Because of the concern about declining German second language enrollments in the United States, there is a need for enhanced cultural education in the second language curriculum. Current global circumstances, including an increasingly multicultural society and widespread need for intercultural communicative competence, not just grammatical competence, suggest that the curriculum should include aspects of popular culture and de-emphasize "high" culture, an elitist and incomplete perspective. The presentation of such cultural information, a largely visual approach, is appropriate, using photographs and video alongside audio materials. Further, use of advancing technology, particularly interactive media, to present audiovisual materials is necessary to link linguistic performance, communicative competence, and cultural awareness in the classroom. Guidelines for evaluation and selection of instructional materials are drawn from the literature of second language teaching. Extensive notes contain approximately 17 references. (MSE)
Bridging The Gap:
Teaching Culture In The Foreign Language Classroom

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In the most recent issue of Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German with the title 'German in the 21st Century' Valters Nollendorfs points out in his article entitled 'Out of Germanistik: Thoughts on the Shape of Things to Come' that "the end of this century finds the study of German in America institutionally marginalized and in search of its own identity as a discipline."¹ He mentions nonetheless the "great changes [that, rem. R.P.] have taken place in curricula and methodology, leading to an expansion and blurring of disciplinary boundaries and diversification of subject matter."² Common sense indicates that "these processes are likely to continue into the twenty-first century."³ The "diversification of" the subject matter seems indeed the crucial element in an analysis of the current situation regarding the German teaching profession. At the end of the 20th Century we as teachers have to ask ourselves what it exactly is that we aspire to teach our students in the classroom with regard to our discipline.

Recent trends show that the enrollment figures in German on the College level are not as encouraging as the first post-unification optimism among American Germanists suggested.⁴ And in his 'Thoughts on the Shape of Things to Come' Nollendorf suggests that

The German-teaching profession might be better off-and be better rewarded-by concentrating on the long-range retention of students through the development of attractive and diversified upperclass curricula and teaching techniques rather than just adding students to introductory language courses.⁵
His recommendation coincides with the finding of pedagogues and educators around the curriculum that the majority of our students is not reached by, nor do they respond to, our "traditional" methods of language teaching. The most important question for us teachers then would be, regardless of the level of instruction, whether 100 or 400 level courses, how to most effectively adapt our methods and teaching styles to the changing needs and learning modes of our students, even in introductory language courses.

As language teachers we promote communicative competence, understand the importance of authenticity within the framework of the student's linguistic performance and stress our students' recognition of changing speech fashions and patterns in the target language and culture. Language learning and teaching should at all levels include the teaching of culture with an intercultural approach, so that the student will ideally not only know the "foreign language inside and out" but also be able to "communicate with a foreigner." (Or in different terms: with a native speaker)

The theoretical recognition that cultural and linguistic competence necessitate each other in order for the student to be most proficient in the target language, gives way to the realization that we have to present the cultural context in an appropriately challenging manner in the classroom. The assumption is of course that we emphasize "'communicative competence' as a broader concept than 'grammatical competence'". It is understood as well, that "'communicative competence' involves an appreciation of appropriate language use which, in part at least, is culture specific." With respect to a broad contemporary concept of culture, it is certainly important to note, as Anne Critchfield states,
that "to a large extent, teaching German culture really means teaching the American infiltration of every aspect of German culture."10

At this point another important question arises: How can the open recognition and the transition from a seemingly monocultural to a multicultural society in Germany be related to students of German in this country within the framework of their 'American' understanding of such a concept?

An intercultural approach to language teaching then would focus on the presentation of important issues and distinctive features of various aspects of the target culture to our students in the classroom so that they become more and more aware of the theoretical framework and the practical issues of cultural awareness and competency while being actively engaged in their own language learning process.

For the presentation of diverse cultural contexts in which the target language is embedded, it is current technology that constitutes such an important fundamental factor in the language learning process.11 First its potential lies in its major advantage that it appeals to students as a mode of instruction. Second, it might function as a tool for playful discovery, because the students' are surrounded by it throughout their daily lives not only during their college career. Recent surveys have indicated, that students actually enjoy this mode of learning as they are already so familiar with it.12 "If cultural analysis is to be influenced by pedagogical aims, both of these need to be related to the learning process" in order to be implemented with the didactic methods in question.13

Additionally, the "me generation" of the seventies and eighties may finally merge the concepts of fashionable high tech entertainment with
high tech learning, for instance via the information super-highway, to become more knowledgable in intercultural issues.

Closely linked to the issue of intercultural competence is the dilemma that most teachers face: a large number of us are unable to take our language students to a German speaking country so that they experience the current day-to-day culture through the hands-on approach.

Which focal elements then should a valid definition of culture contain in order to be easily implemented in the classroom versus being experienced in its place of origin? Which underlying concept of culture is implied in this context? How do we best convey this culture-specific knowledge, "the concept of its aesthetic culture, its history, its religious, political, and social framework as well as its day-to-day culture[...]?"14

In 1968 Nelson Brooks already emphasized this necessity to include a broad variety of cultural elements that are introduced to the students when he states: "As long as we provide our students only with the facts of history, as long as we provide them only with a knowledge of the sophisticated structures of society, such as law and medicine, or examples and appreciative comments on artistic creations, such as poems, castles, or oil paintings, we have not yet provided them with an intimate view of where life's action is, where the individual and the social order come together, where self meets life.15 Corresponding to "the individual and social order", the dimension of a private and a public concept of human interaction and communication represents the notion of a broader, and not necessarily linear concept of culture. The term culture here is used in the sense of trying to purposefully integrate and replace the hierarchical differenciation between "high culture", "popular culture" and "deep culture".16 After all though, it is necessary to keep in mind that a
contemporary notion of culture simply includes and comprises a very wide spectrum: Culture can thus be everything but implies without doubt a "broad concept that embraces all aspects of the life of man, from folktales to carved whales."\(^{17}\) to quote Ned Seelye's now famous definition.

It needs to be mentioned as well, that the apparent connections between linguistic and ethnographic dimensions regarding human communication have been pointed out by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall\(^ {18}\) and the sociolinguist Dell Hymes.\(^ {19}\) As early as 1959 and 1962\(^ {20}\) did they emphasize the need for a further investigation of the circumstances and contexts within which any specific verbal communication can even function. As Hymes' statement on language reveals: "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless."\(^ {21}\)

It is clear that the teacher in his/her focus in the instruction should, - even at the beginning stage of language teaching- always remember and regard the textbook as "a cultural construct" as well, whose authors -consciously or not- present a different view of cultural assessments that coincide with their unique pedagogical beliefs and principles.\(^ {22}\)

Consequently one should make sure to examine and emphasize those aspects of the popular target culture that will truly aid the student in developing "transnational communicative competence" beyond the textbook level and readily deemphasize the high or "prestige" oriented, factually loaded culture that merely represents an elitist,- at times even questionable set of cultural images,- the use of which should not coincide with the declared goals of most language teachers.\(^ {23}\)
In this learning endeavor one must therefore involve "the affective and cognitive processes of the learner" in interpreting the selected information for the growth of the students' communicative awareness which should ultimately lead to a broader competence in cross cultural communication.24

It is obvious that no definite answer can be given to the question of what culture skills and understandings a language student should ideally possess. But there are certain aspects that need to be considered when one is ready to formulate -no less- ambitious teaching goals as they relate to the knowledge of culture: according to the discussion between various American Associations of Teachers (AAT's) as quoted by Genelle Morain:

"Students of a foreign language and culture should:
1.)- be able to say and do the culturally acceptable thing in ordinary social situations and in certain extraordinary situations;
2.)- know why these behaviors are important to members of the culture and how they fit harmoniously into the culture's system of values;
3.)- be able to interpret the visual elements of the culture (signs, symbols, objects, environmental factors, and nonverbal behavior) in the same way as do members of the culture;
4.)- be able to evaluate generalizations made by and about the members of the target culture. (This requires an awareness of stereotyping and of the distortion in perspective caused by prejudice. It also requires an awareness of the similarities and differences of world view between the student's own and the target culture.)
5.)- know how to keep growing in cultural understanding through interaction with native speakers, participation in cultural events, intelligent appraisal of the mass media, and enjoyment of literature and the arts. 25

The presentation of such cultural information could be very effectively integrated by a largely visual approach, if it is agreed upon,
that visual cultural elements such as representations encoded in genuine photographs and authentic audio as well as video materials of particular elements of the target culture for instance in form of TV commercials or video clips can partially and convincingly substitute for a true authentic experience and translate into an educating encounter of the other culture on various levels. After all these images are easily retrievable. Teachers and students alike have control over previewing and reviewing via video.

In this context modern technology with all its components appears to be the most sophisticated tool to present authentic culture and counterculture and its compounds within its typical environment, short of visiting the native country. Given this mode of instruction, the teacher is able to add yet another dimension in fostering the students language learning experience. That is the context in which the language is actually spoken, becomes multidimensional and extends much further than the geographical and ideological boundaries that our textbooks, largely designed for use within the traditional classroom setting, might intimate or suggest in the appropriate culture sections, or back- and front cover illustrations.

Thus, the integration of audio-visual media and technology is not only appropriate to reach our students, but is a necessity to bridge the gap between linguistic performance, communicative competence as well as cultural awareness. With the sophisticated use of media we are able to integrate and place the linguistic patterns that we teach within an appropriate context. Therefore it is important to stress the need of the metalinguistic dimension that plays such a crucial role in introducing and establishing this context for communication in the target language and
deals with the underlying cultural issues in which these functions are embedded.

It is a logical conclusion that the immanent gap between linguistic competence and performance which could be characteristic for actual language use and application in a cultural context is interesting when it is linked to the issue of combining and efficiently employing interactive technology in the classroom. For our purpose here the focus rests more specifically on interactive media with the emphasis on audio-visual technologies to improve current foreign language education.

The emphasis is clearly on the aspect of using interactive media as a meaningful vehicle for cultural instruction in the broad sense and meaning of the word mostly within the traditional classroom setting. It is here that the teacher plays a central role in organizing and introducing these audio-visual images and segments via video and a television set to raise the students awareness not only for the target language but rather and equally important for the target culture. Thus video materials can become vehicles for introducing and negotiating communicative interaction about cultural elements within the students own characteristic cultural environment, providing and producing a comparative element of distinction which is essential for cross-cultural understanding. Ultimately the basic objective should be to combine creative and innovative teaching methods with new video pedagogy, so long and wrongfully neglected, in order to achieve what has been outlined by various proponents of the proficiency movement. As a result the metalinguistic context within which language functions should ideally be an integrated part of language instruction, better "Language Education."
With the words of Claire Kramsch it is best to summarize that: "If we take the interactional dimensions of language seriously, as well as the type of learning we can best further in school settings, we should not only provide authentic and simulated natural contexts of acquisition, but use the unique literate environment of the classroom to reflect consciously and explicitly on interaction processes in various social contexts." She also points out that textbooks teach the written forms of the foreign language, but also notes, that "the conditions of verbal exchange impose rules other than those found in the written dialogues of the textbook." Thus her conclusion holds true when she states that: "Conversation unfolds in time and is accompanied by nonverbal communication and body language; it has its own rhythm, punctuated by turn takings and turn-yieldings, and by the intonation contours of each utterance. Students, used to the fragmented question-answer patterns of traditional classroom discourse, have to rediscover the orality conditions of their early conversations in their native language.

If we indeed insist on a proficiency based format of instruction, the underlying elements, i.e. culture and context are as important as the language itself, furthermore they necessitate and complement each other. Much has been done to provide teachers and illustrate textbooks with culturally authentic material but who really knows how to best integrate this material into the classroom? It is just here, that the newly emerged video pedagogy such as advocated by Rick Altman, Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin or the 1988 PICS Conference dealing with "a new Integration of Language and Culture" in Middlebury, Vermont, together with theoretical approaches such as discourse analysis and schema theory and practical guidelines for implementation become more
and more prevalent to namely accomplish raising cultural awareness as a tool for teaching cultural competency, -provided and most importantly, that the teacher acts as organizer and mediator within this context.\textsuperscript{36}

Thus the question as to why the teaching and raising of cultural awareness within a given group of students, regardless of their level of proficiency is such an important goal of our language instruction, can be best answered with its own words. It improves the student's receptive and productive abilities while it fosters their sensitivity for critical analysis, thus raising their intercultural awareness, a definite prerequisite for successful intercultural communication.\textsuperscript{37}

It is in this specific context, that video and mass media here ought to represent "all forms of contemporary culture....-the clothes people wear, the food they eat, their interests, preferences, personalities and residences, to name but a few."\textsuperscript{38}

Thus one can further progress toward the formulation of an immediate set of goals that should be reached via the methodical presentation of materials that are: "context-rich and experience based." \textsuperscript{39}

Genelle Morain developed a serial listing of cultural characteristics that are applicable and can be used with ease for a preliminary analysis of any video segment, film and/or videocassette presentation. These basic elements are quite essential and in themselves illustrate the necessity and validity of intercultural comparisons as they relate to those comprehensive goals by the AAT's that were quoted on page six. They include the following\textsuperscript{40} with an emphasis on the comparative aspect of the analysis\textsuperscript{41}: 
"1 Art: Examine the materials for artistic use of language as well as for artistic use of form and design. 42

2 Artifacts: What physical objects of the culture are visible (household appliances, automobiles, fashion accessories, etc.)? Are they used differently? Do their characteristics in any way reflect the culture of the country?

3 Attitudes: How are cultural attitudes shown in the material (i.e., the French concern with the liver; the American concern with getting fat)?

4 Background setting: Does the setting depict locations of geographic or historical interest?

5 Clothing: What conclusions can the viewer draw as to social level, occupation, and geographic region from the clothing worn in the film?

6 Gestures: Note examples of gestures, posture, and facial meaning which convey cultural meaning. Are there equivalents in American culture?

7 Humor: What type of humor is shown in the film? Is it slapstick or sophisticated? Is it possible to make generalizations about a "national humor"?

8 Interpersonal relationships: Note significant relationships between parent and child, between teenagers, between men and women, between members of one occupation interacting with members of another.

9 Onomatopoeia: Does the foreign culture use the same or different sounds to portray a yawn, a sneeze, a sob? How does the culture express pleasure in taste, fragrance, and sight?

10 Proverbs and sayings: Examine the script for examples of proverbs or proverbial similes and metaphors.

11 Social customs: Do the films present examples of table manners? of greetings? of techniques for such social amenities as lighting cigarettes, entering rooms, holding chairs, opening doors, and proposing toasts? What traditional customs are revealed (birthday and anniversary celebrations, holiday observations, etc.)?
12 Stereotypes: Do the materials illustrate stereotypes held by the foreign culture? How are doctors, athletes, clergymen, and in-laws characterized?" 43

Video presentations in the foreign language classroom have to be integrated in the process of language and culture learning on the basis of a clear pedagogical approach that yields results in the form of intercultural competence and transnational literacy. It is only in the context of certain guidelines as the ones that are illustrated here, that the results can be measured and compared on the basis of goal oriented curricula that recognize the need for such knowledge within the target language as a discipline.

NOTES


5Valters Nollendorfs, Out of Germanistik: Thoughts on the Shape of Things to Come. In: Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German. Volume 27, Number 1, Spring 1994, p.3.


7Anne L. Critchfield, A Primer for Teachers of German: Five Lessons for the New Millenium. In: Die Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German. Volume 27, Number 1, Spring 1994, p. 13. It is of course understood in this context that the mastery of the target language, including intercultural competence entails much more of a differentiated understanding of the complex differences and similarities in cross cultural communication than are necessary to communicate with a foreigner.


16"The term "culture" is, of course, used in many different senses. We shall distinguish (1) high culture, (2) popular culture, and (3) deep culture. While clear distinctions cannot always be made between high culture (Joseph Brodsky and Pierre Boulez) and popular culture (Hildegard Knef and Julio Iglesias), the former is generally more highly elaborated and requires a certain apprenticeship to be fully appreciated. Both aspects are crucial to our teaching, however, for both are in a sense concrete realizations of deep culture. Deep culture is "culture" in the sociological and anthropological sense: more a set of organizing principles that underlie behavior and thought than a collection of curious practices that contrast with our own. Ultimately, we would like to communicate some of these principles to our students." Zitiert nach: Angela Moorjani, Thomas T. Fied, "Semiotic and Sociolinguistic Paths to Understanding Culture," In: *Toward A New Integration Of Language And Culture*, Northeast Conference On The Teaching Of Foreign Languages: Middlebury, VT 1988, 25-45, 27.

17H. Ned Seelye, *Teaching Culture-Strategies for Intercultural Communication*. (1984; Lincolnwood: NTE, 1991), 26. He adds to this quasi definition: "Intercultural communication teachers have not necessarily been able to define culture where others have not; we have finally been content to shrug our shoulders and admit that it doesn't really matter how it is defined as long as the definition is broad. The important thing is that intercultural communication involves many characteristics not often present in our classes. Culture is seen to involve patterns of everyday life that enable individuals to relate to their place under the sun." ibid. 26.

Dell Heymes, see footnotes 4-6 in Claire Kramsch, "Interaction in the Classroom: Learning to Negotiate Roles and Meaning," In: Die Unterrichtspraxis, (vol. 16) Fall 1983, 175-190, p.188.


32 Claire Kramsch, Culture and Constructs: Communicating Attitudes and Values in the


34 Susan Stempleski, Barry Tomalin, Video in Action-Recipes for Using Video in

35 Alan J. Singerman (Ed.), Toward A New Integration Of Language And Culture,
(Middlebury, Vt.: Northeast Conference On The Teaching Of Foreign Languages, 1988). See also
the printed contributions in IALL (Journal of the International Association of Learning
Laboratories), Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 1990.

36 See the special feature edition on Video in the Classroom, The IALL Journal of Language
Learning Technologies, Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 1990. Especially Rick Altman's article:
"Toward A New Video Pedagogy: The Role of Schema Theory and Discourse Analysis, ibid. p.9-16,
where he makes a foray into the realms of schema theory and discourse analysis as theoretical
foundations for work with video in language teaching, p. 7.

37 See Figure 3.3. The Mirror of Culture. In: Louise Damen, Culture Learning: The Fifth
Dimension in The Language Classroom. Reading, Ma.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company,
1987.

38 Jean Pierre Berwald, "Mass Media and Authentic Documents: Language in Cultural
Context," In: Toward A New Integration Of Language And Culture, Northeast Conference On The
Teaching Of Foreign Languages: Middlebury, VT 1988, p. 90.

For further reference see also those 'culture universals' which are discussed an
Proficiency-Oriented Instruction, Boston: Heinle&Heinle, 1986 p. 366 ff..

39 Genelle Morain, The Role Of Culture In Foreign Language Education," ERIC

40 Quoted in: Jean Pierre Berwald, "Mass Media and Authentic Documents: Language in
Cultural Context," In: Toward A New Integration Of Language And Culture, Northeast Conference

41 Quoted in: Jean Pierre Berwald, "Mass Media and Authentic Documents: Language in
Cultural Context," In: Toward A New Integration Of Language And Culture, Northeast Conference

42 These guidelines are quoted in: Jean-Pierre Berwald, "Mass Media and Authentic
Documents: Language in Cultural Context," Toward a New Integration of Language and Culture
93/94.

43 Genelle Morain, quoted in: Jean-Pierre Berwald, "Mass Media and Authentic
Documents: Language in Cultural Context," Toward a New Integration of Language and Culture