leaders they learned about.

Reflective Statement: A writing assignment may follow (or be part of) this activity. Students describe a past or present figure in terms of his/her leadership skill. While this may be expanded to include heroes who are not necessarily military ones, it should include and synthesize some of the learning achieved in the unit/lesson/activity. By incorporating Standard 4.2, it helps learners see cultural differences and similarities in practices, and perspectives in leaders and leader behavior.

Scenario 2: Chinese (intermediate/advanced), Presentations on Cultural and Political Responses

Goal: To enhance students' critical thinking and leadership skills on culturally and politically sensitive issues with regard to U.S. relations with the PRC (China) and ROC (Taiwan), and to develop problem-solving skills and practice interacting and communicating with high-ranking Chinese government and military officials (Standards: 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 5.2).

Set-up: The students are divided into several groups to develop their own possible situations arising from sensitive issues and practice and present them in the Chinese language to the entire class.

Execution: Each group of students presents their discussed situations. Within each group, some students role-play as U.S. military officers; others are Chinese Communist Party officials and Chinese Liberation Army officers. They properly greet each other, and have open dialogs on cultural, military and political issues concerning China and the U.S.

The Situation: A delegation of forty high-ranking officials from the Communist Party of China comes to visit USAFA for one day. You are tasked to create an itinerary for this visit, which includes dedicating two students to present a briefing about the U.S. military mission in Chinese, hosting Round Table discussions, organizing lunch, and finally providing a tour of the facilities. In addition to displaying proper etiquette in welcoming the high-ranking Chinese officials, the focal point of the situation resides in culturally and politically sensitive questions that may be raised by the Chinese delegation or our own mock military students. Discuss and present your viewpoint of the following issues. Some issues are easier to discuss than others. The second group will be harder to discuss diplomatically and will require cautionary considerations.

Easier

1. Chinese educational system
2. Future exchange programs between USAFA and the Chinese Air Force Academy
3. Cooperation between China and the US on space development and related issues
4. China's fast growing economy and its future

Harder

1. Sovereignty issues: China and Taiwan
2. Recent dispute over the Diaoyu Island between China and Japan
3. Human rights issues: Tibet and China
4. Fall of a former Chinese politician: the Bo Xilai scandal

Assessment: The assessment occurred through the application of this real world situation. The Chinese delegation visit was a true event (Spring 2013). We organized for the visit in class prior to the official visit, and students fully prepared themselves for dealing with all types of issues that might occur. As a result, the students involved in the Chinese delegation visit successfully accomplished all tasks. The students represented their institution by displaying intelligence, appropriate knowledge and cultural and political sensitivity, making a positive impression on the members of the delegation.

Reflective Statement: Face-to-face cultural/linguistic interactions like these enhance students' target language communication skills, improve students' cultural awareness and leadership skills, and motivate them to continue language study. Although all students know they need to perfect their language abilities, these situations provided a concrete target, and opened participants' eyes as to how important it is to develop their leadership and diplomatic relationship skills. The students learned that their organizational leadership abilities and their cultural awareness go hand-in-hand with language learning.

Scenario 3: French or Arabic (any level), A Moroccan Souk Visit

Goal: To provide the students an opportunity to react in a leadership role while taking into account their understanding of the products, practices, and perspectives of the Maghreb (Standards: 2.1, 2.2, 4.2).

Set-up: The scenario and subsequent follow-ups are on PowerPoint slides. The Air Force is sending 50 airmen to Rabat (Morocco) for a short time to respond with humanitarian aid to a crisis or natural disaster. As contracting lieutenants, your team needs to negotiate with a local vendor at the souk to purchase food to prepare in the portable kitchen that has been set up by the Civil Engineering team. After each element (outlined below in stages) is added to the situation, students discuss their response in small groups before the next stage is added. Class-wide discussion takes place after every group has independently discussed each stage.

Execution:

- Step 1: You are on a team of three (a female Captain and two enlisted males) and you notice that every time the Captain asks a question, the response is given (and the eye contact) to the two enlisted males.
- Step 2: The vendor suggests you purchase ingredients for the famous *bastila* recipe that Moroccans enjoy which features a specialty bird – a plump and flavorful pigeon in between layers of filo dough with nuts and cinnamon and powdered sugar on top.
- Step 3: You get the feeling that your vendor is taking an opportunity to pad the bill for your American team because America is rich and why shouldn't he take advantage?
- Step 4: After the vendor finds out you are assisting with humanitarian relief, he offers to give you a sizeable discount. **Wrap-up:** With the entire class, ask for responses about: what the Captain was doing wrong; what about that famous *bastila*; should Americans pay more or less? Discussion should include an indication that in Morocco, some males only feel comfortable shaking hands or engaging with other males, not always, but in more conservative areas. The *bastila* is a national dish and showing respect for the pride in wanting to share with the Americans, possibly a diplomatic suggestion of making the recipe with chicken, was an option discussed. Americans shouldn't pay more, and it would take an astute officer to recognize appropriate price ranges, yet it isn't appropriate to underpay either, and typically a bargain on something means the vendor will make it up somewhere else. Being diplomatic and gracious is key to continuing harmonious relations. At this point, the instructor can ask if there are any other questions about the products, practices or perspectives of Morocco and adds input regarding other cultural reflections which weren't brought out in the class discussion.

Reflective statement: The class had the benefit of two instructors who had spent time in Morocco, as well as other Middle Eastern countries, so the additional input generated other questions about the products, practices, and perspectives and the discussion continued longer than the allotted time. The groups produce all or part of this scenario in French (or Arabic) according to their level of language expertise and time spent introducing key vocabulary.

Scenario 4: Portuguese (novice), The Brazilian Office

Goal: To help students develop leadership skills by experiencing cultural differences and comparing them to their own culture. (Standards: 1.3, 2.1, 4.2).

Set-up: The students are paired up and given the situation that they will prepare to role-play. Each student practices his/her role and presents it to the class in Portuguese.

Execution: Students act out their roles as if they were in Brazil and in a theater-like setting. One of the students will be the Brazilian employee and the other student will play the role of the American student in Brazil participating in a language immersion

program. The students will prepare the classroom as if it were an office.

The situation: You are in Brazil on a language immersion or semester abroad program. You realize that you have lost your university identification card and need a replacement. As you arrive at the identity card office, you notice there is one employee and several students that are waiting to get their identity cards processed. You are instructed to take a number and wait your turn. However, as you wait, the young lady working in the office is having a lovely and long conversation on the phone with her boyfriend. After almost 30 minutes on the phone, someone she knows walks in, and she immediately decides to attend to him, totally ignoring the other people in the room, including you. What is your reaction?

Here are some questions for students to ponder as they prepare to discuss/act out this situation. Be creative and expand on these prompts.

1. What will you do? Will you confront her and complain about the situation?
2. Will you report her to her supervisor?
3. Or, you will just wait for your turn to get your card and leave?
4. How would you compare this situation to the U.S.? Would something like this happen in the U.S.? Explain.

Assessment: The students were graded on creativeness, preparation and organization, and pronunciation during the role-play. Other elements of the evaluation included students' clearly demonstrated cultural perspectives and respect toward other cultures.

Reflective statement: The outcomes of this scenario were as varied as the different perspectives and different reactions from the students. Some of the student responses were mature, constructive, and appropriate, while others were not appropriate. It was evident that students need to learn and practice leadership skills in a different cultural setting. Finally, the scenario gave the students the ability to experience cultural comparisons and draw conclusions.

Scenario 5: Portuguese (intermediate), Dressing Etiquette in Brazil

Goal: To provide students an understanding of the role of culture and language when communicating, making decisions, and exercising their influence in a global context (Standards: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 4.2).

Set-up: This cultural scenario (in English) is presented to the entire class. It is then presented in Portuguese highlighting new vocabulary. You are in Brazil and you need to extend your visa. You looked on the Internet to determine what you need to do and discover you have to go to a Federal Police (*Polícia Federal*) office. It is very hot. You decide to wear shorts and flip-flops. At the entrance of the building, a Federal Police employee stops you and denies you entry to the building because you are not wearing pants. The hotel where you are staying is far away. You won't be able to be back in time to complete your business. This annoys you. What do you do?

Execution: First, the students are divided in groups of four and then instructed to discuss the topic in the language indicated by the instructor. Students have to express their opinion and be able to defend their point of view to the other students in the

group.

Next, there is a discussion with the entire class. They are encouraged to approach the situation as leaders. At this moment, they shift from the personal to the leadership role. They are to think not as an individual, but as someone in a leadership position whose action can have a powerful result – good or bad. To make this point, the following question is posed: “What are the implications of your behavior as a leader in this situation?”

Once they have been able to make this connection, they are instructed to move to the third requirement, which consists of a role-play of the situation in Portuguese. Students are paired up and required to write a dialog to present to the class. They are encouraged to present the dialog without notes – if possible. By writing it, students use known structures and vocabulary and also add new vocabulary with a dictionary.

Assessment: Students were evaluated on both their culturally appropriate behavior as leaders and their written and oral expression.

Reflective statement: The role-play not only helped the students practice orally what they created in writing, but also helped to improve their chances of retaining the language through immediate recycling. Additionally, this role-play provided a valuable lesson to the instructor. First, it provided insight into the variety of perceptions that students hold about culture. Some students were intuitively sensitive and therefore respectful to the new facet of the culture as leaders, while others had a negative reaction. Second, they enjoyed the discussions about the culture, but what really motivated them was the role-play. They were equally enthusiastic to learn new vocabulary so they could “embellish” their presentation.

Scenario 6: Russian (novice), Presentations on Russian-speaking Regions and Cultures

Goals: To provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their speaking skills at the end of their first year of study of the Russian language, and also to provide an opportunity to do research on the regional and cultural diversity in Russia and former Soviet Republics. Additionally, this scenario further develops leadership skills such as: initiative, responsibility, critical thinking, effective speaking and active listening skills (Standards: 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 4.2).

Set-up: Students choose one of the Russian Federation’s regions or former Soviet Republics from the list provided and completes an oral presentation accompanied by a short slide show. Part one consists of a three-minute minimum introduction in Russian that includes the following topics: a complete description of the region, including location, language, population, major cities and other attractions, educational system, and natural resources. Part two lasts about seven minutes and covers the following topics *in English*: regional history and importance, governmental structure, cultural aspects and traditions. Students are required to cite at least two different resources for the written portion of this project. No more than one student in the same class presented the same region.

Execution: Students elected their region of interest from a lengthy list (e.g., Ukraine and Ukrainians; Belarus and Belarusians; Azerbaijan and Azeri; Kirgizstan and Kirghiz) and prepared their presentations. Once prepared, they gave their presenta-

tions with varying degrees of success (please see Reflection for further explanation).

Assessment: Both presentational and written components were evaluated based on how thoroughly the topics were covered, and quantity and quality of effort and independent research. Russian language skills were evaluated separately based on grammatical accuracy, use of new vocabulary, and the content and relevance of the information presented in the Russian introduction.

Reflective statement: As students elected what region to present according to their interests, background or just randomly, they encountered different kinds of problems preparing for their presentations. It was evident that if they relied on help from friends or peers, their presentation came out more subjective and emotionally colored than others who researched the region over the Internet and gathered factual material. At the same time, students tended to organize the material according to their own interests and preferences. For example, some of them talked about dancing, music, sports, traditional food or costumes and included a short video. That actually made their presentations unique and special. Many students chose to ask their instructor to check their written Russian texts before the presentation. It helped them minimize mistakes in pronunciation and grammar use and feel more confident in class. Many students showed an interest in each other's regions and asked follow-up questions (nature, traditions, military, etc.), making the discussions more interesting and lively.

Overall, the presentations were thorough and demonstrated good oratory and leadership skills as well as creativity. For all of them it was the first experience to speak in the target language in front of the audience for a few minutes, and some felt nervous and uncomfortable but were bolstered by their classmates.

Scenario 7: Spanish (any level), Multi-national situations (Argentina, Spain, Japan and Afghanistan): What would you do?

Goal: To provide students an opportunity to develop leadership skills by emphasizing multi-national/multi-cultural awareness and cooperation in a variety of contexts. Using four different transnational situations, students are to identify cultural differences and compare them to their own culture. Students explore how cultural factors may influence better leadership decisions and actions. In Phase I of this project, cadets/learners requested more multi-national experiences in their language classes [beyond the target language/culture(s)] (Standards: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 4.2).

Set-up: Students are divided in groups and given a different situation per group. Students are instructed to discuss the situations and to develop a group response in the target language for their specific situation.

Execution: Each group was given 12 minutes to discuss the situation internally and develop a collective response in Spanish. They were instructed to consider the following questions:

- a. How are their perceptions (of the situation) different than your perceptions?
- b. Do different cultures have different moral codes?
- c. Is "When in Rome do like the Romans" a proper path to follow?

d. What would you do in the situation presented to you?

Situation 1: You are a Lieutenant escorting four students on an Argentinian Air Force Academy visit and while there, you notice that the personnel, including the officers that are driving you around, are not in a rush despite the specific agenda you were given on the first day. Perhaps they are trying to maintain a relaxed atmosphere for their guests, or they have standards but don't enforce them, or it's simply part of the culture. Should you join the bandwagon? Later, you have a dinner appointment for a gift exchange and your students are asking you to relax and let them enjoy their last night. You are an officer that needs to model appropriate behavior to the officers in training. What would you do and why?

Situation 2: You are a Captain visiting the Air Force Academy in Spain. You notice that the Major that is escorting you, el Comandante Juan Descarado, is very friendly with the junior officers in his unit. In fact, he tells you that he plays tennis every Saturday morning with Lieutenant Anita Inocente de Castilla, a new officer in the unit, and then takes her to lunch. Moreover, he tells you that the Spanish culture is very warm and welcoming and that it's a matter of custom for officers to have a casual meal together. It's now Friday night, el Comandante Descarado has invited you to play tennis Saturday morning. He said he would pair you up with Lieutenant Asustada, another officer in his unit. What would you do and why? It is now Saturday and el Comandante Descarado invites you to either go to a restaurant for dinner or to go out to the dance club and/or binge drinking with the new female Lieutenants. What would you do and why?

Situation 3: You are a student/cadet visiting the Japanese Air Force Academy, and it is Japanese custom to bow as a form of formal salute. But you are an American, very proud of your customs and culture. Should you bow to them as well or stand up proud offering a handshake instead. What would you do and why? You are now having a formal dinner with representatives of the Japanese government and members of the press, and they ask you to provide your thoughts on the attack on Pearl Harbor and the atomic bombs dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What would you do and why?

Situation 4: You are a Captain assigned to a special operations Province Reconstruction Team working with the newly formed but fledgling Afghani Air Force in the remote, tribal areas near the border with Pakistan. Local customs require visitors to leave their weapons outside the tent, remove their shoes, and drink tea with the locals as they warm up to each other and begin conversations about the economy, the Taliban, the allies and what your team can do for them. What would you do and why?

Students were given 5 minutes per group to present their responses to the scenarios in the target language in front of the class, followed by the instructors' comments or observations and class discussion.

Assessment: This exercise was conducted by nine instructors in 13 Introductory

Spanish classes. Students were not formally assessed; however, the instructors guided the resulting discussion and provided feedback to ensure the exercise objectives were met. During the discussion, feedback from the students indicated they felt that language courses at the Academy should include more cultural leadership discussions; that knowing languages and cultures helps produce better leaders; and that leadership and culture are not mutually exclusive ideas or constructs.

Reflective statement: This exercise served to develop cultural awareness that is an essential component of global leadership expertise. The situations were intentionally crafted to get cadets out of their comfort zones. This activity served to establish a more visible link between the language learning environment and the development of leadership skills.