

# Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development

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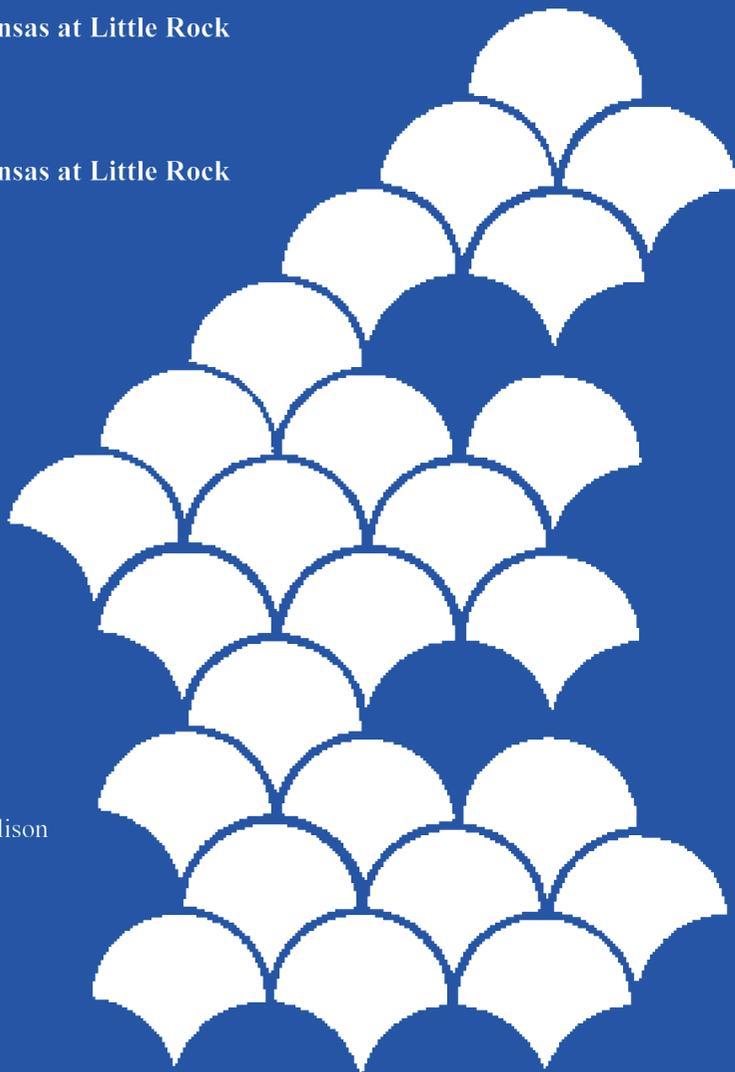
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2006 Report of the  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

# **Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development**

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**Selected Papers from the 2006  
Central States Conference**

**Dave McAlpine, Editor**  
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**2006 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 *CSC 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 the sessions that will be presented at the annual conference. Once the sessions have been selected, presenters are contacted by the editor of the *CSC Report* and invited to submit a manuscript for possible publication in that volume. The invitation outlines the key themes for the *Report* to which each submission must connect. Copies of the publication guidelines are sent to conference presenters and others who express interest in submitting a manuscript. All submissions are read and evaluated by at least five members of the Editorial Board, individuals who are experts in the field of second language acquisition and foreign language methodology. 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that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published.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 the reviewers' ratings are received, the editors make all final publishing decisions. A critical criterion is how well the article addresses the volume's thematic focus. The names of the members of the 2006 Editorial Board are listed below.

The editors would like to point out that all Web site addresses (URLs) mentioned in the articles were fully functional at the time this volume went to press. This does not mean that those sites still exist or that the addresses given are still functional.

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# Contents

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Review and Acceptance Procedures.  
Preface  
Central States Conference Board of Directors 2005-2006.  
Introduction.

- 1 New Visions in Action: A Perspective on Process and Progress**..... 1  
Frank Medley and Robert Terry

## Pre-Service

- 2 Today’s Pre-Service Foreign Language Teachers: New Expectations, New Realities for Teacher Preparation Programs**..... 11  
Eileen Glisan
- 3 Reflections of a Study Abroad Director** ..... 41  
John Janc
- 4 Any Classroom Can Be a Distance Learning Room**..... 51  
Zoe Louton and Eryn Sunday
- 5 WebQuests, Teacher Preparation, and Language Learning: Theory into Practice** ..... 63  
Aleidine Moeller and Anastassia McNulty
- 6 Integrating Standards and Instruction: One University’s Experience**..... 75  
Rosalie Cheatham
- 7 Service Learning and the Integration of the 5Cs in College Instruction** ..... 89  
Gladys Martin

## In-Service

- 8 Professional Development for Foreign Language Educators: Characteristics and Models for Success** ..... 99  
Marie Trayer

<b>9</b>	<b>Advocating for a Mutual Understanding of Beliefs Between Students and Instructors</b> .....	105
	Angela Ferguson	
<b>10</b>	<b>Reciprocal Teaching as a Platform for Communicative Activities in the Secondary Foreign Language Classroom</b> .....	113
	Rebecca Ann Barrett	
<b>11</b>	<b>Using an Electronic Response System to Enhance Classroom Participation</b> .....	133
	John Sanford Dugan	
<b>12</b>	<b>Instructional Technology as a Means to Enhance Foreign Language Learning</b> .....	145
	Marat Sanatulloev and Elvira Sanatullova-Allison	

## Preface

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The 2006 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, a joint conference with the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, celebrated languages of the world in the classroom and in the community. The theme, *Language and Communities: Integrating Perspectives* focused on connecting the language classroom to the communities in which we live. Chicago provided the ideal setting for integrating the perspectives of languages and cultures from around the world.

This volume of the *CSC Report* is the companion volume for the 2005 *CSC Report* “The Year of Languages: Its Challenges, Changes, Choices, and Celebrations.” Foreign language education gained visibility in 2005 The Year of Languages. We must continue to “celebrate, educate, and communicate the power of language learning” in 2006 through the ACTFL “Discover Languages” initiative. In order to do that, we need to look to the development of pre-service teachers—our future. The 2006 *CSC Report*, “Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development,” focuses on pre-service teacher preparation and its connected issues, and in-service teacher development and its related topics. The research shows us that teachers who are better prepared and have a higher level of proficiency have a greater impact on improving language learning in the classroom. However, learning a second language goes beyond the classroom. As educators we sometimes get so consumed by what we are doing in our classrooms that we overlook the rich, diverse resources in our communities. The 2006 keynote speaker Dr. Natalie Hahn, from the United Nations Office for International Partnerships, addressed the importance of reaching out to communities, supporting cultural understanding in the classroom and integrating the cultural perspectives with language learning.

The conference workshops and sessions provided a venue for foreign Language educators, both present and future, to enrich language learning in their classrooms through integrating the perspectives of language and communities. The full-day immersion workshops connected with the communities of the Alliance Française, Instituto Cervantes, Goethe Institute, and Italian Cultural Institute. The Art Institute of Chicago hosted and presented a workshop using art to build language skills. Teachers learned how to utilize local cultural institutions to build a toolkit for cultural understanding in the classroom at The Field Museum’s workshop. Many sessions brought foreign language educators together to integrate the perspectives of language and communities including the Chicago consulates sharing a wealth of valuable resources with teachers.

Integrating the perspectives of language and communities for both present and future teachers was evident in the conference program and in the articles selected for this volume. The articles integrate the perspectives of a new vision for teacher development whether it is meeting the needs of a changing population, developing

mentoring programs, studying abroad, or preparing for new requirements. The participants of the conference integrated the perspectives of language and communities. Both the *CSC Report* and conference integrated perspectives of foreign language education fundamental to meeting the future needs of students and teachers.

— Vickie Scow  
CSC Program Chair 2006

# Introduction

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## Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development

**Dave McAlpine**

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As the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages approaches its fortieth year as one of the country's major providers of in-service education for second language educators, it is appropriate that this volume focuses on the role of both in-service education for those preparing to become foreign language teachers as well as on in-service education for teachers committed to life-long professional renewal.

The 2005 volume, *The Year of Languages: Challenges, Changes, and Choices*, presented the profession with a response to the highly successful Year of Languages campaign of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Similarly, this volume responds to ACTFL's New Visions in Action project and its Teacher Development Task Force adopted as a major focus by the Central States Conference. The goal of the Teacher Development Task Force is to identify and define the key components that might be included in a national foreign language teacher education program for pre-service teachers and a national agenda for professional development for in-service teachers.

While not comprehensive by any means, this volume provides glimpses of what many of those preparing to be language teachers can expect from their pre-service education and what those who are in the classroom now should encounter from their in-service providers as they continue to update themselves in the field of foreign language education.

The first article by Medley and Terry provides an overview of the New Visions in Action project and details the Teacher Development Task Force's activities dedicated to the improvement of teacher preparation, both at the pre-service and in-service levels.

All of the other articles in this volume of the *Report* focus on either pre-service and in-service education with Eileen Glisan's article providing a comprehensive look at the ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation

of Foreign Language Teachers and the implications of those standards on those preparing to be foreign language teachers in colleges and universities today.

John Janc, Zoe Louton and Eryn Sunday, and Aleidine Moeller and Anastassia McNulty describe respectively study abroad, distance education, and WebQuests as topics that all new teachers must understand as they enter today's second language classroom.

Rosalie Cheatham presents the reader with an innovative change to a university French curriculum and links the 5Cs of the student standards to the ACTFL/NCATE Teacher Standards; Gladys Martin continues the discussion of the 5Cs as a focus of another university's attempt to make its programs relevant to the students and to impact the community it serves.

The second half of the volume focuses on In-Service as introduced by the article by Marie Trayer. Trayer provides the reader with a list of opportunities for professional development ranging from programs offered by national foreign language resource centers, to regional conferences, to college and university course work.

Angela Ferguson advocates that foreign language teachers provide opportunities for students to understand the use of certain pedagogical systems that may deviate from the students' beliefs in order to create a classroom where students feel comfortable to take risks. Likewise, Rebecca Ann Barrett challenges the reader to consider Reciprocal Reading and Jigsaw strategies to improve students' communicative skills.

Finally, technology continues to play an important part of in-service education for today's second language educator as evidenced by the article by John Sanford Dugan on the growing use of electronic response systems to check student knowledge and by the article by Marat Sanatulloev and Elvira Sanatullova-Allison on instructional technology-based activities that make classrooms interactive, meaningful, enjoyable, and exciting learning environments.

The editors are grateful to the authors for their willingness to share their ideas here in the *Report* and to the many professionals who served as reviewers of these articles. The editors hope that these articles provide a "new vision" for the goal of teacher development by the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

# 1

## **New Visions in Action: A Perspective on Process and Progress<sup>1</sup>**

**Frank Medley**

West Virginia University

**Robert Terry**

University of Richmond

In 1998, the National K-12 Foreign Language Center (NFLRC) at Iowa State University and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) began a process to identify and address some of the most pressing needs in teaching and learning foreign languages in this country. A Steering Committee was formed, with representatives from the NFLRC and ACTFL meeting to identify what was needed to accomplish the following goals: Ensure that all teacher educators have the necessary knowledge and skills.

- Ensure that all pre-service foreign language teachers are fully prepared in the discipline.
- Ensure that all pre-service foreign language teachers are fully prepared in the pedagogical and clinical content of foreign language teaching.
- Ensure that all experienced foreign language teachers are competent to help their students achieve the national standards.
- Have clear, measurable ways of assessing competence.
- Develop and implement varied curriculum models that reflect diverse learners/purposes/outcomes.
- Assess whether every student has achieved the national standards.
- Have the profession gain increased control in the agenda-setting and decision-making process.
- Ensure that every child has the option to participate in a sound program of foreign language study and that every teacher has access to quality professional development.

## 2 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

- Define a unified professional stance regarding language policy (New Visions in Action (NVA), n.d. *Beginning New Visions*).

Building on these goals, in June 1999 a planning conference was held near Atlanta, where some forty foreign language educators engaged in intensive discussions prompted by three questions: “What could we do?” “What should we do?” and “What will we do and who will do it?” Stemming from these discussions, five papers were prepared as springboards for further study: Architecture of the Profession; Curriculum, Instruction, Articulation, and Assessment; Teacher Development; Teacher Recruitment and Retention; and Research.<sup>2</sup> In June 2000 a National Priorities retreat was held in Leesburg, Virginia, sponsored jointly by the NFLRC and ACTFL, with grant support from the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the 1999 discussions and papers. This was a much larger meeting, with representatives from a number of foreign language professional organizations and other individuals who had expressed interest in the project, together with most of the participants in the 1999 planning session. Archival documents indicate that working groups refined the ideas, set priorities, and developed action plans for the five goal areas as set forth in the 1999 papers mentioned above. These action plans identified the steps and those who would be involved in carrying them out (NVA, n.d., *National Priorities Retreat* (June 2000)).

Following the 2000 meeting, four Task Forces were organized and the Steering Committee was expanded to include the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the four Task Forces: (1) Curriculum, Instruction, Articulation, and Assessment; (2) Teacher Development; (3) Teacher Recruitment and Retention; and (4) Research. This new Steering Committee held its first meeting in February 2000, at which time the role of each Task Force was determined. The Chairs and Co-Chairs then extended public invitations to foreign language educators to volunteer to work with the Task Force that was of most interest to them. Once the volunteers were identified, each Task Force began to work on the components of the goals that had been set forth over the preceding two years. Details on the activities of each Task Force, as well as the names of the members of the Steering Committee, are available on the Web at <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions/>. The remainder of this chapter, however, focuses only on the activities of the Teacher Development Task Force.

### **The Teacher Development Task Force**

The goal of the Teacher Development Task Force is to identify and define the key components that might be included in a national foreign language teacher education program for pre-service teachers and a national agenda for professional development for in-service teachers. Both the model and the agenda were based on data gathered from a variety of sources, including

- Current teacher preparation and professional development programs;
- A needs assessment survey conducted in the field;

- Studies of existing and proposed professional development materials and frameworks; and
- National teacher standards and accreditation initiatives (NVA, n.d., Teacher Development Task Force).

The activities of this Task Force are dedicated to the improvement of teacher preparation, both at the pre-service and in-service levels. Toward that end, four Working Groups have been formed, each of which is concerned with a major aspect of professional development: (1) Preparing Teachers to Implement Content and Performance Standards; (2) Internship; (3) Induction; and (4) In-service Professional Development.<sup>3</sup> Each Working Group has from six to nine members, all volunteers, and the primary means of communication among them is e-mail.

The key questions that form the focus for each of the groups essentially stem from the needs assessment survey that was conducted by NVA in its 2002-2003 National Foreign Language Survey.<sup>4</sup> Survey items came originally from the need to identify criteria for ideal professional practices that will help us ultimately improve what we are doing. The survey was designed to develop greater understanding of how the foreign language profession perceives issues related to both pre-service and in-service teacher development; identify components of teacher development on which the Task Force should focus; and determine the perspectives and diverse needs of various stakeholders in the profession regarding teacher development. The key issues, as determined by the analysis of data from the NVA survey, include the four Working Group themes and discussion questions presented below.

The *Content and Performance Standards* group has focused on determining what teachers need to know and be able to do to help their students attain the skills and knowledge represented by the ACTFL K-12 Performance Guidelines and the National Standards. Key questions they are addressing include:

- What are the components of teacher preparation programs that will prepare teachers to implement the ACTFL K-12 Performance Guidelines in their classes?
- How can the National Standards best be integrated into pre-service and in-service programs for foreign language teachers?
- How can we best assess the performance and knowledge base of pre-service teachers in language and culture?
- How do all departments and/or programs (foreign language, education, information technology, and placement site coordinators) cooperate and collaborate in the preparation of new teachers? (NVA, n.d., Get involved)

The *Internship* group considers several issues: the ideal content for a foreign-language-specific methods course; the ideal characteristics and qualifications of the cooperating teacher and college/university supervisor; best

#### 4 Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development

practices in the integration of training, classroom experience, guidance, and supervision; how the methods teacher, supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher should work together effectively. The questions driving their discussions include:

- What are the essential components and methods of delivery of a foreign-language-specific methods course?
- What are the ideal characteristics and qualifications of the cooperating teacher, including language and cultural proficiency? What are the ideal characteristics and qualifications of the college/university supervisor, including language and cultural proficiency?
- What is the most effective way to seamlessly integrate pedagogical training, technology, student-teacher field experiences, and guidance offered by the cooperating teacher and the supervisor?
- What are the ideal conditions under which the methods teacher, supervisor, cooperating teacher, and student teacher work together most effectively? (NVA, n.d., Get involved)

The *Induction* group focuses on describing the ideal induction program for new teachers, the most desired characteristics and qualifications of mentors of new teachers, and the process and components of assessment of new teachers. Within the context of this project, induction programs are considered to be primarily a process that occurs over an extended period. In its *Educational Issues Policy Brief*, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2001) describes Induction as "... a hands-on opportunity for beginning teachers — under the guidance of experienced mentors — to link the theory of instruction learned in their teacher preparation programs with the practice of classroom teaching" (p. 2). However, induction goes beyond mentoring in the sense that mentoring is a one-to-one support process, while induction is a group process of training, support, and retention (Wong, n.d.). Thus, this group is addressing the following questions:

- What are the optimal components of an induction program for new teachers?
- What are the ideal characteristics and qualifications of mentors of new teachers?
- What are the elements that should be taken into consideration in assessing the performance, knowledge, skills, and qualifications of new teachers? When should this assessment take place? How will this assessment take place? Who will do the assessing? (NVA, n.d., Get involved)

The group concentrating on *In-service* works to discover ideal practices of professional development in terms of support, funding, scheduling, discipline-specific content and pedagogy, and the integration of technology. Their questions are

- What is the necessary support that teachers need to take advantage of professional development opportunities, such as release time, funding, providing alternate means of instruction (e.g., substitute teachers, etc.), college/university/CEU credit, and reward?

- When is the optimal time for offering professional development opportunities: during the school day, after school, on weekends, during the summer?
- What is the ideal content for professional development opportunities to support the maintenance and improvement of language, pedagogical, and cultural skills?
- Who should determine professional development needs: the teachers, department chairs, supervisors, school administrators, and/or a combination of these?
- How and where will the necessary immersion experiences take place: in immersion programs? abroad? in intensive language programs? through community service?
- How should professional conferences best reflect and support professional development needs?
- How can we ensure that the essential needs for the integration of technology into foreign language teaching are available? (NVA, n.d., Get involved)

In addition to the group-specific questions, all groups considered the following:

- How can technology best be used to implement teacher preparation, internship, induction, and professional development?
- What are some existing programs that can serve as models to address and exemplify best practices for each of the four categories?
- How can professional organizations best support the initiatives that will be undertaken for teacher development? (NVA, n.d., Get involved)

### **Where Are We Now?**

Based on essential input from the 2002-2003 survey and numerous conversations between Task Force members and teachers at sessions in professional meetings, members of the Task Force identified those characteristics that the volunteers considered most desirable in teacher development programs. All teacher development programs are expected to have certain inherent characteristics. They should prepare students to design lesson plans; select, adapt, and create materials and texts for the elementary and/or secondary classroom; design curricular units; and integrate culture with language instruction. In addition, programs should

- include at least one methods course specific to foreign language teaching prior to student teaching;
- place student teachers with fully certified cooperating teachers;
- require an internship for primary or secondary certification—or for both if for K-12 certification;
- expect instructors in the teacher education program to be professionally active at local, state, and/or national levels;
- offer content courses, such as language, literature, culture, and the arts taught in the target language (NVA, n.d., Teacher Development Criteria).

### **Identification of Exemplary Programs in Teacher Development**

One of the most obvious outcomes of the Teacher Development Task Force has been the identification of undergraduate and graduate degree programs that satisfy the criteria for being designated as exemplary. Criteria for nominating a program as exemplary were identified through data on ideal professional practices collected from the profession on the 2002-2003 National Foreign Language Survey<sup>5</sup> and through a review of the professional literature. In addition, Task Force members have been actively involved at professional meetings as presenters and have solicited input from their audiences. Further, the person nominating the program may propose additional criteria for consideration.

The pedagogical knowledge base on which the selection of exemplary programs is made includes the following criteria:

- All foreign language courses (e.g., language, literature, culture, geography, history, the arts, etc.) are anchored in/guided by the goals of the national student standards (Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century).
- Pre-service teachers are trained to select, adapt, design, and implement technology-based activities and assessments for the elementary and/or secondary classroom.
- The methods course and internship for foreign languages prepare teachers equally for all levels included in the teaching certificate/license rather than focusing on a small segment of the sequence, for example, just high school.
- The program provides a balanced offering of course work in language, literature, and culture of multiple regions/continents/peoples who speak the target language.
- The program has an effective assessment system to evaluate the four skills of the teaching certification candidate through the three communicative modes (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational) as an exit requirement.
- The program has established a system to assess student language skills and requires Advanced-Low for cognate languages and Intermediate-High for non-cognate languages as a prerequisite to student teaching or acceptance into fifth-year or MAT certification programs.
- The program provides exemplary intensive language study or equivalent immersion experience, preferably abroad, as part of the curriculum or as an entrance requirement (NVA, n.d., Teacher Development Criteria).

#### *Gathering Evidence*

Nominators are asked to specify the criterion (or criteria) for which they are nominating the program, write a short rationale for each criterion identified, and provide documentation for each. This documentation might include test

scores, testimony, or documents, which can be made available by website link, uploading, or by mailing the information to the NVA office at Iowa State University. Additionally, they are asked to provide information about themselves and, if they are not nominating their own program, to identify a contact person in the program they are nominating.

### *Review Process*

Once a nomination is received, the Working Group that is focused on the area of each criterion reviews the nomination. Note that a program may well be exemplary in one area [e.g., assessment] but not necessarily exemplary in others such as curriculum design. When this occurs, the program may be identified as a model of excellence in the particular criteria that refer to assessment.

When a nominated model has been selected as exemplary by the Working Group and confirmed by the Task Force Co-Chairs, the NVA staff communicates with the NVA Working Group(s) and the nominated institution to identify appropriate information about the program itself as well as information from the submitted documentation that demonstrate the program's excellence. This information is then placed on the NVA website to serve as a model that can provide direction to other teacher education programs as well as help strengthen foreign language learning in the nation. Additionally, a letter and press release are sent to the program's administrators by the NVA chairs to inform them of their designation as a model/exemplary program.

To date, the greatest weakness of the process lies in the difficulty of soliciting nominations. Although information describing the project has been posted on numerous websites and flyers have been distributed at regional professional meetings, the Task Force has not been inundated with nominations. Further, not all programs that are nominated submit adequate documentation and thus are not designated as an exemplary program. When such a situation arises, NVA and the contact person for the program nominated communicate in an effort to obtain the necessary information so that the nomination can be reconsidered.

### **In-Service Professional Development**

A second area of interest to the Teacher Development Task Force is the quality of in-service programs available to teachers already in the classroom. To this point, however, the primary focus of the group has been on the design and quality of foreign language teacher preparation programs. As the characteristics of excellence in teaching languages are identified, there will be a basis upon which these model in-service programs can be built. The relatively short time that the Task Force has been functioning has not enabled the group to develop the same procedures for collecting and disseminating information about what is going on around the country as we have with the pre-service programs. Thus, one component of the agenda for the future is established.

## Summary and Conclusion

The initiative conceived by the National K-12 Foreign Language Center at Iowa State University and realized through a collaborative effort with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages has laid the groundwork for profession-wide improvements in teaching and learning language in the schools of our nation. Funded initially by the U. S. Department of Education, the project offers promise for continuing its efforts, provided ways can be found to maintain the infrastructure of the Task Forces and the dedication of the volunteers who serve on them. Either through continued funding from the government or from private philanthropic organizations, or with the readiness of one or more regional professional associations to maintain the activities of the groups — perhaps with each regional association “adopting” a Task Force — can the initiative continue.

As this volume demonstrates, the Board of Directors of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages is dedicated to the professional development of teachers, and has indicated an interest in working with the Teacher Development Task Force, should that be the future, continued direction of New Visions.

## Notes

1. Much of the information in this article comes directly from the New Visions website. The authors wish to express their appreciation to Marcia Harmon Rosenbusch, Director of the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University, Miriam Met and Ann Tollefson, Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee, other members of the Steering Committee, and Julio Rodriguez, Webmaster, for their ongoing contributions to the information that can be found on the project’s Web site. The material is used with permission and has been modified to fit the context of a narrative format. The original materials can be found at <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions>.
2. These five discussion papers can be found at <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions/newsite/overview/visions1999.html>.
3. Each of the Working Group themes is aligned with at least one set of national professional standards:
  - National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for teacher education;
  - Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) for initial teacher licensure;
  - National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for advanced professional certification; and, for all Working Group themes
  - International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) for technologically literate students and teachers.

4. The survey results can be found on the NVA website at <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions/>.
5. These nominating criteria and instructions are available on the NVA website at <http://www.educ.iastate.edu/newvisions/shared/>.

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## 2

### **Today's Pre-Service Foreign Language Teachers: New Expectations, New Realities for Teacher Preparation Programs**

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As recently as five years ago, foreign language teacher preparation programs operated without clearly defined expectations from the profession-at-large concerning what its teacher candidates should know and be able to do as beginning teachers. While some programs defined their own expectations reflecting their internal views about foreign language teaching, other programs counted on course requirements alone to produce qualified teacher candidates. However, the new millennium brought with it a renewed concern and vision for foreign language teacher preparation, sparked at least in part by the realization that the profession's K-16 standards for students—*Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999)—could only be implemented by teachers who possessed the requisite expertise.

In 2002, the profession published its first set of standards, the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (ACTFL, 2002), which describe expectations for pre-service foreign language teachers (i.e., teacher candidates). These standards form a seamless connection to two other sets of standards that were developed almost simultaneously: standards for beginning foreign language teachers in years one to three of teaching: *Model Standards for Licensing Beginning Foreign Language Teachers: A Resource for State Dialogue* (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium [INTASC], 2002), and standards for accomplished teachers: *World Languages Other Than English Standards* (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], 2001). Our profession now has a continuum of teacher standards across the career of the foreign language teacher.

## 12 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

While articulating the vision for the preparation of foreign language teachers was a pivotal first step, programs are facing much to do in terms of addressing the standards in teacher education programs and designing assessments that effectively illustrate attainment of the standards. This process has sparked dialogue between colleges of education and foreign language departments, and it has provided ideas for future research.

This article will explore the current expectations for pre-service foreign language teachers and the new realities for teacher preparation programs by discussing:

- the unique features of the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers*, together with ideas for innovative assessments that programs might use to verify that their candidates are achieving specific standards;
- ways in which the standards are serving as a catalyst for change in foreign language teacher preparation programs; and
- future areas of research and professional dialogue that will facilitate meeting the profession's expectations for pre-service foreign language teachers.

### **ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers**

#### *The Path To Standards:*

#### *From the 1988 Guidelines to the 2002 Program Standards*

As early as 1988, in an effort to assist teacher preparation programs in the development of foreign language teachers, ACTFL published its *Provisional Program Guidelines for Foreign Language Teacher Education*. The document was designed as a set of guidelines for helping faculty to assess their institution's preparation of foreign language teachers, evaluate the effectiveness of its preparation program, and plan ways to improve the program. The guidelines focused on the following three areas of pre-service preparation: (1) personal development—knowledge and skills acquired through the liberal arts component, (2) professional development—knowledge and skills acquired through education and experience in pedagogy, and (3) specialist development—knowledge and skills in language and culture (ACTFL, 1988). Included in the guidelines were ideas for curriculum components to be included in the program and the specific knowledge and skills to be developed by coursework and experiences. In addition to representing the first forward-looking view concerning what knowledge, skills, and experiences would hold promise for language teachers, this effort provided the impetus for discussing teacher preparation among all sectors of the foreign language teaching profession.

The next significant milestone that would put our profession on the path towards developing teacher standards was ACTFL's membership in the

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1999. ACTFL joined the ranks of other specialized professional associations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), all of which have professional standards and play a key role in shaping teacher education in the United States. Shortly after joining NCATE, ACTFL appointed a committee to draft new standards for pre-service teachers and engaged our profession-at-large in dialogue about our expectations for beginning language teachers in order to inform the development of the standards. In October, 2002, NCATE approved our newly designed *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers*. This is the first set of foreign language program standards to have been developed by the profession and approved by NCATE. Beginning in 2004, foreign language teacher preparation programs undergoing NCATE review were required to base their program report submissions on the new 2002 standards.

### *Introducing the ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards*

By this time many faculty in foreign language teacher education have seen the standards, and the reader of this article is encouraged to access the full document at <http://www.actfl.org/>; Special Projects, NCATE. The standards feature six broad content standards, each of which has two to three supporting standards (see Appendix A of this article for the standards summary statements). Standards 1 and 2 deal with candidates' preparation in foreign language content, which typically is provided by foreign language departments at the college or university. Standards 3, 4, and 5 relate to pedagogical knowledge and practices (i.e., planning, instruction, assessment), which may be addressed through the college of education course work and field experiences and/or through collaborative efforts between the college and foreign language departments. Standard 6 addresses candidates' commitment to professional growth. In the standards document, a set of rubrics presents the specific criteria addressed in each supporting standard and describes the range of teacher candidate performance possible across three levels: "approaches standard, meets standard, exceeds standard" (ACTFL, 2002).

### *What Is Unique About the Standards?*

The scope of this article does not permit a full discussion of each standard in detail, and, for the reader who needs further details about specific standards, the standards document presents an ample description. This section of the article will highlight five unique features about the standards that, for the average teacher preparation program, represent novel ways to conceptualize expectations of candidate performance. Included with the discussion of each feature are ideas for assessments that could be used effectively to confirm candidate performance in these areas. In several cases, actual assessments already developed by foreign language teacher preparation programs are presented.

*Unique Feature #1: Expectations for and Assessment of Language Proficiency*

For the first time, our profession has articulated expectations for beginning teachers in terms of their language proficiency. Standard 1.a. speaks to the level of proficiency that beginning teachers should have in order to be effective in the classroom. It defines proficiency in terms of interpersonal speaking, presentational speaking, interpretive listening and reading, and interpersonal and presentational writing.<sup>1</sup> Proficiency levels are those used in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (ACTFL, 1986). As illustrated in Figure 1, the levels of oral proficiency are described using the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) groupings of languages according to the amount of time that their research found it takes to achieve various levels of proficiency (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982).

**Figure 1. Required Levels of Interpersonal Speaking by Language**

Languages	Interpersonal Speaking
French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish	Advanced-Low
Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean	Intermediate-High

Why has “Advanced-Low” been established as the desired level of oral proficiency for beginning teachers? The best answer to this question is the explanation provided on the ACTFL website in response to this “frequently asked question”:

In order to provide learning experiences that are in consonance with the expectations outlined in the student standards, foreign language teachers must be able to provide effective oral input that is characterized by fluency and spontaneity. Teachers must be able to speak in paragraphs and in major time frames (i.e., present, past, future). Teachers at the Advanced-Low level and higher have the ability to speak in spontaneous, connected discourse and thus are able to provide the type of classroom environment that is necessary for language acquisition to occur. Teachers who cannot speak in connected discourse and in major time frames do not have the tools necessary for addressing communication in the three modes as defined in the K-16 student standards. That is, they cannot provide target-language input in the classroom at a level necessary to develop students’ interpretive skills or to guide students in interacting with others in interpersonal contexts. Teachers who are not at least Advanced-Low level speakers have difficulty serving effectively as a facilitator in helping students to negotiate meaning with one another and to function spontaneously in the target language. Teachers below the Advanced level

of oral proficiency are typically, at best, “textbook teachers” who need the answer key in order to function in the classroom.

The expectation of “Advanced-Low” oral proficiency is also aligned with what some states have begun to set in their standards for teacher certification, as well as the level described in the proposed licensing standards for beginning teachers developed by the Interstate New Teacher and Assessment Support Consortium (INTASC). (<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageid=3385>)

In presentational speaking, teacher candidates must be able to present information, concepts, and ideas orally to an audience of listeners, and they should be able to adjust their presentation according to their audience. Candidates should also be able to speak extemporaneously, referring to notes, but not reading verbatim from a prepared script. Their presentational language should include connected, paragraph-length discourse that incorporates present, past, and future time frames, vocabulary specific to the context of the presentation, and extralinguistic support, such as visuals, to make their message more comprehensible.

In interpretive listening, candidates must comprehend and interpret a variety of oral texts including face-to-face and telephone conversations, news broadcasts, descriptions and narrations across various time frames, speeches, and debates. The level of detail with which candidates demonstrate comprehension depends on their familiarity with the topic of the text. Regardless of their target languages, all candidates should be able to identify the main idea(s) and supporting details of an oral text, infer meaning of unfamiliar words in new contexts, infer the author’s intent, identify several of the author’s perspectives and cultural perspectives, and provide a personal interpretation of the oral message.

**Figure 2. Required Levels of Interpretive Reading by Language**

<b>Languages</b>	<b>Interpretive Reading</b>
Languages using the Roman alphabet, including classical languages	Candidates move beyond literal comprehension, infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in new contexts, infer and interpret the author’s intent, and offer a personal interpretation of text.
Languages using a non-Roman alphabet or characters	Candidates identify main ideas and most important details, begin to move beyond literal comprehension, and identify either the author’s perspective(s) or cultural perspective(s).

The expectations for interpretive reading and interpersonal and presentational writing also depend on the target languages in which teacher

candidates specialize. Figure 2 illustrates the interpretive reading expectations for candidates whose target languages use a Roman alphabet and for those whose target languages use a non-Roman alphabet.

As illustrated in Figure 3, levels of proficiency for interpersonal and presentational writing are described in terms of languages according to their alphabetic system.

**Figure 3. Required Levels of Interpersonal and Presentational Writing by Language**

Languages	Interpersonal & Presentational Writing
Languages using the Roman alphabet	Advanced-Low
Languages using a non-Roman alphabet or characters	Intermediate-High

The discussion above illustrates that Standard 1.a. defines what teacher candidates should be able to do in their target languages in terms of the three modes of communication and specific levels of proficiency. What sets Standard 1.a. apart from the other standards is the way in which programs must verify that candidates demonstrate these abilities. In the case of oral interpersonal speaking, the standards require that proficiency levels be verified by a test that is administered by a central testing agency, e.g., Language Testing International (LTI) or the Texas Board for Educator Certification. Tests such as the official Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) administered by LTI and the Texas Oral Proficiency Test (TOPT) ensure reliability because the interviews are double-rated through standard procedures established by the testing centers. The standards do not require that programs use official double-rated tests for writing proficiency. However, for programs that want to assess their candidates' writing proficiency as they do their oral proficiency, ACTFL has a double-rated test of writing proficiency called the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT). Figure 4 depicts the options offered through LTI to programs for verifying the speaking and writing proficiency levels of their teacher candidates.

It is interesting that several states have begun to require the OPI and/or WPT as a part of state licensure requirements. Connecticut requires both tests for certification, and Pennsylvania offers teacher candidates the option of taking either the OPI/WPT or the PRAXIS II Foreign Language Content Knowledge Test (for both states, the required minimum level is Intermediate-High). In New Jersey, a newly adopted code (January 2004) requires an OPI with a minimal score of Advanced-Low for all teacher candidates seeking K-12 certificates in world languages; students in teacher preparation programs must meet the requirement beginning in 2007. Maryland requires the OPI and WPT for certification in Italian since there is no other commercially available content knowledge test available for Italian. Georgia, Maine, New Jersey, and Virginia require an Advanced-Level rating on the OPI for alternative teacher licensure.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 4. Double-Rated ACTFL Proficiency Tests for Speaking and Writing Available Through Language Testing International (Adapted from ACTFL, 2004)**

	<b>Format of Test</b>	<b>Languages Available</b>	<b>What Candidate Receives</b>	<b>Price</b>
<b>Official ACTFL OPI</b>	20-30 minute interview conducted telephonically by certified tester and double rated	40 languages including Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish	Official ACTFL OPI Certificate stating the candidate's proficiency level	\$129
<b>Official ACTFL Advanced Level Check</b>	Truncated OPI; conducted telephonically by certified tester and double rated	French, German, Spanish	ACTFL Advanced Level Check Certificate	\$75
<b>Official ACTFL OPI Through an Academic Institutional Upgrade</b>	OPI conducted by a certified tester within the academic institution; double rated and made official through LTI	Contingent on the languages in which there are ACTFL certified testers at the institution	Official ACTFL OPI Certificate stating the candidate's proficiency level	\$30
<b>Official ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)</b>	Proctored, standardized test for global assessment of functional writing ability; double rated	Albanian, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish (online format available)	Official ACTFL WPT Certificate stating the candidate's proficiency level	\$65

In the standards document, programs are encouraged to assess their teacher candidates' oral proficiency in an ongoing manner in order to track their progress, provide them with feedback on the development of their proficiency, and assist them in reaching the required exit level. The Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) is an effective, tape-mediated procedure for implementing informal proficiency testing to check progress at benchmark points in the teacher preparation program (Stansfield & Kenyon, 1992). An advantage of using the SOPI or other in-house assessments for the informal testing is that it enables foreign language faculty to become familiar with proficiency-based expectations and address them in their foreign language courses.

*Unique Feature #2: Intertwining of content knowledge and teaching skills.*

The standards illustrate that knowledge, skills, and dispositions inextricably connect to bring about effective teaching practice. *Knowledge* refers to what candidates know about the content they will teach—i.e., language, linguistics, cultures, literature, cross-disciplinary content—as well as about pedagogy—i.e., language acquisition theories, assessment models, K-16 student standards. *Skills* pertain to candidates' abilities in both language (e.g., interpersonal speaking, interpretive reading) and teaching (e.g., planning, delivery of lessons, assessment practices). (*Dispositions* will be discussed in a later section of this article.) For example, Standard 2.b. illustrates the connection between knowledge of cultures, literatures, and cross-disciplinary concepts and teaching skill. In fact, knowledge about culture and literature plays a prominent role in the standards, as it provides the teacher candidate with engaging content for lessons and important information for students to acquire through the foreign language. Candidates must show their ability to interpret literary texts that represent significant works in the target cultures and to identify themes, authors, historical style, and text types in various media that target cultures hold important to understanding their cultural traditions and perspectives. Candidates use this knowledge as they “select literary and cultural texts appropriate to age, interests, and proficiency level of their students” and as they “integrate these texts into lessons, design activities that develop language competencies based on these texts, and engage students in interpreting their meaning and the cultural perspectives that they represent” (ACTFL, 2002, p. 18).

According to the rubric for Standard 3.a., candidates must demonstrate that they understand language acquisition theories, including the use of target language input, negotiation of meaning, interaction, and a supportive learning environment, and that they draw on their knowledge of theories in designing teaching strategies that facilitate language acquisition. They then use this knowledge to illustrate the following teaching skill: “Candidates negotiate meaning with students when spontaneous interaction occurs. They teach students a variety of ways to negotiate meaning with others and provide opportunities for them to do so in classroom activities” (ACTFL, 2002, p. 22).

Undergirding all of the standards is language proficiency, as explored in the previous section of this article. In order for teacher candidates to interact

spontaneously and negotiate meaning with their students (Standard 3.a.), design tasks that elicit target language use (Standard 3.b.), and provide opportunities for their students to connect to target-language communities through various means such as technology and authentic materials (Standard 4.b.), they must have a language proficiency level that will enable them to carry out these instructional tasks effectively.

How might teacher candidates demonstrate their content area knowledge and their ability to use this knowledge to support their teaching of the foreign language? Presently, the teacher portfolio (particularly in electronic form) is being widely used by teacher preparation programs to promote candidate learning, professional development, and reflection (Stone, 1998). According to Hammadou (1998), a portfolio “consists of multiple pieces of evidence created over time to represent a broad set of proficiencies or understandings” (p. 293).<sup>3</sup> Schulman (1992) stressed the importance and need for portfolios in pre-service teacher education as a vehicle for enabling beginning teachers to capture teaching experiences and the complexities of learning to teach, thus making the teaching experience “stay put” so one can learn from it. Several studies have shown that the process of portfolio development can encourage teachers to become more reflective about their instructional practices (Richert, 1990; Vavrus & Collings, 1991). Indeed, in the assessment systems designed for the purpose of granting teaching licenses and certificates, such as those proposed by NCATE (Elliott, 2003), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (2005), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2004), portfolios are suggested as a preferred method of assessment.

Portfolios can be an effective tool for illustrating candidate attainment of the content knowledge and teaching skills outlined in the ACTFL/NCATE Standards. Foreign language teacher candidates can work with the standards from the time they enter the program. They can be asked to select artifacts to show ways in which they are able to address each standard. For example, to illustrate Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts, candidates might select projects or presentations on literary or cultural topics; journal entries illustrating understanding of the target culture, acquired through interactions with target-language communities; literary interpretations of a variety of texts; a philosophy of teaching statement that addresses the role of culture, literature, and cross-disciplinary content; lesson plans demonstrating the integration of culture and content from other disciplines into language lessons; and K-12 student work samples that illustrate cultural learning (ACTFL, 2002). The following artifacts might be compiled to address Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices: reflections on classroom observations and/or case study reports that include discussion of theory and practice; self-evaluations/reflections on video-taped lessons taught by the candidate; written classroom learning scenarios in which the candidate describes expected outcomes of the teaching segments, instructional decisions made prior to and during the lessons, and an assessment of K-12 student learning and teaching performance (ACTFL, 2002).<sup>4</sup>

A key feature of the portfolio is the reflection that the candidate writes, which may include:

## 20 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

- a discussion of why a particular artifact was selected for use in the portfolio;
- a description of how the artifact illustrates a particular standard;
- connection of the artifact to learning theories and teaching practices; and
- a description of what the candidate learned through this artifact (pertaining to learning, teaching, working with learners, etc.) and/or how the candidate grew professionally.

The reflection can also serve as the vehicle for deliberation and dialogue about educational issues and for developing a conceptual understanding of teaching and learning. In this vein, Delandshere and Arens (2003) urge educators to use the portfolio as a tool for meaningful dialogue and debate about education, teaching, and learning, rather than as a list of superficial assessment requirements. There is also evidence to suggest that having teacher candidates use the portfolio in talking with other candidates could be beneficial in promoting deeper levels of reflection. In her study of how program elements, such as portfolios and teaching partners, affected pre-service teachers' reflections, Richert (1990) found that teachers who used the portfolios in talking with partners were more likely to reflect about content and the teaching of content. These teachers also indicated that the portfolios enabled them to remember teaching events more accurately and that the process of compiling the portfolio engaged them in reflecting more specifically on their teaching.

### *Unique Feature #3: Effects on Student Learning Through Effective Planning, Instruction, and Assessment.*

ACTFL/NCATE Standards 3, 4, and 5 illustrate how teacher candidates use learning theories and the student standards to plan instruction, deliver effective lessons, assess their students' progress, and reflect on assessment results. In the new program report process designed by NCATE, programs must illustrate that their teacher candidates have "positive effects on student learning," i.e., that their K-12 students learn as a result of their instruction. In his text on state-of-the-art assessment practices in teacher education, Elliott (2003) proposes the "teacher work sample" as a tool through which candidates can verify that they have positive effects on the learning of their K-12 students. In the work sample, teacher candidates teach a comprehensive unit and document in detail the teaching and learning that take place. The work sample is typically completed during the student teaching or clinical practice experience and includes the following components:

- a description of the learning environment (school, students);
- a unit plan describing the goals and objectives for a particular unit of instruction, aligned with content standards (these might be state standards and/or the ACTFL/NCATE Standards);
- sample lesson plans from the unit with supporting instructional materials;

- a “pre-test” to discover what students know at the beginning of the unit;
- a “post-test” to discover what students know at the end of the unit;
- examples of formative and summative assessments administered during the unit;
- a discussion of the unit effectiveness in terms of a comparison of the results of the pre- and post-tests;
- evidence of teaching effectiveness as observed by the cooperating teacher and/or university supervisor;
- a self-reflection on the effectiveness of the candidate’s instruction and a plan for changes to improve the unit.

As part of the self-reflection, candidates offer possible reasons for why their students learned or did not learn. A work sample is an “authentic” form of assessment since the tasks are work in a classroom, direct measures of classroom performance, and activities that candidates face in initial employment (Wiggins, 1993).

In the “Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality Project” (<http://uni.edu/itq>), representatives from the eleven partnership sites developed the *Manual for Teacher Candidates: Tips for Preparing the Teacher Work Sample* (2004), which details the steps involved in creating the teacher work sample (TWS).<sup>5</sup> The project identifies the following TWS standards that teacher candidates show evidence of meeting as a result of their work sample:

- The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.
- The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals.
- The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during, and after instruction.
- The teacher designs instruction to accomplish specific learning goals based upon student characteristics and needs and learning contexts.
- The teacher uses regular and systematic evaluations of student learning to make instructional decisions.
- The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.
- The teacher reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice. (Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality Project, 2004, p. 2.)

Appendix B.1 illustrates the teaching processes that are assessed by the Renaissance Teacher Work Sample. Appendix B.2 depicts a suggested schedule for how teacher candidates might complete the work sample during student teaching. The work sample would appear to be an effective tool not only for assessing the

degree to which the candidate has positive effects on student learning but also for illustrating candidate attainment of multiple ACTFL/NCATE Standards.

*Unique Feature #4: The “dispositions” component.* In addition to knowledge and skills, the standards connect a third element, *dispositions*, to effective teaching. “*Dispositions*” is a term used by NCATE to refer to the values, commitments, and professional ethics that guide the candidate’s behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and that have an impact on student learning, motivation, and development, as well as the candidate’s own professional growth (NCATE, 2001). Examples of dispositions include the candidate’s belief that foreign language is for *all* students and the candidate’s willingness to seek opportunities for strengthening his/her language development outside of course work, such as study abroad or immersion experiences. Until the publication of the ACTFL/NCATE Standards, it was likely that foreign language teacher preparation programs had difficulty articulating exactly how their candidates’ attitudes and professional commitment impacted their effectiveness as language teachers, even if they were convinced that these qualities had an important role to play.

How do the standards rubrics represent this seemingly evasive teacher quality? Figure 5 presents an excerpt from Standard 2.c., “Integrating Other Disciplines in Instruction.”

**Figure 5. “Dispositions” Element from Standard 2.c. (ACTFL, 2002, p. 19)**

	<b>Approaches Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>
<b>Dispositions for integrating other subject areas into language instruction</b>	Candidates’ philosophy of language teaching focuses primarily on language instruction, with minimal attention to other content areas.	Candidates devote time to finding ways to integrate subject-area content and to locating authentic resources. They are willing to learn new content with students.	Candidates create a community of learners within the classroom, in which the teacher and learners work together to acquire new information and perspectives across disciplines.

As illustrated in this example, in order to meet this standard, candidates must demonstrate the disposition through concrete actions in their learning, teaching, and/or professional development. To meet the “exceeds” level, candidates illustrate that they use the disposition consistently and/or in a systematic approach.

Foreign language teacher preparation programs have already begun to address the dispositions component in unique ways. Oklahoma State University developed rubrics for assessing the dispositions of their foreign language teacher

candidates at three points in the program. The rubrics, which appear in Appendix C, reflect the dispositions criteria found in the ACTFL/NCATE Standards. First, in the junior year, candidates ask a foreign language/culture professor to complete the first four sections of the dispositions rubric relating to content area knowledge. Second, as seniors in the secondary methods class, candidates do a self-assessment by completing the entire dispositions rubric at the end of the semester. Finally, at the end of student teaching, the university supervisor and/or cooperating teacher use the rubrics to assess candidate performance according to the dispositions criteria that are presented in the rubrics.

In the Spanish Education Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, dispositions are checked as early as the mid-program point (usually second semester of the sophomore year) by means of an interview that is conducted with the candidate, a faculty member involved in the foreign language teacher preparation program, and a cooperating teacher from a local school district. Candidates are asked to respond to a series of questions designed to assess their dispositions for teaching, including plans for and efforts made in the area of professional involvement. They bring to the interview their completed “Professional Involvement Log” that serves as a record of what they have done outside of class to improve their proficiency in Spanish, what professional events they have attended, and with which professional organizations they have become involved. Appendices D.1, D.2, and D.3 show the interview questions, rubrics, and the Professional Involvement Log form, respectively.

*Unique Feature #5: Professional involvement.* Beyond the knowledge and skills addressed in the standards, teacher candidates are expected to illustrate that they are professionally involved and dedicated. According to the following supporting standards for Standard 6, candidates must verify that they:

1. engage in professional development opportunities that strengthen their own linguistic and cultural competence and promote reflection on practice; and
2. know the value of foreign language learning to the overall success of all students and understand that they will need to become advocates with students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote the field (ACTFL, 2002).

Candidates might illustrate the first supporting standard by joining and participating in at least one professional organization (e.g., ACTFL, their state foreign language association, an AAT organization), by identifying their immediate professional development needs, by engaging in a reflective process to improve their teaching, and by seeking opportunities for professional growth. They might verify attainment of the second supporting standard by developing a rationale that includes a discussion of the benefits of foreign language learning; choosing appropriate data sources to support the benefits of foreign language learning and presenting them to designated audiences; providing evidence of the importance of building alliances to advocate for K-12 language learning; and illustrating their

belief that all students should have opportunities to learn a foreign language. Foreign language teacher preparation programs could require their candidates to document their professional development and reflect upon how it has enabled them to grow as language teachers and professionals, as illustrated in the “Professional Involvement Log” shown in Appendix D.3. This aspect of the program will enable candidates to recognize the importance of ongoing professional involvement, and it may help to ensure their active participation in the profession.

### **New Expectations: A Catalyst for Change in Foreign Language Teacher Preparation Programs**

The profession’s new expectations for pre-service foreign language teachers have provided the impetus for re-examining the nature of teacher preparation programs and making changes in order to strengthen them. The new ACTFL/NCATE Standards have prompted programs to address key aspects of their teacher preparation in new ways. First, programs must establish clear expectations for what their candidates should know, be able to do, and be disposed to do as beginning teachers. This involves developing performance-based objectives and accompanying assessments for content courses such as those in language, culture, and literature so that there is a clear connection between the outcomes in courses and expectations in the program.

Second, the focus on the development of oral proficiency in the standards has several implications for programs. Faculty should set proficiency expectations at several benchmark points in the program in order to track their candidates’ progress and assist candidates in meeting the exit level expectation. Programs need to decide which option for oral proficiency assessment they will select for the exit test, among those described earlier in this article (see Figure 4). It is undoubtedly beneficial for programs to have faculty who are certified by ACTFL as oral proficiency testers so that departments have the expertise necessary for developing benchmark and other course assessments and in order to keep testing costs for candidates to a minimum. Further, faculty should discuss how the program assists candidates in reaching the expected proficiency level. What role do the courses play at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels in developing proficiency? Are candidates encouraged or required to participate in a study abroad program? Are they expected to engage in out-of-class activities to strengthen their language skills? What plan does the department have for candidates who do not reach the proficiency level according to the established time frame?

Third, programs may have to deal with administrative issues that pose challenges to meeting the standards. For many institutions, the college of education handles almost exclusively the pedagogical component of teacher preparation while the foreign language departments provide the content-area preparation—i.e, language, cultures, literature. In these instances, in order to meet the expectations outlined in the ACTFL/NCATE Standards, faculty in the two colleges need to engage in dialogue and collaboration as they establish new

expectations for their foreign language teacher candidates together. In many cases, foreign language faculty may feel that they must now assume new responsibilities for the preparation of their teacher candidates if they have not previously played a role in this area.

Fourth, programs must develop an assessment system that includes the use of multiple measures to assess candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions, together with a vehicle for collecting and aggregating assessment data and a strategy for using assessment results to improve candidate performance. Candidates should become familiar with the ACTFL/NCATE Standards at an early point in the program so that on an ongoing basis they may select artifacts and reflect on them to illustrate their ability to meet each standard.

Finally, programs need faculty with the necessary expertise in teacher preparation and experience in K-12 instructional settings. Methods courses and field experiences must be taught/supervised by a "qualified faculty member whose expertise is foreign language education and who is knowledgeable about current instructional approaches and issues" (ACTFL, 2002, p. 2). Candidates must have a methods course that deals specifically with the teaching of foreign languages and field experiences (including those prior to student teaching) that occur in foreign language classrooms.

### **Addressing New Expectations: Future Research and Professional Dialogue**

The process of articulating expectations for pre-service teachers and for addressing them in foreign language teacher preparation programs has prompted the need for future research and dialogue. Programs would benefit from more research in the area of oral proficiency development, specifically on the types of learning experiences that would best facilitate attainment of Advanced-Low oral proficiency. It would seem that advanced-level college courses that are taught in foreign language departments would play a major role in promoting proficiency beyond the intermediate level. However, faculty need assistance in how culture and literature courses might be designed to incorporate advanced-level proficiency goals.<sup>6</sup>

Research is needed in the area of teacher candidate assessment and how best to verify that candidates have achieved the ACTFL/NCATE Standards. Faculty would benefit from ideas on how to integrate course work with the new professional expectations and programmatic assessment. Since many colleges and universities are currently using the electronic portfolio as a key assessment, future studies could examine the role of teacher candidates' reflections in their development as teachers and the relationship between their reflections and progress made in teaching.

In addition to research, professional dialogue among K-16 partners in foreign language teacher preparation is greatly needed. Faculty could explore the ACTFL/NCATE Standards together in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of the profession's expectations for pre-service teachers. Greater collaboration is needed between colleges of education and foreign language

departments in order to merge preparation in the content area with pedagogical preparation. Further, since teacher candidates are influenced to a large degree in their own teaching by the experiences they have had as language learners themselves, K-16 faculty should explore ways to model current approaches to instruction in their classes. For example, it will be difficult for candidates to develop performance-based assessments if the only type of assessment they experienced as learners was the discrete-point, decontextualized format. They may wonder why they are expected to integrate technology into their teaching if their own professors hardly ever use it in their classrooms.

Consortia of colleges and universities could be formed to draw upon areas of expertise that would be available collectively. For example, smaller colleges may not have the means to offer a methods course that deals specifically with foreign language instruction, but they could make arrangements to send their students to another college or university in the area that does offer this type of course. Perhaps faculty from different institutions could assist one another in doing informal proficiency testing or portfolio evaluations.

## **Conclusion**

This article has described expectations of pre-service foreign language teachers in terms of unique features of the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (ACTFL, 2002) and novel assessment strategies for enabling candidates to demonstrate these new expectations. It has also presented some ideas regarding possible areas of future research and professional dialogue and collaboration.

Undoubtedly as we continue to work to strengthen pre-service teacher preparation, we face several challenges:

- How can we work with state departments of education so that state licensing requirements reflect and support our profession's new expectations for pre-service teachers?
- What can we do to ensure that state teacher licensure examinations, such as PRAXIS, reflect our expectations for what foreign language teachers should know, be able to do, and be disposed to do in their teaching?
- How can we facilitate continued dialogue between foreign language departments and colleges of education so that teacher preparation programs can more effectively address our new expectations for pre-service teachers?
- How can we best identify and disseminate information about model foreign language teacher preparation programs?
- How can we work to bridge the gap between pre-service teacher preparation and the on-going professional development of in-service foreign language teachers?

In coming years, our profession will need to address these challenges as we continue to work to fine tune our expectations for pre-service foreign language

teachers, strengthen our teacher preparation programs, and enable our teacher candidates to meet the new expectations that we as a profession have developed.

## NOTES

1. The terms *interpersonal*, *interpretive*, and *presentational* refer to the three modes of communication, as defined in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). The *interpersonal* mode refers to communication in which individuals exchange information and negotiate meaning orally, whether face-to-face or by telephone, or in writing through notes, letters, and e-mail. In the *interpretive* mode, a reader or listener is engaged in understanding the meaning of oral, printed, or other cultural texts such as film, radio, television, literary texts, when the author of these texts is not present and meaning cannot be negotiated. The *presentational* mode refers to one-way oral or written communication in which individuals present information to an audience and there is no possibility of negotiating meaning.

2. This information was obtained through communication with the LTI office.

3. For a full discussion of the concerns that need to be addressed when embarking on teacher assessment via portfolios, see Hammadou (1998).

4. For some examples of electronic portfolios in foreign language teacher preparation programs, see [www.fl.vt.edu/FLED/](http://www.fl.vt.edu/FLED/) (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) and [www.coe.iup.edu/pttut/Portfolios.html](http://www.coe.iup.edu/pttut/Portfolios.html) (Indiana University of Pennsylvania).

5. The eleven project sites are: California State University at Fresno, Eastern Michigan University, Emporia State University, Idaho State University, Kentucky State University, Longwood University, Middle Tennessee State University, Millersville University, Southeast Missouri State University, University of Northern Iowa, and Western Kentucky University.

6. See Donato and Brooks (2004) for an interesting article about literature classes and the development of advanced-level speaking skills.

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## Appendix A

### **ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers**

**Approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) October 19, 2002**

#### **Six Content Standards at-a-Glance**

- Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons**
- Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts**
- Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices**
- Standard 4: Integration Of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction**
- Standard 5: Assessment Of Languages and Cultures**
- Standard 6: Professionalism**

#### **Sixteen Supporting Standards**

**Standard 1.a. Demonstrating Language Proficiency.** Candidates demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the target language, and they seek opportunities to strengthen their proficiency. (See the following support explanation and rubrics for required levels of proficiency.)

**Standard 1.b. Understanding Linguistics.** Candidates know the linguistic elements of the target language system, recognize the changing nature of language, and accommodate for gaps in their own knowledge of the target language system by learning on their own.

**Standard 1.c. Identifying Language Comparisons.** Candidates know the similarities and differences between the target language and other languages, identify the key differences in varieties of the target language, and seek opportunities to learn about varieties of the target language on their own.

**Standard 2.a. Demonstrating Cultural Understandings.** Candidates demonstrate that they understand the connections among the perspectives of a culture and its practices and products, and they integrate the cultural framework for foreign language standards into their instructional practices.

**Standard 2.c. Integrating Other Disciplines In Instruction.** Candidates integrate knowledge of other disciplines into foreign language instruction and identify distinctive viewpoints accessible only through the target language.

**Standard 3.a. Understanding Language Acquisition and Creating a Supportive Classroom.** Candidates demonstrate an understanding of language acquisition at various developmental levels and use this knowledge to create a supportive classroom learning environment that includes target language input and opportunities for negotiation of meaning and meaningful interaction.

**Standard 3.b. Developing Instructional Practices That Reflect Language Outcomes and Learner Diversity.** Candidates develop a variety of instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and articulated program models and address the needs of diverse language learners.

**Standard 4.a. Understanding and Integrating Standards In Planning.** Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the goal areas and standards of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and their state standards, and they integrate these frameworks into curricular planning.

**Standard 4.b. Integrating Standards in Instruction.** Candidates integrate the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and their state standards into language instruction.

**Standard 4.c. Selecting and Designing Instructional Materials.** Candidates use standards and curricular goals to evaluate, select, design, and adapt instructional resources.

**Standard 5.a. Knowing assessment models and using them appropriately.** Candidates believe that assessment is ongoing, and they demonstrate knowledge of multiple ways of assessment that are age- and level-appropriate by implementing purposeful measures.

**Standard 5.b. Reflecting on assessment.** Candidates reflect on the results of student assessments, adjust instruction accordingly, analyze the results of assessments, and use success and failure to determine the direction of instruction.

**Standard 5.c. Reporting assessment results.** Candidates interpret and report the results of student performances to all stakeholders and provide opportunity for discussion.

**Standard 6.a. Engaging in Professional Development.** Candidates engage in professional development opportunities that strengthen their own linguistic and cultural competence and promote reflection on practice.

**Standard 6.b. Knowing the Value of Foreign Language Learning.** Teacher candidates know the value of foreign language learning to the overall success of all students and understand that they will need to become advocates with students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote the field.

Source: ACTFL. (2002, October). *ACTFL/NCATE program standards for the preparation of foreign language teachers*. Yonkers, NY: Author..

## Appendix B.1

### Teaching Processes Assessed by the Renaissance Teacher Work Sample

Teaching Processes, TWS Standards, and Indicators
<p><b>Contextual Factors</b>  <i>The teacher uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of community, school, and classroom factors</li> <li>• Knowledge of characteristics of students</li> <li>• Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning</li> <li>• Knowledge of students' skills and prior learning</li> <li>• Implications for instructional planning and assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Goals</b>  <i>The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significance, Challenge and Variety</li> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Appropriateness for students</li> <li>• Alignment with national, state, or local standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment Plan</b>  <i>The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with learning goals and instruction</li> <li>• Clarity of criteria for performance</li> <li>• Multiple modes and approaches</li> <li>• Technical soundness</li> <li>• Adaptations based on the individual needs of students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Design for Instruction</b>  <i>The teacher designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with learning goals</li> <li>• Accurate representation of content</li> <li>• Lesson and unit structure</li> <li>• Use of a variety of instruction, activities, assignments, and resources</li> <li>• Use of contextual information and data to select appropriate and relevant activities, assignments and resources.</li> <li>• Use of technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instructional Decision-Making</b>  <i>The teacher uses on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound professional practice</li> <li>• Adjustments based on analysis of student learning</li> <li>• Congruence between modifications and learning goals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis of Student Learning</b>  <i>The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and accuracy of presentation</li> <li>• Alignment with learning goals</li> <li>• Interpretation of data</li> <li>• Evidence of impact on student learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflection and Self-Evaluation</b>  <i>The teacher reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation of student learning</li> <li>• Insights on effective instruction, and assessment</li> <li>• Alignment among goals, instruction and assessment</li> <li>• Implications for future teaching</li> <li>• Implications for professional development</li> </ul>

Source: Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality Project. (2004). *Teacher Work Sample Manual for Teacher Candidates: Tips for Preparing the Teacher Work Sample*. [http://fp.uni.edu/itq/PDF\\_files/student\\_tws\\_manual\\_june\\_2004.pdf](http://fp.uni.edu/itq/PDF_files/student_tws_manual_june_2004.pdf), p. 3.

**Appendix B.2**

**Suggested Schedule for Completing the Teacher Work Sample during Student Teaching**

**Week #1:**

- ✓ Meet with Cooperating Teacher to discuss TWS schedule/requirements
- ✓ Complete Contextual Factors section

**By the end of the first ¼ of your placement:**

- ✓ Plan unit with cooperating teacher
- ✓ Complete the Learning Goals and Assessment Plan
- ✓ Give pre-assessment to students (make a copy of student papers or work)
- ✓ Analyze pre-assessment data and use results to complete Design for Instruction section
- ✓ Select 2 students whose formative assessments you will collect during the unit.

**By the end of the third ¼ of your placement:**

- ✓ Teach the unit
- ✓ Collect student work as needed
- ✓ Take notes for the Instructional Decision Making section

**By the end of your placement:**

- ✓ Give post-assessment
- ✓ Analyze post-assessment results and complete rest of TWS

Source: Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality Project. (2004). *Teacher Work Sample Manual for Teacher Candidates: Tips for Preparing the Teacher Work Sample*. [http://fp.uni.edu/itq/PDF\\_files/student\\_tws\\_manual\\_june\\_2004.pdf](http://fp.uni.edu/itq/PDF_files/student_tws_manual_june_2004.pdf), p. 6.

## Appendix C

### Oklahoma State University Professional Dispositions of Teacher Candidates—Assessment

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_ FA SP Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_ or Self Assessment \_\_\_\_\_ (Check)

Please rate the teacher candidate by reading the descriptors of desired teacher dispositions and by circling the description that best represents your assessment of the candidate at this time. Then, please comment by citing examples of the student's behavior. Your assessment of the teacher candidate is very important to the program.

<b>ACTFL Dispositions</b>	<b>Approaches Standard</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>	<b>Exceeds Standard</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
<b>for Acquiring Proficiency</b> [ACTFL 1a]	Candidates make minimal use of resources such as readings and the Internet in order to access the target language world beyond the classroom.	Candidates maintain and enhance their proficiency by interacting in the target language outside of the classroom, reading, and using technology to access target language communities.	Candidates have developed a systematic approach for enhancing their language proficiency on an ongoing basis by using a variety of effective materials, methodologies, and technologies.	
<b>for Accommodating for Gaps in Knowledge of Target Language System</b> [ACTFL 1b]	Candidates frequently ask questions when they lack knowledge of specific aspects of the target language system.	Candidates investigate the target language system and examples on their own when faced with specific aspects of the system with which they are not familiar.	Candidates take courses and/or seek remedial help in order to accommodate for gaps in their knowledge of the target language system.	
<b>for Learning about Target Language Varieties</b> [ACTFL 1c]	Candidates learn target language varieties presented in formal educational contexts (i.e. course work).	Candidates learn about target language varieties through interaction with native speakers outside of class and by accessing authentic target language samples through a variety of means such as technology.	Candidates learn about target language varieties through experiences in immersion situations including study abroad.	
<b>for Cultural Learning</b> [ACTFL 2a, 2c]	Candidates limit their own and their students' cultural work to familiar and factual cultural content.	Candidates integrate cultural insights with the target language in its communicative functions and content areas. They work to	Candidates emphasize cultural concepts as they teach language, analyze and synthesize cultural information from authentic sources in	

			extend their knowledge of culture through independent work and interactions with native speakers.	various media and in relation to specific communities or audiences. They work to build a large repertoire of cultural knowledge and experiences.
<b>toward Exploring Literatures and other Texts and Media</b> [ACTFL 2b]	Candidates limit the texts they teach to those outlined and available in the curriculum.	Candidates identify from their studies lists of texts they plan to use and adapt in their teaching. They enrich classroom content with texts and topics valued by the culture. These texts are taken from literature and other media.	Candidates seek out age-appropriate materials valued by the culture that represent literature, film, and media to expand the repertoire of texts they use in instruction.	
<b>for Integrating other Subject Areas into Language Instruction</b> [ACTFL 2c]	Candidates' philosophy of language teaching does not yet emphasize the integration of other subject areas into language instruction.	Candidates devote time to finding ways to integrate subject-area content and to locating authentic resources. They are willing to learn new content with students.	Candidates create a community of learners within the classroom, in which the teacher and learners work together to acquire new information and perspectives across disciplines.	
<b>for Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment</b> [ACTFL 3a]	Candidates employ exercises and activities that require students to provide predictable and/or correct answers.	Candidates employ exercises and activities that require students to provide open-ended, personalized responses.	Candidates use an approach in which personalized, creative language use is central to all activities.	
[ACTFL 3a]	Candidates assume a traditional role of teacher as director of learning.	Candidates often assume the role of facilitator in classroom activities. Some activities provide opportunities for them to learn with their students.	The principal role of the candidate is as facilitator of learning in the language classroom. Candidates value opportunities to learn with students.	
[ACTFL 3a]	The feedback that candidates offer students is primarily evaluative in nature and focuses on the accuracy of their language.	Candidates provide feedback to students that focuses on meaning as well as linguistic accuracy. They view errors as a normal part of the language acquisition process.	Candidates engage students in monitoring own progress and in asking for assistance from teacher. They engage students in tracking their own errors and progress & in providing feedback to peers.	
[ACTFL 3a]	Candidates encourage students to progress within the framework of the textbook.	Candidates employ strategies to encourage and affirm student progress. They encourage students	Candidates reward students for taking risks in using the target language.	

<p><b>about Student Diversity</b> [ACTFL 3b]</p>	<p>Candidates adapt instruction to address students' needs if they are given specific instructions of how to do so.</p>	<p>to take risks in using the language. Candidates seek out opportunities to learn about their students, their back-grounds, and their special needs. They adapt instruction to address students' needs.</p>	<p>Candidates value diversity in their class-rooms. They work with students, parents, colleagues, and others to address the special needs of their students.</p>	
<p><b>for Integrating Standards into Planning</b> [ACTFL 4a]</p>	<p>Candidates integrate national and state standards into their planning only if they are explicitly integrated in their textbook.</p>	<p>Candidates integrate national and state standards into their curricular planning, even if their textbook is not standards-based.</p>	<p>Candidates justify and use standards as the focus of their curriculum.</p>	
<p><b>for Integrating Standards into Instruction</b> [ACTFL 4b]</p>	<p>Candidates integrate goal areas and standards into instruction to the extent that they are integrated in their textbook.</p>	<p>Candidates design and implement activities that are standards-based, even if their textbook and curriculum are not standards-based. They acquire knowledge and skills to be able to do this.</p>	<p>Candidates use the goal areas and standards to drive language instruction. They participate in professional development activities to enhance their knowledge and expertise with standards.</p>	
<p><b>for Locating Resources and Creating Materials</b> [ACTFL 4c]</p>	<p>Candidates demonstrate little willingness to spend time to locate resources and to create materials that address the standards</p>	<p>Candidates are willing to spend time to locate resources and to create materials that address the standards</p>	<p>A regular part of candidates' planning time is devoted to locating resources and creating materials that address the standards.</p>	
<p><b>toward Global Assessments</b> [ACTFL 5a]</p>	<p>Candidates may recognize the role of performance assessment in the classroom and attempt to measure performances periodically. However, they rely primarily on assessments that are discrete point in nature or right answer responses.</p>	<p>Candidates assess what students know and are able to do by using and designing assessments that capture successful communication and cultural understandings. They commit the time and effort necessary to measure end performances.</p>	<p>Candidates demonstrate that they have shifted most of their assessment practices to performances that are global and integrative and from those they derive the analytical information that informs their teaching. They commit time and energy to assessment projects that are creative &amp; interesting to students.</p>	
<p><b>for Committing Time to Reflection</b> [ACTFL 5b]</p>	<p>Candidates use assessments that can be scored mechanically and move forward without due consideration of how results affect student progress.</p>	<p>Candidates incorporate what they have learned from assessments and show how they have adjusted instruction. The commitment is established in their planning.</p>	<p>Candidates design assessments and commit time to seeing how results be used to improve teaching and student learning.</p>	

<b>for Taking Time to Report Assessment Results</b> [ACTFL 5c]	Candidates find short-cut ways to report assessment results.	Candidates devote time to reporting assessment results accurately and clearly.	Candidates commit time to reporting assessment results in a way that is tailored to particular groups of stakeholders.	
<b>for Seeking Professional Growth</b> [ACTFL 6a]	Candidates often respond to the suggestions that others make regarding candidates' own professional growth.	Candidates seek opportunities for professional growth.	Candidates develop a plan for their continued professional growth	
<b>Regarding the Value of Language Study</b> [ACTFL 6b]	Candidates believe that foreign language study benefits mostly a particular group of students.	Based on readings and field experiences, candidates believe that all students should have opportunities to learn a foreign language.	Candidates argue or make a case for foreign language opportunities for all students.	

Note: Rubric descriptors are adapted from the rubrics in the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers, 2002*.

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## **Appendix D.1**

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Spanish**

**MID-PROGRAM REVIEW  
ENGLISH INTERVIEW  
QUESTIONS: “Dispositions for Teaching”**

1. Do you believe that foreign languages should be taught to ALL students? Explain and support your response.
2. Describe two theories of language learning that support the teaching you have done in Pre-Student Teaching I. What is the role of research in second language acquisition (SLA) in enabling you to be an effective Spanish teacher?
3. What would you do if you were asked to teach content/skills in Student Teaching that you yourself did not know?
4. What will you do if the textbook program that your Student Teaching site has is old and ineffective, given what you have learned about teaching foreign languages?
5. Explain the ways in which you have begun to be involved in the foreign language teaching profession. Present your completed “Professional Involvement Log.” Be sure to describe what you have done outside of your coursework to improve your proficiency in Spanish.
6. What do you plan to do in the future to become an active participant in the foreign language profession (e.g., participation in professional organizations)?

## Appendix D.2

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of Spanish

RUBRICS FOR EVALUATING ENGLISH INTERVIEW FOR MID-PROGRAM REVIEW  
“Dispositions for Teaching”

	<b>Unacceptable 1</b>	<b>Acceptable 2</b>	<b>Target 3</b>
<b>FL for all students</b>	Does not acknowledge that foreign languages should be taught to ALL students. Or cannot provide research-based reasons why foreign languages should be taught to ALL students.	Acknowledges that foreign languages should be taught to ALL students and offers one or two research-based reasons why.	Provides a cogent research-based argument for why foreign languages should be taught to ALL students.
<b>Role of SLA research in teaching</b>	May cite one theory that relates to classroom teaching. Unable to connect SLA research to teaching.	Cites two theories that relate to classroom teaching and acknowledges an appropriate connection between SLA research and practice.	Cites more than two theories that relate to classroom teaching and/or provides a thorough discussion of the connection between SLA research and practice.
<b>Gaps in knowledge</b>	Does not assume responsibility for learning on his/her own.	Assumes responsibility for acquiring new knowledge/skills on his/her own as necessary.	Presents a systematic long-term approach for acquiring new knowledge/skills on his/her own.
<b>Adaptation of materials</b>	Not disposed to adapting materials. Feels compelled to use materials as they are prepared, even if dated and/or ineffective.	Expresses a willingness to adapt the textbook and other materials as necessary to meet instructional objectives.	Expresses a desire to use the textbook as one of many sources, adapt it as necessary, and not use it to drive the curriculum and instruction.
<b>Involvement in the profession/Work to improve proficiency</b>	Has not become involved in professional activities. Has done little to nothing to improve language proficiency outside of coursework.	Has attended at least one professional development event and/or has become involved in at least one professional organization. Has taken some steps to improve language proficiency outside of coursework.	Has attended at least one professional development event AND has become involved in at least one professional organization. Has developed a systematic approach to improving language proficiency outside of coursework.
<b>Plans for professional involvement</b>	Has no immediate plans for becoming involved in the profession.	Has several ideas for ways to become involved actively in the profession.	Has already become involved in the profession (attending conferences/workshops, joining organizations, etc.). Has a clear vision of his/her role as an active participant in the profession.

Note: The student must score a “2” in each category on the scale.

\*\*If a student fails to attain a “2” in each category, s/he will discuss a remediation plan with the Coordinator and will be given a second interview. The student has the right to request a different cooperating teacher and/or a different Spanish Dept. faculty member.

**Appendix D.3**

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Spanish**

**Professional Involvement Log  
To Be Completed at Mid-Program Review & Student Teaching**

Use the following chart to keep track of your professional involvement throughout your time in the Spanish Education Program at IUP.

	<b>Nature/Name of Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Experiences or Responsibilities during Activity</b>	<b>Learning that Resulted from Activity</b>
<b>Efforts to Improve Spanish Outside of Class (e.g., club activities, conversational partners)</b>				
<b>Attendance at Professional Development Events (e.g., conferences, workshops)</b>				
<b>Membership &amp; Involvement in Professional Organizations</b>				

**\*What do you plan to do in the future to become an active participant in the foreign language profession?**

# 3

## Reflections of a Study-Abroad Director

**John J. Janc**

University of Minnesota - Mankato

**B**oth as an undergraduate and graduate student, I participated in four study-abroad programs, one in Canada, one in four European countries and two in France. Each program was different. I enrolled in the first one, a program organized by a Canadian university. The second one was a tour of cities in Finland, Russia, Poland, and Denmark. The last two were study-abroad programs sponsored by American universities. Before leaving, I was sometimes given information that prepared me reasonably well for the program; sometimes I received practically nothing. While abroad, I occasionally had a director who was available to help me and the other students; other times, I rarely saw the person in charge. The courses organized in university settings ranged anywhere from poor to very good.

Before ever planning a trip and/or accepting to be in charge of one, future directors must understand that what they are about to undertake is not just “fun and games,” not just an inexpensive way to spend a couple of weeks abroad. It is a most serious undertaking with ramifications that go far beyond how much spending money to take or what will be done when free time is available. People running a program assume tremendous responsibilities, some of which I will address in this article.

During the years that I have served as a director, I have worked closely with several program leaders and have had the opportunity to observe many others on numerous occasions. Needless to say, each director is different as is each group. I have seen directors who really cared about their students and the quality of the program and who did everything humanly possible to make sure that their charges had a profitable experience abroad. I have encountered those who could care less about their students and the quality of their stay. I have also dealt with those who

were dangerous because they allowed students to participate in activities in which they should never have been permitted to take part.

I have been the director of Minnesota State University, Mankato's Summer Study in France Program for 25 years. I have taken more than 400 students to France. Our program includes eleven days in Paris, two days in Normandy and a month in La Rochelle where the students live with French families and have four hours of formal classroom instruction five days a week at a French language institute. Students receive nine graduate or undergraduate credits.

I would like to share some of my experiences and observations as a program director. Because each program is different, I know that all of my comments are not applicable to everyone. The variables are too numerous to mention. Who sets up the trip, you or a professional travel group? Are your students minors who must be chaperoned on a regular basis? What country or countries are you visiting? Is there a home stay involved? Can you drink the water? How long is the stay? In spite of these differences, I do hope that what I have to say will help you, the reader, be a better director.

### **Pre-departure**

I have a local travel agency arrange airfare to Europe. Charter flights are out of the question because of the risks associated with them. We only use regularly scheduled flights on major airlines. Since students from other states participate in our program, we prefer carriers that have hubs where these individuals can conveniently join us for the flights over and back.

My salary, which is determined by our contract, and my travel costs are funded by the tuition paid by the students. No special fee is assessed.

Before I determine a budget in the fall, I contact all places in France that provide me with a service: hotels, bus companies and the institute where the students study. These costs must be converted from euros into dollars based on what I believe the exchange rate will be in eight or nine months when I send the money to the university's checking account in France. I always err on the side of caution, using a low dollar in order to be safe. After that, I estimate costs based upon inflation for certain categories that are more or less the same each year: subway passes, room and board with host families and entries to any place that we visit. I end up having two distinct types of charges: those applicable to each individual (tuition, hotel rooms, room and board) and those applicable to the entire group (bus rental, airport transfers, etc.). In order to determine the cost per student for the latter group, I divide each bill by the number of students that I generally have enrolled in the program. I add the charges together, always including anywhere from \$50 to \$100 to cover any miscalculation that I may have made. I now know how much to charge each student.

Before leaving in June, I take \$60 from each student account and purchase travelers checks. I convert these to euros when I arrive in Paris and use the money to tip bus drivers and guides, pay for certain museum entries and purchase materials needed by the participants. The university transfers all remaining funds

to France. Instead of leaving the money in a single pool, I calculate how much all the students are entitled to based upon the amount that they have deposited with the school. I then record that sum in a register. It should be noted that all students do not pay the same amount for various reasons. During the trip in France, I deduct the money that I spend per student from their accounts. As soon as I have paid all the bills and the checks have cleared the bank, I refund whatever is left to the students in La Rochelle. The money is not returned to the university.

Planning ahead is absolutely necessary. Reservations must be made early and all deposits must be in on time. I have seen program directors who presumed that they had reservations because they had stayed in a place the year before and who discovered two months before leaving the States that they had no lodging.

Program directors must pay attention to detail. They should never trust anyone. When confirmations arrive for hotel or hostel reservations, plane tickets, tours, or transfers, they need to check the dates and the charges. They should never presume that the dates are the same from one year to the next and never presume that people with whom they have been working, even for long periods of time, will inform them about changes.

A director needs all pertinent health information about each participant. Having the name, address, and phone number of each student's health insurance company is essential as well as any special forms that must be filled out and signed by the doctors or hospitals. Prescription information about someone with an illness is critical. If an individual on the program has a medical problem, the director should learn the vocabulary associated with it so that the illness can be explained to a doctor.

I have organized a one-credit course that all participants in Mankato's program must take. In addition to taking care of all the details, such as dealing with passports, plane tickets, medical insurance forms, and financial aid, we also view videos about places that we will visit. Students feel better prepared because they already have background knowledge about what they are seeing. We also discuss such important topics as avoiding stereotypes, living with a host family, living in a big city, using public transit, using the money and metric systems, understanding the differences between Fahrenheit and Celsius, being mature enough to participate in a program in a foreign country, packing instructions, and discussing drug and alcohol use. At the end of the article, I have included some of the handouts that we study and discuss (see Appendices A and B). I have a list of vocabulary that the students are expected to learn. It deals with food and drink, weather terms, certain clothing items, things that will be seen in Paris as well as many false cognates that can get them into trouble (how to say "I am full" and "food preservatives" are but two examples). They take quizzes on these words as well as on the metric system and vocabulary associated with the subway and train systems, the exchange office and the euro. Each student is asked to make a brief presentation dealing with an historical figure (generally kings and queens) whose name will be seen quite regularly during our stay in Paris. I also ask all participants to complete a form dealing with the food and drink that they like, dislike, and would like to try. I send this information to the host families along

with the students' names and a brief description dealing with their personality, their hobbies and linguistic ability. Individuals from other schools receive all of the handouts and a tape with explanations and commentaries. While in La Rochelle, they take the same quizzes that Mankato students took on campus. The week before we leave, I send them a checklist to help facilitate packing (see Appendix C).

### **While Abroad**

When we arrive in Paris and later on in La Rochelle, I distribute general information and practical advice. The students also receive a color-coded packet of handouts and a detailed schedule telling them all departure times and what materials will be needed each day. I have prepared extensive handouts that deal with buildings, monuments, religious and civil architectural terms, and pertinent historical information. I make every effort to use vocabulary and grammar that even students with a minimal knowledge of French can understand. If a director does not stay at the same place as the students, the schedule must indicate exactly where the participants are to meet the director. I also have my own version of this handout with notes that remind me whether or not they will need a picnic, whether or not they can wear shorts, when they should exchange money, and where free toilets are. When visiting, I put the students into groups of four and designate leaders who tell me whether or not their charges are present when we leave a place. If there are two directors, one should walk in front of the group, another at the end. This way, they will not lose anyone and they can make sure that no one tries to do something foolish or dangerous.

With the widespread use of cell phones, we are like doctors, on call 24 hours a day. If you do not have a phone that works in the country that you are visiting, it would be advisable to purchase one either in the States or abroad. Not only can you communicate with the students and the students with you, but you are also able to call host families, bus companies, hotels and the like. I really do not know how I ran our program without one for so many years.

Some directors set schedules and expect the participants to be on time. Others use "consensus" to make decisions about when to get up, when to meet, what sites to see. While the participants can and must be consulted, it is the director's responsibility to set a schedule and to see to it that the students respect it. Being flexible, however, is a quality that all directors need. Sometimes the unexpected happens and the best laid plans must be changed. Being stern with individuals who show up late is, unfortunately, necessary too.

No matter what the country, it is advisable for directors to have at all times an address book with all necessary information about the groups and persons with whom they have contracts or with whom they are working. If a bus does not arrive, and this has happened to me on more than one occasion, or a guide does not show up, they will be able to call immediately and find out what the problem is. It is wise to bring copies of all contracts, vouchers, agreements, pertinent e-mails, etc.

I have found it useful to have sufficient cash on me or a credit card in order to handle emergencies. I have a French checking account, but I am unable to write a check above a certain amount without two official pieces of identification. Since all that I have is my passport, I must convince people to accept two separate checks. If I am unable to do this, I must pay cash or use “plastic.” It is absolutely necessary to ask for a receipt when paying for anything and to have the students sign each time that they receive cash.

When in France, I listen to the radio, watch television, and read newspapers in order to know what is happening in the country. On different occasions, I have learned that bus or subway drivers were going on strike, that a museum was going to be closed unexpectedly and that a group was going to protest in a neighborhood that we intended to visit.

As group leaders, we must set a good example. I never jaywalk, cross the street when the light is red, fail to pay in the subway or on the bus, or remove objects from hotels and cafés. Of course, I never allow the students to do the same. Pedestrians are too often seen as targets in foreign countries. No one wants to have to spend time in a hospital or a morgue. In addition, the police are less and less tolerant of students who “play dumb” when accused of doing one of the above. They do not hesitate to make visitors pay fines on the spot. I never forget that I am responsible for what happens to my charges. They may have signed a release form that relieves me of all responsibility, but most often, it does not really protect me. I have adequate insurance to cover me in case of a problem.

My philosophy of education is based on the premise that one can lead a horse to water, but that one cannot make it drink. One can, however, rub a little salt in its mouth and it will most likely look for water. If you want the students to be more than tourists, to understand, appreciate, and remember something about what they are visiting, you can require them to purchase guidebooks and give them handouts dealing with the sites on the trip. My students purchase a “guide vert” dealing with Paris and have the handouts that I give them (see Appendix D). I ask them to read the materials the night before and I give them an examination at the end of the program. Several students who have remained in Europe or who have returned there later on have told me that they ended up playing guide for friends traveling with them or for tourists whom they did not even know.

There are at least three types of students who participate in study-abroad programs. First of all, there are the “gung-ho,” “I-love-the-country-and-the-language” people who want to learn everything possible. They ask lots of questions and take notes whenever they visit a museum or a castle. They are the observant ones who notice the little things, the small “c” culture things, that make life in the country that they are visiting different from life in the States. Generally, these students are few and far between. The second type of participant is interested in what is being seen and done but exhibits no great enthusiasm. These students make up the majority of most any group and we as directors must make every effort possible to pique their interest. Finally, there are those students who are completely disinterested. A few years ago, I watched a student visiting

one of France's best known sites stay in the back of his group with his walkman on. He did not hear a single word spoken by the tour guide.

We must be prepared to be disappointed because we can never predict how students will behave. Students whom we expect to be greatly interested occasionally show no interest at all or behave poorly. We must be prepared to be surprised too. The student about whom we had serious doubts may very well turn out to be the most enthusiastic person in the group. Certain students overestimate their ability with the language and will not listen to us when we point out errors. Others refuse to use the language because they are afraid or too lazy. Some have "attitude;" they make life miserable for the others who, subsequently, end up disliking them.

When visiting a museum or castle, some will accuse us of going too slowly, others of going too fast. Finding the "juste milieu" is not easy. It all comes back to how much time was allocated for a visit and to whether or not the schedule can be changed. I constantly remind myself to be patient and understanding. What is commonplace or routine for me is often new and sometimes disconcerting for the students. I never take anything for granted.

While on the trip, it is necessary to be alert to signs of bulimia, anorexia, and drug or alcohol abuse. All directors may be confronted with people who flirt, who actually get involved with members of the opposite sex, and who sexually harass others. How we handle these problems may be determined for us by the institutional administration. A minor caught drinking liquor, smoking marijuana, or breaking curfew might have to be automatically sent home. I try to nip such problems in the bud by being as observant as possible. I ask students in the group whose opinion I trust to keep me posted. I never ask them to spy; I simply ask them if things are going well and if any serious problems exist. When they feel that something should be dealt with, they tell me and I take appropriate action. When my hands are not tied by university rules, I sit down with the individual and very clearly analyze the problem and lay out possible solutions, the most draconian of which is being sent home.

I never judge my performance as a group leader based on one day's activities. There are good days when I think that I have done a super job and there are bad days when I think that I should never have agreed to be a program director. I am critical of myself, but at the same time, I realize that I can never please all of the people all of the time. I have learned that some students will criticize me no matter how hard I try. I have also discovered that the more I do, the more they expect me to do and the more likely they are to be critical.

While still in the country, you will want your students to fill out evaluations while everything is fresh in their minds. You should word the questions most carefully so that you are not held responsible for things that are really beyond your control. Youth hostels and inexpensive hotels are not known for their amenities. I do not ask the students to rate such facilities. I simply ask if they were "acceptable."

Good directors note ways to change, to improve their program. I never trust my memory. I write down the little things and the big things that I want to

remember so that the next time, the trip will be more enjoyable. I note changes in schedules, free bathrooms that are no longer available, restaurants that are worth frequenting, changes in timetables, phone numbers of other bus companies that I contact to find out their prices. I listen to the students, to what they praise and what they criticize and I record this information for later analysis. Having a laptop with me has simplified this task.

### **Upon Returning to the United States**

When I return, I must provide the university with a rather lengthy series of reports: the number of credits for which each student was enrolled, the amount of money collected per individual, the amount of money transferred, a statement detailing how student funds and travelers checks were spent, and my own expense account. The last three require receipts.

Since I work with the same companies and the same families, I thank them once I have returned to the States and send them holiday greetings in December. If I know that I will be staying at the same hotels and hostels and using the same bus companies, I often request bids for the next year before I leave the country. Otherwise, I do so as soon as possible after I return home so that I can prepare the next year's budget. I take the time to look over the evaluations provided by the students. I note anything that can be done to improve the stay abroad. I also keep in touch with students from other universities because they are my best recruiters.

### **Conclusion**

Serving as a program director for twenty-five years has been most rewarding. The times when I wished that I had stayed at home have been rare. I enjoy the looks of joy on student faces when they visit new places, the perceptible growth in their language ability, the pleasure that they exhibit when talking about their host families, their surprise when they say that they actually enjoyed eating oysters or mussels for the first time. I recommend the experience to anyone who is willing to accept the responsibilities associated with the position.

## **Appendix A**

### **Tips for Living with a French Family**

1. Be honest about what foods that you do not like. Let them know when they ask you. Be sure to learn the necessary vocabulary before getting to La Rochelle.
2. Learn what the protocol is regarding the use of the bathroom. There will be some sort of schedule that you will have to respect. Remember not to spend too much time in the bathroom if there are several people who must use it.

- Do not leave a mess. Avoid taking more than two showers a day. Water is very expensive in France, especially hot water. Absolutely no showers are to be taken after 10 p.m.
3. There is a small brush in every French bathroom that is has a specific function: cleaning the toilet bowl if it is not *propre* (clean) after flushing. Please learn to use it.
  4. Never leave a curling iron or hair dryer plugged in.
  5. The French pay for each local and long distance phone call. You may use the phone. Do not abuse it because they pay for the length of the call.
  6. If you plan on being out of your room or any room for a long period of time, remember to turn off the lights. Electricity is very expensive in France.
  7. All families have washing machines. In all cases, they may wash your clothes for you.
  8. If you come home late at night, be careful not to make noise. Be considerate. The French are probably more sensitive to noise than you are. There will most likely be someone who has to get up early and go to work.
  9. Remember to close doors as you leave rooms. The French are more concerned with “*courants d’air*” (drafts) than we. Doors have a tendency to slam shut because of the way the houses are constructed.
  10. Your room will have shutters which will have to be closed at night as well. France does have a few mosquitoes.
  11. Spend time with the family even if it is a strain to speak French constantly. Remember that you are there to improve your spoken French and to learn as much as you possibly can about France. Do not fall into the “teacher-student” paradigm where the French parents are the teachers and you are the student who expects them to do all the talking, to initiate all topics of conversation, etc. You have to have the “courage” to talk, to run the risk of making mistakes, to talk about challenging subjects.
  12. If you plan on attending church on Sunday, check the schedule of services. It is highly unlikely that your family goes to church on a regular basis.
  13. Most families have a limited number of television stations. Do not sit and zap. People find it very annoying.
  14. Never attach the address to the key that the family gives you. If you lose the key, the person, perhaps a thief, could find the house and break into it.
  15. Never bring anyone to the house who is not a member of the group, especially when someone from the family is not at home. Families do not appreciate anyone inviting a member of the opposite sex to their home when they are away. Always introduce people from our group to the families so that they know that they do not have to worry about the person who is there.
  16. If the family does not smoke, smoke only outside.

## Appendix B

### Dos and Don'ts in Paris

#### *You and Your Purse or Wallet*

1. Do not walk around with large sums of money. You can always return to a store and buy what you want.
2. Do not carry your passport with you. You only need it to cash travelers checks or to make purchases with a credit card. A copy of the first page of your passport will serve as identification.
3. Do not carry your American driver's license, social security card. In other words, empty your purse or wallet of everything that you absolutely do not need.
4. Keep your purse zipped and under your arm at all times. If it has a flap, keep it turned toward your body.
5. Never carry a wallet in your back pocket. Keep it in an inside coat pocket.
6. Theft is a common risk no matter where one is. This risk is made somewhat worse overseas because Americans tend to stand out and are generally believed to have something on them that is worth stealing. Your best defenses against theft are: 1) being careful not to open a purse, wallet, fanny pack, or money belt in a place where others can easily see; 2) not carrying much money at any one time; 3) avoiding dangerous places and times; 4) staying sober; and 5) being alert and constantly aware of your surroundings.

#### *On the Street*

7. When crossing the street, be sure to look both ways. There are special lanes reserved for buses and taxis that go the wrong way on one-way streets. Do not jaywalk.
8. Be sure that the light has turned red. Parisian drivers have a tendency to go through lights just as they are turning red.
9. Try not to look like the typical tourist. Keep your camera in your purse or a shoulder bag.
10. Wear proper attire. Shorts are out while we are visiting churches and museums. Not only are they inappropriate attire in Paris, but they are also not appreciated, and in some cases not permitted in certain museums and churches.

#### *In the Subway*

11. Watch your step in busy subway stations that are frequented by tourists. Thieves tend to work in groups of two or three.
12. Be careful on escalators. Thieves can get in front of and behind you and try to separate you from what you are carrying.
13. When getting on a car, do not let someone get between you and your purse. Do not hesitate to push and say loudly "pardon" as you liberate your bag.

14. At night, stay near the center of the platform where the signal alarm is located. If for any reason you feel uneasy about someone, get in the first car and sit in the front. Should someone threaten you, you can let the driver know what is happening by knocking on the door that the conductor is behind.
15. If accosted, give them what they want. Your life is worth more than any of your possessions.
16. Do not talk and laugh loudly in the stations and cars. Do not put your feet on the seats. The French are offended by such behavior.
17. Smoking is not allowed at all in the subway.
18. The Paris subway is clean, inexpensive, and efficient. It is not dangerous if you remain constantly vigilant.

## Appendix C

### Student Checklist

Do I have or have I packed?

- passport that I have signed
- copy of the first page of the passport [not with the passport and not in the suitcase]
- flight information
- travelers checks
- credit card and the PIN. Have you checked to see if the card company adds an additional fee each time that you use the card in a foreign country? Have you told your company that you will be in France using your card?
- copy of the receipt(s) for the travelers checks, credit card, calling card, and debit card [not to be kept with the documents nor in your suitcase when traveling]
- extra set of suitcase keys [not with the other set and not in the suitcase]
- most often used e-mail addresses
- small dictionary, notebook, pens
- all necessary medication and prescription information; extra pair of glasses or contacts
- suitcases as empty as possible. If you are going for two weeks, remember what I said about having to carry them.
- suitcases not locked when checking in at airport
- no film in the checked suitcases which must remain unlocked.
- games, playing cards, hacky sack, Frisbee, books to read, etc.
- CD player and CDs
- a raincoat or poncho with a hood
- gift for host family

## 4

### **Any Classroom Can Be a Distance Learning Room**

**Zoe E. Louton**

Educational Service Unit #5 (NE)

**Eryn Sunday**

Educational Service Unit #5 (NE)

**W**hen we think of distance learning we don't associate it with a classroom, much less an elementary classroom. Instead, we think of virtual universities and high schools or dedicated distance learning rooms apart from the normal classroom. But we now have affordable new technology to put distance learning into any classroom, using recently developed desktop conferencing software. With the effective technology now available, the elementary classroom can become its own distance learning room with all the capabilities of the dedicated distance learning room plus the convenience and comfort of familiar surroundings. Interconnect:Spanish, a Federally funded, three-year K-6 FLAP Grant involving a network of seven rural elementary school districts, uses the new desktop conferencing software to connect each classroom in the network to a distance Spanish teacher located at the project center, Educational Service Unit #5 in Beatrice, Nebraska. The project seeks to develop a viable learning model with a methodology and learning design appropriate to the technology, which will provide foreign language experience to students who would otherwise have no such opportunity. ESU 5, a state intermediate agency, hosts an Internet communications center, maintains the project Web page, and provides critical technical support, serving the network with instructional guidance and informational exchange.

At present, the Spanish is serving for enrichment purposes, but it will likely become mandatory when Rule 10 of the Nebraska Department of Education's Accreditation Procedures goes into effect. Rule 10 includes the requirement that by the 2006-2007 school year, the elementary curriculum will

provide experiences for communicating in one or more languages other than English, as well as knowledge and understanding of other cultures (Code, p.15). Where will they find the teachers? There are not enough for our high schools, much less for our elementary schools. This is a situation that has led so many at the secondary and post-secondary levels to distance learning as a solution, and has resulted in a world-wide boom in distance learning systems.

### **Distance Learning Systems**

When the computer and the Internet appeared on the instructional scene, they were welcomed for their global reach, communicative advantages, and the limitless access to information resources they provided. Subsequently, these powerful, new tools led to the rapid proliferation of the latest stage in the evolution of pedagogical mediums, distance learning. With geographical distance from a learning source no longer an issue, students could sign up for a class, access the material that resided on a designated URL, and complete assignments, all without stepping into a classroom. Because of the asynchronous nature of this arrangement where the instructor and learner are not together at the same time, this system of distance learning is best suited to the self-directed older learner. This new learning medium has led to the lightning-fast development of virtual universities and even a few virtual high schools.

Missing, however, are the interactivity and social presence that help power the learning process, particularly for younger learners. For high school students, the answer has been to install dedicated distance learning rooms that can provide synchronous interactivity to varying degrees, depending on the nature of the material to be learned and the teaching style of the instructor. When budgetary constraints limit curricular offerings, as has increasingly been the case, the students must opt for learning resources not available at their schools. Understandably, distance learning rooms have become very popular, with many high schools having more than one. The NCES report on public school offerings stated that “Of the total enrollment in distance education courses, 68% were in high schools, 29% were in combined or ungraded schools, 2% were in middle or junior high schools, and 1% were in elementary schools” (NCES, 2002-2003, p.1). Clearly, such opportunities for elementary students are extremely rare.

The distance learning rooms themselves are not affordable for elementary school budgets. Thus, elementary aged children have not had equal access to either enriched learning resources such as foreign languages or remediation strategies not available on their school site. Nor are today’s distance learning rooms child-friendly. They are separate from the familiar classroom setting and lack an environment to which the children can relate. What has been needed is a more affordable distance technology in an environment conducive to learning and a new, media-rich methodology in course offerings that blend creative and effective use of the technology.

## The Technology

The desktop conferencing software being used is from PowerPlay by Broadband in College Park, Pennsylvania. It uses an Internet hook-up instead of special lines, is multi-point, and offers much better synchronicity between audio and video than other affordable IP systems, such as Netmeeting and iVisit, which have only point-to-point capabilities. PowerPlay provides an affordable, effective solution that cancels out the need for a dedicated distance learning room. All that is needed is a mobile cart with a dedicated computer for the software program, a projector to display the image on the wall in a large, four by five foot format, a camera to send the classroom video images back to the distance teacher, and a microphone to transmit the audio. It is affordable because the cost of the cart and equipment is about \$6,000 compared with that of a fully equipped distance learning room, which is over \$40,000. Moreover, the monthly maintenance fees for special lines in a distance learning room range from \$700 to \$800, whereas the desktop conferencing programs go out over the Internet as part of the regular service. The schools involved in our project began with one cart per school, which could be rolled from room to room as needed, and are adding carts each year as budgets allow. This permits the distance resource to be part of the classroom setting and does not require the children to change locations.

The audio/video quality has proven to be very satisfactory and the images displayed easily suited to the sessions. The large image projected on the wall can be divided into four quadrants showing simultaneously. (Eight are possible, but the images are smaller.) One quadrant shows the distance teacher at the host site and another is for the subject matter, leaving two quadrants for classrooms at the remote sites. The arrangement can be varied, however, since the distance teacher at the host site can manipulate the size and number of the displayed quadrants as desired. For example, if there is only one remote site, there could be three quadrants displayed: one for the teacher, one for the students, and two merged to form a larger image for the lesson materials. Or, the students can be seen in a large window if the distance teacher needs to see them more closely. If necessary, all four quadrants can be merged into one large image focusing on either the teacher, students, or lesson materials. Usually the material to be learned takes up the larger part of the image, drawing the students' attention, diminishing the teacher window, and thus avoiding the feared teacher-as-talking-head phenomenon.

The children usually sit on the floor or at their desks and interact with each other or the image, which is projected at eye level onto a blank wall or screen. The arrangement allows for necessary freedom of movement. The distance teacher might ask the class to divide into teams for a game of concentration, or she might ask individuals to go to the screen and touch something. This arrangement permits a variety of interaction—verbal, physical, and tactile, all in the familiar classroom setting.

With the proper technology available and in place, the Interconnect: Spanish project moved on to address the learning potential available when a classroom serves as its own distance learning room. For this particular distance

system, a valuable learning asset is that the classroom teacher has access to not only the Spanish distance teacher, but also to other sites that offer educational programs, such as the zoo in Omaha, state parks and monuments in many states, and even other schools. For example, one of the teachers connected to an elementary class in Connecticut for an information exchange.

Apart from the increased availability of learning resources, however, interacting with the distance system is consonant with the children's way of life outside the school setting. Even from very young ages they use cell phones, video games, videophones, and computer activities as part of their daily lives. Pre-readers in the home setting make desired selections from the computer screen going to "Favorites," selecting "Disney Playhouse," and then selecting a desired game or other entertainment. Consequently, their interacting with the colorful and fast-moving images on the wall in the classroom, seeing themselves and the distance teacher simultaneously, all is consonant with their lives outside the classroom, which enhances the learning process. Conversely, the more traditional the classroom, the more possible is dissonance with their lives outside the classroom. The learning design and methodology of the distance session must address the dimensions of the children's techno-rich world.

### **The Instructional Design**

The instructional design tries to minimize the perception of "distance" by making the Spanish session a part of the classroom as much as possible. Toward that end it utilizes a unique, two-pronged solution that reflects true team teaching. It separates the responsibility of classroom management from that of instruction. The distance teacher is responsible for the Spanish resources while the classroom teacher is responsible for classroom management. Major components of the design include:

- Instruction beginning with kindergarten through fourth grade for the first year, adding one grade level for each of years two and three. This will establish the program as fully K-6 by the end of the grant term.
- Brief classroom video lesson units prepared by this project and the previous IN-VISION project lasting about fifteen minutes each. The IN-VISION project was a five-year Federal Technology Grant to a consortium of Nebraska and Iowa schools begun in 1996 focused on Spanish in the elementary schools. The project developed a wealth of curricular guides, videos, lessons, and teaching materials that are well suited to our present project. The lessons are all in Spanish and are based on classroom core themes. Our project, though separate from IN-VISION, shares the same vision for accessible resources for elementary students and is able to carry it further because of the new technology.
- Lesson practice and follow-up activities supervised by the classroom teachers who have been trained as facilitators during staff development sessions. They also participate actively during the distance sessions,

aiding in the physical disposition of the students in accord with the distance teacher's requests. The strength of this component is that the teacher is empowered to help present Spanish materials in class and then integrate the language into other subject matter as appropriate, thus reinforcing the internalization process. The Spanish language resource becomes part of the total classroom environment, enabling the teachers to manage it just as they do the other classroom resources.

- Weekly 20-25 minute interactive Spanish conversational sessions in the classroom with a fluent speaker over the desktop conferencing system. A multimedia projector displays images from the host site on the classroom wall in a large four-by-five foot format. This enables students to relate dimensionally and even tactually (depending on the instruction from the distance teacher) to the image(s) on the wall. The conversations are based on the curriculum developed by the IN-VISION project. Teachers may also suggest content for the sessions that help reinforce the core curriculum.
- On-going professional development teacher training sessions for facilitating the lessons, resolving problems, and using project materials effectively. The training design includes a 4-day session during the summers and monthly one-hour after-school sessions during the school year. The staff at each school gathers in one room and uses the desktop conferencing system to share and interact simultaneously with the host site as well as with teachers at the other participating schools. They also preview and acquire familiarity with the materials for the coming month.
- Material used is from the IN-VISION project as well as additional stories, lessons, PowerPoint presentations, and Flash animations created by this Interconnect:Spanish project.

The curriculum is based on the IN-VISION Curriculum Guide, which covers eight consecutive levels (years) of Spanish for elementary students. It is a valid guide, having been approved by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Each level contains a curriculum, lesson activities, student worksheets, and assessments (Iowa/Nebraska Technology Challenge Project, 2002). It is excellent for our project because it is based on oral proficiency, aligns with the National Foreign Language Standards, and was developed for situations where there is no on-site language teacher who meets daily with the students. Since the assessments are tailored to the instructional design mentioned above, we use them as the basis for our evaluations.

### **The Methodology**

The “distance” in distance learning poses a primary challenge to learner involvement because the perceived “distance” can easily interfere with a student’s feeling of connectedness to the instructor and subject matter, leading to a gap

between the students and the learning process. Children's television addresses this challenge by using colorful, fast-moving presentations rich in media that motivate children to interact dynamically with the material on the screen. When Mr. Rogers asks children in his TV audience to say a word, they automatically respond in their living rooms, even though he is not physically with them. Similarly with Sesame Street, when children are asked to count in Spanish, they respond even though they are alone in their homes. In both cases that "distance" has been closed. Interconnect:Spanish capitalizes on these lessons learned from children's television by using interactive, media-rich activities and games that contain serious learning content and engage the learner.

The lack of a physically present Spanish teacher poses a challenge to many communicative teaching strategies, such as information gap and cooperative learning activities. These activities would require a knowledgeable teacher to constantly monitor student interaction and feedback, which is difficult from a distance. However, distance-learning instructors *need not* sacrifice proven pedagogy for pragmatic reasons. Indeed, the unique resources offered by distance learning utilized wisely can help offset these challenges. A blend of game playing and multimedia can help distance learning teachers move away from the "talking head" phenomenon and organize richly interactive classes.

Games, long used in learning activities, are now gaining status as a primary learning activity. For example, one of the Absolute Priorities listed in the requirement for the most recent proposals for a Star Schools grant wanted "educational gaming and simulations applications to improve mathematics and reading literacy" (Federal Register, p. 11203).

Many educators are even advocating the studying of today's popular and ever-growing array of video games as part of a computer-driven instructional revolution (Prensky, 2001; Gee, 2003). The video games are long and complex, yet they continually draw new players. How do the designers manage to get people to learn and enjoy it? The answer is that the games are pedagogically structured for deep and rapid experience-based learning. They are interactive, player-activated, and designed to adjust to user learning styles, processing speeds, and skill levels. Gee explores the "possibility that video games are the forerunners of instructional tools that will determine how we learn in the future" (2003, back flap).

The designers of popular video games have incorporated into their games good principles of learning that we have applied in our Spanish conversation sessions, albeit in simpler versions. For each session we create animated sequences to engage the learner and with which they can interact. In a recent session with a kindergarten class, the distance Spanish instructor reviewed the Spanish words for crayons, paper, and pencil and then displayed a PowerPoint slide showing a backpack tipping over and spilling its contents. Pencils, crayons, and paper flew across the screen. The distance instructor, in Spanish, directed a student to go to the screen (image on the wall).

**Distance Teacher:** Logan, toca el papel.

*(Logan quickly touches the paper as it falls down the screen. The Distance Teacher reveals a slide showing the backpack containing the paper.)*

**Distance Teacher:** Excelente...Shilo. Toca el crayón amarillo.

*(Shilo approaches the image and touches the yellow crayon as it falls down the screen. Her classmates cheer and clap. The Distance Teacher reveals a slide showing the backpack containing both the paper and the yellow crayon.)*

**Distance Teacher:** Muy bien, Shilo.

**Students:** Yea Shilo, etc.

This activity, which allowed the students to practice new vocabulary while the distance teacher assessed their comprehension, continued until all of the crayons, paper, and pencils were returned to the backpack. The student's cheers suggested that they were motivated and engaged by the activity, which is similar to many children's computer games.

In addition to facilitating the creation of games, we use multimedia throughout the Spanish sessions to encourage interaction, maintain the students' attention, reinforce instruction, and maintain pace. After completing the "spilled backpack" activity, the kindergartners from the previous example watched and listened to a music video, made in PowerPoint, about school supplies. They then practiced the lyrics slowly with the distance teacher and soon were able to sing along with the music video.

Finally, the distance teacher displayed a PowerPoint slide with a cartoon student and a teacher, the student holding some of the school supplies, and the teacher holding others.

**Distance Teacher:** ¿Quién tiene el lápiz? ¿El lápiz? ¿La maestra o el estudiante?

**Students:** Estudiante.

**Distance Teacher:** El estudiante tiene el lápiz. Muy bien.

*(The Distance Teacher repeats the activity, asking about the paper and crayons. She then displays a slide in which the school supplies are distributed differently and calls Regan to the microphone.)*

**Distance Teacher:** Hola, Regan.

**Regan.** Hola.

**Distance Teacher:** Regan, ¿Quién tiene el papel? ¿El papel? ¿La maestra o el estudiante?

**Regan:** Estudi . . . , um (*shaking her head*) maestra.

**Distance Teacher:** **La maestra tiene el papel. Muy bien, Regan. Anthony.**

*(Anthony goes to the screen).* Al micrófono, Señor. Al micrófono. Muy bien. Hola, Anthony.

**Anthony:** Hola

**Distance Teacher:** Anthony, ¿Quién tiene los crayones? ¿Los crayones?

**Anthony:** Los crayones.

**Distance Teacher:** Uh... ¿estudiante? huh. ¿Quién tiene los crayones? ¿La maestra o el . . . ?

**Anthony:** Estudiante.

**Distance Teacher:** El estudiante tiene los crayones. Muy bien, Anthony...

While the students' intense focus is on the game or other activity, they are learning the words almost incidentally because they must use them to interact with the object of their focus. This is the way they learn their own language. They need the words to accomplish something they want.

As the classroom teachers have grown more comfortable with Spanish and the distance learning technology, they have become increasingly more willing to take on a larger role during the distance sessions. This partnership is advantageous to the smooth functioning of the session. For example, when the distance learning instructor gives the command, "*¡Formen dos equipos!*", many teachers will immediately recognize the command and begin organizing their students into two teams. This leaves the distance learning instructor free to prepare for a game or activity. Classroom teachers also pass out materials, monitor student behavior, manage activities at the remote site, and call on volunteers when the distance learning instructor is unable to see who is raising a hand. With instructional and managerial duties thus divided, the distance instructor's focus is concentrated on delivering a smooth presentation of the Spanish materials.

Multimedia was ubiquitous throughout the above mentioned school supplies lesson, and the activities would be difficult to replicate in a less technologically-rich environment. Indeed, the capacities of the available technology often engender the creation of successful activities. Recently, the distance teacher used Macromedia Flash 2004 to create an image of Mr. Potato Head sans hair, eyes, and feet. To the left of the screen was an image bank of hair, eyes, and feet. During class, she instructed individual students to go to the screen and touch a feature. (For example: "*Por favor, toca los ojos.*") The distance teacher was quickly able to assess the student's understanding, and the student received immediate feedback for correctly following the instruction—the chosen eyes were incorporated at twitch speed into the image of Mr. Potato Head. In a more advanced activity, students were asked to describe the desired feature rather than simply touch it.

Students were highly motivated to participate in this activity, gladly interacting with the distance teacher in Spanish in order to create various wacky combinations of features. The activity was further motivating because Flash allowed the distance teacher to animate the eyes. Although distance learning has the unfortunate reputation of impeding communication, the Mr. Potato Head activity illustrates how teachers can create motivating communicative activities by using the resources unique to distance learning technologies. Additionally, by packaging entire lessons within a single Flash or PowerPoint document, distance teachers can quickly move between activities, reducing transition time and increasing time-on-task.

### **Assessment**

Evaluation data is collected periodically to inform project direction. This involves areas such as teacher/student comfort with the technology, teacher/distance specialist comfort with the partnering system, and student progress in

Spanish. The evaluator conducts both mid-year and end-of-the-year assessments of progress to guide revisions in the implementation of the project design. At the conclusion of year one, the evaluator conducted a formal assessment of student oral proficiency. In the absence of an appropriate standard assessment instrument, the evaluator improvised a suitable version from the Assessments section of the IN-VISION Curriculum Guide. At the end of this second year, we plan to use a similar version based on the Curriculum Guide, Level 2. By the close of year three, the students will have acquired enough vocabulary and proficiency that we can use the SOPA (Student Oral Proficiency Assessment) with valid results.

The end of the first year-evaluation indicated that we have made substantial progress in meeting our goals indicated below:

*Goal 1: Develop student proficiency and competency in the Spanish language and cultures using a standards-based curriculum.* The evaluator reported that 91% of the students were able to recognize the words used in the evaluation process, while 58% were able to produce the words. Since comprehension precedes production, this is a satisfactory rating for our first year students. Cultural appreciation is very much in evidence. Lesson plans have introduced a variety of culture-based activities, and staff observation during on-site visits in March revealed that 42% of the teachers had Spanish related materials on display in their classrooms.

*Goal 2: Implement staff development opportunities designed to improve teachers' skills in integrating the Spanish language into other core subjects, and in the role of facilitator in a distance learning setting.* Observer ratings of classroom activities indicate that 24% of teachers used Spanish in the classroom and in such subject areas as simple math and social studies. Also, 91% of the teachers reported that the staff development sessions were somewhat or totally effective in helping them facilitate the technology at their particular remote sites. This would involve turning equipment on and managing camera positions.

*Goal 3: Develop an effective distance learning model that addresses the learning potential when each classroom serves as its own distance learning room, with technical support appropriate to the model.* A successful team teaching design was developed between the host and remote sites where the roles of the classroom teacher and distance teacher are mutually dependent. All of the teachers reported feeling comfortable with the partnering system. Secondly, the learning design is rich in multi-media format, and the seamless presentation of material in changing contexts maintains student attentiveness and concentration. The teachers reported that 100% of the lessons were interactive. At least 70% of the teachers have used the Internet center at ESU #5 for information, technical support, or communication.

*Goal 4: Increase the involvement and participation of parents in student learning.* The number of parents visiting the classrooms or schools for Spanish related activities is slightly lower than the projected 50%, but additional efforts

are focusing on bringing more parents into the classroom during this academic year.

All results assure us that the project design is working effectively. The students are making substantial progress in Spanish language acquisition, and both students and teachers are enthusiastic about the program.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Now in the second year of the project, we have added this year's incoming kindergarten students and are sending out weekly sessions of levels one and two of Spanish to 844 students. The desktop conferencing system of distance learning has proved to be a perfect fit with elementary students at all levels. The students participate enthusiastically, probably due in no small part to the games and other multi-media effects during the lesson presentation. Although it can be said to be entertainment for the students, they are highly motivated and attending closely, acquiring the Spanish as a matter of course. It is an excellent setting for the learning process and ideal for language retention.

The instructional design and methodology accommodate to the constraints of "distance" while taking full advantage of the multi-media capabilities of the system. The "distance" effect is minimized by the large projection on the wall that invites the students to become a part of the action as they interact with the image. Also, the team teaching aspect of the design incorporates the Spanish seamlessly into classroom environment. This cooperative participation by the classroom teacher is fundamental for the success of the program. To their surprise, the classroom teachers have been learning Spanish without realizing it. This year they discovered they could understand what the distance teacher wanted the students to do, even though it was expressed in Spanish. This helped the teachers feel in control of their classes.

For the most part, the technology on the mobile carts has operated smoothly; however, there have been glitches. Fortunately, there is ample support from the technologists at ESU #5. In addition, we have conducted staff development sessions with the classroom instructors, teaching simple problem solving techniques, thereby increasing their comfort level with the equipment.

This distance learning solution has attracted the interest of other elementary schools in the state, particularly with the impending requirements of Rule 10 forcing them to find a way to satisfy the foreign language requirement by the State Department of Education. While we cannot include these schools as part of the Federal grant project, we are exploring the possibility of forming a second cohort where the schools would share in the costs of the program. It would be a practical solution, bringing Spanish language experience to many children who would otherwise have none.

As we are finding ways to improve our Spanish session, this project continues to be a rewarding experience for those of us implementing the grant as well as for the participating students and teachers. There is also enough evidence

from the teacher surveys, oral proficiency evaluations, and overt enthusiasm of the participants during the distance sessions to suggest the possibility that with further refining and meticulous planning, distance learning for children could develop into a viable pedagogical medium for greatly expanded learning opportunities.

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# 5

## **WebQuests, Teacher Preparation and Language Learning: Theory into Practice**

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**T**he teaching and learning of a language has changed significantly as a result of the introduction of the World Wide Web and multimedia in the classroom. Innovative software, Web-based quiz makers, and interactive Websites provide venues for language learning inside and outside the classroom. While these technological advances can provide efficient and effective ways to teach and learn language, there are also challenges that have limited the integration and expansion of technology use in the classroom.

This article focuses on two of these challenges: a) creating a critical mass of teachers who know and can use technology and b) *using* technology to motivate learners and to increase language and cultural proficiency in ways that focus students on specific objectives and content that reinforce the language curriculum.

### **Technology and Teacher Preparation**

A review of the literature on instructional technology (IT) has revealed that a large number of students in teacher education programs were enrolled in coursework in IT, but there existed little tie to curriculum, methods, field experience, or practice teaching (Willis and Mehlinger, 1996). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 1997) conducted a review of its accreditation program with regard to technology and found that technology was treated as a supplement to the teacher education curriculum, not as a topic incorporated across the entire teacher education program. Consequently

pre-service teachers were provided instruction in IT but were rarely required to apply this technology in their courses and fieldwork.

Johnson (2002) found that modeling “is most effective in preparing teachers to integrate technology into their classroom” and can result in teachers who are “far more confident, skilled, and motivated to use computers with their own students” (p. 74). Moeller and Park (2003) summarized technology approaches for foreign language methods classrooms and described a pre-service model program that provided continual scaffolding of technology skills that resulted in the application of technology into the foreign language classroom.

In addition to knowledge of technology, teachers must have the language and pedagogical skills to use technology in interesting, challenging, and rewarding ways. Technology, such as the World-Wide Web, provides a variety of resources that allow the learner to construct meaning by gathering and synthesizing information. Roblyer et al. (1997) identified nine elements that result from technology-enhanced learning: motivation, cooperative learning, shared intelligence, problem solving and higher level skills, tracking learner progress, helping learners visualize problems and solutions, increased teacher productivity, efficient access to accurate information, and the capacity for teachers to create student-friendly materials efficiently (p.29).

### **The Role of the Teacher and the Learner**

Reigeluth and Garfinkle (1992) state that technology changes the teacher’s role to that of facilitator. The teacher monitors, questions, and provides feedback in ways that actively support the learning process. The role of the learner is one of active seeker of information, analyzer of information, and ultimately the presenter of new information gleaned from research, inquiry, and reading. A question that emerges is how can the teacher find **a balance between freedom and control in discovering knowledge in ways that are meaningful for students** that promotes the national and state language standards and creates an equal playing field for all language learners?

Moeller (1998) notes “like languages, technology is not learned in isolation; it is learned best in the context of content” (p. 9). By integrating carefully scaffolded Web-based projects that are strongly aligned with curriculum and standards, students interact directly with content, peers, and authentic texts while learning technology and expanding content knowledge. The WebQuest offers one potential approach to language learning that strikes a balance between freedom and control, optimizes interaction with authentic texts while working with peers in a problem-solving context.

### **The Role of Standards**

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) *Model Standards for Licensing Beginning Foreign Language Teachers* (2002) emphasize that beginning teachers be able:

- to create learning experiences that help students develop language proficiency and build cultural understanding (Principle 1);
- to create an interactive, engaging, and supportive learning environment that encourages student self-motivation and promotes their language learning and cultural understanding (Principle 5);
- to use effective verbal and non-verbal communication, and multi-media resources, to foster language development and cultural understanding (Principle 6).

WebQuest, a Web-based approach to teaching and learning on the World Wide Web, can uniquely meet these principles by building a supportive language learning environment that is interactive, encouraging self-motivation and language and cultural understanding through problem solving tasks.

### Why WebQuests?

Language teachers seeking active ways to engage their students in inquiry activities can send learners on a quest for information using the World Wide Web. March and Dodge define WebQuests as “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information with which learners interact comes from resources on the Internet” (Dodge, 1997, p.1). This approach provides a highly structured format that guides the learner in seeking, reviewing, analyzing, and presenting information. A short term WebQuest engages learners on tasks that require one to three class periods allowing learners to interact with new information that they read, interpret, analyze, and summarize (Dodge, 1997). A long-term WebQuest usually requires more than three class periods depending on the amount of work required by the teacher (Dodge, 1997). Learners analyze a body of knowledge, transform it in some way, and demonstrate in-depth understanding of the material by creating a final product to which others can react or respond.

WebQuests were first introduced as an instructional approach in 1995. The format consists of the following six elements:

1. Introduction (Introduces the topic of the inquiry)
2. Task (Provides a description of the task to be accomplished)
3. Process (Provides description of the steps that need to be taken to accomplish the task)
4. Resources (Websites related to the topic described in step one where students can locate the necessary information to complete the task)
5. Guidance (Some instructors include assessment rubrics to provide students with clear assessment guidelines that will be used by the teacher to evaluate the project)
6. Conclusion (Provides closure, a list of references, and summarizes what has been accomplished) [http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about\\_webquests.html](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html).

Due to the highly structured nature of the WebQuest approach, parameters are defined to eliminate free surfing of the Internet, yet choices are provided as

regards links that can be selected to gather information, what information to include, and how to present the resulting product. Language students interact with authentic texts and sites prepared for native speakers that reinforce the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication (*Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 1996). Students typically work in small groups and assume a specific role in the project (e.g. review certain Websites, create the slides for the PowerPoint). This encourages interaction with peers as they share their findings and negotiate the final product. Skimming and scanning texts, summarizing and interpreting these texts, evaluating what should be included are real tasks that make this activity meaningful and motivating for students.

The WebQuest approach allows teachers to integrate critical thinking, cooperative learning, and authentic texts into one problem-solving task. Students are provided sufficient scaffolding while still encouraged to think on their own (March, 2003). WebQuests can provide open-ended questions that require students to go beyond mere facts, to analyze and evaluate texts, and to synthesize the readings and transform and exhibit this knowledge and deeper understanding of the topic into a product that is presented to their peers.

It is important to design WebQuests that use authentic assessment (March, 2000) that allows classroom learning to be linked to the real world (Hawley and Hawley, 1981) in ways that provides purpose to the learning task.

A most attractive feature of the WebQuest approach to language learning is the fact that students are learning content while learning language. They are learning about geography, history, the arts and music as they read to comprehend the content. This is one important way to narrow the gap between cognitive and linguistic competency that language students often experience in beginning and intermediate language courses. While the typical high school student has reached the formal operational cognitive level of thinking at fifteen years of age, his or her ability to speak in the language is very limited, often at the pre-operational level of cognition (Piaget, 1971). This gap between cognitive and linguistic ability can cause high anxiety resulting in lower motivation on the part of the learner. The WebQuest allows the teacher to select texts that are linguistically and age appropriate, scaffold the tasks, and provide access to resources (dictionary, glossary, visuals) that will assist the learner in interpreting the text.

### **Advantages of WebQuests**

A review of the literature reveals that WebQuests promote critical thinking ([http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about\\_webquests.html](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html)), provide both teachers and students with structure and guidance (Dodge, 1997), provide a child-safe Internet environment (Vidoni, Maddux, 2002), provide realistic tasks (George Lipscomb, 2003, p.77), and encourage collaboration through group work ([http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about\\_webquests.html](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html)).

WebQuests narrow and direct students' Web search (Vidoni, Maddux, 2002). If students are not directed through the Internet search, it can easily

become an overwhelming task. As Summerville (2000) notes, “with the plethora of information, students quickly become frustrated with following links that lead them to useless information” (p.1).

Empirical studies conducted on WebQuests have been few, but those classroom-based studies that have been published indicate that motivation, confidence, and positive attitudes have increased, but a significant gain in academic achievement has not been established.

Burke et al. (2003) conducted a study in an introductory Biology course that compared the WebQuest model to a traditional classroom method. Final test scores revealed no significant difference between the two groups; however, students expressed a positive attitude towards working with WebQuests. Similar results were found in a study conducted in the areas of social studies and science (Leite, McNulty & Brooks, 2005). The classes were randomly divided into two groups: WebQuest and non-WebQuest. The students were pre- and post-tested, allowing the researchers to measure the learning differences in scores statistically. Findings indicated a significant difference between pre- and post-test scores for the social studies group. There was no significant difference between pre- and post-test scores for the science group. The authors concluded that the introduction of the WebQuest unit did not “lead to superior learning relative to conventional instruction.” However, qualitative interviews after the experiment revealed a positive attitude on the part of both the students and teachers towards the WebQuest teaching model. Additional classroom-based research in the area of language learning needs to be conducted on WebQuests to determine their impact on student learning. It is clear that WebQuests increase motivation, confidence, and build community, all of which can contribute to higher student achievement.

### **Development of a WebQuest**

When developing and implementing WebQuests, teachers should keep the following principles in mind to make the experience more meaningful for students. Students should work with their topic in “a real way,” or as Tom March (2000) cautioned, “the full potential of WebQuests can be lost if the final product is not reviewed by a real audience” (p.1). The topic of WebQuests should be closely connected to the students’ background knowledge to allow them “to be able to find themselves, their concerns, or their interests in the learning scenarios” (March 2000, p.1). The role of a teacher is therefore to identify the topic of inquiry, facilitate the learning process, and to motivate learners to participate actively in the research.

As part of their foreign language student teaching field experience, pre-service teachers are asked to create and implement cultural WebQuest projects in their classrooms. The WebQuest project consists of four parts: 1) design, 2) implementation, 3) evaluation, including a self-reflection, and 4) presentation.

During the first part of a project, students design a WebQuest focusing on a cultural topic tied to the curriculum as specified by their school district and approved by their cooperating teacher. The WebQuests are built using a

Manila Web-based platform (<http://manila.unl.edu>). Special training sessions are provided for the students to learn the basics of Manila before they start their projects. These sessions include a description of the WebQuest process and examples of culture WebQuests created by previous students.

During the second phase of the project, pre-service teachers incorporate their WebQuest projects into their language curriculum. The WebQuest is accompanied by a complete lesson plan including clear and measurable objectives. Usually, the pre-service teachers choose to implement short-term WebQuests that take approximately 3-4 days for students to complete.

The third part of the project requires the pre-service teachers to analyze their WebQuest experiences in their classrooms. The pre-service teachers are asked to write a reflective paper providing a detailed analysis of the project including advantages of using WebQuests, problems that they encountered, and how they can improve the lesson. Some of the pre-service teachers conduct pre- and post-tests as part of the evaluation process, which are summarized and presented in their papers.

Pre-service teachers expressed positive attitudes towards the WebQuest model, emphasizing the role of student collaboration, change of pace, increased motivation, and active student learning. One of the pre-service teachers noted “the greatest advantage of a WebQuest is that students have all the instructions on the computer and don’t need the teacher’s assistance to be able to finish the project, which allows them to be independent workers.” Several pre-service teachers expressed the importance of real life tasks offered through WebQuests that made the learning experience more meaningful for their students. The ability to address all learning styles was also observed: “My students collaborated well on the project, it catered to multiple intelligences, the kids’ vocabulary improved, and it was a real-world linguistic experience they may have someday.”

Pre-service teachers shared their WebQuests and their reflections with their peers through a formal presentation. A rubric for evaluation, based on one developed by Bernie Dodge (2001) (<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquestrubric.html>) was used by the instructors of the methods class to guide the pre-service teachers through all stages of project development and implementation. This rubric also served as an evaluation tool for assessing the WebQuests (see Appendix A).

Each pre-service teacher created, taught, and evaluated a WebQuest in the classroom of their cooperating teacher. Examples of these WebQuests created by the pre-service teachers can be found at <http://cehs.unl.edu/psmarsh/index.html>; <http://cehs.unl.edu/ctaylor/index.html>. The sample screenshots below (Figures 1, 2, and 3) demonstrate the format and content of the WebQuests created by pre-service teachers.

This was followed by a self-evaluation of the WebQuest that included: an analysis of the achievement scores of the students based on a pre- and post- test; results of a questionnaire regarding the attitude of students toward the WebQuest project, a self-reflection by the pre-service teacher of the impact of the WebQuest on student motivation, and general effectiveness of the project.

Figure 1. Food in the Spanish-speaking World

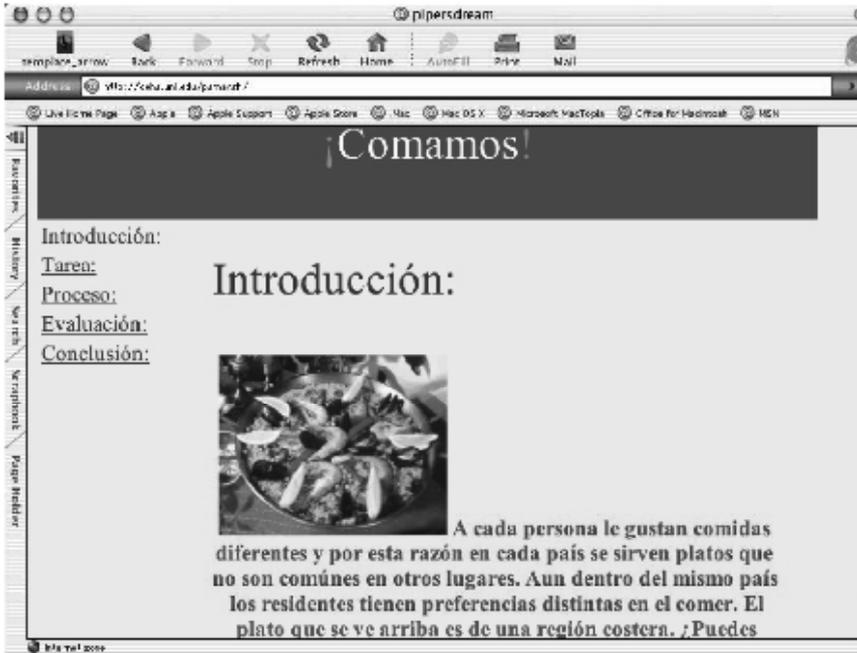
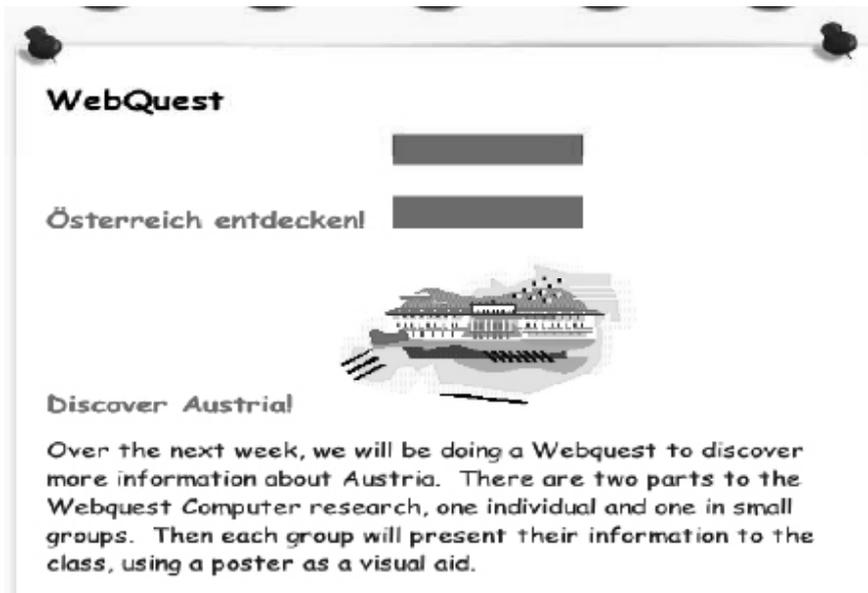


Figure 2. Austrian Webquest



**Figure 3. Directions for Spanish WebQuest**

[Resume](#)  
[Pictures](#)  
[School Profile](#)  
[Spanish at Norfolk High](#)  
[WebQuest](#)  
[Country WebQuest](#)  
[Discussion](#)  
[Recent Discussion](#)  
[Create New Topic](#)  
[Membership](#)  
[Join Now](#)  
[Login](#)



¡Hola clase! Ustedes van a hacer un Web quest. Es muy divertido! Antes de entrar en al pagina web, tengo algunas consejas.

1. Look please at the [lista de direcciones](#) - This is a list of the steps you need to complete. ¡Ojo! Your Webquest is slightly different than the one on the internet.

2. Click on the main website:

<http://www.nevada.edu/~brunelle/travelxperts.html>

Not only did several of the pre-service teachers create additional WebQuests and include them on their Website Home Page, but the cooperating teachers began using them in their classrooms as well. Pre-service classmates shared their WebQuests and were equipped with a collection of examples that could be integrated into their own classrooms upon graduation. Because they were based on content related to the text they were using in the classroom, the pre-service teachers were asked to lead a staff development on the use of WebQuests in the local school district. Such a synergistic relationship between the pre-service teachers, university, cooperating teachers, and school district creates a supportive community of scholars that promotes professional development in ways that results in classroom application.

### Action Research

An important feature of the WebQuest project during the foreign language methods courses involved conducting classroom-based research to determine the effect of using this technology approach in the classroom. Action research provides pre-service teachers with a first-hand experience with a research tool that will allow them to analyze the effectiveness of a classroom strategy/approach and to measure the impact of the approach as regards student learning. Action research studies were conducted on a variety of technology related issues such as: the effect of using online quiz makers versus paper and pencil assignments; the impact of key pals on language learning motivation and cultural understanding; and the differences in achievement level for students who completed a WebQuest project versus traditional classroom instruction.

These action research/inquiry projects are presented to the college as a whole in the format of a poster session. Pre-service teachers write a formal action research paper, summarize their results via a poster, and present these results at a research conference that is open to the public. This provides a real audience for their studies and allows the public to see the results of classroom-based research. Such classroom-based research is a powerful venue for changing beliefs about language teaching and learning and allows teachers to adjust their instruction based on their own experiences and investigations.

## Conclusion

The WebQuest is an effective approach to learning that allows pre-service teachers the opportunity to connect curriculum, technology, and pedagogy in ways that help their students become more independent learners through a learning-to-learn approach versus the transmission model of instruction. This Web-based approach assists students in making cognitive connections and construct more complex mental schema in a real world task that can lead to confidence, higher motivation, and ultimately higher achievement. By creating a carefully scaffolded infrastructure for learning and using technology during the pre-service teacher education program and working with cooperating teachers in applying this technology during the field experiences, the chances for integration of technology in the classroom are greatly increased. This can result in the creation of a critical mass of teachers who can use technology to motivate learners and ultimately increase their language and cultural proficiency in ways that enrich the teaching and learning of languages inside and outside the classroom.

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## Appendix A

## WebQuest Rubric

Original WebQuest rubric by Bernie Dodge  
<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquestrubric.html>  
 (reproduced by permission of author)

	1	2	3
<b>Visual Appeal</b>	There are few or no graphic elements. Background interferes with the overall comprehension.	Graphic elements sometimes, but not always, contribute to the understanding of concepts.	Appropriate graphic elements are used to make visual connections that contribute to the understanding of concepts.
<b>Navigation &amp; Flow</b>	The organization of the lesson is confusing. Pages can't be found easily.	There are few places where the learner can get lost and not know where to go next.	Navigation is seamless. It is always clear to the learner where all the pieces are and how to locate them.
<b>Mechanical Aspects</b>	There are more than 5 broken links, misplaced or missing images, badly sized tables, misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	There are some broken links, misplaced or missing images, badly sized tables, misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	No mechanical problems noted.
<b>Introduction</b>	Introduction doesn't prepare a learner for the task.	Introduction provides a learner with some idea about the task itself.	Introduction effectively introduces the task to a learner.
<b>Task</b>	Task requires simply comprehending or retelling of information found on web pages and answering factual questions.	The task requires analysis of information and/or putting together information from several sources.	Task promotes thinking that goes beyond simple comprehension. The task requires synthesis of multiple sources of information to prepare a final product.

74 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

<b>Process</b>	Process is not clearly stated. Students would be confused about all the steps that they need to do to accomplish the task.	Some directions are given, but there is missing information.	Every step is clearly stated. Most students would know exactly where they are at each step of the process and know what to do next.
<b>Resources</b>	Resources provided are not sufficient for students to accomplish the task.	There is some connection between the resources and the information needed for students to accomplish the task.	There is a clear and meaningful connection between all the resources and the information needed for students to accomplish the task.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation criteria are not presented.	Evaluation criteria are partially presented.	Evaluation criteria are clearly stated in the form of a rubric. Criteria include qualitative as well as quantitative descriptors. The evaluation instrument clearly measures what students must know and be able to do to accomplish the task.
<b>Presentation</b>	Weak voice projection. Demonstrates poor knowledge of the project's content. Unable to answer questions.	Good voice projection. Demonstrates the knowledge of the project's content in a comprehensible and professional manner.	Excellent voice projection and knowledge of the project's content.
<b>Reflective paper</b>	Paper is a summary of the project, contains no reflective analysis of the experiences related to working with WebQuests.	Somewhat organized paper, more than just a summary of the project, contains some reflective analysis of the experiences related to working with WebQuests.	Well-organized paper, more than just a summary of the project, contains reflective analysis of the experiences related to working with WebQuests.

## 6

### **Integrating Standards and Instruction: One University's Experience**

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Immediately after the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) was published, it began to have an impact on K-12 second language programs throughout the country. These learner standards were incorporated into state frameworks and curricular guidelines, and soon instructional materials were modified to include standards-based activities. The 5 Cs of the learner standards (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities) became a popular topic for investigation in journal articles and for dialogue at professional second language conferences nationwide. Almost a decade later there is no question that these standards are having an impact on K-12 classroom instruction and evaluation. The same cannot always be said of programs in higher education.

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock's second language and language pedagogy faculty, leaders in the state in promoting quality teaching in L2 classrooms, quickly embraced the learner standards. They sought and received state and federally-funded grants to assist in-service classroom teachers in the understanding and application of these standards in their curriculum. However enthusiastic faculty members were in encouraging the standards' implementation in the secondary curriculum, they lacked an imperative to embrace post-secondary standards in the university language curriculum. This lack of connection between implementation at the K-12 level and at the post-secondary level is, of course, not unique to this university. That higher education has been much slower to effect such change has been the subject of much professional discussion also. In fact, as James (1998) states, "while large numbers of university professors of language and literature were paying little if any attention to what was going on, a relative consensus was emerging among the leaders in the pre-college sphere" (p. 11).

Unlike university-level educators referenced by James, this university's French faculty knew that they were not practicing (in university language courses to their students) what they were preaching (in workshops to in-service teachers). They were nevertheless slow to act. It is worth noting that the reluctance to embrace learner standards in the university curriculum here did not grow out of "paying little if any attention" to standards or of unwillingness to change but rather from more practical concerns. Recalling the challenges associated with developing a proficiency-based curriculum, the faculty knew beforehand the enormity of the process that would be required to integrate standards throughout the curriculum. As a result, the decision was made to phase in, with no particular urgency, changes that would eventually eliminate the disparity between discussion and implementation.

As is common with many changes that in hindsight become revolutionary, the approval and dissemination of the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (2002) made the connection between curriculum and standards immediately important. These teacher standards, then, became the catalyst for change.

The motivation to change was energized even more by the fact that preparing students to become teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century produces unique challenges for all disciplines in this state because National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation is required for each College of Education and academic program desiring to license teachers. It is, then, critically important at this university that program graduates desiring second language licensure be prepared to meet the competencies required in the teacher standards. Determination to maintain the unit's preeminent role in training pre-service teachers and in providing quality in-service experiences for local teachers required a serious consideration of the impact of both sets of standards on students, faculty, and ultimately the university and the state.

Since standards focus on outcomes, what learners know and are able to do, program success then is clearly a factor of student performance evaluated externally rather than a result of teacher evaluation of students based solely on in-class performance and on "seat time." Providing students with the maximum opportunity to acquire and practice the needed content and skills became the focus of the reform project. Unlike the K-12 situation, university level French textbooks offered few insights, and there were no state frameworks to follow. Rather the resulting changes reflect what James (1998) calls the recognition that "the publication of Standards for Foreign Language signals the end of business as usual in departments of national language and literature in our colleges and universities...because this content has grown out of a grass-roots desire for change in the foreign language teaching profession across the country" (p. 11).

The standards-based curricular reform described here was a process (not an event) and grew from a solid foundation of previous efforts to embrace evolving methodologies. In reality, the impact of the national interest in externally-validated quality education and several local circumstances provided a felicitous convergence of needs leading to reform. Still, placing the most recent changes in

a historical context was crucial to justifying and facilitating the approval process on campus.

### **Making the Case for Change – An External Imperative**

The campus conversation began with a discussion of how, from the national perspective, the terms assessment and standards have become the currency of the new millennium in education, not just in second languages. Beginning with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983), there was an external imperative to demonstrate quality in education and to reverse a decline in the competitive advantage of U.S. students over those of other nations that eventually led to the development of national standards for both learners and educators. It was surprising how few faculty on campus in other academic disciplines were aware of the standards movement in their own field. Language faculty became leaders at the university in articulating a connection between standards and degree requirements. As standards and assessment became the new “buzzwords” for program review, knowledgeable language educators reminded colleagues that they had spent much time over the previous decade defining competency-based teaching and assessment helping to prepare students to use real world language.

It is important to remember that although the development, adoption, and implementation of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (1986) required more than a decade to fully integrate in the national consciousness of language educators and text publishers, nonetheless most K-16 programs reflect to varying degrees an awareness of the value of the proficiency guidelines for assessing student progress and mastery. Liskin-Gasparro (2003) states that the terms oral proficiency, OPI, and ACTFL Guidelines “are common currency in the discourse of foreign language teachers and pre-service teacher candidates” (p. 483). Such familiarity is not yet the case with respect to learner or teacher standards.

### **Beginning Curricular Change from a Position of Strength**

At this institution, the evolutionary process that facilitated the movement to a standards-based curriculum includes three stages, the first of which occurred in the mid-1980s. Two subsequent events, occurring in the 1990s, positioned the French faculty to embrace both sets of standards with minimal conflict among colleagues. The latest adaptations, the most revolutionary in terms of curriculum design, were fully approved in 2004 and grew out of the earlier reforms. The striking point to recognize is that the changes of the 1980s and 1990s supported the standards rubrics.

Soon after the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (1986) were published and promulgated by the profession, French faculty made a conscious shift to encourage the development of more substantive aural/oral skills than was possible in the two-course elementary, intermediate, and advanced sequences existing at the time. A three-hour conversation course, designed to provide practical applications and

aural/oral practice of the structures and content previously introduced, was added at each of the three levels. Quite popular with students, particularly those planning to study abroad who recognized a clear need to improve spoken language skills, the conversation courses helped faculty and students understand early in the proficiency era that oral skills had to be overtly taught in order for students to attain productive competence adequate to survive in the target culture. While this statement seems axiomatic in the current era, it was not only controversial but was also considered inappropriate to “waste” credit hours on oral/aural courses at the inception of this change.

Additional emphasis was placed on the aural/oral skill development at the advanced level by a modification of the more traditional composition and conversation sequence to a four-skills approach for both courses. The major and minor requirements were subsequently modified to require at least one three-hour conversation course and one three-hour culture and civilization course. The effect of these changes over time was an evident shift toward developing enhanced oral proficiency for all students in all courses along with awareness of the target culture.

Two fortuitous events in the 1990s occurred on campus that provided the impetus for additional modifications. One was a requirement emanating from the regional accrediting association that all academic majors must develop an assessment component for program graduates beyond course grades and that the results of this assessment must be evaluated in such a manner as to be reflected in changes to course content and instruction. The other event was the participation of the language department in the Language Mission Project (Maxwell, Johnson, & Sperling, 1999) that resulted in substantive modification to the intermediate-level skills courses.

In order to comply with the assessment requirement referenced above, faculty in each language group developed a proficiency-oriented exit exam requiring performance in listening, reading and writing along with a modified oral proficiency interview (MOPI). In addition, a proficiency goal (Intermediate mid or high) for each skill was established for program graduates. Since the campus assessment project was designed to assess programs rather than students, however, it was not possible to hold students accountable for their performance on the assessment exam. Therefore, exit exam results did not provide useful data in terms of quantifiable individual achievement. Since students were not challenged to perform at their highest level of competency, it was impossible to determine if the proficiency goal was reached. Anecdotal information obtained from graduates during this period indicated, however, that students felt a reasonable comfort level with survival-level speaking in the target culture, reaffirming the value of the conversation courses. At the same time, both students and faculty recognized that the receptive skill gain (particularly in listening comprehension) was less significant than was the gain in speaking facility.

During the 1990s the university also implemented a three course (nine-hour) language requirement for students seeking a B.A. degree. The opportunity to implement changes in the intermediate sequence became the focus of the unit’s

participation in the Language Mission Project (Maxwell, Johnson, & Sperling, 1999). Intermediate I, now the “end of the requirement,” was revised into a content-based course enabling students to demonstrate upon completion of the language requirement that they are able to perform some useful functions with their second language knowledge. Intermediate II was not changed. Grading emphasis shifted from tests designed to demonstrate mastery of structures taught in early chapters of most intermediate tests (and often leaving students with a very clear understanding of how little language they really knew) to a “real world” project emphasis wherein students demonstrate “survival” ability by performing and preparing activities that they might encounter if traveling in the target culture or working for a corporation with international linkages. The student chooses much of the specific content and performs according to pre-established guidelines. Evaluative rubrics are shared in the course syllabus so that students understand the expectations both in form and in content. Structures to be taught then are selected not because they are included in an intermediate text but because they are the functions needed to complete the prescribed course activities and projects.

For example, in the context of arriving at the home of a host family during a study abroad experience, the student is asked to develop a series of questions one would need in order to obtain necessary information. Hence, in the study of interrogatives, the real world communicative strategies for seeking information are encouraged rather than simply re-entering the list of interrogative expressions from the text and completing text exercises. Ways of seeking information by simply stating “I need...” or “I’m looking for...” or using memorized patterns such as “Could you tell me...” are offered in addition to “Where is...” This strategy helps students to personalize the need for circumlocution and to be ingenious in learning “to survive.” Since the reasonable proficiency expectation for students at this level is in the intermediate range, the written project components reflect those cited in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Writing* (2001): students “... can write short, simple communications, compositions, descriptions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts that are based on personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other topics related to personal experiences and immediate surroundings” (p. 5).

Experience with this concept has reinforced the intuitive belief of faculty that students become more interested in acquiring structural accuracy when they can realize an immediate, reasonable usage for what they are learning. Students who continue the study of French from this foundation bring very different skills and a broader range of knowledge to subsequent courses than do their peers coming from more traditional preparatory courses. Throughout the reform process, the importance of proficiency guidelines cannot be overstated. The guidelines not only “guided” the faculty in the development of course expectations but also enabled the students to understand that course expectations were consonant with nationally-accepted norms and not directly related to “seat time.”

As a result, students complete the three-course requirement with a fairly clear understanding that they are, in fact, capable of functioning at a survival level in the target culture. As James (1998) recognizes,

Such a program [genuinely proficiency-based foreign language program] can be great fun for students, but the fun is not an end in itself. Its justification lies in its usefulness to their lives, lives of work as well as lives of leisure and self-enrichment. Such a program certainly does not eliminate grammar from its teaching nor de-emphasize reading and writing. It does, however, test mastery of grammar and performance of skills in a way that is different from standardized testing (p. 13).

During this same time period, the French program benefited from an additional initiative in which the university language faculty took a leadership role in developing the state's curriculum for teaching students with limited English proficiency. Four language pedagogy courses were developed (Methods of Teaching Second Languages, Second Language Acquisition, Teaching People of other Cultures, and Second Language Assessment). All of these courses are taught in the language unit by language pedagogy faculty. Believing that competent language teachers need the extended opportunity to learn discipline-based pedagogical strategies and that second language teachers comprise a good core group to strengthen the state's capacity to serve the growing number of K-12 students with limited English proficiency (LEP), the decision was made from the beginning to require all four courses for any students wishing to seek licensure from the university as a second language teacher. Following this plan, a graduate is not only eligible for licensure in a second language but also for endorsement to teach LEP students. When the teacher standards were approved, then, L2 faculty already were well-positioned to provide discipline-specific courses to more nearly assure that program graduates could reasonably achieve the required levels of competency for the state licensure examinations. While these pedagogy courses do not count toward the major or minor in the second language, they are required by the College of Education for teacher licensure.

Within the teacher standards there is a clear delineation of responsibilities between language faculty and language pedagogy faculty. Language faculty understand that they have the responsibility for preparing students for standards 1 and 2 (Language, Linguistics, Comparisons and Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts) while language pedagogy faculty have responsibility for the remaining four standards. Learning to systematically include all of the required content and competency is expected of all unit language faculty. That the pedagogy core already existed in the language unit prior to development of teacher standards is testimony to the vision of the language pedagogy faculty and an important component of the overall program design. Even with consensus among faculty and fortuitous modifications already in place, the shift to the use of both learner and teacher standards as the organizing principle for the entire curriculum still required a significant amount of consultative discussion, compromise, and creative leadership.

## Establishing a Standards-based Curriculum

Faculty began by assessing in what way(s) the desired outcomes could dictate the program design. The need to restructure the “orphan” intermediate II course along with the desire to enhance instructional emphasis on listening comprehension provided an opportunity to adopt the communication standard as the bridge between requirement and major courses. Intermediate II was replaced, and the two advanced skills courses were modified into a new three course advanced sequence entitled “Integrated Skills I, II and III.” Each of the three courses focuses on one mode of the communication standard (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). A side benefit of this modification was that students received an additional three hours of upper-level credit, a useful “carrot” to encourage those completing the requirement to continue since upper level hours are important for degree completion. The Integrated Skills courses are not sequential in the sense that a student must take them in a particular order. All three are required for a major or minor. This flexibility eliminated one problem of the previous structure, which required students to progress in a “lock step” sequence (Intermediate II had to be completed before Advanced I, etc.). An additional advantage is the opportunity to share progress indicators from the learner standards with students in order to help them understand that the acquisition expectations of each class reflect best practice as determined by the profession as a whole.

An initial challenge for the new sequence was to find reasonably-priced, level-appropriate materials that interested and motivated the students while providing adequate structure. Because of the determination of faculty to assure that the communication emphasis reflected real-world language usage, a wide range of materials was considered. Coincidentally, several new publications had become available from French publishing houses such as Cle International, Hachette, and Didier. Print and audio files from the internet are readily accessible. Interpretive skills have been enhanced by usage of *Authentik (Authentik Resources Ltd., 2005)* and its accompanying recorded materials. This publication has been particularly well received by students because of its quality, engaging format, variety of timely, interesting articles, and ease of access. A single grammar review, *Contrastes (Rochat, 2005)*, is used across all three courses. Structures appropriate to the communicative context are sequenced throughout the three courses (e.g. conversational verb tenses are included in the interpersonal course while subjunctive and literary past tense recognition are reserved for the interpretive course).

Initial reports from students who have completed the communication mode sequence are very positive. An unanticipated consequence of the enthusiastic response of students to the activities in the interpretive courses has been more effort to use authentic materials to teach interpretive skills from the beginning. Among the “lab” assignments in each of the required courses (Elementary I and II and Intermediate) are several assignments where students are instructed to glean and guess content from a variety of authentic materials on topics either of cultural relevance or based upon student interests. That these modifications matter

## 82 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

is anecdotally reinforced by students returning from study abroad experiences who have indicated for the first time much less stress and frustration with their comprehension skills than had been true previously.

Once coursework to focus on the communication standard was in place, it was possible to complete the curriculum design under the headings of the 5 Cs. The new design required a restructuring of some of the traditional courses, but it also allowed flexibility for including traditional content. While the added flexibility is popular with students and reasonable for faculty, it does challenge the traditional belief in the importance of study of the “canon” for a language major. The imperative, however, to prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> century language usage and for meeting the teacher standards eventually overrode the desire to preserve and defend tradition.

The standards-based organization for the major follows. It requires 30 credit hours above elementary level of which nine hours must be senior level courses. A grade of C or better is required in all courses.

- Intermediate (3 hours)
- Communication (12 – 15 hours)
  - Integrated skills I - interpretive
  - Integrated skills II - interpersonal
  - Integrated skills III - presentational
  - Intermediate or Advanced conversation
- Cultures (3 – 9 hours)
  - Culture and Civilization I (practices / perspectives)
  - Culture and Civilization II (products / perspectives)
  - Francophone Culture
- Comparisons and Communities (3 – 9 hours)
  - Pronunciation
  - Advanced Listening and Pronunciation
  - Practicum
  - Senior project
  - Study Abroad
- Connections (3 – 9 hours)
  - Selected readings
  - Writings: Historical perspective
  - Writings: Modern perspective
  - Cinema
  - Seminar (may be repeated for credit with topic change)

Since courses with a cultural focus have long existed in the curriculum, and since at least one course in culture and civilization was already required for the major, using the “C” of culture as a rubric in the standards-based curriculum required only title changes.

Given that this university is located in an urban area and is a metropolitan university, the “C” of communities seemed a natural fit. Conceptually, faculty

agreed on a curricular strategy to determine what students should know and be able to do but found it somewhat more difficult to agree on how to assess competency in the communities standard. Clearly, those students who have the opportunity to participate in the university-sponsored study abroad program will use French outside of a classroom, and students in all courses have opportunities to research topics of interest. To move beyond these opportunities, the concept of a senior project took shape as faculty discussed how French students could use their language skills in the city. The opportunity to relate a student's individual interest and skill with areas of community need or to enable participation in an internship in the non-profit sector and then to develop a written or oral presentation of the experience are examples of how the project may take shape at the senior level. This concept not only allows students to use real language; it also is a natural outgrowth of the project requirements of lower-level courses and supports the university mission to relate curriculum to the metropolitan environment. The senior project is the venue for the pre-service teacher to connect work done in previous courses with the career goal of teaching. A culminating project coupled with artifacts from earlier courses will provide the needed examples of work product for the licensure applicant.

Rather than separate Comparisons and Communities, the decision was made to group these two standards together in terms of designating hour requirements for the degree. This choice was purely pragmatic since students returning from a study abroad experience may have only one semester remaining prior to graduation and may need to concentrate their course work in other categories. It is important to recognize, however, that students desiring licensure will be encouraged to complete one of the two comparisons courses (Pronunciation / Advanced Listening and Pronunciation) in order to assure that each student has had an opportunity to acquire some basic knowledge of linguistics (one of the competencies of the teacher standards).

The 5<sup>th</sup> "C" (Connections) includes several of the more traditional courses, including Selected Readings, Cinema, and seminars. One significant change, referenced previously, is that the traditional courses comprising the literary canon were deleted. Rather than offering century-based or genre-based literature courses, the curriculum was changed to include generic writings courses. One writings course reflects a historical perspective, and the other reflects a modern perspective. The genre and periods are not delineated further. This revolution will strike many purists as heresy. The French faculty agrees unanimously that the literature course deletions are "heart-wrenching." That said, however, there is no question but that today's metropolitan university student is much more committed to a study of a second language as a tool for understanding other peoples and events than in studying literature. The non-specific breadth of the new writings courses may prove troubling to some, but the faculty believe it is a wave of the future as a university is responsive to student demand.

In a continuing attempt to assure that students are challenged to attain the highest levels of proficiency of which they are capable, the *TFI (Test de Français International, 2001)* was adopted to supplant the original "teacher-made"

assessment exam from the early 1990s. Campus-wide assessment of academic programs is still required. Now, however, the opportunity for each student to compete on an internationally-normed exam provides much greater motivation for students to do their best work on the assessment than was true previously. Although it is a standardized exam, the *TFI* tests more closely assess the language skills of a standards-based curriculum than do other available standardized instruments. Faculty are able to identify quickly the relative achievement of students for program assessment purposes, the test is comparatively inexpensive, and each student receives a certificate documenting a demonstrated level of competency with descriptive competency rubrics provided.

### **Modifying Classroom Practice and Conforming to Standards**

Faculty believe that this curriculum structure has positioned students to be better prepared should they decide to utilize their language skills for K-12 teaching. Few students enter the university intending to major in a second language, and even fewer of those decide to major with the intention of becoming a language teacher. However, given that there is a significant teacher shortage in second languages in the state and region and that the more “glamorous” jobs for language majors are less easily found, students often decide to seek licensure near the completion of their degree program or even after they have graduated. These students must be prepared, then, to demonstrate the competencies required by the teacher standards even though they were not preparing initially to become teachers. It is the importance of preparing all majors for the eventuality of their becoming interested in teaching that poses one of the greatest challenges for all the language programs.

The reality is that embracing the modes of the communication standard for the advanced level integrated skills sequence has had substantial impact on the instructional content of the elementary and intermediate courses. Consonant with the standards’ emphasis on what the students know and are able to do, it has been evident that when students who begin their study of language connecting what they know about current events, their own field of study, or their hobby with articles on similar topics in French, not only does their language acquisition improve but also, and perhaps more importantly, their willingness to challenge themselves to understand is enhanced. This focus on teaching the interpretive skill from the beginning and continuing the focus into subsequent courses results in students with broader ranges of interest in and knowledge of the target culture. Not surprisingly, students acquire a broader vocabulary more nearly approximating real world usage on topics that reflect their personal activities and interests than was typical when constrained to text-based vocabulary. Therefore, language acquisition is no longer an abstract concept but rather a “way of life” communication strategy.

As mentioned above, course evaluation has moved away from emphasis on testing toward emphasis on production. There are still quizzes and tests, although fewer of them, but the summative assessment for the elementary and

intermediate courses and some upper-level courses is project-focused. Not surprisingly, students are enthusiastic about not having a final exam. However, it is clear that students spend as much if not more time on project preparation than they would on studying for an exam. Overall accuracy parallels or exceeds that of a series of exams. The project format reflects what the proficiency movement tells us about what students can reasonably be expected to do at each proficiency level. For example, developing lists and writing paragraphs (Novice/ Intermediate) lend themselves well to preparing to pack for a trip or introducing oneself by writing a letter of introduction to a host family during a study trip abroad. Course assignments reflect realistic behaviors in upper level courses as well. To attain Advanced-low proficiency in writing is not an insignificant achievement. Students are informed that

Writers at the Advanced-Low level are able to meet basic work and/or academic writing needs, produce routine social correspondence, write about familiar topics by means of narratives and descriptions of a factual nature, and write simple summaries. Advanced-Low writers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in major time frames with some control of aspect (*ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Writing*, 2001).

Assignments encourage students to move toward this goal. To expect a higher level seems unrealistic given the need to attain Advanced-Low oral proficiency as well.

The project component of courses supports the portfolio requirement for pre-service teachers. Requiring such products for all students assures that those students eventually choosing to become language teachers have the requisite work samples archived for presentation at the time of application for licensure. In addition, faculty are becoming much more intentional in sequencing assignments and in continually reinforcing appropriate usage of structures needed for communication. This choice to allow function to dictate selection of form provides a model of appropriate methodology for pre-service teachers.

Again, although it is too early to know definitively whether the students completing the redesigned curriculum perform better on the *TFI* or more importantly (for some) on the state licensure examinations, it is already evident that students like working toward measurable “real world” goals much more than simply studying grammar or even writing literary essays.

Yet several challenges remain. It is undeniably important to assure that students acquire a level of accuracy acceptable to the tasks they should know and be able to do. How to reasonably archive student work products and assure that each student will have access to the accumulated “portfolio” of materials for whenever it is needed to demonstrate language competency is currently unresolved. For the moment students are expected to maintain their own archived materials. With a new structure for the major and minor in place, it is also incumbent upon the faculty to assure that courses are offered frequently enough to assure that

most students have access to the courses they need. Having a less traditional, less “lock step” progression from course to course has facilitated student matriculation and progress toward a degree. However, having students at significantly different levels in the same advanced course poses instructional challenges for the teacher.

### **Observations and Concerns for the Future**

Using the 5 C’s as the organizing principle for the revised major provides both cohesiveness and flexibility for the student. A student is required to take a strong core under the communicative heading and at least one course in each of the other categories. Study abroad is highly encouraged. One significant advantage of the decision to challenge all students to meet the performance threshold required for the teacher standards is that it offers an “excuse” to help all students understand the process of language learning. For example, by sharing the sample progress indicators provided in the learner standards with students in the Interpretive Skills course, students have access to information regarding what professionals outside their class think is reasonable for them to know and be able to do at their level. The more transparent the learning process becomes to the learners, the more power they assume over their own language acquisition. Instead of being reminded continuously via testing of what particular forms they cannot use with consistent accuracy, the students are empowered to demonstrate to what extent they can, in fact, use the language they are learning. The *TFI* is utilized for the program assessment although no minimum score is required at the present time in order to receive a degree. However, when a substantial number of students have graduated under the new structure, it is likely that faculty will move to require a minimum score on the *TFI* exam (or a similar one) for graduation as a further step to encourage student preparation. How to enforce even a minimum level of competency when students have already satisfactorily completed all of the required course work poses important questions that do not seem to have easy answers. Such issues as how to prescribe remediation, how to relate achievement on a standardized exam with course evaluation and grading, and how to notify students in a timely enough manner to provide an opportunity to remediate the test deficiency prior to intended graduation date are only some of the challenges to be resolved. Of these the most significant is how to reasonably guarantee success once a remediation plan is followed and/or how to deny a degree to someone who has passed all of the course work.

### **Conclusion**

A new question must now be raised. How do these modifications stand the test of time? The more traditional sequence and curriculum have outlasted generations of college faculty. Will the same durability be true of the standards-based sequence and curriculum? There can be no assurances. However, given that it is unlikely that the notion of the student-as-customer who needs to acquire a marketable skill in the process of obtaining a college education is unlikely to

disappear from the public conversation within the next few decades, it is reasonable to assume that a curriculum that focuses more directly on what the student is able to do (outcomes) rather than on what knowledge one has been exposed to (input) will withstand the test of time.

Speaking of the imperative for changes in higher education language programs, Kadish (2000) states:

Students have changed, the importance of literature to most students has diminished, the need for persons possessing high levels of linguistic and cultural competence has increased, enrollments have changed and shifted, and many other societal and academic changes have occurred. Meanwhile many professors simply continue to teach their area of specialization and pursue narrow research and career goals (p. 50).

One university French curriculum is now evidence that not all faculty are so reactionary in their approach to college level French instruction. Hopefully, as this model is refined, other colleges and universities will choose to follow the example.

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# 7

## Service Learning and the Integration of the Five Cs into College Instruction

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Hispanic Resources of Cleveland was taught at Cleveland State University in Spring 2005 as a service learning course to serve two main purposes: (1) to engage CSU students in learning about the language and culture of one of the largest ethnic minorities in the city in an interactive and authentic context outside the classroom and (2) to provide human power to a social service organization in Cleveland's near west side that services Hispanics. It was taught as a service learning course where academic learning and reflection about the community and its needs were combined with community action. The course was inspired by the philosophy of the *Teacher's Handbook* (Shrum & Glisan, 2005), and thus it aimed to address the five standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for foreign-language learning at the post-secondary level. These standards are Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, also known as the 5 Cs. The course also sought to teach culture by distancing itself from the Frankenstein Approach, the 4-F Approach, the Tour Guide Approach, and the By-the-Way Approach as mentioned in the *Teacher's Handbook* (p. 141). These approaches to teaching culture ultimately simplify the topic by highlighting bits of information and by stereotyping groups without integrating culture into the linguistic aspect of the language program. As Shrum and Glisan (2005) point out, the Frankenstein Approach presents "a taco from here, a flamenco dancer from there, a gaucho from here, a bullfight from there" while the 4-F approach highlights folk dances, festivals, and food. The Tour Guide Approach identifies monuments, rivers, and cities while the By-the-Way approach emphasizes disjointed bits of behavior (p. 141). By adopting the *Handbook's* philosophy, the instructor also sought

to motivate others in the profession to think outside the box of the “cover the textbook” approach mentioned by James (1998) and to convert Spanish culture and language acquisition into a truly attainable and dynamic process (p. 13). It was also the goal to show to university students a non-traditional approach to learning to communicate in a second language, one that did not emphasize memorization of vocabulary or grammar rules but, rather, the development and acquisition of communicative strategies. This essay will show how the course, designed with a service learning philosophy in mind and the *Teacher’s Handbook* as its bible, succeeded in addressing the standards in the most authentic context possible under the given circumstances. It is hoped that this essay will encourage other post-secondary institutions, especially in the Cleveland area where the educational needs of the Hispanic community are so great, to incorporate this model in their foreign language curriculum.

According to the 2002 census, Cleveland’s Hispanic population grew by 54%. In addition, according to Esperanza, Inc.’s *15<sup>th</sup> Fiesta of Hope*, due to language, culture, poverty, and isolation barriers, Cleveland Municipal School District Hispanic students get so discouraged that they eventually drop out at a rate of just under 50%, (2003-04 academic year), higher than that of any other ethnic or racial group (p. 8). Esperanza, Inc., as the city’s leading organization in promoting educational opportunities for Hispanic students, urgently needed volunteers to promote its mission. Esperanza, Inc. offers enriched educational services and opportunities, provides scholarship assistance, encourages high school graduation and post-secondary education, and provides literacy training, mentoring, and tutoring. (More information may be found at [www.esperanzainc.com](http://www.esperanzainc.com).) Esperanza, Inc.’s need, combined with CSU’s strategic location near the west side, seemed reason enough to create this course. There was, moreover, a request by CSU students who did not want to major or minor in Spanish, to take a course that allowed them to interact with the Hispanic community. Some of these students did not want to enroll in a traditional language class but wanted, instead, to pursue the use of the language. Unlike the traditional service learning course where the needs in the community usually generate a need for a course (Tilley-Lubbs, 2004), Spanish 245 was created to satisfy a mutual need of both the community and the service learners, and thus the students’ ownership of the course was more pertinent to their goals. The course, therefore, was offered as a general education class and included Spanish majors and minors and others who would serve the community while also learning about cultural issues and gaining valuable job and social skills. It was hoped that the students’ language skills would also improve as a result.

During the first five weeks of the course, the students learned about Esperanza, Inc.’s mission, programs, and need for volunteers; read assigned sections of Noble and LaCasa (1992) *The Hispanic Way*; attended lectures by Hispanic guest speakers about their own experiences of being Hispanic; and wrote reflective weekly journals on the readings. In addition, the students also followed a weekly chapter in *Building Bridges* (Hamner, 2005) about what service learning entails. In the sixth week of the semester, the students started volunteering for

two hours a week at the site tutoring, mentoring, training, and sometimes even relieving overworked staff from clerical duties. The students subsequently reflected on their semester-long experience through a final analysis essay and through a roundtable with Esperanza, Inc.'s staff during final exams week.

### **The Standards**

ACTFL's five standards, or the 5 Cs, highlight what students should know and be able to do in the target language in order to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways: the "how, when, and why to say what to whom" ([www.actfl.org](http://www.actfl.org)). According to Shrum and Glisan (2005), these standards are considered a reliable gauge to determine whether the students will be able to effectively "participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world in a variety of contexts and in culturally appropriate ways" (p. 190). Due to the course's designation as a general education class, and not as a Spanish course, the 5 Cs were seen as applicable mainly to the majors and minors in Spanish since these students would be the only ones sufficiently equipped to communicate in the target language. It was thus hoped that the rest of the students would be *collateral beneficiaries* from the exposure to the language and culture, and that, perhaps, some might even switch majors. The *collateral beneficiaries* would thus meet the ACTFL's Cultures, Connections, and Comparisons standards in a significantly modified way, that is, not through language but through cultural exposure. The course would ultimately benefit all students in their interpersonal interactions and increased cultural sensitivity and empathy, while servicing the organization and the community at large.

### **Communities and Communication Standards**

The Communication standard refers, among other things, to the ability of students to engage in conversations, and understand and interpret written and spoken target language. The Communities standard, on the other hand, refers to the students' use of language both within and beyond the school setting. Because the context in which the students predominantly listened to and spoke in Spanish was at Esperanza, Inc., both of these standards are seen here as intertwined and inseparable. Because the students expressed themselves, they exercised both their communicative and interactive competence by internalizing grammatical structures when communicating with a purpose.

The standards further divide the communication standard into three communicative modes that emphasize the context and purpose of the communication: the interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes. The course offered a unique opportunity for the students with interest in the language either to develop or increase their competence in conversational Spanish for authentic communicative purposes using the interpersonal mode of communication. This mode denotes active negotiation of meaning among individuals, mutual observation and monitoring among the participants, and

## 92 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

clarification and adjustment in their communication (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). Students thus applied their grammatical knowledge to communicate and learned to add to it appropriate conversational gestures and more natural intonation. Because they worked without the presence of the instructor, they also took risks and relied on various strategies for making themselves understood, as evidenced by the following student anecdote:

I was also able to practice my Spanish again with the older gentlemen. At first I was nervous to speak to them but now I try to just go with the flow and say as much as I know. For the most part I understand everything I hear and I think they understand everything I say. However I need to work on using the right tense with them. I have been using the *tú* forms but I need to be using *Ud.* I kind of feel as if I am disrespecting them, but I think they understand.

Although it is not possible to measure the actual extent to which these students picked up rules during their communicative exchanges, the mere exposure to the natural use of the language at the site led to some degree of unrehearsed exchanges and spontaneous understanding:

Because everybody spoke Spanish...this helped my listening skills. Although I do not know everything they talk about, it helps me to listen to the language. (Translated)

Moreover, by having the opportunity to negotiate meaning with native speakers other than the instructor, the students also discovered the existence of gaps between what they wanted to say and what they were able to say and reflected on what they knew about Spanish. As one major reflected in the final analysis assignment:

For me, another very restricting and discouraging limitation was the language barrier. I have practiced Spanish in college for the past two years, but it has not prepared me for everyday conversational use; especially listening comprehension...However, I would not consider the language barrier a complete limitation, because being exposed to it in the organization has allowed me to develop better listening and comprehension skills, as well as better verbal usage...this enabled me to become noticeably more productive in other classes, specifically my Spanish courses.

Moreover, the students' exposure to the use of the language with native speakers tested not only what the students could do on their own in the foreign language but also what they could do with the assistance from native speakers. In this "Zone of Proximal Development" (Shrum & Glisan, 2005), the students also enhanced their discourse competence and pragmatic and cultural appropriateness, provided assistance, and co-constructed cultural knowledge (p. 21).

I had a sense of feeling sorry because I could not communicate with him at a normal extent and I did not understand everything that he said. Oddly enough though I did start to remember some words and he did help me fix some of my pronunciation and I had a little bit of trouble conjugating the verbs. I just felt that I could not say everything that I wanted to say to him or ask everything I wanted to ask him because of the language barrier.

Naturally, throughout their on-site visits the students experienced numerous opportunities to hear Spanish at a level beyond their current range of competence, thanks to its contextualization within the Hispanic organization's setting. For the majors, minors, or heritage speakers, exposure to the target language brought up an interplay of vocabulary, background knowledge, and use of several strategies (such as identifying key ideas, guessing meaning) to process in a top-down fashion when there was no option to ask for clarification (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). For other students, this immersion exposed them to the sounds and context of language use and also awoke in them the thirst to learn more about it. As one student reported in the final analysis assignment:

By learning more I got a better understanding and by doing so it helped me become more comfortable around people who speak another language... this was [a] wonderful experience [that] made me want to refresh my memory with the Spanish language, learn more and study more of it to become more knowledgeable so that I can hold conversations and understand what people are saying.

The second mode of the Communications standard, the interpretive mode, refers to the perception of meaning in target language oral and printed texts when there is no possibility of negotiation of meaning with the writer or speaker (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). Because the course was open to both majors and non-majors in Spanish, the printed texts and oral presentations were given strictly in English, something that therefore excluded this mode of communication from being practiced in the classroom. The nature of the assigned cultural readings or the theme of the presentations, however, required deeper background knowledge of the Hispanic culture for an accurate interpretation. This knowledge was facilitated for the students by the instructor and other presenters in the classroom, and through the interactions that the students had at the sites with Hispanics coworkers and clients. This exposure was the best formula to get the students to merge the cultural concepts and information they had read about in *The Hispanic Way* with what the presenters introduced, confirmed or expanded further on.

Due to the experimental nature of this course and the limited amount of time and other resources to set it up, the third mode of the Communications standard, the presentational mode, was not addressed. This mode, as its name implies, refers to one-way communication to an audience of listeners or readers where there is no direct opportunity to actively negotiate meaning such as in

an oral presentation (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). It is the instructor's intention to incorporate this mode in future course offerings.

In summary, the course met the Communities and Communication standards by integrating meaningful language use into the students' on-site visits by letting them apply the knowledge from the class lectures and readings about cultural practices and perspectives and by offering them multiple opportunities to make connections between what they knew, should have known, and learned about the language and culture. They got a unique chance to put to the test and apply that which they had been exposed to in the classroom.

### **Cultures and Comparison Standards**

Just as the Communication and Communities standards share so much in common and are thus presented here as inseparable, so do the Cultures and Comparisons standards. The Cultures standard, on one hand, refers to the students' gain of knowledge and understanding of other cultures, including their practices, products, and perspectives. The Comparisons standard, on the other hand, defines the students' understanding of the nature of language and culture through comparing the foreign language and culture to their own. Both the assigned readings as well as their interactions at the site increased what Shrum and Glisan (2005) refer to the students' sociocultural competence, or their "knowledge about context, stylistic appropriateness, nonverbal meaning," as well as "actional competence... [or] the ability to match linguistic form with the speaker's intent" (p.14). The students therefore analyzed cultural practices and perspectives between the Hispanic culture and their own, as evidenced by the following example from a Spanish major:

During all my visits I have noticed many small cultural differences in interaction both in the office and the school, that have reinforced the materials that I have been studying at school. For example the very formal manner in which Hispanic people address each other and the more informal conversational exchange between business associates.

Besides learning about aspects of the Hispanic culture, reacting to them, and learning to respect differences, the students also showed willingness to revise their own attitudes or preconceptions:

The biggest metamorphosis that I went through as a person...was how I view the Hispanic community and community in general... the clients and volunteers at [the organization]...were not living in an area where everything was well kept, pretty or where anything a person may need is readily available...Somehow they seemed happier than the people from my area...I believe it is possible that due to lack of money in the area, people are more interdependent. They have to depend and interact with each other because that is the easiest or most efficient way to survive.

The students' direct involvement with the organizations' managers, coworkers, and clients, moreover, presented to them a wealth of experience associated not only with the workplace but, especially, with a multicultural environment. The students therefore encountered some issues or difficulties that they ultimately learned to navigate on their own based on the assigned readings:

It was not easy to connect to the students in the beginning...I decided not to focus on the difference in culture too much. After having this attitude, it was only a matter of time that I did not feel awkward any more...I did not make the cultural difference the issue. I focused on the duties I had as a service-learner.

I now realize the scope of my project but have also learned that what the book states is a valuable tool in dealing with a different culture. I must exercise flexibility, give the benefit of the doubt, develop empathy and remain flexible.

For most of the students in the course, doing their service learning in the near west side of Cleveland represented a bigger challenge than just gaining knowledge and understanding of the Hispanic culture in terms of practices, products, and perspectives. Navigating the west side of Cleveland meant, to some, exploring new territory and confronting their preconceived fears about the *barrio*:

I understand that the organizations are located in the area where they are most needed; however, I worry because it is not a safe neighborhood... not because of the higher population of African Americans or Hispanics in that area [but] because of the higher crime rate...I know that leaving at 5 p.m.—at the latest—is *best* because at least it is still light outside when I walk to my car.

I did have a stereotype of how people would be acting... because [Esperanza, Inc.] was in an area without a whole lot of money [I thought] that people would not be as open, happy and close. That was very wrong. In fact I found the exact opposite to be true. They were open, jubilant (sic) and very close.

## Connections

The Connections standard refers to how students connect their knowledge of the target language to other disciplines. Even for non-majors, the service learning experience lent them the opportunity to experiment with their professional interests and either confirm their choice of a career or consider a new one. For a student considering the teaching profession, the course allowed one to gain and develop strategies on how to teach and interact with students, how to be

patient, and how to appreciate teaching as being “more challenging than it looks, especially when teaching students from another cultural background.” Another student discovered a latent skill:

I had previously tutored adults in English as a Second Language elsewhere, however, I had never dreamed that I would be interested in tutoring ten to fifteen year olds...I had to recall English grammar in correlation with Spanish grammar, and basic Mathematics that I have not had since the sixth grade.

Yet for another student, the experience helped her choose another career:

One thing I was considering doing was working with a nonprofit organization in the future. I think that this experience has changed that and now I want to be a professor of Catholicism/Theology. I still enjoy working with the youth and volunteering so I will keep on doing that through organizations that I am associated with.

## **Conclusion**

The students in this course participated in a non-traditional course based on the service learning philosophy. They left the comfort of their economic, social, and ethnic Anglo- and African-American homes to travel into the Hispanic near west side of Cleveland and interacted with a segment of the population unknown to many of them until then. Their service at Esperanza, Inc., also took the students out of their academic milieu and brought them face-to-face with the educational crises experienced by many students of the near west side. The results include deeper awareness about the socioeconomic reality of Hispanics in Cleveland, greater empathy for those affected by the educational crisis in the city, and stronger commitment to get involved. As evidenced by their journals, majors, minors, and heritage speakers also gained confidence in their language skills and attained new communication levels previously limited by the traditional classroom experience. Finally, even the students taking the course exclusively to fulfill the general education requirement gained valuable cultural experience and had the opportunity to interact with a group otherwise foreign to them. Students unknowingly met the ACTFL standards while increasing their understanding of their own culture and of the Hispanic community while improving on their language skills by interpreting written and spoken Spanish in an authentic context. Thanks to their service at Esperanza, Inc., the CSU students created and left in place a new legacy of cooperation between the agency and the university that will continue to solidify as future students join the ranks. For Esperanza, Inc., the service learning project provided much needed human power for Cleveland’s Hispanic community, a proof of the commitment by CSU to help them reach their academic goals.

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# 8

## **Professional Development for Foreign Language Educators: Characteristics and Models for Success**

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**W**hat is professional development? What are the characteristics of successful professional development? The U.S. Department of Education (1996) defined professional development as the “rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and others whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment.” Certainly, there are many successful professional development models in the educational community both inside and outside the foreign language profession. By analyzing the varied professional development models available, several characteristics emerge that define successful experiences.

### **Professional development models**

Professional development models fall into both formal and informal (Bransford, Brown, Cocking, 2001) categories. Informally, teachers learn from their own experiences by living, analyzing the outcomes, and adjusting. Teachers also learn by interacting with other teachers in daily conversations, sharing experiences, and asking advice. On a more formal level, teachers are teaching other teachers during inservice sessions at the school district level. Outside the school, educators attend workshops, presentations, and conferences. Teachers may study in advanced degree programs or be part of special projects learning specific skills.

**Action research**

To formalize the process of learning by educators' own experiences, action research can be a powerful model to implement. Action research enhances teachers' learning by proposing ideas to a community of learners. Typically, teachers spend an extended period of time working on classroom-based research projects.

With advantages of action research also come caveats. Advantages include gaining new knowledge by going through the process itself, sustaining teacher learning, supporting intellectual and pedagogical growth, and increasing the professional understanding of teachers by recognizing their ability to add to knowledge about teaching. Unfortunately, the use of action research is often hampered by time constraints and lack of other resources. Often, teachers have to incorporate action research based on course work during their own time and need the support and guidance of university personnel for successful implementation.

**Learning community**

Slick (2002) describes a professional development model called a learning community. The learning community is defined as a group of individuals who create group goals and values while working and learning collaboratively. Fifty-two (52) K-12 teachers entered a pilot graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The program was holistic in its design, with teachers completing a growth improvement plan, a capstone project, and a teaching portfolio. Student-centered, learning communities develop meaningful learning and individual support.

Comments at the end of the experience illustrated the power of the learning community as a successful professional development model. Participants noted that when given a voice and opportunity to engage in meaningful collaboration and dialogue, teachers gained a new energy and had a greater sense of self-efficacy. Participants of this learning community offered four suggestions to those considering this model: 1) seek out positive people, use mentors, develop new relationships, avoid negative energy; 2) develop understanding and tolerance; 3) be courageous; 4) work to build community and to live by community values.

Le Page, Boudreau, Maier, Robinson, Cox (2001) also incorporated the learning community model with the focus on the collaborative partnership between K-12 teachers and college faculty. Teachers entered the masters program in teams and continued together for the entire two-year experience.

LePage, et.al. (2001) reported that faculty from the Institute for Educational Transformation (IET) at George Mason University in Virginia facilitated the program. The IET faculty reported that issues of role inconsistencies need to be understood and articulated as part of the learning community process. Responsibilities between faculty and participants need to be discussed openly and honestly. The results of these discussions provided the faculty with information necessary to strike the right balance in structuring the experience and offering

shared leadership without control as well as mutual respect for each others' abilities.

### **Technology-enhanced models**

The use of technology provides efficiency and cost-effectiveness for professional development models. Joia (2001) developed a graduate course using both the summer workshop and an online course identified as Stages 1 and 2. He states that digital media increased the interactive processes among the teachers, students, experts, and community. After the 5-day summer workshop, participants entered into Stage 2, the online course, using interactive resources, collaborative projects, and individual portfolios that encompass participant home pages and diaries. The online course also included the Cyber Cafe, a meeting point to encourage informal exchanges, such as jokes and invitations. Students uploaded their reflections, reports, experiences, critiques, and data to be used in group projects.

Merry Merryfield (2001) transformed a conventional, campus-based graduate course on multi-cultural education to an online venue. Merryfield reported that the teachers were more willing and frank about cultural issues during the online experience. The interaction patterns were more equitable and cross-cultural than those in the campus version. However, the participants perceived that they had to interact with people face to face to develop relationships across cultures. Teachers felt that relationships were a prerequisite to rethinking how their own teaching could better support diversity.

### **Instructional Environments for Quality Professional Development**

Bransford, et.al. (2001) state that the quality of professional development experiences depends on the type of instructional environment implemented. The learner-centered environment attempts to build on the strengths, interests, and needs of the learners. Many of the experiences provided for teachers fall short in this regard as teachers attend workshops that do not focus on their needs.

The second environment is knowledge-centered. All teachers need pedagogical content of professional development specific to their subject area. When teachers are allowed to use their subject matter as the primary vehicle for learning, they are able to focus on their own experiences as learners.

A third environment for successful professional development is assessment-centered. In this environment, participants have opportunities to test their understanding by trying out strategies and receiving feedback. In this way, teachers see if the new strategies work with their students or not.

The final environment is community-centered, involving norms that encourage collaboration and learning. Important to this model is the enhancement of learning by developing collaborative peer relationships and practice. The most valuable components of this environment include collaborative discussions where teachers are involved in sense-making and understanding the phenomena

of learning. Team teaching falls into this category as the teachers make joint decisions and analyze their own specific problems. As can be seen by the above discussion, shared experiences and discourse around texts and data on student learning are key factors to successful professional development.

### **Examples of Professional Development in the Foreign Language Community**

In the foreign language educational community, workshops and conferences are the most common types of professional development. Fourteen national foreign language resource centers formed in 1989 by federal grant funds provide many summer workshops for foreign language teachers. One example of a workshop, Teacher Partnerships, was organized by the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center Institute in 2005 at Ames, IA (<http://nflrc.iastate.edu/inst/homepage.html>). Educators learned about innovative technology, performance assessment, action research, foreign language standards, and collaboration. The National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center in 2002-2003 offered an institute using action research where participants designed projects based on critical issues.

The Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) (<http://clear.msu.edu/>) at Michigan State University hosted the May 2005 CALICO Conference that focused on technology in foreign language instruction. During the summer of 2005, CLEAR offered workshops titled “Creating Communicative Speaking Activities,” “Digital Video Projects,” “Vocabulary—The Key to Language Fluency,” and “Teaching Writing in the Language Classroom.” (<http://clear.msu.edu/training/05workshops/index.html>) (As of the writing of this article, the 2006 summer institute schedule had not been posted.)

A third resource center, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota also provides many professional development opportunities for foreign language educators. Some of the 2005 workshops were the following: “Meeting the Challenges of Immersion Education: Focus on Writing;” “Culture as the Core in the Second Language Classroom;” “Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction.”

The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the national leader in foreign language education, organizes a yearly conference. Examples of ACTFL workshops during the conference are the Oral Proficiency Interview Training, Technology Training, and Assistance in Implementing the Standards into Teacher Preparation Programs (<http://www.actfl.org>). Hundreds of concurrent sessions provide educators with ideas for instruction as well as information on research in the FL field, technology, and the up-to-date national foreign language issues.

Regional foreign language conferences such as Central States Conference (CSC), the Southern Council on Language Teaching (SCOLT), and the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) provide numerous sessions and workshops on the teaching of languages, the most recent trends and

research in education, as well as advocacy and moving the profession forward. Although these conferences are “one-shot” experiences, the networking and new ideas for instruction gained by participants is often invaluable.

The state foreign language associations have meetings with concurrent sessions that emphasize useful classroom techniques. Networking and collaboration are very important at this level, with many opportunities for professional involvement.

Besides workshops and conferences, many universities offer courses toward advanced degrees in the foreign language, education, second language acquisition, or cultural studies. When the course content follows the criteria described above, participants are engaged, confident, and more likely to apply the information in their classrooms. According to Bruning, Flowerday, Trayer (1999), the graduate courses offered by the Nebraska Foreign Language Standards/ Frameworks Project produced the highest percentage for teacher efficacy and advocacy in implementing the state standards compared to the less time-intensive activities like the five-day summer institute and the one-day workshops.

Throughout the country, various grant projects also provide professional development experiences. There is a wide range of content offered as well as expectations. Goals for these projects may focus on improving proficiency via immersion, culture goals, strategies for effective FL instruction, technology, or other specific topics. Each state’s foreign language supervisor or state foreign language association should have a list of opportunities of this kind.

Immersion experiences, such as the one provided by IN-VISION, a technology challenge grant project from Nebraska, asked participants to interact with native speakers in Spanish in small conversation groups about important cultural issues and customs for five days. After the week, the participants continued their conversations with a native speaker found where they live or work for 15 hours during the fall semester. IN-VISION staff monitored the conversations via weekly e-mail communications written in Spanish summarizing the content of the conversation. Participants reported that not only did their proficiency improve, but gains in cultural understanding as well as new relationships were made.

There are several conclusions the reader can note from the above discussion of professional development. Participants’ involvement throughout the process of the professional development experience is a key characteristic of success. Partnerships, collaboration, teamwork, student-centered environment, defining roles, respect, interaction among participants and instructors, are all identified as important for success. Teachers focus on their particular content at times and places convenient for their busy schedules during the summer or using distance education via the Internet to support professional development efficiently and effectively. In particular, foreign language professional development has several venues using many models that are effective. If the professional development experience incorporates the elements described above, participants should respond positively by growing both professionally and intellectually.

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## 9

# Advocating for a Mutual Understanding of Beliefs between Students and Instructors

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Students' success in learning a Foreign Language (FL) can be impacted positively or negatively by various factors, including their belief systems about how FLs should be taught, what should be given priority in FL study, and their belief systems regarding characteristics of the ideal language teacher. Beliefs systems are important to investigate because they direct the attitudes that develop, which then influence motivation. Furthermore, teachers bring their own set of beliefs or assumptions about how FLs should be taught and what areas should be included in FL study. These beliefs then guide their teaching, including their teaching style and classroom activities. In any given class, if the beliefs of the students differ from those of their instructor, misunderstandings can occur, because students will not understand or agree with the priorities being established. The students may have negative emotions such as frustration and confusion and in turn be less motivated to learn the target language. It is paramount to attempt to prevent this from occurring because motivation is shown to have a profound impact on language learning; thus if a student's motivation is depleted, the end result will be less successful second language acquisition (SLA).

As previously stated, students have beliefs about how a FL should be learned (Ellis, 1994) and possess distinct beliefs about specific aspects of language study such as the importance of studying grammar and pronunciation. Student beliefs have been investigated to a lesser degree than have student attitudes or motivation. However, there are various studies showing the influence of student beliefs on language learning (Wenden, 1986, 1987; Abraham & Vann,

1987; Horwitz, 1987). There has been little research conducted on teacher beliefs and the influence of these beliefs on their teaching (Clark & Yinger, 1979; Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

### **Beliefs**

Beliefs are a set of assumptions that an individual possesses, which are ingrained, personal, and constructed over time and through different experiences (Woods, 1996). Woods asserts that “People unconsciously internalize beliefs about language throughout their lives, and so the beliefs about what language is, what ‘proper’ language is, and so on, vary from individual to individual and are often deeply held” (p. 186). Belief systems lead to attitudes, which involve an evaluative response. What will determine if the attitude that emerges is positive or negative and to what degree it is positive or negative is the closely related belief system. Student motivation is determined by a multitude of factors including attitudes and belief systems. Thus, belief systems and attitudes, such as a learner’s belief about whether culture is important to study in the FL classroom, can affect motivation, but it will be just one of many variables determining motivation.

### **Attitudes and Motivation**

A discussion of attitudes is necessary due to the strong, undeniable interrelationship between attitudes and belief systems. The attitudes possessed by students and teachers are diverse and fall on a continuum. Attitudes stem from personal characteristics, are intricately related to motivation, and are linked to beliefs. Likewise, it is possible to hypothesize that belief systems influence motivation along with attitudes due to the intimate relationship among all three.

Motivation includes sociopsychological, affective, cognitive, and situational aspects (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991) and can be influenced by instructor variables such as gender, age, teaching style, native language (L1), and native culture. Instructor variables, such as those listed above, as well as the instructor’s methodology are categorized as part of the classroom level in Crookes and Schmidt’s construct of motivation (1991).

Ellis (1994) stated that there is a reciprocal relationship between SLA success and student language attitudes. Due to this juxtaposition between attitudes and achievement, students who begin with positive attitudes and also experience success in learning the L2 will have these positive attitudes strengthened and thus want to learn more. On the other hand, negative attitudes will also be reinforced by limited success learning the L2. The belief systems of students could also influence their SLA success.

### Significance of Study

The data gathered through questionnaires in this study show the need to understand student beliefs because of potential disaccord with the instructor's beliefs. Instructors are not able to assume what the students view as necessary for FL study. Thus, it may prove worthwhile for the instructor to take an inventory of the students' current beliefs through the completion of an anonymous questionnaire at the beginning of the semester. This will inform the instructor of the students' beliefs and highlight areas of differences of beliefs either among students in the classroom or between the instructor's beliefs and those of the students. Discussion can then ensue to help ward off any potential negative consequences of these differences. If these differences between instructor and student beliefs are not addressed or discussed in the classroom, the students' learning may be impeded. These data promote a better understanding of issues concerning student and instructor beliefs and possible modification with the goal of more effective FL teaching and more successful SLA.

### Participants

Eight undergraduate Spanish classes at a large, research university in the Southwest completed an anonymous questionnaire about their beliefs. Five of those beliefs will be the focus of this paper. All of the 154 students were native speakers (NS) of English and second language learners of Spanish. The five-point Likert scale used to assess participants' beliefs was collapsed to form three categories on the questionnaire. *Agree* was combined with *strongly agree* and *disagree* with *strongly disagree*. Thus, three final categories were designated: *agree*, *disagree*, and *neutral*.

### Findings and Discussion of the Questionnaire

Table 1

*It is important for me to study grammar.*

<i>Agree</i>	90%	<i>Neutral</i>	6%	<i>Disagree</i>	4%
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It is important for teachers to know that the vast majority of students (90%) expect grammar in the classroom and believe it necessary to master the FL. This supports Schulz (2001), who also provides evidence that students believe it is important to study grammar. This author asserts that understanding the students' beliefs is significant pedagogically because, as Schulz states (p. 245), "FL educators need to keep these beliefs or perceptions in mind when planning classroom activities, given that teaching activities need to be perceived in the learners' minds as conducive to learning."

If instructors are not including grammar instruction and grammar practice in the students' language study, student beliefs and expectations are not being met. Thus, if the instructor has a teaching philosophy that does not support grammar study, this should be discussed in the classroom. An open dialogue will inform the students of the instructor's reasons for not including grammar (e.g., to make communication the priority as opposed to grammatical correctness). The goal should not be to change the students' beliefs but rather to inform the students of the teacher's reasons for the priorities being established to promote SLA. Although beliefs cannot be taught, information about opposing beliefs can be provided to the students, and a classroom environment can be created in which the students feel comfortable to try something new or believe what they did not previously believe.

*Table 2*

*It is important for me to learn informal, colloquial expressions.*

<i>Agree</i>	82%	<i>Neutral</i>	17%	<i>Disagree</i>	1%
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A strong majority of the students (82%) believe that colloquial language study should be included in FL study. Students appear to believe that they need to learn more than grammar and need to know common, colloquial expressions also. This is a beneficial belief for instructors to know about, because if everyday language including idiomatic expressions is not being included in the students' language study, one of the students' beliefs is not being met.

*Table 3*

*It is important for me to learn about the culture of the FL.*

<i>Agree</i>	73%	<i>Neutral</i>	20%	<i>Disagree</i>	7%
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Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the student participants believe it is necessary to study the culture of the language being studied. Culture and language are closely tied (Cummins, 1991), and many students echo Cummins's sentiment that language cannot be studied without also studying the culture of the target language. However, although a significant majority of the students agree that culture is important to study, there are still over a quarter (27%) of the students who are either neutral or disagree with this statement. Thus, the teacher will want to take the time to promote the need for knowledge of culture in class with the ultimate goal of convincing the students that language and culture are related. The teacher cannot assume that all students

see the value in learning about the target culture as related to their language study.

Table 4

*The Spanish class should be conducted all in Spanish*

<i>Agree</i>	41%	<i>Neutral</i>	21%	<i>Disagree</i>	38%
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Students have differing beliefs about the role of the L1 (in this context English), in the classroom. Nearly half (41%) of the students do not believe any English should be used in the Spanish FL classroom. However, over a third (38%) of the students disagree with this statement. This is a point of disagreement that the instructor would want to discuss in the classroom. If this discussion does not occur, students may be confused as to why their instructor, who is supposed to be facilitating their SLA, is incorporating techniques or strategies that, in the students' opinions, hinder SLA. The instructor will want to discuss his or her own philosophy, for instance, advocating for effective uses of the L1 in the classroom and how the L1 can encourage SLA or, on the other hand, discussing advantages of conducting the entire class in the FL.

Table 5

*I prefer my instructor to give grammatical explanations and directions in English.*

<i>Agree</i>	64%	<i>Neutral</i>	22%	<i>Disagree</i>	14%
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An even larger number (64%) of students, however, want English to be used in the classroom restrictively. It is apparent that there are students who believe that English is advantageous for specific functions such as homework explanations. These findings provide implications for instructors and students because if a student views L1 use as hindering SLA, and the instructor views the L1 as a productive teaching tool in certain situations, such as in difficult grammatical explanations, the teacher must explain a rationale to the student for using or allowing English in the classroom, or the student will perceive this action as detrimental to SLA success.

## Conclusion

Student and teacher beliefs need to be made transparent in the FL classroom so that both students and teachers understand where, respectively,

they are coming from and so that teacher behavior and teacher expectations gain in credibility for those students who do not share a teacher's beliefs. Instructors should assess students' beliefs to check for disaccord between their pedagogical practices and their students' beliefs. Then, if necessary, action can be taken to help bring the students to the point of understanding the instructor, even if the beliefs of the students are not permanently changed. This action involves the instructor's openly discussing and supporting the choices made regarding the structure of the classroom.

Teachers are responsible for providing opportunities to the students to understand their own belief systems as well as that of their teacher. Teachers must explain why they use certain pedagogical approaches in the classroom, especially when they deviate from the students' beliefs. Teachers must create a classroom atmosphere in which students feel comfortable to take risks because modification of belief systems can potentially cause anxiety. Students' also have responsibilities – they should critically examine their own belief systems, having a disposition that is open to learning about why the teacher makes certain decisions, thinking about these reasons, and finally changing their belief systems if they feel the new belief systems are more productive or desirable.

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# 10

## **Reciprocal Teaching as a Platform for Communicative Activities in the Secondary Foreign Language Classroom**

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When asked, *Why study a foreign language?*, most people reply that the goal is to be able to speak that language. Even students who take a foreign language only to fulfill a graduation requirement have an expectation of learning at least a modicum of communicative skills. According to Savignon (1983), communication is one of the major concerns in our daily lives, yet the desire to learn a new language in order to converse with others has been frustrated by traditional teacher-centered foreign language instructional methods that stress grammar and word substitution drills rather than true communication. As a foreign language teacher and teacher educator, this researcher has long been concerned with improving students' ability to speak and to engage in authentic conversation in the target language. This study grows out of that concern to enhance foreign language communication skills. Because Palincsar and Brown's (1986) Reciprocal Reading procedures incorporate important elements of cooperative learning (Salvin, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1994), Reciprocal Reading offers a promising alternative to traditional oral/aural methodologies of teaching by providing a learner-centered setting for development of communicative skills.

This study examined the suitability of adapting and implementing Palincsar and Brown's (1986) classic Reciprocal Reading strategies in the secondary foreign language classroom as a platform for communicative activities. This researcher was particularly interested in strategies that might improve students' fluency, vocabulary, and communicative self-efficacy by providing them with opportunities to increase their confidence by speaking at some length in the target language. Therefore this study was guided by the following questions:

- Can secondary foreign language students improve their speaking fluency and enhance their vocabularies by using Reciprocal Reading procedures?
- Can secondary foreign language students build communicative efficacy by using the opportunity to speak at length that Reciprocal Reading provides?
- What adaptations could increase the efficacy of Reciprocal Reading techniques for use in the foreign language class?

### **Literature Review**

The conceptual framework of this study is supported by research in the social context of learning (Krashen, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978), cooperative learning, (Slavin, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 1995) reciprocal teaching, (Hosenfeld, Cavour & Bonk, 1996; Lijerón, 1992; Palincsar and Brown, 1986), and communicative strategies and activities (Donato 2000; Oxford, 1997; Dörnyei, 1997). Specifically, Vygotsky (1978) maintained that socially interactive learning is critical to cognitive development and that thought processes do not develop in isolation. The activities of Reciprocal Reading offer students a socially interactive process in which they may develop their speaking, reading, and listening skills.

The introduction of innovative, socially interactive strategies to increase oral communication in the traditional foreign language classroom is indicated by the limited opportunity for students to speak at length in the target language. According to Donato (2000), despite the emphasis on oral communication in foreign language learning, it remains the most elusive of the skills in the secondary language classroom. One explanation may be that the concept of “communication” itself is misunderstood. Teacher-to-student directives in the second language (L2) do not constitute true communication any more than student-to-student exchanges of brief, memorized one-word answers or patterned responses (Hall, 1999). These artificially abbreviated speech patterns may have impeded students’ ability to acquire the foreign language skill they most desire, the ability to converse.

Cooperative learning may provide a convenient setting for more effective communicative activities in the foreign language classroom. The efficacy of cooperative learning has been well documented by Slavin (1995) and by Johnson & Johnson (1994). Johnson and Johnson (1994) maintained that the documented success of socially interactive learning activities forms one of the major social-psychological tenets of current research. Cooperative learning has also been proven to be of value in the foreign language classroom by providing more opportunities for students to speak the target language. The interdependency and collaborative efforts among group members have been shown to enhance the L2 learning experience (Colville-Hall, 1992; Dörnyei, 1997; Holt, 1993; Kessler, 1992; Oxford, 1997; Szostek, 1994).

## Reciprocal Reading Explained

Palincsar and Brown's (1986, 1988) seminal studies of Reciprocal Reading strategies are an extension of cooperative learning and were created as an intervention technique for language arts/English to strengthen poor reading skills of American middle school students. With careful teacher modeling and extensive training, Palincsar and Brown found that young students were able to take command of the four strategies of Reciprocal Reading and implement them in cooperative learning groups. The teacher then became the coach in a student-centered learning atmosphere.

Palincsar and Brown's four Reciprocal Reading strategies, which may be used in any order, are:

- **Summarization.** A student narrates and paraphrases a part of the lesson to listeners who have prepared other sections of the same lesson.
- **Prediction.** When relating a story or lesson, the student whose turn it is to summarize asks the listeners to predict or speculate what may happen in the next increment of the narrative.
- **Clarification.** The student summarizing may explain a word or concept with or without the request of the listeners.
- **Questioning.** The student summarizing poses questions to the listeners over what they have heard.

The success of Palincsar and Brown's cooperative intervention strategies for struggling readers (1986, 1988) suggested that the same strategies might be modified and used in a foreign language classroom (Speece, MacDonald, Kilsheimer, & Krist, 1997; Hosenfeld et al., 1996) to strengthen not only reading skills but also communicative and listening skills (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Additionally, cooperative learning activities have been proven to be of value in the foreign language classroom by providing more opportunities for students to speak the target language. The inter-dependency and collaborative efforts among group members have been shown to enhance the foreign language learning experience (Dörnyei, 1997; Oxford, 1997; Szostek, 1994; Holt, 1993; Colville-Hall, 1992; Kessler, 1992).

Lijerón (1993) laid the groundwork for reciprocal teaching in foreign language classes in a study that examined teaching metacognitive strategies to high school Spanish students with the goal of improving reading comprehension in the target language. She taught them the four processes of Palincsar and Brown's Reciprocal Reading technique but stressed only the results of the information processing strategies for understanding text rather than the communicative aspects of orally sharing foreign language text content with others. The skill of circumlocution was recognized during the study as critical to the success of Reciprocal Reading techniques. Hosenfeld (1995) defines circumlocution as a language learner's ability to avoid conversational breakdown by paraphrasing, describing, or using synonyms when confronted with a difficult sentence or a

forgotten word during a conversational activity. A “piscina” (swimming pool) might become “un lago artificial de concreto para nadar” (an artificial concrete lake for swimming). The verb “degollar” (to behead) may be expressed as “cortar las cabezas” (to cut [off] their heads). With Lijerón’s contribution of the teaching of reciprocal strategies in a foreign language class and with Hosenfeld’s insight concerning the importance of prior training in circumlocution in second language reciprocal activities, this study moves one step further in researching Reciprocal Reading in the secondary Spanish classroom.

## **Procedures**

The format of the case study provided the appropriate methodology to answer the research questions for this qualitative research. The case study format was chosen because of its adaptability to the subject under study and its ability to generate thick, rich description of data produced by the research. The term “case study” is used to describe the investigation of an individual, group, or phenomenon (Bassegy, 1999). A common characteristic of case studies is the underlying belief that to understand a case and to explain why things happen, it is necessary to conduct inquiry in a real-life situation. In this study the results and conclusions from that inquiry may be interpreted to explain recurring patterns and to predict future events (Bassegy, 1999).

Before the eight-day research activity began in a suburban, middle-class high school, the researcher had received approval from the school administrators and the classroom teacher to execute the Reciprocal Reading procedures. Letters to parents and students described the project as presenting “teaching and learning strategies... in reading, speaking, and understanding Spanish.” Included was a permission slip for student participation and permission to record classroom activities, to be signed by both students and parents. All twenty-one junior Spanish IV students and their teacher agreed to take part in the research that spanned eight regular consecutive class periods and one follow-up visit three months later.

The reading selections for the reciprocal exercise were chosen from *Corazón de España*, a classic intermediate level literature anthology. The stories selected were slightly below the level of reading difficulty that students were accustomed to in their regular class work. The rationale for using this relatively easy reading material was that the readings served only as a platform for the communicative component of the research. Because most students experience extended speaking activities less than any other foreign language classroom task (Brooks & Donato, 1994), and because meaningful, interactive communication has been neglected in foreign language instruction (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987), most students’ ability to speak spontaneously and at length in unmemorized discourse lags behind their reading competency. This observation is supported by Knudson (1997), who espouses the efficacy of exploiting the “comprehension advantage” or the fact that many students are able to read beyond the level at which they speak.

The choice of stories was intended to facilitate the students' ability to speak, rather than to read, at greater length without the burdens of complex sentence structure and arcane vocabulary. Brown (1994) supported the use of authentic "discourse-level" amounts of text that can support conversation without students' struggling to make their speaking level match their reading ability level. A few of the students initially expressed dismay at the "easy" reading, but most agreed with one student who stated during her interview that "...telling a simple story was good. Well, it's easier to talk if you don't have to ah, kinda grope for words and try to remember the plot, and characters and everything."

As an introduction to the exercise, Palincsar and Brown's four procedures in Reciprocal Reading were modeled by the classroom teacher and the researcher and then practiced by the students until all agreed that they were familiar and comfortable with the strategies. A popular fairy tale and a film served as the examples for demonstration. Students were then assigned one of three short stories from *Corazón de España* and placed in a group of students with the same story. These groups of three or four students became the Experts on that story. All work was conducted in the target language. The Experts were instructed to read together and to predict what would happen before reaching the end of the reading. Specifically, the Expert groups were expected to work together to clarify any confusing words or concepts so that every student in the group understood the story well enough to retell it to someone who had not read it. Each Expert group was instructed to prepare the questions at the end of the story and to create its own higher order story questions that would require elaborative or analytical answers. Higher order questions ask more than, "What happened next?" They necessitate responses that cannot be answered by simply matching a word in the question to the same word in the text and reading the sentence surrounding the key word. This part of the exercise required some intervention from the classroom teacher and the researcher. Although the students were accustomed to answering higher order questions in their normal class work, the creation of such questions was a new and challenging experience. They had seldom been asked to create what a student referred to as "teacher type questions." Scaffolding from the classroom teacher and the researcher was required to help students create questions that asked "why?" or "how?" or "explain the reason that..." The Expert groups were then able to create other higher order questions to pose to their listeners as a piece of the narration activity.

When all in the group decided that they understood the story, they practiced narrating it to each other, with other group members scaffolding and elaborating as needed. By practicing the summaries, predicting, creating questions, and clarifying, students were employing the reciprocal strategies they had learned. At the end of the practice narrations in the Expert groups, the Reciprocal Reading strategy was expanded to include a Jigsaw activity. The class recombined into Listeners groups in which each group member had read a different story. This grouping technique is borrowed from the traditional Jigsaw activity (Aronson, 1978) and is shown below. For example, from the text, *Corazón de España*, Expert Group 1 read "La niña de Francia / The Daughter of France," Group 2

read “La doncella guerrera / The Warrior Maiden,” Group 3, “The Zegrías and the Abencerrajes.” When redistributed into the Listener groups, each student had a different story to summarize. It was the responsibility of each Expert to narrate the story to the new group members, employing all four Reciprocal Reading strategies learned previously. The following timeline details the daily steps of the research procedure.

### ***Day One***

- Introduction of the researcher to class by the classroom teacher as a doctoral student who would be in their classroom to teach them some reading and speaking strategies. The researcher made a point to avoid expressing any expectations or projected outcomes of the procedures.
- The researcher distributed and explained the purpose and use of the student journals to record their daily impressions, opinions, and progress through the process.
- The researcher explained the four processes of reciprocal teaching. The classroom teacher and the researcher demonstrated the use of the four processes of reciprocal teaching.
- The researcher and teacher had the students play an introductory game of student pairs narrating in English a favorite movie or television show using the four processes.
- The researcher handed out a guide to procedures of reciprocal teaching and went over it with students to answer questions and clarify procedures.
- The classroom teacher assigned *Corazón de España* textbooks to students.

### ***Day Two***

- The classroom teacher assigned Expert groups of three or four students.
- The classroom teacher assigned each Expert group a different training story.
- Students read the stories aloud in their Expert groups.
- The teacher and the researcher circulated around the room, listening, helping, and assessing student progress.
- While still in their Expert groups, students answered the text questions following their stories and created their own higher order questions.

### ***Day Three***

- Students reviewed their stories in the Expert groups and refined their higher order questions.
- Taking turns, students began to narrate sections of the stories to their Expert group members. Group members scaffolded each other by correcting and filling gaps in the sequence of the stories.
- Still in the Expert groups, students took turns narrating the entire story

to their group members, polishing and verifying their understanding of the story.

#### ***Day Four***

- Students had five minutes to work in their Expert groups and remedy last-minute problems with their narrations.
- Students recombined into the Listener Groups, following the Jigsaw procedure.
- Students began the narrations of their stories in the Listener groups. Each student had a different story and clarified, questioned and asked for prediction as well as narrating the story.
- In a whole-class discussion, students discussed the stories and the reciprocal teaching procedure as the classroom teacher and the researcher moderated the activity.

#### ***Day Five***

- The classroom teacher and the researcher briefly reviewed the reciprocal procedures and reminded students that they would begin the work on the stories that compose the bulk of the research. The students would be recorded from this point until the end of the research activities. Students were reminded that student-researcher interviews were voluntary and would be done at the students' convenience.
- The teacher collected, checked, and returned the student research journals to verify their on-going use.
- The teacher assigned new stories to the Expert groups, from the same book, *Corazón de España*, with the same instructions and procedures as used in the training process.
- The teacher and the researcher continued to monitor group activity and facilitated when necessary.

#### ***Day Six***

- Students continued to work in their Expert groups, reading aloud, discussing the stories, clarifying, predicting, collaborating on vocabulary definitions, answering text questions, and creating their own higher order questions.
- Students practiced the narration of their stories in their Expert groups, first in segments, then by each student narrating the entire story with scaffolding from group members.
- The classroom teacher announced that for her test, students would have to know the stories they had heard narrated as well as the one each student had told.

#### ***Day Seven***

- Students were given five minutes in their Expert groups to warm up or practice their narrations.

- Students recombined into the Listener groups and began the narration process, employing the other three strategies of reciprocal teaching.

### ***Day Eight***

- The Listener groups completed the narration/listening activity.
- The teacher and the researcher moderated a whole-class discussion of the stories with the Expert group for each story answering questions regarding story setting and sequence, vocabulary, or characters' names.
- Students completed the post-research questionnaire.
- The teacher reminded students of her own test over all the stories for the following day.

Approximately, ninety days later, the researcher returned the class to administer the post-research quiz (see Appendix A), the purpose of which was to supply data concerning student's retention of general story plots and vocabulary.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected from the following sources:

- Observations of student groups by the researcher and the classroom teacher were noted in research journals and provided a qualitative means of comparing and checking data for consistency of assessment. Focus was on assessment of increases in fluency, vocabulary, and student efficacy.
- Students' discussions, narrations, questions, and group work were recorded and transcribed. They documented spontaneous statements within a group of peers and also aided in assessing increases in fluency, vocabulary, and student efficacy.
- Students wrote their impressions and observations of the procedures in journals daily. These journals provided a basis for comparison and sometimes a more detailed or even conflicting account of statements recorded in their oral interviews with the researcher.
- Voluntary interviews between students and the researcher provided more spontaneous student input concerning the research procedures and their impressions of its efficacy.
- The classroom teacher's quiz immediately after completion of the experiment measured students' retention of story plots and vocabularies from material that they had told and heard in narration.
- A post research quiz 90 days after completion of the experiment measured students' long-term retention of the material in the stories.

All data collected by the procedures above was reduced by elimination of repetitive or extraneous data, color-coded, and sorted by topic into four categories that corresponded to the four procedures of Reciprocal Teaching (summarization, prediction, clarification, and questioning) with sub-categories for evaluation of

student fluency and vocabulary as well as frequency of circumlocution. Although Reciprocal Teaching is considered to be a single strategy, its four procedures produced such varied data as to warrant separate analysis of each element. As the research evolved and unanticipated relevant data emerged, it was also coded and examined for inclusion in the subcategories or recoded as new strands. For example, an unexpected antecedent to the intervention was the discovery that the classroom teacher had taught and been emphasizing use of circumlocution in her previous lessons. Circumlocution, as defined by Hosenfeld, Cavour, Bonk, Baker & Alcorn (1993), is the ability to paraphrase, define, describe, or explain an unknown word with gestures. The skill of circumlocution appeared to be critical to the success of the students' narrations, supporting research by Hosenfeld, Cavour, & Bonk (1996) that stated that circumlocution was observed to decrease incidents of communicative breakdown. The classroom teacher explained that she had taught and extensively practiced circumlocution with her students prior to this study, which made it an important factor in this research project. One example of a student's circumlocution skills is seen in the following excerpt of summarization and clarification from classroom tape transcripts in which "David" explains the Spanish word for "slander" to another student.

- David:** ...su plan es calumniar los Abencerrajes.  
¿Comprende?  
*[Their plan is to slander the Abencerrajes.  
Understand?]*
- Student 1:** No exactamente.  
*[Not exactly.]*
- David:** Calumniar es no decir la verdad. Uh, es decir cosas  
falsas de una persona.  
*[Calumniar is not telling the truth. Uh, it's saying  
false things about a person.]*

The ability to circumlocute proved valuable to both narrator and listener in that communicative breakdown was avoided, despite a difficult or previously unknown word.

During group work, the classroom teacher and the researcher separately evaluated students' speech by using the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking (1999).

The classroom teacher and the researcher compared individual evaluations, using the standards set by the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Inter-rater reliability was considered acceptable when variability of subjective assessment did not vary more than one level. Both the teacher and the researcher evaluated students three times for fluency, vocabulary, syntax, and coherence during the reciprocal procedure. They were assessed in their initial Expert groups, during their narrations, and finally in a whole-class discussion of the stories. The classroom teacher's previous oral grades for her students provided a subjective baseline for assessment, and her daily evaluations during the research exercise also produced

valuable data concerning the acquisition of students' speaking skills during the Reciprocal Reading and narration exercises.

### **Findings**

This study of Reciprocal Reading techniques modified with the addition of a Jigsaw activity has produced positive results as a platform for building communicative skills in a secondary Spanish language class. All the students in the study were judged to have improved their oral proficiency skill to some degree based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking. Emphasis on teaching circumlocution skills prior to such a study is critical to avoid communicative breakdown during conversation activities. In reviewing and answering the research questions, the following results were found:

- Secondary foreign language students can improve their speaking fluency and enhance their vocabularies by using modified Reciprocal Reading procedures.
- Results of this study indicate that Reciprocal Reading procedures enhanced with narration in a Jigsaw activity may improve speaking competency, especially when accompanied with training in circumlocution.
- Secondary foreign language students can build communicative efficacy using the opportunity to speak at length that enhanced Reciprocal Reading techniques provide.
- Students in this study made notable gains in their speaking proficiency, as evaluated by two observers, and according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Proficiency Guidelines—Speaking (1999). Students also appeared to gain confidence in their own abilities to use the target language as evidenced by the gradual increase in the duration of their narrations and their increasing willingness to risk speaking without the expectation of flawless oral execution.

Students generally approved of the opportunity to speak at length during the narrative phase of the research project. Keeping story difficulty and new vocabulary at manageable levels also encouraged students to speak more freely by reducing vocabulary anxiety and communicative breakdown.

Careful examination, coding, and evaluation of the resulting data furnished ample evidence that the Spanish IV students had apparently made progress in the acquisition of speaking skills. Based on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines, the classroom teacher and researcher agreed that all students had improved their speaking proficiency to some degree. Three students progressed to the next higher level of proficiency, from Intermediate Mid to Advanced Low. Most students improved within their assessed levels of proficiency from Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid, or from Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High. Even students who had had previous difficulty with oral classroom participation were judged to

have improved within their Novice range from Novice Low to Mid and Novice High competency.

Hosenfeld's (1996) emphasis on the importance of circumlocution in communicative exercises was justified by its extensive and successful use by students in this study. The students themselves recognized its value in their oral work. During the interviews, Antonia was asked if she was using circumlocution in her narration:

- Antonia:** Definitely  
**R.B.** Was that hard?  
**Antonia:** No. I just had to think of other Spanish words for things.  
**R.B.** Did your listeners understand?  
**Antonia:** Yeah, I really think so. It really helps to know synonyms and stuff.

Most of the students echoed Antonia's appreciation of the strategy of circumlocution. When complimented on his ability to circumlocute, Donaldo stated, "O, sí, la Señora B. dice todos los días es muy importante explicar en español." [*Oh, yes. Every day Mrs. B. says it's very important to explain in Spanish.*]

The value of circumlocution as a strategy to promote oral communication and to avoid conversational breakdown cannot be stressed enough. Circumlocution is a logical and legitimate alternative to what some critics call the "pidgeonization" of a language by non-native learners. Explaining a word or idea through definition, "A forest is a group of trees," is highly preferable to communicative breakdown or bastardizing the target language with oddities such as "forrest-o" or "tree-os," the universal bane of Spanish teachers.

Overall, the data indicated that students had successfully implemented the modified strategies of Reciprocal Reading combined with Jigsaw techniques and had approved of the experience, seeing it as a potentially valuable tool for future reading assignments. According to the post research survey, narration was deemed the easiest element with clarifying, questioning, and predicting following in increasing order of difficulty (see Appendix B). Of twenty-one participants, nineteen chose "pretty well" or "very well" on the post research survey that asked if "the reading strategies had helped me to understand the story" (see Appendix C). The post research quiz, a simple multiple-choice tool with twenty questions over the four stories was administered about ninety days after the completion of the Reciprocal Reading activity. It indicated that most students had indeed understood not only the story they narrated but also the stories they heard classmates tell. The lowest score was thirteen of twenty correct, and the highest score was a perfect twenty.

**Discussion**

This study has significantly expanded Palincsar and Brown's (1986, 1988) concept of Reciprocal Reading as a tool created only for English-speaking students who were deficient in reading in their own language. By making modest adaptations to the original techniques, Reciprocal Reading appears to show potential as an additional tool for the foreign language class. The focus of this study on the communicative element of second language learning departs from that of previous research. While Lijerón's work stressed only reading comprehension and Hosenfeld was concerned with circumlocution, this study has explored the efficacy of having students engage in meaningful, spontaneous dialogue for the purpose of imparting information to another person. While this study acknowledges the contributions of previous researchers by incorporating some of their methods, it moves into a new phase of foreign language pedagogical research—contextual communication among students that promotes language usage and learning.

In spite of the positive findings that appeared in the analysis, the students' perceptions of their own accomplishments were varied. Antonia expressed enthusiasm for the modified Reciprocal Reading technique: "I really liked it.... I didn't think I could talk about a whole story, but I did!" Gala also shared her approval: "I think it's a good thing...you know, having to talk about something long. We don't get to do that usually."

Nevertheless, several students expressed disappointment with what they perceived as their inability to speak well. During the informal interviews, I often heard near apologies or muted frustration attributed to their "failure" to speak fluent, flawless Spanish after only three and a half years of formal study for fifty minutes per day in an English-dominant school setting. Emilia's statement was typical of those of some of her classmates' statements about their own efficacy in speaking: "...I don't think I speak very fluently." Mónica stated that she and a friend "stink at Spanish [because] I don't memorize Spanish that well. I don't think I told [the story] very well." Yet, according to findings by the classroom teacher and the researcher, both Mónica and her friend had made patent improvements in their speaking skills. This concern with not being fluent may increase student anxiety because of unrealistic expectations in oral proficiency. The teacher may reduce this anxiety by encouraging students to be more tolerant of their errors while they are acquiring a skill that demands time and limitless practice (Oxford, 1990).

It should be noted that Reciprocal Reading is intensely student-centered. The demands on the individual student to be a full participant in both the Expert and Listener groups impose a more constant responsibility upon the language learner than the teacher-centered instructional setting to which the student may be accustomed. The eight days of the research exercise appear to approach the maximum time frame for such an activity. Students confessed in their interviews that eight days was about right and that more time would have caused them to "burn out" on the activity. For this reason, Reciprocal Reading with Jigsaw in the foreign language classroom should be limited in each application and not used

exclusively as the instructional model for daily work. Occasional use throughout the semester or year is recommended. As students become accustomed to the procedures and demands of the processes, they may appreciate its advantages of increased self-efficacy, greater fluency, and communicative competency.

An unanticipated issue that arose mid-way through the narration activity was that of trust. In the daily journals and also in the informal interviews, some students expressed doubt that they were hearing accurate narrations of stories from their Listener group mates. One student confessed: "...I read their stories for myself...I just wasn't sure I was getting all the details and stuff." Another student was quite frank in her distrust of her fellow narrators. She read all the stories because "I just didn't trust them enough to let my grade depend on their narrations." If, as Johnson and Johnson (1991) stated, positive interdependence is a basic element of cooperative learning, then the issue of trust and the reluctance to rely on other members of the group may be a factor in determining the efficacy of cooperative learning, especially among academically successful, competitive students.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study suggests further research in the area of Reciprocal Reading in the foreign language classroom. To broaden the knowledge base this study may be replicated among a larger, more diverse student population in an urban setting. Further work could be directed to other languages taught at intermediate level and beyond in the secondary venue. At the college setting, different instructional levels from the intermediate classes through the major levels could be examined as promising areas for future research.

Thorough training of students by instructors experienced in cooperative learning skills is mandatory to diminish the competition among group members and to focus on the achievement of all students. Greater interdependency in cooperative learning exercises may be created among students if the several reading selections are not readily available beyond the Expert groups. By making the Experts the exclusive source of information about a particular story in the lesson, the Listeners may be more likely to listen closely and be forced to trust the narrator's accuracy and not to believe that they must read all the stories themselves to "make sure of getting it right." The issue of building trust among group members may emerge as a determinant in the success of cooperative learning in the foreign language classroom. It is an intriguing area that suggests more research.

Limiting the duration and frequency of Reciprocal Reading exercises in the secondary classroom is recommended to reduce student burnout that may result from the heavy responsibility on the individual learner that is inherent in reciprocal activities.

### **Conclusion**

This study has indicated that the Spanish IV students participating in the research project did, overall, successfully implement the strategies of Reciprocal

Reading, modified with the addition of a Jigsaw component to increase their communicative skills in the target language. The importance of circumlocution to avoid communicative breakdown in the target language is recognized as a critical component of that success.

Despite varying student perceptions regarding their speaking efficacy and the emergent issue of trust in the cooperative groups, the promising results of this study indicate that Reciprocal Reading combined with Jigsaw strategies in the secondary foreign language classroom may offer foreign language teachers a useful tool for improving students' communicative skills. The flexibility possible in modifying Palincsar and Brown's (1986, 1988) original strategies allows for enough variation to adapt Reciprocal Reading practices to the students' needs. With careful training of students in the procedures and the judicious use of Reciprocal Reading strategies so as not to exhaust student enthusiasm for the process, practicing teachers may discover that the implementation of modified Reciprocal Reading techniques in their classrooms will offer them valuable additional strategies in the continuing quest to meet the expectations of students who want to speak the foreign languages they are studying.

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## Appendix A

### Post-Research Quiz Cuentos de *Corazón de España*

Selección. Por favor, use Vd. Letras MAYÚCULAS. Favor de indicar el cuento que Vd. leyó con un círculo en el título. Gracias.

#### **La niña de Francia.**

- \_\_\_ 1. La niña estaba en camino hacia  
A) Madrid B) París  
C) Orleans D. Londres.
- \_\_\_ 2. Ella tuvo ayuda de  
A) sus padres B) el rey moro  
C) el hijo del rey D) un caballero.
- \_\_\_ 3. Él la invitó ir al bosque para  
A) casarse con ella B) matarla  
C) hacer amores con ella D) un picnic.
- \_\_\_ 4. La niña le respondió que  
A) tenía lepra B) sí  
C) tenía D) necesitaba.
- \_\_\_ 5. La niña mintió para  
A) andar en el bosque B) salvar a su padre  
C) engañar al rey D) escapar de las atenciones amorosas.
- \_\_\_ 6. La niña era  
A) soldado B) esposa del rey  
C) hija de los reyes de Francia D) bailarina.

#### **La doncella guerrera**

- \_\_\_ 7. El Conde De Aragón no pudo  
A) ir a la Guerra B) bailar con la reina  
C) encontrar a su hijo D) oír.

- \_\_\_ 8. El Conde tenía  
 A) amores con la reina    B) una espada famosa  
 C) siete hijas    D) tres hijos.
- \_\_\_ 9. La hija menor  
 A) fue a París    B) tuvo amores con un caballero  
 C) inventó fiestas    D) fue a las guerras en lugar de su padre.
- \_\_\_ 10. El hijo del rey  
 A) murió en Marruecos    B) se enamoró de los ojos de “don Martín”  
 C) calumnió a los caballeros    D) compró una espada para “don Martín.”
- \_\_\_ 11. En el mercado “don Martín” admiró  
 A) los vestidos    B) las flores  
 C) las armas    D) la vara para su caballo.
- \_\_\_ 12. En el jardín “don Martín”  
 A) admiró las rosas    B) perdió su honor  
 C) se bañó con los caballeros    D) cortó una vara para su caballo.
- \_\_\_ 13. “Don Martín” volvió a casa al recibir una invitación de  
 A) besar al príncipe    B) bañarse con los otros caballeros  
 C) luchar en una batalla    D) su padre.
- \_\_\_ 14. “Don Martín” era  
 A) el Conde de Aragón    B) soldado  
 C) la hija del Conde de Aragón    D) el hijo perdido del Conde de Aragón.

### Los Zegríes y Abencerrajes

- \_\_\_ 15. Los Zegríes y Abencerrajes eran  
 A) novios de familias famosas    B) reyes de Granada  
 C) caballeros cristianos    D) familias nobles moros de Granada.
- \_\_\_ 16. Los Zegríes y Abencerrajes eran  
 A) grandes rivales    B) mejores amigos  
 C) primos    D) hermanos del rey.
- \_\_\_ 17. Los Zegríes dijeron al rey que el jefe Abencerraje  
 A) tenía amores con la reina    B) ayudaba a los cristianos  
 C) inventaba fiestas    D) mató al hermano del rey.

- \_\_\_ 18. El rey mandó  
A) la batalla                      B) matar a 32 Abencerrajes  
C) matar a todos los Zegríes  
D) conquistar Granada.
- \_\_\_ 19. En 1492 Granada fue conquistada por  
A) los Zegríes                      B) los Abencerrajes  
C) los Reyes Católicos      D) Boabdil.
- \_\_\_ 20. Boabdil murió triste y solo en  
A) Granada                      B) el Patio de Leones  
C) Marruecos                      D) Córdoba

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire for Post-Research Survey

Please answer the following statements. (Capital letters, please.)

- \_\_\_ 1. I prefer working with a group rather than by myself on Spanish reading assignments  
a) almost never   b) sometimes   c) usually   d) almost always.
- \_\_\_ 2. Learning the reciprocal reading strategies (summarization, questioning, clarifying and predicting) was  
a) very difficult   b) somewhat difficult   c) fairly easy   d) very easy.
- \_\_\_ 3. The reading strategies helped me to understand the story  
a) not at all   b) a little bit   c) pretty well   d) very well.
- \_\_\_ 4. The strategy that was the easiest to learn/use was  
a) summarization   b) questioning   c) clarifying   d) predicting.
- \_\_\_ 5. The strategy that was most difficult to learn/use was  
a) summarization   b) questioning   c) clarifying   d) predicting.
- \_\_\_ 6. The strategy of circumlocution was helpful in narrating the story/  
a) not at all   b) a little bit   d) usually   d) very much.
- \_\_\_ 7. The narration practice activity was helpful?  
a) not at all   b) somewhat helpful   c) very helpful   d) helpful & enjoyable
- \_\_\_ 8. Narrating the story helped me to understand it  
a) not at all   b) a little bit   c) pretty well   d) very well.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I was able to understand the other students' narrations of their stories  
 a) not at all b) a little bit c) pretty well d) very well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I would be likely to use the reading and speaking strategies  
 (like circumlocution) in other Spanish lessons  
 a) not at all b) seldom c) often d) nearly always.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The Reciprocal Reading strategies helped in developing  
 a) reading comprehension b) speaking ability  
 c) listening comprehension d) all the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The time spent on this reading and communicative unit was  
 a) too long b) not long enough c) OK d) just right.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Would you be willing to participate in another research study similar to  
 this one?  
 a) No b) Unlikely c) Probably d) Yes

### Appendix C

#### Results of Post-Research Questionnaire

1. I prefer working with a group rather than by myself on Spanish reading assignments.
- |              |           |         |               |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Almost never | Sometimes | Usually | Almost always |
| 1            | 7         | 9       | 4             |
2. Learning the reciprocal reading strategies (summarization, questioning, clarifying and predicting) was
- |                |                    |             |           |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Very difficult | Somewhat difficult | Fairly easy | Very easy |
| 0              | 2                  | 10          | 9         |
3. The reading strategies helped me to understand the story.
- |            |              |             |           |
|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| Not at all | A little bit | Pretty well | Very Well |
| 0          | 2            | 11          | 8         |
4. The strategy that was the easiest to learn/use was
- |               |             |            |            |
|---------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Summarization | Questioning | Clarifying | Predicting |
| 16            | 1           | 3          | 0          |

132 *Responding to a New Vision for Teacher Development*

5. The strategy that was most difficult to learn/use was

Summarization	Questioning	Clarifying	Predicting
2	4	3	12

6. The strategy of circumlocution was helpful in narrating the story

Not at all	A little bit	Usually	Very much
2	7	9	3

7. The narration practice activity was

Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Helpful and enjoyable
0	7	11	3

8. Narrating the story helped me to understand it

Not at all	A little bit	Pretty well	Very well
1	1	9	10

9. I was able to understand other students' narrations of their stories

Not at all	A little bit	Pretty well	Very well
1	3	12	5

10. I would be likely to use the reciprocal strategies in other Spanish group work

Not at all	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
2	6	11	2

11. The Reciprocal Reading strategies were helpful in developing

Reading comprehension	Speaking ability	Listening comprehension	All the above
1	9	2	9

12. The time we spent on this reading and communicative unit was

Too long	Not long enough	OK	Just right
1	3	13	4

13. Would you be willing to participate in another research study similar to this one?

No	Unlikely	Probably	Yes
0	2	9	10

# 11

## Using an Electronic Response System to Enhance Classroom Participation

**J. Sanford Dugan**

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**W**ith the current emphasis on accounting for professional development, when a national mandate requires teachers to document high qualifications and states are requiring credits or continuing education units for certification renewal, many foreign language teachers are seeking opportunities to improve the multiple skills they need to be effective. While enhancing teachers' knowledge of the target language and culture is of primary importance, changes in the tools of teaching are drawing increased attention to technology and giving a new meaning to teacher development. The days when books, chalkboard, red pen, and an occasional mimeo sufficed have given way, at least in certain countries, to an era where computer labs, e-mail, Web sites, camcorders, handhelds, and other devices are multiplying the ways people communicate and learn.

In their quest to keep up with new technologies, educators must adapt to commercial markets that are beyond their control. If a new tool succeeds in the market place, it may at first be beyond the reach of a school budget; educators must wait for it to become affordable. Each technology has a life cycle; some mature and last, others fade away. Overhead projectors survive, but film strips have disappeared. Audio cassette tapes, long a staple for language teaching, are being supplanted by CDs and will no longer be manufactured. Sometimes the cycle of appearance, maturation, and decline spans less than a decade: witness the laser video disc, a worthy tool rendered obsolete by DVDs.

A technique that is relatively new to education but has the promise of making a lasting contribution is the electronic response system. It can enhance classroom participation and requires a minimal "smart classroom": computer, network, special software, response pads, receiver, data projector, and screen.

Electronic response systems such as Audience Response Systems (2005) or Meridia Interactive (2005) have been commercially available for twenty years, but until recently they were affordable mainly for business and were often used at events with a large group. As computers become ubiquitous and data projectors drop in price, using this technique in the classroom seems more feasible.

In its simplest form, the system uses a computer and projector to display multiple choice questions on a screen; each learner replies using a key pad with numbered buttons, similar to a television remote control, which transmits wirelessly to a small receiving unit attached to the computer. When everyone has responded, the teacher presses a button, and a display projected on the screen shows the number of replies made for each choice in that question. Since the individual learner's response is not shown, reluctance to participate is reduced. The system can show cumulative results on a series of questions, and with a network, the individual results can be stored for later retrieval by the learner, who may want a study guide, and by the instructor, who may want to offer remediation or edit questions.

Not many foreign language educators have had the chance to use this technique in the classroom principally because of cost. Changes in several technologies are, however, converging to put it within reach. The widespread use of computers, especially laptops, allows teachers to develop computer skills and brings this tool into many classrooms. At the same time, the cost of projection equipment is coming down. Units that are suitable for the classroom are affordable enough for school districts to plan for having one in every classroom (Ann Arbor Public Schools, 2005). A third factor is a network and digital storage space to facilitate subsequent retrieval; resources available online make network connectivity, in particular the Internet, a priority for learning environments, and digital storage is more available. Finally, the technologies of sending and receiving local signals (infrared, radio wireless, or the like) and of compiling, calculating, and displaying results make the whole thing possible and are now available at reasonable cost. In summary, the minimal technical requirements include hardware—a response pad for each learner, a receiver at the instructor station, a projector and screen, a computer, and a storage/retrieval facility (server)—and software—a system to record responses, calculate and display results, connectivity to the data storage/retrieval facility. All of these are within reach.

## **Background**

In August 2004, the Information Technology Coordinating Committee at Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR) established a working group to study the potential of electronic response systems as an emerging learning technology and to explore benefits of its application across campus (OSU-ITCC website, 2004). One result of this undertaking is a Website containing multiple resources, including: a) a spreadsheet comparing almost 20 systems under more than two dozen criteria (mostly technical and cost), b) a dozen “independent papers,” some in academic journals, others in campus technology trade publications, reporting on attributes

and uses of electronic response systems in teaching / training / learning, and c) information provided by the half dozen major vendors that are present on the Web. While the technical data and vendor information are helpful, the opinions of users are the most valuable. Following is a look at some of those experiences.

In the mid-1980s, researchers at IBM (Horowitz, 1988) studied the attentiveness of participants and retention of information in classroom settings with an instructor and 20 corporate manager trainees. They compared a traditional lecture situation to one where participants used an individual response apparatus. The latter was more successful: trainees were more attentive, and retention of information was greater. The researchers concluded that the technique improves learning and could be an inexpensive and valuable tool for educators. Furthermore, Abrahamson (2005) reviews reports on the use of classroom communication systems in different institutions, in different disciplines, and at different age levels; in general, the system is effective in enhancing participation of all learners.

Some educators, chiefly in the sciences, are making efforts to implement the system in the classroom. Several online articles report experiences in classroom use. The more dramatic uses occur in large lecture halls, where encouraging individual participation and monitoring student comprehension are major problems. According to Woods and Chiu (2003), an electronic response system achieved progress toward both goals; when students know that their participation counts, they attend more diligently, and when a large group does not answer correctly, the instructor's presentation can be adapted. The system has promise also in classes of 20-30 or even smaller sizes. While a discussion class affords more opportunity to participate, there are those who tend to dominate a conversation. Giving all those present a chance to respond ensures participation. Again in the sciences, Schakow et al. (2003) report that in a lecture class of 24 learners the system was effective in increasing learning. Some reports are quite enthusiastic; Edmonds (2004) states that using electronic response is "... a perfect example of technology encouraging better teaching."

In its current form, the electronic response system does not pose huge technological problems. It offers the possibility of engaging the attention of all in the classroom but requires the instructor to provide conscientious reflection on learning outcomes and preparation of appropriate activities. What follows is an exploration of some of these considerations.

### **Theoretical Considerations**

Theories of knowledge and learning have been explored for centuries and are inevitably an aspect of discovering truth. Bates and Poole (2003, pp. 49-50) recount the story of the Greek philosopher Socrates who berated his pupil Phaedrus for learning a speech from a book rather than from a person. The philosopher's criticism is that since a book cannot be interrogated, there is no opportunity to engage the author in a search for the truth. The emphasis on the primacy of dialogue in this story has led to what we call the Socratic method. While the modern pedagogue may not often have the luxury of working one-on-

one with an attentive pupil, there are means to engage groups in a meaningful search for truth. Furthermore, there is a considerable body of work, albeit in printed form, that can provide guides in that search.

In the third edition of an extensive study entitled *Psychology of Learning for Instruction*, Marcy P. Driscoll (2005) traces the development of instructional psychology since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Near the end of this volume, she identifies two contrasting sets of ideas that currently dominate the field. One is Robert M. Gagné's "Conditions of Learning"; the other, with various proponents, she labels "Constructivism." Gagné's theory, the result of a career spent in training people in various sectors of society, is a coherent group of generalizations with a strong emphasis on cognitive information processing and a set of steps for instructional planning. Constructivism is a looser collection of theories grouped around ideas of knowledge as being dynamic and constantly being structured.

Driscoll describes how Gagné's theory evolved over the decades of his experience: "With behaviorist roots, it now brings together a cognitive information-processing perspective on learning with empirical findings of what good teachers do in their classrooms" (Driscoll, 2005, p. 352). Without going into detail, it is useful to note that the theory includes three major components: 1) a "taxonomy of learning outcomes" that draws on several other models, including the Bloom taxonomy, and describes learning outcomes in various domains, 2) "conditions for learning" that describe optimal ways to plan and organize learning experiences, and 3) a set of "nine events of instruction" that specify ways for the instructor to maximize the opportunities for learners to benefit from any given lesson. The events are listed as follows: 1) Gaining attention; 2) Informing learners of the objective; 3) Stimulating recall of prior learning; 4) Presenting the content; 5) Providing "learning guidance;" 6) Eliciting performance; 7) Providing feedback; 8) Assessing performance; 9) Enhancing retention and transfer. (Driscoll, 2005, p. 373) While Gagné saw all events as important, he acknowledged flexibility in whether all might occur in a successful lesson and in the order of their occurrence.

An electronic response system can be useful in accomplishing many of these "events of instruction" in the context of a classroom foreign language lesson. Projecting a question on the screen, perhaps accompanied by a graphic, will gain attention, especially if everyone's answer will contribute to the results. Informing learners of the objective and stimulating recall of prior learning is done as the question is read out; elaborations and explanations by the instructor are valuable in this step. Presenting the content and providing guidance can also accompany presentation of the question. Eliciting performance is accomplished when each respondent answers using the response pad. Feedback is almost instantaneous for each question; although results do not identify respondents, students can compare their own response to the results. Assessing performance occurs gradually as one question follows another. Enhancing retention and transfer is facilitated after class when learners review their performance from the stored data.

The major theory that contrasts to the Gagné model is "Constructivism." While it has varying aspects and proponents, the influence of earlier theorists,

especially the Russian Lev Vygotsky, is evident. Driscoll explains, “. . . many constructivist theorists adhere to Vygotsky’s notions about the social negotiation of meaning . . . . That is, learners test their own understandings against those of others, notably those of teachers and more advanced peers” (Driscoll, 2005, p. 388).

In an earlier chapter entitled “Interactional Theories of Cognitive Development,” Driscoll examines the ideas of Jerome Bruner and Vygotsky in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Both theorists studied the importance of the learner’s interaction with others who serve as guides to developing skills. While Bruner emphasized the role of culture (Driscoll 2005, pp. 240-245), Vygotsky went further in studying the interaction between the learner and the guide. Two of Vygotsky’s important concepts are “scaffolding” and “intersubjectivity”; the teacher needs to provide a scaffold, a structure that the learner can use to build up the desired skills, and the teacher and learner must share an intersubjective equality in the learning task, that is they must agree on the goals and then work together to reach them (Driscoll, 2005, pp. 257-259).

In a valuable recent collection of essays (Hall et. al., 2005), several scholars reflect on theories developed in the 1920s by the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin and on their implications for language learning. Rather than an abstract construct, language is seen by Bakhtin as fundamentally an interaction between people. The introductory essay highlights the use of language as a “dialogic” process, bringing together the past and the present and being essentially a dialogue. Through this dialogue the learner transmits culture, participates in social interaction, and creates a self. Marchenkova (Hall et. al., 2005) elaborates Bakhtin’s views, quoting him: “Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.” (Hall et al, 2005, p. 175). At the same time, she juxtaposes Bakhtin’s ideas to those of Vygotsky, whom she quotes, “Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child . . . . The child’s intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language” (Hall et. al., 2005, p. 177).

This emphasis on the importance of what takes place in the interaction between learner and guide provides a strong theoretical base for the use of an electronic response system. The electronic response system is clearly a way for the learner to participate in a meaningful exchange with the instructor, even if there are many others in the class at the same time. With appropriate, well planned activities, the act of responding can be a step in constructing knowledge.

### **Applications of Multiple-choice Format**

At first, it may seem that the multiple-choice type format is too limiting. Nevertheless, there are different uses that can be made of this format, some of which can be crucial to language learning. One can think of four major categories: assessment, opinion surveys, demographics, and decision making. In an assessment

exercise, a question is based on material studied beforehand and usually has one correct answer. In an opinion survey or demographic instrument, each item offers a range of possible responses, with no single correct choice. In a decision making activity, questions are related in a branching pattern; the most popular answer in one question can affect which question is asked next.

Assessment is perhaps the most obvious use of the multiple-choice format. For this category, the basic features of the format are evident, but a few suggestions on question design may help to reduce error. Multiple choice questions have mathematically more power to discriminate than True / False questions but take more time to write; the increase in discrimination power in questions with five choices as opposed to four may not be worth the extra effort of creating a fifth choice. Make sure that there is only one correct answer; avoid ambiguous choices. If there is a negative in the “stem” (the first part of the item), avoid negatives in the choices. The length of the choices should be nearly the same. As an example, here is a question on what might have been a reading passage:

*In his 1492 voyage to the west, Christopher Columbus . . . .*

- a) landed in Cathay
- b) lacked royal patronage
- c) named a country for himself
- \*d) had a fleet of three ships.

In an opinion survey, the answers may be based on a scale, or they may be a list; there is no one answer that is correct. Here is an example of a scale:

*On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (strongly agree), what is your opinion on the following statement? “Everyone should learn more than one language.”*

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5

Following is an example of a list:

*The most challenging subject in school is \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a) mathematics
- b) chemistry
- c) history
- d) speech
- e) English

In a demographic item, participants respond according to their own lives; the results give a description of the class population. An example follows:

*In my family, the number of children, including myself, is \_\_\_\_.*

- a) one
- b) two
- c) three
- d) four
- e) more than four

Suppose a class is deciding when and how to organize its picnic (decision making). *Question: The class picnic should be held in \_\_\_\_.*

- a) March
- b) April
- c) May
- d) June

If the answer is “March” or “April,” in the next question, “sports” or “a hike” may not be practical, and the item would be altered.

*Question: The most important organized activity to be included in the picnic should be \_\_\_\_.*

- a) sports
- b) a hike
- c) crafts
- d) singing
- e) board games

If the winning choice is “sports,” which one(s) should be planned for?

*Question: The sports will be \_\_\_\_.*

- a) softball
- b) soccer
- c) Frisbee
- d) volleyball
- e) touch football

Activities in which the electronic response system will be useful relate to different situations as well as to the content at hand. To determine whether learners studied material before coming to class, the assessment mode is useful. Following discussion of a given topic, an opinion survey would be appropriate. Demographic questions can be used to help students better know their peers. Decision making would be useful in scheduling an excursion or other activity. Furthermore, there are research lines that provide guidance in shaping communicative learning activities that are more effective and that focus specifically on language.

**An Electronic Response System and Communicative Activities Focusing on Language**

In a recent book on second language acquisition (SLA) research and implications for effective classroom practice, Wynne Wong (2005) reviews current SLA theory and makes suggestions for learning activities. Two essential theories are evident: the invariable sequence of stages in SLA and the primacy of input. Significant accumulated research supports the theory that learners acquire a second language in stages that follow an invariable sequence. While acquisition cannot be speeded up simply by adapting the syllabus to teach higher levels in the sequence, learning can be facilitated if the instructor attends to where learners are in the sequence and provides appropriate activities. The primacy of input in SLA means that learning occurs after the learner receives and processes meaningful information. The instructor's goal is to identify the learners' stage and devise tasks in which they use language to achieve a meaningful goal, such as gaining information about their immediate classroom or the world as they know it. In the crucial process of input, the electronic response system can be invaluable because it prompts every participant to answer and does not allow a few students who may be more verbal to dominate the results.

In order to enhance meaningful input, Wong suggests four types of activity: input flood, textual enhancement, structured input activities, and grammar consciousness-raising tasks. For each type, many examples are provided, and there is a discussion of its theoretical basis and details on research studies showing effectiveness. For all of the types, except perhaps textual enhancement, the electronic response system can help everyone in the class to participate. Below are some examples.

"Input flood" (Wong, 2005, pp. 37-47) is a term used to indicate an input enhancement in which the form that is to be learned occurs many times in a relatively short period; for example, the learner reads or listens to a paragraph with numerous examples of the target form. An example that Wong gives is the subjunctive form in French; he proposes a paragraph that begins, "Il faut que vous arriviez en classe à l'heure demain. Nous avons un examen. Il est pertinent que vous étudiiez bien ce soir. Il est nécessaire que vous révisiez les chapitres trois, quatre et cinq . . ." [*It is necessary that you arrive to class on time tomorrow. We have a test. It's pertinent that you study well this evening. It's necessary that you review chapters three, four, and five . . .*] (Wong, 2005, p. 44). In order to show that students are processing the information of the paragraph, the author suggests that they perform a task like answering questions on the information. This could be readily accomplished with multiple choice questions using an electronic response system.

*Pourquoi faut-il se préparer bien ce soir? —Parce que demain, il y a*

- 
- a) un match sportif
  - b) une réunion
  - c) un test
  - d) une excursion. . . .

*[Why is it necessary to study this evening?] “Because tomorrow there is \_\_\_\_\_.*

- a) a sports game
- b) a meeting
- c) a test
- d) an excursion]

“Textual enhancement” (Wong, 2005, pp. 48-62), in the concrete sense, means using word processing features like “bold,” “italics,” or “underline” to set off text that contains linguistic features for the learner to focus on. While this can be effective, it is not clear how an electronic response system would use it, and some systems do not support style changes in individual words.

“Structured input activities” (Wong, 2005, pp. 63-78) are tasks that focus on a specific problem in the learners’ processing strategy. Having devoted part of a chapter to input theory in SLA (pp. 24-36), Wong stresses that it is necessary to identify the problem: “Before we can begin to create a structured activity for a particular grammatical form, we must first understand what strategy learners are using to process that form” (p. 69). Some possible “inefficient strategies” are relying on content words instead of form in order to derive meaning, having difficulty with unfamiliar word order, or overlooking a form that is not in a salient position (p. 69). As an example, he supposes that students of French are skipping over the direct object pronoun because it is located in a medial position which is the least salient for input processing. An activity he suggests is a series of sentences read aloud, with multiple choice answers that students read. In the situation, a student from France talks about his family.

*Which family member corresponds to the one in the sentence? “Je la cherche en voiture pour aller à l’église.*

- a. sa soeur
- b. son père
- c. ses chats

*[I pick her up in the car to go to church.*

- a. his sister
- b. his father
- c. his cats]

In order to choose correctly, the learner must focus on the form (masculine / feminine, singular / plural) of the object pronoun. Doing a series of half a dozen or more sentences stresses the importance of processing these forms. The electronic response system could be very helpful here.

A “Grammar consciousness-raising” (GCR) activity (Wong, 2005, pp. 79-88) focuses on a specific form and engages learners to make a rule about the

form. Learners work in small groups; each member of the group has a separate list of paired sentences; in each pair, the sentences are the same except one has an incorrect form. The learner reads the sentences aloud; the group discusses correct and incorrect forms and creates a rule that clarifies the usage. The GCR activity focuses on grammar and is accomplished for the most part orally. While the electronic response system would not be directly involved, it could serve subsequently in a paired-sentence test aimed at determining if the rule was learned.

As SLA research advances, there will likely be emphasis on individual characteristics in learning. The role of multiple intelligences is being explored in this regard. Nevertheless, the capability of the electronic response system to gather the reactions of all participants will remain a powerful tool. The informed instructor will want to plan a strategy.

### **Planning a Strategy**

Introducing an electronic response system into a foreign language class requires managing technology, logistics, and instruction. Securing technical support means getting on-site help from knowledgeable staff as well as determining a vendor who can provide hardware and software and arrange for storage and retrieval of data. Logistics requires that equipment (computer, projector, signal receiver) be available as needed and that learners have response pads. With laptops, portable projectors, and hand-held response pads, practically any classroom can be used; if a network is not immediately available, the instructor could upload data after the lesson. It is the instructional planning that is paramount.

The number of questions and the type of questions that are used in a given class or course must vary according to circumstances. In any case, the nature of the system imposes the discipline of planning ahead of time the items that are going to be available during the class hour. While it is possible to record answers to issues that arise spontaneously, a methodical pre-planning approach favors a long-term strategy. Using the technology regularly allows the instructor to be aware of students' needs. As answers to individual questions are processed, there is immediate feedback on whether students are meeting specific objectives, without having to wait for a progress test. If too many objectives are missed in a given class, planning for the next and future classes can be done right away. In this way, the instructor can stay more attuned to the progress of the entire class.

Another aspect of approach is the rhythm of using electronic response, lecturing, and prompting discussion. Burnstein and Lederman (2001, p. 9) report their experience implementing an electronic response system in a physics lecture class. Following an initial year of experience, they adopted a rhythm in which electronic response questions were interwoven at different points throughout the lecture. Sometimes peer interaction was accomplished by having groups of two or three work together on a question and come up with a consensual response. In some instances, it is useful to record responses to a question, allow discussion, and then pose the question again to see if answers change.

Developing a strategy for using the electronic response system involves risks, not the least of which is the uncertainty of introducing a new technique. There is a period of adjustment for instructor as well as for learners. With careful planning and a reflective approach, however, it is possible to meet the challenges and to make it a successful endeavor.

## Conclusion

As foreign language instructors become more adept at using computers and as the cost of certain technologies becomes more affordable, it is likely that electronic response technology will reach more and more classrooms. By recording and processing the responses of all learners in the classroom, this technology holds the promise of enhancing each learner's involvement. While the instructor will find that manipulating the hardware and software is relatively easy, the greater challenge lies in being aware of how the individual learner is acquiring language and in designing or selecting the questions that will favor progress toward acquisition.

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# 12

## **Instructional Technology as a Means to Enhance Foreign Language Learning**

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**T**echnology can be an effective way of enhancing students' language retention and learning as well as promoting their language proficiency by integrating context with the instruction, making language input comprehensible, and engaging students in meaningful tasks. Based on examples of instructional technology-based activities developed by the authors, this article discusses the role of technology as a tool for a foreign language educator to integrate the principles of effective language learning, foreign language standards, and proficiency guidelines into their instruction. First, the authors discuss the importance of the technology and the proficiency guidelines in the standards for foreign language teachers and learners. Second, the principles of language learning leading to language retention are discussed. Third, the paper describes specific instructional technologies and related instructional formats that language teachers can use in their classrooms in order to address the principles of effective language learning and the foreign language standards.

### **Standards for Foreign Language Teachers and Learners**

The importance of technology and proficiency is emphasized in the standards for foreign language teachers and learners across all levels.

#### *Standards for foreign language teachers*

On national and state levels, standards for foreign language teachers underscore the importance of the use of technology in the foreign language

classroom as well as for the preparation of foreign language teachers across all levels:

The teacher candidate uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom. (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, 2002, General Competency Six & Principle # 6)

Research and practice shows that the teacher's knowledgeable use of instructional technologies in the classroom contributes to enhanced input processing by bringing context into language teaching (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). For example, the use of the Internet or Microsoft's PowerPoint® has become an indispensable tool in language learning and language teacher preparation programs (Pusack & Otto, 1996, p. 33).

#### *Standards for foreign language learners*

"Students should be given the opportunity during their school careers to take increasing advantage of new technological advances" (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 35). A meaningful integration of a variety of technologies in the classroom "will help students strengthen linguistic skills, establish interactions with peers, and learn about contemporary culture and everyday life in the target country." (p. 35) By incorporating technology in the classroom, foreign language educators reach all five goals, known as the "5 C's of foreign language education" (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) (p. 31). Five goal areas "reflect a rationale for foreign language education" (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 45). The standards of each goal area "offer a vision of what students should know and be able to do with another language" (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 29). One can read:

The standards for foreign language learning require a much broader definition of the content of the foreign language classroom. Students should be given ample opportunities to explore, develop, and use communication strategies, learning strategies, critical thinking skills, and skills in technology, as well as the appropriate elements of the language system and culture (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 32).

In particular, technology helps to reach the Connections goal that addresses the relationship of foreign language learning with other disciplines and information acquisition. Standard 3.1 of the Connection goal says that "Students reinforce and further knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language" (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 9). Standard 3.2 states "Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures" (p.9). Standard 3.1 also says that learning is now interdisciplinary. Knowledge that the students acquire in other disciplines can and should contribute to their learning of the foreign language and culture. Foreign language instruction becomes a means to "expand and deepen students' understanding of, and exposure to, other areas of knowledge" (p. 54). Standard 3.2 states that foreign language learning offers a "unique means of communication" and serves to "broaden" the sources of information available to students (p. 56). Students are to "seek out materials of interest to them, analyze the content, compare it to information available in their own language, and assess the linguistic and cultural differences" (p. 56).

*Proficiency guidelines*

Through the implementation of computer-mediated instructional projects, a foreign language educator can focus on the three modes of communication in foreign language: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 36). These “communicative modes” “place primary emphasis on the context and purpose of the communication” and answer “the question: what does it mean to ‘know’ a language” (p. 36). Based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines, teachers have to tailor their instruction based on students’ levels of language proficiency, such as Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior, and the corresponding sub-levels of Novice High or Intermediate Low (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1999). In the projects presented in this article, Novice and Intermediate levels are addressed. At the Novice level of language proficiency, students “can communicate with formulaic and rote utterances, lists and phrases,” while on the Intermediate level, they “create with language, ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics, and can handle a simple situation or transaction” (Swender, 1999, p. 9).

**Issues of Language Acquisition and Retention**

Foreign language teacher standards also stress teachers’ knowledge about language learning and second language acquisition. It seems that the development and the integration of computer-mediated instructional activities into the foreign language classroom enable pre-service and in-service teachers to connect their knowledge about how students learn with the use of instructional technologies:

The teacher understands how all students learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual and social development. (Nebraska Department of Education, 1996, p. 349, Teacher Preparation Guidelines, Principle #2).

During the period of the 1960s and early 1970s, language educators and researchers began to see the importance of how stimulus information is processed by language learners. It appears that a deeper understanding and the implementation of the way in which information is processed will enable language educators to create an instructional environment that enhances learners’ language learning.

**Learning as a Constructive and Reconstructive Process.**

Learning should be understood as a constructive and reconstructive process rather than a receptive one. Knowledge is created and reconstructed during the encoding and retrieval processes that lead the learner to make meaning of, select, and relate new and previous information. Constructivism, a broad term with philosophical, learning, and teaching dimensions, promotes the view of learning as a constructive and reconstructive process. Constructivism emphasizes the learners’ active role in constructing their own knowledge through both individual and social activities and interactions. Constructivism goes far beyond the

hereditary and environmental factors or interaction of the two in the development of the individual that nativism, empiricism, and interactionism promote. From the constructivist point of view, the individual cannot be reduced only to heredity, environment, or their interaction.

### **Processes of Human Cognition**

Understanding specific processes of human cognition helps the teacher to understand the fundamentals of human learning and how to build and improve instruction. The interrelatedness of the processes of acquisition, transfer, and retention of information in the mechanism of human learning leads the teacher to emphasize the importance of the relationship between teaching and assessment, language acquisition and language production, and previous and new information in the instructional practices. Research shows that even though unattended learning is possible, attended learning is superior to unattended learning.

Attention is necessary and sufficient for learning even though it has a limited capacity. Attention controls access to learning and awareness (Schmidt, 1995, 2001). Is there language learning without awareness? Preconscious registration (a detection of stimulus without awareness) and noticing (a detection of stimuli with awareness within selective attention, and a subjective correlate of attention) are both viewed as attentional mechanisms and are at play in language learning. Even though implicit and explicit learning represents the distinction between acquisition and learning (Krashen, 1982), and unconscious induction and abstraction (Schmidt, 1994), theoretical and experimental research shows that the rise of consciousness, awareness, and motivation are through factors of need, search, and evaluation (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Higher learners' involvement load and the depth of information processing advanced by the levels-of-processing approach to learning and memory (Houston, 1991) can also contribute to the acquisition of implicit knowledge, promote word retention and trace durability, and facilitate learning in general (Ellis, 1994; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Schmidt, 1994).

From the point of view of the separate-storage model of memory, rehearsal and meta-cognition enable information to remain in short-term store, enter the long-term memory system, and flow between the two of them (Bruning, Schraw & Running, 1999; Houston, 1991). While memorization and problem-solving can contribute to the acquisition of explicit knowledge, a learner's implicit knowledge can be developed by noticing, comparing, and integrating information.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, an example of his dialectical constructivism, is one of the most powerful concepts of mutual influence between the cognitive and social aspects of human cognition. The Zone of Proximal Development is "the difference between the difficulty level of a problem a child can cope with independently and the level that can be accomplished with adult help" (Bruning, Schraw & Ronning, 1999).

### **Instructional Practices Leading to Acquisition**

In order for acquisition to take place, daily instructional practices have to maintain an important balance between what students know and can understand and what will challenge them. This underlies the importance of maintaining an adequate difficulty level of instruction such as “a bit beyond” the learners’ current level of language competence expressed by Krashen’s formula “ $i + 1$ ”. While the “ $i$ ” is the current level of the learner’s competence, the “1” corresponds to the learner’s next level of competence that is a little beyond the learner’s current proficiency (Krashen, 1983, p. 2).

As Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) stated, the use of elaboration and motivation in the acquisition of target vocabulary leads to higher retention and proficiency. The researchers proposed a construct of task-induced involvement with the three motivational and cognitive dimensions of need, search, and evaluation that are conducive to the elaboration necessary for learning. Involvement as a motivational-cognitive construct explaining and predicting learner’s success in the retention of hitherto unfamiliar words combines three factors—need, search, and evaluation—in determining vocabulary retention. The need component, a motivational and non-cognitive dimension of involvement, is based on a drive to comply with the task requirements, which can be either externally (a moderate need) or internally (a strong need) imposed. Search and evaluation, the two cognitive dimensions, are contingent upon noticing and allocating attention (Schmidt, 1994, 2000) to the form-meaning relationship. Search is the attempt to find the meaning of an unknown word in the target language by consulting a dictionary or another authority, such as a teacher. Evaluation entails a comparison of a given word or a specific meaning with other words or meanings. The higher the involvement load, the better the retention of words will be. Teacher/researcher-designed tasks with a higher involvement load will lead to higher vocabulary retention. The focus on the involvement load does not give any preference to input or output tasks, nor does it depend on different types of mode, such as visual, oral, or aural. It only predicts that higher involvement in words induced by the task, as either input or output, will result in better retention.

A major challenge for a teacher of foreign languages is to integrate instructional technologies in order to develop language learners’ self-regulation and creativity while they learn the target language. Use of technologies can address Bloom’s six levels of cognitive development, which are knowledge (recalling or locating specific bits of information), comprehension (understanding communicated material or information), application (using rules, concepts, principles, and theories in new situations), analysis (breaking down information into its parts), synthesis (putting ideas together into a new or unique product or plan), and evaluation (judging the value of materials or ideas on the basis of set standards or criteria) (Curtain & Pesola, 1998). The teacher’s input expressed in the directions of the activities and assessment instruments should be tailored to the learner’s level of language proficiency.

The understanding of effective language learning leads foreign language educators to see what instructional formats and supporting instructional technologies can be integrated in the classroom to achieve positive outcomes.

### **Examples of Instructional Technologies**

Several software programs can be considered by foreign language teachers for developing instructional classroom activities based on the principles of effective language learning. A few are discussed here.

Macromedia's Dreamweaver 4<sup>®</sup>, a program for professional Website design, enables the language teacher to create interactive Web pages and activities that develop students' skills of searching, selecting, and using information on the Web in relation to the target language and culture.

Produced by Sunburst Technology Corporation, HyperStudio<sup>®</sup> is a multimedia software program that enables a language teacher to integrate videos, audio, recordings, text, and images. Another example of such a program is Microsoft's PowerPoint<sup>®</sup>. By creating meaningful sequences of cards and slides, teachers can create interactive stories through a multi-sensory and comprehensible input. Multimedia programs enhance students' information processing and develop their multiple intelligences.

By using video editing software programs, such as Apple's iMovie<sup>®</sup> (Macintosh platform) or Sony's Movie Shaker<sup>®</sup> (Windows machines), teachers can edit their digital video products recorded with digital video cameras and integrate them into their computer-mediated instructional activities using other instructional technologies such as multimedia software programs. With video editing software, teachers can select necessary portions of their videos, and add effects, music, titles, and subtitles. Edited videos let teachers increase the meaningfulness and comprehensibility of their instruction through visual and interactive input.

Produced by Inspiration Software Corporation, the Inspiration<sup>®</sup> software program can be used with any of the software discussed in this article, and provides teachers with the tools to create, develop, and make their instructional ideas more visual. The authors claim that "Inspiration's combination of visual and linear thinking deepens understanding of concepts, increases memory retention, develops organizational skills, and taps creativity" (Inspiration Software, Inc., 1998-1999, p. 21). Diagrams and outlines, concept and idea maps, webs and storyboards are some of the Inspiration tools that can activate student thinking in different ways. Integrated text, visuals, and colors can increase the comprehensibility of the structure and the quantity and quality of learning.

The instructional technologies mentioned in this section enable teachers to develop several instructional applications such as Internet-based instructional projects, computer activities, and stories. Some specific examples of computer-mediated activities developed by the authors are discussed within.

***WebQuest: “Olympic Summer Games of 2012”***  
***(Proficiency Level: Intermediate; Grade Level: 6-16)***

“A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web. [...] The model was developed in early 1995 at San Diego State University by Bernie Dodge with Tom March ...” (San Diego State University College of Education Website, The WebQuest Page, Site Overview). WebQuests are task-, inquiry-, and Internet-based instructional projects that contain several meaningfully designed instructional Web pages and organized Web links to culturally and linguistically authentic resources. WebQuests are designed to support learners’ thinking at the higher levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation that Bloom’s Taxonomy of thinking processes emphasizes.

In these projects, an inquiry-based approach is complimented with proficiency- and group-oriented learning. Individual and group rubrics enable students to evaluate their own and others’ performances according to the specific tasks assigned and Web resources analyzed. Learning a foreign language is also connected to studying the content area of social studies, such as geography, lifestyle, and eating traditions of the target cultures. Authenticity of resources, visual input, and structural organization of materials and their availability are definite advantages of WebQuests.

As an example of a WebQuest based on the learning principles discussed, this article presents the WebQuest “Olympic Summer Games of 2012” in which Intermediate learners of French select a French city to be a candidate for hosting the Olympic Summer Games of 2012. The authors used Macromedia’s Dreamweaver 4 to develop this instructional application. The WebQuest contains six main Web pages: Introduction, Task, Processes, Organization, Resources, and Evaluation. With appropriate adaptations, this project can be used for 6th grade to college educational levels as well as across the sub-levels of the Intermediate level of language proficiency that are based on ACTFL proficiency guidelines. Major levels and the different corresponding sub-levels point out how well a language learner can sustain performance “of the functions of the level, within the contexts and content areas for that level, with the degree of accuracy described for the level, and in the text type for the level” (Swender, 1999, p. 31). If necessary, teachers can adapt the format and the content of this project to other levels of language proficiency, such as Novice, Advanced, or Superior, by modifying the language input, activities, assessment instruments, Websites, and expectations for students’ output.

*WebQuest Web Pages*

Introduction page. The site’s Introduction page offers a general description and context of the project. The description is written in the target language, in this case, French. One can read:

Pour augmenter des chances de France afin de devenir un pays d’accueil des Jeux Olympiques d’été 2012, le gouvernement français a pour but de sélectionner une ville française qui sera le candidat

officiel du pays dans une course très compétitive avec des villes candidates représentant de nombreux pays du monde entier. Vous êtes membres du Comité Olympique de France dont la tâche est de trouver le meilleur candidat français. La victoire sur les autres pays est une priorité nationale de France et des Français. Le fait d'accueillir les Jeux augmentera le nombre de touristes visitant le pays et, par conséquent, assurera la position de France comme un pays le plus visité du monde. Cet événement sportif encouragera des compagnies étrangères à venir en France. Cela créera des emplois et améliorera l'économie nationale. La déclaration du candidat officiel sera célébrée dans le pays et annoncée dans le monde entier. Ce moment important pour la France et ses citoyens aura lieu le 15 juin 2004, exactement huit ans avant le début des Jeux. Ce jour-là, l'entrée officielle de France dans la course sera marquée par une présentation du candidat officiel de France. *[In order to increase the chances of France's becoming the host of the Summer Olympic Games 2012, the French government decides to select one French city to be the only official French candidate in a very competitive race with cities from all over the world. You have been invited to be members of the French Olympic committee to select the best candidate. The victory over the other candidates is a national priority for the French government and people. Hosting the Olympic Games will bring many foreign tourists and businesses to the country and strengthen the position of France as one of the most visited countries in the world. It will also create jobs and improve the national economy. The declaration of the official candidate will be celebrated nationally and proclaimed internationally. It will take place exactly 8 years before the games start, on June 15, 2004. On that day, in the city chosen, the official entry into the race will be celebrated by national and regional festivities marked by your special presentation about the city-winner.]*

Task page. The Task Page describes what major tasks students have to accomplish: *Votre tâche est de faire un exposé sur une ville française pour démontrer qu'elle peut être le meilleur candidat pour accueillir les Jeux Olympiques d'été 2012. [Your task is to select a French city and support it with a special presentation to demonstrate that it can indeed be the best candidate for France in the international race in order to host the Summer Olympic Games 2012.]*

On the Task Page, students are given advice on how to work in groups. They are told that resources and directions prepared for them will help them with their search. They are encouraged to be knowledgeable, creative, hard-working, collaborative, and objective. While working in groups, they are invited to ask questions and listen carefully to what their group members have to say. They are encouraged to put their group interests before their personal ones:

Remember, you can win only if your group wins! Every group needs to convince the other members of the Olympic Committee that their candidate is truly the best one for everybody!

Students are encouraged to build together a small community of learners and to develop social and communicative skills.

Process page. The Process page presents a step-by-step approach that groups of students have to follow in order to accomplish their task. A focused explanation of every step of this inquiry process seems to facilitate students' thinking. During this exploratory work, every member of the class community becomes a member of the French National Olympic Committee.

As step one, every committee member chooses a region or a city to explore: East, West, South, or North France. They let their teacher know what group they are in. While accomplishing this work, students consult sites given on the Resources page, look at the criteria for their search in the chart on the Organization page, and examine the criteria for their evaluation (the rubric for individual and group presentations) on the Evaluation page.

In the second step, every group member researches the chosen city or region. Students explore the Web resources on the Resources page and print and complete the chart on the Organization page.

As the third step, each group determines the best candidate from their group and respective regions. Group members present their individual candidates and answer questions from their group members. They use the rubric on the Evaluation page to evaluate presentations and give them to the presenters. Finally, the group chooses the best candidate to be presented to the class.

As step four, every group prepares a presentation about their candidate. Groups look at the organization chart on the Organization page to prepare the presentation. Every group member prepares a specific different category of the chart. Students use "the rubric of participation" on the Evaluation page to evaluate their group members' and their own participation in the group project. Students give rubrics to the group members.

For the fifth step, every Olympic Committee member evaluates the group presentations. Groups use "the rubric for group presentations" on the Evaluation page to evaluate presentations. They give the rubrics to the presenting groups. The president of the Olympic Committee (the teacher of the class) counts the results and declares the winner. After the WebQuest is completed, the teacher counts, records, and gives students their final individual scores based on all points acquired in all rubrics during the entire project.

Resources page. The Resources page offers organized links that the students can use to locate information to complete the project. The instructor organizes links in a meaningful way, based on geographical criteria of the target country (France). Students can visit authentic sites to learn about those regions. By using the Organization page and its references, language learners develop search skills and learn to make decisions about using Internet resources selected by the

teacher. By working with authentic Internet pages, students learn and practice how to scan texts and find information they might need. It is also important that the teacher make an effort to double check and regularly review the resource links selected for the project so that only desired and appropriate sites are present on the list of references. It is often possible that sites can change, or an Internet address can be listed incorrectly and a wrong site can be made available for students for consultation. Therefore, additional care should be spent in this very important matter.

#### *Assessment Instruments*

KWL chart. A KWL chart can be used with WebQuests and produced with the Inspiration software program. By using this chart, the teacher can ask students to provide information about what they know (K) about the subject before they start working on it, what they want to learn (W) and, after completing the project, what they have learned (L). The use of the KWL chart allows the teacher to engage students in thinking about the goals, the process, and the outcomes of the project. In this self-reflective chart, students can include short statements, write short narratives, and give examples.

#### *Academic Contract*

Academic contracts are a way to develop accountability of the students for their own learning. By using academic contracts, students learn how to plan and accomplish projects together. Academic contracts contain dates and objectives of student groups' meetings. Every group member signs a group contract. By signing the contract, the group members state that they agree with the indicated steps and deadlines that the group set up to accomplish the tasks.

Organization chart. On the Organization Page, students are given categories for their presentations: Sport Facilities, Lodging and Places to Eat, Attractions, and Transport. As examples, groups are also given a list of elements that they can use in their presentations: pictures, puppets, audio and video, posters, role play, signing, and drama. With these, the teacher guides and scaffolds the students' preparation. Students have to realize that their presentations should be well-organized, interactive, and appealing to the audience. Rubrics that are used to evaluate students' performance reflect the requirements described on the Organization page.

Rubrics. On the Evaluation page, students can find rubrics that evaluate their work. By using rubrics, teachers make students accountable for their own learning. Multiple sources are used for evaluation, such as classmates, group members, the teacher's evaluation and the student's self-evaluation.

One rubric is to evaluate the student's individual and group presentations. The class, the teacher, and the members of a presenting group use rubrics to give

their evaluation. The quality and quantity of the presentation as well as the use of technology (e.g., multimedia, Internet) are major criteria of the evaluation. Every evaluation criterion is defined and evaluated on four major levels: excellent, very good, good, and needs improvement. A number of points is assigned for every level, such as 10 for “Needs improvement,” 20 for “Good,” 30 for “Very Good,” and 40 for “Excellent.” Quantitative and qualitative elements describing the organization and content of presentations are included in the definition of criteria.

The second rubric is to evaluate student contributions to their own groups. At the end of the project, group members evaluate each other based on the criteria, such as leadership and accomplishment of the task assigned. Every criterion in this rubric is defined and evaluated on four levels of performance: “Excellent” (20 points), “Very Good” (15 points), “Good” (10 points), and “Needs improvement” (5 points). If needed, the number of points assigned to every level of performance can be changed and modified by the teacher.

***“French Foods”: Computer Activity***  
***(Proficiency Level: Novice; Grade Level: PreK-5)***

To develop this computer-based activity called “French Foods,” the authors used Macromedia’s Dreamweaver 4. In this instructional application, students practice to identify, comprehend, apply, analyze, and evaluate French food vocabulary learned in class while conducting a task-based search of Internet pages on an appropriate language level for Novice elementary school language learners.

At the beginning of the session, every student is given the same set of cards with images of food items studied and the names of the foods in the target and native languages below the images. In pairs, students search assigned Web pages to identify foods that a French boy, Pierre, eats for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in France. Students have to match identified foods with cards of food items given to them. The ultimate goal for learners is to group cards into three categories corresponding to the content of Pierre’s breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Finally, students verify if their results are correct by answering the teacher’s questions about what they found and learned, comparing their findings with those of their classmates, and receiving the teacher’s feedback.

This computer-based activity is designed to develop students’ language sensitivity by making connections between images and words, associations between the target and native languages, and word and context. The organization of this activity’s Web pages is inspired by the concept of a contextualized language picture-dictionary. This activity is also based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Thinking Processes: Knowledge (locating specific bits of information), Comprehension (understanding information about foods), Application (use of learned food vocabulary in a new situation), Analysis (organizing the information), and Evaluation (verifying the findings).

### *Web Pages*

In order to complete this Web exercise, students need to click on the “STUDENT” link to open the introductory page, and follow the directions presented there.

This activity contains several Web pages prepared by the teacher. In contrast with WebQuest, in this computer-based activity, the teacher creates the resource pages that the students consult and designs them for language learning.

Main page. First, the class visits the main page where students can read about the general context of the activity and the steps that they have to follow in order to complete it. On this Main page, one can read:

This is Pierre. Pierre is a French boy. Do you want to find out what Pierre eats for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in France?

Follow the directions:

1. Click below on Pierre’s meals: breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
2. Read about foods Pierre eats for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
3. Find cards that match the foods Pierre eats.
4. Group your cards into breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
5. Share what you learned with your teacher and other students about foods Pierre eats.

The teacher introduces the learners to the main character of the activity, Pierre, and the objectives for their search by projecting on the big screen the introductory page that students also open on their own personal computers. The teacher needs to make sure that learners understand their task.

Pages about Pierre’s meals. On the page for Breakfast, students can read in the target language:

Pour le petit déjeuner, je bois du jus d’orange, mange du pain et du fromage. [*For breakfast, I drink orange juice, eat bread and cheese.*] Students can see pictures of orange juice, bread, and cheese.

On the page for Lunch, there is a description in French of Pierre’s lunch: Pour le déjeuner, je mange du riz et du poisson et bois de l’eau. [*For lunch, I eat rice, fish, and drink water.*] Students can see images of rice, fish, and water.

On the page for Dinner, Pierre describes his dinner: Pour le dîner, je mange de la pizza, une banane et de la glace. [*For dinner, I eat pizza, banana, and ice cream.*] Students can see images of pizza, a banana, and ice cream.

Under the images, there are passages describing the food in question and asking students reflective questions that guide their thinking. For example, Pierre boit du jus d’orange tous les matins. Pierre aime le jus d’orange parce que le jus est toujours frais. Pierre aime aussi la couleur du jus d’orange. Le jus d’orange est jaune comme le soleil. Quant il fait chaud, Pierre aime boire du jus d’orange. [*Pierre drinks orange juice every morning. Pierre likes orange juice because it is always fresh. Pierre likes also the color of orange juice. Orange juice is yellow like the sun. When it is hot, Pierre drinks orange juice.*]

*Pedagogical Recommendations*

Teachers might consider the following recommendations to conduct this computer activity as well as scaffold students' learning as effectively as possible.

Cooperative learning. The teacher groups students into pairs in order to find out the information needed. Pair work is only one possible option for grouping. Individual and group (3-4 students) work are other possibilities for this type of a task-based search. It seems that the teacher has to plan carefully in order to group learners according to learning styles, personalities, pace of learning, gender, ethnicity, language, academic, and special needs of language learners so that their common work will be as effective as possible for all learners. Preference can be given to heterogeneous grouping. However, it seems that knowledge about the needs of language learners of the class would give the best guidance to the teacher. Cooperative learning (searching, matching, assisting) enables individual learners to negotiate the meaning of the information they find and to move, as Vygotsky described, from their actual developmental level to their potential one.

Scaffolding. The teacher consistently scaffolds the learning process of young learners. During the completion of the search, the teacher visits learners to make sure that they are making progress in their search. Learners characterized by a low level of attention, ineffective cooperative skills, and insecurity would need close assistance and attention on the part of the teacher. If there are difficulties, the teacher needs to scaffold learners' quests with leading questions and examples, in addition to getting peers involved in assisting each other. Effective grouping is an important factor for cooperative work between young learners.

Assessment strategies. During the phase of the verification of the results, the teacher asks learners to answer questions about the findings by showing the cards, locating words and images on the big screen of the classroom, and pronouncing words in the target and native languages. To locate needed words and images visible and accessible to all learners at once, the teacher projects every needed page on the big classroom screen. In this case, one of the seating possibilities is to gather (on the floor or in chairs) all young learners in a U-shape in front of the big classroom screen at this assessment stage of the computer activity.

One of the ways for the teacher to assess learning is to give students feedback about their findings and leading them to find correct answers, if necessary. The teacher draws learners' attention to the relationship between image and word, native language and target language, and the meaning of a word and its context. Students need these skills for both an effective computer-based search and their language learning and development. After conducting the activity, the teacher may follow it up at a later time by bringing real and authentic foods presented in the activity into the classroom in order to taste them. Any authentic meal presented, such as a breakfast, might be organized within the tasting. Through engaging as many learners' senses as possible in a real-life context, such as touching, feeling,

smelling, and tasting the foods studied and discovered, the teacher creates an effective learner-centered instructional environment that enhances young learners' active participation in their own learning process.

In conclusion, Internet-based projects, such as WebQuests and computer activities, enable a foreign language educator to build meaningful and interactive foreign language instruction that engages students in learning the target language and culture through building connections with other disciplines and communities, developing interests and creativity, and using the target language for real-world communicative tasks.

***HyperStudio: the Story of "Les Trois Mousquetaires"***  
***(Proficiency Level: Novice; Grade Level: 6-16)***

Multimedia software programs represent other tools that enable the teacher to create activities and materials that relate language learning to other disciplines, such as literature, history, geography, and music, and to the world at large. To do this, the teacher integrates a story-based approach into the foreign language instruction.

This section describes how a story of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (The Three Musketeers) can be taught to Novice learners of French on grade levels 6-16 by using the HyperStudio multimedia program. HyperStudio allows the teacher to teach a story through communicative and learner-centered exercises focused on the learner's skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing as well as learning and practice of grammar and culture integrated into the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). The meaning of the story is a major vehicle for language learning and practice and the teacher's instruction in class. The program lets the instructor integrate and meaningfully and purposefully organize different types of exercises in one technology-based instructional product. Projected on a big screen or used on individual computers, these interactive exercises become tools for the teacher to establish a connection and build a relationship with the class. A multimedia program allows the teacher to engage the learners actively in every step of the process of learning, discovery, and communication.

***Opening of the Story: Getting Students' Attention***

HyperStudio enables the teacher to create interactive presentations by using cards. A HyperStudio card represents a multimedia space that allows the integration of text, colors, effects, video, audio, visuals, and links. To teach a story, the teacher can assign specific segments of the story and related exercises to different cards. For example, the first card in the discussed adaptation contains a colorful background depicting a theater stage with closed curtains, the title of the story, images of story characters, and a short video in which the narrator of the story (this can be a classroom teacher or a native speaker) introduces the story to students in the target language. Once the first card starts, dramatic music starts playing and images of theatrical masks and birds begin to move across the stage. The objective for the opening is to create a theatrical atmosphere that can enhance

students' interest, curiosity, attention, and, subsequently, motivation to learn. The technological tools of HyperStudio enable the teacher to create a multi-sensory input connecting to students' multiple intelligences and interests. HyperStudio features are easy to learn and use. A motivated foreign language teacher can use the program to build effective and engaging activities and presentations on a daily and weekly basis.

*Adapting the Story Script: Aiming Language Proficiency*

The text of the story should be tailored to the students' level of language proficiency. In the present adaptation, the story is adapted to the Novice level of oral language proficiency. The teacher can use the description of the targeted level of language proficiency based on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines in order to include the essential characteristics typical for the level in question.

C'est l'histoire de quatre mousquetaires. D'Artagnan, Parthos, Athos, et Aramis sont les quatre mousquetaires qui ont servi le puissant roi Louis XIII et la belle reine contre leurs ennemis comme le Cardinal des Gardes, Richelieu, et d'autres rois. [*This is a story of four musketeers. D'Artagnan, Parthos, Athos and Aramis are the four musketeers who served the powerful king Louis XIII and the beautiful queen against their enemies like the Cardinal of the Guards, Richelieu, and other kings.*]

*Story Narrative: Using HyperStudio Features*

Teachers themselves, their colleagues, or native informants can record the text. If the teacher chooses to use an audio version of the text, the HyperStudio has a utility that allows the teacher to record the text with a simple microphone. In an effort to increase the quality of the sound, the teacher can also use the sound tracks of the digital videos for audio purposes. Audio files can be saved on the teacher's computer and later inserted into a card. The use of sound tracks has appeared to be a simple and effective way to make audios and reach an acceptable level of sound quality. If teachers want to record the narrator(s) on a video, they can use a digital video camera, edit it as necessary, and insert it into the card.

The text can be inserted into a scrollable textbox. By using scroll bars, the text can be moved inside the box. Language- and culture-rich textual annotations can be created for key vocabulary in the text. The teacher needs to create a link between the word or expression in the text and the annotation. The learner clicks on the linked vocabulary item to make the corresponding annotation appear outside the textbox. Video and audio files prepared by the teacher or others can also serve as annotations. Since media files can be inserted directly in the cards, they appear immediately once the student clicks on the linked word of interest. After accessing annotations, clicking a second time on the linked vocabulary makes a textual annotation disappear. If necessary to underline certain elements of the text, numerous effects can be added with text, such as putting text in bold, making it italicized, using fonts, different size, and colors.

*Presenting the Story: Methodological Issues*

In the present adaptation of Dumas' story, the class needs to use individual computers in a computer lab in order to work with the audio, video, and the narrative of the story. Students are asked to access all three formats of the story in any order: audio, video, and narrative. All three formats are inserted into the same HyperStudio card and can be accessed by clicking on the corresponding links. The choice of all three possible formats addresses students' diverse learning styles, skills, and strengths. While working with all three types of input, students are also asked to take notes about the details of the story and answer in writing several general comprehension questions. At this stage, the comprehension questions should be general in nature rather than addressing numerous details of the plot, and the answers students have to write should be one-word or short sentences. The objective for using comprehension questions is to focus students' attention on major developments of the story. In the present adaptation, audio and video recordings are made by the authors themselves. Recordings of the story can contain monologues and dialogues based on the story. The teacher's colleagues, students and native informants can play in the video and audio recordings of the story. In video recordings, accessories such as visuals, costumes, and decors can be used to make the language input as visual, meaningful, and contextualized as possible.

Since students can see the individuals, videos appear to be especially beneficial for language learners to pick up extralinguistic cues such as gestures, movements, facial expressions, special location, and other visuals, which is likely to increase students' comprehension of the story and its context. Being able to see the faces of actors gives learners an extra input to catch the pronunciation and the intonation and relate actions and words better. Videos provide the ability to put words into context and connect them to other sources of input as well as the students' multiple intelligences. Using audio recordings without visual or written support will push learners to use their cognitive abilities to the maximum in order to understand the meaning of the story. Audio recordings can also be used with the narrative of the story, which is a script of the audio and video recordings. Used in concert, different types of input provide the maximum support to the learner.

While working with the narrative of the story, students can consult annotations describing in the target language the social, cultural, economic, and linguistic context of the story: the French King Louis XIII and France's situation during his reign. To access the annotations students have to click on highlighted key words or phrases to which annotations refer. Annotations appear in a form of short texts or definitions placed in a textbox. The narrative also contains images of characters and French and European cities, as well as music illustrating the plot of the story and life during that time period. The same examples are used in the interactive practice exercises and activities to which learners are exposed at a later time.

Presenting the story with HyperStudio corresponds to the objectives of the Presentation stage of the PACE (Presentation, Attention, Co-construction, and Extension) model, which is a story-based approach for teaching grammar (Shrum

& Glisan, 2005, p. 196). The Presentation stage presents the target language in a “whole” and “thematic” way: “Episodically organized stories include stageable actions and events and are well suited for presentation since the meanings of these texts can be made transparent and comprehensible through dramatization, actions, or TPR storytelling” (p. 196).

Several types of exercises can be implemented with HyperStudio to practice the vocabulary and grammar in a meaningful context of the story as well as to strengthen students’ understanding of the story. These exercises correspond to the goals for the Extension Activity Stage of the PACE model: “In story-based language teaching, the teacher never loses sight of the “whole”. [...] the Extension activity phase of PACE provides learners with the opportunity to use their new grammar skill in creative and interesting ways while at the same time integrating it into existing knowledge” (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 199). HyperStudio enables the teacher to achieve such objectives.

Based on their instructional objectives and creativity, teachers can also create different types of practice activities with HyperStudio. Some sample activities are presented here.

#### *Matching Exercises*

By completing matching exercises, students can practice associating the character’s image, a description of the character, and her or his name. For example, images of four characters appear on the card. Below every image, there are two names, and students have to choose the one that corresponds to the image. Before associating the image and the name of a character, students listen to the directions in the target language and, later, an oral introduction of the character. Characters describe themselves or talk about a certain segment of the story that can give listeners clues about the character’s identity. Afterwards, students have to click on the name of their choice. When they do it, they hear a feedback on their answer. The teacher can use several types of feedback, which can range from yes/no answers to reflective questions that would guide students’ thinking in the interpretation of the feedback, such as, “Are you sure? Review the story one more time!” Through guessing and problem solving situations, the teacher develops students’ higher thinking skills.

#### *True/False Questions*

Students are asked to answer specific questions about the characters of the story: the King, the Queen, Cardinal Richelieu, or the musketeers. These questions are focused on specific traits of the characters based on the story told. Such exercises also check students’ knowledge of grammar points studied, such as the agreement in gender and number between noun and adjective. As VanPatten and Sanz (1995) pointed out, meaning comes before grammar. Students have to click on the word that best represents their understanding of the story. Students receive immediate oral and written evaluation of their answers. Oral and written statements are recorded by the teacher in advance. The teacher’s evaluation statements can be words in the target language like “Bravo! You won!”, “This is

a correct answer!", "You know the story!", or "Sorry! Think one more time. The King is not poor!" and so on.

An interactive geographical map can also be used to check on students' understanding of the story. On a card, students see the map of Europe with the names of the countries and places and are asked to locate three places visited by the main character. Students click on the name of a country and receive immediate feedback. The feedback is prepared and recorded by the teacher. The feedback can also range from Yes or No answers to the statements that ask students to think about the story and its meaning if the student's answer is not correct: "D'Artagnan did not visit this place. Go rather to the North." Students have to interpret the feedback and make appropriate decisions.

#### *Writing About a Story Character*

On a card, students are given the image of a character and provided with a written quote describing the character. In class, students are asked to identify and describe the character: "Who is this character?" "Describe the personality and physical appearance of the character," "Why is this character important?" "Tell me about the role of the character in the story." First, students are asked to provide written answers to the questions in a scrollable textbox that appears in the card. Students write and erase information as needed. Software programs with French a alphabet can be installed on the computers so that students write signs, such as accents, that are typical in the French alphabet. If HyperStudio is not available in the school, Microsoft Word® or similar programs can be alternatively used. In this case, students can see the card on the big screen and retype the question in their document and then answer it. After completing the answers individually, students discuss their answers in the target language in groups or pairs, which allows the teacher to establish and develop the interpersonal mode of communication in the classroom. Afterwards, student groups can be asked to summarize and present their descriptions for the class. Later, the teacher clicks on the image of the character to allow students to listen and read the sample answers and descriptions in relation to the question. After clicking on the image of the character, the sample written answer appears on the card and students can listen to the character's self-description pre-recorded by the teacher. At that stage, students can make necessary modifications to their own writing as necessary. The teacher can collect students' works to give them additional feedback in relation to their writings.

#### *Reconstructing the Story Plot*

The teacher can ask students to reconstruct the plot of the story. For example, on a HyperStudio card the images of the cities visited by the musketeer, D'Artagnan, the main character of the story, are placed in a random order. By using the feature that allows moving visuals, students are asked to put the images in the order in which the character visited them in the story. In pairs or groups, students brainstorm possible answers and negotiate the meaning in the target language. To do it, the class can use their computers in the computer lab of the school if the school has these. Before class, the teacher can copy the HyperStudio presentation to the computers that students will use during the class. The teacher

can ask selected groups or pairs to present their results on the big screen in front of the class. While doing it, the class brainstorms and discusses all possible answers, reviews, and retells the story. As an alternative way to complete the reconstruction of the story plot, in case the HyperStudio program is not available in the school's computer lab, students are given envelopes with the visuals used in the card. Student groups and pairs reconstruct the story plot by manipulating visuals on their desks. Then, selected groups, pairs, or students present their results on the big screen by using the teacher's computer.

To scaffold students to retell the entire story, the teacher can guide students' thinking by using story maps in the target language prepared with the Inspiration software program. The teacher can use several formats to build story maps. Based on one format, story maps contain textboxes for four categories: characters of the story, setting, plot, and outcomes. Students can work in pairs or groups to enter information into corresponding boxes. Based on another format, a story map presents a sequence of major events in the story development. The teacher provides the description of some events and asks students to give information for the remaining ones that also contain some cues to guide students' thinking.

As a final project, students can be asked to form groups to prepare their own presentations about the story. The teacher's presentation becomes for students an example of how to use HyperStudio. Before preparing their presentations, students are taught how to create cards and use the features of the program. Teachers can teach the program's features to their students themselves or have a technology teacher do it. Student groups prepare files of materials, including visuals, audios and videos, for their presentation. Students can combine the use of different technological tools, such as HyperStudio, Inspiration, video editing, and Internet, with, for example, a role-play of the story as well as visual arts and music. During a whole-class session student groups give and videotape their presentations with a digital video camera. Later, the class can make a video collage based on all students' presentations.

As a conclusion, the use of the story "pushes" language learners to use the language as much as possible, which fosters language acquisition (Swain, 1985), develops their communicative competence, and higher-level thinking skills. By simplifying the input, by using linguistic and extralinguistic features, and by modifying the interactional structure of the conversation (Long, 1981), teachers modify their language input. This develops specific features in the learners' interlanguage (Ellis & He, 1991), the learner's use of the target language, and examination of the relationship between language items contained in multimedia delivered input and those recalled and reused by students during the completion of the task (Brett, 1998).

## **Conclusion**

Instructional technology-based activities discussed in this article can assist foreign language teachers in creating an interactive, meaningful, enjoyable, and exciting learning environment in their classrooms. Students' multiple intelligences and language retention are addressed through an integration of context, tasks,

and multiple and diverse sources of input and assessment instruments. The teacher's focus on communication, context, standards, language proficiency, and acquisition enhance students' language learning and makes language learners active participants in the process of learning and discovering the target language and culture.

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