

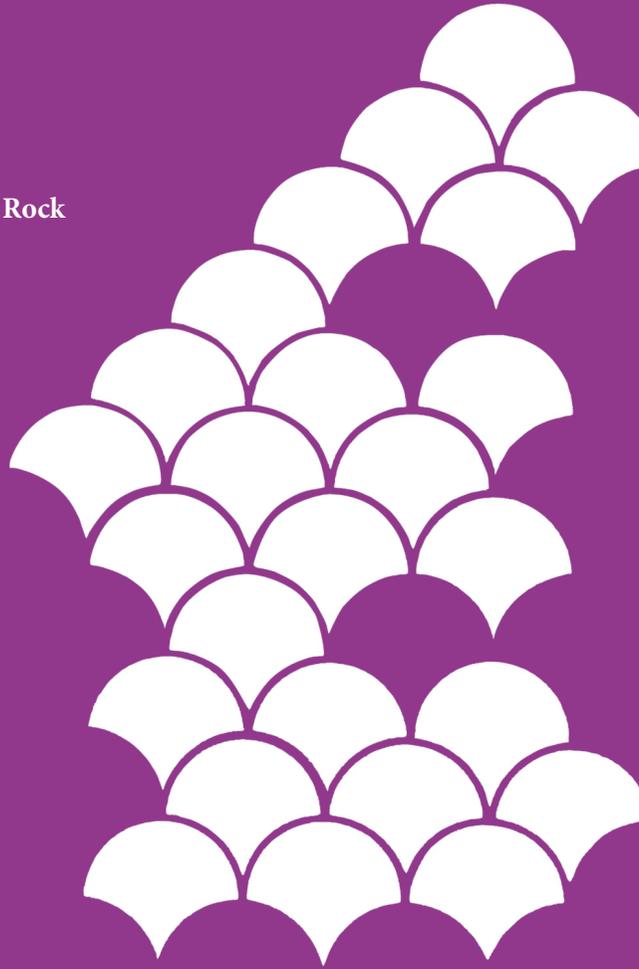
# Unlock the Gateway to Communication

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Brigid Burke  
Teresa Bell



2014 Report of the  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



# **Unlock the Gateway to Communication**

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**Selected Papers from the 2014  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of  
Foreign Languages**

**Stephanie Dhonau, Editor**  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

**2014 Report of the  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

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## **Review and Acceptance Procedures Central States Conference *Report***

The Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages *Report* is a refereed volume of selected papers based on the theme and program of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Abstracts for sessions are first submitted to the Program Chair, who then selects sessions that will be presented at the annual conference. Once the sessions have been selected, presenters are contacted by the editor of the *Report* and invited to submit a manuscript for possible publication in that volume. Copies of the publication guidelines are sent to conference presenters. All submissions are read and evaluated by the editor and four other members of the Editorial Board. Reviewers are asked to recommend that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published. When all of the reviewers' ratings are received, the editor makes all final publishing decisions.

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### **2014 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages *Report* Editorial Board**

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## Preface

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### Unlock the Gateway to Communication

The 2014 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages took place in St. Louis, Missouri with the cooperation of the Foreign Language Association of Missouri. The 2014 conference focused on ways in which foreign language teachers, “unlock” or help to open up lines of communication between their students and people who speak a language other than the native language of their students. Foreign language teachers do so not only by helping students to learn how to express themselves through oral and written communication, but also through cultural knowledge of the target culture. For students to become globally competent citizens, they need to know not only how to communicate through oral and written communication; they must also understand the nuances of a culture. An understanding of the products, practices, and perspectives of a culture are equally important to function in a given culture.

The 2014 Keynote speaker was Dr. Brandon Wiley, the Executive Director of the International Studies Schools Network for the Asia Society. Dr. Wiley energized the attendees by speaking about teaching for global competency and the critical role that foreign language instruction plays in creating globally competent citizens. Dr. Wiley followed up his keynote address with a session entitled “Six School-Wide Strategies to Globalize Your School.”

The CSCTFL 2014 conference featured 28 workshops and more than 170 sessions. Nine of the 17 central states were represented by “Best of...” sessions. Several presenters from the 2013 conference returned to re-present their session as an “All-Star.” The sessions and workshop topics represented at the 2014 conference included the connection to Common Core in the foreign language classroom, the use of technology, teaching for communicative competency, lesson planning, assessment, the integration of culture in the curriculum, and the use of literature, art, music, and film in language classes.

The authors who submitted articles for the 2014 CSCTFL *Report* addressed the 2014 conference theme, “Unlock the Gateway to Communication.” The articles in the 2014 *Report* pertain to developing communicative competency and cultural competency. By focusing on developing communicative competency and cultural competency, foreign language teachers are able to shape their students into citizens who will be globally competent and be able to communicate and interact effectively in a global society. The authors explain how to achieve these goals through the use of technology in teaching, studying abroad, the use of target language in the classroom, and the role of a textbook in the classroom while promoting communication.

Julie Jezuit  
2014 CSCTFL Program Chair



# Unlock the Gateway to Communication

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**Stephanie Dhonau**

University of Arkansas at Little Rock

This year's volume of the *Central States Report* offers a variety of articles focusing on topics of current interest to colleagues in K-16 that focus on various ways and means that researchers and practitioners attempt to "Unlock the Gateway to Communication". The articles in this year's *Report* offer a variety of reviews of contemporary literature and research-based suggestions for improving not only communication, but also intercultural competence and technological use in instruction.

## **Intercultural Experiences to Unlock the Gateway to Communication**

In the first section of the volume, three articles share the common theme of interculturality in which intercultural competence and the corresponding challenges of cross cultural encounters are a major focus.

In the first article, Moeller and Nugent explore the literature on both intercultural competence and intercultural communication competence, looking to the literature to provide a thoughtful discussion of how intercultural competence and intercultural communication competence are defined. Furthermore, they offer some highly applicable teaching strategies and activities for developing intercultural communicative competence in the classroom.

Looking at intercultural competence through a different lens in the second article, Koubek discusses the challenges that college-level ESL learners encounter when trying to communicate on a US campus, discussing the frustrations and anxiety that these second language learners exhibit when trying to communicate and fit into the English-speaking college environment. Her descriptive statistics results are based on a survey of international students and offer some ideas for easing the intercultural and cross cultural unease these learners report.

In a third article within this section, Shaver and Grandouiller also focus on intercultural competence, discussing the value of exploring cultural practices in the US while at the same time making adjustments for courses taught abroad where students can access culturally-relevant interactions on a daily basis. They offer that preparing learners for intercultural interaction to function and participate in the target society stateside is as important as knowing and using the target language. Study abroad offers the opportunity for first hand reflection and activities that can help to promote intercultural competence.

## **Technological Considerations to Unlock the Gateway to Communication**

In the next section, two articles focus on how technology may enhance learner experiences and provide another gateway to communication with the stipulation that thoughtful application of technology in instruction is key to successful use.

In Gascoigne and Parnell's article on hybrid language instruction, the authors review the literature on whether student learning outcomes vary whether in face-to-face or online instruction, finding little significant difference between the two environments. In the article they investigate student satisfaction of first year French students and French majors and minors in hybrid language courses. At a time when more K-16 institutions are being faced with demands for more online instruction, this article discusses some of the major considerations one university has addressed before engaging full-scale online instruction.

The second article involving how technology can unlock communication focuses on the ever increasing challenge educators have evaluating Web 2.0 technology use in instruction. McKeeman and Oviedo attend to the issue of evaluating tools for Web 2.0 tool effectiveness using a rubric to analyze and compare functionality, student engagement, and overall quality that readers may find useful for evaluating new tools for world language instruction as they are released.

### **Standards-Driven Observations to Unlock the Gateway to Communication**

Three articles share a common focus on furthering learner communication in classroom situations and beyond as they relate to unlocking communication for world language learners in the final section of this year's *Report*.

Ceo-DiFrancesco explored thirty typical beginning level Spanish textbooks to determine if these textbooks offer more creative language tasks (CLT) than traditional grammar-based, mechanical tasks in light of contemporary interest in language proficiency and communication skills invoked by the National Standards. The author finds that there appears to be a disconnect between theory and practice, and that there still remains an overwhelming number of traditional, mechanical grammar-focused activities in many of these textbooks. She posits that programs that rely heavily on current textbooks for course and syllabus design may not meet the needs of students eager for opportunities to practice communication skills.

In Burke's paper, the author studies the attitudes of high school students who are enrolled in Spanish instruction after several of their teachers have had an experiential professional development course on communicative language teaching methods. The results of observations and artifacts, questionnaires, and the researcher's notes were compared and contrasted, finding that students do like using the target language and gained confidence in speaking when their teachers use communicative language teaching methods in the classroom.

Finally, Bell addresses the Communities standards as one of the least researched of the 5Cs. To that end, she reports on a research study conducted with learners of German who studied abroad in a five-week program, looking at their reported use of target language resources they accessed for personal enjoyment and enrichment while abroad. The author reports that the learners in this study did access a variety of resources while abroad, demonstrating some evidence of meeting the Communities standard from this experience.





# 1

## **Building intercultural competence in the language classroom**

**Aleidine J. Moeller**

**Kristen Nugent**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### **Abstract**

This article reviews and summarizes the literature on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in order to better understand how these notions can impact the cultural component of a foreign language curriculum. Building on various models of intercultural communicative competence, examples of cultural tasks that promote intercultural communicative competence and represent best practices in language teaching and learning are presented and illustrated for classroom integration.

### **Introduction**

The linking of language and culture in the foreign language classroom has been the focus of much scholarly inquiry (Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1989; Liddicoat, 2002, Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). With increased globalization, migration and immigration there has been a growing recognition for the need for an intercultural focus in language education. While language proficiency lies at the “heart of language studies” (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 2006, p. 3), it is no longer the only aim of language teaching and learning. The Standards (2006) define language goals in terms of the 5 C’s (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) designed to guide learners toward becoming viable contributors and participants in a linguistically and culturally diverse society.

## 2 *Unlock the Gateway to Communication*

According to the Standards (2006), culturally appropriate interaction occurs when two individuals engage in a reciprocal conversation based on mutual understanding and an attitude of openness. When language educators plan a standards based curriculum, it becomes clear that language and culture are inextricably linked. Moloney and Harbon (2010) note that within the context of language classrooms intercultural practice “asks students to think and act appropriately within a growing knowledge of the culture within language (p. 281)”. This requires instructional planning that provides time and space for cultural exploration and discovery. What kinds of classroom tasks can successfully move students toward intercultural competence?

Research on intercultural competence underscores the importance of preparing students to engage and collaborate in a global society by discovering appropriate ways to interact with people from other cultures (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2012). *An intercultural competent speaker of a FL possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values and knowledge about a culture.* An intercultural competent (ICC) speaker turns intercultural encounters into intercultural relationships—someone determined to understand, to gain an inside view of the other person’s culture while also contributing to the other person’s understanding of his/her own culture from an insider’s point of view (Byram, 1997).

When language skills and intercultural competency become linked in a language classroom, students become optimally prepared for participation in a global world. This article reviews and summarizes the literature on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in order to better understand how these notions can impact the cultural component of a foreign language curriculum. Building on various models of intercultural communicative competence, examples of cultural tasks that promote intercultural communicative competence and represent best practices in language teaching and learning will be presented and illustrated for classroom integration.

### **What is Intercultural Competence?**

Defining intercultural competence is a complex task. At the heart of intercultural competence is the preparation of individuals to interact appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds (Sinicrope et al., 2012). As a result, understanding culture becomes an integral component of intercultural competence. Nieto’s (1999) definition of culture as, “...the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people. . .” (p.48) makes it difficult to identify which aspects of a given culture should be included in classroom instruction. Furstenberg (2010b) further explains that, “...culture is a highly complex, elusive, multilayered notion that encompasses many different and overlapping areas and that inherently defies easy categorization and classification” (p. 329). An additional complicated dimension of intercultural competence relates to the goal of those who are preparing individuals for intercultural relationships as numerous contexts and multiple models of intercultural competence exist that include international business, study-abroad, international schools, medical careers, living abroad, and K-16 education (Sinicrope et al., 2012). Finally, the fast-paced transformation of

society as a result of science, technology, and globalization, forces intercultural objectives to continuously evolve in order to reflect the needs of modern citizens and communities (Stewart, 2007). It is no wonder that a precise definition of intercultural competence does not exist in the literature.

Although there is no consensus on a precise definition for intercultural competence, there are common themes that emerge from the research literature.

#### *Self-Awareness and Identity Transformation*

Various models of intercultural competence attend to different types of self-awareness and internal transformation as necessary initial components in the process of becoming interculturally competent. Bennett's (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)* charts the internal evolution from "ethnocentrism" to "ethnorelativism" within the context of intercultural interactions. In order to successfully navigate intercultural situations, Bennett (2004) posits that a person's worldview must shift from *avoiding cultural difference* to *seeking cultural difference*. Gudykunst's (1993) *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Model* explains that those hoping to adjust to new cultural situations must learn to "successfully manage their anxiety in new cultural environments" (Gudykunst, 1998, p. 232). Gudykunst (1993) makes clear that when anxiety about interacting in intercultural situations is too high, sojourners are less likely to accurately interpret the hosts' responses. On the other hand, when anxiety is too low, visitors to other countries engage in conversation believing that they completely understand everything about the foreign culture, and therefore do not remain open to belief changes as a result of what is learned during cross-cultural interactions. This model is often used in training sessions for those planning to live abroad. The training sessions incorporate discussion and role-play so that attendees learn to manage their anxiety in order to effectively communicate with those from other cultures. In Byram's (1997) *Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence*, the first factor an individual must address is *attitude*. Byram (1997) uses such words as openness and curiosity to explain his conviction that an individual must remain open to learning about new beliefs, values, and worldviews in order to participate in *relationships of equality*. Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) offer a practical suggestion for getting students to consider their own perspectives by collectively recording their preconceived ideas in relation to the foreign culture before the process of discovery begins. This allows the learners to record their perceptions before the unit of study so that they have a reference for comparison once the process is complete.

In addition to the aforementioned models of intercultural competence, scholars stress the importance of self-awareness and internal transformation in the pursuit of intercultural competence (Furstenberg, 2010a; Green, 1997; Kramsch, 2004). For example, when Deardorff (2006) set out to solicit definitions of intercultural competence from university administrators and intercultural scholars, she discovered that both groups privileged the transformation of attitude, including self-awareness and openness to new values and beliefs, as a vital first step to becoming interculturally competent. Regarding the teaching of

foreign languages to secondary school students, Chappelle (2010) emphasizes the significance of exploring identity with Americans who are studying other cultures, and specifically highlights the fact that many students in the United States enter foreign language courses with an unwillingness to consider another point of view as well as a lack of awareness of their own culture. This dilemma is discussed further by Fonseca-Greber (2010), who explains that the main obstacle in a language teacher's quest toward intercultural competency in the foreign language classroom is that few Americans value seeing the world from the perspective of other. Consequently, teachers must be prepared to spend some time guiding students to reflect on their preconceived ideas and perceptions before entering into studies of other cultures in the classroom. The possibility of self-awareness and identity transformation will only exist once students are given the opportunity to recognize where they begin the journey.

<b>Bennet's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)</b>	<b>Gudykunst's (1993) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Model (AUM)</b>	<b>Byram's (1997) Multidimensional Model of Intercultural Competence</b>	<b>Deardorff's (2006) Process Model of Intercultural Competence</b>
Charts internal evolution from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism	Focuses on self-awareness as the key component in building bridges to other cultures	Addresses the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to interact successfully in intercultural situations	Creates a continuous process of working on attitudes, knowledge, internal outcomes, and external outcomes related to intercultural competence

**Table 1.** Summary of the four major theories and factors that contribute to the development of intercultural competence

#### *Student as Inquirer*

When an intercultural classroom environment is described, student learning is frequently depicted as learner-centered, engaging, interactive, participatory, and cooperative (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001; Moore, 2006; *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*, 1993). Much of the inquiry into intercultural competence defines the student as a researcher, or discoverer of knowledge, viewing the learner much like an anthropologist who explores and investigates a topic both in and outside of the classroom (Furstenberg, 2010a; Kearney, 2010; Lee, 1998; Moore, 2006). Furthermore, 21<sup>st</sup> century foreign language teachers are no longer expected to transmit detailed information about the culture being studied to learners, rather the teacher assumes the role of facilitator as she guides the learning process in order to actively involve learners as they explore, discover, analyze, and evaluate

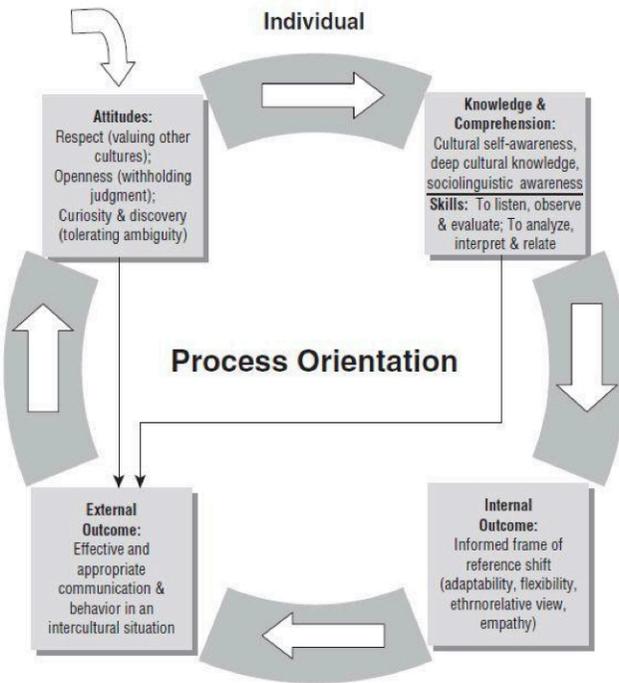
meaningful information through primary and authentic texts, audio, video, and media (Byram et al., 2002). In such a learning environment, knowledge is shared, new values and opinions are considered, and students take ownership of their own learning.

Based on the standards found in the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001), Byram et al. (2002) emphasize the fact that since culture is an ever-changing force, foreign language teachers must be prepared to create an environment of curiosity and inquiry in order to guide learners toward intercultural competence. The authors recommend creating an open atmosphere in the classroom and offer an example that allows learners to compare travel guides between the native culture and the target culture. In this situation, the teacher's job is not to provide specific questions and answers in relation to the artifact, rather to pose some open-ended questions to guide learners toward independent discovery of differing worldviews based on common textual material. This places the learner in the role of active gatherer of knowledge and information, thereby minimizing judgment about the culture. Furstenberg's (2010a) approach to intercultural competence in the French classroom, dubbed *Cultura*, serves as a model for involving university students first hand in exchanging ideas and opinions about current events and topics of interest through online forums. Using their native language, American and French students participate in a learning process that guides students toward considering other perspectives. Furstenberg (2010a) reports that her approach does not simply present facts about the other culture, but rather places the French and American students in the role of describing their own culture, beliefs and traditions and "By virtue of engaging learners in a dynamic process of inquiry, discovery, exploration, and interpretation, together with learners from another culture, such a project invariably favors a collective, constructivist approach to learning" (p. 56). Her university students learn by questioning the French students about their cultural practices and products while discovering ways to clarify how American perspectives influence the actions and interactions in their native culture.

### *Process*

One of the most difficult components of preparing students for intercultural competence is assessing and measuring this learning process. Since all students enter the classroom with differing viewpoints and worldviews, it becomes almost impossible to simply expect students to grow interculturally at the same rate. As a result, many researchers of intercultural competence describe the classroom experience as a process (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Moloney & Harbon, 2010). Byram (1997) describes the intercultural learning process as linear. Learners enter the process from different points based on backgrounds, life experiences, and perspectives, and move at different speeds (Byram, 1997). There is no predefined final goal for the students in the classroom, rather each experience becomes its own goal in interculturality (Byram, 1997). Deardorff (2006) explains further the importance of a continuous process toward intercultural competence with her *Process Model of Intercultural Competence*. According to Deardorff (2006),

the journey is never ending as the learner continues to learn, change, evolve, and become transformed with time. Her process orientation model is circular and uses arrows to indicate intersections and movement of the individual between attitudes, knowledge and comprehension, internal outcomes, and external outcomes related to intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006). Deardorff's (2006) model is open and allows individuals to enter at any point and move freely between categories, sometimes moving ahead, and at other times returning to delve deeper into a concept previously encountered.



**Figure 1.** Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2006)

The focus on process in the realm of intercultural competence also informs the types of assessments necessary to record learning and growth. Scarino (2010) proposes an open assessment process that allows student and teacher to work together in documenting learning growth. Portfolios work as effective forms of process-oriented assessments by affording each student the opportunity to interpret meaning, consider judgments, and defend language/culture choices on an individual basis (Scarino, 2010). Schulz (2007) confirms the belief that portfolios are the most effective way to record the process of becoming interculturally competent in the foreign language classroom. She includes in her ideal portfolio space and time for critical reflection, self-evaluation, feedback from peers and the teacher, discussion time, and collaboration (Schulz, 2007). Her final suggestions for teachers planning to use this system for assessing cultural competency include

allowing the learners the time to record new insights, to begin the process in English and transition to using the target language, and to allow adequate time to consider cultural situations in class (Schulz, 2007).

The diversity of definitions and descriptions of intercultural competence reflects the multiple situations in which American citizens are guided toward cross-cultural understandings. Intercultural competence is becoming an integral component as American citizens interact more frequently with those from other countries. Additionally, the notion of preparing globally competent students who understand the importance of the interconnectedness of our modern world is beginning to infiltrate discussions in K-12 education. When Byram (1997) presents the components of intercultural competence, he explains that it involves either interacting with the “other” while continuing to use one’s native language or interpreting documents that have been translated into one’s native language from another culture/language. In this case, intercultural competence does not require the participant to understand or speak a foreign language. Intercultural communicative competence, however, incorporates the ideas of self-awareness, inquiry, and process as outlined above, but moreover, introduces the notion of communicating in a foreign language as integral to the intercultural situation.

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Byram (1997) depicts someone who gains skills in intercultural communicative competence as an individual who is successful in: building relationships while speaking the foreign language of the other participant; negotiating how to effectively communicate so that both individuals’ communicative needs are addressed; mediating conversations between those of diverse cultural backgrounds; and continuing to acquire communicative skills in foreign languages not yet studied. This final characteristic stresses that when an effective intercultural communicator learns to interact with those from a specific culture, a foundation of language and culture learning has been built, and that individual is more likely to continue to gather linguistic information from other cultures in order to broaden her spectrum of intercultural encounters. Gaining intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is about more than simple exchanges, rather it centers on building relationships and engaging in communication even when the participants involved do not share the same worldview (Byram, 1997). What are the objectives of intercultural communicative competence in the context of the foreign language classroom?

In Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), foreign language teachers are asked to guide learners through the process of acquiring competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to intercultural competence while using a foreign language. Teachers must lead students through activities in which attitudes about the “other” are considered, and ideally transform the learner. The goal for the students is to start by questioning their preconceived ideas before entering into a process of discovery about the “other” with the intent of becoming more willing to seek out and engage with otherness in order to ultimately experience relationships of reciprocity (Byram, 1997). As students continue to engage in analysis

of other cultures, certain knowledge must be acquired. It is imperative that the foreign language educator allows time to explore the national identity of the home culture and the target culture in relation to history, geography, and social institutions (Byram, 1997). Once learners have taken time to discover the similarities and differences between their culture and that of the target culture, the teacher must craft activities that will prepare students to build relationships with people of diverse backgrounds and languages (Byram, 1997). Next, foreign language students must be provided the time and the space to develop skills in interpreting and relating. When students begin to identify ethnocentric perspectives and misunderstandings related to cross-cultural situations, they become able to understand and then explain the origins of conflict and mediate situations appropriately in order to avoid misinterpretations (Byram, 1997). Finally, skills in discovery and interaction allow intercultural speakers to identify similarities and differences between home cultures and foreign cultures resulting in successful communication and the establishment of meaningful relationships (Byram, 1997). A successful intercultural speaker seeks out opportunities to meet individuals from diverse cultures in order to share information through communication in a foreign language.

Based on the information provided in Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), foreign language teachers must reconsider methods for teaching language and culture in the classroom if the goal is to create true interculturally competent speakers of the language. Traditional methods for teaching foreign languages emphasized the importance of students practicing language structures, pronunciation and vocabulary in order to become native like speakers. van Ek (as cited in Byram, 1997) explains that putting the focus on the creation of native speakers actually sets most students up for failure because they are asked to detach from their own culture while accepting the fact that the native speaker holds the power in the interaction. This inhibits growth toward intercultural competence, as the learner is not given equal opportunity to bring his/her beliefs into the conversation. Rather than pushing students toward using a foreign language like a native speaker, language teachers should guide students toward using language that structures new discoveries about the "other" and about themselves (Byram, 1997). The focus shifts from preparing students to communicate without error in order to survive a foreign culture to communicating openly in order to build relationships so that they can thrive in a foreign culture. When the teaching of intercultural communicative competence includes models of reciprocal relationships in which students play the role of a "social actor", students experience the mutual discovery of another language and culture, and language classrooms become places where students and teachers consider questions of values and morals, which can ultimately promote the notion of democracy (Byram, 2003).

The activities that follow exemplify best practices in intercultural communicative competence that build on the theories delineated in this paper. These learning tasks serve as exemplars and are designed to assist teachers in building interculturality among language learners within the context of the foreign language classroom.

## ICC Activities for the Foreign Language Classroom

### Example 1: *Cultura* online blog exchange

The Internet has made it considerably easier for foreign language teachers to create an environment in which meaningful interactions between American students and students of the target culture can take place. In Furstenberg's (2010a) *Cultura* program, American students studying French engage in online discussions with French students learning English by comparing and analyzing texts of a similar nature derived from both cultures. During the online experience, students from two different cultures are expected to formulate questions for each other in order to fulfill the objective of becoming more open to the other's viewpoint during the perspective exchanging process. All participants write in their native language, but read in the target language, and sessions in the classroom take place entirely in the target language as an extension of what is discovered online. The students involved compare materials such as surveys, films, websites, literature, images, and video. For example, the teacher may ask the students to compare the websites for the two schools involved in the web-based exchange. Based on these website observations, students begin a process of inquiry leading to mutual cultural discovery of the differences and similarities between the two schools. Students from both cultures not only obtain vital information about the foreign culture as a result of having their questions answered, but more importantly are provided the opportunity to present their perspective thus, becoming more aware of their own culture in the process.

Furstenberg (2010a) describes her program as a process of negotiation, in which students work together to make observations, craft hypotheses, and search for patterns, while simultaneously confronting and pondering their own attitudes, beliefs, and values. Online activities, like the one employed by Furstenberg (2010a), guide students toward becoming more open to other perspectives while simultaneously creating the opportunity for students to inquire further into explanations of their own cultural beliefs and actions. Through this never-ending journey of inquiry, students encounter many of the themes weaved throughout intercultural competence such as, self-awareness, student as researcher, and the importance of process. This type of classroom environment creates possibilities for attitude transformation, as well as the acquisition of knowledge of other cultural norms, institutions, and beliefs. Students obtain real-life skills in interacting with others via the online forum. This type of exercise also increases students' acquisition of new vocabulary and grammar structures in the target language through the reading of online material and blog posts from the foreign students.

### Example 2: Attitude exploration with OSEE tool

It is vital for students to consider their preconceived ideas and attitudes before entering into the intercultural competence process. The OSEE tool (Deardorff/Deardorff, 2000) was created in order to help learners analyze their attitudes toward others at the beginning of the intercultural process. OSEE stands for:

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- O: Observe what is happening
- S: State objectively what is happening
- E: Explore different explanations for what is happening
- E: Evaluate which explanation is the most likely one

In the foreign language classroom, the teacher may choose to present a film clip on a topic of interest related to the curriculum. For example, a Spanish teacher locates a video clip representing a *Quinceañera*. The teacher begins by presenting the video with the sound off so that students are solely engaged by the images, actions, and interactions thereby providing an opportunity for students to focus completely on what they see during the observation.

During the viewing, the teacher asks the learners to address the letter **O** by simply asking them to **Observe** the actions and interactions seen on screen. After viewing, students address the letter **S** by **Stating** or listing the observable actions without describing the situation as desirable or undesirable. The next step begins with the letter **E** which guides classmates to work in small groups **Exploring** the explanations embedded in the actions and interactions of the target culture. This level of **OSEE** requires students to have sufficient background knowledge of the culture in question, or more specifically the cultural situation being observed (Deardorff, 2011). This may also be an appropriate time to allow students to work together as anthropologists engaging in research and investigation as they explore the cultural viewpoints driving the actions in the film. In the final step of **OSEE**, the learners practice **E** by **Evaluating** the possible explanations in order to choose the most appropriate rationale for the behavior seen in the film clip. This stage is the most difficult due to the fact that human interaction does not follow preconceived rules therefore, many factors must be considered in order to appropriately assess the situation in question. Students may need to continue to collect information about the foreign culture in order to successfully complete the evaluation level of **OSEE** (Deardorff, 2011).

Deardorff (2011) explains that when students reach the final stage of **OSEE**, they are prepared to enter into the conversation. The teacher may choose to present the video a second time with the sound on to allow the learners to hear the target language. In response to the video, teachers may create opportunities for practicing the target language while asking students to refer back to the cultural guidelines learned during the investigation (**OSEE**) process. By promoting communicative activities such as conversations, dialogues, role-plays, skits, and scenarios, the teacher creates an environment in which the concepts of intercultural communicative competence can be practiced. This exploration activity creates space for learners to consider their preconceived ideas about people from other cultures so that negative beliefs are transformed during exercises focusing on objective observation, research, and evaluation.

### Example 3: Documenting transformation collectively

It is important to provide evidence of growth to students so that they can see the benefits of the intercultural process. One simple way to do this is to gather students together around a large piece of paper on the first day of a new cultural unit of study, and ask students to share words and ideas that quickly come to mind in relation to

the topic (Byram et al., 2002). For example, a German classroom may be starting a unit on Berlin. As students come up with vocabulary describing their views of Berliners, the teacher records their initial perceptions on paper to use as a reference point throughout the unit of study. During the unit on Berlin, the teacher locates meaningful statistical data regarding the age, race, and religion of citizens in Berlin, as well as information related to careers, housing, and past times. Students take time to analyze graphs, surveys, newspaper articles, websites, and advertisements in order to discover basic information about the citizens living in Berlin. The teacher's role is not to prepare questions and answers related to the texts explored, rather the teacher encourages the students to freely discover contrasts and connections between the citizens of their city and the citizens of Berlin. At the end of the Berlin unit, students reconvene around the original piece of paper, which documented their preconceived ideas, and converse about the changes that have taken place in their attitudes and beliefs. A new piece of paper is filled with discoveries based on factual information researched in the classroom and online during the unit of study. Tech-savvy teachers can alter this activity slightly by preparing a before-and-after template on [padlet.com](http://padlet.com) or [popplet.com](http://popplet.com). Students can record their perceptions online and have access to these documents throughout the duration of the unit.

In relation to Byram's (1997) *Model of ICC*, this activity provides time for learners to record and consider their preconceived attitudes toward citizens of another culture. The goal of the activity is to open students' eyes to the fact that many of their perceptions are not based on factual information. As the teacher provides adequate time for gaining knowledge about the target culture while encouraging students to make meaningful connections between the home and target culture, learners begin to experience the process of identity transformation as informed perceptions of German culture replace incorrect preconceived ideas. This activity provides many opportunities for students to gain skills in comparing and contrasting two distinct cultures.

#### Example 4: Values in proverbs

Through the study of proverbs, students can begin to uncover the cultural values expressed in language (Hiller, 2010). Since proverbs are often inaccessible to outsiders because typically they are handed down in families from one generation to the next, a unit of study on proverbs would provide a way to explore the attitudes of those from another culture. A teacher in a French classroom begins a unit on proverbs by asking students, "What is a proverb?" and "Did you know that many proverbs originated in France?" in order to evaluate learners' background knowledge on the subject.

Once students have had time to share their prior knowledge, the teacher prepares students to complete a jigsaw learning task by researching basic information about proverbs. Learners are placed in home groups consisting of four individuals. Each individual selects one topic upon which s/he becomes an expert. Students choose one of the following topics to research:

- Group 1: What are proverbs? What are some original sources of proverbs?
- Group 2: Who generally uses proverbs while speaking?
- Group 3: How do proverbs reflect cultural values? Give examples.
- Group 4: Why are many French and English proverbs similar?

Once students have selected the topic of their choice they move to their respective expert groups and begin to collect information, summarize and share the most important findings. Students in the expert group discuss and record the newly acquired information and return to their home groups where each member presents information about his/her topic until all four topics have been summarized. Each group prepares a poster synthesizing the information gleaned from this project and present the results.

The follow-up activity focuses on the exploration of French proverbs through an envelope activity. In pairs, learners work together to match five French proverbs with their English equivalent. This provides an opportunity to see that numerous proverbs used in American culture have their origins in the French culture. In addition, this task encourages students to use their knowledge of French vocabulary and grammar to extrapolate the appropriate English equivalent. Some possible proverbs for inclusion are:

- *Vouloir, c'est pouvoir.* [Where there's a will, there's a way.]
- *Tout est bien qui finit bien.* [All's well that end's well.]
- *Tout ce qui brille n'est pas or.* [All that glitters isn't gold.]
- *Paris ne s'est pas fait en un jour.* [Rome wasn't built in a day.]
- *On ne peut pas avoir le beurre et l'argent du beurre.* [You can't have your cake and eat it too.]

As the class takes time to discuss the appropriate responses, the teacher can ask students to consider the values shared by both cultures as well as how the specific vocabulary and language used in the proverbs demonstrate different perspectives and viewpoints. This exercise serves the dual purpose of engaging learners in considering their own linguistic and cultural background alongside that of the target culture, a vital component of intercultural communicative competence (Chappelle, 2010).

Students are then asked to imagine themselves living with a family in France as an exchange student. The scenario goes as follows: To welcome you, the host family hosts a dinner party. While engaging in conversation at the party, a particular phrase is used that makes little sense to you as an American. You ask for clarification and discover that it is a proverb, but find it extremely difficult to grasp the meaning of the phrase. You search the Internet for the meaning behind the proverb and how it reflects and relates to French culture. Once the scenario has been explained carefully, the teacher hands out a different French proverb to each student, or to small groups of students, and asks them to engage in research related to the proverb. When finished, the students share their discoveries with the entire class so that French values can be uncovered, documented, and considered.

As a culminating activity, teachers ask students to use L2 to create unique proverbs that are relevant to their lives. Each student is asked to write an original proverb in the target language that relates to their life. This provides an opportunity for students to be creative and craft something meaningful, thus making the learning experience more powerful. Once students feel confident about their written proverb, their assignment is to create an avatar using voki.com. This free Web 2.0 tool allows students the opportunity to create a character who speaks the target language. Voki.

com is equipped to present short speeches in most of the foreign languages taught in American school systems. On the final day of this lesson, the students participate in a gallery walk equipped with computers and head phones to watch and listen to the Voki presentations. Students record the main idea of the proverb and try to identify who created the Voki.

#### Example 5: Artifact exploration

When artifacts related to practices of the target culture are presented alongside open-ended questions to students in a foreign language classroom, an opportunity is created in which learners gather information independently in order to become more knowledgeable about cultural practices and beliefs. This activity presents a model representation of the teacher working as facilitator in the classroom while students do the work of evaluating information about the target culture (Byram et al., 2002). In a Chinese classroom, the teacher creates a context by asking learners to imagine being an American living in China who gets invited to a friend's birthday party. Upon arrival, the American student sees that the objects found at a birthday party in China are different from what is typically seen at a birthday party in the United States. The student notices that long noodles in bowls are being served for dinner, the cake is decorated with fruit, and a tray with multiple objects (i.e. coins, musical instrument, book) is sitting on a table near the presents (typical for a first birthday).

Once the context is introduced, the teacher asks students to work in small groups to inquire about the birthday artifacts. Students are put into groups and each group is given a different object to consider. The teacher explains that students are not allowed to research their artifact, but rather are encouraged to make assumptions about the item based on background knowledge. Students begin by recording the name and purpose of the object, as well as the impression students have of people from China based on the object. Once finished, small groups share their ideas with the entire class as the teacher plays the role of mediator. This creates an opportunity for the teacher to see what attitudes students have about Chinese people at the onset of the lesson, while also helping students to become self-aware of any preconceived notions they may have about the Chinese people and practices.

The second part of the lesson asks learners to engage in inquiry related to their object. Once they have become aware of their preconceived notions, it is imperative to allow time for discovery learning so that cultural facts can be uncovered. Students are provided the following open-ended questions by the teacher to guide their research about their specific artifact:

- Who would use it? What is its purpose? When is it used at a birthday party? Why is it used at a birthday party?
- Did you discover a connection between Chinese culture and your native culture?
- Were any of your original ideas proven true or false?

By using research tools to help reveal cultural facts, students learn that knowledge about cultures can be gained through inquiry. It is effective to have students present their findings to the class using an iPad app like StoryKit or a Web 2.0 tool like Glogster. This phase of the artifact exploration lesson not only guides

learners in independently uncovering knowledge about other cultures through research, but more importantly it creates an opportunity for learners to practice skills in comparing and contrasting so that connections are made between the target culture and home culture.

Once informed about Chinese practices at birthday parties, the learners can engage in activities that instill skills in communication. The teacher can provide input on such topics as manners at a Chinese birthday party, ingredients needed to make a Chinese birthday cake, or how to shop for and buy an appropriate gift for a birthday party in China. These extension activities create time and space for the learner to connect communicative skills to the intercultural context of a Chinese birthday party. As the teacher continues to guide the learners in how to appropriately communicate in the target language, the learner is able to connect vocabulary, grammar, and culture in a meaningful way. This builds on the skills needed for intercultural interactions and fulfills the essence of intercultural communicative competence in that learners become equipped with the tools needed to engage in reciprocal relationships with those from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

## **Conclusion**

If teachers want to prepare students for success in a globally interconnected world, intercultural competence must form an integral part of the foreign language curriculum. Researchers have identified themes (e.g. identity transformation, student as inquirer, process) that characterize an ICC classroom that can assist teachers in creating learning tasks that will move students toward intercultural competence. When intercultural competence is an integral part of the language classroom, learners experience how to appropriately use language to build relationships and understandings with members of other cultures. They can examine their own beliefs and practices through a different lens, negotiate points of view different from their own, and gain an insider's perspective of another culture.

The activities presented in this paper represent a variety of approaches to teaching and assessing intercultural competence based on recognized theoretical frameworks on interculturality. By including such activities in the foreign language curriculum, students begin to see how their attitudes, knowledge, and language skills can affect their intercultural experiences. As a result, students will gain an understanding of how to enter into intercultural situations with an open mind, resulting not only in more successful communication, but in building meaningful relationships with target language speakers.

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# 2

## Unlocking the Gateway to Cross-Cultural Communication

Ekaterina Koubek

### Abstract

Anxiety can impede foreign language production and academic achievement according to research in this area. Both foreign and second language learners experience anxiety, which poses potential problems for language acquisition. In this study anxiety and comfort levels among native and non-native speakers of English were investigated using descriptive statistics to determine cross-cultural communication experiences of international and U.S.-born students at a small liberal arts university in the Midwest.

### Introduction

The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (2013) states that the number of international students at higher education institutions in the United States increased by 7.2 percent to a record 819,644 students in the 2012/13 academic year. This increase has been shown for the seventh consecutive year. According to the report, there are 40 percent more international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities than a decade ago, contributing approximately \$24 billion to the U.S. economy on a yearly basis.

As international students transition to a new environment from their country of origin, they face many challenges. As Tochkov, Levine, and Sanaka (2010) posit, “Although their experiences of adjustment are similar to any move to a new environment, international students experience certain unique obstacles, such as uncertainty about role expectations in the new country, language barriers, and

social difficulties” (p. 677). These obstacles can impede a smooth adjustment to diverse situations at U.S. colleges and universities. Even though many students choose to come to the United States due to academic opportunities not offered in their country of origin (Constantine, Kindaichi, Okazaki, Gainor, & Baden, 2005), they feel worried and anxious about understanding and interpreting the new language, cultural traditions, cross-cultural communication norms, and academic expectations (Mori, 2000).

## Literature Review

### *Second Language Anxiety*

Research on language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1994; Young, 1990, 1991, 1992) has consistently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language production and achievement. Language anxiety is experienced by both foreign and second language learners and poses potential problems “because it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 86).

According to Chen (1999), “A key variable that interrelates with many stressors in educational and socio-cultural domains is second language anxiety” (p.49). Language barriers may generate psychological harm and a tangible threat to international students, as Chen explains:

The problem is psychological in the sense that it can have a strong and long-lasting impact on the person’s self-concept and other related cognitive, emotive, and behavioral aspects during adjustment to the unfamiliar host culture. It is tangible in the sense that language proficiency is a basic and necessary requirement for simple daily living as well as for more complex technical and academic activities, such as working and studying in higher education institutions. (p. 51)

The psychological and tangible threats occur when international students perceive they are going to encounter a challenge or harm that may exceed their abilities and resources. Coming to study in a foreign country involves the unknown and uncertainty, which may bring many threats and challenges for international students. Thus, stress becomes an avoidable psychological factor for these students (Chen, 1999).

The level of language proficiency can have a strong impact on international students’ validation of their personal wellbeing in the host culture (Ishiyama, 1989). Ishiyama argues that incompetence in language communication may make them feel confused, inferior, and less willing to communicate with native speakers of English, thus creating a vicious cycle of failure and discontent. Language competency affects students’ self-concept and self-efficacy in academics (Chen, 1999). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) reported that students are very self-conscious when they are required to engage in speaking activities that expose their inadequacies, and these feelings often lead to “fear, or even panic” (p. 128).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) argue that people who feel competent in their native language might feel reduced to a childlike state when asked to use their second language. In addition, foreign language learners are often subjected to threats to their self-perception in the foreign language classroom setting. They conclude that foreign language anxiety can be associated with three factors: a fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension. Lucas, Miraflores, and Go (2011) explain that communication apprehension is characterized by fear and anxiety in communicating with people. This type of anxiety in learning a second language is derived from the learners' personal knowledge that they will have difficulty understanding others and making themselves understood. Learners with communication apprehension choose to keep silent in their classes.

Similarly, assessment and perception of international students' mastery of the English language may influence their appraisal of their ability to cope with situations involving threats, obstacles, and challenges. The less competent international students are in using English, the less confident they may feel in dealing with challenges, the more harmful and threatening circumstances they may perceive, and the more stressors they may experience in academic pursuit and socio-cultural adjustments (Chen, 1999).

### **Cross-Cultural Norms**

According to Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2007), many international students may experience loneliness in two ways. First, they find themselves missing their own cultural and linguistic setting, including those with whom they share their concerns or view of the world. Second, they find themselves at a lower level of empathy in cross-cultural relationships than in same culture relationships. Research finds that many international students are disappointed by the underdevelopment of relationships with native speakers of English (Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2006).

An individual's self-concept and self-esteem are validated by others who, in culturally designed ways, provide emotional and social support (Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2007). Moving to a different culture suddenly deprives the individual of this support system, thus inflicting anxiety and uncertainty to international students, who are facing an unfamiliar language and culture. They are likely to experience a more difficult college transition than U.S. students and might also have a more difficult time seeking assistance (Poyrazli, Arbona, Bullington, & Pisecco, 2001).

### **The Study**

#### *Statement of the Problem*

While the majority of research on the experiences of international students has been conducted at larger university campuses, very little of this research has addressed the issues of international students moving to and studying in rural areas. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate international students'

perceptions on their anxiety and comfort level at a small liberal arts university. Specifically, this paper intends to answer the following question: How comfortable are native and non-native speakers of English when communicating with each other at a small liberal arts university?

### *Participants and Setting*

Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of international students and the U.S.-born students in order to find out how comfortable they are when engaging in cross-cultural communication at a small liberal arts university. A group of eight students, enrolled in Methods for Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL 330) along with their professor, decided to investigate this question in the spring semester of 2013.

Some demographic information pertaining to the university is needed in order to explain the data collected in this study. The university's main campus enrolls approximately 946 non-international and 54 international students. The university employs 100 non-international and nine international faculty members. The student/faculty ratio is 10:1 (Academic catalog, 2012/2013). The university's students were primarily from the Midwest from the White (non-Hispanic) background.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This study is quantitative and descriptive. Data was collected from two questionnaires—*Survey about the Comfort and Anxiety Level among Native Speakers of English* and *Survey about the Comfort and Anxiety Level among Non-Native Speakers of English* (see Appendix). The instruments were adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) made a unique contribution to the identification of the scope of foreign language anxiety by developing the FLCAS, while Pappamihel (2002) used the FLCAS as a foundation to develop the SLSAS, so it could better reflect the second language environment of the sample. The surveys consisted of 13 items on a five-point Likert type scale. The items reflected the communicative situations the participants were likely to encounter according to the communicative setting, interlocutor (speaker/listener) variables, and the nature of the communication.

### *Data Collection*

These surveys were first piloted with a sample of international students and U.S.-born students to clarify and refine them in order to gather future data. This sample was excluded from the study findings. Once the pilot was completed, the researchers chose international students by securing permission to attend a meeting of the International Club and requesting international students' voluntary participation. Informed consent letters were collected at that point. Twenty-two students voluntarily agreed to participate in an anonymous survey. Twenty-

five students, whose first language is English, were chosen based after securing permission from another education instructor to administer a survey in her classroom. Voluntary participation was assured, as informed consent letters were gathered from all present students.

Demographic information on both student populations was requested as part of the study. Figure 1 shows the native speakers' gender, age range, gender, and knowledge of a foreign language, while Figure 2 details the demographic information of the non-native speakers of English.

Gender	Age	Knowledge of a foreign language
12 Male	15 17-20 years old	9 students
13 Female	10 21+ years old	

Figure 1. Native Speakers' Demographics

Gender	Age	First language	Years studying English
6 Male 16 Female	18 17-20 years old	5 Korean	1 1-2 years
	4 21+ years old	4 Chinese	1 2-3 years
		3 Kinyarwanda	1 3-5 years
		2 French	2 5-10 years
		2 Twi	15 over 14 years
		1 Punjabi	
		1 Spanish	
		1 Hmong	
		1 Nepali	
		1 Vietnamese	
		1 Hindi	

Figure 2. Non-Native Speakers' Demographics

*Results*

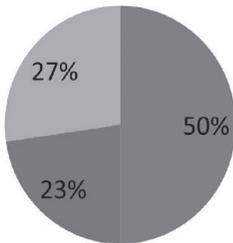
The figures below show how international and U.S.-born students responded to Likert-scale questions, which asked them to rate their experience with comfort level and anxiety when interacting with native speakers and their cultures. While there were 13 questions, only nine will be shown in the charts. To make these charts more user-friendly, “strongly agree” and “agree” responses as well as “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses were combined. Dark grey stands for “disagree” responses, medium gray for “agree” responses, and light grey for “neutral” responses.

Figure 3 shows non-native speakers' responses to the difficulty of comprehending every word in a native speakers' speech. Fifty respondents believed they experienced anxiety due to a lack of comprehension of native speakers, while twenty-three percent did not perceive being confused or nervous when they did

not understand every word of English native speakers were using. Twenty-seven percent did not indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with this statement.

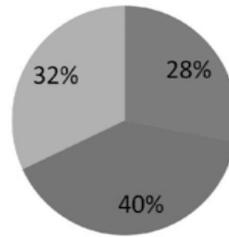
Figure 4 indicates native speakers' responses to non-native communication in their native language. Twenty-eight percent of native speakers believed that they experienced nervousness and confusion when hearing non-natives speakers of English communicate in their native languages, while forty percent disagreed with this statement. Thirty-two percent of students remained neutral in their response.

**1.) I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word of English that English speakers are saying.**



**Figure 3.** Non-native Comprehension Anxiety

**1.) I get nervous and confused when I hear non-native speakers of English communicate in their native languages.**

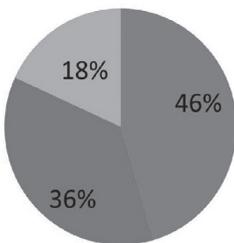


**Figure 4.** Native Comprehension Anxiety

Figure 5 portrays the comfort level non-native speakers experience around native speakers of English and the culture of the United States. Forty-six percent of students believed they were comfortable around native speakers and their culture, while thirty-six percent disagreed. Eighteen percent of respondents remained neutral in their response to this question.

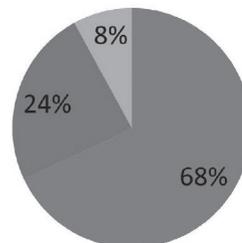
On the other hand, Figure 6 shows native speakers' comfort level speaking to people from cultures that are different from their own. Sixty-eight percent agreed with this statement, while twenty-four percent of respondents believed they did not feel comfortable. Eight percent of native speakers remained neutral in their response.

**2.) I am comfortable around native speakers of English and the culture of the United States.**



**Figure 5.** Non-Native Comfort Level about Native Speakers and Target Culture

**2.) I am comfortable talking to people from cultures that are different from my own.**

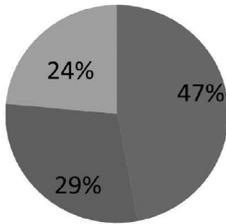


**Figure 6.** Native Comfort Level Communicating with Non-Natives

Figure 7 depicts non-native students' fear and anxiety about being ridiculed for their mistakes in their verbal and non-verbal communication. Forty-seven percent of respondents were afraid that native speakers of English would laugh at their mistakes in their verbal and non-verbal communication. Twenty-nine percent of students disagreed with this statement. Twenty-four percent neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

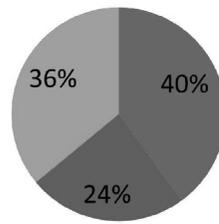
Alternatively, Figure 8 shows native speakers' fear to correct mistakes of non-native speakers of English in their verbal and non-verbal communication. Forty percent of native speakers agreed that they were afraid to correct mistakes of non-native students, while twenty-four percent disagreed with this statement. Thirty-six percent of students remained neutral in their response to this statement.

**3.) I am afraid native speakers of English will laugh at my mistakes in my verbal and non-verbal communication.**



**Figure 7.** Non-Native Anxiety on Error Correction

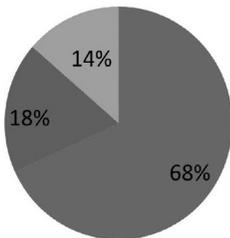
**3.) I am afraid to correct mistakes of non-native speakers of English in verbal and non-verbal communication.**



**Figure 8.** Native Anxiety on Error Correction

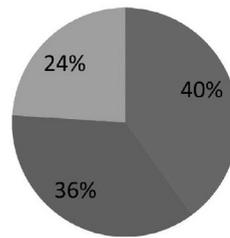
When asked about non-native speakers' success at communicating with native speakers of English, sixty-eight percent agreed with the statement, while eighteen percent disagreed. Fourteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with it, as Figure 9 depicts.

**4.) I am successful at communicating with native speakers of English.**



**Figure 9.** Non-Native Comfort with Communication

**4.) I am successful at communicating with non-native speakers of English.**



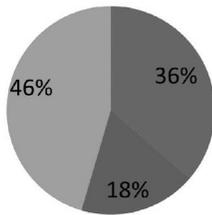
**Figure 10.** Native Comfort with Communication

On the other hand, Figure 10 (preceding page) shows native speakers' comfort level at communicating with non-native speakers of English. While forty percent of students agreed with this statement, thirty-six percent disagreed with it. Twenty-four percent remained neutral.

Figure 11 portrays non-native speakers' anxiety about their self-image. Thirty-six percent were afraid that native speakers of English might think they were stupid because of the mistakes they made, and eighteen percent disagreed with this statement. However, forty-six percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

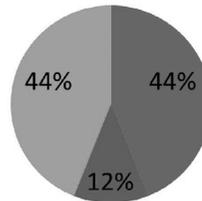
Conversely, Figure 12 shows native speakers' anxiety about their self-image when correcting non-native speakers' mistakes in English. Forty-four percent of respondents were afraid that non-native speakers of English might believe they were better than non-native speakers when correcting their mistakes in English, while twelve percent of them disagreed with this statement. Forty-four percent of respondents remained neutral.

**5.) I am afraid people think I am stupid because I make mistakes in English.**



**Figure 11.** Non-Native Anxiety about Self-Image

**5.) I am afraid that non-native speakers of English may perceive that I think I am better than them when correcting their mistakes in English.**



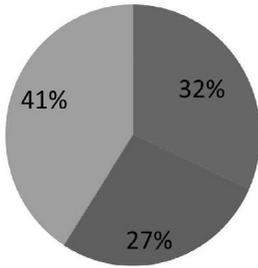
**Figure 12.** Native Anxiety about Self-Image

When asked about non-native speakers' perception of whether people judge them because of their non-native accent in English, thirty-two percent of students believed that they were being judged while twenty-seven percent disagreed with this statement. Forty-one percent of respondents remained neutral in their response to this statement.

On the other hand, when native speakers were asked whether they judged non-native speakers of English on their accent, only four percent of them agreed with this statement, while twenty-eight percent disagreed with it. However, sixty-eight percent remained neutral in their response to the statement.

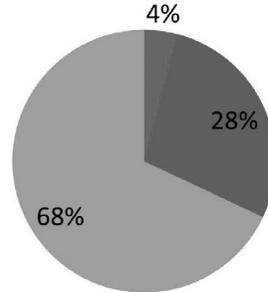
When asked whether non-native speakers hesitated to ask questions if they did not understand what the English speaker was saying, fifty percent of students agreed with this statement, while twenty-three percent disagreed with it. Twenty-seven percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, as depicted in Figure 15.

**6.) People judge me because of my non-native accent in English.**



**Figure 13.** Non-Native Anxiety about Accent

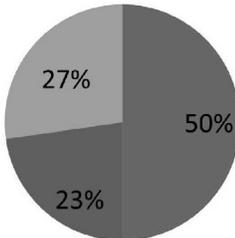
**6.) I judge non-native speakers of English on their accent.**



**Figure 14.** Native Judgment on Accent

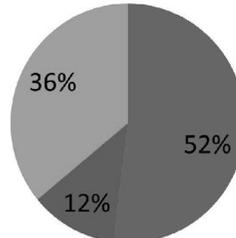
Figure 16 shows native speakers' responses to the statement whether they hesitated to ask questions when they did not understand what the non-native English speaker was saying in English. Fifty-two percent of students indicated that they did hesitate to ask questions when there was a lack of understanding between them and non-native speakers of English, while twelve percent disagreed with the statement. Thirty-six percent remained neutral in their response to the statement.

**7.) I hesitate to ask questions when I don't understand what the English speaker is saying.**



**Figure 15.** Non-Native Anxiety Ask Questions

**7.) I hesitate to ask questions when I don't understand what the non-native English speaker is saying in English.**



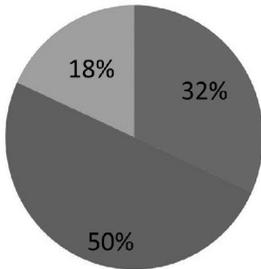
**Figure 16.** Native Anxiety to Ask to Questions

Figure 17 shows the non-native speakers' anxiety when speaking to native speakers of English. Fifty percent of students believed they got self-conscious when speaking to native speakers, while thirty-two percent disagreed with this statement. Eighteen percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with it.

Alternatively, when native speakers of English were asked to rate how comfortable they were around non-native speakers' language and their culture, fifty-two percent of them did not feel being comfortable, while forty percent of

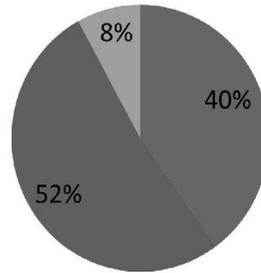
students felt comfortable. Eight percent of respondents remained neutral in their response.

**9.) I get very self-conscious when speaking to native speakers of English**



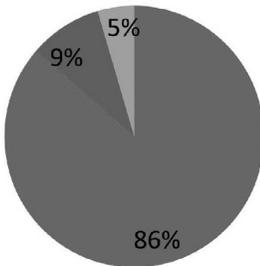
**Figure 17.** Non-Native Anxiety to Speak to Natives

**9.) I am comfortable around non-native speakers' language and their culture.**



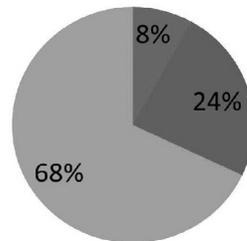
**Figure 18.** Native Comfort around Non-Natives

**10.) I enjoy watching TV shows, listening to music, and radio produced in English.**



**Figure 19.** Non-Native Comfort Media in English

**10.) I enjoy watching TV shows, listening to music, and radio produced in a foreign language.**



**Figure 20.** Native Comfort with Foreign Media

The last item of the questionnaires dealt with the comfort level of non-native students with media in English. Eighty-six percent of students indicated that they enjoyed watching TV shows, listening to music, and radio shows produced in English, while only nine percent disagreed with it, and five percent of respondents remained neutral, as indicated in Figure 19.

Conversely, Figure 20 shows that only eight percent of native speakers of English enjoyed media produced in a foreign language, while twenty-four percent disagreed with this statement, and sixty-eight percent of students neither agreed nor disagreed with it.

## Analysis and Discussion

Overall, the results indicate that the majority of non-native students of English perceived themselves as self-conscious when interacting with native speakers of English, were afraid to ask questions and of being judged by their mistakes, and got nervous and confused when they did not understand every word an English speaker was saying. These findings corroborate with the study involving Asian international students from Korea, Vietnam, Indian, and Japan conducted by Costantine, Kindaichi, Okazaki, Gainor, and Baden (2005) that reported that these students felt fears of not being understood by their classmates and therefore were being ostracized in the new environment.

Although Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) posit that foreign language anxiety can be associated with three factors: a fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension, in this study, two factors - fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension - were investigated and found to be present among the majority of non-native speakers of English. Additionally, the results indicated that some non-native speakers of English found themselves to be fearful of being subjected to threats to their self-perception based on their foreign accent and mistakes they made in verbal and non-verbal communication. This finding supports Schmitt's assertion (2005) that it is the use of non-conventional language that marks international students as nonnative speakers and can marginalize them within their disciplinary community, which can result in being unrecognized, undervalued, and misunderstood by native speakers of the target language. However, this study also showed that the majority of non-native speakers of English felt successful at communicating with native speakers of English and that almost fifty percent of them were comfortable around native speakers of English and the culture of the United States. This finding supports Ishiyama's (1989) idea that the level of language proficiency is a strong predictor of international students' validation of their personal wellbeing in the host culture. The more competent international students are in using their English skills, the more confident they might feel in dealing with threats, challenges, and harm, and the fewer stressors they might experience in their academic and socio-cultural domain (Chen, 1999).

Interestingly, the results also indicated that half of the native and non-native speakers hesitated to ask questions if they did not understand each other. Since both groups hesitate to ask questions of each other when communication breaks down, this likely contributes to stifling cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding. Moreover, only forty percent of native speakers believed they were successful at communicating with non-native speakers of English. This can be attributed to the belief that native speakers are very sensitive to a foreign accent in English and "are quick to use it as a signal that the speaker is an out-group member" (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010, p.1093). This may result in underdevelopment of relationships with native speakers of English, thus promoting loneliness and isolation of international students in the host country (Lee, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2006).

## Conclusion

The present study found that international students experienced fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension as well as native speakers of English experienced lack of comfort when communicating with non-native speakers of English at a small liberal arts university. In their study in rural Australia, Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007) reported that developing relationships with local students was problematic for international students, “with an inability to succeed often resulting in loneliness and alienation, and impacting negatively on academic adjustment and performance” (p 8). It can be gleaned from the present study that the majority of international students experienced anxiety while interacting with native speakers of English. Previous work on anxiety suggests that this may be rooted in negative affective experiences while learning the language in the past as well as an attempt to avoid “losing face” in front of their peers and native speakers of English in the present (Lucas, Miraflores, & Go, 2011).

According to Woodrow (2006), it is important to take into consideration communication both in and outside the classroom and ensure that students have the necessary skills and practice for everyday communication. Educators can help bridge the gap in cross-cultural communication by setting out-of-class authentic and meaningful tasks, such as a service project, where both native and non-native students of English would need to collaborate at a local community or university level. As Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2007) posit,

Educational institutions and international students need to devise ways of better adjusting to and learning from each other while engaging with a more mixed and complex set of values...Here the single most important element in strategies of providing a better environment for international students is to improve relations with local students. If a stronger social bridge between international students and their local context is to be built, this is the place to build it. (p. 173)

This supports Kostogriz’s (2005) notion of a critical pedagogy that actively promotes ‘productive transformative activities’, rather than mere reproduction. He calls this a ‘thirdspace pedagogy’, which takes into account “both the multiple and contested nature of literacy learning in multicultural classrooms and intercultural innovations in meaning- and identity-making” (p. 203). ‘Thirdspace’ involves dynamic processes of growth and change, where learners can learn from each other through the collision of ideas, discussion, and reflection of each other’s experiences, which supports Vygotsky’s (1962/1934) work on learning as a profoundly social activity (Ryan & Viète, 2009).

It is important that educators be made aware of the language anxieties their students may be suffering from so that they are able to design lessons and tasks that will best address strategies that can be effectively utilized. In addition, teachers may opt for alternative assessment techniques that may lessen the international students’ anxiety during class, such as a group evaluation with individual comments provided on their linguistic performance (Lucas, Miraflores, & Go, 2011).

Language anxiety impedes successful language learning among second and foreign language learners. It is imperative that teachers look at the affective state of the learners as this greatly affects their learning, and design lessons that build on mutual cultural understanding in order to unlock the gateway to cross-cultural communication.

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### Appendix

#### Survey about the Comfort and Anxiety Level among Native Speakers of English

Please use the scale below to indicate how you feel about the comfort and anxiety level of speaking English to non-native speakers of English. Do you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the statement?

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I get nervous and confused when I hear non-native speakers of English communicating in their native languages.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. I am comfortable talking to people from cultures that are different from my own.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I get nervous when a non-native speaker asks questions about my speech.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. I am afraid to correct mistakes of non-native speakers of English in verbal and non-verbal communication.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am successful at communicating with non-native speakers of English.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. When speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I worry that I don't pick up on non-verbal communication from their culture (such as gestures, eye contact, facial signs).	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I am afraid that non-native speakers of English might perceive that I think I am better than them when correcting their mistakes in English.	<input type="radio"/>				

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- |   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 8. I judge non-native speakers of English on their accent.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. I hesitate to ask questions when I don't understand what the non-English speaker is saying in English.     | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I am interested in learning about people from other cultures.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. I enjoy watching TV shows, listening to music, and radio produced in a foreign language.                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I am comfortable around non-native speakers' language and their culture.                                  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. I have been provided opportunities to learn about non-native speakers' culture at Buena Vista University. | <input type="radio"/> |

For question 13 please provide concrete examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Information Please provide a short answer or check the appropriate slot.

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_  
Age: 17-21 \_\_\_\_ 22-25 \_\_\_\_ 26-30 \_\_\_\_ 31-40 \_\_\_\_ 40+ \_\_\_\_  
Academic status: 1<sup>st</sup> year \_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> year \_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> year \_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> year \_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity: White \_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_ African American \_\_\_\_  
Asian American \_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_  
African \_\_\_\_ Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

What other languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

What country were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

What countries have you traveled to? \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation.*

Survey about the Comfort and Anxiety Level among  
Non-native Speakers of English

Please use the scale below to indicate how you feel about the comfort and anxiety level of speaking English to native speakers of English. Do you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree nor Disagree (N), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD) with the statement?

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word of English that English speakers are saying.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. I get very self-conscious when speaking to native speakers of English.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I get nervous when I don't understand what the native speaker of English is correcting in my speech.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. I am afraid native speakers of English will laugh at my mistakes in my verbal and non-verbal communication.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. When speaking to a native speaker of English, I worry that I am not aware of non-verbal communication (such as gestures, eye contact, facial signs).	<input type="radio"/>				
6. I am afraid people think I am stupid because I make mistakes in English.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. People judge me because of my non-native accent in English.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. I hesitate to ask questions when I don't understand what the English speaker is saying.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. I am interested in making friends with people from other cultures.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. I enjoy watching TV shows, listening to music, and radio produced in English.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I like talking to people from cultures that are different from my own.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. I am successful at communicating with native speakers of English.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. I am comfortable around native speakers of English and the culture of the United States.	<input type="radio"/>				

**Demographic Information** Please provide a short answer or check the appropriate slot.

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age: 17-21 \_\_\_\_\_ 22-25 \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 \_\_\_\_\_ 31-40 \_\_\_\_\_ 40+ \_\_\_\_\_

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Academic status: 1<sup>st</sup> year\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> year \_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> year \_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> year \_\_\_\_  
Special (for exchange students)\_\_\_\_

What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

What other languages do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

What country were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been in the USA? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you studied English? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you study English prior to coming to BVU? \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation.*

# 3

## Teaching history and culture here and abroad

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### Abstract

Intercultural competence is recognized as a necessary goal of foreign language classes, particularly at the college level. Considered on par with grammatical and lexical proficiency, intercultural competency allows non-native speakers of a language to function and participate in a society where the target language is spoken. Teaching for intercultural competence requires that the language teacher first bring students to an awareness of the various aspects of culture that play a role in the way they themselves function in daily life. It is only then that students are ready to learn and understand the hows and whys of life within the new culture, with the ultimate goal being empathy towards speakers of the target language. This paper reports on the practice of teaching language and culture through an intercultural lens in college-level French and German history and culture classes. Specifically addressed are intercultural strategies used in the US classroom and the modifications made to those strategies when the course is taught in the target culture.

The question of what to teach in the foreign language classroom has been and continues to be the topic of discussion among foreign and second language teachers at all levels of education. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Kaplan (1966) noted the shift away from prescriptive grammar to a more culturally based curriculum. Now, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, language curricula in higher education require that the culture associated with the target language be integrated with language instruction. Second language learners in a new country must learn not only to speak the language, but also to be able to function in the culture in which

the language is situated. Foreign language learners learning a language outside of a country where that language is spoken, often have different purposes for learning the language. For them, being acquainted with how to participate in the culture on a day-to-day basis is not immediately necessary. Nevertheless, as Brody notes, sociologists, anthropologists and linguists all agree “Language and culture are inextricably tied. Culture is negotiated in large part through language, and language codifies many cultural assumptions and values” (2011, p. 40).

It is in this broad context that the authors/instructors report their practices in the undergraduate level foreign language history and culture courses. In a small Midwestern liberal arts university where the foreign language programs are small (no language majors other than Spanish, only minors in Spanish, French, German, and several area studies minors), the instructors have the rare opportunity to offer French and German culture courses to language students in overseas contexts. French and German culture courses are offered on a regular rotation, but also scheduled are the same courses every two years in French-speaking and German-speaking countries for a 3-week May Term. While the bond between language and culture remains the same, the opportunity to teach culture within the cultural setting presents a valuable opportunity to teach through a different approach and from a different perspective.

The purpose for including a history and culture course in the college language curriculum provides a focus for further language study while acquainting students with the target people group. Teaching about the arts, literature, and historical or cultural events, “Big C” culture (Peterson, 2004), has been a traditional element of such courses and remains necessary as a means to tie language to the history of its speakers. However, as Saville-Troike notes, “the aspects of culture that should be taught are dictated by the student’s reason for learning” (2003, p. 15); thus, “little c” culture (Peterson, 2004) is the element of culture that will have greater effect on students, especially when they travel to a country where the language is spoken. Little c culture can be defined as the day-to-day elements of culture that are often hidden or unseen by the casual observer, but that dictate how a native participant of the culture will react to any given situation.

The Cultures Standard, one of the 5Cs of the National Foreign Language Standards (Communications, Communities, Comparisons, Connections and Cultures), disseminated by the American Council on Teaching Foreign Language (ACTFL, n.d.), establishes three components that teachers should include in teaching culture. *Perspectives* are the underlying, philosophical “beliefs, values, attitudes and traditional ideas of a society”; *Practices* are “patterns of behavior that are socially acceptable within the group”; and *Products* are tangible and intangible products ranging from food and dress, to literature and art, to legal and educational systems (Ohio, n.d.). These 3Ps build on and elaborate the concepts of Big C and little c culture. By teaching both history and culture, we present elements of Big C and little c culture that are *products* of the German and French cultures. Familiarity with these products allows students to examine *Practices* and *Perspectives* that create recognizable distinctions of the German and French peoples.

As students become acquainted with the 3Ps of the target culture, the Comparisons standard of the 5Cs comes into play. When they examine *Perspectives*, students engage the Comparisons standard, by making a well-informed comparison of their own cultures to the targeted culture(s), thus striving for the goal of intercultural competence.

### **Intercultural Competence**

Culture can best be taught through an intercultural lens, where learners are called upon to consider elements of their own cultures as they learn elements of the new. Byram (1997) defines intercultural competence as an interaction within the language learner between his or her own culture and the new culture. The learner brings to the learning situation knowledge of his or her own culture and must recognize cultural differences without bias. Byram further defines intercultural competence as an additional layer of communication that involves an effort on the part of the speaker to relate to the target culture by establishing and maintaining relationships. Thus, in preparing students to interact with and eventually form relationships with native speakers of the target language, teaching little *c* culture, that is, bringing students to an understanding of cultural perspectives is more important than merely teaching about cultural products. Kramsch (2003) notes that the purpose of teaching culture through an intercultural perspective is not to expect the students to become “little French or little Germans,” but rather to help learners “understand why the speakers of two different languages react [differently to the same situation] and what the consequences ... may mean for the learner” (p. 32). For these reasons, the inclusion or, more importantly, the infusion of language teaching with culture is important for language learners. Byram reminds us, “Teaching for linguistic competence cannot be separated from teaching for intercultural competence” (1997, p. 22).

Teaching through an intercultural perspective requires not only adaptation on the part of the teacher, but also adaptation on the part of the students. A culture course must teach cultural facts; however, it must also bring students to an awareness of the differences between their own culture(s) and the culture(s) associated with the target language, and how these cultures interact and intersect (Wintergeist & McVeigh, 2011; Dykstra-Pruim, 2008; Altmayer, 2008; Lafayette, 2003). In order to develop cultural awareness, students need to look at their own culture(s) for the purpose of analyzing their own beliefs, values, behaviors, attitudes, ethnocentrism, and enculturation (Wintergeist & McVeigh, 2011). Only by first examining their own culturally-based beliefs, can they then come to a point where they can recognize and resolve misunderstanding due to cultural differences (Dykstra-Pruim, 2008).

In order to be able to create relationships and develop empathy for the target culture, it is important to have knowledge of the history related to the culture, the country and the people group associated with the target language. Martin and Nakayama (2007) note the “dialectical interplay between past and present” (p. 118) involved when people of different cultures interact. They claim, “...culture and cultural identities are intimately tied to history because they have no meaning

without history” (p. 119). Multiple sources cite breakdowns in intercultural communication when historical contexts have not been considered. Frances Fitzgerald, in her book *Fire in the Lake*, places blame for the Vietnam War on a total lack of Vietnamese historical context on the part of the American government. President George W. Bush only added fuel to the fire of the Iraqi War when he used the term “crusade” in a speech (White House Archives, 2001). Recently, a spa hotel in Germany advertised its *Kristall-Nacht* as a special event (BBC, 2013). The teaching of culture must involve situating that culture within its historical contexts. Without this context, language learners will not be able to understand why the people they want to know react the way they do to certain situations.

Approaching language learning from an intercultural perspective requires added effort on the part of the students: the students must adopt an attitude of reflection. Nostrand (1996) notes the need to develop in our students “the affective capacity for empathy” (p. 6) toward the culture, while learning and reflecting about one’s own culture. Smith, Paige and Steglitz (2003) maintain that before we can truly understand another culture, we must first “make the effort to achieve a deep sensitivity to differences...and [develop an] objective awareness in...our own subjective perspectives” (p. 97). By cultivating a deep sensitivity or empathy towards other cultures, we teach our students “to elicit attitudes without imposing attitudes” (Nostrand, 1996). According to Smith, Paige and Steglitz (2003), “Failure to do this leaves us open to the dangers inherent in making inferences and judgments without an understanding of either our subjects or ourselves” (p. 97). It is by recognizing our own system of values and beliefs that we are able to avoid bias and be open to understanding other culturally-based perspectives.

### **Teaching Intercultural Communication Here**

Teaching a culture course for the purpose of integrating intercultural competence can take place outside the target culture or inside the target culture. Outside the target culture presents a situation where the teacher must be creative in bringing that culture into the classroom, and therefore into the consciousness of the students without relying on stereotypes (Damien, 2003). Groenewold (2005) notes the benefits of participating in the target culture for developing intercultural competence; thus, the teacher outside of the cultural context must make efforts to provide creative opportunities for participation. By examining other cultures nearby, i.e., cultures other than the culture of the students and the target culture, students can develop a perspective on cultural differences. They can begin to examine aspects of their own cultures that play a role in their own worldviews. Groenewold (2005) suggests role playing and participatory learning as means for opening intercultural possibilities. He describes “discover a German”: ways to engage the culture without being there. He says such role playing can raise questions that might not arise when simply learning facts.

Giving students the opportunity to reflect on, experiment with, and develop new situations are ways that Altmayer (2008) suggests for opening students’ minds to other viewpoints. Lafayette (2008) echoes these suggestions by noting foreign language teachers can learn from the field of anthropology by making use of their

methods of awareness and comparison, and making use of learning-centered learning. Damien (2003) adds to this an affective layer by suggesting that cultural learning be non-threatening, be on-going throughout language study, and make use of all the senses. She also suggests that students be taught to translate culturally instead of linguistically. Schier (2008), for example, outlines a curriculum for focusing on the concept of time, beginning with a broad perspective across cultures and ending with materials that focus on the specific ways the target culture deals with the concept. Included in her outline is the specific example of teaching speech acts along with topics such as politeness, showing respect, candidness and tolerance for the purpose of integrating the instruction of language and culture.

### **Teaching Intercultural Communication Abroad**

Of course when a culture class is taught within the target culture, multiple opportunities for learning about and engaging the culture abound. The teacher has authentic resources easily at hand and does not have to create or search for them. However, even this situation cannot be described as *alles in Butter* (smooth sailing). Groenewold (2005) notes that it is questionable whether a student in the classroom can ever learn a country the way one might learn culture. It is at this point that participation in the cultural life of the country is necessary. Students need to participate as much as possible. Altmayer (2008) says students need to participate in situations where they “walk in the shoes” of the other in order to develop a different mindset. Damien (2003) affirms that the role of the teacher is essential in fostering cultural enquiry, and Majjala (2008) notes that teachers need to provide opportunities for their students to develop empathy with the target culture. One way of doing this is to be sure they encounter both the “good” and the “bad” in everyday situations. But, as Damien (2003) cautions, the best learning situation is non-threatening. Phipps (2008) notes that while risk will be involved, it should only be the risk of communicative failure. When this type of risk is used as a teaching/learning tool, there is no end point in the learning situation. The teacher must foster cultural enquiry even when the learning environment is in the target culture.

No matter how astute and competent the teacher is, or how authentic and full of potential the environment is for preparing students for face-to-face intercultural experience, the success of the situation ultimately depends on the willingness and motivation of the students to learn. Lovik (2008) recounts a case study of a student who was prepared for an intercultural learning experience, but who did not cooperate with the host family’s rules. The situation provides clear evidence that one can learn *how* to be *höflich* (polite/courteous), but may choose not to *be* *höflich*. Such a situation reminds us all that learning a culture ultimately lies in the students’ personal motivations.

### **Strategies for Intercultural Competence**

As noted earlier, the authors teach French and German History and Culture courses on a regular rotation in our language curriculum on campus in the

Midwestern United States. The setting is a traditional lecture or seminar, with the inclusion of as many authentic materials as possible (films, guest speakers, online access, etc.). Three-week sessions (taught during May Term) of the French and German History and Culture courses are also offered in France, Germany and Austria. This is not a study abroad situation where students study for a semester or a year, but rather a short term experience designed to get the students into the culture that they are studying, although briefly. Logistical situations change from year-to-year, but generally students live in either a dormitory situation or at a hostel. Organization for the trip is coordinated through a cooperative effort with the university's travel studies program and an agent of another university with locations in the other countries. The authors design and teach the courses with assistance in planning by the hosting agent. Class time includes actual time in a lecture/seminar session, but also time participating in the culture.

### *Reflection*

The authors have both adapted before and after essay assignments that they use in both contexts, here and abroad. The before essay assignment is made up of two essays. In order to prepare the students to reflect on and define their own cultures (Smith, Paige and Steglitz, 2003), the instructors require that the students write an essay about themselves. In this essay they are asked to reflect on the influences in their lives that impact their worldview, such as religion, family, familial background/country of origin, citizenship, society, friends, etc. (Wintergeist & McVeigh, 2011). This essay is assigned and due during the first week of the semester (course taught here) and before departing the US (course taught abroad). The second essay is short and requires students to consider their perspectives on the inhabitants of the country or countries in which the target language is spoken. They are asked to write about their impressions (no research involved) of the French or Germanic peoples, respectively. They may include perceptions, suppositions, first-hand experiences, stereotypes, etc., and are asked to note what or who has influenced these perceptions. As with the first essay, this essay is due either during the first week of the semester (here) or before departing the US (abroad).

The after essay is assigned as the final paper for each of the courses. It is a formal essay requiring examples, citations, and references. In this paper students are required to write in an informed manner their interpretation of the inhabitants of the French and Germanic countries, based on the material covered during the course. For students in the courses here, they may include information from the textbooks, guest speakers, and any supplemental materials or events. The students in the courses abroad are required to use the same information, but may also include personal experiences. For the students here, this assignment calls them to consider how the history of a land plays a role in the current culture of its inhabitants. For the students abroad, who are able to incorporate personal experiences, reflection on and analysis of who the other is, how and why he is different from themselves, summons them to consider the validity of other cultural norms (Dystra-Pruim, 2008). In the May term course (abroad), the final reaction paper is due approximately two weeks after the students' return to the US,

after they have had a chance to reflect on their experience, as also suggested by Spenser and Tuma (2002) in their plan for preparing a short-term overseas course experience.

### *Preparation for Cultural Encounters*

In preparation for the courses abroad (in France, Germany or Austria), the instructors include pre-departure cultural training. These weekly sessions are scheduled on campus six to eight weeks before leaving. Spencer and Tuma (2002) suggest that a pre-course orientation of this type is useful to prepare students to handle the stresses of change and cultural and linguistic learning that will go on in an intensive schedule in France (or Germany or Austria).

An example of the impact of the pre-departure session on the students came at the beginning of a recent three-week course in France. The group arrived in the country just hours before a three-day weekend, in which the stores would be closed for the entire three days. The group had about a half an hour to buy some groceries, as the students were to be cooking their evening meals. The students with less cultural preparation (students participating in a general education course, not the French History and Culture course and who had no French language background) were upset to discover that the concept of “the customer is always right” was not a value in France, and that the store managers had no intention of staying late in order to accommodate this group of customers. Those in the culture class had discussed this topic in class (and were also more comfortable as they spoke the language and so were able to understand the managers’ comments). They were neither surprised, nor bothered, reacting with equanimity and advising their peers on the subject. They had reached an attitude of discovery. Byram (1997) states

“Attitudes which are the pre-condition for successful intercultural interaction need to be not simply positive, since even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding. They need to be attitudes of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others’ meanings, beliefs and behaviours.” (p. 34)

Similar pre-departure “survival” sessions are offered for students traveling to Germany and Austria, and are open to all students participating in the Germanic History and Culture course as well as to any other students who will be participating in a course in a German-speaking country. The focus of these sessions has been to reacquaint students with necessary vocabulary that they will encounter upon arrival and which will be particularly important for their first 48 hours in country. Examples include the mundane: the importance of recognizing *drücken* and *ziehen* (push and pull) on doors; comprehending that in addition to the labels of *Damen* (ladies) and *Herren* (gentlemen) on restroom doors, a door labeled *WC* serves the same function.

As a result of having taught Headstart German for the US Army in Germany for many years, the German instructor recognized how important these seemingly trivial cultural elements can be. Students learn hello and good-bye greetings, numbers, pronunciation of the alphabet, food vocabulary, restaurant culture, what

to expect when traveling on public transportation (both local and long distance), shopping conventions, how to ask and receive directions, and about free time activities. Because this information is taught in one-hour sessions for eight weeks, instruction is made up mostly of repetition drills. At this point it is not important that they understand why, but simply that they can properly ask or respond in a given situation. The most enjoyable and memorable aspects of these lessons are the situations where they must determine why a person has made a cultural *faux pas*.

### *Cultural Participation*

A strategy not easily dealt with here is the need for cultural participation (Schier, 2008; Allison, 2008; Damien, 2003; Groenwald, 2005). In the United States, the authors introduce cultural products via multi-media: internet, recordings, concerts, films, photographs, etc. In addition there are excellent books that explain and outline cultural practices.

In order to align the courses here with the courses abroad, the instructors use textbooks, which present both practices and perspectives. For the French course, the textbook *Les Français* (Wiley & Brière, 2001) is used. The first part of this textbook deals with the interpersonal cultural differences between Americans and the French, such as the subjects of personal space, view of time, values, and body language and gestures. In the second, longer part of the course, using the same textbook, students look at French history, government, education, and current trends in French society. Other textbooks that may be used during the semester include *Au Contraire: Figuring Out the French* (Asselin & Matron, 2010), *Cultural Misunderstandings* (Carroll, 1998), as well as the corresponding French title *Évidence Invisibles* (Carroll, 1987), and *Les Valeurs des Français* (Bréchon, 2003).

Students always respond to the course, whether here or abroad, by some change in attitude toward the French, as they become aware of the reasons for certain general behaviors of the other culture; however, not all reach the state of empathy, what Byram (1997) calls “*savoir comprendre*” (p. 105). Some students will fix on whether they agree or disagree with the French. Sharifian and Palmer (2007) speak of the necessity to go on to “new cultural conceptions” (p. 34)—that is, “schemas that are largely culturally constructed” (p. 34). Other students are able to take on what Saville-Troike (2006) calls “knowledge of the culture [including] content, context, and linguistic elements...as well as an understanding of the wider societal structures and practices that influence norms and conventions of language interpretation and usage” (p. 134). Thus, in the culture course in the United States, learners work through topics hypothetically (although taking advantage of guest French speakers in class, and students from French-speaking countries who mentor or converse with students in “language partnering” (Shaver, 2012).

For the German courses, the German instructor makes use of the books written by Hyde Flippo (e.g., *When In Germany, Do as the Germans Do*), and the various Xenophobe’s Guides, such as the *Xenophobe’s Guide to Germany* (Zeidonitz & Barlow, 2008). All of these books provide well written and easily understood cultural differences that language (and cultural) learners need to recognize and be able to use. The sometimes light-hearted approach to differences in daily life

between Germanic peoples and Americans make the material memorable without creating stereotypes. Personal experiences, including *faux pas*, recounted by other students and professors provide an experiential element, albeit secondhand.

Students abroad have the opportunity for participation in and interaction with the culture, which provides chances for students to deal personally with the other culture and to create their own memories. In order to provide as many varied experiences as possible, German students are mandated to participate in at least 10 cultural experiences. They are then required to keep a cultural journal where they reflect on differences and similarities they see. Journal entries are expected to be a reflection on the experience as they consider why the experience was (or was not) unusual or different. These experiences include day-to-day, individual activities such as attending a church service, sporting events, theater or concert, visiting a museum, going shopping in a store, shopping at an open air market, riding public transportation, eating in restaurants, or sitting in on a university lecture. One experience that was especially well received by the students was a scheduled visit to a bank, which included a tour and explanation of the banking system in Germany. In order to ease the students into the new culture, the German instructor has provided regular walking opportunities where the students stroll through areas as a group. Going as a group to areas off the beaten path, helped them realize that they could navigate on their own, without feeling threatened. It was also an opportunity to explain subtle cultural differences they might not expect to see.

In the French course, the French instructor also requires students abroad to keep and turn in a diary, detailing their experiences, reactions, and attitudes in encountering the culture, and facilitating the students' preparation for the final reflection paper. Students are also required to write "Culture Vignettes" during the three weeks in France, in which they write about encounters in interacting with the French people and French society and reflect on what they think was happening either in terms of success in communicating or in terms of misunderstanding. They learn, as Byram (1997) cautions, to "manage dysfunctions which arise in the course of interaction, drawing upon knowledge and skills" (p. 38). Many of the encounters take place during afternoon walks, visits, and experiences, and thus bring up some of the topics which could only be discussed hypothetically in the U.S. classroom. An example of this is the way in which students studying in context in France can see for themselves the historical environment, noticing plaques on nearby buildings concerning historical events, and taking into account the historical information surrounding them. This kind of immediate history effectively takes the place of more hypothetical classroom historical knowledge, although without prior preparation, students might not be able to recognize all that they are seeing.

When students are successful in the required individual and group experiences, they gain courage to create their own intercultural moments (Levine, 2008). One male student in Vienna joined in a pickup basketball game at a park near where he lived. Not only did he report a positive experience, but those he played with were able to experience their own intercultural moment with an American. The

same student reported several (unrequired) shopping excursions, including a secondhand shop. This student had been outside the US before, but not to Europe. On the other hand, another student (female) who had never been outside the US before her trip to Austria, always stayed with a group. She often acted as translator for those whose German was not as good as hers. Her reports of experiences and reflection on intercultural differences were well considered, but she was never able to feel comfortable venturing out on her own.

Similarly, understanding differences between the French and American cultures, worked well for the students in France. They began a spontaneous, quiet attempt to indicate to their non-French-speaking peers some of the important points of politeness in French culture, which they had studied and were subsequently experiencing firsthand. For example, they taught cultural norms on French table customs, how to order, and how to ask questions. The French-speaking students were rather taken aback at realizing that their English-speaking peers were using normally pitched voices in the restaurant, and they tried to influence their fellow students to modulate their voices to a level more usual in France.

Another reaction of the French-speaking students was enjoyable to watch, as they woke up to the fact that they could actually communicate and function in the culture. At one point, when French learners went out to a café, they responded to the situation with certain courtesies such as initial greetings, using their utensils in French fashion, keeping their hands on the table, talking politely with their hosts/café patrons, and saying a polite cultural good-bye on leaving. They overheard the host telling the instructor that “these students are so polite”—and it definitely added to their confidence in confronting the culture alone afterward.

The students gained confidence quickly, and some of them felt comfortable to strike out on their own, exploring the city and encountering French people. They also had been following certain issues in French society during earlier French classes. This enhanced their perceptions of those situations in the French context. For example, in earlier courses, the group had been following the situation of the Roma in France, and questions of immigration. On a visit to Versailles, one of the students, meeting a Roma woman during the lunchtime picnic, sat with her and carried on a conversation for about an hour, later writing about the conversation in her diary and talking about her perspective on the immigration situation in general, and the Roma in particular. The encounter had turned an academic discussion on current events, usual in the stateside class, into a more personal and vivid realization of the reality of the situation in France. The student has since spoken on the subject in lower level French classes, on returning to her studies in the U.S.

The reasons for mandating participation in these experiences followed by personal reflection are many: to encourage the students to “walk in the shoes” of Germans and Austrians (Altmayer, 2008); to create moments of intercultural communication through participation (Levine, 2008); and to assist them in maneuvering through differences both good and bad (Majala, 2008). Saville-Troike (2006) discusses the way in which “learning a second language for communication purposes requires knowledge and skills for using it appropriately... Taking a social

perspective...L2 interpretation and production are influenced by contextual factors,...[and] the nature of social interaction may facilitate or inhibit L2 acquisition” (p. 130). The French and German students had the valuable, although sometimes frustrating, experience of finding themselves able to translate for their fellow students who had not had the benefit of language study. In this way, the groups encountered positive cultural communication situations, and also moments of cultural adjustments and frustrations. These experiences show the essential nature of cultural education as integrally part of the communication process. Students were able to make the “leap of insight ... defined by Byram (1997) as *savoir comprendre*” (p. 105). It is encouraging that participation in the culture, aided by pre-training in cultural communication as well as the language, had resulted in the communicative competence which Saville-Troike (2006) discusses, and that their training in reading, speaking, listening, and writing, had been enhanced by the study of culture, so that students could function, communicate, and experience in a satisfying way in their encounters with the people and environments of France, Germany and Austria.

### *Teaching History*

The course titles include history with culture; thus, history must be a part of instruction. Groenewold (2005) notes the need to include generational knowledge in the teaching of culture, and Dykstra-Pruim (2008) discusses the role that history has played in the development of culture. Knowing the importance of including history in courses has lead the authors to experiment with different strategies, some successful and some not as successful.

As noted earlier, both the French and German instructors rely on textbooks to guide instruction and to provide referential material for the students. For the purpose of teaching Germanic history, several textbooks have been selected, including *A Concise History of Germany* by Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Austria*, by Steven Beller, *Germany: A New History* by Hagen Schulze, and *Deutsche Geschichte* by Manfred Mai. For various reasons, the German instructor has taken different approaches to the teaching of history. Here, the instructor has experimented with two approaches to the teaching of history, with the second strategy being more successful than the first. Because the instructor has wanted students to have an understanding of the history before discussing cultural elements, the study of the history comprises the first half of the course and culture completes the second half. This order of presentation has been unwieldy for the instructor and for the students. Trying to digest 1200 years of history in seven weeks is difficult for the most astute student. A better strategy is that of dividing history into 12 segments and introducing it one segment per week. The students are not overwhelmed and the students reading in German<sup>1</sup> have longer to prepare between readings. In addition to the previously discussed culture texts, the text *Modern German Culture*, edited by Eva Kolinsky and Wilfried van der Will, is used which ties history and culture together for an in-depth look at the Germanic people. This historical approach to culture serves to reinforce both history and culture for the students. Before class discussions, students are required to write

a brief response to the reading. This works well because students come to class prepared to discuss instead of to listen to a lecture.

As difficult as it is for students to digest 1200 years of Germanic history in 15 weeks here, it is significantly more difficult to absorb in a course that lasts only three weeks. This conundrum has no best solution. For the most recent trip to Vienna, the German instructor tried a new approach to teaching history. The instructor taught the book backwards, beginning with the last chapter and continuing to the front. The purpose in doing this was to introduce the students as quickly as possible to the current historical, political, and social context of Austria. While teaching the last chapter of the textbook first accomplished that goal, this backwards chronology unfortunately left the students somewhat confused and unable to sort through the correct sequence of events.

The course in French includes less history taught systematically. Wylie and Brière (2001) in *Les Français* present an historical timeline from the vestiges of a France beginning to the events of modern times. This text also takes a look at the role of the French family before and after 1986, and the changes that have come to French society in modern times. The French government and the demography of France serve as examples of how France has changed since the world wars (Wylie & Brière, 2001).

While touching on history in the current courses, both here and abroad, the French instructor is considering adding more of a comprehensive timeline for the students in order to emphasize the importance of history as a framework for French culture and to give them a feel for history that they will experience in France. One possible source, Lenard's *Trésors du Temps* (2005), gives a very student-accessible compilation of the history of France, and could be useful to present short segments to enlighten students to the framework of historical knowledge that French people share from their schooling and their surroundings. Also, an excellent source for background on the more modern history of France is the four-volume series *Histoire de la France Politique* by Berstein and Winock (2004). The concept of the timeline demands that, to understand French points of view, one must also understand the role history plays in society, not only as the past that is over and done with, but as part of the ongoing shaping of society (Wylie & Brière, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

Teaching culture with the goal of developing intercultural competence must be a required element in the language teaching curriculum. Language learners cannot expect to participate in the society of a people group without understanding the culture that is intrinsically fused with the language they are learning. Similarly, without understanding the whys and hows of the culture, students cannot expect to create and maintain relationships with other peoples. Generally speaking history and culture courses are upper level courses for students who have completed the intermediate level of language learning. At this point in this institution's curriculum the authors are turning from a focus on language infused with culture, to teaching culture informed by the language they have learned (Brody, 2003). The

question the authors pose to themselves is whether instructors can help, aid, or speed up acculturation by teaching culture in a three-week session in the target language (Brody, 2003). The authors recognize that teaching for intercultural competence must be approached differently when teaching here (in the US, where the target language and culture are not the norm), and abroad (specifically in France, Germany or Austria where the target language and culture are the norm). The authors have described strategies for teaching intercultural competence that are commonly addressed in the literature: reflection, preparation for cultural encounters, participation in culture and understanding historical contexts. Each of these strategies can be included in teaching contexts both here and abroad; however, the authors have made a conscious shift in how intercultural competence is addressed due to location. Being able to participate in the culture while learning about it can be a matchless experience for language learners. Teachers must provide maximum opportunity for student participation in and encounters with the culture. We must focus on “public” interactions: elements of politeness, how to fit in, and recognizing what is esthetically pleasing or accepted (Smith, Paige, & Steglitz, 2003). At the same time, through the use of authentic materials and creativity on the part of the teacher, students learning another culture here can be prepared to address cultural moments when the opportunity arises or in Kaplan’s words, “[classroom-taught culture can] provide the student with a form within which he may operate, a form acceptable in this time and in this place” (1966, p. 20).

### Note

1. Because Germanic History and Culture satisfies requirements for both the German Minor and the General Education requirement for Global Awareness, the course is taught in English, with students minoring in German required to read the history in German (Manfred Mai) in order to maintain and practiced their German language skills.

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## Appendix A

### Suggested Textbooks

#### French History and Culture

- Asselin, G. & Mastron, R. (2010). *Au Contraire! Figuring out the French*. Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Berstein, S. & Winock, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Histoire de la France Politique, Vol.1-4*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Bréchon, P. (2003). *Les valeurs des Français*. Paris: Armand Colin.
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#### Germanic History and Culture

- Beller, S. (2006). *A Concise History of Austria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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# 4

## Hybrid language instruction: Finding the right fit

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### Abstract

Where do students fit into hybrid language instruction? The answer depends on the students themselves. This study examines student perception of the hybrid experience. Following a review of the literature that has tended to find no significant difference between the student learning outcomes from those taught in traditional courses as compared to students from hybrid language courses, this study compares student satisfaction information. Two different populations of learners are examined: beginning learners of French in a basic post-secondary language course and French majors and minors in a fourth-year post-secondary content course. While hybrid and online learning may provide an important gateway to communication for many, our findings suggest that it is not necessarily the right fit for all and that more detailed consideration of both the type of course and the level of learner is needed before full-scale format changes should be adopted.

### Introduction

As new gateways to communication, technological applications present a myriad of seemingly limitless choices for language educators. Many of these educators continue to seek out, create, and try new techniques for language learning. While still considered a young discipline, second language acquisition research and theory have evolved tremendously in a relatively short amount of time (Ellis, 2012). Indeed, as “schools of thought have come and gone, so have language teaching methods waxed and waned in popularity” (Brown, 1994, p. 14). The following pages propose that when identifying interesting and exciting

technologies and forms of delivery, we must be careful to resist the temptation of a one-size-fits-all mentality. Instead, we need to be particularly discriminating when matching the technology and form of delivery to the type and level of language instruction.

## **Background**

For Parry (2011), language teachers and learners “have never enjoyed such a rich variety of [technological] tools. [Students can] go online to watch weather forecasts on TV from Belgium or visit the Musée d’Orsay in Paris” (p. 2). Contributing to the attractiveness of technology, in general, or to online and hybrid environments for learning, in particular, is the belief that this type of instruction can increase students’ target language production by encouraging greater student participation, distributing participation more evenly among students, encouraging participation among shy students, transferring communication authority to students, reducing anxiety, developing extended discussion, and increasing student motivation (Sanders, 2005, p. 524). For Scida and Saury (2006) technology can enhance language learning by increasing time on task, helping to make students responsible, allowing students to tailor practice to their specific needs and pace, providing immediate feedback, and increasing student interest and motivation through multisensory and multidimensional input (p. 521).

Fueled by both the attractiveness of new media of instruction and the promise of increased student autonomy, agency, and interest, the authors have witnessed a steady increase in the number of hybrid and online courses offered at the post-secondary level in the US. In fact, as of 2012 there were over 5.6 million college students in the US taking at least one course in either a hybrid or online environment (Russell, 2012). According to Allen and Seamen (2011) an online course delivers between 80-100% of course content via technology, whereas a blended or hybrid course, by definition, replaces between 30-80% of face-to-face time and content by technology.

When designing a hybrid course there are many elements to be considered. Sitter, Carter, Maham, Massello, and Carter (2009) recommend that there be a careful balance between online and face-to-face course components, including “the need for clearly defined course requirements, the need to design elements that will engage the desired depth of critical thinking and learning, and the determination of which assignments are best executed face-to-face and which can be executed online” (p. 124).

Several studies have compared student learning outcomes from beginning hybrid language classes to those from similar face-to-face groups, often finding no significant difference in performance across groups. Sanders (2005), for example, compared student learning outcomes in multiple sections of beginning post-secondary Spanish. Specifically, he compared outcomes from traditional face-to-face sections to those of students in sections where online automated language exercises replaced a portion of seat time. In this case, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing activities were moved online and seat-time was reduced from 200 minutes per week to 130 minutes (p. 526). Using the BYU web-based

computer adaptive placement exam (WebCape), Sanders found a mean WebCape score of 299 for the face-to-face groups and 301 for the hybrid groups.

Similarly, Blake, Wilson, Cetto, and Pardo-Ballester (2008) compared oral proficiency outcomes from three types of beginning post-secondary Spanish classes: a hybrid class where three meetings per week were replaced by seven hours of study via computer, a completely online version of the class, and a traditional group that met five days per week. Measuring oral proficiency using the Spanish Versant test by Pearson, Blake et al. found no significant differences between outcomes for the three groups and concluded that “first-year distance learning and hybrid students [...] approximate the oral proficiency outcomes similar to those of first-year students working in traditional classrooms. Most importantly, these students are not being disadvantaged by taking Spanish in a non-traditional format” (p. 124).

Gascoigne and Parnell (2013) compared student learning outcomes across two sections of students in beginning of post-secondary French. In this case, the face-to-face section met for 240 minutes per week. The hybrid section met for 120 minutes per week while also completing 120 minutes of additional online review and practice. The same online work done by students in the hybrid section was covered or completed in class by students in the face-to-face section. Student performance was measured by chapter exams, composition scores, oral participation grades, the final exam, and final course grades. There was no significant difference found between groups on any of the measures and on some measures the hybrid group performed better than the face-to-face group.

Grgurovic (2011) believes that empirical studies investigating the use of blended or blended models of language learning can essentially be divided into two groups: comparative and non-comparative studies. Comparison studies, such as those involving the beginning post-secondary language learners described above “examine the effectiveness of blended learning by comparing blended instruction (face-to-face together with CALL instruction) with traditional instruction (face-to-face without CALL instruction). Non-comparison studies examine blended learning program design and implementation, and student and teacher attitudes toward blended learning” (p. 102). Given that a “considerable number of research studies found that it is possible to get the same (or even better) results in distance classes as in the traditional, face-to-face context” (Vorobel & Kim, 2012, p. 549), the researchers sought to take a closer look at student attitudes toward blended learning at different levels of instruction through a non-comparative outcomes study. Indeed, while most of the research to date has “focused on how and whether technology can support and facilitate language learning, there are fewer studies that look at what language instructors do with technology in their classrooms and how they perceive the use of technology” (p. 343). In fact, Murday, Ushida, and Chenoweth (2008) have called for a movement away from outcomes measurement to qualitative assessments of the effects of technology on student attitude (p. 126).

**Student Attitudes toward Hybrid Instruction**

Among those who have conducted non-comparative qualitative investigations of student attitudes, Karabulut, VeVelle, Li, and Surovov (2012) sought to examine third-year post-secondary French language students' perceptions of and attitudes toward technology. Using a qualitative multiple-case study design employing both surveys and interviews, Karabulut et al. investigated students' motivational intensity, technology use in English, and technology use in French, as well as faculty beliefs about student technology use. The authors found that while some students have a strong preference for traditional face-to-face classrooms most students "have positive attitudes toward technology-enhanced language learning" (p. 343). However, Karabulut et al. warn that faculty expectations pertaining to when and how students use technology may not be as accurate as one would expect.

In another survey, this time of elementary and intermediate post-secondary learners of French and Spanish, Murday, Ushida, and Chenoweth (2006) found increased satisfaction over time by hybrid learners. In this case, students in each language and at each level of instruction met face-to-face with their respective instructor and classmates for one hour per week and then met with their instructor for an additional 20 minutes of face-to-face conversation. In addition, students met online once per week for a virtual chat session in small language groups. They then received online materials and completed additional assignments via distance. Corresponding face-to-face groups met for 50 minutes four times per week wherein they covered the same material as the hybrid students. In the first semester courses, Murday et al. found no significant differences in course satisfaction as revealed by common end-of-semester course evaluation instruments. However, they did notice that course evaluation scores for the hybrid groups increased steadily across levels of instruction, from first- through fourth-semester courses. In other words, the slightly more advanced students in terms of course level were somewhat more satisfied with the hybrid course.

In addition to looking at student learning outcomes across treatment groups, Gascoigne and Parnell (2013) also compared course evaluation feedback from a face-to-face and a hybrid section of beginning French, which were both taught by the same instructor during the same semester. The course evaluation form used was a 35-question multiple-choice form with questions broken down into the following nine dimensions: learning, enthusiasm, organization, group interaction, individual rapport, breadth, assessment, evaluation, and assignments, followed by two general questions comparing the instructor to other instructors at the institution and comparing the course to other courses at the institution. Given that students in each section completed the same course evaluation form, there were no questions specifically addressing the hybrid nature of the course. The authors found that on each of the nine dimensions and one of the two general questions (rating the instructor), students in the hybrid section rated the course and the instructor higher than did students in the face-to-face section.

Cubillos (2007) examined students who self-selected either a face-to-face or a hybrid version of third-semester post-secondary Spanish. He found a "majority of

freshmen enrolling in traditional classes [with] sophomores, juniors, and seniors gravitating toward the hybrid sections, which suggests that the hybrid format was more appealing to experienced college learners” (p. 25). Cubillos believes that there may be a connection between personality factors and class type selection and recommends that “a much closer examination of the nature and significance of this relationship may be necessary before we can establish the extent to which the hybrid course environment can be beneficial for a general school population” (p. 28).

Following Cubillos’ recommendation, the present study sought to compare perceptions from two vastly different levels and types of hybrid language learners: first-year post-secondary French students enrolled in a required language course and fourth-year students comprised of French majors and minors near the end of their program.

### **The Study**

Certainly no language program sets out to alienate students, however for languages with smaller enrollment numbers, such as French or German, knowing what type of instruction (hybrid, face-to-face, or online) students prefer, and which level of student prefers it, is critical to program growth or perhaps even survival. In trying to understand what type of student is attracted to and appreciates hybrid language instruction, detailed surveys were administered to two different post-secondary French hybrid classes representing bookends of the college language-learning experience: a first-year elementary language class and a fourth-year senior level content course. As this is part of a long-term investigation, additional courses will be surveyed in the future.

#### *First-Year Course*

The first-year course was a five-credit hour, beginning French course emphasizing all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and culture taught during the spring semester of 2013 at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. The University of Nebraska-Omaha has a four-semester foreign language requirement for all students in the College of Arts and Sciences, the largest college at the University.

Instead of meeting for 240 minutes per week, as would a face-to-face section, the hybrid first-year course met for 120 minutes per week with the instructor and then completed the equivalent of two hours per week of additional online review and practice outside of class. Students were also given a detailed study-plan with clear due dates for all online assignments. The students had a hardcopy of the textbook for use in class as well as access to both an online textbook and workbook for practice that provided immediate feedback.

There were 22 students enrolled in the first-year hybrid course, of which seven were male and 15 were female. Even though this was a first-year course, there were only four freshmen enrolled. There were also six sophomores, eight juniors, and

four seniors. There were no declared French majors or minors enrolled in this particular section.

#### *Fourth-Year Course*

The fourth-year course in question was a three credit-hour course on the structure of the French language emphasizing French phonology, morphology, and syntax. In this case, the face-to-face time was also halved (from 150 minutes per week to 75). In exchange, students were required to complete additional readings and assignments on-line before coming to class.

There were 17 students enrolled in the fourth-year class, of which four were male and 13 were female. While there were no freshmen enrolled, the class contained three sophomores, three juniors, and 11 seniors. All students were declared French majors or minors.

### **Survey and Results**

Because the official university end-of-semester course evaluation form does not ask any questions specific to the hybrid experience, a new survey was prepared for use in these hybrid courses and modeled after a hybrid instrument prepared by Sitter, Carter, Mahan, Massello, and Carter (2009). (See Appendix A). The hybrid course survey contained 13 five-point Likert scale questions and two open-ended questions asking what students liked about taking French in a hybrid environment and what they would change if they could. The same survey was administered in both courses during the 14<sup>th</sup> week of a 16-week semester in the spring of 2013. For each of the Likert-scaled questions students were asked to circle the option that best described their belief or behavior. Each question with the percentage of responses per course level is presented below.

- Hybrid learning allows for the presentation of course content in a logical, sequential manner such that it facilitates learning.

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
First-year	10%	57%	19%	14%	-
Fourth-year	57%	43%	-	-	-

- Online content (including reading, research, review, learning new concepts, and assessment) is as demanding as content delivered in traditional face-to-face courses.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	10%	41%	29%	10%	10%
Fourth-year	29%	57%	7%	-	7%

- Technology used for assignments is easy to use and understand.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	19%	43%	24%	14%	-
Fourth-year	57%	43%	-	-	-

- The amount of communication and interaction between students and faculty in the hybrid course was sufficient for effective learning.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	19%	43%	19%	14%	5%
Fourth-year	50%	50%	-	-	-

5. Technology-based communication is as effective as face-to-face communication for responding to questions.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	-	43%	14%	29%	14%
Fourth-year	14%	58%	14%	-	14%

6. I believe using a hybrid course design is just as effective as traditional teaching methods.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	10%	24%	37%	19%	10%
Fourth-year	21%	58%	21%	-	-

7. I prefer hybrid courses to traditional face-to-face courses.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	5%	20%	25%	35%	15%
Fourth-year	21%	29%	29%	14%	7%

8. I prefer hybrid courses only for specific subjects and/or specific levels of instruction.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	19%	52%	24%	5%	-
Fourth-year	21%	72%	7%	-	-

9. Students can learn the same amount in a hybrid course as in a traditional course.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	14%	38%	19%	19%	10%
Fourth-year	29%	64%	7%	-	-

10. The hybrid format allowed me to control the overall pace of my learning.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	24%	28%	19%	19%	10%
Fourth-year	36%	57%	-	7%	-

11. I was able to motivate myself to complete the out-of-class assignments.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	19%	48%	14%	14%	5%
Fourth-year	21%	51%	21%	7%	-

12. What is your impression of this hybrid language experience so far?

	Positive	Somewhat Positive	Indifferent	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
First-year	43%	-	48%	9%	-
Fourth-year	71%	29%	-	-	-

## 13. Are your learning goals being met?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
First-year	40%	40%	5%	15%	-
Fourth-year	43%	50%	7%	-	-

**Discussion**

A quick review of the response rates by course level reveals that for every question the more advanced language learners reported having a more positive experience and reaction to the hybrid course than the first-year students. Because of the small sample size (17 and 22 students per course) tests of statistical significance were not run. Nevertheless, a closer look at those questions yielding the most divergent response is deserved. For several questions, a more favorable response of “agree” or “strongly agree” is nearly double for the advanced class as compared to the first-year group. For example, for question 6, “I believe using a hybrid course design is just as effective as traditional teaching methods” 34% of the first-year students agreed or strongly agreed compared to 61% of the advanced students. Moreover, 29% of the first-year students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement compared to none of the fourth-year students. Similarly, when asked if they preferred hybrid courses to traditional face-to-face courses, 25% of the first-year students agreed with this statement or strongly agreed compared to 50% of the advanced students. When asked to provide their overall impression of the hybrid language experience 43% of the first-year students rated it as positive or very positive compared to 100% of the fourth-year students.

While difficult to quantify student responses to the open-ended questions, a few comments stood out as especially common and representative. For example, many students at both levels of instruction appreciated the flexibility that the hybrid format afforded them, “I like that I can take a foreign language and still go to work,” or “I had the time to really go through the content and understand the lesson before coming back to class.” On the other hand, several students in both groups noted that they missed more frequent meetings with the instructor and contact with others in order to hear and speak the language, “I miss the simple repetition of hearing spoken French more often throughout the week,” or “I really enjoyed this class but wish there was more face-to-face interaction.” Some students in the first-year course expressed occasional frustration in not understanding material or not understanding the online homework, “Some of the online assignments are difficult and confusing,” while others from this group liked being able to use the online materials to work ahead of schedule as well as the ability to practice the language whenever they wanted, “It is possible to use online materials to get ahead,” or “I liked the ability to practice online whenever I wanted.”

**Conclusion**

One of the first-year students described the hybrid course as “a good course, but it just depends on the person taking it.” This student is right. Not only are there many individual differences and learning styles that will impact students’

preferences for course delivery, but level of study and type of course are likely to matter as well. Just as Cubillos (2007) observed that students' satisfaction with hybrid instruction improved slightly from beginning through intermediate courses, we have found student satisfaction to increase noticeably from beginning to advanced study. At first glance, this finding may not be surprising: more mature students with higher levels of proficiency are likely to be more willing to accept responsibility for managing their learning and demonstrate more persistence and agency within the hybrid environment. However, this expectation does not necessarily align with the majority of the offerings as represented in the research. Indeed, in our review of the literature we found 10 examples of studies examining hybrid applications to beginning and intermediate language classes (Blake et al. 2008; Cahill & Catanzaro, 1997; Chenoweth, Ushida, & Murday, 2006; Cubillos, 2007; Echavez-Solano, 2003; Gascoigne & Parnell, 2013; Karabulut et al. 2012; Murday et al., 2008; Sanders, 2005; Scida & Saury 2006) and a mere two examples involving advanced foreign language courses (Karabulut et al. 2012; Russell, 2012).

While hybrid instruction involving beginning language levels may be more common, at least as measured by the number of research studies available, it may not necessarily be the best fit for all learners. Few educators would disagree with Blake et al. (2008) that the hybrid format "is not the appropriate learning environment for everyone" (p.115). We would add that the hybrid format may not be the appropriate environment for all beginning language learners and echo Cubillos' call for a much closer examination of the nature and the significance of the relationship between type of language learner and format of instruction before declaring hybrid instruction to be beneficial for everyone (2007).

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**Appendix A**

## Hybrid Course Survey

Please respond to each of the following questions by circling the option that best describes your belief or behavior.

1. Hybrid learning allows for the presentation of course content in a logical, sequential manner such that it facilitates learning.

Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
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2. Online content (including reading, research, review, learning new concepts, and assessment) is as demanding as content delivered in traditional face-to-face courses.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. Technology used for assignments is easy to use and understand.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. The amount of communication and interaction between students and faculty in the hybrid course was sufficient for effective learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. Technology-based communication is as effective as face-to-face communication for responding to questions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. I believe using a hybrid course design is just as effective as traditional teaching methods.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. I prefer hybrid courses to traditional face-to-face courses.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8. I prefer hybrid courses only for specific subjects and/or specific levels of instruction.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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9. Students can learn the same amount in a hybrid course as in a traditional course.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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10. The hybrid format allowed me to control the overall pace of my learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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11. I was able to motivate myself to complete the out-of-class assignments.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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12. What is your impression of this hybrid language course experience so far?

Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Indifferent	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
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Your learning goals in this course being met.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**Short Answer Questions**

1. What do you like about taking this French course in a hybrid context?
2. What do you dislike about taking this French course in a hybrid context?

Modified from Sitter et al.

# 5

## **21<sup>st</sup> century world language classrooms: Technology tools supporting communicative competence**

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Barton County Community College

### **Abstract**

There is an explosion of Web 2.0 technology tools that have the potential to enhance student communicative competence. However, evaluating the effectiveness of these tools can be challenging without a framework (rubric) to analyze and compare functionality, student engagement, and overall quality of these new tools. In an effort to gain greater clarity on the value of these tools and enable educators to begin to systematically identify and select which attributes provide the most value to their students, the authors of this paper have developed the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC). This evaluative tool provides guidance in a world where these technology tools continue to quickly evolve, and where new tools are introduced frequently. By understanding these dynamics educators can identify the tools most relevant and beneficial to their students' learning and communicative competence.

**T**he educational landscape within world language classrooms is changing and evolving, embracing instruction to foster 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and dispositions. Fundamental skills and competencies still reside at the heart of curricular goals and outcomes; however, the path taken to achieve them and the

context within which they are embedded is developing to demonstrate increased rigor, relevance and real-world application.

In the last century we were a factory-driven society and schools were designed around that concept. Today we must create spaces where students can collaborate and participate in real-life environments where they can learn how to work on teams; that's what they'll be doing in the work world. (McCrea, 2012, p. 2)

Communication is the keystone within the world language classroom, and technology is affording teachers and students alike new ways to disseminate information and express themselves. "The 'spaces' where students learn are becoming more community-driven, interdisciplinary, and supported by technologies that engage virtual communication and collaboration" (Johnson, Smith, Levine & Haywood, 2010, p. 4). The abundance of open source technology available to both instructors and students creates instructional opportunities for second language learning in both synchronous and asynchronous formats. Understanding the development of these technologies and their role in teaching and learning can lead instructors to create authentic, collaborative and meaningful assignments to engage, stimulate and facilitate target language (TL) communication for students within a virtual environment. Meaningful and realistic interaction is essential in order for a second language learner to have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language.

Technology is a tool, a means of communication for students to succeed in the classroom (Grabe & Grabe, 2007). When used effectively, technology can facilitate language learning. "Technology dramatically extends and changes the breadth and depth of exposure that learners can have with the target language and interactive events in which they have the opportunity for language focus" (Chapelle, 2009, p.750). Determining which technologies are instructionally worthwhile and which support instructional goals and outcomes can be a challenging task for the instructor. The authors, in an effort to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, offer an evaluation tool, the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC), to gauge the value and effectiveness of Web 2.0 technologies. In addition, Web 2.0 tools will be highlighted; results will be shared regarding how each fared upon evaluation by the TERCC, and specific examples will be outlined regarding how each was integrated within instruction.

### **Communication and Communicative Competence**

In order to achieve native-like communication, one must have a solid grasp of the various communicative competencies. The framework of communicative competence is structured into four elements: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence, functioning together as guidelines for communicative language teaching (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983). When broken into their subcomponents, communicative competence refers to knowledge or the capability relating to language use rules. Strategic competence is speaking in an appropriate manner while maintaining awareness of the sociocultural aspect of the language. It is

the mastery of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that are used by speakers usually to compensate for breakdowns in communication (Canale 1983). Sociolinguistic competence is the appropriateness of utterances, the authenticity or naturalness of speech, and the cultural references within language. Vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling, and linguistic semantics are all features of grammatical competence. Discourse competence is the description of knowledge and skills in using rules for cohesion in form and coherence in meaning (Canale, 1983). Discourse can be oral or written, a report, a letter, or a set of instructions. The elements of communication remain the same. These competencies are needed to successfully communicate whether it is face to face or within a virtual environment. It is the responsibility of educators to structure and provide learning opportunities that foster and support true and meaningful ways to engage within communication and all its communicative competencies.

Assimilating a language's structure, linguistic rules and vocabulary in the target language entails a different approach to learning thus bringing forth cognitive challenges for students. Learners need to acquire linguistic knowledge in a classroom environment in order to facilitate smooth learning transitions from their native language to the target language. "Learning strategies are procedures undertaken by the learner, in order to make their own language learning as effective as possible" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.43). Language learners must be metacognitively aware of their own abilities in order to continue to learn and develop within the target language. A language learner may apply cognitive learning strategies that are essential for language learning such as repetition of a word for memorization or pronunciation and organization of words to classify with other graphics in an attempt to recall vocabulary, these strategies can be implemented within both traditional and blended learning environments. At times learners will use social and affective strategies to interact and cooperate with other students or a teacher for question clarification trying to meet their learning needs (Mitchell & Myles, 2004).

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Classrooms**

Classrooms today are populated by 21<sup>st</sup> century learners, digital natives (Prensky, 2001), and in order to be highly effective, educators, need to structure our classrooms to foster meaningful language learning (Savignon, 1997) that is grounded by curricular standards (ACTFL, 2012) and supports 21<sup>st</sup> century skill growth (P21, 2011). Language learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom is not "business as usual." Students are not passive learners, rather active participants within the learning process, creating content and making meaningful connection with their learning. According to Theisen, students need

engaging and relevant lessons and supportive learning environment where they can advance at varied rates and in different ways. We know they need choices, challenges, respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and opportunities to take on leadership roles. (2013, p. 7)

The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning promotes this active engagement through the incorporation of the 4 C's: collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication. While not absolutely requisite, technology is routinely integrated within the 21<sup>st</sup> century world language classrooms. Technology is becoming an essential, instructional tool that can be applied to enhance teaching in a language classroom. The millennial generation is accustomed to utilizing technology on a daily basis, incorporating familiar learning strategies and tools in the classroom facilitate a student's ability to learn a second language, thus benefiting both the instructor and the student. According to Jonas-Dwyer and Pospisil (2004), Millennials, "like to work with the best and latest high-technology gadgets. The Millennials are into teamwork, group projects, service learning, and community service" (p. 196). Students see technology as an essential learning tool and not a disposable gimmick or trend. Whether situated within a blended learning environment, distance learning, or in a more traditional brick and mortar classroom, technology is an inevitable part of that landscape. In order for world language classrooms to prepare students for the expanding global climate, instruction must embrace 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and learning environments.

### **Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)**

Meaningful learning and technology are essential when developing assignments in order to achieve communicative competence using Web 2.0 tools. However, with so many different tools available, it can be daunting to decide upon which to use. The authors developed an evaluation rubric to assist in making the determination about the value of Web 2.0 tools that are being considered.

In crafting this Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC) (Table 1), the authors were guided by the belief that meaningful communication is at the heart of language acquisition (Lee & VanPatten, 2003) and that technology should be used to logically support the instructional objectives. Based upon these principles and the research base regarding effective second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) and communicative competence (Savignon, 1997; Omaggio-Hadley, 2001), a working rubric was created. (See Table 1.)

Communicative competence was analyzed via its components of strategic, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competencies. While each of these four components is vital for effective communication, some of the competencies can be emphasized more than others; therefore, each was examined individually. The first part of the rubric is broken into the separate components of communicative competence; the second part evaluates elements that are more holistic in nature.

Communicative burden refers to the individuals sharing the responsibility to maintain and continue discourse. Where there is shared communicative burden, the conversation is more authentic. Furthermore, if communication is synchronous, the timeliness of that communicative burden assists individuals in overall understanding by promptly responding to points of clarification, elaboration, and, when needed, explanation.

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)				
	Highly supportive	Moderately Supportive	Unsupported	
Part 1	<b>Strategic Competence</b>	Technology supports participants ability to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdowns. Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems.	Technology allows participants limited opportunities to create, express ideas/emotions and solve problems.	Technology does not allow participant output of target language (TL).
	<b>Grammatical Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary, morphology (number & gender agreement, verb agreement, etc.), & syntax (word order) through TL intake and output.	Technology allows for participants to engage within written OR oral communication. Participants can recognize elements of grammar (vocab, morphology, & syntax) as a result of listening to or reading TL. Supports language input and intake.	Technology does not allow participants to engage within written or oral communication. Limited TL input. Grammatical elements of language are not emphasized or supported.
	<b>Sociolinguistic Competence</b>	Technology supports and encourages participants to demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can demonstrate sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL.	Technology allows participants to recognize their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can be exposed to the "naturalness" of the TL, without producing TL.	Technology does not support the understanding of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Naturalness of the TL cannot be realized.
	<b>Discourse Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion (ex. Storytelling).	Technology allows participants to experience (read or listen to) coherent, cohesive TL (input).	Technology does not support coherent or cohesive TL, rather TL is segmented and independently framed, not a cohesive discourse.
Part 2	<b>Communicative Burden</b>	Technology allows for shared, timely (synchronous) communicative burden, supporting true 2-way communication.	Technology allows for communicative burden; however, communication may be asynchronous.	Technology does not allow for shared communicative burden.
	<b>Authenticity of Communication</b>	Technology supports communication that is meaningful, relevant, and within an authentic real world setting.	Technology supports meaningful communication in a artificial setting (one that is minimally authentic).	Technology offers rote drill and practice. Not characteristic of a real world setting.
	<b>Internal Monitor</b>	Technology encourages participants to grow in their TL through making cognitive connections, connecting new content with previously learned material, and enhancing participants internal monitor.	Technology supports limited cognitive connections or connections to other contents and knowledge. Limited opportunities to enhance participants internal monitor.	Technology does not support connections nor participant's internal monitor.
	<b>Feedback</b>	Technology offers participants timely feedback to gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written AND oral communication.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback regarding accuracy of either their written or oral communication.	There wasn't the ability to give or receive feedback regarding their oral or verbal communication.

**Table 1.** Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)

The authenticity of communication supports the theory of second language acquisition (SLA) by examining the technology's ability to support meaningful communicative input. The authors recognize that communication within an instructional setting is unique, and the goal is to as closely as possible mirror communicative settings to those found within the "real world." When done effectively, technology supports students' ability to realize the relevance of the conversations and discussions within an authentic real-world application.

As students develop within their target language learning, their internal monitor develops as well. Successful instructional activities encourage students' internal monitors to work, grow, and develop. Krashen (1982) explained the internal monitor as the tool used to determine whether or not the language produced makes sense before being spoken. Therefore, with highly supportive instructional tools, Web 2.0 technologies encourage students to make cognitive connections; previously learned material serves as a bridge to new content, thus enhancing students' internal monitors.

Feedback is a vital component for efficacious learning. Particularly within a language-learning environment, timely feedback helps students gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written and/or oral communication. This element of the rubric evaluates technology's ability to offer feedback.

The TERCC is a semi-subjective evaluative tool. Pawson and Tilley (1997) state, "the 'findings' of evaluation are inevitably equivocal, but ... they are still profoundly useful" (p. 16). The rubric is intended to provide a measure to assist

instructors in determining if a particular piece of Web 2.0 technology is a good match for the instructional objective and supports overall communication.

### **Web 2.0 Tools in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom**

As reflective practitioners, the authors are continually seeking tools to enhance and elevate instructional impact upon student learning. In order to choose appropriate technology tools, the TERCC was created to explore how chosen Web 2.0 tools impacted student's communicative competence. In order to gauge the reliability of the TERCC, 20 inservice and preservice teachers used the rubric to evaluate four Web 2.0 technology tools (Ask 3, Go Animate, Story Creator, and VoiceThread). For the purposes of this project, the chosen Web 2.0 tools were used based upon mutually selective criteria. They needed to match form and function with the learning outcomes within the existing classroom. The technology tools needed to be: open source, asynchronous, user-friendly and intuitive, offer ease with classroom management features, allow for creativity, stimulate collaborative learning, and offer voice over, text, and video comment capabilities. The TERCC was then used to analyze and evaluate each of these technology tools in order to predict their potential success and value offered within the instructional setting. Following general qualitative research methods (Creswell, 1998) and incorporating a case study design (Stake, 1995), each Web 2.0 tool was then integrated as an instructional/learning activity. Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol was followed when informing participants of the scope and potential impact of this research. The participating classroom was a post-secondary entry-level Spanish class. The classroom was situated within a language lab, blended learning environment allowing for accessibility to technology and permitted ease of data collection through researcher observations and field notes. Blended learning within this environment offered students instructional opportunities via online delivery of content and the more traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Thirty-five student participants engaged with the technologies presented. Data collected from student participant artifacts, surveys, and qualitative comments coupled with researcher observations and field notes were triangulated with the TERCC data to create a more holistic analysis of how these Web 2.0 technology tools were impacting student communicative competence.

#### *Ask3*

**The tool.** Ask3 is a Web 2.0 cloud-based open-source web recording application released July 2013 (Ask3, 2013). Ask3 is an iPad application set up to share videos or graphics between members of a class via an iPad device; facilitating and ensuring student privacy. There is no limit to content storage. Teachers and students collaborate via threaded discussions, audio, and video conversation postings, thus allowing teachers and students to share and create videos. Students are able to login in to a class by use of a class code given to teachers during their sign up process. Ask3 enables both teacher and students to share their knowledge and collaborate remotely, creating quick visual lessons with recorded segments from either the teacher or the student. Students are

able to respond orally to a teacher's question, by use of a written answer or both oral and textual. The application is equipped with practical tools that allow teachers to create and post videos. The drawing tools include the ability to change textual color, photo capturing and importing voice recording. Ask3 stimulates students' creativity through use of video and audio in an online collaborative environment. The use of this application provides teachers additional forms of gathering informal assessment data within the classroom by use of sending students a link via e-mail. The iPad's mobility, large screen, portability, and user friendliness outweigh Ask3's disadvantage of not being able to create additional classes.

**TERCC results.** Ask3, in general, supports communicative competence (Figure 1).

<b>ASK3</b>				
<b>Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)</b>				
	<b>Highly supportive</b>	<b>Moderately Supportive</b>	<b>Unsupported</b>	
<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Strategic Competence</b>	Technology supports participants ability to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdowns. Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems.	Technology allows participants limited opportunities to create, express ideas/emotions and solve problems.	Technology does not allow participant output of target language (TL).
	<b>Grammatical Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary, morphology (number & gender agreement; verb agreement, etc.), & syntax (word order) through TL intake and output.	Technology allows for participants to engage within written OR oral communication. Participants can recognize elements of grammar (vocab, morphology, & syntax) as a result of listening to or reading TL. Supports language input and intake.	Technology does not allow participants to engage within written or oral communication. Limited TL input. Grammatical elements of language are not emphasized or supported.
	<b>Sociolinguistic Competence</b>	Technology supports and encourages participants to demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can demonstrate sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL.	Technology allows participants to recognize their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can be exposed to the "naturalness" of the TL, without producing TL.	Technology does not support the understanding of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Naturalness of the TL cannot be realized.
	<b>Discourse Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion (ex. Storytelling).	Technology allows participants to experience (read or listen to) coherent, cohesive TL (input).	Technology does not support coherent or cohesive TL, rather TL is segmented and independently framed, not a cohesive discourse.
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>Communicative Burden</b>	Technology allows for shared, timely (synchronous) communicative burden, supporting true 2-way communication.	Technology allows for communicative burden; however, communication may be asynchronous.	Technology does not allow for shared communicative burden.
	<b>Authenticity of Communication</b>	Technology supports communication that is meaningful, relevant, and within an authentic real world setting.	Technology supports meaningful communication in a artificial setting (one that is minimally authentic).	Technology offers rote drill and practice. Not characteristic of a real world setting.
	<b>Internal Monitor</b>	Technology encourages participants to grow in their TL through making cognitive connections, connecting new content with previously learned material, and enhancing participants internal monitor.	Technology supports limited cognitive connections or connections to other contents and knowledge. Limited opportunities to enhance participants internal monitor.	Technology does not support connections nor participant's internal monitor.
	<b>Feedback</b>	Technology offers participants timely feedback to gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written AND oral communication.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback regarding accuracy of either their written or oral communication.	There wasn't the ability to give or receive feedback regarding their oral or verbal communication.

**Figure 1.** Ask3 TERCC

Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions/thoughts, and solve problems thus fostering strategic competence. However, due to the asynchronous nature of the tool, there is reduced need to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdown. Grammatical competence is supported as a result of allowing students to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating their knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. Sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL is afforded by Ask3 and the videos that can be created thus offering the potential to support and encourage student sensitivity to the TL dialects, registers, references, and expressions resulting in supported

sociolinguistic competence. Through the contextual nature of the videos created by the Ask3 technology, discourse competence is supported, allowing participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion.

Once again, since the technology tool of Ask3 is asynchronous, timely, true 2-way communication is not supported, minimizing the communicative burden. There is limited authenticity in communication: rather, the technology supports meaningful communication but in an artificial setting. The technology of Ask3 offers the potential for students to grow in their TL through cognitive connections, connecting new and previously learned content. Opportunities exist to enhance participants' internal monitors. Through the utilization of threaded discussions written feedback is available to students with the potential to be timely.

**In action.** The assignment was given to students as a post-reading activity upon completion of the family unit. Prior to completing the assignment students had completed a lesson covering adjectives, physical traits and/or characteristics relating to the nuclear and extended family. The Ask3 assignment was a collaborative, paired, in-class activity. Instructions were given in the target language within the Ask3 platform as an audio posting. Students began collaborating, interacting and communicating upon hearing the instructions. This was evident as a din of conversation erupted within the language lab, as students made in an effort to communicate in the TL. One student supported this observation when he stated,

Using technology to learn a new language is highly beneficial. You have to think more of what you want to say. So you have a lot more planning to do, and it's not just putting a slide up there. You're actually thinking about how you're going to say it, and how you're going to present it.

Comprehension of TL instructions was evident as students proceeded to answer questions and record additional comments, reference the families and their physical traits. Prior to their recordings, students wrote their answers as they talked among themselves. Student participants continuously practiced TL vocabulary and simple sentence structure as they exchanged different point of views and scaffolded each other's TL growth. A student participant shared, "Where one person didn't know or needed help, other classmates knew or were available to help." Ask3 enabled students to share their knowledge collaborating through recorded audio segments in their quest for TL communication.

#### *GoAnimate*

**The tool.** GoAnimate is a cloud-based web application for producing animated videos (GoAnimate, 2013). GoAnimate allows users a free 30 second clip. It allows students to develop narrative videos by use of animated characters, avatars. Characters speak via lip-sync and move around throughout the video presentations. A student is able to record his or her voice in the TL, creating a monologue or dialogue varying by assignment. Users have the choice of importing previously recorded audio clips or select a text-to-speech built-in software system allowing their voices to change through pitch and/or intonation. This particular feature provides a student the ability to create two characters and deliver the

difficult task of a dialogue without the need of a second person. Language learners practice engaging within TL discourse, using learned vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. All videos and animated characters are supported with music, character movement effects, and different background settings. These background settings replicate authentic virtual environments. The websites feasibility of drag-and-drop tools as well as thousands of character models makes the use of this application easy to navigate and was well favored by the students. GoAnimate's multiple features include scripting and storyboarding, voice recording, visual backdrops settings, audio and publishing options. Diversity is well represented throughout GoAnimate; hundreds of characters can be customized into different shades of color allowing for individual identification of each project to be personalized by the student.

**TERCC results.** Inclusively, GoAnimate is supportive of communicative

GoAnimate Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)				
	Highly supportive	Moderately Supportive	Unsupported	
Part 1	<b>Strategic Competence</b>	Technology supports participants ability to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdowns. Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems.	Technology allows participants limited opportunities to create, express ideas/emotions and solve problems.	Technology does not allow participant output of target language (TL).
	<b>Grammatical Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary, morphology (number & gender agreement; verb agreement, etc.), & syntax (word order) through TL intake and output.	Technology allows for participants to engage within written OR oral communication. Participants can recognize elements of grammar (vocab, morphology, & syntax) as a result of listening to or reading TL. Supports language input and intake.	Technology does not allow participants to engage within written or oral communication. Limited TL input. Grammatical elements of language are not emphasized or supported.
	<b>Sociolinguistic Competence</b>	Technology supports and encourages participants to demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can demonstrate sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL.	Technology allows participants to recognize their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can be exposed to the "naturalness" of the TL, without producing TL.	Technology does not support the understanding of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Naturalness of the TL cannot be realized.
	<b>Discourse Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion. (ex. Storytelling).	Technology allows participants to experience (read or listen to) coherent, cohesive TL (input).	Technology does not support coherent or cohesive TL, rather TL is segmented and independently framed, not a cohesive discourse.
Part 2	<b>Communicative Burden</b>	Technology allows for shared, timely (synchronous) communicative burden, supporting true 2-way communication.	Technology allows for communicative burden; however, communication may be asynchronous.	Technology does not allow for shared communicative burden.
	<b>Authenticity of Communication</b>	Technology supports communication that is meaningful, relevant, and within an authentic real world setting.	Technology supports meaningful communication in a artificial setting (one that is minimally authentic).	Technology offers rote drill and practice. Not characteristic of a real world setting.
	<b>Internal Monitor</b>	Technology encourages participants to grow in their TL through making cognitive connections, connecting new content with previously learned material, and enhancing participants internal monitor.	Technology supports limited cognitive connections or connections to other contents and knowledge. Limited opportunities to enhance participants internal monitor.	Technology does not support connections nor participant's internal monitor.
	<b>Feedback</b>	Technology offers participants timely feedback to gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written AND oral communication.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback regarding accuracy of either their written or oral communication.	There wasn't the ability to give or receive feedback regarding their oral or verbal communication.

Figure 2. GoAnimate TERCC

There is high potential for creativity, offering students the opportunity to express ideas/emotions/thoughts and/or solve problems. If students choose to, circumlocution is possible, but, due to the nature of preplanned videos, the utilization of circumlocution is not likely. The ability to storyboard and script the video offers a strong case that grammatical competence is supported within GoAnimate; language learners plan their video through written communication and produce their videos through oral communication. The features affording

voice to be varied through pitch and intonation helps to support sociolinguistic competence. Students can demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, and potential idiomatic expressions, thus supporting overall sensitivity to the “naturalness” of TL. Discourse competence is strongly supported with GoAnimate with language learners demonstrating their ability to organize the TL coherently and cohesively.

Due to the ability to create a video between multiple avatars, an artificial environment can be created to elicit communicative burden. Content created from the videos supports meaningful communication, but since the setting is artificial, there is only moderate authenticity of communication. Once again, the ability to plan, storyboard, and script out the dialogue for the video prior to enacting and producing it, encourages students to grow in their TL through enhancing their internal monitor. Cognitive connections are supported and links between new and previously learned content are supported. Finally, the technology tool of GoAnimate offers limited opportunities embedded within it to provide or receive feedback regarding communication accuracy.

**In action.** The GoAnimate assignment was a comprehensive final project. Students were able to choose any topic that had been covered throughout the duration of the course. The object of the final project was to promote creativity and give students the opportunity to produce a two-minute monologues or dialogues in the TL demonstrating knowledge of learned vocabulary and grammar over familiar thematic topics. Students could work individually or collaboratively to complete this in-class assignment. It was observed that students reacted to the technology with enthusiasm and engagement within the assignment. Instructions were given in the target language. As students made progress on the assignment and further engaged with the technology, it was noted that student creativity and TL relevance flourished. Students showed interest as they began to design their own projects; they took ownership and responsibility, arriving early to class and working on their projects. One student stated, “I loved it. Since you need knowledge and creativity; it helped spark my imagination and motivated me to learn and push myself.” Ideas began to shape their understanding of discourse. Students applied verbs and vocabulary words to form sentences, which eventually fed into their dialogue. Instant creativity and authentically meaningful conversation occurred even within a simulated online environment. For example, one group decided to have two parts to their project, including a section where they were at Starbucks ordering coffee. Their dialogue morphed from simple greetings into more complex sentence structures. Students applied prior vocabulary along with new vocabulary in order to meet their dialogue needs. Collaboration went beyond creativity as they strived to pronounce each and every word to perfection. In some instances a group would erase their recordings up to more than five times until they were satisfied with their pronunciation. Students were satisfied with the final outcome of the assignment. They were able to create meaningful dialogues and simulate authentic online environments based on their own experiences, creativity, and understanding.

### Story Creator

**The tool.** Story Creator is a Web 2.0 open source application to be used for storytelling or narration on iPad or iPhone (Story Creator, 2013). Students are able to create and produce electronic books narrated through their recorded voice. The application allows students to take photos, video tape, and record voice over. They can also upload their pictures from devices, Flickr, Picasa, and Facebook. The application supports textual highlighting. Textual enhancement fosters users ability to attend to grammatical forms and assists with TL fluency while reading the electronic book. This application supports the ability to practice the TL by formulating sentences and practicing vocabulary as students record their voices in conjunction with the graphics being displayed on the page. Final products can be shared via Facebook or through e-mail.

**TERCC results.** Story Creator was overall highly supportive when fostering students' communicative competencies (Figure 3).

Story Creator				
Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)				
	Highly supportive	Moderately Supportive	Unsupported	
Part 1	<b>Strategic Competence</b>	Technology supports participants ability to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdowns. Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems.	Technology allows participants limited opportunities to create, express ideas/emotions and solve problems.	Technology does not allow participant output of target language (TL).
	<b>Grammatical Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary, morphology (number & gender agreement; verb agreement, etc.), & syntax (word order) through TL intake and output.	Technology allows for participants to recognize elements of grammar (vocab, morphology, & syntax) as a result of listening to or reading TL. Supports language input and intake.	Technology does not allow participants to engage within written or oral communication. Limited TL input. Grammatical elements of language are not emphasized or supported.
	<b>Sociolinguistic Competence</b>	Technology supports and encourages participants to demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can demonstrate sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL.	Technology allows participants to recognize their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can be exposed to the "naturalness" of the TL, without producing TL.	Technology does not support the understanding of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Naturalness of the TL cannot be realized.
	<b>Discourse Competence</b>	Technology allows participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion (ex. Storytelling).	Technology allows participants to experience (read or listen to) coherent, cohesive TL (input).	Technology does not support coherent or cohesive TL, rather TL is segmented and independently framed, not a cohesive discourse.
Part 2	<b>Communicative Burden</b>	Technology allows for shared, timely (synchronous) communicative burden, supporting true 2-way communication.	Technology allows for communicative burden; however, communication may be asynchronous.	Technology does not allow for shared communicative burden.
	<b>Authenticity of Communication</b>	Technology supports communication that is meaningful, relevant, and within an authentic real world setting.	Technology supports meaningful communication in a artificial setting (one that is minimally authentic).	Technology offers rote drill and practice. Not characteristic of a real world setting.
	<b>Internal Monitor</b>	Technology encourages participants to grow in their TL through making cognitive connections, connecting new content with previously learned material, and enhancing participants internal monitor.	Technology supports limited cognitive connections or connections to other contents and knowledge. Limited opportunities to enhance participants internal monitor.	Technology does not support connections nor participant's internal monitor.
	<b>Feedback</b>	Technology offers participants timely feedback to gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written AND oral communication.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback regarding accuracy of either their written or oral communication.	There wasn't the ability to give or receive feedback regarding their oral or verbal communication.

Figure 3. Story Creator TERCC

This tool supports strategic competence, allowing language learners to create, express ideas/emotions/thoughts, and solve problems. While there is the ability for students to circumlocute ideas, since this is a publishing tool, it is the assumption that students would have already determined what would be said/written in the TL and, therefore, minimal circumlocution would be necessary. Story Creator allows

for the potential of oral and written intake and output, thus allowing language learners to demonstrate competence and knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, and syntax (highly supportive in grammatical competence). Sociolinguistic competence has the potential to be supported, through the utilization of the Web 2.0 tool; however, much of tool's support depends upon what TL the participant produces. Language learners can demonstrate the "naturalness" of language through the flow and fluency from TL production. Discourse competence is the subcategory in which Story Creator shines and is highly supportive. Story Creator allows language learners to demonstrate their ability to organize the TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion, as with storytelling.

In analyzing some of the ancillary elements of Story Creator, communicative burden is unsupported. Because the intent of the technology is to create a narrative or story, the creator/writer is communicating to the reader; however, communication is not two-way; clarification cannot be requested. These are all elements that have the potential to make comprehension more challenging. The other unsupported element of Story Creator was the lack of ability embedded within the technology to give or receive feedback regarding the oral or verbal communication. Conversely, Story Creator offers authenticity of communication that is meaningful and relevant. Students are able to take control of their interactions with the TL, which supports not only the authenticity and meaningfulness of the task but also supports the development of students' internal monitor. When students can see and connect to the meaning and context of the TL, there is increased potential to grow in the TL as a result of making cognitive connections, connecting new content with that previously learned and an overall enhanced internal monitor.

**In action.** Students were asked to create a story; they were able to choose any topic that had been covered during the duration of the course. The activity was assigned as an individual activity. Instructions were written and given in the target language. The final product of Story Creator required more creativity from students due to the narrated story line application. Students completed assignments without any additional support from their classmates. Students explained that running into technology problems was frustrating because they had to resolve it by themselves. In addition to technological assistance, the ideas were limited based on limited collaboration or the impact of bouncing ideas off one another. As one student stated, "I envied when we worked in teams. When we ran into problems, we found solutions when we talked." One student was almost done with her project and decided to begin from scratch due to misunderstanding the instructions. Students narrated their story line in conjunction with pictures they chose. The pictures chosen by the students were personal thus producing authentic conversation. Narrated conversation in a familiar social authentic environment influenced production of TL. For example, a student had recently visited Panama; she included a picture of a restaurant nearby and insisted on researching the correct pronunciation for a particular dish; *empanadas* (a flour tortilla baked with beef filling), an authentic food from Panama. At this point the assignment became meaningful, and the student dedicated more time toward

pronunciation, grammar, and sentence structure. She wanted to make certain her final project was a fusion of a language class with a summer vacation.

### *VoiceThread*

**The tool.** VoiceThread is a cloud application, meaning there is no software needed to install. Voicethread is an online, open source, collaborative slideshow with built in audio that allows students to create, comment, and converse based upon embedded multimedia (VoiceThread, 2013). VoiceThread allows students to post comments on VoiceThread slides using one of five commenting options: microphone, webcam, text, phone, and audio-file upload in the target language as an individual or in a collaborative effort.

**TERCC results.** Overall, VoiceThread was found to be a highly supportive tool to use when fostering students' communicative competence (Figure 4).

VoiceThread				
Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC)				
		Highly supportive	Moderately Supportive	Unsupported
Part 1	Strategic Competence	Technology supports participants ability to circumlocute in order to compensate for linguistic breakdowns. Technology allows participants to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems.	Technology allows participants limited opportunities to create, express ideas/emotions and solve problems.	Technology does not allow participant output of target language (TL).
	Grammatical Competence	Technology allows participants to practice written and oral communication, demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary, morphology (number & gender agreement; verb agreement, etc.), & syntax (word order) through TL intake and output.	Technology allows for participants to engage within written OR oral communication. Participants can recognize elements of grammar (vocab, morphology, & syntax) as a result of listening to or reading TL. Supports language input and intake.	Technology does not allow participants to engage within written or oral communication. Limited TL input. Grammatical elements of language are not emphasized or supported.
	Sociolinguistic Competence	Technology supports and encourages participants to demonstrate their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can demonstrate sensitivity to the "naturalness" of the TL.	Technology allows participants to recognize their sensitivity to TL dialects and registers, knowledge of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Participants can be exposed to the "naturalness" of the TL, without producing TL.	Technology does not support the understanding of cultural references, idiomatic expressions, ect. Naturalness of the TL cannot be realized.
	Discourse Competence	Technology allows participants to demonstrate their ability to organize TL into a coherent, cohesive fashion (ex. Storytelling).	Technology allows participants to experience (read or listen to) coherent, cohesive TL (input).	Technology does not support coherent or cohesive TL, rather TL is segmented and independently framed, not a cohesive discourse.
Part 2	Communicative Burden	Technology allows for shared, timely (synchronous) communicative burden, supporting true 2-way communication.	Technology allows for communicative burden; however, communication may be asynchronous.	Technology does not allow for shared communicative burden.
	Authenticity of Communication	Technology supports communication that is meaningful, relevant, and within an authentic real world setting.	Technology supports meaningful communication in an artificial setting (one that is minimally authentic).	Technology offers rote drill and practice. Not characteristic of a real world setting.
	Internal Monitor	Technology encourages participants to grow in their TL through making cognitive connections, connecting new content with previously learned material, and enhancing participants internal monitor.	Technology supports limited cognitive connections or connections to other contents and knowledge. Limited opportunities to enhance participants internal monitor.	Technology does not support connections nor participant's internal monitor.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback to gauge the accuracy/correctness of their written AND oral communication.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback regarding accuracy of either their written or oral communication.	There wasn't the ability to give or receive feedback regarding their oral or verbal communication.

Figure 4. VoiceThread TERCC

VoiceThread allows students to create, express ideas/emotions, and solve problems, being highly supportive of strategic competence. However, while possible, the tool does not intuitively encourage circumlocution. Particularly, since communication is asynchronous, linguistic breakdowns can be scaffolded and solved prior to the necessity of circumlocution. Through the production of either oral and/or written communication, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and

discourse competencies are all highly supported within VoiceThread. Through their output, students can demonstrate knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax (grammatical competence), sensitivity to registers, cultural nuances, and language “naturalness” (sociolinguistic competence) and can organize TL within a coherent, cohesive fashion (discourse competence).

The asynchronous nature of VoiceThread allows for reduced communicative burden and limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback. Even though VoiceThread has these limitations, there are many elements that make it a valuable learning tool. Depending upon how the tool is used within instruction, VoiceThread has the potential to become highly supportive of authentic communication. Discussion surrounding the collaborative multimedia slideshows can support meaningful and relevant communication framed within an authentic, real world setting. There is also a high potential for VoiceThread to support a student’s internal monitor. Particularly since VoiceThread affords students the ability to listen to/read their comments multiple times before they are published or posted, participants can work to develop their skills (McKeeman & Oviedo, 2012).

**In action.** The VoiceThread application was used to assign an individual activity and asked students to respond to a simulated ‘speed dating’ scenario. Students introduced themselves, talked about where they lived, where they were from, their age, and what they liked. VoiceThread instructions were written and given orally on the initial slide along with a graphic used to represent ‘speed dating.’ Student comments varied; some fulfilled activity requirements by answering the essential questions, while others responded creatively. Levels of communicative competence were evident by how they chose to comment within the VoiceThread. Intonation, voice, and fluency were recorded as students asked and answered questions, expressing their own thoughts to convey authentic ‘speed dating’ responses. A student stated, “This project helped me in a positive way. It furthered my ability to speak more fluently.” Students went beyond what was currently being learned to use verbs and vocabulary which had yet to be reviewed in class. Students connected new content with previously learned material in order to accurately express their ideas. A student’s response to giving her age was reformatted as a question: “*Puedes adivinar mi edad?*” (Can you guess my age?). The verbs *poder* (can, to be able to) and *adivinar* (to guess) had not been covered in class. Another student added a question at the end of his information as well as the verb ‘to choose,’ “*Elijo a yo!*” (Choose me). The structure of the sentence was grammatically incorrect, but his message was achieved. The student’s ability to communicate was heightened through motivation and interest and contextual engagement.

## **Discussion and Implications**

Based upon the data collected and analyzed from the four Web 2.0 tools (Ask3, GoAnimate, Story Creator, and VoiceThread) and their integration within the classroom, the authors can generalize that the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC) is a reliable and valid metric to use

when evaluating potential technologies. This rubric provides teachers a guideline with which to begin the evaluation process when choosing a technology tool for instruction. Teachers must be mindful of learning goals and objectives when choosing instructional activities and resources (McKeeman & Oviedo, 2012). Web 2.0 technology tools have great potential to support communicative competence and overall student learning; however, they must be integrated within instruction so that there is a natural fit and its effectiveness is realized. The TERCC offers a metric in which teachers can make decisions that are supported and validated, aligning Web 2.0 tools appropriately to instructional design.

It is the ultimate goal of world language classrooms to scaffold student learning in order to attain communicative competence and thus second language acquisition. The Web 2.0 tools integrated within this study's classroom shared some commonalities; they provided asynchronous interaction, offered written and oral TL practice, created an artificial, yet real-world based setting, were student-centric, supported the use of students' internal monitors, promoted creativity, and provided a platform for which students could express their personal ideas, emotions, and thoughts. These elements fostered communicative competence at some level, whether it is moderately supportive or highly supportive. However, as with any instructional tool, one must supplement learning with intentionally structured activities and chosen resources in order to complete a holistic learning experience. Based upon the Web 2.0 tools chosen within this study (Ask3, GoAnimate, Story Creator, and VoiceThread), grammatical competence and discourse competence were strongly supported within the learning activities. For example, one student stated, "I was able to hear myself and the mistakes I was making by hearing, so I was able to go back and make corrections." Strategic competence was, to some extent, supported but the element of circumlocution to compensate for linguistic breakdown was not afforded by the chosen technologies. Therefore, face-to-face quick talks or impromptu discussions and dialogues are necessary in order to fully address strategic competence. Similarly, with sociolinguistic competence, the potential exists within the technologies to allow students to recognize and demonstrate cultural sensitivity within language; however, unless students take the initiative to capitalize upon it, this competency, too, could be an area in which more is needed. One student did just this within the study, "During this assignment I've learned how to not only make a conversation work through animation, but *I was also able to practice motions that would be used in real conversation.*" The chosen Web 2.0 technologies encouraged students to take control of their learning, thus making it meaningful and personalized to them. Each student was able to work at his/her own level to advance toward a greater communicative competence. When integrating any Web 2.0 technology tool within instruction, it is vital for teachers to maintain a solid grasp on the learning goal or objective in order to properly align the right tool for the right purpose.

Instructional decisions should be well grounded and based in research and best practices. The authors sought to explore and develop a way in which teachers could evaluate Web 2.0 technologies in order to gauge the tool's potential instructional value, determine how best to align its strengths with overall learning goals in

order to maximize communicative competence. The creation of the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC) provides a metric to offer this grounding for which instructional decisions can be made.

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# 6

## The role of textbooks in promoting communication goals

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### Abstract

Contemporary course and program goals often focus on the development of proficiency and invoke the National Standards as guiding principles of content. Beyond fulfilling basic graduation requirements, many 21<sup>st</sup> century learners recognize the importance of communication in the language they are studying. However, some learners claim to be able to do little in the target language after fulfilling the required courses and do not continue on to higher level studies. This article calls into question instructional materials utilized for courses and reveals a disconnection between theory and practice. An examination of beginning Spanish textbooks demonstrates a perpetuation of traditional content and practices. In addition, there exists a disproportionate number of traditional, mechanical, grammar-based practice versus creative language tasks (CLT) or tasks that encourage students to interact in creative, authentic, and real world situations. Programs that are closely defined by a publisher-prepared textbooks may be unable to meet student and professional goals of communication.

### Introduction

**T**hree decades of research in second language acquisition have brought about a general professional consensus among second and foreign language educators. Most would agree that language proficiency should be the

overarching and main goal of language instruction (Bell, 2005). Furthermore, instructors have been urged by researchers and professional organizations to provide multiple opportunities to expose students to optimal input, to encourage creative student production, and to promote interaction and negotiation of meaning (Burke, 2010; Ellis, 2005; Frey, 1988; Krashen, 1987; Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Long, 1981, 1996; Pica et al., 1989; Sousa, 1995; Swain, 1985, 1995, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Van Patten, 2003). K-16 Content Standards have been created by task forces at the national and state levels to support the development of proficiency and communicative competence, while encouraging content driven lessons and experiential learning in and beyond the classroom setting (*Standards*, 2006). A uniform assessment tool for evaluating proficiency has been developed and updated by a nationally recognized organization (ACTFL, 2012). The profession has made gains with regard to the theory and principles of second language teaching, evident by these concrete examples.

From the students' perspective, those who enroll in introductory university courses to comply with credit obligations often acknowledge that they do have learning goals beyond simply the fulfillment of a requirement. Recognizing the value of the content, students are interested in communicating effectively in the target language (Terrell, 1977). Many, however, do not continue their coursework beyond the basic requirement, due to a variety of factors, including time, money, and disillusionment with the results. Students claim to be able to do little in the way of communication upon completion of the credit requirement. How are world language educators failing them? An examination of beginning Spanish textbooks reveals a disconnection between theory and practice. There exists a disproportionate number of traditional, mechanical, grammar-based practice versus creative language tasks (CLT) or tasks that encourage students to interact in creative, authentic, and real world situations. Curricula that are closely defined by a publisher-prepared textbook (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski, 2008; Komoski, 1985; Schultz, 1991) may be unable to meet student and professional goals of communication.

### **The Textbook and Beginning Language Programs**

#### *The textbook as curriculum*

The beginning textbook has become the “bible” or “instruction guidebook,” providing complete support for novice teachers and teaching assistants, and a page by page plan for veteran instructors, who may have little time or interest to pursue supplementation or adaptation of the textbook. Kramsch (1988) referred to the textbook as “the bedrock of syllabus design and lesson planning...” (p. 68). The fact that some instructors may not have a background in pedagogical training or applied linguistics adds to the acceptance of the textbook as the standard of content and accepted best practices of delivery. For some instructors, it is seen as “sacred and inviolable” (Joiner & Phillips, 1982, p. 108). In addition, a lack of adequate pedagogical training leads to the textbook being treated as “omnipresent and ever open” (Warriner, 1989, p. 82). And if it is always open and followed

religiously, the textbook determines what, when, and how the language is to be taught (Heilenman, 1991). Many departments or language sections tend to rely on the beginning language textbook to provide the continuity and consistency of presentation and content for multi-section courses. Therefore, one could summarize that the textbook is the customary curriculum of beginning language courses, defining learning objectives and instructor and learner behaviors (Ariew, 1982).

*Materials development and the process of selection*

By definition, materials that are developed and marketed to university programs and K-12 public school systems are done so with the hopes of lucrative gains for the publishing firm and its editorial staff (Heilenman, 1991; Heilenman & Tschirner, 1993; Joiner & Phillips, 1983; Richards, 2001; Tomlinson, 2003). A number of authors have described and documented the long process of publisher-produced materials development (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski, 2008; Heilenman, 1993; Heilenman & Tschirner, 1993; Schultz, 1991; Mares, 2003). While many authors will claim to have begun the process with the goal of writing materials that are innovative, creative, and relevant to learners, textbooks are inevitably a product of compromise (Ariew, 1982; Heilenman, 1993; Joiner & Phillips, 1982; Bragger & Rice, 2000). Since the marketability of authored materials is tested through paid peer reviews on numerous occasions, multiple revisions are required in order to meet the demands of prospective customers. Large volume sales depend upon the level of acceptance by colleagues in the decision making position and require large scale adoption by colleagues and universities across the country for the textbook to be considered successful and worthy of moving into a second edition development phase.

Innovation in textbooks lags behind research in second language acquisition and methodology, as market analysis has determined that the professionals who select textbooks or serve on selection committees tend to be conservative and resistant to change (Heilenman, 1993; Tomlinson, 2003). Wong and Van Patten (2003) describe the current situation as one in which instructors enter the realm of teaching with pre-conceived traditional notions of the structure of textbooks. Thus, publishers fear that a major deviation from the norm will significantly affect large scale sales, and, consequently, they tend to offer conservative options that appeal to a large number of adopters. "The reality is that publishers will probably still play safe and stick to what they know they can sell..." (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 9). Small scale alterations to content along with large scale changes to design and technology components are generally considered more palatable by publishing firms. Bragger and Rice (2000) describe the "illusion of change" that is evident due to the constant addition of ancillary material offerings that accompany a textbook. New editions and texts new to the market generally offer a repackaging of existing materials with some visual alterations and perhaps a marketing ploy based on a new theme in research, focusing on the appropriate and expected professional jargon of the day, such as "communicative," "proficiency oriented," "authentic," "National Standards" or "functional language". According to Heilenman (1993), since little

protection exists through patents and intellectual property rights, major successful innovations are not encouraged or possible, due to the fact that they could easily be slightly altered and immediately marketed by a competing company.

With over sixty beginning Spanish textbooks on the market, the selection process can be overwhelming. Yet a study by Angell, DuBravac, and Gonglewski (2008) found an underlying apathy toward textbook selection for beginning language programs. Based on an e-mail survey to university supervisors and coordinators, neither textbook reviews nor checklists or other tools of evaluation were determined to be in widespread use in evaluating current products on the market. The authors discovered the need for greater transparency and increased discussion regarding such a critical matter in language teaching. Finally, Angell, DuBravac, and Gonglewski (2008) suspect a general acceptance of the textbook as the overarching curriculum on the part of supervisors, textbook selection committees, and instructors and a less rigorous and critical examination of prospective textbooks as they correspond to a particular educational context. Bragger and Rice (2000) document this phenomenon by describing teachers who either do not take an active role in textbook selection or who evaluate texts based on “superficial characteristics” and the infamous “flip test” (visual appeal and a quick visual check for the presence of particular desired features.) Tomlinson (2003) claims that materials are more often evaluated based on visual appeal alone and judged by whether or not they conform to the instructor’s expectations of how a textbook should appear. This lack of interest in textbook content and structure of the beginning language program is further reflected by the relatively small number of articles published on the subject (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski, 2008; Bragger & Rice, 2000).

Previous studies demonstrate that authority appears to have been delegated to the beginning Spanish textbook to override or compromise professional experience, pedagogical research and best practices regarding the content of required introductory language courses (Heilenman, 1991). The purpose of this study is to complete a critical examination and analysis of a representative group of beginning Spanish textbooks in order to determine the extent to which the textbook curriculum ensures meeting program and self-proclaimed student goals. Specific research questions were as follows:

1. Has there been appreciable change with regard to the traditional grammatical syllabus of beginning, university-level Spanish textbooks?
2. What is the typical grammatical load per chapter of textbooks and does this allow time for communication tasks?
3. What is the average lexical load per chapter and to what extent does this agree with suggested amounts from pedagogical research?
4. How many tasks providing meaningful interactions in authentic, real world contexts are incorporated in beginning Spanish textbooks?

Determining whether or not introductory Spanish textbook curricula are assisting the profession and the clientele in meeting communication goals has high stakes for the effectiveness of language programs.

*Methods of Analysis*

Two sets of introductory textbooks were analyzed for the current study. The first set was comprised of 13 books published between 1965 and 2007. A second set of contemporary texts included 17 latest editions with publication dates ranging from 2008 to 2012. Refer to Table 1 for a complete list of all 30 textbooks included in this investigation.

**Table 1.** Introductory Spanish Textbooks 1965-2012

Text	Author	Year	Edition	Publisher
<i>Foundation Course in Spanish</i>	Turk and Espinosa	1965	2 <sup>nd</sup>	D.C. Heath
<i>Spanish-A Basic Course</i>	Noble and Lacasa	1977	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Holt, Rinehart and Winston
<i>En contacto</i>	Valencia and Merlonghi	1980	1 <sup>st</sup>	Houghton Mifflin
<i>Puntos de Partida An Introduction to Spanish</i>	Knorre, et al.	1981	1 <sup>st</sup>	Random House
<i>Beginning Spanish A Concept Approach</i>	Da Silva	1983	5 <sup>th</sup>	Harper and Row
<i>Dos mundos</i>	Terrell, et al.	1986	1 <sup>st</sup>	McGraw Hill
<i>¡Claro que sí!</i>	Garner, et al.	1990	1 <sup>st</sup>	Houghton Mifflin
<i>Arriba</i>	Zayas-Bazán and Fernández	1993	1 <sup>st</sup>	Prentice Hall
<i>Motivos de conversación</i>	Nicholas and Dominicus	2000	5 <sup>th</sup>	McGraw hill
<i>Sol y viento</i>	VanPatten, et al.	2005	1 <sup>st</sup>	McGraw Hill
<i>Vistas</i>	Blanco and Donley	2005	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Vista Higher Learning
<i>¡Dímelo tú!</i>	Rodríguez, et al.	2006	5 <sup>th</sup>	Thomson Heinle
<i>Imágenes</i>	Rush, et al.	2007	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Houghton Mifflin
<i>¿Sabías que...?</i>	Van Patten, et al.	2008	5 <sup>th</sup>	McGraw Hill
<i>¡Anda! Curso elemental</i>	Heining-Boynton and Cowell	2009	1 <sup>st</sup>	Pearson
<i>Adelante, Uno, Dos, Tres</i>	Blanco	2009	1 <sup>st</sup>	Vista Higher Learning
<i>Portafolio</i>	Ramos and Davis	2009	1 <sup>st</sup>	McGraw-Hill
<i>Puntos de partida</i>	Knorre, et al.	2009	8 <sup>th</sup>	McGraw-Hill
<i>Apúntate</i>	Pérez-Gironés, Dorwick	2010	1 <sup>st</sup>	McGraw Hill

<i>¡Con Brío!</i>	Lucas Murillo and Dawson	2010	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Wiley
<i>Dos mundos</i>	Terrell, et al.	2010	7 <sup>th</sup>	McGraw
<i>Mosaicos</i>	Castells	2010	5 <sup>th</sup>	Pearson
<i>Hola Amigos, Volume 1</i>	Jarvis, et al.	2011	7 <sup>th</sup>	Cengage
<i>Viajes Introducción al español</i>	Hershberger, et al.	2011	1 <sup>st</sup>	Cengage
<i>Arriba</i>	Zayas-Bazán, et al.	2012	6 <sup>th</sup>	Pearson
<i>Dicho y hecho</i>	Potwoski, et al.	2012	9 <sup>th</sup>	Wiley
<i>Experience Spanish</i>	Amores, et al.	2012	1 <sup>st</sup>	McGraw Hill
<i>Exploraciones</i>	Blitt and Casas	2012	1 <sup>st</sup>	Cengage
<i>Gente</i>	De La Fuente, et al.	2012	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Pearson
<i>Plazas</i>	Hershberger, et al.	2012	4 <sup>th</sup>	Cengage

The texts, across a 47-year span, were analyzed regarding total grammar points presented. A core list of grammar points was created based upon an accumulation of the grammar points found in all 30 textbooks. This core list can be found in Appendix A.

The contents of each of the contemporary introductory textbooks dating from 2008-2012 were analyzed in detail with respect to grammar, vocabulary and activity types. The beginning Spanish texts included for analysis are published in the format of one volume or alternatively are divided into two or three volumes to be utilized for as many as three semesters or quarters of study. Two of the textbooks, *Viajes* and *¡Apúntate!*, represent shorter versions of an original textbook and carry different titles. Since these texts were not designated as “brief edition,” as has traditionally been done, they were treated as separate products and analyzed as such.

The titles of 60 contemporary textbooks were entered into an Excel file as a sampling frame. The Excel software generated a list of 17 texts as a random sampling. Care was taken to input introductory textbooks from all publishing firms with at least three beginning Spanish texts on the market. Textbooks were not pre-screened for content prior to the commencement of the data collection.

### *Grammar*

Two issues regarding grammar were analyzed for this study. First, a complete count of grammar points per textbook was calculated as a percentage of the total number of grammar points contained in the core list. The 47 year span covered by these introductory texts was examined to determine historical trends in grammatical coverage. For the total grammar count, *¡Anda!* was not included, since volume one, *Curso elemental*, is intended to cover less material than the other texts, yet including volume 2, *Curso intermedio*, would span a longer period than

the rest of the textbooks in the study. Therefore, this text does not coordinate properly with the remaining books.

The second issue that was examined involved the grammar load per chapter of the 17 contemporary texts. This analysis included an initial calculation using the scope and sequence of each textbook. Further examination of each chapter's content was necessary to capture grammar presentation included in boxes and side bars. These additional grammar points were included in the data collection. An overall number of grammar points per text was determined as well as the average number per chapter for each text. *Dos mundos* is the only text that contained four introductory chapters, labeled '*pasos*'. In order to effectively compare this text to others, an average of the grammar points in the four *pasos* was calculated and used as a "chapter."

### *Vocabulary*

A calculation of the total number of lexical items per chapter was determined using the 17 current Spanish introductory textbooks listed in Table 1. This calculation represents the number of lexical items per chapter that students are expected to learn or master during the course of the introductory sequence. Vocabulary lists with English translations at the end of the chapter were the starting point for this calculation. However, some textbooks include additional lexical items in boxes placed throughout the chapter and are not necessarily present in the bilingual vocabulary list at the end of the chapter. These additional items, as well as lexical phrases presented in both vocabulary lists and boxes, were included in the total calculation for each chapter. In order to calculate a total per chapter for the textbook *¡Hola amigos!*, each visual display with labeled drawings had to be utilized, since the book did not have a summary list at the end of its chapters. For the text *Dos mundos*, similar to the treatment of the number of grammar points per chapter, an average of the total number of vocabulary items for the first four '*pasos*' was assessed for the preliminary chapter.

### *Activities and Tasks*

A three-chapter sequence in each text was chosen as the basis for assessment of activities and tasks. Chapters four, five and six represent a mid-way point for the majority of the books in terms of the number of chapters and would likely be studied toward the latter half of a first-semester course. The total number of all activities and tasks within the three chapters of each of the seventeen contemporary texts was first tabulated. Additional activities from the side bar of the instructors' manual, workbooks, and websites were not included. Chapter activities and tasks were then examined carefully to determine whether or not they matched the description of a creative language task (CLT): authentic, real life tasks that involve creative language interaction. Finally, the total number of CLTs was determined across the same three chapters for the group of seventeen current textbooks listed in Table 1.

**Results**

A tabulation of the number of grammar points in each textbook was completed, and the results are shown in Figure 1. The number of grammar points has not changed appreciably over the 47 years spanned. To illustrate this, the average of the 13 textbooks published between 1965 and 2007 was not found to be significantly different than the average of the set of 16 contemporary textbooks published since 2008. The former group averaged  $58.0 \pm 4.8$  SD grammar points and the contemporary texts averaged  $55.9 \pm 4.7$  SD grammar points ( $p$  value = 0.26).

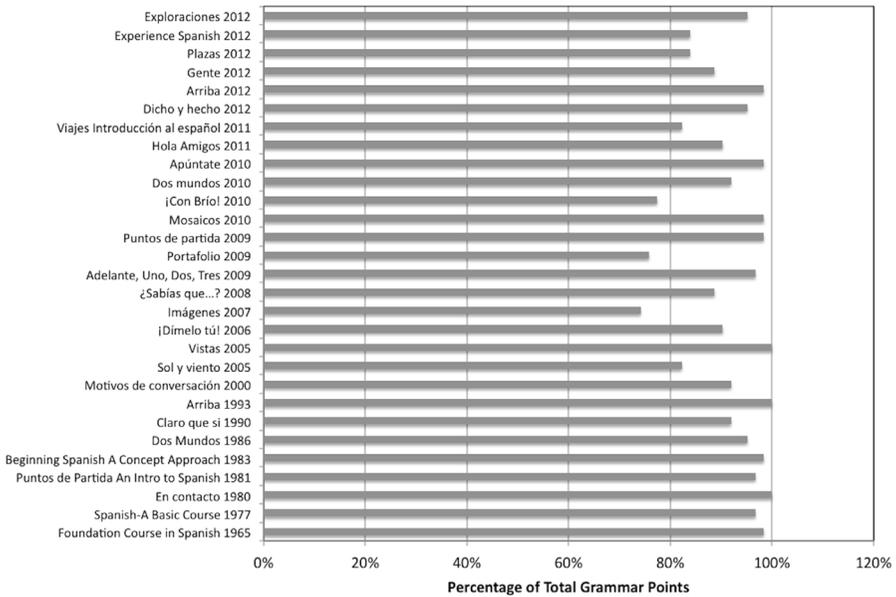


Figure 1. Percentage of Total Grammar Points per Textbook

Figure 2 shows the average number of grammar points per chapter for each of the 17 contemporary textbooks published between 2008 and 2012. Error bars in this graph reflect the standard deviation in the grammar point count among the chapters of each textbook. The overall average, among these textbooks, of the average number of grammar points per chapter is  $3.80 \pm 1.13$  SD. Notably, the standard deviation interval for each individual textbook overlaps with the standard deviation interval for the overall average.

The average vocabulary count per chapter for all 17 textbooks is plotted in Figure 3. Error bars represent the standard deviation in the vocabulary count per chapter for each textbook. Across all books, the overall average chapter lexical load is  $115 \pm 41$  SD with individual textbook averages ranging from 72 to 202. The highest lexical item count in an individual chapter was 273 and the lowest was 31. Just as observed for the grammar point counts, nearly all standard deviation intervals for individual texts overlap with the standard deviation interval for the

overall average. The exception was *Dos mundos*, the text with the highest average vocabulary count per chapter.

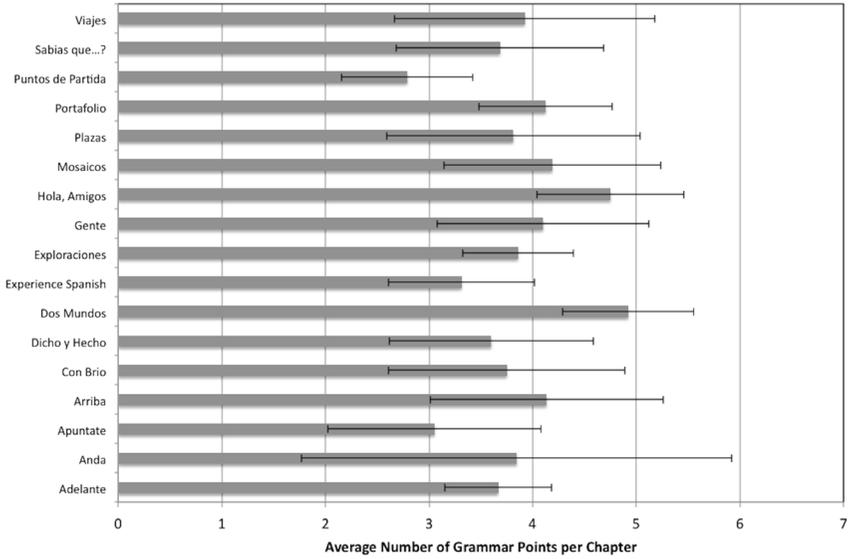


Figure 2. Average Number of Grammar Points per Chapter

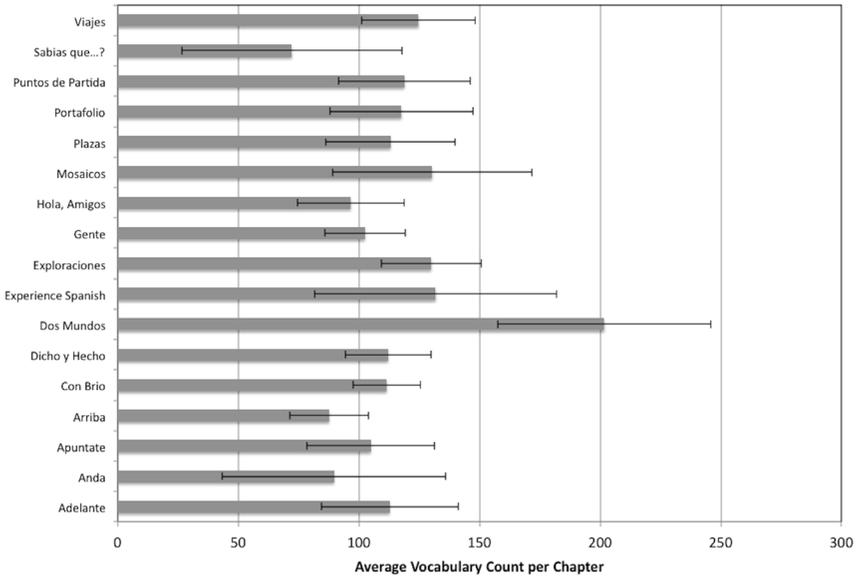


Figure 3. Average Vocabulary Count per Chapter

Table 2 shows the number of CLT that were identified in three select chapters for the 17 contemporary Spanish textbooks. The average number of CLT in the three chapters is 1.8% for this set of textbooks. In addition, six of the analyzed textbooks contain no CLT per chapter.

Table 2: Percentage of Activities Classified as CLT

Text	Average Total Activities	% CLT
<i>Adelante, Uno, Dos, Tres</i>	42.0	0.0
<i>¡Anda!, Curso Elemental</i>	59.7	1.1
<i>Apúntate</i>	38.7	0.0
<i>Arriba</i>	48.3	0.0
<i>¡Con Brío!</i>	57.3	1.7
<i>Dicho y hecho</i>	56.7	1.2
<i>Dos mundos</i>	33.7	0.0
<i>Experience Spanish</i>	51.7	0.0
<i>Exploraciones</i>	62.3	1.1
<i>Gente</i>	25.3	5.3
<i>Hola Amigos, Volume 1</i>	30.7	3.3
<i>Mosaicos</i>	65.7	6.1
<i>Plazas</i>	49.7	3.4
<i>Portafolio</i>	35.3	2.8
<i>Puntos de partida</i>	39.7	0.0
<i>¿Sabías que...?</i>	31.3	3.2
<i>Viajes Introducción al español</i>	41.0	.8

## Discussion

### *Amount of Grammar*

Grammar content in introductory Spanish textbooks is organized by the same grammatical syllabus that has been implemented since the early decades of foreign language instruction in this country. Thus, the underlying basis for instructional practice continues to be focused on the mastery of a core list of 62 grammatical structures. The review of 29 texts over a period of 47 years brings to light the inclusion of the same 62 grammatical points from decade to decade. Little variation exists in the number of grammar points included in the 29 textbooks analyzed for this study. Although three texts each incorporate less than 50 grammar points, the other 26 textbooks demonstrate the continued tendency to include as many core structures as possible. Why has the scope and sequence remained virtually unchanged over many years? The answer to this question

lies with the demands of the market, determined by Spanish instructors across the country. Heining-Boynton (2010) claims that this insistence on the part of instructors to teach all of the grammar tenses and grammar points in beginning courses dates back to the time when the goal of foreign language instruction was reading and translation. Cole and Strict (1981) describe the “text-teacher-student trilogy” in which teachers as students study with textbooks that are organized via a traditional grammatical syllabus. After years of study, these students become teachers who teach using similar textbooks and perhaps even one day work as authors designing textbooks with the same grammatical syllabus. The cycle of maintaining traditional organizational practices remains unchanged. Musumeci (1997) supports this claim:

Today the role that materials play in fostering change remains suspect. A perusal of current second and foreign language textbooks suffices to reveal a continuing reliance on a grammatical syllabus to structure textbooks. Language learning objectives remain stated in terms of structures that learners will be able to manipulate at the end of a specific period of instruction with little regard for developmental orders of acquisition or the transitory nature of instructional effects.... (pp. 128-129)

Indeed a heavy reliance on the grammar syllabus as the organizational core of the language course may still be evident (Finnemann, 1987).

Scarcella and Oxford (1992) argued that “Teachers do not need to teach all the grammatical properties of the language; they focus on those grammatical features which are useful to students and teachable and learnable” (p. 174). And Bernard (1965) wrote, “Grammar should be studied from the standpoint of expression of ideas and the facilitation of communication” (p. 67). However, some instructors will likely confess that they are unable to follow this advice. They report an urgency to complete the course, and to “cover” the book. In so doing, this rush to cover grammatical content reduces the course to a manipulation of complex grammar points that students struggle to “master.” In these instances, the required Spanish course sequence becomes a grammar course, a course in which students practice structures in order to fill in the blanks correctly on an exam. Some instructors may give up on expecting production and providing for interaction that leads to real communication, since there is no time. Instructors may fear that developing communication skills is not possible if students are still struggling with the mechanical manipulations. There is also little time to incorporate cultural themes, since, if they are presented at the end of the chapter, they are typically skipped over in order to wade through all of the grammar content (Dorwick & Glass, 1983). The end product of a two- or three-semester requirement is a student who may not be able to communicate much beyond a few formulaic statements, and likely does not “...attain even a minimal level of communicative competence” (Terrell, 1977, p. 326). Therefore, the rigid and traditional scope and sequence of textbooks encourages the continued practice of basing the course on a traditional grammar syllabus. It discourages moving in the direction of Tedick and Walker’s (1982)

concept of treating grammar on a need-to-know basis and organizing instruction by content themes, authentic texts, or social and cultural situations.

With regard to the number of grammar points per chapter, the trend has been for publishers to present an equal number of grammar points per chapter to provide consistency for programs to plan their semester or quarter. Thus, each chapter is divided evenly over the weeks of the period of instruction, a practice that assumes all grammar points require equal time to “master.” Based on the demands of the profession, an equal division of grammar points across chapters eases the complications of creating a course syllabus. Some texts combine grammar points into one listing, such as “comparisons of equality and inequality” or “definite and indefinite articles,” while others present them as separate grammar points, always in an attempt to maintain the required balance. Other texts insert additional grammar points throughout the chapter in boxes with labels such as “*Nota de lengua*,” “*Atención*,” “*Ayuda*,” “*y algo más*,” in order to fit in all of the necessary grammar points, while at the same time maintaining the consistency. Finally, in some textbooks that seem to have reduced the traditional grammatical syllabus, the additional grammar points, explanation and practice activities, especially for complex verbal constructions, are included as an addendum following the final chapter of study or as the first appendix. In almost all of the textbooks examined, this consistency of presenting a particular number of grammar points per chapter is demonstrated. In the case of *Puntos de partida* and its off-shoot *Apúntate*, there are 18 total chapters. Thus, the grammar points are extended over more chapters and the last six chapters of the books contain only two grammar points per chapter.

If the chapters of an introductory textbook were divided equally for purposes of syllabus design, assuming that the textbook is “covered” in its entirety, the syllabus may allow for one day per grammar point. A sample syllabus from 2010 for the second half of a semester of study is presented in Appendix B to illustrate the short amount of time that can be devoted to grammar points in a chapter if the instructor follows the practice of “covering” the textbook. A beginning student enrolled in a course following this syllabus would be expected to “master” or “acquire” the following grammar points in fifteen class meetings: *ir, stem-changing verbs in the present, irregular present tense verbs, estar with conditions and emotions, ser and estar, present progressive, direct object nouns and pronouns, saber and conocer, indirect object pronouns, regular and irregular preterit verbs*. This organizational practice assumes that all grammar points are created equal and require the same amount of time to “acquire.” The implication is that students learn all grammatical points at the same levels of development. Research indicating stages of development and a natural order of acquisition is ignored (Pienemann, 1984, 1989; Wolfe Quintero, 1992). Finally this organizational practice disregards the established ACTFL (2012) Oral Proficiency level descriptions of what learners are able to do with the language via spontaneous speech production.

The concept of teaching language as subject rather than object is maintained in introductory Spanish textbooks through the coverage of a relatively consistent amount of grammar points. Given the traditional model of grammatical syllabus design and the amount of grammar per chapter, one must ask at the completion

of the language requirement, if students are able to communicate at some level of competence or are they simply able to manipulate all or many of the grammar points covered in the text on a paper and pencil test? According to Tschirner, (1996) "...our present grammar sequences are far too ambitious, and are more likely to overwhelm than to help language learners" (p. 10). The call to reduce the exhaustive list of structures introduced at the earliest levels has been issued by many (Ariew, 1982; Belasco, 1972; Heining-Boynton, 2010; Rex, 2011; Terrell, 1977; Tschirner, 1996; Valdman, 1978). In fact, Heining-Boynton (2010) claimed that no research exists that supports teaching all major grammar tenses and grammar points in the first two semesters. Ironic though it may seem, perhaps presenting less may in effect yield more in the way of language production. If the grammar expectations were reduced, instructional time would be available for instructors to work with students more intensively on proficiency rather than on mastery of grammar points. However, given that grammar continues to be presented in traditional amounts, there exists the danger that this can actually encourage a focus on 'covering' material and inhibit programs from meeting proficiency goals.

### *Vocabulary*

A review of research uncovers a growing interest in second language vocabulary acquisition since the mid-1980s (Coady & Huckin, 1997). The lexicon of the second language plays a central role in the language learning and its acquisition is a key element in the development of proficiency (Terrell, 1977). The novice speaker, according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012), is described as one who can produce lists of words and formulaic expressions. Thus, lexical items are of critical importance to the language learner in order to comprehend and express oneself orally and in writing.

Recommendations for vocabulary acquisition and the number of lexical items to teach per class period range from seven (Sousa, 1995) to ten (Schmitt, 2000). Thirty words per class hour is cited, but only for gaining initial partial knowledge (Schmitt, 2000), and 50 words per week is recommended only if vocabulary acquisition is the only focus of the course. Proposed by Meara (1995), this notion involves students concentrating on acquiring their first 2,000 words at the very onset of language studies to provide a strong vocabulary base. Other researchers have focused on the way in which vocabulary acquisition occurs. Lee and Van Patten (2003) purport that the mere existence of vocabulary lists "...suggests to learners that vocabulary acquisition is a matter of memorizing second language equivalents of first language words" (p. 37). Instead, the authors point to the concept of *binding*, developed by Terrell (1986). According to Terrell, binding is the cognitive and affective mental process of connecting a form with its meaning, but not necessarily with its translation (1986). Terrell's concept of binding coincides with brain research on the important and powerful role of emotion (Jensen, 1997) in the acquisition of new material. Schmitt (2000) claims that vocabulary is acquired through multiple exposures, thus pointing to the importance of recycling

or repeated reintroductions of lexical items in order to aid in the acquisition process.

Altman (1997) supports this claim, citing the need for repeated use of vocabulary in meaningful situations in order to lead to automaticity and the acquisition of lexicon. Several researchers stress that instructors should provide affective activities and purposeful tasks that are described as meaningful, authentic, contextually rich, input enhanced, personal and engaging for the learner (Coady & Huckin, 1997; Heilenman, 1991; Joiner & Phillips, 1982; Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Schmitt, 2000; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). Allen (1993) recommends utilizing classroom situations wherein the learner perceives a need for the new lexical items. In addition, a study by Kim (2008) found that opportunities for meaningful peer collaboration assist students in acquiring vocabulary in the second language. Finally, Joiner and Phillips (1982) claim that “Students produce more creative and expressive responses and memory task is lessened when the new information is something they want to be able to say” (117).

Providing a long bilingual vocabulary list for each chapter of a beginning text runs the risk of overwhelming the learner, especially if the instructor follows traditional expectations that all lexical items included in the list must be mastered. In addition, if assessment practices adhere to the traditional goals of mastering all items on a vocabulary list, the learner is obligated to commit to memory the entire list in order to earn an acceptable grade on an exam or quiz. However, the research presented above recommends the presentation of only seven to ten lexical items per class session, along with reentry of previously presented items. Additional vocabulary could be presented formally, but only partial control should be expected. If one is to consider that typically a two-week period is dedicated to a chapter in a beginning textbook, with three to four class sessions per week, 60 to 80 lexical items could be considered a fair goal for students per chapter. Although many textbooks divide the lexical items into categories over a series of sections per chapter, the data demonstrate that those textbooks analyzed in this study average between 72 and 202 words per chapter, with some texts including very high expectations for vocabulary acquisition.

Textbooks vary as to the manner in which they organize the lexical load. In the case of *Mosaicos*, page numbers indicating the location of actual vocabulary displays are included on the bilingual vocabulary page at the end of each chapter. This eliminates the need for the publisher to repeat these thematic groupings in the vocabulary section at the end of the chapter, reducing printing costs by perhaps a page or two per chapter, while also creating what appears to be a shorter vocabulary load. In some of the textbooks, such as *Arriba* and *¡Anda!*, there seems to be a concern to provide some consistency in amount of lexical items across all chapters, although this is not completely achieved. One text, *Exploraciones*, includes more specialized terms, such as airport security, art museums and galleries, zoo and farm animals and environmental engineering, than any of the other texts analyzed. These specialized terms relate to the themes of the chapters, and are more prevalent in the latter half of the book.

Consideration should be given to the fact that not all lexical items meet the communication needs of all learners. Recommendations call for allowing students to individualize and personalize textbook vocabulary lists (Joiner & Phillips, 1982; Williams, Lively & Harper, 1998). This may require adding to the published textbook list, eliminating some items that do not relate to students, especially specialized terms, and adjusting pedagogical practices in the areas of task design and assessment.

### *Activity and Task Design*

Since the 1980s the profession has experienced a push toward oral proficiency (Higgs & Clifford, 1982) and a continued and growing trend toward encouraging learners to communicate in and beyond the classroom setting. Given today's communication goals, one would expect a crucial update in textbooks regarding task and activity design that reflects current theory and best practices. In 1972, Paulston classified textbook and classroom exercises as mechanical, meaningful and communicative drills and described these as a necessary and optimal practice progression for learning a language. Littlewood (1984) devised a "framework for teaching" which includes a progression from pre-communicative to communicative activities. Pre-communicative activities are repetition and pattern drills, grammar exercises and other activities that require conscious attention to specific linguistic elements. In contrast, communicative activities are more natural, "whole task" practice in which the learner's attention is specifically focused on the desired meaning to be communicated (p. 92). Although current research urges instructors to move away from mechanical drills and meaningless manipulation of grammatical forms (Wong & Van Patten, 2003), mechanical drills continue to dominate the types of "activities" found in today's textbooks, following all grammar explanations in the typical organizational format (Finneman, 1987; Schultz, 1991). In some cases these drills have been updated in the sense that they are likely to be presented as contextualized "activities," and sometimes accompanied by instructions for pair completion. However, the learner is still only required to manipulate forms and comprehension of the meaning of the forms is not necessary to complete the drill. Therefore, the efforts to update the basic mechanical drill do not make it more communicative and open-ended. The reality is that the majority of classroom practice, if one utilizes a consecutive page-by-page coverage of the textbook, remains form focused and mechanical in nature.

Second language acquisition research has repeatedly called for instruction to focus on more communication based contexts in which students are expected to express their own ideas, thoughts, feelings and opinions in open-ended situations (Garton, 1995; Heining-Boynton, 2010; Joiner & Phillips, 1982; Lightbown, 1991; Swain, 1991; Terrell, 1977). Assessing the typology of the remainder of Paulston's drill types, Aski (2003) asserted that meaningful drills involve no authentic communication, since "...students do not generate and negotiate their own meaning in original constructions. (p. 59). According to her study, Aski (2003) takes the stand that the typical communicative drills in the Italian textbooks that she analyzed are very formulaic, structured and significantly focused on form. The

author also found that many communicative drills require only yes/no answers or contain contrived questions to stimulate student responses. Finally, the author discusses communicative language practice as moving beyond the focus on form toward goals of negotiation of meaning and interaction. Examining two grammar points in seven beginning level Italian texts, the author found that only 3% of all activities could be considered communicative practice for one grammar point, and for the other, only 14%. Overall Aski concluded that there was little emphasis on communicative language practice in the textbooks that she analyzed.

Similar results were found in the current study of contemporary introductory Spanish textbooks, with only 1.8% of all chapter activities classified as CLT in a set of seventeen texts. An expanded version of Aski's classification of communicative language practice was derived from Nunan (1993) in order to include the notion of task based instruction. Tasks "(1) are systematically linked to things the learners need to do in the real world, (2) incorporate what we know about the nature of successful communication, and (3) embody what we know about second language acquisition" (p. 63). According to Byrnes (2001), the use of tasks involves an "...explicit focus on meaning making in context" (p. 176). Therefore, using the term creative language tasks (CLT) categorizes classroom activities that are not contrived, but instead can be described as authentic, real life tasks that involve creative language interaction. In addition, they are comprised of interpersonal negotiations, exchanges of information and spontaneous and unpredictable language for a purpose.

Results of this analysis demonstrate that textbooks do not deliver on providing sufficient activities in the form of CLT; activities that push students to create with the language in authentic, real word situations. Current texts do contain activities that, at first glance, resemble the CLT classification. It should be noted that these were not included in the overall tabulation for two reasons. The first involves activities in which the students are given an open-ended situation, but then told in English exactly how to express themselves and what to include in their responses, in which case it is more of a translation exercise. The following example illustrates this point:

*5-23 Datos personales. Con un(a) compañero(a) de clase, haz y contesta preguntas con los verbos ser y estar sobre los siguientes temas.*

1. *La personalidad. Ask about his/her personality in general.*
2. *La salud: Ask about his/her emotional and physical state today.*
3. *El pueblo: Ask about his/her hometown, where it is, what it looks like, and whether it's big or small.*
4. *La familia: Ask about his/her family (size, ages, physical features, personalities). (Hershberger et al., 2012, p. 166).*

5-23 Personal Facts with a partner from class, compose and answer questions with the verbs *ser* and *estar* about the following themes:

1. Personality
2. Health
3. Town
4. Family

The second reason entails the inclusion of an example for the learner in Spanish that provides all of the linguistic and lexical information necessary to complete the task. Thus, the task is more of a substitution of one's own personal information, as in the following examples:

*ENTREVISTA. Interview two classmates to find out where they are going and what they are going to do on their next vacation.*

*Modelo:*

*Estudiante 1: ¿Adónde vas de vacaciones (for vacation)?*

*Estudiante 2: Voy a Guadalajara con mis amigos.*

*Estudiante 1: ¿Y qué van a hacer (to do) ustedes en Guadalajara?*

*Estudiante 2: Vamos a visitar unos monumentos y museos. (Blanco, 2009, p. 180).*

**INTERVIEW**

*Model:*

*Student 1: Where are you going for vacation?*

*Student 2: I am going to Guadalajara with my friends.*

*Student 1: And what are you all going to do in Guadalajara?*

*Student 2: We are going to visit some monuments and museums.*

*3-17 Mis parientes favoritos. Describe to your classmate three of your favorite relatives. Define the family relationship.*

*Modelo: Mi abuelo favorito se llama.... Tiene...años. Es de... Es muy inteligente... Es el padre de mi madre.*

*You may be called upon to share information about your classmate with the class.*

*El abuelo favorito de (classmate's name) se llama... (Potowski et. al., 2012, p. 85).*

*3-17 My favorite relatives.*

*Model: My favorite grandfather's name is...He is ...years old. He is from...He is very intelligent...He is my mother's father.*

*The favorite grandfather of (classmate's name) is named...*

*D. La casa ideal. What is your dream house like? What would it be? What amenities would it have? Describe the details to a partner, who will try to draw a floor plan as you speak.*

*Modelo: Mi casa ideal está en\_\_\_\_\_. Es \_\_\_\_\_ y tiene \_\_\_\_\_.*

*La cocina está al lado de \_\_\_\_\_. También hay\_\_\_\_\_. (Ramos & García, 2009, p. 84).*

D. The ideal house.

Model: My ideal house is in \_\_\_\_\_. It is \_\_\_\_\_ and it has \_\_\_\_\_.

The kitchen is next to \_\_\_\_\_. There is also \_\_\_\_\_.

The following example illustrates a combination of the use of both a model in Spanish with the linguistic variables as well as English statements to be translated.

*B. Entrevista: ¿De dónde eres? Find out as much information as you can about the location of each others' hometown or state, or about the country you are from. You should also tell what the weather is like, and ask if the other person would like to go there with you.*

Modelo: E1: ¿De dónde eres?

E2: Soy de Tylertown.

E1: ¿Dónde está Tylertown?

E2: Está cerca de... (Knorre et al., 2009, p. 169).

B. Interview. Where are you from?

Model: Where are you from?

S2: I am from Tylertown.

S1: Where is Tylertown?

S2: It is close to...

While these activities or exercises provide language practice, they do not provide the type of language interaction that meets the CLT specifications described above. As identified in Table 2, within the three chapters of the 17 recent textbooks, only 1.8% of all the textbook activities were found to be CLT. The following examples illustrate tasks identified as CLT:

*Situaciones*

*Role A. You and your little brother/sister have to do some chores at home. Since you are older, you tell your sibling three or four things that he/she has to do. Be prepared to respond to complaints and questions.*

*Role B. You and your older brother/sister have to do some chores at home. Because you are younger, you get some orders from your sibling about what you have to do. You do not feel like working, and you especially do not like being bossed around, so respond to everything you hear with a complaint or a question. (Castells et al., 2010, p. 174).*

*Situaciones*

*Estudiante A: Tu compañero/a de cuarto te invita a una fiesta con sus amigos, pero sus amigos no te gustan mucho y no tienes ganas de ir con ellos. Inventa excusas.*

*Estudiante B: Vas a una fiesta con tus amigos. Invitas a tu compañero/a de cuarto pero es tímido/a y piensas que no quiere ir porque tiene vergüenza (is embarrassed). Insiste. (Potowski et al., 2012, p. 159).*

### Situations

Student A: Your roommate invites you to a party with his/her friends, but you don't really like the friends and you don't feel like going with them. Invent some excuses.

Student B: You are going to a party with your friends. You invite your roommate but s/he is timid and you think s/he does not want to go because s/he is embarrassed. You insist.

### *Contraste cultural*

*En grupos de tres, hablen de los siguientes aspectos de sus familias. Después, establezcan dos o tres contrastes entre sus familias y una familia hispana típica.*

- *Mujeres de sus familias que son profesionales o empleadas. Incluyan más de una generación.*
- *Quehaceres domésticos que hacen los hombres de sus familias.*
- *Responsabilidades con respecto a los hijos en sus familias.* (Lucas Murillo & Dawson, 2010, p. 211).

### Cultural Contrast

In groups of three, talk about the following aspects of your families. Then, establish two or three contrasts between your families and the typical Hispanic family.

- The women of your families who are professionals or hold other jobs. Include more than one generation.
- Household chores that the men of your families do.
- The responsibilities of the children in your families.

However, due to the low percentage of CLT found in the 17 contemporary texts, the current analysis confirms earlier claims that a preponderance of traditional focus on form practice (Johnson & Markham, 1989; Schultz, 1991) is maintained as the norm in beginning textbooks. In fact, if one considers the number of pages of the typical beginning text that are dedicated to grammar explanations, grammar charts and diagrams and mechanical, non CLT activities, the largest portion of the text is devoted to traditional linguistic content that does not support the profession's professed communication goals.

### **Recommendations: A Continued Call for Change**

An increased call for a change in materials is found in publications over the past two and a half decades (Bragger & Rice, 2000; Bynes, 2001; Komoski, 1985; Heilenman & Kaplan, 1985; Heilenman, 1991; Rex, 2011; Schultz, 1991). However, an examination of the issue reveals that in general the profession and the market may be resistant to change, and the textbook continues to encourage traditional practices. Dorwick and Glass (2003), both executives in the publishing industry with direct responsibilities for foreign language materials development, point to "minimal changes in materials and behaviors" and admit that "...there is less real change in materials than one might imagine (p. 593). Van Patten (1998) further argues that the "universality" of beginning language textbooks in content and subsequent treatment of the content is reflected in the same "universality"

among the instructors who use them. If required language courses are based on a textbook, then the perceptions contained in the textbook are practiced by those who are employed to instruct the courses (Van Patten, 1998). Beginning programs are based on materials that neglect research and ignore students' communication goals, representing a complete mismatch with the gains we have made regarding theory, research, standards and measurement of proficiency. Therefore, by the very nature of the current textbook, second language teachers are likely to fall short of effectively preparing students to participate in purposeful and real communication in the target language.

Since textbooks lag behind research in second language acquisition (Saraceni, 2003), relying on them to define program goals, curriculum, and teaching practices dangerously perpetuates traditional instructional perceptions and practices. In fact, Musumeci (1997) identified the need for instructors to understand and adopt the best practices supported by SLA research and demand that these are reflected in materials developed by publishing houses. However, since it is clearly not through the textbook that second language theory from the last three decades is transferred into practice, it is evident that current textbooks are not the answer and our programs should not be based upon them. The careful selection process proposed by Angell, DuBravac and Gonglewski (2008) and others is likely not to result in productive gains, since the materials are more similar than they are different.

The gap that has existed in the profession with regard to theory and practice (Grove, 2003; Rex, 2011; Van Patten, 1998) cannot be solved by a textbook. Instead, language departments and programs must begin to examine the challenges of training and to address the fact that these issues cannot be resolved by adopting a textbook with all of the latest professional jargon and technological enhancements. Instead, departments can offer methods courses and workshops for new faculty, instructors, teaching assistants, and even pre-service teachers to address the limitations of publisher prepared materials as well as strategies for the selective use of such materials. Educating colleagues as to the shortcomings of these educational materials with regards to meeting communication goals will go a long way in addressing professional development needs. In addition, a deliberate examination of SLA research, the National Standards for Foreign Language Education for K-16 and the ACTFL proficiency guidelines will assist programs in the adoption of goals and objectives that are independent of any commercially prepared materials. Devising appropriate and authentic assessment tools based on program goals will also serve as a means of guiding colleagues toward instruction that is focused on meeting program and communication goals and not on covering a textbook. Realizing that tailor-made materials can meet the needs of specific student groups in particular learning situations more effectively than the 'one size fits all' publisher produced materials, programs can involve all instructors in active articulation of effective instructional practices that more closely align with SLA theory and research. One qualitative study by Cerar (2003) reported positive learner responses to a comprehensive, internet-based curriculum for intermediate and conversation courses. Integration of authentic materials, high interest and

customized themes and strategies for engaging learners actively in experiential learning through real communication with native speakers was listed as a key feature of the curriculum design. Thus, for introductory courses, creating locally prepared flexible handbooks for students can become a tool for facilitating students' written and oral communication through the integration of multiple sources and resources, including and above all those that are prepared, tested, and evaluated by a group of actively involved instructors. Units of study that integrate current issues, research and specialty areas of colleagues in the language department, as well as resources in the local community prove to be more authentic, meaningful and personal to all. If such a project is not possible, another option to resolve some of the issues with introductory textbooks may exist in the form of a thorough customization of existing materials, including removal of chapters, vocabulary, grammar points, along with the addition of department authored CLT. Instructors have the opportunity of investing in the entire process and examining more deeply the most efficient and effective way to develop real communication.

### **Future Explorations**

The current study examined a group of 47 introductory Spanish textbooks from various publishing firms with regards to amount of grammar, vocabulary and CLT. Considering the number of texts on the market and the small number of studies that have included data analysis, there are additional topics which merit examination. Future work could consider marketing data for specific textbooks allowing the comparison of successful and unsuccessful texts regarding the amount of grammar, vocabulary and CLT. Additionally, the analysis and identification of alterations to textbooks based on market feedback and market trends from edition to edition would be a worthwhile project. Finally, a study of sequence of the contemporary grammar syllabus would be important to determine how grammar sequences align with second language acquisition research on the developmental order of acquisition.

### **Conclusion**

Although many instructors recognize the important role of meaningful communication and interaction in language learning, the most negative factor in second language classes today continues to be the reliance and/or over-reliance on educational materials (Hammerly, 1982) that do not align with research findings. Evidence from this study points to the continued reinforcement of traditional practices found in beginning college-level Spanish textbooks, especially with regard to grammar scope and sequence, amount of vocabulary and activity design. In its current state, the beginning Spanish textbook offers limited promise for the development of communication goals.

Experienced language educators do admit that there is no ideal textbook. The time has come to address the ineffective aspects of our programs and to take serious measures to match our profession's goals with our practices. For most programs across the country, beginning language courses are the "bread-and-butter of larger

departments and the recruiting ground for minors and majors” (Angell, DuBravac & Gonglewski, 2008, p. 570). Outside competition from sources such as for-profit online programs and heavily marketed software packages that promise significant gains in a short amount of time is yet another reason to consider implementing measures to evaluate and improve university introductory language programs. In an age when education is increasingly held accountable for student engagement and success, it seems that the call for change should be stronger than ever before. Ensuring that our students meet program and their own personal objectives of real, meaningful, spontaneous communication will only take place if and when the profession recognizes the textbook as an “insufficient and deficient medium” for language learning (Schultz, 1991, p. 173) and looks beyond the textbook as the “quick fix” for the introductory sequence.

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## APPENDIX A

### Grammar List: Beginning Spanish Textbooks (62 Total)

Definite and Indefinite Articles	<i>Por</i> or <i>Para</i>
Adjective form, position, agreement	Adverbs with <i>-mente</i>
Subject pronouns	Subjunctive to express volition
<i>Ser</i>	<i>Nosotros</i> commands
Formation of yes/no questions and negation	Indirect commands
Present tense of <i>-ar</i> , <i>-er</i> , <i>-ir</i> verbs	Subjunctive to express feelings and emotions
Irregular verbs, Present tense	Subjunctive to express doubt and denial
Possessive Adjectives	Subjunctive with impersonal expressions
Present Progressive	Formal Commands
Past Progressive	Informal Commands
<i>Ser</i> and <i>Estar</i>	Subjunctive with adverbial conjunctions
<i>Hay</i>	Past Participle
Prepositional pronouns	Present perfect indicative
Prepositions followed by infinitives	Present perfect subjunctive
Present tense of stem-changing verbs	Future
Direct Object pronouns	Future of probability
Personal <i>a</i>	Conditional
'contractions' <i>al/del</i>	Imperfect subjunctive
<i>Ir a</i> + infinitive	Unstressed possessive adjectives
Indirect Object Pronouns	<i>Si</i> clauses
Demonstrative Adjectives and Pronouns	Future perfect
<i>Saber</i> and <i>Conocer</i>	Conditional perfect
<i>Gustar</i> and similar verbs	<i>Hacer</i> in time expressions
Reflexive constructions	Pluperfect indicative
Comparisons of equality and inequality	Pluperfect subjunctive
Preterit of regular verbs	Subjunctive with indefinite and nonexis-
Preterit of irregular verbs	tent antecedents
Imperfect regular and irregular verbs	Relative pronouns
Indefinite and negative expressions	<i>Se</i> for unplanned occurrences
Double object pronouns	Reciprocal construction
Impersonal and passive <i>se</i>	Passive voice
Preterit versus imperfect	

**APPENDIX B**

Second Half of Semester Syllabus for *Adelante Uno* (2009)

20	Examen de mid-term: Lecciones 1-3, págs. 1-143
22	Lección 4: <i>Los pasatiempos</i> . Contextos, págs. 168-171; (Síntesis) Comp. # 1, pág. 154
25	Lección 4: Fotonovela, págs. 172-174; Pronunciación, pág. 175; Cultura, págs. 176-177
27	Lección 4: Present tense of ir (4.1), págs. 178-180; Stem-changing: e>ie, o>ue (4.2), págs. 181-184
29	Lección 4: Stem-changing verbs: e>i (4.3), págs. 185-187
1 de noviembre	Lección 4: Verbs with irregular yo forms (4.4), págs. 188-191
3	Lección 4: Recapitulación, págs. 192-193; Panorama: <u>México</u> : págs. 196-198
5	Lección 5: <i>Las vacaciones</i> , Contextos, págs. 221-224; Prueba # 4: Lección 4
8	Lección 5: Págs. 225-227; Fotonovela, págs. 228-230; Pronunciación, pág. 231; (Síntesis) Comp. # 2, pág. 208
10	Lección 5: Cultura, págs. 232-233; Estar with conditions and emotions (5.1), págs. 234-235;
12	Lección 5: The present progressive (5.2), págs. 236-239; Ser and estar (5.3), págs. 240-243
15	Lección 5: Direct object nouns and pronouns (5.4), págs. 244-247
17	Lección 5: Recapitulación, págs. 248-249; Panorama: <u>Puerto Rico</u> , págs. 252-253
19	Lección 6: <i>¡De compras!</i> , Contextos, págs. 275-279
22	Lección 6: Fotonovela, págs. 280-282; Pronunciación, pág. 283; Prueba # 5: Lección 5
24	FESTIVO
26	FESTIVO
29	Lección 6: Cultura, págs. 284-285; Saber y conocer (6.1), págs. 286-287; (Síntesis) Comp # 3, pág. 262
1 de diciembre	Lección 6: Indirect object pronouns (6.2), págs. 288-291; Preterit tense of regular verbs (6.3), págs. 292-294.
3	Lección 6: Pág. 295; Prueba # 6: Lección 6 (págs. 275-294)

6	Leccion 6: Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns (6.4), págs. 296-299; Recapitulación, págs. 300-301
8	Leccion 6: Panorama: <u>Cuba</u> ; págs. 304-305
10	Repaso



# 7

## **Forty years after Savignon, How far have(n't) we come? Students' perspectives about communicative language teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**Brigid Burke**

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### **Abstract**

This paper expands on Burke's (2012, 2013) research with four high school Spanish teachers who participated in a 10-week experiential professional development course (EPD) at their school in order to understand and experience communicative language teaching (CLT) methods. During EPD, and the three weeks immediately following EPD, 483 students were observed in classes. Twenty-eight of these students also attended two after-school meetings and answered an open-ended written questionnaire. Two hundred sixteen students were observed in classes post-EPD, 23-25 weeks after the EPD course concluded. In order to understand students' beliefs and attitudes about CLT, data from classroom observations and artifacts, the student questionnaire, field notes, and the researcher's journal were compared and contrasted. As Savignon (1972) found over 40 years ago, students appreciated being trained in communicative activities, liked being encouraged to use the target language, and gained confidence in speaking. Concluding remarks suggest that teachers engage in discussions with their students about the distinct process and importance of learning world language with communicative methods. Furthermore, in order for practice to meet theory, and conceivably, to "unlock the gateway to communication"; researchers need to provide teachers with practical ways to implement CLT and collaborate on-site *with* teachers and students to create communicative classrooms.

In May 2010, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published a position statement encouraging teachers to use the target language at least 90% of the time in classroom instruction (ACTFL, 2010). Over 40 years after Savignon's (1972) significant university-level study was published, in which she found that students benefitted from and enjoyed experiencing communicative methods, and more than a decade after the National Standards (1999) were published, why did ACTFL feel the need to specify that teachers needed to maximize target language use during classroom instruction? Simply stated, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the problem persists: World language teachers still are not using communicative methods on a regular basis, if at all. Even though the profession has made many attempts to improve world language education, the same issues that were visible 40 years ago are ever-present in classrooms today. Students continue to spend multiple hours in classrooms, only to leave with limited proficiency in their world language, and often teachers continue to teach as they were taught, focusing on grammar and using translation when teaching.

Goodlad (1974, 2004) and Lortie (1975, 2002) have found that teachers often use the same methods in their classrooms that they, themselves, experienced from elementary school through college, regardless if they were best practices or not. Lortie (2002) named this issue in educational training of teachers the "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 61). He explained that students, for many years, implicitly serve as apprentices of teaching as they observe their teachers teach year after year. Goodlad and Lortie point out that even if pre-service and in-service teachers are taught about more effective methods than what their teachers may have used with them, they will rely more on their past experiences as students. They will teach as they were taught, which is problematic if certain methods they use have been found to be less effective. In world language classrooms, this means that if teachers mainly experienced grammar-translation methods, they likely will use grammar-translation methods even if they were trained to use communicative methods. Gallagher (2011) found that both novice and veteran world language teachers were open to using communicative methods, but because of barriers, such as their apprenticeship of observation, as well as a lack of outside support and experience with CLT, changing their methods to be more communicative was challenging.

Since ACTFL's position statement was released, the researcher has witnessed many teachers at language teaching conventions and conferences, as well as on ACTFL's Language Educator blog, showing interest about how to make their classrooms more communicative. Teachers are reflecting critically about their beliefs, experiences, and values concerning what methods they should use with their students and why. They appear to want to change, but question their ability to do it alone. Additionally, absent from these discussions at conferences, and present literature, are *student* voices, especially at the secondary level. Clearly, students' beliefs about world language pedagogy can be influenced by their teachers' beliefs and methods because of what they experience and learn in their world language classes (Goodlad, 1974, 2004; Lortie, 1975, 2002). But, can students' beliefs and experiences with CLT affect their teachers' methods? In this study, high school

Spanish students were asked to share what they thought about CLT with their teachers after experiencing it. By including students in their teachers' professional development activities, the researcher hoped that the students could have a voice, and teachers could hear firsthand that students enjoyed, understood, and valued the benefits of CLT. As a result, teachers would gain the confidence they needed to use CLT methods on a more consistent basis by working with their students.

Some studies have investigated teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes about target language use and grammar teaching (Brown, 2009; Dickson, 1996; Levine, 2003, 2011; Macaro, 2001; Viakinnou-Brinson, Herron, Cole, & Haight, 2012). Most of these studies have occurred at the university level and have not focused on students' beliefs and opinions about CLT specifically. In order to find out how high school students viewed CLT, the investigator designed and implemented a 10-week experiential professional development course (EPD) with four high school Spanish teachers and their students ranging from Spanish I to Advanced Placement Spanish. The teachers enrolled in EPD in order to understand CLT and learn how to design and implement communicative activities into lessons with support from a researcher-consultant. As a former high school French teacher, who used CLT methods, and experienced and researched its positive effects on student attitudes and acquisition, the author believed that by engaging in participatory action research with teachers and students in their classrooms, she could instigate change in the four secondary Spanish teachers' classrooms. The researcher observed the students during their Spanish classes (during and post-EPD) and at two after-school EPD meetings. At the after-school meetings, open-ended questionnaire data were collected in paper format from 28 of the students enrolled in Spanish I to Advanced Placement Spanish courses.

To understand what the students thought about CLT and EPD, the following research questions were asked: 1) How did students describe communicative activities? 2) What did students think about communicative activities? 3) What communicative activities did the students enjoy? 4) How did students react to participating in EPD meetings?

In what follows, a review of literature is provided focusing on research about CLT, teachers', students', and researchers' beliefs about CLT, and strategies for teachers to use when integrating CLT. Then, the methodology is described and results are presented and discussed. Concluding remarks suggest that teachers engage in discussions with their students about the process of learning world language using communicative methods. Furthermore, in order for practice to meet theory, and conceivably, to "unlock the gateway to communication"; researchers need to provide teachers with practical ways to implement CLT and collaborate on-site *with* teachers and students to create communicative classrooms. As a dedication to Sandra J. Savignon, more than 40 years after her study was published, here the author focuses on 21<sup>st</sup> century secondary learner's perspectives about CLT with readers.

**Review of Literature***CLT 40 Years Ago*

Over forty years ago, Savignon (1972) conducted a groundbreaking study with 42 students enrolled in beginning college French at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At that time, instructors were heavily influenced by the audio-lingual method, emphasizing dialogue memorization and pronunciation drills. For her experiment, Savignon divided the students into three groups. All groups met for four 50-minute periods a week and followed the same syllabus. Each group, E<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>2</sub>, and C also met an additional 50 minutes a week. During these additional 50 minutes, Group E<sub>1</sub> (Experimental group 1, n= 12) was trained in communicative acts with students learning greetings, asking for directions, making plans, and discussing current events. The emphasis was on meaning, and students were encouraged to use as much French as possible when communicating. Group E<sub>2</sub> (Experimental group 2, n=15) discussed French culture in English. They learned about all things French—politics, current events, films, and cuisine. Group C (Control group, n=15) spent their additional time in the language laboratory on campus practicing basic material they were studying in the French 101 course.

In order to understand the effects of the various methods used for teaching language, linguistic and communicative competence tests were given to the students at the end of the semester (Savignon, 1972). Savignon (1972) used standardized proficiency tests in reading and listening to measure students' linguistic competence. Teacher assessment of oral skills and course grades also were used. Communicative competence was evaluated during four tasks: 1) a discussion with a native French speaker, 2) an interview with a French native speaker, 3) a report of facts about oneself or one's recent activities, and 4) a description of ongoing activities (for actual tests see Savignon, 1972). Savignon found that the group trained in communicative skills (E<sub>1</sub>) performed significantly better than the other two groups on the communicative skill tests and on the teachers' evaluation of students' oral skills. For the study, Savignon also asked students to evaluate their language courses. Students who were in Groups E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub> evaluated their course experiences significantly higher than Group C. Savignon's study indicated that language students appreciated learning to communicate in the target language and enjoyed learning about culture. She concluded that language teachers needed to consider teaching their students to function *in* the language instead of only teaching them *about* it. This would require that teachers speak less *to* students and more *with* them in the target language. Over 40 years later, while ACTFL's official statement is that the target language should be used at least 90% of the time (2010), in too many classrooms, teachers are not using the target language enough and are not providing opportunities for students to negotiate, interpret, and express themselves to the teacher and their classmates in the target language.

**Defining the CLT Teacher and Communicative Activities**

Even though Savignon's (1972) study highlighted the need for world language teachers to use more communicative methods such as training students in

communicative tasks, teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century still continue to struggle to be a CLT teacher, this “teacher of extraordinary abilities: a multi-dimensional, high-tech, Wizard-of-Oz like superperson” (Medgyes, 1986, p. 107). Burke (2006) defined a CLT teacher as someone who promotes student-to-student communication in the world language to facilitate students’ development of communicative competence. CLT teachers use immersion, contextualized lessons, and student-centered instruction. They believe students can learn grammar implicitly while using language in context, but, when necessary, they teach explicit grammar lessons so students can enhance their communication (Burke, 2006). Culture is taught using the target language to encourage communication and to improve students’ communicative competence (Burke, 2006).

Burke (2006) explained, “CLT teachers believe that the world language should be used as the medium of instruction” and “...create opportunities for students to use the world language during communicative activities” (p. 159). She described communicative activities as student-centered activities that are meaningful and engage students in an exchange of information and/or ideas. She specified that during communicative activities the target language is used and English is avoided. By asking students to stay in the target language, they must use strategies to negotiate, express, and interpret in order to develop their strategic competence, a crucial component of communicative competence (Burke, 2006, 2010; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997). Burke (2006, p. 150) and Ellis (1982, 1997) believe that these tasks or activities must have the following characteristics:

1. There must be a communication purpose.
2. There must be a primary focus on message rather than on linguistic code, although participants may need to attend to form from time to time.
3. There must be some kind of gap (information or opinion).
4. There must be opportunity for meaning negotiation when performing the task.
5. The participants choose the resources, verbal and non-verbal required for performing the task (i.e. they are not supplied with the means for performing it).

Long (2000) and Pica (2002) assert that communicative activities must focus on negotiation, expression, and interpretation of meaning and encourage socialization between students in the world language. Shrum and Glisan (2010) pointed out that this negotiation of meaning might be difficult to achieve in classroom settings because “students are often hesitant to question or counter-question the teacher” (p. 21). They advised teachers to go beyond providing comprehensible input and integrate communicative activities into their lessons where students interact with one another and negotiate the world language to learn.

In Burke’s (2006) study of pre-service teachers, even after being trained in CLT methods, only a minority of students focused predominantly on communication in lessons they implemented during their secondary methods field experience. Most students were classified as “hybrid teachers” who used a mixture of CLT and

grammar-translation methods; however, a minority of pre-service teachers were classified as CLT teachers (Burke, 2006, p. 153).

*Teachers', Students', and Researchers' Beliefs about CLT*

To date, very little empirical classroom research has been conducted to examine teachers' and students' beliefs and attitudes about CLT methods at the secondary level. Most studies focus on teachers' beliefs and occur in university classrooms (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Dickson, 1996; Levine, 2003; Macaro, 2001). Dickson (1996) surveyed 508 secondary world language teachers in England and Wales. Even though 89% of these teachers were in favor of maximizing target language use, Dickson found that most teachers reported using the target language 50-75% of the time. Only 30% of teachers estimated that their students used the target language 50% or more of the time. Teachers blamed factors such as student ability and behavior as to why they felt they could not expect students to use the world language more often. They also feared not being able to maintain student interest and build rapport with students if they used the world language more often. When teaching grammar, teachers felt that using the first language (L1) saved time. Teachers reported that they engaged students in question-answer activities and role-play, but that it was difficult to allow students to use the target language in meaningful and informal ways (Dickson, 1996).

In Brown's (2009) quantitative study at a U.S. university, although the world language teachers valued CLT, their students preferred a grammar-based approach. Additionally, Viakinnou-Brinson, Herron, Cole, and Haight (2012) discovered that when students learned grammar, they preferred being taught in French and English even though grammar tests scores were significantly higher when they had been taught in French only. One student in their study asserted,

In my opinion, the things I learned or did not learn using French only could have been taught to me much easier [sic] and much more efficiently than using English instead of using hand motions and pictures. I think it would have been more useful to just tell me what the word means in English. There are still many words and grammar functions that I have been taught but really don't understand. (p. 83)

Many students who planned to teach French in the future stated they would only use English when explaining grammar, otherwise they would use 'mostly French' (Viakinnou-Brinson et al., 2012, p. 84).

In the last several years, researchers have addressed the use of CLT methods in classrooms, particularly related to target language use (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Cook, 2001; Levine, 2003, 2011; Littlewood, W. & Yu, B., 2011; Pan, Y. & Pan, Y., 2010; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009). Cook (2001) criticized language educators who ban the L1 from the classroom. He cited studies by Antón and DiCamilla (1998) and Brooks and Donato (1994) to support his rationale to maximize target language use while treating the L1 as a useful classroom resource. Grounded in socio-cultural theory, these studies make claims in favor of code switching (mixed use of L1 and the target language) to benefit learning. Cook

suggested teachers maximize their use of the target language instead of placing emphasis on minimizing use of the L1, claiming, “there is no logical necessity that communicative tasks should avoid the L1” (p. 405). Cook critiqued the communicative approach, highlighting the benefits of translation as a teaching technique. He claimed when teachers shun the L1, learners are asked to “put languages in separate compartments” (p. 407). Cook left readers with the thought that “imitation natives”, or proficient and competent students, was an impossible feat, and that teachers should “produce students who are able to operate with two language systems as genuine L2 users” (p. 419).

Like Cook (2001), Turnbull (2001) agreed that world language teachers should maximize their target language use, but he also argued that the more teachers use the world language, the higher the students’ proficiency will be. Turnbull (2001) described how he taught students French in different Canadian contexts, using it as much as possible.

Although my students may have been resistant to my use of the target language at first, they quickly adjusted and often thanked me at the end of the school year for teaching them in French. They told me they learned so much because I spoke to them in French most of the time, whether we were analyzing a grammar point, debating a controversial topic, or talking about social activities outside of class; they said that they could never ‘tune out’ or ignore what I was saying to them. My students often told me that they realized that French could actually be used for real-life communication; English was not necessary to survive. (p. 533)

Turnbull (2001) understood teachers’ claim that using the L1 could save time. However, he emphasized that in the context where students learn the world language for short periods of time on a daily basis, teachers needed to use the world language as much as possible if students were going to stay motivated and learn it.

In his questionnaire study of 163 college-level WL teachers and 600 WL students, Levine (2003) found that teachers believed that using the target language caused students to feel more anxious than they really did. Students who reported higher target language use also reported lower anxiety about using the target language. Approximately 63% of teachers and 63% of students strongly agreed or agreed that using the target language was challenging, rewarding, worthwhile, and appreciated being required to speak the target language during their class (Levine, 2003, p. 351). Levine discovered that if teachers expected their students to use the target language, they adapted to communicating in it. Even though the data was in favor of encouraging teachers to use and expect more target language use with students, Levine (2013) supported the socio-cultural perspective that the world language classroom should be a multilingual context.

#### *Strategies for Teachers to Use CLT*

In order to help students understand the benefits of CLT, as Savignon (1972) had found in her study, Levine (2011), Brown (2009), and Viakinnou-Brinson

et al. (2012) have suggested training students to understand CLT. They advise teachers to engage students in brief discussions about second language acquisition and effective world language teaching practices. They emphasize the importance of discussing the process of learning, acquisition, and teaching with students.

When ACTFL announced its position on target language use, Burke (2010) described 10 practical ways teachers could promote more student communication in the target language including integrating communicative activities, engaging students in strategy talks, evaluating participation, and teaching explicit grammar lessons in the target language. Burke (2010) advised students and teachers to take responsibility to improve WL education. She pointed out that if students were going to develop global awareness and understanding, while also improving their proficiency, teachers needed to do more than teach about the language through teaching grammar rules and asking students to do isolated textbook and workbook activities. Teachers needed to engage students in meaningful communication in the target language and to avoid speaking too much English (Burke, 2010).

Ceo-DiFrancesco (2013) also has provided strategies for instructors and students to help maximize target language use. In order for teachers to help students understand them when they are speaking in the target language, Ceo-DiFrancesco recommended use of Total Physical Response techniques, modeling, gestures, graphic organizers, and use of visual aids. She also addressed classroom management, stating that teachers needed to teach students what the appropriate and acceptable norms of behavior were for a communicative classroom. For students, Ceo-DiFrancesco promoted the teaching of metacognitive, cognitive, and coping strategies. She believed students needed to learn how to be effective language learners.

Additionally, Moeller and Roberts (2013) wrote several guidelines for how language educators could create and sustain a learning environment where authentic, engaging, meaningful communication occurred in the target language and was standard. They stressed the importance of building a communicative curriculum grounded in second language acquisition theory and the National Standards (1999). They understood that if students were going to be risk-takers, they needed to feel safe by agreeing on classroom rules. Moeller and Roberts (2013) also recommended that through technology integration, students could become users of language and maximize their target language use.

## **Methodology**

### *Participatory Action Research and The EPD Course*

When the author offered EPD to the world language department at Mountain Valley High School (MVHS), she had a clear agenda to instigate change in world language high school classrooms and to promote and support teachers to integrate CLT methods into their classrooms while their students were present. Participatory action research (Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Merriam, 2002; Richards, 2003) was the necessary approach to work with and for teachers and students in order for them to become more knowledgeable about CLT through experience and

reflection. In participatory action research, the participants aid the researcher in determining what collective action is necessary to bring about change (Merriam, 2002). In preliminary observations prior to offering EPD to the school district, the teachers were not using CLT methods on a daily basis, if at all (Burke, 2013). Thus, the four Spanish teacher-participants enrolled in the course to improve their own practice (Burke, 2012, 2013). They particularly wanted guidance on how to implement instruction that focused on communication to increase their students' proficiency, and they envisioned working with other teachers when planning (Burke, 2012, 2013). Together the teachers and their students repeatedly planned, acted, observed, and reflected with guidance from the researcher-consultant. In Burke (2012, 2013) the focus was on the teachers' experience, and here the student data is reported and discussed. In the author's role as qualitative researcher, the author was interested in understanding the interpretations and experiences of the participants during and after EPD. The author was the main interpreter of how the students and teachers experienced and interacted during and post-EPD, and had to determine what meaning it had for them (Merriam, 2002). Even though this paper focuses on the student data from the study conducted, it seems relevant to describe the four high school Spanish teachers who agreed to enroll in the EPD course and participated in the larger study. Three of the four teachers were working on their master's degree and earned three graduate credits for participating in EPD; one earned the credits to satisfy mandatory state professional development hours. The teachers were very diverse in terms of age and years of teaching experience. Teachers were not native speakers and possessed varying levels of confidence about their proficiency in Spanish. Sophia was a first-year teacher who taught beginning levels of Spanish (Spanish I and Spanish II). Sergio was a second-year teacher who also taught beginning Spanish (Spanish II). Daniella had been teaching for eight years, and she taught beginning and advanced Spanish (Spanish II and Advanced Placement Spanish). Raquel was a twenty-three year veteran and taught beginning Spanish (Spanish I).

During the 10-week EPD course, the four teachers attended a breakfast meeting, implemented communicative activities during their classes with their students, engaged in peer observations, and met with peers and the consultant to plan and reflect on communicative activities (see Appendix A for detailed timeline). The researcher decided to start small with the teachers and only required implementation of communicative activities for the EPD course. In preliminary observations, they had not used any CLT methods beyond using the target language to teach explicit grammar lessons, so it seemed realistic to first encourage the teachers to plan shorter activities or lessons that promoted student communication in Spanish. Requiring the teachers to "dive into the deep end" at the beginning of EPD and use CLT methods all the time with their students would have been an impractical and intimidating goal.

At the first after-school meeting during Week 3, the researcher-consultant modeled three communicative activities in French with ten of Sergio's students. Then, teachers were required to implement three communicative activities during Weeks 5-8 during their classes. All teachers implemented many more

communicative activities (interviewing activities such as *busquedas* and *entrevistas*, Immersion Day, writing activities such as *cuentos* and *carteles*) than the minimum requirement, and they began implementation before the fifth week (Burke, 2012). They were able to choose the types of communicative activities they designed, implemented, and reflected on in their written work for the course. At the follow-up meeting during Week 9, Daniella and Sophia both modeled communicative activities in Spanish to a small group of their own students. They had implemented similar activities in their classes for EPD during Weeks 5-8.

Since EPD was first implemented, the researcher-consultant has continued working with two of the four teachers, although no formal follow-up research has been conducted. Raquel retired a few years after EPD ended due to health issues, and Sophia moved away from Mountain Valley. The author has visited Sergio and Daniella periodically in their classrooms, and they have continued to implement communicative methods. They also have made several presentations with the researcher, as well as independently, about the collaboration and their teaching at regional, national, and international conferences, most recently at the ACTFL convention in November 2013. Daniella earned her Ph.D. in Instructional Systems in August 2013, and her dissertation focused on the importance of technology to promote collaborative, reflective dialogue among world language pre-service teachers during their teacher-training program.

#### *Context and Participants*

EPD was implemented at MVHS because of its relatively diverse student population, large faculty, and proximity to the researcher's university. MVHS can be classified as a typical middle to upper-class U.S. public high school. The high school draws its students from a 150 square mile attendance area encompassing the Borough of Mountain Valley and its surrounding townships totaling an enrollment of approximately 2,500. The proximity of the university campus accounts for much of the diversity in the student population. It also offers high school students the advantage of enrolling in college-level courses as part-time non-degree seeking students. Many collaborative projects occur between the university and the Mountain Valley school district.

During EPD, and in immediate post-EPD observations (the three weeks following EPD), 483 students were observed in classes, including 237 Spanish I students, 223 Spanish II students, and 23 Advanced Placement Spanish students. Twenty-eight of these students also attended the two after-school meetings and answered an open-ended written questionnaire. Students who participated in the meetings and completed the questionnaires signed consent forms prior to participating in the after-school meetings. Students under the age of 18 received letters to be taken to their parents, who also signed their consent forms. Ten students from Sergio's Spanish II classes attended the first meeting in February and answered the student questionnaire (Appendix B). Eighteen students from Daniella's Advanced Placement (AP) and Spanish II classes and Sophia's Spanish I and Spanish II classes were present at the follow-up meeting in March and answered the questionnaire (Appendix B). During post-EPD visits in September

(23-25 weeks after EPD course), 216 students were observed in classes including 56 Spanish I students, 137 Spanish II students, and 23 Advanced Placement Spanish students. Some of Raquel's and Sophia's Spanish I students who had participated in lessons during EPD were observed in Daniella's, Sophia's, and Sergio's Spanish II classes post-EPD in September.

#### *Data Collection*

During and post-EPD, as the researcher-consultant conducted numerous observations of the students during their teachers' classes using an observational data sheet (Appendix C). She also collected various artifacts such as handouts, worksheets, assessment, and student work. Field notes from observations recorded teacher and student interaction, student to student interaction, teacher explanations of topics and assignments, student reactions to implementation of CLT methods, and other interesting phenomena that occurred during various lessons. A researcher journal was utilized and in-depth reflections from student observations during after-school meetings were written (Glesne, 2006). During and after the course, observations of students during classes and meetings totaled approximately 307 hours.

In order to gain insight into the experiences and understandings of the students who were in the four teachers' classrooms during EPD, the 28 students who attended the two after-school meetings were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix B). They were given a paper copy, answered the questions in handwritten format, and returned the questionnaire to the researcher-consultant at school. The questionnaires documented students' perceptions of CLT and EPD during Week 3 and 9.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed qualitatively through inductive analysis (Johnson, 2012; Thomas, 2006). Similarities and differences that were found from one participant were compared and contrasted with other participants, and themes were identified (Glesne, 2006; Richards, 2003). Student responses were organized into eight categories with multiple subcategories under each category. When placing data under certain categories and subcategories, it was compared, contrasted, coded, and then filed. Glaser and Strauss (1999) call this the constant comparison method of qualitative analysis. Using analytic induction, data were re-checked to see if the various cases were related and justified (Richards, 2003; Silverman, 2001). The researcher wanted to be certain that original claims made about the data were warranted. Credibility, a qualitative research term that is analogous to internal validity in quantitative research, was established through triangulation by analyzing questionnaire data from multiple participants from various levels of Spanish and comparing and contrasting it with the researcher's observational data and field notes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). When students made comments about certain activities in the written

questionnaire, the researcher was able to consult observational data and field notes taken during classroom observations.

### *Limitations*

By taking a qualitative approach to research, the author aimed to understand students' perceptions about their experiences with CLT as they participated in communicative activities during and post-EPD. Data collection for this study occurred in 2004, and due to personal circumstances, the student story could not be shared with readers until now. It is my hope that readers still find the students' experiences and voices valuable in pursuit of providing improved world language education for students. In order to make the qualitative analysis more manageable, only 28 of the 483 students who were present in teachers' classrooms during EPD participated in the two after-school meetings and answered the student questionnaire. Even though Raquel's students were asked to participate in after-school meetings, none were either willing or able to stay after school. Most of her students were ninth graders, while students who participated from Daniella, Sergio, and Sophia's classes were in grades 9-12.

The effects of EPD cannot be generalized beyond what the participants of the study experienced in the particular context of this study (Merriam, 2002). Individual and shared experiences that occurred during this EPD may or may not be replicated if implemented again with different teachers, students, and administrators in a different context, and by a different consultant-researcher. However, in the context where the author is now situated, which is more diverse demographically than the Mountain Valley area, the author believes that similar findings would result. The author strongly believes that professional development that catalyzes collaboration between teachers, students, and researchers allows for the possibility of more viable change in world language education.

### **Results**

The most relevant findings from the student data were associated with students' definitions of communicative activities, their opinions about communicative activities, the types of communicative activities they enjoyed, and their thoughts about being included in EPD after-school meetings.

#### *Describing Communicative Activities*

Students were able to describe communicative activities in their student questionnaire responses more appropriately at the follow-up meeting during Week 9 than they had at the first EPD meeting during Week 3.

**Early definitions and misconceptions.** Students from Sergio's classes who participated in the first after-school EPD meeting were asked to describe communicative activities they enjoyed in their classes. Certain students accurately described communicative activities while others wrote about grammar-translation activities. Two students noted that they did not like any communicative activities,

while the rest of the students named activities such as the Fly Swatter Game, the Shouting Game, Bingo, Battleship, “the A and B person thing.”

Students believed that certain translation games were communicative in nature. One student identified the Fly Swatter Game as communicative, “The one [where] we go up to the board with fly swatters. Mr. S says a word in English, then we have to hit the [Spanish] word with the fly swatter.” Another student believed the Shouting Game was communicative:

The Shouting Game. It is where the teacher gives us cards with our vocab words. Then he gives a random number to everyone on the same team. Then he will call out the English word and we have to hold up the card with the right Spanish word and then pronounce the word correctly before the other team.

Certain students, however, were able to identify communicative activities correctly, making reference to doing dialogues, noting they were interesting. One student described an information-gap activity, explaining it as the “A and B person thing” and that “each person has a different paper, either A or B and you ask things according to those papers.”

**Subsequent definitions.** At the follow-up meeting during Week 9, Sophia and Daniella’s students explained communicative activities more intuitively than Sergio’s students had during Week 3. The most salient category in the data involved students noting that communicative activities involved oral communication in Spanish. They believed talking, speaking, and/or conversation was involved with students interacting, negotiating, expressing, interpreting language, and asking questions. Many students mentioned communication was all in Spanish, with students talking to one another and sometimes the teacher. Students wrote: “One where you try to get someone else to understand an idea you have, in this case, by using Spanish.”... “Learning by getting everyone in the class involved into something different that will help the thing that we are taught stick into our brains.”... “Speaking Spanish with other students to help learn the language.” Students understood that the activities were student-centered and that there was an exchange of information or ideas taking place in Spanish.

#### *Students’ Opinions About Communicative Activities*

Data from the student questionnaires, observations, field notes, and researcher’s journal showed students were positive about communicative activities they experienced during EPD and post-EPD (three weeks immediately following EPD, and then 23-25 weeks after EPD had ended), with only certain complaints.

**Positive sentiments.** Students felt they learned Spanish as a result of engaging in communicative activities because they were asked to speak in the target language, which they enjoyed. One student commented about the French communicative lesson he experienced at the first after-school meeting, “I found it easy to learn the language when only the language was spoken. It made me think about what [she] was saying, and that made it stick in my mind.” Students at the follow-up after-school meeting noted they liked being able to have conversations in Spanish with

their peers where they were asked to negotiate, express, and interpret language. Some students from both meetings believed they learned certain forms and vocabulary, and “to speak it correctly if not better” as a result of participating in communicative activities.

During Week 8 of EPD, Sophia’s Spanish I classes experienced “Immersion Day” where the students and teacher only communicated in Spanish during the entire class. After class, Sophia interviewed her students about their feelings about the class and she informed the researcher-consultant:

After speaking to several students, they reflected that speaking only in Spanish wasn’t too difficult, and that doing activities they already were familiar with made it easier. One student liked that I called on individual students to make sure everyone was not only speaking with a partner but in front of the class. Two girls I surveyed stated that the “immersion” experience is not that hard, but people don’t want to put forth the effort for the class. They also told me that it was neat to have me stay in Spanish for the entire class period. Another student said, “It gets easier and easier to do these lessons.”

Post-EPD, 24 weeks after EPD had ended, Sophia’s Spanish II students were observed participating in an *encuesta*, during which students interviewed one another about what they did outside of school. Before students began the activity, Sophia chose two student “experts” who had been in her Spanish I class the previous year to help her lead the activity. She discussed certain strategies students could use when they did not know words. Sophia told students they would lose points if they spoke English. Students who had been in her class the year before suggested to the class that if they did not know or understand a word, they could spell it, use gestures, or act it out. After the activity, Sophia continued speaking Spanish and asked students how they liked the activity. One student remarked, “*divertido*” (It was fun). She asked in English what they thought was the hardest part of the activity, and a student said, “staying in Spanish.” Sophia praised this particular student for drawing in order to communicate at one point during the activity.

In the student questionnaire data, students expressed that by participating in communicative activities, they became more confident in their ability to speak Spanish, which lowered their stress level about being asked to use it in the classroom. One of Daniella’s students from the follow-up after-school meeting commented, “I like the ability to speak with other people at my level in Spanish. It keeps things interesting and it is generally students’ weakest area. It builds confidence.” Another one of her students wrote, “It is easier to express yourself when you do it with other people, and in a fun environment.”

**Students’ criticisms.** The most salient category related to dislikes about communicative activities that emerged from the various data sources was the fact that some students felt frustrated because of their lack of Spanish vocabulary. During Week 4, Spanish II students told Sophia during a debrief session that communicative activities could be frustrating. They also said they wished the directions were in English, they needed to use their bodies more, it was hard to ask

questions, they had to pay attention, and that they needed more time to complete the activities because “we get going and have to leave.”

One of Sophia's students wrote in the questionnaire after the follow-up after-school meeting: “It is very hard when you don't know a word in Spanish not to go back to English.” A few students from both meetings described their dislike about not being able to use English and expressed how it was difficult to understand peers at times. Students also mentioned that communicative activities were hard or difficult, with one admitting, “They are often harder than worksheets or book work. Especially, at first, it is quite hard to catch on to what someone says in Spanish than read it.”

#### *Communicative Activities Students Enjoyed or Would Enjoy*

Students were prompted in the student questionnaire to discuss communicative activities they had enjoyed in class or thought they would enjoy. After experiencing the communicative French lesson at the first EPD meeting, Sergio's students noted they would enjoy doing more conversational Spanish activities. They wanted to experience more activities like the ones they participated in during the French lesson at the first EPD meeting. Students had learned to introduce themselves to one another, to ask other students for their phone numbers, and then they attempted to answer a few written questions about getting around Montpellier, France by using three different bus schedules. Students mentioned, “More games and interactive conversationalist activities. Things like applying what we heard.”... “Maybe not everyday, but once a week we speak only Spanish. I think that it would be good. It might be hard to reinforce but it would be helpful.”... “Group conversations, more common language use, conversational Spanish.”

After the follow-up EPD meeting, students listed that they would enjoy games, interviewing, and on-line chat the most often. One student remarked, “I like doing the computer activity where we talk and the activity that we did after that activity where we all talked and got to ask questions of each other verbally (in Español of course).” A smaller number of students liked doing skits and participating in Sophia's Immersion Day. One student noted, “The “all Spanish” day. It's when no English was to be spoken and it was frustrating at the time because I didn't know everything that I wanted to, but it was fun.” One student emphasized that she liked anything that was hands-on because she did “much better interacting with others.”

#### *Inclusion in EPD meetings*

Students appreciated being included in teacher professional development activities. While some students wrote in their questionnaire that they felt fine and comfortable, several others were happy to share their feedback about their perspectives and experiences with communicative activities. They believed that the meetings were valuable learning experiences for themselves and their teachers. Students wrote: “It was a great time to give feedback to teachers about how to make foreign language instruction interesting.”... “I felt pretty good being able to work with Spanish and help out teachers for a good cause and helping the Spanish

teaching system develop.” Students found the meetings fun, cool, and interesting. Only one student who participated in the follow-up meeting during Week 9 expressed dislike because “We had to stay after school.”

## **Discussion**

In order to understand secondary learners’ perspectives about CLT and EPD, this study investigated the following research questions: 1) How did students describe communicative activities? 2) What did students think about communicative activities? 3) What communicative activities did students enjoy? 4) How did students react to participating in EPD meetings?

At the first after-school meeting, most of the students defined communicative activities inaccurately, describing situations where they had translated words into English-Spanish or Spanish-English during games. At the follow-up meeting during Week 9, after students had experienced training in CLT for several weeks in their teachers’ classrooms, they were able to explain that a communicative activity involved negotiation of meaning, expression, and interpreting, and they understood the need to speak in Spanish (Long, 2000; Pica, 2002). They also emphasized in their responses that socialization was necessary with most communication occurring student to student, but also could involve interaction with the teacher (Pica, 2002; Shrum & Glisan, 2010).

Even though these secondary students expressed dislike about avoiding English during communicative activities because of their lack of Spanish vocabulary as Viakinnou-Brinson et al. (2012) had found with college-level French learners, they understood the importance of maximizing their Spanish use and showed it was possible in the classroom. Several times during and post-EPD, Sophia, in particular, engaged in debrief sessions or “strategy talks” with her students in order to prepare them for her expectations of behavior during communicative activities and to get feedback about how they were feeling after implementing them (Burke, 2010, p. 52; Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2013). As Brown (2009), Levine (2011), and Viakinnou-Brinson et al. (2012) advocated, by training students during class and at after-school EPD meetings to understand the benefits of CLT, they comprehended why they were being asked to engage in communicative activities during lessons. Students realized, although it sometimes could be frustrating and challenging, it was important to develop strategic competence early in order to be able to communicate in Spanish (Burke, 2006, 2010; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997). Similar to what Turnbull (2001) had concluded, and what Levine (2003) had found, many students believed communicative activities improved their confidence in speaking Spanish and lowered their stress level for using it. Students became users of the target language by interviewing classmates, playing games, and through technology integration (Moeller & Roberts, 2013).

Students appreciated that their voices were heard and valued by the researcher and their teachers at EPD meetings. By asking students to participate in these meetings, teachers were able to help students develop metacognitive, cognitive,

and coping strategies, and think about what it meant to be effective language learners (Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2013). Students could be risk-takers and felt safe while learning how to function in a communicative classroom (Moeller & Roberts, 2013).

## Conclusion

Several researchers have recommended that language educators be realistic about their approach to teaching world language and continue to use a multilingual approach and allow for multiple codes to be heard in classrooms (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Cook, 2001; Levine, 2003, 2011). This is necessary at the *beginning* of introductory language courses. Students may need to use some English during the first few weeks, and teachers can conduct strategy talks, debrief sessions, and other process-orientated discussions about CLT and second language acquisition in English the first quarter or semester of the introductory language course. When implementing communicative activities and using other communicative methods, teachers can ask students to reflect on questions such as, “Were you speaking the target language all the time? What would help you speak more often in the target language? How did you do during the lesson/activity? What was the level of difficulty? Why is it important to use the target language in class? How did you communicate to your partner when you did not know a word or an expression?” Teachers need to hear students’ voices and engage them in dialogue about effective world language pedagogy and basic second language acquisition theory, and this may need to occur in English at the beginning of the language learning process.

However, eventually, world language teachers must ask students to stop using English, or their first language, and challenge themselves, use what they know and what they are learning in the target language, on a more consistent basis. If elementary, secondary, and post-secondary students are to develop higher levels of proficiency while learning in classrooms, they need to be required to *use* it. As Savignon found with college-level learners over 40 years ago, the secondary students in this study showed that they *can* be trained to understand CLT methods, and they *valued* the benefits of being asked to maximize their use of the target language. Instead of promoting the use of English in world language classrooms, researchers should work more closely *with* teachers and students so more students can become proficient in world languages. Some teachers may have enough training, and confidence, to be full-fledged CLT teachers, and use immersion, contextualized lessons, student-centered instruction, implicit grammar teaching, and integrate of culture during content-based instruction. Many trained teachers, however, have not. In order to move the profession forward and create contexts where students develop their proficiency at higher levels, researchers, teachers, and students need to work together. Researchers and consultants need to support teachers in their classrooms. Teachers and researchers need to ask students what they think about CLT and not just make assumptions about what they feel or think. All also need to be realistic about expectations as change takes time, and if

we really want more CLT teachers, all levels of instructors and researchers need to help teachers understand, create, implement, and reflect on communicative methods one step at a time, and with their students.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, translators and interpreters are expected to be two of the fastest growing occupations in the U.S. between 2010-2020 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Being bilingual—fluent in more than one language—is now one of the most valuable skills for students to graduate with from high school or college. The U.S. Army, New York Police Department, Fortune 500 companies, hospitals, courts, and schools “can’t get enough workers with this job skill” (Kurtz, 2013, para. 1). If students are going to become bilingual, then, in world language classrooms, they need to be required by teachers to negotiate, express, and interpret the world language consistently in a variety of ways. If a 14 year-old girl is working to become an Olympic swimmer, her coach is not going to spend most of her training time having her play soccer or basketball. The coach is going to have her swim. It seems simple, students who wish to learn Spanish need to speak Spanish 90% or more of the time in their Spanish class. Allowing students to revert to English denies them the opportunity to develop their proficiency. Both students and teachers unquestionably have been, are, and will be, challenged by CLT, but if they rise to this challenge, and get support to do it, they will enjoy it and benefit from it.

### **Dedication and Acknowledgements**

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### **Note**

For purposes of privacy, the names of the high school, teachers, and administrators have been changed. The information on the school district is not referenced also to protect the anonymity of the participants.

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**Appendix A: EPD Timeline**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description of event</u>
Spring 2003	visited 8 MVHS world language teachers and met curriculum coordinator
Summer 2003	presented EPD to MVHS world language curriculum coordinator
November 19, 2003	4 MVHS Spanish teachers enrolled in EPD course and agreed to participate in study
January 24, 2004	<b>EPD course began</b> , breakfast meeting
January 26-February 13	<b>EPD (weeks 1-3)</b> researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings; teachers completed biographical questionnaire and pre-EPD questionnaire
February 11	first after-school EPD meeting, students completed questionnaire
February 16-20	<b>EPD (week 4)</b> researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings; teacher crew meetings began; teachers planned for implementation of communicative activities
February 23-March 26	<b>EPD (weeks 5-8)</b> teachers implemented, observed, reflected on communicative activities; researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings; teachers met in crews to plan and reflect on communicative activities
March 8-14	MVHS spring break
March 29-April 2	<b>EPD (week 9)</b> teachers implemented, observed, reflected on communicative activities; researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings; teachers met in crews to plan and reflect on communicative activities
March 31	follow-up after-school EPD meeting, students completed questionnaire

April 5-9	<b>EPD (week 10, final week)</b> researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings; fieldwork reports and final reflection papers submitted by teachers
April 9	<b>EPD course ended</b>
April 13-29	<b>EPD+1,2,3 post-EPD visits began</b> researcher-consultant conducted observation visits and consultant meetings
August 31	MVHS world language department meeting, discussed post-EPD visits with teachers
September 14-30	<b>EPD+23,24,25 post-EPD visits occurred</b> researcher-consultant conducted observation visits; teachers completed post-EPD questionnaire

### Appendix B: Student Questionnaires

#### EPD Spring 2004 Student Questionnaire (February)

Thank you for participating in World Language EPD. So that I can learn more about your experience during today's activity and about your World Language learning experience in general, please answer the questions below. You may use additional sheets of paper if you would like. If you have any questions, you may contact me via e-mail or by phone XXX-XXXX. Please return the questionnaire to your World Language teacher by February 13, 2004. I appreciate your time and dedication to making EPD a success!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your WL Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Your year in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Your class/level: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have studied the WL: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you feel about participating in professional development activities with the WL teachers?
2. Describe the activity you participated in today. What did you like or dislike about it?
3. How do you think you did when you communicated in French for the activity today?
4. What was positive about the experience?
5. What was frustrating about the experience?
6. Describe a communicative activity that you have enjoyed doing in your WL classroom this year.
7. Choose the approximate percentage of classroom time per week (total=

100%) that you participate in communicative activities like the one you participated in today.

- a. 0% b. 25% c. 50% d. 75% e. 100% f. other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Describe a communicative activity that you would enjoy doing in your WL classroom this year.
  9. What is it about dialogues, skits, and conversation work in class that is valuable to you?
  10. What do you dislike about communicative activities?
  11. Do you have any questions at this time?

### EPD Spring 2004 Student Questionnaire (March)

Thank you for participating in World Language (WL) EPD. So that I can learn more about your experience during today's activity and about your World Language learning experience in general, please answer the questions below. You may use additional sheets of paper if you would like. If you have any questions, you may contact me via e-mail or by phone XXX-XXXX. Please return the questionnaire to your World Language teacher by April 2, 2004. I appreciate your time and dedication to making EPD a success!

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your WL Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Your year in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Your class/level: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have studied the WL: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you feel about participating in professional development activities with the WL teachers?
2. Describe the activity you participated in today. What did you like or dislike about it?
3. How do you think you did when you communicated in Spanish for the activity today?
4. What was positive about the experience?
5. What was frustrating about the experience?
6. What is your definition of a *communicative activity* in the Spanish classroom?
7. Describe one or more communicative activities that you have enjoyed doing in your Spanish classroom this year.
8. Choose the approximate percentage of classroom time per week (total=100%) that you participate in communicative activities like the one you participated in today.  
a. 0% b. 25% c. 50% d. 75% e. 100% f. other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Choose **one** of the five circles that show the approximate percentage of time YOU use Spanish (for example, speaking or writing) during the activities that you mention in #8 (total=100%). a. 0% b. 25% c. 50% d. 75% e. 100% f. other: \_\_\_\_\_





# 8

## Meeting the Communities standard on study abroad

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### **Abstract**

Although study abroad programs receive a lot of attention in the research literature, few studies have addressed the ways in which students can meet the Communities standard while on study abroad. The Communities standard states that language learners “use the language within and beyond the school setting,” and “show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9). Ways students might demonstrate that they meet the Communities standard include “accessing entertainment and information sources available to speakers of the language” and “traveling to communities and countries where the language is used exclusively to further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9). This paper reports the results of a study in which the types of FL resources students seek for personal enjoyment and enrichment as well as the benefits of reading those resources for cultural and linguistic learning are investigated while on a five-week study abroad program. The results indicate that students go out of their way to find a number of resources in the target language for personal enjoyment and enrichment on a regular basis. The results of this study are of interest to administrators, language teachers, and language teacher candidates and can be applied to classroom language instruction and learning.

## Introduction

Since the advent of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (SFL) in 1996, teachers and administrators throughout the United States have sought to base their teaching and learner outcomes on the five goals (commonly known as the 5 Cs) that make up the SFL. These five standards include: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. A number of empirical research studies have been conducted to validate and explore the role the SFL play in language learning and teaching throughout the United States (Arens, 2010; Allen & Dupuy, 2012; Lafayette, 1996; Magnan, 2008; McAlpine, 2000; Phillips & Terry, 1999).

Recently more than 2,100 language teachers completed *The Standards Impact Survey* (ACTFL, 2011). Based on the results, the authors report that although the SFL are being used as the basis of learner outcomes in many language programs, the Communities Goal is the only one of the five standards that receives by far the least amount of attention in classroom teaching (ACTFL, 2011). It has even been referred to as “the Lost C” (Cutshall, 2012). The Communities standard states that language learners will “participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9). In further explaining the Communities standard, Standard 5.1 states that “[s]tudents use the language within and beyond the school setting,” and Standard 5.2 states that “[s]tudents show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9). Ways students might demonstrate that they meet the Communities standard include “accessing entertainment and information sources available to speakers of the language” and “traveling to communities and countries where the language is used exclusively to further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9). Reasons language teachers offered that the Communities Standard is the most difficult goal area to integrate into their teaching and curriculum include:

- Limited or no resources in the local community;
- Not enough time on part of teachers or students;
- Not feasible to take students out of school;
- Difficult to establish and maintain relationships with people outside of schools;
- Not knowing how to incorporate into lesson plans; and
- Not knowing how to assess or measure meeting the Communities goal (ACTFL, 2011).

One interesting yet confusing result is that 75% of teachers stated that they give students means by which they can be lifelong learners of the language, although teachers also reported that the Communities goal was the goal they incorporated least into their teaching.

In a recent study given to language students, the majority of the students reported that the reason they were learning a language is to be able to communicate with native speakers of that language (Magnan, Murphy, Sahakyan, & Kim, 2012). In other words, students value the Communities standard most, while teachers find it the most difficult to integrate into their teaching. This disconnect may cause students to become disillusioned with their classroom language learning experiences if the focus

is not on becoming proficient enough to be able to converse with native speakers of the language. Lentz (2013) points out that most teachers believe the only way to meet the Communities standard is to take students out of the classroom on field trips or on study abroad, neither of which is easy to do. After attending a graduate workshop on using backward design to plan to meet the Communities standard as part of classroom instruction, Lentz explains that teachers can “rediscover the lost C” by using real-time communities, virtual communities, and service learning communities with their students. Keeping students’ language learning goals of communicating with native speakers in mind, teachers can use the Communities standard as a basis for planning units, lessons, and assessments.

In a position paper written by Allen and Dupuy (2012), the authors review current trends in participation in study abroad programs by college students as well as important research discoveries related to the Communities standard. The authors first cite the 2009 study by Mangan and Murphy that found that the Communities standard is the one of the five standards of most significance to university FL students. They then cite the 2011 ACTFL study that found that the Communities standard was ranked lowest of the five standards in terms of planning and learning and was considered the most difficult to teach. In fact, the researchers of the ACTFL study wrote that “the majority finds [the Communities] goal area to be nebulous, out of their control, and not assessable” (p. 28). Allen and Dupuy center the first half of their paper on two main questions that ask whether a study abroad experience facilitates meeting the Communities standard and how post-secondary curricula can enhance the study abroad experience and fulfillment of the Communities standard (p. 469). The second half of their paper focuses on pedagogical implications of the existing research for programmatic courses of action in university FL programs and on study abroad programs to allow students to maximize their FL learning and meet the Communities Standard.

This paper reports the results of a study in which the types of FL resources students seek for personal enjoyment and enrichment as well as the benefits of reading those resources for cultural and linguistic learning are investigated while on a five-week study abroad program.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways can participation in a summer study abroad experience assist students in meeting the Communities standard?
2. What types of resources in German did study abroad participants seek out for personal enjoyment and enrichment while on a five-week study abroad program in Germany?

## Literature Review

FL teachers and researchers have been interested in the gains students make as a result of participating in study abroad programs for decades (Brecht & Robinson, 1993; Freed, 1995; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004; Lafford, 1995). The hope is always that students’ overall proficiency will improve in the target language (TL) in terms of fluency, linguistic gain, cultural knowledge, accuracy,

pragmatic competence, and pronunciation. To date, however, the research has been conducted to determine whether the Communities standard is met through a study abroad program indicates that many students only use the TL periodically (Allen & Dupuy, 2012) and that some do not show significant gain in their overall proficiency in TL and only use the TL when necessary (Mendelson, 2004).

Allen (2010b) notes that many teachers and administrators feel that short-term study abroad programs are the fastest way to meet resident requirements for language minors or certificate programs of study, and Allen and Dupuy (2012) observe that participation in short-term study abroad programs has increased while participation in longer study abroad programs has decreased. The study abroad program in this study lasted five weeks and is considered a short-term study abroad program. For this reason this review of the literature will highlight recent studies that sought to show how students can meet the Communities standards while on short-term study abroad programs.

Allen and Dupuy (2012) point out that because most study abroad programs today are shorter than previous study abroad programs and because participation by undergraduate students has increased among non-language majors, the questions arise of why students participate in study abroad, whether students' proficiency in the language can increase while on study abroad, and whether students have meaningful interaction with NSs and the TL while on study abroad.

#### *Standard 5.1: Student's Language Use on Study Abroad*

Many studies have been dedicated to investigating the improvement of students' oral proficiency (Allen & Herron, 2003; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004), cultural knowledge (Bacon, 2002; Bell, 2009), pragmatic competence (Kinging & Farrell, 2004; Magnan & Back, 2007), and sociolinguistic competence (Kinging, 2008) as a result of studying abroad. These studies provide encouragement for teachers, students, administrators, and parents that students' language proficiency will improve because students study abroad. In terms of the Communities standard 5.1, which states that "[s]tudents use the language within and beyond the school setting" (National Standards, 2006, p. 9), these studies do not provide information about students' use of the language while on study abroad.

Teachers know that students are generally provided with opportunities to use the language within school settings. Study abroad programs allow students to use the language beyond the school setting within the target culture. Researchers in the field of sociolinguistics argue that students learning a TL within the context of their own university and culture without direct contact with native speakers (NSs) of the TL or experience interacting with NSs in the target culture are only learning the TL on an academic level (Saville-Troike, 2003). Students may learn how to use the language in classroom activities and on tests and may even be able to reach a somewhat advanced level doing so, but their language proficiency will never become native-like without interaction and negotiation with NSs in the target culture (Saville-Troike, 2012). The Communities standard supports the notion of the importance of interaction in FL learning because on study abroad programs student will "participate in multilingual societies at home and around

the world” by “traveling to communities and countries where the language is used extensively to further develop their language skills and understanding of the culture” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9).

Allen (2010a), Kaplan (1989), and Kinginger (2008) all note that many times study abroad participants only have brief interactions with members of the target community in the TL during their entire time abroad and that many of the times they do interact with NSs, they are ordering food or requesting information. There are many reasons students do not take full advantage of living among NSs. Allen and Dupuy (2012) describe living arrangements, students’ own ideas of linguistic competence and discourse norms, and the use of Internet communication technologies as the three main reasons students do not speak with NSs while on study abroad. On many study abroad programs students live with or interact daily with other Americans and find it easier to communicate in English with them rather than try to express themselves in the TL. It seems that students need to make a conscious choice to immerse themselves in the language and the culture in order to make significant improvements in their language abilities and cultural knowledge (Allen & Dupuy, 2012; Wilkinson, 1998a; Wilkinson, 1998b; Wilkinson, 2001; Wilkinson, 2002).

#### *Standard 5.2: Using German for Personal Enjoyment and Enrichment*

Standard 5.2 states that “[s]tudents show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment” (National Standards, 2006, p. 9), and study abroad seems like an ideal place for students to begin or continue using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment. Allen and Dupuy (2012) mention that even though given the focus of this standard, many would suppose that students already seek out music, books, film, etc. in the TL for personal enjoyment, many students do not do this.

One study (Kaplan, 1989) examined students’ use of the TL outside the classroom while on a short-term study abroad program and discovered that students did not read fiction or go to movies or plays very often. Also, students spent little, if any, time writing outside of the classroom. Mendelson (2004) investigated contact study abroad students had outside the classroom in interactive and non-interactive situations and learned that speaking and listening in short exchanges along with extended conversations made up 70% of students’ use of the TL while on study abroad. Reading and writing in the TL only occurred to read menus, schedules, etc. and completing homework outside of class.

Another study by Miller and Ginsberg (1995) found that study abroad students in Russia considered reading and writing activities as less useful in their overall language improvement than activities that required them to actively speak. The researchers determined that the students’ own opinions about language learning guided them to ignore language learning situations that could have contributed to the improvement of their overall language development. Contrary to this study, Kline (1998) found that study abroad participants who read a French novel in class and viewed a film version of the novel in the theater with their host families felt

comfortable conversing with their host families about the novel and other course-related readings in French.

The studies that look at students' use of the TL on study abroad for personal enjoyment and enrichment indicate that students seem to value speaking activities over reading and writing activities. It is also surprising that students did not seek out opportunities to read in the target culture, go to movies or plays, or speak with NSs for enjoyment.

### **Methodology**

At the University of Oklahoma, about 30,000 students complete two consecutive semesters of a FL during their undergraduate years. All students are encouraged to explore the possibilities for study abroad, and as of March 2012, about 25% of all students study abroad during their college career. The entire university community remains dedicated to this commitment today, which is why the Education Abroad Office provides students with over 200 study abroad program options across 50 countries and 120 cities, including a flagship study abroad program at the university's exclusive satellite campus in Arezzo, Italy).

Thirteen students from the University of Oklahoma participated in a five-week study abroad program in Leipzig, Germany—seven male students, and six female students. Their ages range from 19-22. Prior to the study abroad program, their advisory proficiency levels varied from Novice High through Advanced Low on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Oral Proficiency Scale—five students started at the Novice High level, three at the Intermediate Low level, three at the Intermediate High level, and two at the Advanced Low level. The five students at the Novice High level had taken two semesters of university German prior to studying abroad. The three students at the Intermediate Low level had taken three or four semesters of university German. The three students at the Intermediate High level had taken five or six semesters of university German, and the two students at the Advanced Low level had taken seven semesters of university German.

All students stayed in dormitory rooms in buildings affiliated with the University of Leipzig located on major tram lines throughout the city. Each student had a single bedroom and a shared kitchen and bathroom with one or two roommates. Five students had traveled to Germany prior to the study abroad program, and one had traveled to German-speaking Switzerland. The other eight students had never been to a German-speaking country.

Students were required to email the researcher daily and include the following information regarding their use of German for personal enjoyment and enrichment: (1) the date; (2) the length of time spent reading in German, viewing something in German, and writing in German; (3) the type of resources students sought out to read (i.e., newspaper, novels, news online, magazine, non-fiction, e-mail), view (i.e., TV, YouTube, movies, news), or write about (personal journal, Facebook, emails, notes, letters etc.); (4) why they chose each particular resource; and (5) what they noticed in terms of grammar and vocabulary in each resource. The only instructions students received were to e-mail the researcher at the end of every

day of the program with the requested information. Based on these requirements, students understood that they should seek out opportunities to use German for personal enjoyment by means of reading, viewing, or writing while in Germany.

The data were collected by the researcher and were analyzed according to Miles and Huberman's (2013) three-phase process for data analysis—reduction, data displaying, and drawing conclusions. In the first phase of data analysis, all e-mails were analyzed for content and categorical clues according to whether the students read, viewed, or wrote using German. Categories for each resource students sought out were assigned, and each resource students mentioned was assigned to a category. From the categories, conclusions were drawn based on the resources students chose that were described in their e-mails. Table One outlines the resources students sought out to use each day to read, view, or write using German for personal enjoyment or enrichment and the number of times each resource was mentioned.

**Table One.** Resources students sought out for personal enjoyment or enrichment while on study abroad (parentheses represent number of times mentioned).

Category	Resource (number of times resource was mentioned)
Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facebook posts (236)</li> <li>2. E-mail (229)</li> <li>3. Newspapers (188)</li> <li>4. Magazines (161)</li> <li>5. Novels (87)</li> <li>6. Young adult fiction (86)</li> <li>7. Children's books (78)</li> <li>8. Menus (72)</li> <li>9. City guides (31)</li> <li>10. Descriptions of movies (32)</li> <li>11. Reviews of movies (27)</li> <li>12. Descriptions of plays (13)</li> <li>13. Reviews of plays (12)</li> <li>14. Descriptions of musical performances (10)</li> </ol>
Viewing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. YouTube videos (178)</li> <li>12. Music videos (169)</li> <li>13. News reports (77)</li> <li>14. Movies (47)</li> <li>15. TV shows (30)</li> <li>16. Play (13)</li> </ol>
Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Facebook posts or comments (213)</li> <li>18. E-mails (201)</li> <li>19. Notes for roommates, classmates, or teacher (142)</li> <li>20. Comments on websites (38)</li> </ol>

In addition to the resources students chose to read, view, or write using German, the researcher also looked at the average number of minutes per day students used German outside of class to read, view, or write for personal enjoyment and

enrichment. Table Two (next page) outlines the number of days each student read, viewed, or wrote using German for personal enjoyment and enrichment; the total number of minutes students read, viewed, or wrote using German; and the average number of minutes per day students spent reading, viewing, or writing as well as the pre- and post-OPI ratings and age of each student.

In the category of reading for personal enjoyment and enrichment, the total minutes students read over the course of 24 days ranged from 120-494 minutes. The average number of minutes per day students read ranged from 16.7-20.6 minutes. The important difference between those who reported lower time periods of reading each day is the number of days read, which ranged from 10 days to all 24 days.

In the category of viewing, the total number of minutes spent viewing ranged from 124-195 minutes, with the average number of minutes per day students viewed German televised programs or videos ranging from 11.7-22.2 minutes per day.

The total minutes students spent writing ranged from 116-311 minutes, with the average number of minutes students wrote per day ranging from 6.4-13 minutes per day.

## **Discussion**

*Research Question #1: In what ways can participation in a summer study abroad experience assist students in meeting the Communities standard?*

In response to the first research question of this study, the data collected on types of resources study abroad participants indicate that students are able to meet the Communities standard of using the language both within and beyond the classroom setting by accessing entertainment and information sources available to speakers of German while in Germany. (See Table One for a list of resources.) Many of the resources students listed can easily be accessed or acquired while living at home, but none of the students who participated in this study had accessed any of them with the exception of YouTube videos prior to their study abroad experience. In a pre-study abroad class, the researcher told the students several ways they would be able to access and use resources available to speakers of Germany more easily while in Germany and that the focus of their study abroad program is to become more proficient in German. All 13 of the students were enthusiastic to have access to authentic resources in Germany and expressed the desire to seek out authentic resources to improve their German. None of the students had a true immersion experience while on study abroad, although one put forth a valiant effort. None of them really tried. Allen and Dupuy (2012) point out that having American peers close by as part of a study abroad program along with Internet communication technologies “can easily derail the pursuit of cultural and linguistic immersion in host communities abroad” (p. 476). The students in this study were with peers from their university every day of the program. Five students commented that they wish their experience could have been more of an immersion experience but

**Table Two.** Number of days students read, viewed, or wrote using German for personal enjoyment and enrichment; the total number of minutes students read, viewed, or wrote using German; and the average number of minutes per day students spent reading, viewing, or writing as well as the pre- and post-OPI ratings and age of each student.

Student	Number # of Days reading (out of 24)	Total Length in Minutes reading/Average minutes per day reading	Number # of days viewing (out of 24)	Total Minutes viewing/Average minutes per day viewing	Number # of days writing (out of 24)	Total Minutes writing/Average minutes per day writing	Pre-OPI Rating (pre-study abroad)	Post-OPI Rating (post-study abroad)	Age
#1	10	120/12	9	150/16.7	16	133/8.3	NH	IL	19
#2	12	150/12.5	10	177/17.7	18	121/6.7	NH	IL	19
#3	11	148/13.5	12	200/16.7	18	118/6.6	NH	IL	19
#4	21	218/10.4	18	333/18.5	16	145/9.1	NH	IL	19
#5	16	192/12	16	124/7.8	18	115/6.4	NH	IL	19
#6	23	222/9.7	18	295/16.4	19	192/10.1	NH	IL	22
#7	13	128/9.8	11	205/18.6	8	116/14.5	IL	IM	21
#8	12	122/10.1	12	140/11.7	13	118/9.1	IL	IM	21
#9	24	276/11.5	21	370/17.6	18	220/12.2	IH	AL	22
#10	19	255/13.4	20	320/16	19	204/10.7	IH	AL	20
#11	24	416/17.3	22	488/22.2	24	257/10.7	IH	AL	20
#12	24	478/19.9	24	510/21.3	24	248/10.3	AL	AM	19
#13	24	494/20.6	24	495/20.6	24	311/13	AL	AM	19

NH=Novice High  
 IL= Intermediate Low  
 IM=Intermediate Mid

IH=Intermediate High  
 AL=Advanced Low  
 AM=Advanced Mid

that they really enjoyed looking for German resources with their classmates in spite of the lack of immersion setting.

*Research Question #2: What types of resources in German did study abroad participants seek out for personal enjoyment and enrichment while on a five-week study abroad program in Germany?*

In response to the second research question, the data show that the 13 students sought out 24 different resources in the categories of reading, viewing, and writing for personal enjoyment and enrichment while on a five-week study abroad program in Leipzig, Germany. Overall, students read and wrote Facebook posts and e-mails much more than any other resource they used to read or write. This result is not surprising given that each of the 13 students has an active presence on Facebook and e-mails regularly. Within the first two days of their time in Germany, students had become friends with a number of NSs of German on Facebook and had also exchanged e-mail addresses with NSs.

In terms of seeking out resources to read in addition to Facebook posts and e-mail, students also regularly read newspapers and magazines, and some students read novels, young adult fiction, and children's books. The books students chose were mainly German translations of their favorite books at home, such as the *Harry Potter* series, the *Hunger Games* series, the *Twilight* series, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Some students chose German books, such as, *Der Zauberberg* by Thomas Mann, poetry by Goethe, short stories and novellas by Franz Kafka, *Freunde* by Heinrich Heiner, and *Max und Moritz* by Wilhelm Busch. The most surprising results in the reading category were the number of students who spent at least ten minutes reading descriptions and reviews of movies and plays. Most students attended at least one play and two movies in a movie theater, and none was given or directed to read a summary or review of the play or movies. It is interesting to note that a number of the students carefully read menus at restaurants to learn new words related to menu items in Germany and city guides to learn more about Leipzig and other cities they visited.

Of the six resources students listed that they sought out to view, YouTube videos and music videos were by far the most popular. Some students spent several minutes each day watching videos online that were in German, and one commented that he would look up a video online after hearing one of his German friends talk about it. That way he was prepared to participate in a conversation about the content of the video the next day. Students also watched online news reports, went to movies, watched TV shows, and attended a play. One student in particular watched one of her favorite shows on the Disney Channel in German as often as she could. She felt that watching it helped her learn current and relevant vocabulary for her age and allowed her to lose herself in the German language while also keep up with her favorite TV show at home.

Students listed only two venues for writing in German for personal enjoyment and enrichment in addition to writing Facebook posts and e-mails: notes for roommates, classmates, or teachers and comments on websites. Students commented that they had the most difficult time finding venues to write outside

of Facebook and e-mail, and for the purpose of their study abroad program, the writing they engaged in for personal enjoyment seems appropriate.

In examining the data for individual students on this program, only two out of 13 students read, viewed, and wrote using German for personal enjoyment and enrichment every single day of the five-week program, although one student accessed German in two of the three categories for all 24 days. (Students were only required to track the resources they used and the minutes for each resource for 24 days of the program.) Both of the students who accessed German in all three categories every day of the program were at the Advanced Low level on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale prior to departure, and the fact that these students had had by far the most German before study abroad and comments made by both may indicate that they were more likely to seek out German resources for personal enjoyment and enrichment because their German was at a higher level than the other participants. Based on total number of minutes in the categories of reading, viewing, and writing students spent more time viewing televised programs and videos in German than writing or reading in German and more time reading or writing. As previously mentioned, one of the reasons this may be the case is due to the limited venues for writing for personal enjoyment and because the main goal of the program was oral proficiency.

When looking at the total number of minutes, the average number of minutes per day, and the number of days students read, viewed, or wrote in German for personal enjoyment and enrichment, the numbers are not overwhelming. But when considering that each minute was spent by a student on study abroad in German using German for personal enjoyment and enrichment, the numbers are more impressive. Students were required to read and write daily in the classroom and for homework assignments, and the fact that they still went out of their way to use German for personal enjoyment and enrichment shows that on this particular study abroad program, the Communities standard was indeed met.

### **Implications for Study Abroad and the Classroom at Home**

As demonstrated on the study abroad program in this study, if students are prepared to seek out resources in the TL for personal enjoyment and enrichment and are required to record what they do and for how long while on study abroad, students may be more likely to meet the Communities standard. Along the same lines, if teachers introduce students to ways of accessing TL resources from home, they may be more likely to do so. Teachers could also make doing so part of a course syllabus so that students receive credit for seeking out resources they can use for personal enjoyment and enrichment. Twelve of the 13 students commented that they are sure they will continue to read, view, and write in German for pleasure following the study abroad program. Three months following the program, all thirteen students reported reading, viewing, or writing something in German at least four times each week. Five months following the program, all thirteen students reported reading, viewing, or writing something in German at least three times each week.

Although the proficiency level of each student was not taken into account for each student's report of use of German for personal enjoyment and enrichment, it is motivating to mention that each student's proficiency improved one sub-level on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale based on results of pre-departure and post-study abroad program advisory Oral Proficiency Interviews.

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