Performance + Proficiency = Possibilities

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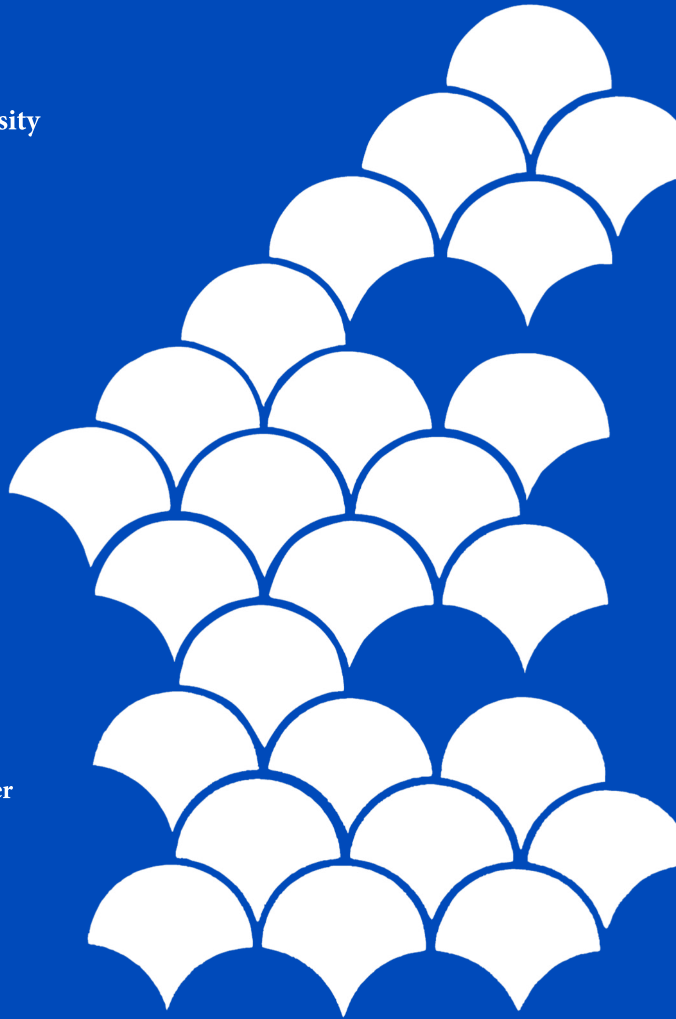

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2017 Report of the
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Performance + Proficiency = Possibilities

Selected Papers from the 2017 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Julie A. Foss, Editor
Saginaw Valley State University

2017 Report of the
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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Review and Acceptance Procedures
Central States Conference Report

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that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published.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

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Preface

Performance + Proficiency = Possibilities

The 2017 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was held at The Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. The conference theme focused on moving students from knowing about the language to becoming proficient in the language. With the Seal of Biliteracy in the forefront of our work, it is vital that we provide an education for our students to be successful at the Intermediate Mid level and above in their prospective languages. Their jobs and future depend on our ability to provide a path to proficiency and global competency.

The 2017 Keynote Speaker was Nick Verderico, a former student who was one of my "possibilities" who used his proficiency for "reality." As a Business Development Manager, Nick is responsible for sales and marketing in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic), Northern Mexico, and Central and South America. His language abilities have garnered him a very interesting job with The J.M. Smucker Company. His message was not only what his "reality" is as the company's Business Development Manager, but also how what you do in your classroom can inspire your students to help them be successful, gainfully employed, 21st century global citizens. He is the "poster child" of what world language teachers envision for their students' futures. His observations and life are a testament to the power teachers have in their classrooms.

The CSCTFL conference boasted 328 sessions and workshops. There were a myriad of topics and best practices presented, including Integrated Performance Assessments, technology, language literacy, 90% language usage in class, assessing proficiency, core practices, advocacy, curriculum design, and many more too numerous to mention. CSCTFL is grateful to have so many presenters who were willing to share and network with all the participants.

The 2017 Central States Conference Report entitled Performance + Proficiency = Possibilities contains articles that focus on developing proficiency from PK-16. Topics include the promotion and assessment of performance and proficiency in a variety of contexts, and through the use of multiple technologies. Articles also explore the possibilities that exist for intercultural understanding, community engagement, and advocacy for language learning. CSCTFL is lucky to have such dedicated researchers, writers, and proficiency-based educators.

Martha Halemba
2017 CSCTFL Program Chair

Performance + Proficiency = Possibilities

Julie A. Foss
Saginaw Valley State University

This volume explores the multitude of possibilities that exist both within and beyond the performance- and proficiency-oriented classroom. Articles in the 2017 *Report* present possibilities for language learners and teachers alike, including possibilities for developing real-world language skills, fostering intercultural understanding, engaging with communities, mentoring, and advocating for language learning in many contexts.

In the first chapter, Castañeda, Gardner, and Luebbers propose using student performance as the basis for efforts to sustain and support language programs. They argue that performance-based activities, including student projects, cultural events, travel, and service, can serve as a powerful advocacy tool, and they provide practical advice for implementing and publicizing these activities.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on assessment possibilities in the language classroom. Rojas-Miesse and Szucs make the case that a variety of assessments can and should coexist in proficiency-oriented instruction. After describing the nature and purpose of achievement, performance, and proficiency assessments, they show how each can be integrated into the curriculum, as illustrated by sample assessments and rubrics. McKeeman and Oviedo explore how digital tools including Piktochart, VoiceThread, and Twitter can be used in performance assessments to support student learning, and the possibilities that these technology-based assessments provide for interdisciplinary collaboration.

In Chapter 4, Carruthers examines the use of another technology, synchronous video chat, to foster intercultural competence. She reports on students' experiences and perceived benefits of participating in conversations with native speakers using the TalkAbroad platform, and makes recommendations for the successful implementation of native speaker video chats.

Chapters 5 and 6 offer additional approaches to promoting cultural understanding. Léal advocates for redefining French language and cultural studies through a focus on contemporary, multicultural France. In addition to providing a wealth of historical and background information, resources, and interdisciplinary activities, she explores the notion of multiculturalism as it exists in the French and American education systems. Wagner and Sullivan describe how an undergraduate research project on the memorialization of homosexual victims of the Holocaust helped develop a student's intercultural literacy. Their article also provides an overview of the research mentoring experience from both the mentor's and mentee's perspective, including advice and strategies for mentoring undergraduate research.

Izmaylova-Culpepper and Olovson report on the linguistic possibilities offered by short-term study abroad in Chapter 7. Their study on the development of fluency and accuracy during a six-week Spanish immersion program offers evidence that even short stays abroad can benefit students' oral performance. The authors also

discuss the use of the Exploratory Practice framework as a roadmap for educators who wish to conduct their own action research, and present thoughts on using self-reflective discourse analysis activities in language instruction.

Allen moves the focus from student language production to teacher language production in Chapter 8. Her analysis of teacher code-switches in the classroom as compared to bilingual code-switching outside the classroom points to the importance of embedding language instruction in meaningful discourse.

In the final chapter, Zhang and Bowles advocate for purposeful integration of the arts in elementary language programs. They present a number of engaging, performance-oriented arts-integrated activities from an elementary Chinese program. Included are detailed descriptions and examples of student work that encourage replication of these activities in other elementary settings.

Although they represent a range of languages, learning contexts, approaches, and ideas, all the articles in this volume highlight the type of meaningful, real-world experiences that underlie the development of performance and proficiency. The diversity that these articles represent also serves to underscore the multiplicity of possibilities that exist through language learning.

Classroom and Community Performance Activities as Language Learning Advocacy Tools

Martha E. Castañeda
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Abstract

According to the Modern Language Association, in 2013 the enrollment in university foreign language (FL) courses dropped 6.7% (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). In PK-12 public schools, data is equally dismal with only 18.5% of all students enrolled in a foreign language class. States in the Central States region are not immune to this phenomenon, and several states in the region report a decline in language enrollment (ACTFL, 2015). Hence, it is imperative that educators take action, advocate for growth, and sustain existing programs. In this article, the authors propose strategies and performance activities as a means of advocating for language learning in the classroom and community. Grounded in ACTFL's performance descriptors (ACTFL, 2012), community-based learning (Mooney & Edwards, 2001), and Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2005), the proposed activities innovate possibilities for student performance. Classroom activities include digital storytelling projects presented to an audience of parents and community members as well as making culturally authentic artifacts displayed at school and taken home. Community activities involve bilingual reading aloud projects, translating documents for native speakers, and making culturally authentic crafts for children in hospitals. As an extension to the inherent community connections, the paper provides strategies for sharing classroom news with local media.

Introduction

There is reasonable cause for concern for the survival of language programs, with declining enrollment starting from PK all the way through the university level of language study. Data shows a drop in enrollment in university foreign language courses of 6.7% in a 2013 survey conducted by the Modern Language Association (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). Data collected and reported by ACTFL on K-12 public schools show that in 2004/2005 and 2007/2008, only 18.5% of all students were enrolled in foreign language courses, with several states in the Central States region reporting a loss (ACTFL, 2015).

In addition to the observed declines in PK-16, another issue is leading an additional downturn in language program enrollments. In some states, such as Oklahoma, Florida, New Mexico, and California, there has been a recent push for legislation to allow students to count computer coding as a means of satisfying the foreign language requirement (Berdan, 2014; Boyd, 2014; O'Connor, 2014). Even more worrisome, according to data from the 2007 census, some of these enacting the legislation include states with the highest populations of citizens who speak another language at home. Forty-two percent of Californians, thirty-five percent of New Mexicans, and twenty-six percent of Floridians use a language other than English at home (Shin & Kominski, 2007). These issues, combined with the ever-increasing accessibility and improvement of digital translation, language learning, and communication tools such as Google Translate, Duolingo, and the Pilot earpiece, create a need for advocacy for language learning programs as great as ever.

We expect that language educators are aware of the merits of learning a second language, but the onus is on us as professionals in the field to share and celebrate those merits with the general public. In order to retain and even increase the current language program enrollments, we must communicate the benefits of language learning with the general public. Indubitably, advocacy in the traditional sense of political participation and engagement plays a valuable role in sharing this knowledge with the public and in sustaining the current numbers in the profession. ACTFL's State Advocacy Goals include promotion of language learning at an early age, working to make language learning a high school graduation requirement, and even arranging meetings and contact with legislators (ACTFL, n.d.). These goals are worthwhile, and language educators can support these goals additionally through strategies for gaining positive attention for language programs in schools and communities.

Language educators can employ practical strategies to address learning goals and simultaneously establish and develop language programs as an integral and valuable part of the academic and greater community. In this article, we plan to provide examples of a variety of practical strategies that language educators can utilize to advocate for language learning in their PK-12 and university institutions, local communities, and beyond. The strategies provided in this manuscript adhere to World-Readiness Standards (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and inherently encourage meeting the ACTFL performance descriptors (2012) by focusing on students' ability to use language. Many of the strategies presented in this article additionally provide opportunities for students and educators to engage in service activities, including a variety of forms addressed through research conducted by

Mooney and Edwards (2001), such "service learning," "out of class activities," and more. Strategies presented in this article can simultaneously foster growth and proficiency for students in terms of language skills and cultural competencies, attract language learning candidates to weakening programs, and stimulate and foster strong bonds between educators, language learning programs, administrators, parents, and other community stakeholders.

Language educators can take advantage of opportunities to advocate for language learning through activities already occurring within the classroom or institution environment. Many activities, such as digital portfolios, craft making, digital storytelling, and lessons that allow for cross-curricular connections offer opportunities for students to demonstrate and practice interpretive listening and speaking performance skills, such as following instructions and asking questions to clarify meaning, and also for teachers to advocate for language learning. These advocacy measures can be made through minimal tweaking or additional effort beyond typical classroom and institutional duties on the part of the educator, making them convenient and desirable means of advocating for language study.

Tangible evidence of learning

To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge.
—Confucius

Stoller (2002) indicated that language learners can develop their language skills in tandem with acquiring cultural knowledge through project work. The integration of cultural and language skills in projects, Stoller argues, pushes students to take ownership in their learning, to rely on higher-order thinking skills, and helps create a community of learners. Donato and McCormick (1994) indicate that artifacts in the form of portfolio allow students to reflect on their learning, to set new goals, and to provide "concrete evidence" of strategy use, and argue that this should be utilized in language classrooms. In a PK-12 setting, sending home tangible samples of student work or providing student work to the community can keep educational stakeholders abreast of student growth and development, helping parents understand their child's learning goals and teacher's methods, and promoting involvement from all community members in educating the children (Davies & Le Mahieu, 2003).

One such example of an activity in a PK-12 setting that allows language learners to use language in context to build cultural proficiency, to perform by creating tangible evidence of learning, and to connect with the community is the "Guatemalan worry doll" project. First, community or parental support is garnered by requesting materials needed to execute the project: cardstock, cloth, string, matches, markers, and scissors. This can be done via email or face-to-face requests, or via grant requests or websites such as donorschoose.org. When teachers explain the intended purpose of the materials as not just a learning tool, but also to provide comfort and joy to community members in need, donors are more likely to provide requested items.

Once materials are gathered, the teacher prepares a lesson in which students are informed in the Spanish language about the origin, use and significance of worry dolls in Guatemala. Then, students follow instructions provided in the target language to make dolls to take home or to send to a nearby Ronald McDonald house, and handwrite

cards in English and Spanish to accompany the dolls, explaining the significance of the doll and wishing the recipient well. Following a series of instructions in the target language as well as asking questions in the target language to clarify meaning are two Novice to Intermediate level language performance tasks embedded in this type of activity when presented in the target language (ACTFL, 2012). This activity promotes the learning outcomes in Fink's Taxonomy of caring, integration, application of skills, and human dimension, combining to create significant learning (Fink, 2005). Teachers of languages other than Spanish can make other products of cultural significance to provide to nearby veterans hospitals, nursing homes, Ronald McDonald houses, and more. The nature of this project also lends to addressing Cultures, Communities, Comparisons, Connections, and Communication, all five of the 5 C's of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) along with the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* (2012). Through this type of project, students increase awareness of community needs, and gain knowledge through real world experiences. The awareness and knowledge gained in this project best fit the descriptors for "out-of-class activities" and "volunteering" types of community-based learning as described by Mooney and Edwards (2001).

These kinds of projects allow for educators to increase awareness among parents, community members, and stakeholders in education regarding the learning that is taking place in the classroom. These educational stakeholders can become informed of student progress with cultural competencies and language proficiency, as writing samples are included with the tangible items. Additionally, educators can reach out to parents and community members to celebrate these classroom achievements by sharing photos and written descriptions of the event via email or press releases. These positive experiences and efforts to fill a need in the community can help stakeholders take notice of a language program and to see it in a positive light.

Digital task-based learning

Teachers need to stop saying, "Hand it in," and start saying "Publish it," instead.
—Alan November

Projects can be a vehicle for students to explore topics of interest, solve problems, and generate artifacts to demonstrate growth (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991). The ability to make a product is valuable, as it helps students to "construct their knowledge - the doing and the learning are inextricable" (Blumenfeld, et al., 1991, p. 372). In the modern era, such products may include digitally stored portfolios, speech samples, writing samples, digital presentations, posters, and blogs, websites, and more. "The new technologies make it possible to show, in ways that were not available before, what students and professionals working in the field know and can do" (Weidmer, 1998, p. 586).

One example of a digitally-based project in the PK-12 setting or the university setting is that of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is the practice of combining multiple modes such as photographs, text, music, audio, narration, and video clips into a compelling, emotional, and in-depth story that captures a defining moment in one's or another's life (Lambert, 2013; Ohler, 2006). The process entails brainstorming, writing multiple drafts, receiving feedback, editing, storyboarding,

digitally packaging, and presenting to an audience. The nature of digital storytelling does not only allow students to explore areas of interest and personal value, allowing stretch and scope for growth, but also is simultaneously a vehicle for expansion of expertise with digital tools. The language and technological aspects of the digital storytelling task provide a space to support what Savignon (2002) calls discourse competence, going beyond isolated words or phrases and creating a meaningful whole and interconnected text. For the project, teachers and students provide guidance to each student as they write and edit a powerful story. The teacher's role is to focus the attention on the story first (Castañeda, 2013; Ohler, 2006) and not until the story is complete should students move to the technical aspects of the project. Through the project, students work independently as well as peer-edit the story emphasizing its content. Once the story is complete, students can embellish the story with photographs, music, and other technical aspects. The finalized product can be presented to an audience of peers, school personnel, parents, and community members who are invited into the classroom for a red-carpet style premiere event, where the stories are shared. Digital products can also be shared via sites such as YouTube, making them publicly accessible and making it possible for community members to engage, even remotely, in the learning process by viewing the products of the classroom. These products allow students to demonstrate growth in all areas of Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning: foundational knowledge, application, human dimension, integration, caring, and learning how to learn (2005).

Such digital storytelling projects allow for students to develop proficiency in the presentational writing and speaking modes, and through peer evaluations, in the interpretive reading and listening modes. Students who have completed such projects in their class and have been surveyed report gains in skills using digital tools, an overall sense of value in the project, but more importantly, report gains in their confidence with language skills (Castañeda, 2013; González-Loret, 2015). In a 2012 study, Yang and Wu found that digital storytelling "is a valuable tool for invigorating learning and motivating participants to collaboratively construct and personalize digital narratives as authentic products of learning" (p. 350). Their study found that after participating in the project, students showed improvement in language proficiency, critical thinking, and even self-efficacy. We provide a suggested process for completing a digital storytelling project in the classroom in Appendix A. The process details a recommended order of all steps needed to complete a digital storytelling project in the classroom. We also provide a rubric that one of the authors has used with a digital storytelling project in an Intermediate level conversation class in Appendix B.

Another task-based project supported by digital tools for the PK-12 or university setting is an activity in which students engage with an infographic, reading the information in the infographic and completing a corresponding interpretive reading activity. Then, students create their own survey questions on leisure time activities, ask peers their questions, and collect and record the data. Then, using Piktochart, a web-based infographic application, students create an infographic to represent the results of their surveys, and present the results to the class. This

multi-step activity process uses interpretive reading, interpersonal speaking, and presentational speaking as primary modes of communication, and allows students to perform a task (survey and report data) using digital tools. Language educators at the PK-12 level can use these products as part of a portfolio of evidence of learning in communication with parents and other community stakeholders as a strong visual representation of what students are able to do with the language. This type of product allows students to address Connections, Comparisons, Cultures, and Communication within the 5 C's of the World-Readiness Standards (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) while at the same time demonstrating the ability to use language that has been learned and practiced (ACTFL, 2012).

Both digital storytelling and other digital task-based projects allow students to build proficiency, to demonstrate skill through spoken and/or written performance, and open the door to new possibilities of sharing these products with educational stakeholders. These possibilities of connecting the classroom to the community can help educators to advocate for the value of language learning, and to show off students' skills while simultaneously building their confidence with digital tools and their communication competencies in a supportive environment.

Cross-curricular and intramural connections

School systems should base their curriculum not on the idea of separate subjects, but on the much more fertile idea of disciplines...which makes possible a fluid and dynamic curriculum that is interdisciplinary.

—Ken Robinson

In some districts and buildings, educators from the PK-12 setting to the university setting may also advocate for language learning by connecting with students in other disciplines, and developing and executing projects with colleagues. Interdisciplinary tasks can help students to develop flexible thinking skills and multiple approaches to solving problems (Jacobs, 1989). Interdisciplinary connections can also be made at the university level, albeit some incentive may be necessary for faculty to endeavor to contribute to such tasks (Davies & Devlin, 2007). At the university level, tasks such as the aforementioned digital storytelling project may foster interdisciplinary connections without necessitating direct collaboration among numerous faculty members to plan and conduct the project.

One example of an interdisciplinary project in the PK-12 setting is the "Day of the Dead Ofrendas" project, wherein art students and Spanish students collaborate in efforts to decorate a large display case in the school building with artwork, calligraphy, and crafts. This helps not only to make a connection between language learning and art skills, but also a highly visible and attractive display for a culturally authentic holiday, creating buzz around the building about language learning. Another such project is when art and Spanish teachers team up to make *cascarones* (confetti eggs) and *papel picado* (perforated paper) at Cinco de Mayo, creating similar displays, and promoting discussion regarding comparisons of how holidays are celebrated in different countries, how different communities celebrate and observe holidays, cultural perspectives that influence holiday celebrations and behaviors such as decorating. These displays can help to

connect the language classroom within the community when displayed publicly, and to connect to the community by requesting materials from the community to supply for the decorations. These results correspond with the Comparisons, Communities, Connections, and Cultures World-Readiness Standards (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

Another cross-curricular activity that can be used in the language classroom is tutoring. One way to achieve this is through what De Lisi and Golbeck (1999) call peer tutoring, asking upper-level students to tutor elementary-level students. High school students can create and prepare puppet shows, songs, and cultural presentations that they then present to elementary students. The shows and creative performances can be presented during the lunch hour or during class. Following the constructivist approach to learning (Vygotsky, 1978), foreign language peer tutoring benefits both tutors and learners. Tutors have the opportunity to practice language in more depth and tutees receive language and cultural exposure. Young children are typically delighted to see older students' performances, sparking interest in the language. The older students often enjoy sharing their skills and knowledge with the younger students, aiming to be engaging, accurate, and fun, knowing they would be held accountable by performing in the show. These connections can help to foster a love for language learning early on, providing future participants in language programs. Additionally, educators can share information from these and other classroom events with community stakeholders through emails and press releases, making the case for language learning to remain an integral part of the academic experience in a given community.

Focusing on the community

Outside the classroom, language educators in the PK-12 setting to the university setting can maximize the benefits of language learning through community service projects, travel abroad, volunteerism abroad, and by sharing classroom successes with local news media. These efforts create visibility for the program in the local community, as well as in other communities around the world. The efforts required for these opportunities go well beyond what may be typically expected of a classroom educator, but are well worth the effort in terms of opportunities for students' language and cultural practice, as well as in terms of advocacy (Abbot & Lear, 2010). These kinds of programs can serve as a way to attract and retain students in language departments.

Community service projects

Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.

—Dorothy Hight

In a 2000 study on the effects of what the authors refer to as service learning, Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee found that service learning projects had a positive impact on academics, students' sense of self-efficacy, values, and engagement in the classroom and world. A study conducted by White (2016) focused on the Communities standard

of the World-Readiness Standards found that language learners valued engaging in communities of native target language (TL) speakers. White encouraged instructors to make efforts to raise their students' awareness of TL populations at not only a global, but also a local community level, such as through service learning.

Community service projects appropriate to the PK-12 to university-aged student offer a unique opportunity for language educators to advocate for language study. These projects offer real-life applications of language in a contextualized setting, underscoring the importance of linguistic and cultural competencies in a globalized society. For example, in a PK-12 setting, taking students to read aloud in bilingual texts at a local library and make a corresponding craft can offer contact with children and community members that are native and heritage speakers of the language, as well as promote literacy and create excitement for reading in both languages in the community.

To accomplish this, teachers coordinate plans for dates, times, and room usage at local libraries or other venues. Language educators of PK-12 students may also need to arrange transportation and permission forms. For this project, language teachers develop lesson plans focused on fostering student practice of reading aloud in the target language. Students read aloud, recording and playing back the reading to evaluate for pronunciation, rhythm, and fluency, as well as planning and preparing for craft materials and instructions. Some libraries or venues have funds available to support craft needs. For other venues, teachers may need to solicit donations from parents, community members, or via grants to include a craft. This project provides opportunities for students to meet the learning outcomes of learning how to learn (self-assessment), foundational knowledge, and caring as outlined in Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (2005), as well as standards of Communities, Connections, Communication, and potentially Cultures and Comparisons, depending on the texts and the participation of the native or heritage speakers of the target language in the community. The nature of this project also corresponds with the "out-of-class" and "volunteering" types of community-based learning that emerged in Mooney and Edwards' research (2001), giving rise to benefits such as the opportunity for students to work with diverse groups of individuals, to work to alleviate community challenges, and to become more aware of the problems in the community.

Another community service project that can prove valuable in a PK-12 to university setting is that of preparing and donating a culturally authentic food to a local food bank. An experience in a food bank serving a significant population of speakers of a language can support learners' cultural and humanitarian competencies. Again, this requires coordination in terms of facility use in the form of kitchens, as well as purchasing of ingredients, and solicitation of grants or donations to support the purchase of ingredients. Teachers prepare a lesson in which instructions and a recipe will be provided in the target language, as well as visual support in the form of modeling the preparation of the food items. Students learn a wealth of new vocabulary in a context robust with comprehensible input supported with visuals (the food itself, the teacher modeling the preparation). Students write reflections, reporting a sense of thankfulness and gladness after participating in an activity that not only requires the use of the language and knowledge of cultural products, but also the opportunity to

perform a gesture of kindness for a fellow human being. This type of project fosters students' growth in meeting learning outcomes such as caring, human dimension, application, and integration (Fink, 2005). This type of service corresponds with "out-of-class" and "volunteering" learning, and provides an opportunity to garner some of the benefits of a real-world experience in food preparation, addressing concerns in the community, experiencing diversity, and having the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge in a "hands-on" experience (Mooney & Edwards, 2001). In addition, students develop and demonstrate their ability to perform with the language, because they must follow multi-step instructions provided in the target language in order to prepare the food, and clarify meaning by asking questions in the target language.

Another way for students to engage in the community at the university level is through assisting with translation or interpretation of documents for heritage or native speakers of the target classroom language. This type of activity is best reserved for more advanced speakers of the language, as well as a more advanced level of maturity from the student, as some documents require a more advanced knowledge of the target language or contain sensitive information. Educators find these opportunities with web searches to find support groups or other organizations for native speakers of the language in the nearby area, and contacting the group managers to offer volunteer services. In some instances, educators establish a venue and time for translations. In other instances, they establish opportunities that can be accomplished remotely, transferring documents online. These acts of translation can help to provide a much-needed service in a community, particularly for speakers of a language that have minimal knowledge of the language that is a majority language in the community and need assistance in setting up any number of day-to-day amenities, from electricity, to water, to health services. In a similar fashion, teachers arrange for their students to help translate at local schools with large numbers of English-language learners for their parent-teacher conferences, special after-school events, and work on improving communication between teachers and parents in their native languages. Translating documents for other individuals in need in the community facilitates student's growth in meeting learning outcomes such as caring, human dimension, application, and integration (Fink, 2005), and helps students to meet the Communities and Communications World-Readiness standards.

Providing for needed items in a community can help to make a language program's place more secure in a time when programs are seeing a decline. Educators can tout the benefits of community service for students, as well as the value of the language program within the community as an attractive reason to retain and foster growth within the program.

Travel and study abroad

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.

—Marcel Proust

In 2007, Altbach and Knight concluded that "[i]nternationalism will remain a central force in higher education" (p. 303), in a study on the increase in university study abroad program offerings. Altbach and Knight further asserted that an

increase in university offerings internationally would meet "important needs in the developing world" (p. 291). This "internationalism" can include study abroad programs, as well as bringing together faculty and students from multiple nations.

Study abroad course offerings vary depending on program enrollment, required course elements, and interest at the university level. At the university level, these are sometimes called "academic immersion programs", which are for-credit courses where the student receives instruction before, during, and/or after the immersion experience in an international setting. The instruction is enhanced by the experiential component of "being in the field" in an international setting, lending to authenticity not found elsewhere, including colloquial language use, local mannerisms and customs, and the sights, sounds, and smells that lend to a new ambiance and learning environment. At the PK-12 level, some districts will not allow teachers to take students on trips internationally, while other districts encourage international travel as a part of a robust cultural and language program. There are many companies such as Education First, Explorica, and CIEE, among others, with which to partner in planning for travel abroad with students. These trips require significant planning and communication with students, parents, and administrators.

Language educators can use travel and study abroad programs to attract students to the program, as well as to enhance the learning experience for students and the likelihood that they will develop global competencies. A 2013 study on the impact of education abroad found that thoughtful planning and prompts to foster student reflection were important components in fostering global competencies among students (Stebleton, Soria, & Cherney). In our experience, educators that serve as trip facilitators may take advantage of the opportunity to foster reflection activities. These reflections can be conducted informally through conversations each evening on a brief trip, or more formally as an assigned component. Formal assignments include prompts for journaling or a video log series of reflections, which can be shared with the public via YouTube, helping to increase global competencies. These reflective activities can help students to achieve significant learning in accordance with Fink's (2005) taxonomy, in particular in the areas of foundational knowledge, application, human dimension, and caring. Additionally, time spent abroad is correlated with gains in proficiency (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003), and time spent specifically engaged in service activities abroad increases the amount of contact between program participants and native speakers compared to a study abroad or homestay experience (Martinsen, Baker, Dewey, Bown, & Johnson, 2010).

Volunteering abroad

What we do for ourselves dies with us, what we do for others remains and is IMMORTAL.

—Albert Pike

In a 2008 study on the impact of international volunteer service, Sherradan, Lough, and McBride found that international volunteering efforts may impact students in terms of growth in language proficiency and communication skills, their cultural competencies, conflict resolution skills, and participation in global civic society organizations. These domestic or international experiences sanctioned

by or affiliated with the college lack the academic component of instruction. These experiences include learning as an organic component of the immersion and volunteering experiences, but not specifically tied to and structured by an academic component. These programs may have a reflective or journaling component but are typically loosely structured (Lipscomb University, n.d.). The flexible nature of service learning allows for social bonds to be formed between volunteers and the communities they impact, which may help to improve international cooperation and understanding. These results align with Fink's (2005) Taxonomy of Significant Learning, especially in the areas of caring, human dimension, integration, and application, and correspond to all of the 5 C's of the World-Readiness Standards: Cultures, Communities, Connections, Communication, and Comparisons.

Sherradan et al. additionally indicate that teachers that have volunteered abroad are more likely to remain in the profession (cited in Unterhalter, McDonald, Swain, Mitchell, & Young, 2002). Research conducted by Wilson and Musick (1999) left little doubt that there were benefits to volunteering in general as well, including building professional networks and social contacts, improved mental health, and improved physical well-being, experienced by the volunteer, and that the effects of those benefits were still present a long time after a volunteering act. Given the benefits of volunteering in general, and volunteering abroad specifically, language education professionals should consider spearheading efforts to offer these opportunities in their departments.

Many companies such as Education First (eftours.com), American Field Service (afsusa.org), and International Studies Abroad (studyabroad.com), to name a few, offer assistance and resources to PK-12 educators, or to individual students or groups of students planning to travel abroad to volunteer. These excursions require careful planning and preparation. Opportunities for volunteering abroad involve requirements for participants in terms of their health and insurance, as well as planning and preparing materials for use in the volunteer project while abroad prior to participation. Although thoughtful planning and preparation are necessary prior to any trip abroad, the benefits, in particular for trips that require volunteer work, are well worth the effort. The benefits of these types of community-based learning include that students gain knowledge and insights through their experiences, as well as increase their awareness of needs and social issues in a community and their exposure to diversity while working to address problems in a community (Mooney & Edwards, 2001).

Another aspect of volunteering abroad is service learning abroad. Service learning is a unique combination of doing service for others and a particular community, learning through and from that experience, while simultaneously earning academic credit in a formal academic setting that supplements the learning gained from the service learning experience (Lipscomb University, n.d.). This learning combines academic learning in the classroom examining theories, situations, and backgrounds relevant to a particular topic with the hands-on practical side of learning through doing. It also immerses students in a specific context where the service is carried out for a condensed period of time. Typically, a service learning college course has designated meeting times, follows a structured syllabus and homework, and is

led by an instructor. The service component of such programs is specifically and explicitly tied to the course goals. The academic and field experiences are guided by the hands-on/immersion experiences of the specified activities in their new learning environments along with rigorous journaling and reflective processes. Students perform service work and conduct research relevant to the topic of study while traveling and spending time in the target culture/context. Course requirements typically include a daily journal, evening reflection groups, and a written document that reports the results of the student's research, along with a final reflection paper which addresses a plan for future action (Keily, 2005). Specific experiences of service-learning courses align well with the fields of sociology, education, foreign language/cultural studies, and pre-medicine/biology, among others. Appendix D contains an example of a course description from a service learning program that has been offered for the last sixteen years at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. Students at the college register for a 3-credit hour semester-long course in sociology. The class meets for the first seven weeks of the semester learning about various issues in sociology, such as race and gender discrimination, but in particular in this course, students learn about cultural and social differences and the plight of the immigrant. During the mid-semester spring break, the students join the teacher in El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico for the "Border Awareness Trip". Students and faculty spend a week learning about migrants/immigrants and border issues through various key venues (i.e., immigration court) and interactions with specific personnel (i.e., border patrol agents). They also serve the immigrant community in El Paso by helping them with translation, transportation, and sharing in *convivencia* (shared communal living) with them in temporary migrant housing while these immigrants await detainment. After spending the week at the border, students return to the sociology classroom to continue learning more about social issues and inequalities they witnessed during this service learning component. The combination of learning formally, learning by doing, and reflecting during their service trip helps students to grow in Fink's (2005) areas of foundational knowledge, application, integration, caring, and the human dimension.

Bridging community and classroom

One strategy that many departments may depend on to support language learners, connect to their community, and to advocate for their program is to offer a diverse array of clubs and organizations for groups of students interested in language or culture. Additionally, educators connect their classroom to their community through securing grants and donations from local organizations and funders. These offerings may take a large amount of effort beyond the typical expectation for classroom duties, but also pay off large dividends in terms of garnering student interest for language programs (especially for students unable to afford travel abroad), and supporting the language program's interests with funding.

Clubs and organizations

We cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together.

—Bill Richardson

Extracurricular involvement has a positive impact on a students' academic achievement, as well as self-concept (Marsh, 1992), leadership skills (Foreman & Retallick, 2012), and development in cultural participation, educational involvement, and career planning (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). Additionally, students involved in extracurricular activities make gains in social and cultural capital, increasing their social networks, and enhancing knowledge and understanding of a diverse population (McNeal, 1999). Students that have participated in extracurricular activities in the PK-12 level are more likely to be accepted into universities (Kaufman & Gabler, 2004).

Examples of extracurricular activity offerings range from language and cultural interest clubs to honor societies in both the PK-12 setting and in the university setting. Typically, such activity offerings include attending local cultural or language related events or even planning and hosting such events. Some PK-12 institutions and universities offer an "immersion day" experience for students; others may take part in dancing, culinary, theatre, or other events in their area to provide students the opportunity to learn about the products, practices, and perspectives of language speakers. These opportunities offer students the opportunity to increase language proficiency outside the walls of their traditional classroom "bubble," and if students are involved in planning and hosting, or even performing in an event to celebrate a culture, they will also build valuable skills in organization, problem-solving, and event planning.

One such event in a PK-12 setting is "Salsa, Salsa", in which students and other interested parties can enter a salsa recipe (with a sample and chips, of course) into a competition. While the competition takes place, salsa music is played, and a salsa dance instructor may also teach a couple of basic steps. Students volunteer as salsa makers, judges for the salsa, and if desired, judges for a salsa dance contest. Students take ownership in the event planning in terms of securing a venue, planning criteria for judging salsas and printing, monitoring, collecting, and counting judges' rating cards, and making signs to advertise the event and for each salsa. Students also assist in planning and preparing a prize, such as an award certificate or a hand-crafted ornament in the shape of a chili pepper. For other languages, dancing and song may not be included, or may be the featured element in such a contest. These opportunities to engage with culturally authentic foods, music, and dance can address the Connections, Comparisons, and Cultures World-Readiness Standards.

Honor societies in university or PK-12 settings promote high academic achievement in a given department, as well as longevity; students who are required to have a certain number of credits or semesters of study of a language to be eligible for an honors program might elect to take an additional course if their schedule allows it and the standard is feasible. Depending on an institution's policies, clubs and honor organizations provide a venue for travel, community service, and fundraising efforts to support language program goals, such as scholarships for travel and study abroad, study of language, materials, and more. With so many benefits for students, language programs, and other stakeholders, extracurricular offerings are effective in making a language program visible and indispensable within a community.

Press releases

The press is not only free, it is powerful. That power is ours.

—Benjamin Disraeli

It is highly beneficial to language programs to utilize local media outlets to promote and advocate for the study of languages. At both the PK-12 level and university level, departments compete among other institutions and even other departments to attract students to their programs (Binkley, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Results from a study on public relations by Ledingham and Bruning (1998) "suggest that organizational involvement in and support of the community in which it operates can engender loyalty toward an organization…" (p. 63). It is suggested that reaching out to the community, or networking proactively, strengthens outcomes of organizational programs (Meier & O'Toole, 2003). It is worth noting that policies on public relations vary from institution to institution, and policy may require that educators go through a public relations manager or administrator prior to sending out any press releases or invitations to events to the press. If supported by policy, positive public relations can be fostered by inviting local media to important events in the classroom, such as cultural holiday celebrations or presentations of major projects. If the media do not come to these events, educators can advocate by sharing photos and press releases celebrating classroom successes after they have taken place. This communication not only reaches parents, but also community members that will see the value in the program and be more likely to support and sustain it. Harvey (1996) advocates that it is important for schools to market themselves to their community, including students and parents, and to consider the impact of a school's' reputation on student recruitment. Harvey further feels that for schools to market effectively, staff should review practice systematically, and schools can also celebrate the qualifications of their staff via public marketing.

Readers will find a sample press release in Appendix C. Press releases typically include a summary of the classroom events, including the date, location, students and faculty involved. Press releases highlight the value or impact of the classroom events on student learning, as well as the fun, positive character of the event overall. Sometimes, the event descriptions include student quotes or reflections. Some press releases include one or more photographs from the event. We would encourage educators to review press releases before distribution for content and for use of language, helping to ensure that the desired effect is accomplished and that the school, students, faculty, and event in general are represented with a high standard of professionalism.

Securing materials and donations

Donors don't give to institutions. They invest in ideas and people in whom they believe.

—G.T. Smith

Another means of advocating for language learning is by engaging the community in the classroom, by encouraging community members to contribute

materials, time, or funds for classroom activities. Teachers engage the community by asking guest speakers to visit their classrooms, asking local businesses to contribute materials for cultural food, craft and art projects, and inviting the community to events hosted by the school's language club, such as song and dance performances. At the PK-12 level, teachers can solicit support from their school's PTO or other booster organizations. In some instances, it helps to offer volunteer work back to the supporting organization. One such example is to request materials for decorating the classroom from your school or district's parent-teacher association, but offering to help with the manual labor of decorating for the after-prom event that they sponsor.

Teachers from PK-12 settings and university settings can secure financial support and materials through grants funded through local community organizations and donors. Grant proposals require thoughtfulness and planning on the part of the applicant. Some have specific deadlines for applications, or periods of application, and fund requests that fall outside of those windows cannot be considered. Other grants have a rolling or ongoing application. Porter (2005) lists neatness and organization, realistic program goals, specific examples of how a project will accomplish these goals, and a clearly articulated financial plan among the criteria for a solid grant proposal. Many grants have a focused goal on the arts, or history, or STEM, and delineating clear links between the classroom objectives and the grant funder's goals will help increase the likelihood that the grant proposal will be funded.

Various districts recognize grant recipients at faculty meetings, as efforts to secure funds to support student learning are generally applauded. Again, the efforts to bring funds in to the institution in which one teaches are seen as a valuable asset to the institution.

Conclusion

Based on sources consulted for this article, in addition to the classroom, volunteer, and travel abroad experiences of the authors, we believe that it is possible and necessary for teachers to advocate for language learning through planned and practical strategies. Each of the strategies discussed provides a wealth of benefits in terms of language learners' opportunities to build proficiency, perform important and valuable tasks in the community, and open the doors of possibilities for language learners and language learning programs. Building connections with students, parents, administrators, and other community stakeholders will help to set the stage for language learning programs to continue and to grow over time as an integral part of the academic and larger communities.

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Appendix A

Digital Storytelling Suggested Process

1. Plan and align the Digital Storytelling Project with curriculum using Backward Design principles.
2. Show samples of digital stories to students. Most digital stories found online are in English but there are a few in Spanish at http://www.umbc.edu/blogs/digitalstories/2009/06/globalized_communication_fall.html

3. Provide prompt to students. When written in the native language, the recommended word length for stories that capture an audience's attention is approximately 250-375 words given that a story of this size will lead to a video of approximately 2 to 3 minutes in length. In the foreign language classroom, the word count would vary, but it is likely that intermediate and advanced students are able to produce approximately 250 words.
4. Students brainstorm ideas for a meaningful story.
5. Students write a first draft.
6. Peer feedback is provided. The traditional digital storytelling process recommends story circles where students form groups of four to five, read their story out loud and receive peer feedback using the phrase "if it were my story." In the foreign language classroom, peer feedback can be adapted based on the level of proficiency and context.
7. Teacher provides feedback on the first draft of the story.
8. Students write a second draft.
9. Teacher provides feedback on the second draft of the story.
10. Students write a final draft.
11. Students create storyboards where they match text with pictures and plan transitions.
12. Students work in computer lab or use computers in classroom to record audio.
13. Students work in computer lab or use computers in classroom to compile their story using software available (e.g., iMovie, Photo Story, Photoshop Elements, Movie Maker, etc.).

Appendix B

Digital Storytelling Rubric, Intermediate University Level

Language Control:

1. Emerging use of a variety of language structures required for task (i.e. past tense, future, etc.)
2. Emerging control of a variety of language structures
3. Control of a variety of language structures (i.e. past tense, future, etc.)
4. Control, ease, and comfort using a variety of language structures (i.e. past tense, future, etc.)

Sound and effects:

1. No sound, audio, music, or transitions are used in the presentation
2. Music overpowers the speaker, transitions make the audience dizzy
3. Music somewhat overpowers the speaker, transitions somewhat make the audience dizzy
4. Level of music does not overpower the speaker in the story and transitions do not make the audience dizzy

Technology preparedness:

1. Student does not ensure that technology works (i.e. working out issues, testing technology ahead of time, arriving early to set up)
2. Student somewhat ensures technology works (i.e. working out issues, testing technology ahead of time, arriving early to set up)
3. Student somewhat ensures technology works (i.e. working out issues, testing technology ahead of time, arriving early to set up)
4. Student is proactive in ensuring technology works (i.e. working out issues, testing technology ahead of time, arriving early to set up)

Level of discourse:

1. Use of complete sentences, some repetitive, few cohesive devices
2. Emerging variety of complete sentences, some cohesive devices
3. Variety of complete sentences and of cohesive devices
4. Variety of complete sentences and of cohesive devices, emerging paragraph-length discourse

Task completion:

1. Minimal completion of the task, content frequently undeveloped and/or repetitive
2. Partial completion of the task, content somewhat adequate and mostly appropriate, basic ideas expressed but with little elaboration or detail
3. Completion of the task, content appropriate, ideas adequately developed with some elaboration and detail
4. Superior completion of the task, content rich ideas developed with elaboration and detail

Awareness of Audience:

1. Lacks awareness (their interests, attention span, language proficiency, etc.) of audience in the story
2. Limited awareness of audience is present in the story
3. Some awareness of audience is present in the story
4. Strong awareness of audience is present in the story (i.e. circumlocution/ pictures used when specific words may not be known to audience)

Comprehensibility:

1. Content barely comprehensible, requiring frequent interpretation, pronunciation may frequently interfere with communication
2. Content mostly comprehensible, requiring interpretation, pronunciation may occasionally interfere with communication
3. Content comprehensible, requiring little interpretation, pronunciation does not interfere with communication
4. Content readily comprehensible, requires no interpretation, pronunciation enhances communication

Appendix C

Sample Press Release

RE: XXXX High School World Language Students Provide Comfort to Families of Children Battling Illness

On Wednesday, April 30th, 2016, students enrolled in Spanish II and IV classes as well as those in Spanish Club at XXXX High School worked to provide comfort to families of children combatting illness, making over 70 traditional Guatemalan Worry Dolls, called "quitapenas", to be provided to families staying at the Ronald McDonald house in Cincinnati while their children receive medical attention at nearby hospitals. The dolls will be accompanied by small messages explaining what their cultural significance is, as well as thoughts of comfort and well wishes.

The dolls are traditionally used for small children to tell their worries to, placing the doll under their pillows at night, and overnight the dolls work to take away the worries of the child. The hope is that the dolls will provide some comfort to families of children that are battling significant illnesses and help to ease their worries, as well as to provide a brightly colored companion that fits well in one's pocket or purse to accompany families that may be far from home.

"Our hope is that knowing that others are thinking positive thoughts for them and would like to alleviate their burden, even in some small way, will serve as a comfort to families of children that are battling illness and may be far from family and friends."`

— XXXX, Spanish Teacher at XXXX High School

Appendix D

Service Learning Course Description

SOC 390 (3 credit hours) is offered every spring semester to Sociology majors and Spanish majors at Thomas More College. These students participate in a formal class setting during the 16-week semester and discuss issues of immigration, discrimination, race, etc. as they pertain to a specific context, the southern U.S. border and predominantly Hispanic cultures.

The course goals are:

1. Awareness of self (particularly as it relates to various forms of privilege and one's own ethnocentrisms)
2. Awareness of others (particularly as it relates other's positioning in the world and disparate 'life chances')
3. Critical thinking (emphasis on structural forces that promote inequality)
4. Materialistic humility (emphasis on Catholic Social Teaching and Justice)

Service comes in the form of:

1. living in solidarity with the undocumented migrant
2. preparation and participation in the meals for the community
3. maintaining the community house (learning through 'convivencia')
4. developing a border awareness through hands-on experiences with key border personnel
5. A sense of advocacy for the migrant and of immigration issues upon return

The way in which service projects are experienced and internalized by students varies. One of the primary mechanisms for processing and sharing experiences is in group reflection and individual journaling. Both of these components are central to the pre-during-post field experience. The nature of open, reflective daily dialogue among participants is key to the learning process and the internalization of this unique experience. Reflection in this program is student-designed and student-led.

Keep What Works: Many Assessments Can Coexist

Nohelia Rojas-Miesse
Miami University
Julie Szucs
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Abstract

In today's modern language teaching and learning landscape, educators are inundated with new and improved ways of measuring students' knowledge. Every year it seems that a new type of assessment is in vogue and the pendulum is constantly swinging from one testing method to another. This can be confusing, overwhelming and often leads to the adoption of the "new" method at the expense of tried and true forms of assessments. In reality, educators do not need to abandon one type of assessment in order to adopt another. There is space for a variety of assessments, all of which provide distinct and valuable feedback about student learning and reveal a clearer view of their abilities. In this article, the authors will explain the characteristics and differences of achievement, proficiency, and performance assessments and demonstrate how each has a specific value and purpose. In addition, the authors will share how various forms of evaluations can be incorporated into the curriculum of basic language courses of any level by illustrating the process taken in their own university-level courses.

Introduction

Over the years, the methods that educators have used to teach and test students have evolved based on research in second language acquisition (SLA), as summarized by Shrum & Glisan (2009). Moreover, the impact of SLA research and the introduction of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines by the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages in 1982 have moved educators away from strictly testing translation towards evaluating more communicative

functions (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2013). At any given foreign language professional conference, educators can find information about different types of activities and assessments that provide new and improved ways of measuring students' knowledge. Some of these include project- or task-based learning, Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs), bell-ringers and exit slips, portfolios, videos, podcasting, and digital storytelling. These myriad activities may be used as formative assessments to monitor and provide students with feedback on their progress or as summative assessments that are designed to evaluate student learning with a high point value. Nonetheless the assessments can be grouped into three general categories: achievement, performance, and proficiency. All of these assessments can coexist within the same classroom, as they each provide a different understanding of the learner's skills in creating with the language. Taken together, they provide a more complete picture of the learner's abilities.

Categories of assessments

Achievement testing traditionally relies on rote memorization of grammar forms and vocabulary to be reproduced on an exam. There is rarely functional or "real-life" context to use the language in this way without being overly contrived. According to Clifford (2006), achievement-type testing features a "rehearsed or memorized response using the content of a specific textbook or curriculum" (p. 67). Although this type of assessment has been common in foreign language classrooms for many years, it has recently lost favor in the communicative classroom. Generally these assessments are mechanical in nature, focusing on the recall of specific information *about* the language, specifically structures and/or vocabulary. Achievement testing may vary in format, from true/false responses, matching or multiple choice to fill-in-the-blank or short sentences with discrete answers. Because "the content of achievement tests can be derived from three different sources: the textbook, the course syllabus, and the class objectives" (Perrone, 2003, p. 1) the learners are only asked to reproduce what was explicitly taught from the specific unit they are studying. It is common that in a traditional achievement test learners reproduce memorized words or phrases without creating anything meaningful with the language. However, the authors will later provide examples of how even this type of assessment can be used effectively in combination with other forms.

Performance assessments focus on meaningful communication across three modalities (interpretive, interpersonal and presentational) instead of focusing on forms and structures. The attention to grammar and/or vocabulary becomes part of a "toolbox" of skills to help the learner communicate more effectively, instead of the structures being the goal of the assessment (Clementi & Terrill, 2013). This type of assessment does not explicitly evaluate structures and vocabulary, except when they present problems in overall comprehensibility. In other words, the focus is on communication rather than on conjugating verbs.

As stated in the *ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*, "performance is the ability to use language that has been learned and practiced in an instructional setting" (ACTFL, 2012, p. 6). Performance assessments feature meaningful communication while still using specific vocabulary and/or functions that have been practiced in different ways and many times throughout the duration of the unit. Although this type of assessment requires

students to create with the language, sometimes even spontaneously, these evaluations can be misleading when used alone. Because the functions have been heavily practiced in class, student performance often suggests a higher competency with the language and should not be confused with proficiency. However, as will be noted later, these assessments have their own unique purpose and should be included in the curriculum.

Language proficiency is a continuum of a person's ability to use a language for a variety of purposes (Stern, 1983). Proficiency assessments are characterized by spontaneity and cover a wide range of familiar contexts that were not specifically prepared or practiced. A well-developed proficiency assessment should mimic a natural and real-life situation in which a student has a reason to communicate in the second language. Although language instruction has stressed the importance of proficiency for the last decade or more, this type of assessment is not always incorporated into the curriculum.

Proficiency assessments feature unrehearsed communication that is not focused on specific functions, vocabulary or topics. The topics are relatable and relevant to student lives, yet wide-ranging and appropriate to the targeted proficiency level of students as defined by ACTFL. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines "describe what an individual can and cannot do with language at each level, regardless of where, when, or how the language was acquired" (ACTFL, 2012, p. 6). In other words, the assessments are not limited to what students have been recently studying in the classroom, but rather focus on what the learners can do with the language in any situation. Although ACTFL describes proficiency for all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and provides assessments for each, most proficiency assessments done in the classroom focus only on speaking or writing.

Often these types of assessments are difficult to administer in the classroom. In most traditional classrooms, testing tends to focus on the material that has been learned, practiced and tied to a particular curriculum. When introduced to the classroom, proficiency testing may seem out-of-place and disjointed to students because it is not related to what has been explicitly taught and discussed previously. Despite this challenge, proficiency testing has a specific purpose and value, and educators should not avoid it.

Purpose of assessments

In order to have the fullest picture or the best representation of students' skills, combining a variety of assessments is necessary. This combination can "increase… students' motivation and show them how well they have learned the language" (Jabbarifar, 2009, p. 1). Each type of evaluation fulfills a different purpose, and one cannot truly know what students can do with the language by utilizing only one form of assessment. When developing an assessment, educators must ask WHAT, WHY and HOW. What to measure? Why is it important to measure it? How will it be measured?

Purpose of achievement assessments

In order to move through the ACTFL proficiency levels, students must show the ability to not only communicate in various time frames but also to discuss a variety of topics. These topics range from familiar contexts to more complex ones depending on the level of the learner. Although ACTFL does not dictate grammar structures or vocabulary, in reality a certain control of these is essential to increase

one's language proficiency. As students move through the ACTFL levels, they need command of language forms and varied lexicon in order to be able to communicate skillfully at the next higher level.

Identifying WHAT structures and vocabulary students have mastered from the classroom material is the goal of achievement assessments. Without accuracy of particular structures, moving up and performing tasks required by higher levels becomes more difficult. While a student can be comprehensible and somewhat proficient without using the past tenses correctly, he/she could not receive the ACTFL Advanced or Superior rating without consistent control of those forms. Additionally to achieve the Advanced level, students must be able to discuss more complex issues of national and international importance, not just familiar everyday routines, which requires the use of increasingly unfamiliar vocabulary.

The reason WHY achievement assessments play an important role in the overall evaluation of students is because this type of testing provides students and teachers feedback and accountability towards the mastery of these functions. As noted by Jabbarifar (2009), "evaluation of achievement is the feedback that makes improvement possible. By means of evaluation, strengths and weaknesses are identified" (p. 7). Grammar and specific vocabulary items are tools to help successfully communicate an idea. To be able to communicate skillfully, the development towards accuracy cannot be overlooked and should be measured effectively.

Traditionally, HOW these structures and vocabulary have been measured is through a test in which students conjugate verbs in mechanical activities, identify vocabulary in fill-in-the-blank activities or through translation and discrete questions with only one possible correct answer. Even when contextualized, these assessments often do not approximate true communication in a real-life situation. Furthermore, the tests often do not measure students' awareness of the purpose and context of the structures in real-life settings. Solely relying on this form of achievement testing can result in producing students who are quite good at conjugating specific tenses when instructed to do so, yet are unable to produce and create with the language in a meaningful way. A humorous depiction of this scenario is illustrated in Figure 1.

"I see you studied Spanish. How fluent are you?"
"I can conjugate –ar verbs in 10 tenses!"

Figure 1. Result of traditional achievement testing. Reprinted from *Spanishplans.org*, 2017 by J. Buehler. Copyright 2017 by Spanishplans.org. Reprinted with permission.

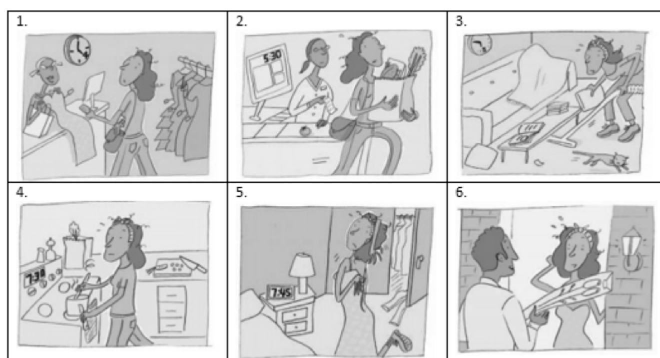
In recent years, educators have been encouraged to move away from achievement testing and replace it with performance and/or proficiency evaluations. However, achievement testing, when done properly, still has value. Although language should not be reduced to simple right-wrong answers, when used communicatively, achievement testing can still give valuable feedback and hold students accountable for language control in ways that do not solely require rote memorization as traditionally done. Students can demonstrate their knowledge by creating with the language in a particular context with a specific function. With the application of some creativity, an achievement test can go from mechanical to meaningful. In order to do this, it is necessary to include a combination of open-ended questions, descriptions and narrations in the evaluation. The activities should be created to elicit multiple correct answers while focusing on both content and accuracy.

Figure 2 offers an example of an activity from an intermediate-level Spanish course in which students are required to show knowledge of vocabulary from the unit as well as accuracy in the use of the preterite and imperfect tenses to narrate

A busy day, Part A: Last Saturday, Marta had many errands and chores to complete before her date with Carlos. Use the drawings to narrate the story of what happened or what she did to prepare for her date. For each drawing, write **two** complete sentences using vocabulary for the unit, a logical expression from the list and the past tenses. Explain what she did, what she was thinking, how she was feeling, time of day, etc.

Grade distribution – 6 points each: 2 points logical use of lesson vocabulary and expression from list, 4 points for grammar (2 points per sentence for correct use of past tense)

Lista de expresiones			
enseguida	a tiempo	apenas	por casualidad
bastante	de repente	en el acto	casi



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A busy day, Part B: Based on what you wrote in Part A, answer the following questions in logical manner using complete sentences.

Grade distribution – 2 points each: 1 point logical response, 1 point appropriate and accurate grammar.

1. What happened after Carlos arrived?
2. What did they do during their date?
3. Will they go out again? Why or why not?

Figure 2. Sample communicative achievement assessment. Illustrations reprinted from *Facetas, 4e* (p. 84), by J. Blanco, 2016, Boston, MA: Vista Higher Learning. Copyright 2016 by Vista Higher Learning. Reprinted with permission.

a story. Because the drawings contain numerous vocabulary words from the unit, students have the freedom to construct meaning from the pictures in a variety of ways, and the activity elicits multiple correct and appropriate responses. Flexibility on the part of the teacher is required because not all the students will focus on a specific vocabulary word or storyline. When grading, points are awarded to hold students accountable for grammatical accuracy (subject/verb agreement, correct use of tense) as well as for using the vocabulary words in a logical manner (content). This balances the need to evaluate students' control of structures with their ability to create with the language, essentially creating a hybrid assessment that combines achievement with performance.

Purpose of performance assessments

Giving students room to create with the language and awarding points based on communication is a vital element of performance assessments. "The *types of work* we choose to evaluate and *the methods* we use to evaluate that work deliver powerful messages to students about what we value" (Clementi, 2008, p. 1). By affording learners the opportunity to express their ideas without focusing exclusively on form, educators convey the message to students that their ability to communicate something meaningful is important and relevant. A hallmark of performance assessments is the holistic evaluation of language use, focusing on overall comprehensibility (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2015).

When giving students a performance-type assessment, educators are trying to identify WHAT authentic tasks and functions students can complete in multiple modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational). Additionally, this type of assessment provides information about the strengths and the weaknesses of students' language performance, including the use of communication strategies and culturally-appropriate responses. These tasks are based on the controlled contexts that have been rehearsed extensively in the classroom.

The reason WHY performance assessments play an important role in the overall evaluation of students is because this type of testing allows teachers to measure the extent to which learners can use the language in a creative and authentic way within a *limited, controlled and practiced context*. In a well-designed curriculum, with clearly-articulated communicative goals for learners, performance-based summative assessments can help "indicate whether and to what degree the learners have met the goals of instruction" (Clementi & Terrill, 2013, p. 64). As noted by Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters (1992) these types of assessments "1. require students to perform, create, produce, or do something; 2. tap into higher level thinking and problem-solving skills; 3. use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities; and 4. approximate real-world application" (p. 6). The result, then, is not students who can only conjugate Spanish –ar verbs in 10 tenses, but rather students who can actually say something meaningful in the target language. Nevertheless, what students can say is limited to what they have practiced and may still have multiple errors.

Ideally, a performance assessment should include the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive and presentational) and reflect the

tasks that students have rehearsed on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. These evaluations should integrate seamlessly into the lesson, incorporate authentic resources which provide exposure to 'real' language and cultural information (Kilickaya, 2004) and be designed to measure HOW students can apply what they have learned in a controlled, real-life context. This type of evaluation begins with the input and interpretation of an authentic written or oral text, such as an article in a newspaper or an online video created by native speakers for native speakers, to contextualize and provide content. This can be followed by an interpersonal task that approximates a real-world situation requiring the student to communicate about the context previously introduced. Finally, students will create a written or oral product of their own demonstrating their understanding or reaction to the context and content provided by the authentic resources.

The sample assessments in Figures 3, 4, and 5 stem from a unit about common illnesses in an intermediate-level medical Spanish course. The instructor

Asma: Aspectos fundamentales

1. **Key Word Recognition.** Find in the article the word/phrase in Spanish that best expresses the meaning of each of the following English words/phrases:

   a. To take for granted: ____________________
   b. obstruct: ____________________
   c. air flow: ____________________
   d. mild symptoms: ____________________
   e. swollen: ____________________
   f. trigger: ____________________

2. **Supporting information:** For each of the following, circle the letter of each detail that is mentioned in the reading. Write the information that is given in the article in the space provided.

   a. Asthma attacks are one of the major reasons why children miss school and visit the ER at hospitals:
   ____
   b. Before a person has an asthma attack, he/she experiments certain symptoms:
   ____
   c. The respiratory tract of people with asthma are always swollen and attacks occur when the person is exposed to certain triggers:
   ____
   d. It is difficult to diagnose asthma because not everyone experiences the same symptoms:
   ____
   e. Asthma can be cured:
   ____

3. **Guessing Meaning from Context.** Based on the information given in the reading write what the following three words/expressions (**in bold**) probably mean in English.

   a. *La respiración se experimenta como algo tan natural que es fácil* ***darla por sentada****:* ____________________
   b. *El asma puede ser* ***atemorizante****:* ____________________
   c. *De hecho, una crisis asmática suele desarrollarse* ***a lo largo del tiempo****...:* ____________________
   d. *Medicamentos de* ***alivio rápido*** *que actúan rápidamente para detener la crisis asmática una vez iniciada:* ____________________

4. **Inferences.** "Read between the lines" to answer the following questions, using information from the article. **Respond in Spanish.**

   ¿Para quién fue este artículo escrito? Explain and support your answer with information from the article.

Figure 3. Sample interpretive assessment.

Mini-drama

You are a doctor, and a patient (your partner) comes in with the following symptoms*: shortness of breath, wheezing, and coughing*.

Act out the situation using the information in the readings.

- The **patient** should tell the doctor how and/or when the symptoms began. The patient explains the symptoms he/she is experiencing.
  - *No me siento bien. He tenido dolor en el pecho por dos días. También anoche no pude dormir porque tenía mucho tos...*
- The **doctor** should ask appropriate and logical questions to make a diagnosis. Fill in the ***Informe sobre el enfermo*** as you interview the patient.
  - *¿ Usted ha tenido sibilancias?...*

Figure 4. Sample interpersonal assessment.

Tarea:

- In class, you will present your patient's case to a group of supervising doctors (the class). You will have to:
  - Explain his/her past medical history.
  - Talk about his/her current condition and his/her history with this condition.
  - Discuss proposed treatment.

Figure 5. Sample presentational assessment.

introduced the topic of asthma via an article directed at patients from a medical website. This was followed by a role-play activity in which one student playing a patient sought medical advice from another playing a doctor regarding asthmatic symptoms. The third phase of the assessment required students to present the patient's case and medical history to a group of "supervising doctors" (the rest of the class). This assessment had multiple goals while incorporating all three modes of communication: evaluate students' reading comprehension and understanding of the topic, assess the skills needed to interview a patient, and measure the student's ability to describe symptoms and treatments using vocabulary from the unit.

As noted previously, in performance assessments the focus is on communication; accuracy of form or structure often takes a back seat to overall comprehensibility. However, real movement through the proficiency scale requires both communication and correct form.

When educators opt to use only performance assessments and forego other methods of evaluation, it is critical to explore the following questions: Can students transfer skills of communication to topics that they have never practiced? Do they know why certain grammatical structures need to be used or do students only use those forms because they have been used repeatedly in that particular context? Do they have mastery of certain structures to help them move up the proficiency levels?

The answer is no. Students can perform beautifully within a certain, *very constrained* context, but when they must use the same structures in a different, un-rehearsed setting, they struggle. Students are familiar with the specific grammatical forms, but have trouble transferring the practiced context to a new

one. For example, in the intermediate-level medical Spanish course referenced earlier, students participate in a study abroad program in Nicaragua. When students interact with patients and ask medical history questions, something practiced extensively in class, they perform very well using the past tenses. However, outside of the practiced context, such as speaking with host families, the same students have difficulty expressing other past activities. This confirms that what students can do in a controlled environment should not to be confused with overall language proficiency or what they can do spontaneously.

As illustrated by this example, relying solely on performance assessments can be misleading. As noted in the ACTFL Performance Descriptors (2012), performance assessments challenge learners "to use strategies from the next higher range [of proficiency] …tasks are controlled, resulting in higher expectations of learners' performance compared to how they perform in a non-instructional environment" (p. 3). When performance assessments are used exclusively in the classroom, their results can lead to a skewed view of students' abilities, resulting in the belief that students are more proficient in the language than they really are. However, when combined with other forms of assessments, a more complete understanding of the students' overall abilities with the language begins to emerge.

Purpose of proficiency assessments

Thus far two modes of assessment that evaluate student learning within the classroom have been considered. Nonetheless, if only these two types of assessments are utilized to evaluate students, educators will not know if and HOW learners can use language skills when they must communicate spontaneously in the target language outside the classroom. When giving students a proficiency-type assessment, educators are trying to identify WHAT students can do with the language regardless of what they studied and how it was taught.

Proficiency assessments evaluate the unrehearsed, general ability to accomplish communication tasks across a wide range of topics and settings. The reason WHY proficiency assessments are a crucial component of the curriculum is because they pair "what an individual can do [in the real world] with what one knows. As in a driver's test, an achievement test would represent the paper and pencil questions that one answers, while a proficiency test determines how well the person can drive the car" (Language Testing International, n.d.). Unlike performance assessments, proficiency evaluations reveal a clearer picture of language acquisition and students' abilities to transfer skills in new contexts.

Moreover, proficiency assessments can assist educators in creating a more realistic curriculum by identifying its potential weaknesses. For example, if the objective of the curriculum is for students to achieve the Intermediate Low level on the ACTFL scale, teaching grammar topics that are well beyond that level will detract from said goal. In other words, expecting students to control and spontaneously use the subjunctive to give an opinion in a second-year Spanish class is unrealistic. It would be more beneficial to focus instruction on structures that support development towards the next-higher proficiency level functions of narrating in multiple time frames. Therefore, these assessments can be a tool to

determine programming and instructional support needed to achieve desired language outcomes.

Ideally, a speaking or writing proficiency assessment should be inspired by the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) for evaluating speaking skills and the ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) for written language. The content and context of these evaluations should be independent from the materials being covered in the classroom. They should be designed to demonstrate HOW students can communicate in the target language in a variety of contexts and reveal what the learner can do with the language they know when communicating spontaneously. The proper execution of the evaluations requires that the educator be familiar with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, have knowledge of how the tests are conducted, and have a realistic expectation of students' proficiency level. Not having a clear understanding of the proficiency guidelines or what is appropriate for the level can lead to educators asking students to control language sometimes far beyond their ability. Unfortunately, this can have the contrary effect of creating frustration, resulting in students giving up instead of building confidence in their linguistic abilities. Another caveat is that without a thorough grasp of the characteristics of proficiency, the assessment can result in a performance evaluation instead.

The sample assessment in Figure 6 is an in-class composition from an intermediate-level Spanish course. During this evaluation, students receive a prompt that is unrelated to topics covered in the course and have 55 minutes in which to compose a written response without the use of resources. The prompts are carefully created and targeted toward the Intermediate level of the ACTFL scale. Although the goal is to evaluate written proficiency, the in-class writing assessments do not fully mimic the ACTFL WPT because students only receive one prompt, and there is no probing at higher levels. The writing is evaluated using a rubric based on Intermediate level descriptors (see Figure 7). The expectation in this intermediate course is that students are able to create with the language in writing about themselves and/or familiar topics. In lieu of multiple prompts that elicit higher-level functions, the rubric allows students to exceed expectations in demonstrating higher proficiency in quantity and quality of language.

You saw a movie for Spanish class this semester at X University and had an exceptionally good/bad experience with it. Write a review on labutaca.net (a Spanish-language movie review site) explaining, in detail, what makes this movie a great/terrible choice to see. Describe the genre, acting, setting and plot of this movie. Compare the movie to another that you have seen in the same genre and how it is better/similar to this movie.

Figure 6. Sample proficiency writing prompt.

Department of Spanish and Portuguese
SPN 201 Writing Rubric

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Content (25%)	25 Content is superior and fully addresses all aspects of the prompt. Main ideas are clear and well-developed with detailed support.	21 Content is satisfactory and addresses all aspects of the prompt. Main ideas are clear and are supported with some elaboration and detail.	19 Most or all aspects of the prompt are addressed. Content is generally adequate, but may be superficial and/or repetitive. Main ideas are usually clear, but lack detailed development or elaboration.	15 Content is inadequate and/or does not address all aspects of the prompt. Main ideas are unclear and/or have minimal or no elaboration or detail. Content may be unrelated and/or repetitive.
Organization (25%)	25 All sentences and paragraphs are cohesive and flow logically. A variety of transitional words are used effectively	21 All sentencesand paragraphs are cohesive, yet may not always flow logically. A few sentences may be discrete. Transitional words are included, though some may be repeated.	19 Sentences and paragraphs are somewhat cohesive, though several may be discrete and/or misplaced. Transitional words are used, but may be ineffective.	15 Few sentences are cohesive. Most sentences are discrete and are misplaced with limited flow. Transitional words are not used or are used ineffectively
Discourse Level (25%)	25 Complete sentences are used throughout. Sentence structures are varied and include conjunctions and/or connectors.	21 Complete sentences are used throughout. Sentence structures may be varied but simple and include conjunctions and/or connectors.	19 Uses complete sentences most of the time. Sentence structure may be simple and/or repetitive. Conjunctions and/or connectors may be used.	15 Many incomplete sentences. Sentence structure is often simple and/or repetitive. Conjunctions and/or connectors are not used.
Vocabulary (25%)	25 Vocabulary range is extensive. Word choice and usage are appropriate in almost all instances. Mistakes do not obscure meaning. There are few spelling mistakes. Idiomatic expressions and/or less common words1 are attempted. Literal translation from English is not used.	21 Vocabulary range is satisfactory. Word choice and usage are generally appropriate. Mistakes rarely obscure meaning. Some spelling mistakes may be present. Idiomatic expressions and/or less common words may be attempted. Literal translations from English is rarely used.	19 Vocabulary is generally satisfactory, but may be repetitive and/or basic. There may be several mistakes in word choice and usage. Mistakes may obscure meaning. There may be many spelling mistakes. Few literal translations from English may be included.	15 Vocabulary range is inadequate, limited, and/or repetitive. There may be consistent and/or frequent mistakes in word choice and usage. Mistakes may often obscure meaning. There may be excessive spelling mistakes. Several English words and/or literal translation may be included.
Total Possible:	100	84	76	60

NOTE: This rubric incorporates descriptors from ACTFL's written proficiency guidelines for the novice and intermediate level(s).

Figure 7. Sample proficiency rubric.

Another proficiency assessment used in this intermediate level Spanish course is a face-to-face interview inspired by the ACTFL OPI. The goal of this evaluation is to measure what the student can spontaneously do with the language while participating in a simple, guided, direct conversation on a predictable topic related to daily activities and personal environment. The functions that are measured during the interview correspond to expectations of the Intermediate level on the ACTFL scale. This summative assessment takes place outside of class, near the end of the semester. Educators are encouraged to follow the pattern of the OPI: begin at a comfortable level to lower the student's anxiety levels which may hinder language production, establish at which level the student can successfully communicate, probe the student's ability at the next higher level and finally bring the conversation back to a very comfortable topic in order for the student to leave feeling successful.

Both assessments, oral and written, are administered in each level of the beginning and intermediate courses at this university. Reading and listening are not part of the proficiency assessments, but rather are measured in performance evaluations. However, in the introductory levels, the proficiency evaluations often parallel performance assessments due to the nature of the Novice level and newly-learned vocabulary and structures. As noted by Clifford (2006), performance can be a subset of proficiency or overlap with proficiency. In beginning levels students are able to create with language in a meaningful way but only in a very limited context. The unintended result is that attempts at proficiency testing in the introductory levels are often really measuring performance. The context is still very familiar since common vocabulary and structures to talk about oneself are fresh and new and have been practiced often through the course. As students progress through the intermediate classes in this program, the evaluations become less performance-oriented and more focused on proficiency.

An understanding of how to modify the ACTFL proficiency assessments to make them applicable for the classroom is essential. Proficiency testing can be

difficult to incorporate into the curriculum because it requires not only training but also time. Another consideration is that using such assessments in the classroom, which are divorced from current themes or topics of the curriculum, can be somewhat unsettling to the flow of the curriculum. However, these evaluations are critical in determining whether students can transfer the skills they learn in the classroom to real life.

Integration of assessments

Utilizing a variety of assessments, both formative and summative, is essential to measure students' language skills. Determining WHAT type of assessment to use, as well as WHY and HOW to use it, should depend on the educator's goals and student learning outcomes. Achievement assessments may take many forms: quizzes, written unit exams, comprehension checks, homework or exit slips, for example. They are most effective when the goal of the evaluation is to show the mastery or accuracy of structure or vocabulary recently learned. Performance assessments also present many options: presentations, oral recordings, skits, communicative unit exams, conversations, reading or listening interpretive tasks, or out-of-class compositions. They can be combined as IPAs or administered separately. These assessments are valuable when measuring the student's ability to complete a specific communicative task in a meaningful way, in a controlled context and in multiple modes of communication. Finally, proficiency assessments often evaluate oral or written skills through spontaneous one-on-one interviews, conversations with native speakers and writing. The goal of these assessments is to determine if students can transfer skills learned in the classroom to unfamiliar and unexpected contexts. In this program, formative and summative assessments are distributed across the three types of evaluations discussed in this article: achievement, performance and proficiency. Each assessment fulfills a different purpose in the classroom as shown in Table 1. Measuring mastery of structures, functions and vocabulary in achievement assessments as well as measuring the overall ability to complete a communicative task in a controlled environment during a performance assessment are essential. These two forms of evaluation are critical to help students move toward higher proficiency. However, the proficiency assessments are equally valuable because they reveal learners' overall language ability and give language educators feedback in creating realistic objectives for student learning.

Conclusion

Although new and exciting ways to test students' knowledge and language skills are often a topic of discussion and research, educators do not need to abandon other forms of assessment in order to incorporate new trends. There is space for a variety of assessments, all of which provide distinct and valuable feedback about student learning and reveal a clearer view of their abilities. Each type of assessment (achievement, performance and proficiency) serves a specific purpose. Utilizing solely one method of evaluation prevents the educator from knowing the students' overall capabilities in the target language and may misrepresent their true language development. However, by combining all three forms of evaluation,

Table 1. *Integration of Assessments in University-Level Basic Spanish Course*

Assessments	Type of Assessment	Category of Assessment	Purpose of Assessment
Comprehension checks / homework	Formative	Achievement	Evaluate student's accuracy of the structure, function or vocabulary
Speaking tasks (in-class presentations, skits, interpersonal conversations, oral recordings)	Formative and/or Summative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task
Spontaneous conversations with native speakers (online)	Formative	Proficiency	Evaluate student's ability to transfer skills to unfamiliar contexts
Readings discussed in class	Formative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task
Videos viewed in class	Formative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task
Writing tasks in class or assigned as homework	Formative	Achievement and Performance	Evaluate student's accuracy of the structure, function or vocabulary and ability to complete a specific communicative task
Written unit exams	Summative	Achievement and Performance	Evaluate student's accuracy of the structure, function or vocabulary and ability to complete a specific communicative task
In-class compositions	Summative	Proficiency	Evaluate student's ability to transfer skills to unfamiliar contexts
Out-of-class composition	Summative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task
Oral interview	Summative	Proficiency	Evaluate student's ability to transfer skills to unfamiliar contexts
Interpretive reading	Summative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task
Interpretive listening	Summative	Performance	Evaluate student's ability to complete a specific communicative task

educators are able to see what the students have learned, how they can perform in a controlled environment and what they can do with the language in a natural setting. All of these assessments can and should coexist within the same classroom because, taken together, they afford a more thorough picture of the students' overall language development.

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Designing Performance-Based Assessments Within Digital L2 Environments

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Abstract

This paper explores the pedagogical value of three digital technologies (Piktochart, VoiceThread, and Twitter) to support language learning, and their potential use as frameworks for performance-based assessments. Findings from a case study explore the implications and potential power that digital performance-based assessments can have upon instructional design and learning outcomes.

Introduction

Learning another language is intended to not exist in isolation, or to be experienced in a vacuum as the idiom implies, but rather language is meant to express oneself, to share ideas or points of view. To learn a language eventually leads to communicating with others. Students need exposure to meaningful, communicative, and authentic activities in which they can showcase their grasp of the language through production. The crux of the problem with learning language within a traditional classroom environment is the artificial nature of most tasks. While authenticity of the classroom environment is a relative notion, it is difficult to dispute the fact that there is a certain degree of artificiality in the classroom in order to position learning opportunities to help maximize a skill, short-cutting the naturally slow process of language acquisition in order to expedite discovery and learning of language (Pčolinská, 2009). For purposes within this article, authenticity will refer to any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching (Nunan, 1989; Wilkins, 1976). When

considering the language classroom and the pedagogy surrounding instruction within the language classroom, one must consider the materials being used, and the context they are being used in/for; it is this framework and overall setting that is established creating either an artificial or authentic learning environment. If much of what is said, read, and experienced is a stretch of communicative "real language," produced by "real speakers or writers" for a "real audience" to convey a "real message" of some sort then the resulting environment created is that of authenticity (Morrow, 1977, p. 13).

It takes dedicated effort to infuse the classroom with truly authentic materials, tasks, and communicative opportunities. Authentic learning allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant to the learner (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999). The integration of blended, online, and digital learning platforms has provided language teachers with increased opportunities for authenticity; students can create personalized, creative, meaningful, and communicative projects. This paper considers the ever-expanding language learning environments within which our students are engaging and learning, and explores how these digital spaces can be capitalized upon in order to offer integrated performance-based assessments utilizing three technologies: Piktochart, VoiceThread, and Twitter.

Proficiency-driven instruction

As educators, we do not want our students to remain static in their language abilities, but to always continue to improve and advance their overall communicative competence. In order for this to happen, pedagogy within the classroom needs to be proficiency-driven, with tasks that are grounded in student proficiency and performance, or what the learner is able to do with the language in purposeful communicative tasks that reflect real-world uses of the language (ACTFL, 2012a).

An instructional stance that is proficiency-based promotes intercultural communication by exploring the mosaic of language and culture, where students communicate appropriately and accurately in authentic contexts (Arendt, Lang, & Wakefield, 1986). Within classrooms that are proficiency-driven, students

- know exactly what skills they need to master in order to demonstrate that they have acquired new content knowledge and developed their linguistic proficiency;
- are autonomous learners, working at their own pace until they reach their goal;
- are assessed formatively along the way, just as much for educators to gauge and adjust instruction as to measure student learning (Oregon Education Roundtable, 2009).

Proficiency-based instruction builds upon what students already know, can do, and need; it respects multiple learning styles and modalities encouraging differentiation and the development of a wide array of skills and learning strategies.

Proficiency-driven instruction is transparent, goal oriented, and student centered. Teachers and students alike work together to achieve and thrive.

Performance assessments

Performance assessments, which require students to demonstrate mastery of skills and competencies by producing or performing something, are one of the cornerstones of the proficiency-driven classroom. (Wisconsin Education Association Council, 1996). It is important to note that performance assessments measure a student's language abilities that have been learned and practiced within familiar contexts and content areas; conversely, proficiency assessments are spontaneous demonstrations of language ability in non-rehearsed contexts (ACTFL, 2012a). Both have merit and serve valuable purposes in the language classroom, but for this paper, the focus will be upon designing performance assessments.

Performance assessments are both formative and summative in nature. They build upon pre-requisite knowledge encouraging students to "put it all together" but at the same time they can offer a glimpse into student progress, comprehension, and at times gaps in their understanding. As a result, performance assessments are more inclusive and complete than traditional ones.

ACTFL's *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners* (2012b) describe the three modes of communication - interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational – as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Modes of Communication*

Mode of Communication	Description
Interpretive	Interpretation of the message relayed from author/ speaker/ language producer
Interpersonal	Negotiation of meaning among individuals
Presentational	Creation of a message to inform, persuade, narrate, or explain

"The Performance Descriptors form a roadmap for teaching and learning, helping teachers create performance tasks targeted to the appropriate performance range, while challenging learners to also use strategies from the next higher range" (ACTFL, 2012b, p. 1). Using the performance descriptors that identify what learners can do in the three modes at various proficiency levels, learning outcomes and accompanying assessments can be created in order to determine a more reliable gauge of what students know and can do linguistically, thus offering a more meaningful, robust and reliable way to assess students' language performance.

Digital learning environments

Language learning is broadening its reach to encompass more than just traditional brick-and-mortar classrooms and immersive study abroad experiences. Technology has opened up another platform with which students can learn, communicate, and engage. One of the biggest benefits of digital learning

environments is its ability to extend the amount of time students have to use and engage with the language. It is recognized that it is impossible to offer an exact measurement regarding how long it takes for a student to become proficient, and there can be vast variations based upon the language being learned, the targeted proficiency level, the learner, and the type of pedagogy employed (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982). However, Desveaux (2013) offers a general point of reference that it takes approximately 200 hours of guided language learning for students to progress from one level to the next. The most common program model in the country continues to be two years of language instruction at the secondary level, which generally limits proficiency to the Novice range (ACTFL, 2012b). While not a fix, digital language learning environments afford teachers the chance to extend students' learning opportunities and contact time with students within a structured and guided space.

"While technology can play an important role in supporting and enhancing language learning, the effectiveness of any technological tool depends on the knowledge and expertise of the qualified language teacher who manages and facilitates the language learning environment" (ACTFL, 2012a). This statement is a core truth of using technology in language learning. As it is essential that any strategy, activity, or technology use have a sound pedagogical framework in order to be considered for implementation, it is important for teachers and instructors to have tools to evaluate the technology available to them and help them decide if they are appropriate for the task and the goals of the class or the program.

To reiterate, emphasis must be placed upon "pedagogy before technology, rather than technology before pedagogy, … constructively re-envisioning technology in their [teachers'] classrooms" (McGrail, 2007, p. 83). The authors chose to use the *TERCCC Suite* of rubrics to gauge the value of digital tools in relation to the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (see McKeeman & Olveida, 2014, 2015, 2016 for discussions of the development and use of these rubrics).

Technology-based performance assessments in action

The performance assessment was a holistic and contextualized task embedded within multiple layers of technology in order to capitalize upon each of the strengths of the technologies. In other words, one technology was not sufficient in order to achieve the desired learning outcomes; therefore, multiple technologies —Piktochart, VoiceThread, and Twitter—were used in order to meaningfully address each of the elements

Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol was followed when informing the teacher participant of the scope and potential impacts of the project. General qualitative research methods were employed (Creswell, 1998) using case study design (Stake, 1995). The case study involved a participating teacher teaching Level 1 Spanish at a post-secondary institution working within blended and online classroom environments. Data were collected through artifacts, qualitative comments, researcher observations and field notes; used with data generated from the *TERCCC Suite* of rubrics, data were triangulated to gain a more holistic

understanding of the how the digital tools interplayed with instructional design and subsequent performance-based assessments. Constant comparative analysis was used throughout the data collection and analysis of the case study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

The participating teacher prepared for creating the performance-based assessments by scaffolding instructional content, tasks, and tools within every learning module prior to introducing the integrated performance assessments that students would be asked to complete towards the end of the unit. In preparation for the assessments, introductions and greetings would be taught at the beginning of the chapter and continuously recycled and reinforced as new vocabulary and content were introduced. Instructional technologies would also be modeled and integrated within instruction prior to the performance assessments that students would need to complete; this ensured that students would understand what these technologies were and how to use/manipulate/engage/and capitalize upon them. Instructional scaffolding was deemed important in order for students to gain confidence in their linguistic abilities as they revisited and reviewed previously-learned content while stretching their abilities and learning new content, thus improving their skills and performance. Encouraging students to advance their language proficiency through performance was important within the classroom where the case study was conducted. Therefore, the performance assessments were designed to assess learning objectives that were based on ACTFL's performance descriptors for all three modes of communication.

As instruction was diligently scaffolded, so was the assessment task. For example, students would not be required to demonstrate a skill without it being broken down into its subcomponents so they could be practiced and learned. Once these components were integrated, students would be able to competently use the skill as a result of this scaffolding. This process was used during each stage of instruction and again when students were demonstrating their linguistic abilities during the performance assessment task. In order for students to demonstrate their performance within the different modes of communication, the assessment was broken into three parts, (1) reading, viewing, listening and understanding the content being presented (interpretive mode) in order to apply it appropriately and accurately in other modes, (2) creating, uploading, and presenting an infographic orally (presentational mode), and finally (3) discussing the presentations and offering feedback (interpersonal mode).

The following sections will describe how these digital technologies were used to assess learning outcomes using these integrated performance assessments.

Piktochart

Piktochart is a free, open-source, web-based digital tool that allows for ease in creating, editing, and producing infographics (Piktochart, n.d.). Infographics' power lies in their ability to make broad, complex, or dense ideas more accessible through colorful, creative, and visually engaging layouts (Pappas, 2016). There is flexibility and choice built in to the creation of these infographics thus affording

personalization and creativity. Piktochart was selected as the digital platform with which learners could demonstrate their interpretive communicative competence and translate it into presentational communication. It was also selected because of its ease of use and format.

Students were charged to create an infographic through Piktochart in order to demonstrate their understanding as it related to their own cultural mindset and/or perspectives about their own culture, then to compare it to another culture (Appendix A). For example, students would learn about *quinceañeras* and then compare them to similar celebrations that they are familiar with, such as "sweet 16" birthday parties or debutante balls. The Piktochart assignment was given toward the end of the unit. Students had learned and practiced vocabulary related to greetings, and family members, in addition to other cultural lessons (i.e. customary greetings, regional/traditional foods, shopping patterns, and holidays from different Spanish speaking countries). The assignment was broken into four sections, the introduction, family, food and culture, all to be addressed in the digital platform. Students had repeatedly practiced all content prior to demonstrating their understanding within the Piktochart infographic in order to be able to know and successfully present the culture section of their presentation.

Asking students to take a broad concept like culture and personalize it, applying their knowledge of what culture is and what constitutes culture, gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the content and then extend their performance through creation of their own message about culture. Further extension was created when student used their personalized cultural knowledge to make connections to a different culture, once again demonstrating their understanding of the message as to what culture is and how it is comprised.

The infographic assignment combined text, graphics and video to create a visually comprehensible message that could be easily shared digitally (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Sample Piktochart infographic assignment.

Students connected simple strings of text with graphics while organizing it into four sections. The result was a digital, L2 rich visualization of students' interpretation of culture through family, food, holidays. This allowed novice students to demonstrate their comprehension of culture, while also becoming an author in the L2, educating fellow classmates about their own personal culture through an accessible, meaningful, and authentic infographic.

The Piktochart portion of the performance assessment asked students to demonstrate their ability to use the L2 to write simple introductions, introduce family, talk about food and holidays, engage in simple conversations, ask/answer rehearsed questions, and demonstrate their understanding of multiple cultures. These different expectations built upon one another; for example, simple introductions were essential in order for the student to be able to introduce his/her family. A student would begin by introducing herself, "*Hola, mi nombre es Cindy*" (Hi, my name is Cindy). After the personal introduction she would continue to introduce her family. "*Mi padre se llama Robert y mi madre se llama Zulema.*" (My father's name is Roberto and my mother's name is Zulema). Many students would add the letter "o" to their parent's name, changing it to a Latino name. Students were also observed to combine new vocabulary with previously learned vocabulary when creating simple sentences to introduce family members. For example, a student would say *"Mi madre se llama Zulema y ella es muy guapa, ella es de California, pero vive en Texas y tiene cincuenta años*" (My mother's name is Zulema and she is beautiful, she is from California, but she lives in Texas and she is fifty years old). Students bound their understanding of the language with the graphics they chose to include, visually organizing their infographic to include images and videos with text. For instance, a family tree was paired with pertinent information about their families; videos from countries studied and text from subheadings were paired with short descriptors. Students' infographics demonstrated their ability to accurately use the L2 to present simplified yet meaningful language, and understand similarities and differences between a L2 culture and their own.

VoiceThread

VoiceThread is a free web-based technology that can embed multimedia within a virtual collaborative slideshow in which participants can comment and converse through audio, video, and/or text (VoiceThread, n.d.). This digital tool was targeted because of its versatility, compatibility with multimedia and its ability to support language production. VoiceThread was selected primarily to serve as a platform in which learners could present their infographics (see Figure 2 on the next page); however, there were several other potential uses within this performance-based task.

The presentation was done orally through the use of the video recording tool available in VoiceThread. Students were able to record and re-record their presentation until they were satisfied with the result and then publish it. This not only showcased their linguistic performance, but increased their opportunity to practice the L2, fine-tuning their ability to express their thoughts on family, food and culture.

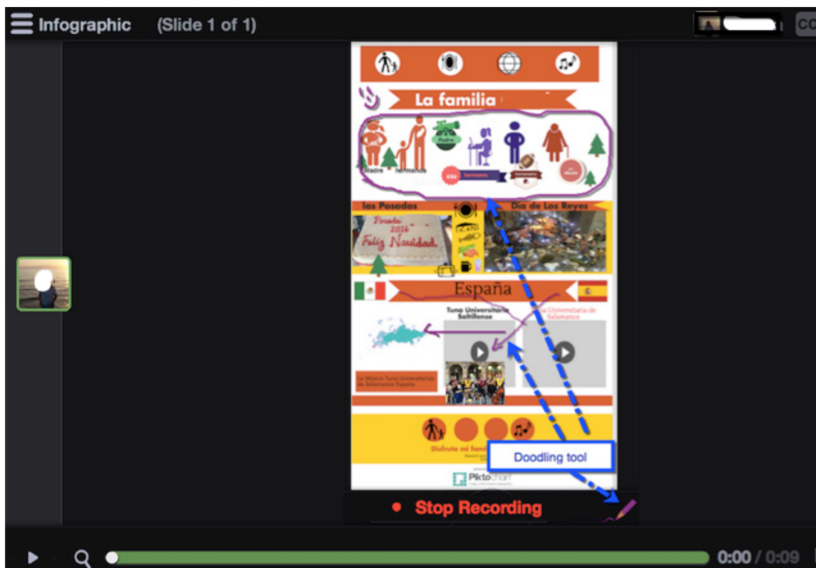

Figure 2. Model of Piktochart infographic embedded in VoiceThread for presentation.

The VoiceThread platform also allowed students to catch common, simple mistakes in the grammatical structures that students needed to use to complete the task. For example, a student was viewing his presentation on VoiceThread and realized he said, "*mi madre se llamo*" [my mother's name is] rather than "*mi madre se llama.*" The student quickly caught this common error and self-corrected. This was not a unique case, but a regular occurrence, which could be interpreted as encouraging development of students' internal monitor (Krashen, 1982).

For those viewing/listening to the infographic presentations, VoiceThread allowed for collaborative comprehension; students could choose to comment or pose questions on the slide. While not synchronous, there was the ability to negotiate understanding. Furthermore, the visual support from the infographics, and the doodle feature (see Figure 2) supported the audience's comprehension.

The VoiceThread portion of the performance assessment charged students to demonstrate their ability to use the L2 to read simple introductions, introduce family, foods, and holidays, and explain their understanding of multiple cultures. VoiceThread offered an environment that promoted a low affective filter and minimized distractions for students allowing them to focus on the task. Students orally presented their Piktochart infographics (a personal introduction, information about their family, foods and holidays, and their cultural understanding). These familiar topics allowed students to express themselves either through self-prepared, memorized scripts or via spontaneous speech. Novice learners were able to articulate simple sentences without much memorization because they had intimate knowledge of the topic and therefore could focus their cognitive efforts on the language versus the subject.

Twitter

Twitter, a prevalent social media platform, was targeted for its instructional potential. Twitter's mission is, "[to] give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers" (Twitter, n.d.). This mission paralleled its intended instructional use within the digital classroom, serving as a platform in which to communicate, collaborate, and share insights with one another. While Twitter by design is a communication tool, it is also a community in and of itself; it connects communities and cultures. Twitter was chosen to serve as a platform for students to practice skills associated with initiating and maintaining dialogue. Students used practiced vocabulary with simple phrases to comment upon, ask questions, and simply reflect upon the infographic presentations. For example, students would tweet a picture of their meal and comment on their or a classmate's assignment. The connections they made between what they were doing in the classroom with their life outside the classroom made the assessment come to life and be more meaningful.

The Twitter element of the performance assessment asked students to use the L2 to make simple introductions, demonstrate understanding of at least two cultures by asking a question about why a particular cultural practice, product, or perspective is similar or different in each. Twitter's technology allows students to communicate within the 140-character limit. The character restrictions offer a nice scaffold for novice learners, facilitating their questions and responses in order to engage in abridged conversations (short phrases and simple sentences) without the pressure of producing more extensive strings of discourse. For example, students tweeted short responses in the L2 demonstrating cultural understanding when a question was asked regarding the Day of the Dead and Halloween. One student tweeted "*Son diferentes, Día de los muertos es una celebración y Halloween no*," (they are different, Day of the Dead is a celebration and Halloween is not). In another example, when prompted by a reflective question about the assignment, a student replied, tweeting, "*las culturas son más similar que pensar como Latino Am. y las culturas de Sur Pacifico*" (cultures are more similar that we think like Latin Am. & South Pacific cultures). Twitter encourages communication in L2 though basic reading and writing. Students used practiced vocabulary and or simple phrases to comment or ask questions about their classmates Piktochart/VoiceThread presentations, or simply reflect upon their own presentations.

Discussion and implications

As Blake (2013) stated, "Technology, if used wisely can play a major role in enhancing L2 learners' contact with the target language…. Whether technology can actually fulfill this promise depends on how it is used in the curriculum." (p. 2). In talking with the participating teacher in the case study, it was apparent that conceptualizing this integrated performance-based assessment took considerable time, and then actually creating the framework (a.k.a., the directions) for the assessment in which students could demonstrate their linguistic performance took additional time. Again, it is not just about using a technology as a frill in the classroom, but to purposefully and meaningfully craft instruction, in this case a performance-based

assessment, and taking time to pair the technology tool with the learning outcomes. Therefore, when designing instruction and assessment with digital technologies, it is good to note that the process in its entirety will likely be a bit more time-consuming at the start.

All projects have a scope (the magnitude of the project), schedule (the length of the project, how long it will take), and cost (the resources needed to complete the project). The scope of this performance assessment was inclusive, comprehensive, and well integrated, as a result, the schedule of its creation increased. In other words, the time it took to design and create these performance-based assessments took much longer. In a more traditional classroom, with more traditional assessment measures, it likely takes significantly less time for teachers to prepare and produce an assessment task for students; however, the overall impact of the assessment upon students' affect, the comprehensive gauge on students' performance, and the meaningfulness of the task would also likely be less. Therefore, the additional time it took to design and implement the technology-based performance assessment was worthwhile.

The link can also be made to the scope/schedule/cost analogy when looking at students' effort, time on task and eventual output when comparing performance-based assessments with more traditional assessment measures. The participating teacher reviewed student scores and performance on like content but assessed with different vehicles, and she reported without hesitation, students assessed using digital performance measures outperformed themselves compared to when they were assessed through more traditional measures. "They work on it until perfection," she said. Students would rehearse, review, re-record, re-work, revisit, redo their work again and again in order to make it "just so." While the participating teacher's focus was clearly on the linguistic proficiency of students and their communicative competence, the students were more focused initially on the final published product. Therefore, they saw value of making their L2 production as accurate as possible by repeatedly practicing prior to their final upload. This was a unique byproduct offered by the well-designed nature of the digital assignment. During traditional classroom presentations, this is generally not the case; students may rehearse prior to getting up in front of their peers and presenting. The teacher went on to say, "[Students] knew it was going to be published for everyone to see and they wanted it to be good." Students would publish their work to a private class account owned by the instructor, but viewable to only those enrolled in the class; however, some chose to make their presentations public. Sharing their infographics with family, friends, and/or a greater audience created authenticity. Students were publishing a "real message" to "real people" thus creating a more memorable and meaningful learning experience. While presenting a poster to a class of your peers still puts a student in the spotlight for everyone to see, it is momentary and seems less permanent or lasting. The connotation of *publishing* work is more final, lasting, permanent, and it was clear that students placed value on the work they uploaded in a technology platform.

The potential for interdisciplinary integration and collaboration in these assessments was also noteworthy. Creating familiarity with infographics allowed for students to not only know how to read and understand them, but to use and create them. These can be seen in every aspect of life, and as students continue in

education or the workforce, infographics are becoming more and more prevalent as ways to interpret and convey information (McCandless, 2010). The participating teacher explained, “I could easily go to the Poli Sci teacher and collaborate having students create or interpret infographics that are on persuasive arguments. They’re everywhere and could be used for anything.” She went on to explain that students need more opportunities to present and publish their work. Again, she began to think interdisciplinarily, saying, “what we’re doing here is a lot like what the Speech or English teachers are doing. We could be working together to have students do more of this.”

Conclusion

In this paper, we explored how students’ linguistic performance can be promoted through the creation of digital performance-based assessments. Three technology tools were selected that complimented one another in how they were integrated within the performance-based assessment, eventually supporting student learning outcomes. Findings suggest that while the construction of these digital performance-based assessments require additional time initially there is also a corresponding benefit to student performance. The environments created when learning is offered through well-crafted digital technologies affords students the chance to engage in authentic learning, encouraging them to see these experiences as applicable in the “real world.” In order to prepare 21st century learners to become 21st century citizens, learning must be contextualized, connected, interwoven, meaningful and relevant. As teachers, we need to be thinking outside our content area; operating within silos of content and knowledge is not adequate. This study offered a glimpse into the potential that exists when effectively conceptualizing and integrating performance-based assessments using digital technologies as the framework for performance.

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Appendix A

Assignment Descriptions

Asignación: Infográfico Piktochart

Diseña un infográfico usando la página web: www.piktochart.com

I. *Cubre los siguientes temas:*

La familia

- *Miembros de la familia inmediata*
- *La comida*

Representación de platos o la comida que escogiste porque son importantes?

II. *Escoja dos días festivos.*

¿Por qué son importantes o significante para ti y tú familia?

III. *La Comida*

El platillo, postre o bebida especial para ti qué vas a compartir con la clase el día de las presentaciones.

¿Porque crees qué la comida o familia es una parte intrica de la familia? Nota, que no es solamente el comer la comida. Piensa, piensa hmmmmm….

IV. *Agrega un componente cultural adicional a tu infográfico.*

Compara y contrasta aspectos de otras culturas de latino América con tu propia cultura. Busca semejanzas o diferencias a tu cultura.

Trata de escoger ejemplos significantes en los que puedas relacionar tus propias experiencias personales. Por ejemplo un cumpleaños como un Sweet 16, como lo relacionarías con otro país latinoamericano?

Infographic assignment

Design an infographic using the piktochart template: www.piktochart.com

I. Covering the following subjects:

The Family

- Immediate family members
- Foods

Representation of dishes or food that you choose, and why were they important?

II. Choose 2 holidays

Why are they important and/or significant for you and/or your family gatherings?

III. The Food.

Your special dish, dessert or drink that you are wanting to share with the class on the day of presentations.

Why do you think food or family plays an intricate or important role in culture? Please note, It is not only about eating think hmmmm..

IV. Add one more culture component to your infographic in addition to what you have mentioned.

Compare it to another Latin America culture. Compare and contrast aspects of another Spanish-speaking cultures with your own culture. Look for similarities and/or differences compared to your own culture.

Make it relevant to your own, in other words something you can relate to. Example, if you or a family member celebrated a sixteenth birthday such as a sweet sixteen, then how would you relate this celebration with another Spanish speaking culture?

VoiceThread Submission for Infographic

Como crear una cuenta en VoiceThread y entregar el trabajo.

1. *Navega la red a VoiceThread.com*
2. *Regístrate y abre una cuenta personal en VoiceThread*
3. *Inicia con la contraseña*
4. *Haz click en el enlace o copiar el enlace del link* https://voicethread.com/myvoice/#thread/778983939/42388425/4338888
5. *Publica tú VoiceThread en español. Habla y haz una presentación sobre los cuatro temas, introduciendo a la familia y los cuatro temas de la asignación de piktochart en español usando Voicethread.*

How to submit your assignment on VoiceThread and create an account.

1. Surf the web to VoiceThread.com
2. Register and open a VoiceThread account
3. Enter with your password
4. Click on the link or copy and paste the link: https://voicethread.com/myvoice/#thread/778983939/42388425/4338888
5. Publish your VoiceThread in Spanish. Cover the 4 subject headings of your piktochart assignment. Introduce your family and present your piktochart in Spanish through VoiceThread.

Students' Experiences During Cross-Cultural Video Chat Interactions

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions on language proficiency, interest and experience with the target language and culture, benefits of cross-cultural interactions, and level of comfort using technology of intermediate level college Spanish students when participating in online video chats with native speakers of Spanish. Surveys were collected at the beginning and end of the semester and were analyzed to gather information about their experiences. Results of this study suggest that video chats with native speakers may positively influence students' views of the target language, culture, and Spanish-speaking people and may further their interest about continuing learning. This study provides guidelines, considerations, and recommendations for the successful implementation of video chats with native target language speakers.

Introduction

In many foreign language teaching contexts, it can be very difficult for teachers to provide students with opportunities for authentic interactions with native speakers. However, as technology continues to evolve, more resources to facilitate these interactions are available, including networked technologies with audio and video capabilities (e.g., Skype, Windows Live Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger etc.). There are also many technologies offering the opportunities to speak with native speakers of specific languages, including Language Twin, TalkAbroad, LinguaMeeting, WeSpeke, etc. (Ceo-Francesco, 2015). The goal of these interactions is to educate interculturally competent speakers of a foreign language, ones who possess both communicative competence in the target language in addition to particular skills, values, and knowledge about the culture (Moeller & Nugent, 2014).

Wilkinson et al. (2015) advocate moving culture to the center of our classrooms, as it would launch both students and teachers into a lifelong journey of cultural discovery,

involving new understandings of multiple cultural identities and building intercultural communicative competence. Communication and culture are inseparable; one cannot really understand another culture without having direct access to its language (Duranti, 1997).

Communicating with people abroad online may provide students with the connection to a community of target language speakers and increase their appreciation of their culture. Savignon (1997) noted the importance of learners' attitudes, experiences, and affective variables in second language learning. Therefore, this study will explore the experiences of students using a synchronous online chat for culture-focused conversation assignments with native speakers. The purpose of this study is to explore the use of this technology with language learners participating in conversations with native speakers of Spanish language, analyze their perceived language proficiency before and after the conversations, analyze their attitude towards Spanish-speaking people, language and culture, and examine their comfort level with the use of technology for language learning.

Review of literature

Several studies have explored language learners' experiences in text-based synchronous virtual environments (Donaldson & Kötter, 1999; Shih & Yang, 2008; von der Emde, Schenider, & Kötter, 2001). However, not much research has been done on language learners' experiences and attitudes when using synchronous video chat communication technology to speak with native speakers. Carruthers (2015) explored students' experiences and perceived language learning when participating in synchronous conversations groups via virtual 3-D environment (Second Life*)* versus face-to-face conversations. Results showed differences in the learner's perceptions in regard to language proficiency in different skills. Since the conversations were among language learners, a limitation of this study was the lack of cultural context of the conversational activities as well as limited authentic communication.

More recent studies using web-based synchronous video capabilities have focused on comparing text-based and video-based synchronous communication effects on oral proficiency development (Hung & Higgins, 2016; Ko, 2012) and motivation (Freiermuth & Huang, 2012; Terhune, 2016). However, research in this area is limited in regards to the learners' perceived language proficiency or interest towards the target language and culture. One study examined the effects of participating in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual virtual exchange (synchronous and asynchronous communication, and tasks included both languages and cultures) between students of German in the United States and students of English in Germany, on students' interest about learning about another culture. The results showed that students' interest in learning about culture did not change before and after the exchange. Students maintained a high level of interest and believed that learning about the target language culture needs to be part of language courses (Schenker, 2013).

This study seeks to fill a gap in the research by exploring the effects of participating in synchronous video chats with native-speakers on participants' perceived language proficiency, level of interest and experience in learning about Spanish language and culture, level of comfort when using technology, and the perceived benefits from the cross-cultural experience.

Methodology

For the purpose of the study, students participated in four online video chats of 30 minutes with native Spanish speakers from a variety of countries during a semester of study. The online program utilized for the online conversations was TalkAbroad. This program provides students with 30-minute conversations with trained and supervised conversation partners abroad, using video-conferencing software as the interface for the conversations. Students need a computer, web access, a headset and microphone. Teachers have access to set up a course, post assignments, and listen to the recordings. Students could select their partners and make appointments for the conversations. The program recorded the conversations and kept track of students' work. Participants were recruited in intermediate courses from three sections of approximately 30 students. Students completed four conversations that aligned with the content of the curriculum that increased in level of difficulty. The first assignment had conversation partners talk about their lives, the second assignment was to describe pictures, the third assignment was about art and culture, and the fourth assignment was about the news.

Participants

A total of 21 students participated in the semester long conversation exchanges. Students were enrolled in Intermediate Spanish courses at a Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Participants comprised 18 females and 3 males who were at least 18 years of age and native speakers of English.

Data collection

Pre- and post-survey

The initial survey (see Appendix A) was used to obtain general information such as gender, major and minor of study, why participants are learning Spanish (items 1, 5, and 6), language background information (item 3), experience with other languages or cultures through travel/living abroad, family, or friends (items 2 and 4). Likert-scale questions were used to ask about their perceived language proficiency in each of the language skills (item 8), a question about their interest in learning Spanish language and culture (item 9), and their current experience with native Spanish speakers (item 10). The survey also included seven open-ended questions about their attitudes and beliefs about Spanish language and culture (items 11 and 12), expected learning from conversations with native speakers (item 13 and 17), level of comfort with use of technology (items 14 and 15), expectations of the course (item 16), and topics of interest to discuss in the conversations (item 18).

The post-survey (see Appendix B) was given at the end of the semester and included the same items 8 to 18 from the initial survey (items 1-11), a Likert-scale questionnaire with 13 items about their experience during the conversations, and two open-ended questions about what they liked about the conversations (item 12) and what would they change about the conversations (item 13).

Recordings and reflective questionnaires

After each conversation, students had to listen to the recording of the conversation with the native speaker and transcribe at least one page of the conversation. The

goal of this part of the exercise was for students to reflect on their performance and further practice listening and speaking skills. Students answered reflection questions to guide them on how to reflect about their learning (see Appendix C).

Data analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analyses were conducted on the data obtained from the surveys of the 21 participants for whom complete data were available. No personal or identifiable information was collected. A coding system was utilized to collect, manipulate, and analyze the data. The data obtained from the Likert scale items on the pre- and post-surveys was analyzed with a paired-samples T-test to compare and determine if there was significant difference between the means of the pre- and post-test. The answers from the open-ended questions on the pre- and post-surveys were analyzed qualitatively. The researcher transcribed and coded the answers in order to reveal patterns on the students' responses.

Results

Language background and areas of study

Participants were asked if they had visited or lived in a Spanish-speaking country: 48% had never visited or lived in a country abroad. Only19% of students spoke or learned another language besides English or Spanish, and 29% of students expressed having friends or family that are native speakers of Spanish. Students were asked their area of study, including major and minor. Students were from a variety of majors including biology (24%), business (19%), nursing (10%), psychology (9%), undecided (9%), English (9%), Spanish (5%), anthropology (5%), criminal justice (5%), and education (5%). Even though only one student was a Spanish major, thirteen participants (62%) were Spanish minors.

Students were also asked the reason why they study Spanish. The answers were tabulated and grouped in categories including: required for my major/minor, love the Spanish language, love for culture, having a Hispanic heritage or family, desire to help people who speak Spanish, for their future career, and for travel. The response with the highest rate was for their future career (40%) which included comments such as they felt it was important in today's world, the changing demographics in the U.S., to be more competitive in the job market, desire to help Spanish-speaking people, and because it is essential for a medical career. The second most common was because of their love of the language or culture (26%). Other responses included desire to learn a second language (11%), having a Hispanic heritage (9%), required for their major/minor (8%), and travel (6%).

Language proficiency self-ratings

Participants were asked to rate their language proficiency level in reading, writing, speaking, and listening from 1 (not proficient) to 5 (highly proficient). Results of the paired-samples t-test showed that mean perceived proficiency levels differed approaching the level of significance with $p < 0.1$ for speaking before ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.81$) and after ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.72$), $t(20) = -1.83$, $p = 0.08$, and reading before ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.74$) and after ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.59$), $t(20) = -1.92$,

$p = 0.06$. These results suggest that participants felt that they improved mostly in the areas of speaking and reading but there was not much perceived difference in listening or writing.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics and t-test Results for Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing*

	Pretest		Posttest			95% CI for Mean Difference			
Outcome	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*n*		*r*	*t*	*df*
Speaking	2.43	0.81	2.71	0.72	21	-0.61, 0.04	.57*	-1.83	20
Listening	3.24	1.18	3.19	0.74	21	-0.44, 0.53	.46*	0.20	20
Reading	3.62	0.74	3.95	0.59	21	-0.69, 0.03	.30	-1.92	20
Writing	3.14	0.91	3.31	0.95	21	-0.53, 0.19	.64*	-0.96	20

* $p < 0.5$.

Interest in language and cultural learning

Students rated their level of interest in learning the Spanish language and discovering about Spanish-speaking cultures from 1 (no interest) to 5 (very interested). Results, presented in Table 2, showed high interest in the initial survey with a 4.52 score on average and some increase to 4.71 on average after participating in the conversations with native speakers. The difference between the pre- and post-survey was not significant. However, their answers varied in distribution when compared with the pre-survey. The most common response from participants in the pre-survey was their interest in learning how to communicate in another language ($n = 12$) and learning about culture of other countries ($n = 11$). The rest of the responses mentioned travel ($n = 2$), connecting with their family or heritage ($n = 3$), or because they found Spanish learning fun and interesting ($n = 2$). The post-survey showed similar responses with an increased interest in mentioning travel as a goal ($n = 5$).

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics and t-test Results for Interest and Experience*

	Pretest		Posttest			95% CI for Mean Difference			
Outcome	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*n*		*r*	*t*	*df*
Interest	4.52	0.81	4.71	0.46	21	-0.61, 0.04	.15	-1.00	20
Experience	2.90	1.26	3.24	0.89	21	-0.44, 0.53	.42	-1.28	20

* $p < 0.5$.

Students also rated their level of experience and contact with Spanish speakers from 1 (no experience/contact) to 5 (lots of experience/contact). Results in the pre-survey, also shown in Table 2, showed a mean of 2.90 and some increase to 3.24 after participating in the conversations with native speakers. The difference was not statistically significant. Students in general had a low level of experience and contact with native Spanish speakers. They responded that they have contact

with Spanish speakers when visiting Spanish-speaking countries (n = 5), with family (n = 4), teachers (n = 4), friends (n = 3), when going to a Mexican restaurant (n = 2), and at work (n = 1).

Views about Spanish-speaking people, Spanish language, and culture

Participants were asked their opinion the Spanish-speaking people, culture, and language in the questionnaire. Answers were tabulated and grouped into themes and frequencies of comments were counted for analysis. Pre-survey responses showed that all of the participants had a generally positive view of Spanish-speaking people, culture, and language. 41% of the comments were about the culture: "the culture is beautiful even though it can be confusing or seen as different", "beautiful culture, especially South America", "Spanish culture is more complex than American culture. Each country has its own culture and I like that". When asked what they thought of the Spanish language, and the ideas or social status they associate with it, 29% commented on the language positively: "beautiful language", "love how easy and natural Spanish feels", "they speak very quickly", "different Spanish speaking countries use different dialects and slang", "intriguing language filled with passion"; two students commented on the language being challenging: "difficult but challenging language", "quite challenging to learn but interesting to work with." 29% (n = 6) of the participants commented about Spanish-speaking people: "more friendly and welcoming than people in the U.S.", "they are more relaxed people than Americans", "They are very hardworking and passionate about their heritage". 14% (n = 3) of participants commented that the language was just interesting, or that they did not have much knowledge about it.

In the same questions on the post-survey, all responses were also positive with 10% (n = 2) of the responses about the culture and 90% (n = 19) commenting on Spanish-speaking people: "They are very nice and understanding. They could tell I was nervous so they tried to make me feel more comfortable", "They are friendly, polite, and active. Many of the TA partners I had were involved in dancing, Crossfit, biking, etc. I think their culture revolves around family and socializing and less on technology like we focus in America", "They were friendly and well-educated. I would like to have more contact", "They are more like us than we like to believe. It just depends on the person as to how they act and choose to express their culture", "Religious, family-oriented", "I like learning about the way they live and their culture", "Enjoy Spanish speaking people. They are super friendly, well-mannered, and family-oriented." Participants also viewed the Spanish language positively and explicitly stated that language and social status are not connected: "I think that it is a cool language. I admire it a lot. I do not associate language with a social status because that doesn't make sense". They described the language as beautiful, complicated, unique, easy to learn. Only two cases related the language to a wealthy and educated class, and two cases associated the language with a lower class or to workers in a restaurant or farm. Some students changed their mind from pre- to post-survey: "I used to think they were of a lower status, but actually I do not think that is true at all. They are just like us if not better."

Perceived benefits from the cross-cultural experience

Students were asked what benefits they expected to obtain from frequent conversations with native speakers of Spanish. In the pre-survey, 86% of the participants (n = 18) responded that they wanted to improve their conversational ability, fluency, and to have the opportunity for real world practice. Other comments included learning about culture (n = 3), improving accent and pronunciation (n = 2) increasing confidence (n = 1), and helping understanding the language and different dialects (n = 1). In the post-survey, all participants commented that the course and the conversation activities met their expectations. Some students' comments were: "Conversations flows much easier, started thinking in Spanish rather than translating everything", "I felt much more comfortable speaking by the 3rd session. I think it improved my listening and speaking skills. It also gave a taste of how fast they speak and how different the accents can be", "New colloquialisms and grammar", "Got used to speaking and hearing the language instead of just reading and writing", "the comfort gained for the language being forced to use only Spanish with someone", "I can understand and speak Spanish better."

Students also commented on the diversity of accents and countries of origin of their partners: "Well, one thing I learned was that I can better understand Mexican Spanish than Colombian or Costa Rican Spanish. However, more importantly than that, I got to converse with real native speakers on a live webcam and talk to them about their lives and their culture. It was pretty amazing," "I loved speaking with people from various countries because previously I had only spoke [sic] with people from Mexico."

Level of comfort with the use of technology

71% (n = 15) of the students felt comfortable with the use of technology and only six students (29%) expressed being somewhat comfortable with technology before the activity. After the conversations, 81% (n = 17) of the students felt comfortable with the use of technology, though six students commented they had technology issues such as sound issues, slow Internet connection, or video lagging. Students commented that this activity was a "great approach for practicing the language" and "more convenient than going to conversation hours on campus." Technology was seen as a "great tool to connect people around the world", one student stated: "I think using the Internet is a great way to further students' knowledge and education. Instead of paying thousands of dollars to take trips to Mexico and talk to native speakers, I can do it right from the comfort of my home. I don't think Internet should ever completely replace schools because it is also important to learn communication, note taking skills, etc. in the classroom. However, technology is a great aide [sic]."

Discussion and summary

This cross-cultural interaction activity investigated (1) a change in the students' perceived level language proficiency, (2) the level of interest of students participating in conversations with native speakers about the language and culture, (3) the students' perceived benefits from participating in conversations with native speakers, and (4) the level of comfort of students when using technology to practice language.

The results revealed that although not statistically significantly, their perceived proficiency increased in the area of speaking, reading and writing, and decreased in listening. The perceived improvement in the areas of reading and writing may be a consequence of finishing in an intermediate course in Spanish and not a direct reflection of this activity. The perceived decrease in the listening skills may have been caused by the exposure to a variety of accents or other factors such sound issues. The instructors for the courses were from Spain, Venezuela, and the U.S., however, the online partners were from a variety of countries not including the countries of origin of the instructors. The situation of trying to understand an unfamiliar dialect or accent may have influenced their lower scores in listening skills.

Results showed that, both before and after participation in the conversations, students were highly interested in the language and culture for a variety of reasons. The main reasons were to be able to communicate in a second language and to learn about different cultures. Due to the demographics and the location, students in this institution have very little contact or opportunities to interact with native speakers of Spanish. Therefore, their views about the people, language and culture were limited in the pre-survey. The post-survey responses were more personalized and richer after the experiences with the conversations. Responses moved from focusing on the abstract concepts of language, culture, and general descriptors for Spanish speakers (such as "friendly", "interesting", "hardworking," and "passionate") towards a more personalized description of Spanish speakers as a consequence of their personal experience.

Students had the opportunity to choose a partner for each conversation activity. Some students picked a different partner from a different country each time, some students picked the same partner for all conversations, and some repeated partners once or twice. Further research may be done to explore if the choice or variation of partners affected their experience.

The level of comfort using the technology was high and students did not have major issues using the program. They enjoyed the opportunity of participating in this experience and had a positive view of using technology as an aid in language learning. Students' perceived benefits from participating in the experience were the improvement in conversational ability, fluency, and confidence. They also enjoyed learning about the similarities and differences of their life and their conversation partner's life abroad. They loved being able to speak with people from a variety of countries and experienced different dialects, mannerisms, and accents.

Recommendations for future implementation

It was observed that many students had difficulty starting the conversations, transitioning from topics, and asking questions. Students would quickly greet their partner and move to a question related to the assignment. This is not a natural practice with native speakers; usually greetings and farewells take longer than in the American culture. Students also jumped quickly from one question to the other without using transition words or follow-up questions. It is important that teachers planning to implement these activities prepare students in advance with the linguistic tools they need to be able to greet and transition throughout the conversation. Also, teachers could

design role-plays in the classroom with the same topics for the students to be able to practice in advance, build their vocabulary in the topic, and create follow-up questions.

For each activity, students were instructed to prepare in advance for the conversations by reading about the related topic and preparing questions ahead. In the first conversation, the goal was for students to describe, compare, and contrast their life with the life of a partner abroad. Students who prepared in advance were able to keep the conversation flowing; on the other hand, unprepared students used more time to complete the assignment and the native-speaker partner took over the activity by asking most of the questions. Since the assignment was just speaking and a reflection questionnaire, there was not a clear goal of cultural learning from the partner. Future implementation should set clear cultural goals for each conversation and require students to not only reflect on their learning but also report a summary of their partner's answers.

The TalkAbroad software also presented some course management limitations. At the time of this research, instructors had no control in regards to adding/dropping students from a class, resetting or rescheduling conversations, choosing the length of the conversations, and there was not an area for providing feedback or grading within the interface. Additional functionality has since been added to the TalkAbroad platform.

Finally, when students were asked what would they change about the conversations, most of them thought that 30 minutes was too long. After analyzing the recordings, it was observed that students finished the assignments in less than 30 minutes, ranging from 10-20 minutes. Future implementation should consider more goals for each conversation to provide material for longer conversations, and starting with shorter conversations at the beginning of the semester and increasing them in length of time as students become more familiar with the system and more comfortable speaking.

Limitations

Limitations of the present study include a sample size too small to make this study generalizable to the population. Tasks given to the students could have been more detailed and could have guided the student to learn more about the culture. There is also need for improvement in the survey questions that align with the ACTFL proficiency guidelines in order to provide more concrete data. The Likert scale did not provide descriptions for each proficiency level, which may have influenced students' accuracy in self-assessing their level. Another limitation was the self-reported data, although the researcher took measures to avoid biases such as anonymous coding of data and not using personally-identifiable information. However, there is always room for human error due to unconscious cultural biases, attribution, or exaggeration. More research using both qualitative and quantitative methods could provide more information valuable to language learners and teachers to better implement new technologies in effective ways.

Conclusion

Participating in this video chat cross-cultural exchange may have influenced students' interest in learning not only the Spanish language but also about the people and the culture. Students' experiences communicating with native

speakers gave them the opportunity to discover more than just language. They became aware of the diversity of accents, dialects, and countries where Spanish is spoken. They also recognized the similarities and differences in daily life, food, celebrations, pastimes, family values, cultural activities, etc. between themselves and people living abroad.

The cross-cultural interactions provided students an opportunity to experience cultural products, practices, and perspectives (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). They looked at products shown by the partners abroad, like pictures of their family, pets, trips, etc., they learned about their partner's practices (celebrations, daily life, work, school, hobbies, etc.), and the underlying perspectives. This type of activity as a central goal in a language class can be used to encourage communication, make comparisons, connect with communities of native speakers, and make connections in professional fields. Using the World-Readiness Standards as a framework to design activities with native speakers is a great opportunity available nowadays with technology. As Moeller and Nugent (2014) and Wilkinson et al. (2015) advocate, culture has to be at the center of our classrooms in order to promote students' lifelong journey of cultural discovery with the goal of becoming interculturally competent foreign language speakers.

As technology continues to evolve, more resources are available for teachers and language learners to communicate with people abroad. Communicating with people abroad online can provide students with the connection to a community of target language speakers and increase their appreciation of their own culture. As the online video chatting is a relatively new technology, there has been little empirical research exploring this medium of communication in the area of foreign language pedagogy as an option for online courses, distance learning, and/or as a supplement to language courses. This study provided a model for language teachers for future implementation in their classes, and an innovative way to provide opportunities for language learners to participate in various meaningful conversations with native speakers of a target language to not only help them develop their communication skills, but also to gain a more personal and richer view of the target language cultures and communities.

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Appendix A

TalkAbroad Pre-Survey

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Have you ever visited or lived in any countries outside the United States? Yes _____ No _____ If Yes, was it a Spanish speaking country? Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you speak any languages other than English? Yes _____ No _____If Yes, please specify: ______________________________
4. Do you have friends or family that are native speakers of Spanish? Yes ____ No____
   If yes, explain:
5. Area of study (If you are also working on a minor or a double major, **please select your primary area/major of study**) Major: ____________ Minor: _______________
6. Why are you studying Spanish?
7. How long have you been studying Spanish?
8. How would you describe your language proficiency in Spanish?
   Not proficient (1) - Highly proficient (5)

Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5

9. How would you rate your interest in learning the Spanish language and discovering about Spanish-speaking cultures?
   No interest (1) - Very interested (5)
   1 2 3 4 5
   Explain:
10. How would you describe your experience of and contact with Spanish speakers?
    No experience/contact (1) - Lots of experience/contact (5)
    1 2 3 4 5
    Explain:
11. What do you think of Spanish speaking people and culture? Describe any ideas or opinions that you have about them.
12. What do you think of the Spanish language? What ideas or social status do you associate with it?
13. What kind of benefits do you expect to obtain from having frequent conversations with native speakers of Spanish?
14. Are you comfortable using technology such as the Internet and computers with audio and video?
15. What do you think about the use of computer and Internet technology in language learning?
16. What are your expectations of this course?

17. How do you think the use of online conversations with native speakers can help to fulfill your expectations on this course?
18. What topics do you think would be interesting to discuss on these conversations? Please suggest topics.

Appendix B

TalkAbroad Post-Survey

1. How would you describe your language proficiency in Spanish?

	Not proficient (1) -----Highly proficient (5)				
Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Writing	1	2	3	4	5
Listening	1	2	3	4	5

2. How would you rate your interest in learning the Spanish language and discovering about Spanish-speaking cultures?

   No interest (1) - Very interested (5)

   1 2 3 4 5

   Explain:
3. How would you describe your experience of and contact with Spanish speakers?

   No experience/contact (1) - Lots of experience/contact (5)

   1 2 3 4 5

   Explain:
4. What do you think of Spanish speaking people and culture? Describe any ideas or opinions that you have about them.
5. What do you think of the Spanish language? What ideas or social status do you associate with it?
6. What kind of benefits did you obtain from having frequent conversations with native speakers of Spanish?
7. Were you comfortable using the technology (Internet and computers with audio and video)? Did you experience any issues? If so explain.
8. What do you think about the use of computer and Internet technology in language learning?
9. Were your expectations of this course met?
10. How do you think the use of online conversations with native speakers helped to fulfill your expectations on this course?
11. What topics you discuss on these conversations? Do you have any suggestions?
12. What did you like about the conversations?
    What would you change about the conversations?

Appendix C

TalkAbroad Assignments

TALKABROAD ASSIGNMENT #1 MI VIDA DUE 9/15

Objective: Students will ask and answer questions about their daily life. Students will describe, compare and contrast their life with the life of a partner abroad. The following questions might be used as guidelines for your conversation. Prepare 10-15 questions ahead of time to keep the conversation flowing. Be polite. You may ask how to say a word in Spanish: *Por favor, ¿Cómo se dice.. en español?*

Sample questions	En Español…
1. Greet someone and introduce your self	
2. Where are you from?	
3. What time is it there?	
4. How is the weather there?	
5. What languages do you speak?	
6. Do you work or go to school?	
7. 7. What are your hobbies?	
8. Describe your city	
9. Describe your daily routine	
10. Describe your daily meals.	

TALKABROAD ASSIGNMENT #2 FOTOS DUE 10/13

Objective: Students will ask and answer questions when presented with pictures. Students and partners will bring at least five pictures of their city, places they have visited, activities they like to do, or celebrations (weddings, birthdays, etc.) and take turns asking questions about the pictures.

TALKABROAD ASSIGNMENT #3 ARTE Y CULTURA DUE 11/10

Objective: Students will talk about movies, TV shows, music, theater, or other popular culture activities. Prepare 10-15 questions about these topics. Also, be prepared to answer questions about this topic.

TALKABROAD ASSIGNMENT #4 NOTICIAS DUE 12/8

Objective: Students will talk about current events in the news. Students and partners will talk about what is going on in their communities. Students should read their newspaper or news online ahead of time. Be prepared to talk about at least five events.

Reflection Questions: Read the script of your conversation, answer the following questions:

1. How well were you able to communicate with your partners? Why?
2. What was your conversation about?
3. What words/expressions you did not know or understand? Provide examples.
4. What new words/expressions/symbols did you learned from this experience?

Teaching Multicultural France: Historical Constants and New Challenges

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Abstract

In the 21st century, multiculturalism is well-integrated into American educational curriculum across a wide range of disciplines. In the context of the French language classroom, many instructors introduce multicultural concepts through Francophone-themed units, celebrating the diversity of French-speaking cultures through thematic lessons. While this approach may be insightful in increasing awareness of the great expanse of the French-speaking world across the continents, it may ignore the melting pot which has developed and is still developing in metropolitan France during the 21st century. This article provides an overview of multicultural France, giving readers important background knowledge concerning immigration in France and the link between multiculturalism and education in France, and suggests a corpus of works and interdisciplinary activities related to pop culture, political cartoons, the media, history, literature, and politics to use in a wide variety of teaching contexts designed to increase student interest and show the relevancy of French studies. How can educators motivate students to move beyond simple stereotypes and think not only about the realities of present day France, but also its larger, sociopolitical context?

Introduction

In today's society in which the discussion is often dominated by budget issues, politics, the redistribution of limited resources, and education reform, language study in K-16 institutions remains a popular target for criticism, debate, and ultimately cuts. Many conversations at workshops and conventions both nationally and regionally center on the question of how to cultivate and advocate for language studies both now and in the future. In a recent university level course

taught in English on French-language world literature, general education non-French majors were asked at the end of the semester to reflect upon the status and relevancy of French as a world language; the response was overwhelmingly affirmative that French is indeed a world language (see Appendix A). The relevancy of French, therefore, seemed very obvious to these students by the end of the semester. So why then does the image of French as outdated, elitist, not practical, or not relevant persist?

Current connotations of French language study

Firstly, it is important to understand that the public image of France internationally, including in the United States, is largely constructed by France itself. Like any other country, public authorities and private enterprises in France seek to control the image given to the world for various public relations purposes. A rapid Google search of the term "France" reveals a panorama of stereotypical images of which the majority are Parisian: the Eiffel Tower, the *Arc de triomphe*, the Pyramid at the Louvre, and Notre Dame. In the classroom, such a search can provide the basis for a discussion not only about how the world sees France, but also how France chooses to portray itself, and could even include a comparative discussion with similar search terms, for example "United States" or "American."

The above-cited example also reveals that in the context of French language studies, a "rebranding" of the subject is needed, well beyond the simple expansion of French language studies to include Francophone regions outside of hexagonal, metropolitan France. Such a rebranding of the discipline would, for example, include not only a change in semantics and focus, but a fundamental rethinking of what it means to be a French speaker at the heart of a multicultural *métropole* (metropolis) in order to more accurately portray contemporary France to students and the world, all while making the discipline more relevant in the new global order. At the beginning of each semester, I ask my first-year students to make a list of connotations of the word "French", which we then transform into a word cloud; the list that they create is quite revealing of the clichés that many Americans have about the French: The Eiffel Tower, Normandy, bread, cheese, and wine are the most common terms which appear. Little by little, however, the images of France that the world receives have evolved, especially more recently with terrorist attacks and the refugee crisis. The need to understand contemporary France, particularly as it relates to ethnic minorities, is increasingly relevant. Students, parents, and administrators alike are exposed to striking images, such as those televised worldwide during and immediately after the terrorist attacks in France in 2015 and 2016. Students at my institution, for example, were accompanying me on a course in Paris during the January 2015 attacks, where we found ourselves in close proximity to the Charlie Hebdo site, and it was a student who first contacted me in November 2015 to tell me of the tragic events at the Bataclan concert hall. She indicated that she had been watching a French news source, which she had recently learned about in the French conversation class' media unit; this student expressed her frustration with the American media which, from her perspective, did not understand France.

Justifications for new approaches

Although this anecdotal example reveals the ideal that many instructors have for their students, i.e., the ability to independently critically analyze and reflect upon material in the target language outside of the classroom environment, as educators, we need to evolve in our pedagogical practices and the language we employ as well. Use of multicultural approaches in the language classroom, such as presenting perspectives that address the diversity of ethnicities and cultures within the French nation, prepares students for the contemporary world as global citizens and future employees while reinforcing language proficiency and providing advocacy for the importance of language study. The meaningful and timely multicultural and inclusive approaches to teaching French also help students from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds engage as active learners, rather than passive language learners, a useful skill to master regardless of the discipline. As Durand (2013) underscored, an important goal for language learners is to learn how to

> …know how to adapt to situations and evolve in unfamiliar environments, communicate with individuals from a diversity of personalities and cultures, negotiate difficult and abstract tasks with initiative and creativity, analyze and evaluate culture differences in the professional environment, manipulate fiction and reality, and write, read, and think critically. (p. 1105)

Key terms in understanding French civics and identities

In order to understand the nuances of multiculturalism in France today, it is important to help students understand such concepts as *L'Unité civique* or civil unity, which, as Schwartz (2011) explains, has its origins in the ideals of a single, unified, Republican culture set forth by the 1789 French Revolution. Assimilation in France comes from the feeling that the French Republic is one people, one language, and one law, in contrast with the practices of the *Ancien* Régime (the pre-1789 monarchy). Even in France today, there is a fear of *communautarisme* (identity-based politics) and of preferential treatment of one religion or ethnicity. This tendency is inherited from the historical evolution and specificity of the French nation, which has seen five distinct Republics and nearly equally as many revolutions and regime changes. Students who have taken American history or politics courses should be able to compare and contrast these practices with the American model, identifying key differences and analyzing their origins. Since 1872, for example, religion has been absent from French census questions, and in contemporary times, school district zoning, especially in regards to economically disadvantaged students, is now based on geography rather than race or ethnicity.

Developing a narrative of diversity in France

Although most students are able to clearly relate the immigrant theme to American history, they are much less able to do so concerning the French-speaking world. In many classrooms in the United States, French language students learn about multicultural concepts through thematic units centered around regions in the French-speaking world, and often do not focus on the melting pot that

has occurred historically as well as more recently in metropolitan France from immigration. A strong sense of French culture that centers on its Caucasian past and its relationship with Catholicism leads to the exclusion of French citizens who do not correspond to these archetypes. It is therefore important to first help students understand that the United States does not have a monopoly on being a beacon for immigrants. Despite what Americans or even the French themselves may think, as Schwartz (2011) observed: "France is a nation of immigrants that lacks a proud poetry about tempest-tossed seekers of golden doors" (p. 81). Such a quote, as well as images of the Statue of Liberty (and its French origin), are excellent means to begin a conversation about comparative multiculturalism.

During the New Year's Eve festivities in December 2015, Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo decided to organize a video show to project on iconic Parisian monuments with the themes "*vivre ensemble*" (living together) and "*la vie heureuse à Paris*" (the happy life in Paris). Crowds from the entire world saw the diverse faces of contemporary France on the *Arc de triomphe* (Milliard, 2015). Screenshots from French cable channel BFMTV's coverage of the New Year's Eve celebration in Paris would be great to share with students to compare with images of New York's Times Square, while discussing questions such as: "How are the celebrations different and why? What messages are the organizers trying to send to the world?" Journalists from BFMTV spoke of "*La France de la mixité, de la fraternité*" (a diverse, fraternal France) (Millard, 2015). The *Arc de triomphe* was presented as a kind of doorway leading to a new conception of France, which is a notion that instructors need to also include in the French language learning curriculum. Let us use the depth and diversity of contemporary France to our advantage in order to both send a more accurate and more relevant image of France to colleagues, administrators, and students, and to reinforce the importance of our profession. France is not just about the Eiffel Tower and baguettes.

Recently, the media both in France and the U.S. have been focusing on issues surrounding immigration, especially in the context of Islamic extremists and terrorism. Such media attention gives the impression that France has suddenly discovered its diversity as well as the presence of minorities in the heart of the Republic. As instructors, it is our job to refute this narrative, helping students and others to understand that immigration in France, as well as all of the cultural productions around it (e.g., film, literature, art, media), go back decades, and in some cases even centuries. How can one adequately address these themes and questions in the French language classroom? One could, for example, discuss the history of North African immigration, which was the largest immigration in the history of France, and played out differently from the European immigrations of the past (Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese). These latter immigrant populations could also be explored in depth, so as to create meaningful connections for many students in the US. From the end of the nineteenth century until World War II, France was home to more immigrants than any other country (Léal, 2012). Today, nearly 30% of the French population are immigrants or direct descendants of immigrants, including 42% from North and West Africa and 38% from Europe (Kovacs, 2012). A unit or even a semester-long study of the relationship between

France and North Africa provides students with not only a critical understanding of colonial and postcolonial histories, but also highlights the human diversity that exists within North African populations; such diversity in North Africa directly relates back to the ethnic makeup of contemporary France.

Most students know very little about North Africa, French colonization practices, or the Algerian War, which are vital to the understanding of the North African diaspora past and present, both in Europe and at home in North America. Even though much literature exists specifically on Franco-Algerian relations through the work of such historians as Benjamin Stora, the French presence in Tunisia and Morocco is equally pertinent to the contemporary world, especially concerning the status of migrants and refugees in Europe, as well as relationships between the French state and Muslim religious minorities. Minorities in France did not just simply appear, therefore, it is extremely important to help students understand the lengthy history as well as provide proper context to contemporary issues.

In the long history of relations between France and Algeria in particular, and in light of the increasing volume of archives available, it is often difficult for educators to choose materials that are adequate to critical understanding but not overwhelming to students. Modern Franco-Algerian relations began with the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the seizure of Algiers by the French in 1830. From 1848 to 1962, Algeria was legally a part of metropolitan France, only gaining independence in 1962 after an eight-year conflict, which left up to 400,000 dead, and millions of refugees and dislocated persons, including those with more ambiguous statuses such as *Harkis* (Muslim Algerians who fought as soldiers in the French army during the Algerian War), Algerian Jews, and *Pieds Noirs* (settlers of European origin in French Algeria) (Hecht, 2012). In addition to such a referential timeline of events, one might explain, for example through a discussion-based lecture, that in the years following World War II, the migratory pattern of single, North African men who crossed the Mediterranean to work in the reconstruction of France began to increase substantially. Short video testimonials from Yamina Benguigui's documentary *Mémoires d'immigrés* (Dupuis-Mendel & Benguigui, 2004) could be incorporated in the classroom to show how North African workers in particular were sought by French authorities because the authorities considered them to be better integrated into French culture than European immigrants. This misconception was based partly on the shared French language, but also on the belief that North African workers would be easier to control because of the high rates of illiteracy amongst the majority rural Berber population. These are important links to establish with students in order to make personal, meaningful connections with language learning, since many students have a personal link with such economic migration through family or friends in the context of the United States.

From 1946 to 1975, there was a free flow of migrants to and from France from Algeria, and by 1975 when the border was closed, 750,000 migrants had immigrated to France (Scheffer, 2011). The irony in the events, which is essential to point out to students, is that because of the colonial history and legal framework, most of these Algerian "immigrants" were legally French, even if they had never set foot in mainland France. Bringing the conversation back to contemporary France, the

legalities and "classes" of citizenship in French Algeria is an especially engaging conversation to have with more advanced students who have developed sufficient abstract and critical thinking skills in French to understand the complexities and nuances of French-Algerian relations. Although as residents of a French department, all Algerians were, in a legal definition, full French citizens beginning in 1958, Algerian Muslims were subject to border controls, police surveillance, and discrimination in the workplace as well as daily life. Such historical facts can be studied in context with the contemporary discussions concerning citizenship that took place in France after the terrorist attacks in January 2015, when proposals to deter future acts of terrorism included stripping nationality for dual citizens convicted of terrorism; French nationals who did not have dual citizenship would not face such penalties. Language learners who have been exposed to background knowledge about citizenship policies during colonial Algeria and other colonies, for example, would be better able to understand why such a bill was so controversial for many French citizens.

The 1970s was also the period of family resettlement policies which allowed immigrant males to legally bring their families to France, thereby creating new communities as well as clichés and stereotypes about immigrant families. In the context of the language classroom - and appropriate for any level - would be the introductory scenes from Benguigui's film *Inch'Allah Dimanche* (Deraïs, Dupuis-Mendel, & Benguigui, 2002). In this film, one can visually observe the changes that take place during the main character Zouina's journey with her children to rejoin her husband as they travel from Algiers to the French town of Saint Quentin. Students could reflect upon the symbolism that can be seen in the progressive isolation of Zouina as she moves towards her new home in France: the cold, the absence of sunlight, the geography, the comparative architecture of the two cities, and the dynamics of French versus Algerian families at the beginning of the film (03:00-07:03). Although this feature-length film is an excellent linguistic and cultural resource for students, showing shorter clips within the classroom introduces students to a broad range of cultural resources. Students may then watch the feature-length film at home on their own time with their families or friends, thereby promoting advocacy and independent, proactive responsibility for the language and cultural acquisition processes.

In the context of teaching multicultural France as it relates to Franco-Maghrebi communities, it is important to explain to students the changes that occurred in the 1970s, as the French economy began to slow down considerably and unemployment began to significantly affect North African immigrants, who comprised 39% of the working class in France (Ageron, 1985). From these simply presented facts, a rich discussion might occur in small groups or as a large class, on such questions as: What are some of the effects and changes that are a result of the economic downturn? Has a similar event occurred in the United States? Why and how does the perception of immigrants change when the economy slows down? In France, unemployment and low wage employment reinforced the ghettoization of urban outer rings (*banlieues)*, which was then compounded by a housing crisis when the traditional immigrant shantytowns were dismantled by the French government in

the 1970s (Léal, 2012). New housing projects, *habitations à loyer modéré* (HLM), were constructed as a means for the French state to foster a shared identity, language, and residential experience among immigrants in France, but led to the widespread marginalization of ethnic minorities from mainstream society (Léal, 2012). Such occurrences can be seen visually and quite dramatically in *banlieue*-type films such as *La Haine* (Rossignon & Kassovitz, 1995) and even in more recent films such as *Intouchables* (Duval-Adassovsky, Zeitoun, Zenou, Toledano, & Nakache, 2011) which contrasts life in central Paris and the suburbs through its plot development and visual references. Student discussion prompts may include the following questions: Was the French government's *HLM* project successful in its goals or were there unexpected consequences? What were these consequences? Were there similar projects in American cities such as Chicago or Baltimore?

Multiculturalism in the French national education system

Education's place in understanding multicultural France is increasingly relevant, as the French national education model is strikingly different from the American counterpart in several key areas. It is also another familiar area of study that may be of interest to students. The French response to the terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 was largely concentrated on education reform. In my field notes from Paris during that time period, I observe the increased sense of Republican values in public discourse. Common terms that frequently appeared in the media and the speeches of public officials included such terms as *vivre ensemble*, *solidarité*, *devoir*, and *fraternité* (living together, solidarity, duty, and brotherhood) ("Une République sociale", 2015). Munshi (2004) observes that the American media reaction to 9/11 repeatedly framed the events in the context of battle and historical perspectives of past wars, such as CNN's Jeff Greenfield's comparison of casualty numbers with that of Pearl Harbor and Antietam, and Dan Rather's description of events as being "the new face of war" (p. 49). In contrast, media discussions in France about the January 2015 attacks were not framed around a "war on terror" and, in the initial responses, there was little discussion of racism or conditions which may create exclusion. Documents available through Harvard University's *Charlie Archive* provide a collection of materials that could be used in the classroom, both in English and in French, specifically pertaining to comparative media studies: "We seek to collect, organize, and archive a wide array of materials that represent diverse perspectives through different media responding to the events themselves or contributing to the debates around the events" (Liu, 2016). Media outlets in France questioned how the French might better transmit the values of the Republic to children, suggesting that a break in the transmission of Republican values was the issue at hand. Unlike American schools, the French school system is highly centralized; it is an extension of the central government and its missions. News reports in the days and weeks after the attacks reminded viewers of the origins of Jules Ferry's creation of secular education in 1882, and the French Minister of Education suggested through the program "Mobilisons l'Ecole pour les valeurs de la République" ("Mobilizing Schools for Republican Values") that solutions to terrorism could be found in a return to obligatory civil

service, civic and moral education, school uniforms, and singing of the French national anthem *La Marseillaise,* in schools (Leduc, 2015; Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2015; Peiron, 2015; Tourret, 2015).

While American media reactions towards terrorist events tend to focus on national security and the origins of the terrorists themselves (Munshi, 2004), why was the French's first impulse to look for a solution in education? Because it was believed that assimilation into the French nation takes place through the national education system. It was schooling that had transformed the patois-speaking peasants of the past into French republicans, and had also successfully integrated European immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries, since their descendants were largely considered to be French (Schwartz, 2011). This assumption of automatic assimilation to dominant French cultural values through education leaves out, however, the possibility that immigrant minorities might not always choose to pursue integration to dominant culture as their objective, and denies the existence of and legitimacy of multicultural, French populations in France. It is important for students to explore the French media responses to recent terrorist attacks and the role of national education in France in transmitting French Republican values. These examples help language learners understand the French assimilation model for migrants, which remains the basis for contemporary culture, and the hesitancy in France to embrace multiculturalism since, from the French perspective, it may lead to fractured identities, and therefore fractured society, and can be detrimental to the unity espoused by French Republicanism. The continued use of the adage "*nos ancêtres les Gaulois*" (our ancestors the Gauls) throughout the 20th century in education to glorify mythic origins of all French citizens illustrates the push to assimilate to dominant French cultural norms. It is comically depicted in Henri Salvador's 1960 song *Faut rigoler* (*You have to laugh*), which questions the relevancy and accuracy of the adage, from the perspective of the famed musician from French Guiana. It might also be useful to contextualize Salvador's work for students who may not be familiar with French colonialist propaganda and colonial era racism from the end of the 19th through the early 20th centuries. Images from the now controversial *Tintin au Congo* (Hergé, 1946) provide important context about such concepts as France's *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission), linguistic characteristics of *petit nègre* (pidgin language of the West African colonial army), and the white man's burden.

Comparative activities exploring national heroes as presented in the school curriculum also reveal important cultural stereotypes as well as cleavages within communities. American students who list their heroes tend to focus on names such as Martin Luther King, Jr., John F. Kennedy, George Washington, Rosa Parks, Jackie Robinson, Abe Lincoln, and Harriet Tubman. French heroes as proposed by many textbooks as well as the short film *Cliché* (Villain, 2010), similarly revolve around several key figures, whom American students can try to identify in a pictorial, *Guess Who?* type game: Marie Antoinette, Napoleon, Louis XIV, Vercingétorix, Charles de Gaulle, Joan of Arc. What do American heroes say about American identity? What characteristics do French heroes have in common (they are white, nobles, warriors, chiefs of state, Catholic, etc.)? Such an activity presents

an interesting contrast with French national soccer team members (what would the team look like if immigrants were not allowed to play?) and the famous slogan *black, blanc, beur* (black, white, and *beur,* or children of North African immigrants in France), which refers to the multiethnic nature of the team.

Comparing multiculturalism in French and American education systems

For language learners who have an interest in education or careers in teaching, an additional topic to explore is a comparative unit on how multiculturalism is taught in France and in the United States. If a multicultural approach to curriculum is already integrated into American pedagogical practices and if, as we have seen, it has potential for integrating approaches to studying contemporary metropolitan France in the language classroom, how is multiculturalism taught in French schools across the curriculum? What does it tell us about multiculturalism in France? How is it defined? In the American sense, multicultural education, in its most basic definition, is designed "to foster an appreciation for cultural diversity, with the overall goal of developing within students a sense of esteem for different cultures" (Sletzer, Frazier, & Ricks, 1995, p. 125). Singer (2010) pointed out "there are probably as many definitions of multiculturalism as there are advocates, which has been part of the problem defining the purpose of multicultural education or a multicultural political agenda" (p. 11). Despite the ongoing debate in the United States concerning best practices in teaching multiculturalism across several schools of thought and uneven depth of implementation, such approaches are widely accepted (Abington-Pitre, 2015).

An example activity to explore such themes of multiculturalism in French and American education systems may include semester projects or even senior theses. For example, in Fall 2015, I worked with an advanced undergraduate French Education student on her senior capstone research project in which we conducted an informal, open-ended survey of twenty English as a Foreign Language teachers in France in regards to the presence of multiculturalism in various classrooms in France. A major goal of this project was to help this Teacher Education student become aware of the differences in Franco-American perspectives pertaining to multiculturalism, namely that multiculturalism is not as widely accepted in France as it is in the U.S., which, in addition to the examples cited above, can also been observed in pedagogical practices. This student's interest in multiculturalism had been significantly impacted by her presence in Paris with me immediately after the January 2015 terrorist attacks. The research revealed general, non-specific definitions of multiculturalism among these teachers, for example, "The mixing and confrontation of several cultures" or, "Accepting and recognizing several cultures living in the same area. People of different cultures who live together, who are tolerant or curious in regards to people from other cultures"; "A general respect and appreciation of the similarities and differences between diverse cultures." Although most instructors (70%) indicated that they integrated multicultural approaches in their classes, their response to several other questions (detailed below) indicates a contradiction between their understanding of multiculturalism (as illustrated in the definitions they gave) and their actual teaching practices.

The survey revealed that most of the examples that respondents gave were related to English as a Foreign Language classrooms in France and in the context of Anglo-Saxon societies: "more or less, for example, in English exercises, there aren't just the British, but also Americans, Irish, and Indians"; "the children practice English several times a week. Through projects (a virtual tour around the world last year) or through sessions in art and music, we show an interest in other cultures, in other ways of seeing the world"; "Through learning English, French students are confronted with British, American, Australian, and South African cultures and to the people who make up these countries: whites, blacks, Indians, Africans, and Aborigines." As these examples illustrate, instructors felt that they were teaching multiculturalism, when in reality, they had simply been recycling stereotypes acquired from their own educational experiences learning English as a second language (Abington-Pitre, 2015). When the respondents spoke of teaching diversity in the context of France itself, the discussion also remained superficial and even unintentional in regards to practices: "I teach them to discover each other's backgrounds, talking of their home countries and teaching them to accept each other whatever their origins or religion." One respondent replied that there were "discussions when the occasion presented itself: the arrival of a foreign student, a geography course, a reading on a particular subject, writing letters to students in other countries."

Although encouraging students to share their personal stories and cultural background with each other can enhance interpersonal and intercultural communication within the classroom, and it allows instructors to understand the diversity within their own classrooms, such engagements need to occur well beyond the sterilized classroom setting. There is a need to go beyond the simple inclusion of heroic figures or ethnic holidays in order to develop critical analysis proficiencies that learners can take beyond the classroom into daily life. As Hanley (2002) stated in her reflection on the evolutions and practices in multicultural education in the United States since the 1970s, "multicultural education is more than holidays and food, it requires critical thinking with attention paid to complexity. It requires research and learning about the multiple perspectives involved in any historical or contemporary experience in order to understand the rich meaning therein" (para. 6). Singer (2010) echoed Hanley's assertions through a complementary definition of multicultural education, arguing for the continued importance of multiculturalism in the classroom and affirmed: "Multicultural education in this sense means learning to question and critique dominant ideologies and social institutions and developing the skills required for social activism" (p. 12).

In this sense, American multicultural models in the curriculum echo the French goals of social unity (living together, solidarity, duty, and brotherhood) as stated after the January 2015 terrorist attacks. As Hanley remarked, "Essentially, multicultural education is about social change through education. It requires deep and critical thinking, imagination, and commitment to another tomorrow, inclusive of the wealth of all of our stories and peoples" (para., 6). For Singer, "If multiculturalism is meaningful, it must stand for social justice as well as respect for difference" (p. 17). As Brown and Ratcliff (1998) observe in their argument for multiculturalism

as a unifying factor in a culture of difference, a major objective of American multiculturalism lies in the contestation of the vision of a normative society, which in France, is Caucasian and Catholic, in order to give spaces in which other cultures can have a voice (p. 12). The French call for better integration through education would seem to perpetuate the myth of a normative French society.

Several of the French respondents affirmed the importance of teaching multiculturalism: “I think that multiculturalism is crucial in education because children spend a lot of time at school, teachers are there to open up their views on the world and they are mixed with children of different nationalities”; “It seems to be very important for me because it offers a way to open students’ minds as well as the desire to learn about one’s neighbor. It fosters tolerance of difference.” The critical analysis aspect of multicultural education is often left out, however, in the survey results. Participants rarely mentioned this aspect in their responses, concentrating on providing multiple perspectives on a subject through additional materials. A student from France interviewed in the context of this study stated that she “had never really learned to appreciate other cultures. Only the facts, nothing else.”

Textbooks used in France also reveal practices and tendencies for multicultural education. Many of the respondents to our survey criticized the state-mandated texts as propagating stereotypes:

> I find that multiculturalism is rarely represented in depth. It is often about putting a stock photo of an African or Asian child in order to make this or that point, it’s more about not only having Caucasian children in textbooks. On the other hand, it is difficult to find a page or a chapter dedicated to a country, a culture, or even a people. The multiculturalism remains very succinct, it is only approached on the surface.

That being said, however, most of the instructors surveyed confirmed that they thought multiculturalism was at least present in their curriculum and textbooks (57.9%), although it was largely up to individual educators to decide what to teach.

At the end of the research project cited above, we asked instructors in France to reflect upon what had changed since the January 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. One participant mentioned in particular the new civic and morality curriculum introduced by the government in the months immediately following the attacks:

> New sessions on the rules about life in the community, about solidarity, about our motto (freedom, equality, brotherhood). It is what’s called Civic Education. Starting this year, we are supposed to devote one hour a week holding debates about moral and secular education (bullying is a very popular topic at the moment). There are classes for non-French speakers.

Fuga (2008) observes that these kinds of changes were needed in order to address the failings of the existing model of integration, and create social cohesion.

Additional resources and activities for teaching multicultural France

Even if the French Republican model, which focuses on unity, seems to denounce the presence of minority voices as *communautarisme* or identity-

based politics, literary and artistic voices have nonetheless evolved at the same time as the communities that they represent. Contemporary French literature is a living corpus of works which represent a cacophony of voices of immigrants from the French-speaking world who constitute the now diverse and profoundly multicultural French nation. As French language educators, we need to be conscious of the ever-changing realities of contemporary France and of its global sociopolitical context. As multiculturalism is present not only in arts and literature but also in popular French culture, political cartoons, the media, history, and politics, authentic resources from a wide range of disciplines can be used in the language classroom.

These resources and related activities can be integrated in the curriculum in a number of ways. For example, a unit on education in France might include films that correspond to students' grade level in order to encourage identification with French students of the same age. The documentary-style drama *Entre les murs* (Arnal, Benjo, Letellier, Scotta, & Cantet, 2008), which explores a year at a multiethnic school in the Parisian suburbs, would be appropriate at the high school level and could lead to engaging discussions about white privilege and the difficulties in establishing relationships and trust across ethnicities between parents, teachers, and students. The documentary, collaborative film project *Photo de classe* (Bagot, Cros, & Braux, 2012), collaboratively created by a third graders at a Parisian elementary school features a series of short, student video profiles, in which each student tells his/her family story, focusing particularly on ethnic origins and how such diversity enriches the classroom environment. These clips are available through an interactive website rather than a feature length film, and the length of the clips make them particularly appropriate for younger language learners who may have shorter attention spans. In addition to exploring cultural differences, comparing the physical space of the classroom in France with a student's home classroom for example, students could also work together to create their own version of *Photo de classe*. They could profile themselves in a manner similar to the video project and therefore building skills in individual writing and speaking as well as interpersonal skills while they collaboratively work together on the project itself. Finally, the documentary *La cour de Babel* (Fogiel, Gonzalez, & Bertuccelli, 2013), which follows a year in a French as a Second Language classroom for recent immigrant children in Paris, could be paired with a middle school class. French language learners in the United States could engage in many of the same learning activities as those depicted in the film: "show and tell" one object that is important to them and reflects their home culture, tell the class what they did the last day before you arrived in France (or perhaps the last day of summer vacation for American students), have the students film each other to create short "Who Am I" clips, and respond to the prompt, "In ten years, my classmate will be…."

At the high school level, many instructors introduce students to advanced reading in French through well-known literary texts such as *Le Petit Prince*. Instead, instructors might consider reading other works, such as the novel *Kiffe, Kiffe Demain* (Guène, 2004) or short shories in *Le cœur à rire et à pleurer* (Condé, 1999) which are written from a child's perspective, and not only are less abstract

in nature and thereby more accessible to language learners in terms of readability, but also depict the realities of growing up in a society that struggles with and even denies multicultural identities.

The use of the media in the language classroom is also vital in the development of critically thinking, well-rounded, proficient students. This can include comparative activities between French and American media outlets, such as France24, France Info, itélé, TV5Monde, and BFMTV, in addition to the variety of print sources curated through the Google News sites of individual countries. A sample activity is provided in Appendix B. News sources can provide important resources in the language classroom and additional subjects to explore, such as the *déni de francité* (refusal of Frenchness) experienced by West African, North African, and Asian minorities in France as compared to those of European origin. A January 2016 news report, *Enquêtes Trajectoires et origines* (Investigations into Paths and Ancestry) explored a study of 22,000 respondents which revealed that "more than 50% of immigrants of African origin who obtained French nationality think that they are not perceived as French" (Radio France, 2016a). This is an example of a refusal of Frenchness that bears witness to the resistance of French society to integrate certain descendants of immigrants who were nonetheless born in France. Children of migrants "are in positions inferior to that of migrants themselves," and although 93% of those surveyed identified themselves as French, this Frenchness is refused by society because of their name or the color of their skin, thereby making assimilation and social mobility impossible. In many ways, in contemporary French society someone is considered to be French because he/she "looks French," meaning that he/she corresponds to the stereotype of what it is to be French. This concept is comically depicted in the short film, *Cliché,* which includes caricatures of thin, large-nosed Caucasian men and women wearing berets and striped shirts while eating frogs, cheese, and baguettes (Villain, 2010). The film *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu?* (Rojtman & de Chauveron, 2014) also develops the theme of stereotypes of a mythical dominant French culture (Caucasian, Catholic, and middle class) through a comedy portraying a French couple's unwillingness to accept their daughters' marriages to spouses of different ethnicities and religions. The film's trailer is a useful discussion starter in class, and instructors might consider such prompts as: Would such a film be popular in the United States? How would American audiences respond to a comedy that includes specific references to ethnic, racial, and religion stereotypes? Does this film perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes?

A second example of a use of the media to foster discussion of multiculturalism in France is a news story from January 15, 2016 in which it was announced that two or three Frenchmen had been killed in Burkino Faso. At the heart of the lack of precision in the reporting was the ambiguous status of one of the victims, a Portuguese national who had lived in France since the age of seven, forty-five years prior: 52 years old, living in France and of Portuguese nationality, Antonio Basto was killed in the company of his two French colleagues, Eddie Touati and Arnaud Cazier (Radio France, 2016b). In an interview, one of Basto's daughters accused the French government of treating her father differently from his French

colleagues, to which the French prime minister's office responded that Basto's body would be repatriated and his funeral arranged in the same way as for his two compatriots. Students might be encouraged to reflect upon these issues in the context of American immigration, both past and present, drawing upon material learned in other courses and news headlines, as well as personal experience.

Conclusion

As we have seen, incorporating a multicultural perspective to teaching metropolitan France has additional benefits well beyond language acquisition. Since students from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds enroll in French, incorporating strategies from multicultural instruction is a means of making the continued study of French meaningful to the average student, who may not necessarily plan an international career or even travel abroad. Furthermore, in an increasingly performance-based, utilitarian society, students, parents, and advisors at all levels choose academic paths and courses that are perceived as useful. As the terrorist attacks in France in 2015 and 2016 remind us, French remains relevant and important in the contemporary world; it is the language of international diplomacy on every continent, but also a language which assures American national security. Teaching about French diversity not only changes the perspectives of language learners, but it also reminds all actors (students, parents, advisors, and administrators) of the realities and complexities of the contemporary French-speaking world and provides proper context for interpreting current events.

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Appendix A

Student Reflections on the Relevancy of French

"We saw that truly it does span a lot of territories. From personal experience — many schools in Ukraine teach French as a second language (and not English), I saw French Jews in Israel; through literature I saw that French is widely present In Africa, I have a friend who comes from Mauritius and is fluent in French —after doing a little research I found out that they were once a French colony too. In other words, French is not a secluded language, that is limited to the boundaries of some arbitrary territory, but rather a spread out, functional language that has many carriers, and a lot of applications. The literature that is written in French is not simply the literature about France and how nice it is to be in France. As we saw it covers many continents, it has different writing styles, tones, narrators, backgrounds, and settings. They are extremely diverse and different from each other, but one thing unites them —French."

"When we first started the class I thought It was crazy that we would just be learning about French literature, since I did not believe that it was so popular, given all of the other languages and literature associated with them. After learning more about French literature I have a whole new perspective, as well as appreciation for it. We have seen how much of an impact the French language has taken on history, traditions, and cultures through all of the different countries which the French language is associated with. Without French literature or the language, I think that history and literature would be a whole new world and this helps us to have a greater appreciation and understanding of literature throughout the world."

"We can see Just how popular this language really is. It is also important to note that the reason it is so popular is because this is the language the keeps the whole world connected. This is the language that different countries most often use to do business with and to communicate with one another. Also, just the simple fact that this language has been most present throughout all of history makes it a world language."

"To be honest, I wouldn't be mad either if French became the number one language, or if I had to learn the language in the future in order to succeed in life. It really is a beautiful language and I'd be more than happy to learn it."

"Before this class, I was not aware that there were other French speaking countries, besides France and Canada. We learned about the different member and observer countries and it is such a huge list! The writers we have focused on also chose to publish their works In French because they knew it would reach multiple audiences around the world because of how vast the French language has become. I also think it is a world literature because it hits on topics that people around the world can relate to, such as gender roles, racism, stereotypes, family and personal struggles, religion, education, and traditions."

"Because of the works of literature and films that were shown in class I was able to form my own meaning to word francophone. To me It means history and empowerment. Authors like carrier, Condé, and Césaire allowed me to experience and fully understand their Identity and the love for their land, wherever that may be. It allowed me to be able to explore the land, live In the island of Guadeloupe and feel the empowerment of négritude. Francophone takes a meaning of Its own depending on the homeland and Its struggles. The ability to be a part of something bigger but still being a nation of your own because of the history that is unique to each region, to each Island, and to each home."

"As someone who has never had the interest to speak French In my entire life, I learned more from reading these books written In French, as an English speaker, than I have reading some books written in English by American authors. French literature also unifies the histories of many areas around the world who hold importance to the political, economic, social, physical, and cultural structure of our world today."

#From the content I have learned In this course, I am now aware of vast amount of French speaking territories around the world ... Since there Is such diversity and an increasing gain of independence it is unlikely that French language literature will ever become a dying art. N

Appendix B

Media Assignment Guidelines

You are required to watch an English language French newscast and write a short commentary (300-325 words), comparing it with what you have seen on an American newscast for the same time period. English language French newscasts are freely available online through the network France24. Live summaries of the day's news are available every 30 minutes.

In order to receive full credit, the written commentary must include:

- Summary of the French newscast
- Comparison with an American newscast for the same day
- Critical reflection of similarities and differences:
- Which stories appear in both newscasts?
- Which are unique to the French media?
- What does this tell you about what a culture thinks is important and values?

Supporting Students' Intercultural Literacy Through Mentoring Undergraduate Research Projects

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Abstract

This article discusses how students develop intercultural literacy through research, studying events of the past and their memorialization. Our research projects examine historic occurrences that shook national identities to their core and analyze how they impact their development. Within the projects discussed here, students work towards acquiring cultural literacy by observing and reflecting on cultural products and perspectives, learning about a culture's history and contributions, and answering questions such as "what is identity?" and "how does a nation remember?" A point of reference and comparison is needed – students' own identity and culture – to anchor these and similar working hypotheses. To effectively reach a more advanced point of intercultural literacy, students must be aware of their own culture and identity first.

Based on action research, this article touches on changes in attitudes in undergraduate research to prepare students for an increasingly competitive and information-focused society on one hand, and to foster retention and program building on the other. We describe an overview of the mentoring process implemented at a private midwestern university and necessary to guarantee a successful learning and research experience for our students that also fosters hard and soft skills applicable for a non-academic career option, and give examples of successful research grant proposals and lessons learned through

the mentoring process. The research project featured here in detail investigates the memorialization of homosexual victims of National Socialism (Nazis) in postwar societies. Through this and similar in-depth research studies, students at the University of St. Thomas understand trends in modern-day Germany, and how language and cultural literacy create possibilities. Since linguistic and cultural competence are linked, how is the learner's interculturality related to an understanding of the target culture and cultural memory? How do these research projects fit in the wider degree plan of the student? Ultimately, this paper concludes that for students to develop intercultural literacy, they need to learn how to observe, compare, and reflect without judgment, discover their own identity, and be open to new experiences and ideas, while showing cultural awareness and empathy.

The evolving role of research in undergraduate German Studies

Over the past several years, undergraduate students in German Studies have been charged with tasks and exposed to opportunities traditionally available to graduate students. Until recently, the undergraduate experience was often dominated by knowledge transfer from the professor to the learner. Just as the pedagogy from the teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered learning environment developed,[1] undergraduate language studies have undergone significant modifications when it comes to the integration of research. They now feature more hands-on learning resulting in creation of knowledge by the undergraduate student with the professor as a facilitator guiding students through different stages of individual inquiry with the goal of leading them to conduct independent research. The aforementioned change helps realize Wilhelm von Humboldt's vision of the modern university, which combines research and teaching at all levels (Albritton, 2006; Clark, 1997; McNeely, 2002). This may have been commonplace in the natural sciences and engineering for some time, but it now finds its way into the humanities and foreign language programs. Besides knowledge regurgitation, we are increasingly asking undergraduate students to think critically, to process information, and to create knowledge. Driven by the desire to give our students the competitive edge in preparation for graduate school or the workforce, we encourage them to build their resumes and to acquire skills resembling professionalization formerly reserved for graduate school or even thereafter. Based on conversations with colleagues in the field of German Studies from various institutions, we understand, that it is no longer uncommon for an undergraduate student pursuing a degree in languages to have applied for research grants, to collaborate with professors on research projects, and to have presented papers at state, regional and sometimes even national conferences before graduating.

We as educators want our students to have curious minds, to be independent critical thinkers who investigate the world, to be problem solvers who find answers by demonstrating intercultural awareness and ideally even empathy. From first-hand experience, we know that collaborative or independent research projects do not just build skills necessary for a future career in academia, fostering persuasive writing and presentational skills, but also lead to a variety of hard and soft skills

highly regarded in the "real world" such as time management, critical thinking, creativity, intercultural competence, perseverance and stamina, problem-solving, decision-making, and conceptualizing. In addition, research projects enrich the undergraduate learning experience, and may even result in higher retention and therefore program building. Through collaborative or independent research projects, students also acquire skills that can be transferred and are beneficial for their other college classes, among them again critical thinking, persuasive writing, and data and source collection: "Undertaking research means students are entering a dialogue with academic communities in their subject, eventually contributing in the shape of dissertations, theses and conference papers" (Wisker, 2005, p. 17). Furthermore, students will feel a sense of accomplishment that may result in renewed excitement in their field of study leading again to retention. Lisa Zwicker (2013) states that "[p]erhaps most importantly, the benefits for students and the excitement such research can create for undergraduates could serve as a key strategy for rebuilding German Studies."

Preparing students for research in the University of St. Thomas's German program

In line with my university's mission "to educate students to … think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully" (University of St. Thomas, 2014), undergraduate research is strongly encouraged, highly regarded, and financially well-supported at my institution, as well as at many other institutions of higher education. We do want to empower students to become independent researchers and better writers, but mentoring these often rewarding projects can also be time-consuming and overwhelming for students and mentors alike. Faculty mentors therefore need to be conscious of the student's aptitude and commitment, and their own schedule. Planning effectively may guarantee a gratifying experience for both. In fact, the processes eventually resulting in capstone projects or an individual or collaborative research grant may start well before an undergraduate student ever voices the interest in engaging with a faculty mentor in a research project. To that end, the German program at the University of St. Thomas has implemented curricular changes to encourage students to develop sound research methods and skills as early as writing their essays in the intermediate German classes (4th semester). Following the university's Writing Across the Curriculum program, the first class in the German major/minor program was redesigned as a Writing in the Discipline course teaching research and writing conventions in German Studies to prepare students for writing assignments in future coursework, a given career, or in a program of advanced study. At least one-third of the grade for this course is based on written assignments, and much of the learning takes place in the context of writing as a process as customary in the field. Students receive substantive and direct instruction during the writing process and are guided to use writing to generate and think through ideas, to write and revise drafts, and to give and receive feedback on writing, editing, and proofreading. In collaboration with a librarian, and assigned to peer editing groups, students in this class have ample opportunities to practice the methods of scholarship in the discipline of German Studies and work on semester-long individual research based

projects, which result in final research papers and presentations. During the course of their minor or major, students will continue to be exposed to similar research and writing intensive coursework in other advanced German classes. Any student who went through the three-semester language requirement (lower levels) will have been exposed to multiple mini-research assignments throughout their German career such as researching a German historical figure or a German-speaking city.

Student research opportunities through grants

The Grants and Research Office at the University of St. Thomas, a Catholic comprehensive urban university founded in 1885,[2] supports students interested in research through research grant programs such as the Young Scholars Grant and the Collaborative Inquiry Grant. The flagship grants are designed to aid students financially allowing them to focus on a semester- or summer-long research project under the guidance of a faculty mentor. In addition to the research grants, students are able to apply for conference grants and research travel grants of up to $1,000 each with $250 matched by the department, and a summer housing stipend in connection with a faculty-mentored research project. The overall compensation totals approximately $6,700 per project over a 10-week span for the student researcher and $750 for the faculty mentor when applying for miscellaneous grants in addition to the research grant.[3]

The Young Scholars Grant is a prestigious scholarship with a funding rate of approximately 40%. Two-thirds of the awarded grant proposals come from the STEM-fields and one-third from the social sciences and the humanities. Interested in a balance, and according to the Grants and Research Office, the university is promoting the opportunity and actively attempting to recruit applications from the humanities and the foreign languages. To make it more attractive to students in the humanities, the Young Scholars and the Collaborative Inquiry grants application forms both already have a technical and a non-technical category.

A student may apply for more than one Young Scholars Grant during his or her academic career but may not receive more than two. The application process is set up to give the undergraduate student “a glimpse into the grantseeking process” (University of St. Thomas, n.d.-d). to prepare students for future work with funding agencies. Students are asked “to take the lead in developing the project and/or … grant application, gathering required support materials, following instructions and meeting deadlines” (University of St. Thomas, n.d.-d). Young Scholars Grants awardees are expected, among other things, to work 400 hours on their research project over the summer, present their findings at the Undergraduate Research Poster session in the Fall Inquiry at St. Thomas, and submit a final paper. A successful research proposal demonstrates the anticipated impact of the research on the student’s field, the broader community, and the student’s intellectual development. It offers a clear description of a dissemination plan and presents an appropriate research design, methodology or theoretical approach.

The Grants and Research Office in collaboration with the Undergraduate Research Board at the University of St. Thomas sets clear guidelines on the role and restrictions of the faculty mentor in preparing the research proposal and the final

product so as to guarantee a fair application process for all students. However, it also stresses the teaching moments and opportunities that such a collaboration provides, and therefore suggests "some guidance" from the mentor, such as: (1) leading an initial meeting to discuss the research project and the application guidelines; (2) reviewing the proposal outline written in its entirety by the student, offering suggestions for improvement; (3) reviewing of the first draft of the proposal written in its entirety by the student, offering suggestions for content and style; and (4) reviewing of the second draft of the proposal written in its entirety by the student, "helping to fine-tune the final project" (University of St. Thomas, n.d.-d)

Co-author Mitchell Sullivan, a German, Political Science, and International Studies major in the class of 2017, was awarded a Young Scholars Grant in the summer of 2015 under the guidance of the lead author. Sullivan's project on homosexual victims of the Third Reich was not only the first successfully funded but also the first ever submitted Young Scholars Grant in the history of the German Program and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of St. Thomas. Sullivan's project was followed by Morgan Kaardal's, also a German and International Studies major, who won the coveted Young Scholars Grant with a project on the German *Gastarbeiterprogramm* [guestworker program] the following summer.[4]

In addition to the Young Scholars Grant, the University of St. Thomas offers another popular research grant available to undergraduates, the Collaborative Inquiry Grant, which gives students the opportunity to learn or perfect research skills in collaboration with a faculty mentor during the course of an entire semester. Students are asked to allocate approximately 10 hours per week to their research project for a total of about 100 hours during the span of the semester. This is an independent project and the student may not receive credit for the research: "This intensive educational experience is meant to complement, enhance and deepen what is being learned in the traditional classroom. Students from all academic disciplines are invited to apply—from the STEM sciences, to the social sciences and humanities" (University of St. Thomas, n.d.-c). For their effort, successful applicants receive a $1,000 stipend and faculty mentors are compensated with $500. The application form, requirements, and funding chances are similar, if not the same, as for the Young Scholars Grant described above; the scope of the research project however is different. While the Young Scholars Grant is funding an independent project led by the student researcher, the Collaborative Inquiry Grant takes place over the course of a semester and—as the name suggests—is set up as a joint research project with a faculty member.[5]

For some students, the idea of engaging in a demanding research project while trying to cope with the semester's rigorous course load, or having to spend 40 hours a week with the project during the summer while their peers are enjoying their leisure time or even working full time, might feel more like a burden than an enriching educational experience. Students who won the Young Scholars Grant, however, have said they loved working on the projects once they got into the rhythm, because it helped them develop a better understanding of museums and archives, public displays of history, and memorialization of historic events in a cultural setting.

Finding commonalities in language and culture learning was enjoyable and is important to the students, who have stated during presentations of their research that intercultural literacy for them means being open to other ideas and willing to adopt them after going through the stages of observing, comparing, and analyzing. Following Paige (2003), we see cultural learning as "the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively" (pp. 176-7) that may ultimately lead to cultural literacy. The development of intercultural competence is the process of developing effective and appropriate communication skills in a given cultural context requiring a culturally-sensitive mindset and skillset (Bennett, n.d.). Intercultural literacy for the purpose of this paper therefore means the knowledge of one's own and Germany's language, history, products, and perspectives, necessary to guarantee successful communication across cultures. The interculturally literate student is able to demonstrate an advanced understanding of a given culture's symbols (here especially references to historic events and ways of memorializing them) and connect it back to his own culture. This skill will enable the student to effectively participate in a cross-cultural setting.

For Young Scholar Sullivan, "learning about language is intertwined with learning about history and culture. I've been learning German for six years now, and I don't think you can really, truly learn a language unless you learn the history and culture that goes along with it… And you can't really learn German without learning about the Holocaust" (University of St. Thomas, 2015, p. 24). In addition, students enjoyed digging deep, expanding upon topics they had previously engaged with, or broadening their knowledge of a subject matter they knew little about. Presenting their findings at the Undergraduate Research Poster Session and at professional conferences such as the 2016 Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures Conference in preparation for the 2017 CSCTFL in Chicago taught them valuable professional and presentational skills. In line with the university's mission, fostering cultural literacy in our undergraduate students through research projects prepares them for further academic studies or the workforce and helps them to become "[c]ulturally attuned and emotionally sensitive global leaders … who can respond to the particular foreign environments of different countries and different interpersonal work situations" (Alon & Higgins, 2005, p. 501).

Mentoring undergraduate research

What is most important for any research project also applies to undergraduate student research: ensuring that the subject matter is compelling to the students and driven by their interests so that they are willing to see it through. As a practical consideration and to make it feasible to add this supervisorial duty to an already full schedule, the mentor should primarily consider research topics which build on his or her own work and research interests.[6] Furthermore, it is essential to set boundaries and not fall into the trap of doing too much of the work just to finish the

project on time; the student should lead, supported through the mentor's guidance. Ground rules and agenda/schedule setting are vital to a good student-supervisor relationship and build the framework for guiding students from dependency to autonomy. If students decide not to follow the agreed-upon schedule or rules set by the granting agency, they need to be prepared to deal with the consequences. This is not to say that a good supervisor should not do everything possible to help students to the best of his/her ability by reading and editing in a timely manner once students do hand in drafts or the final product. Generally, students tend to send pages and papers expecting immediate responses, not taking the professor-mentor's schedule into consideration. As a byproduct of good research practices, students need to learn time management and focused work, blocking out distractors such as social media and everyday life-occurrences. Regular (weekly) meetings and writing sessions with the research mentor, either in person or via phone/Skype, aid in setting the project up, keeping the momentum and direction going, and helping students conceptualize the research outcome cohesively.

Undergraduate students starting a research project or applying for a research grant should understand that their work ought to be somewhat original in scope. But it does not need to be dissertation quality; rather, it must be a feasible project that will teach students many different skills. Undergraduate student researchers should be guided to "make their own synthesis of existing research and carry out their own fieldwork, experiment and analysis" (Wisker, 2005, p. 18). In an ideal case, the research topic will lead to further research, as it has in the case presented in this article, and should support an argument that creates meaning. The project needs to be focused so that it may be completed by the student – functioning as the primary collaborator with the mentor serving as secondary collaborator – within the given time frame. In order to achieve this, the research question or questions, the theses, and a working title need to be clearly articulated, and the student should understand the methodology or the theoretical framework applied to the project well. Students need to focus on their original questions, but allow for flexibility to follow different leads, yet they need to be aware that not every question can be answered within the scope of the project, thus teaching them to deal with uncertainty. Wisker (2005) suggests that "[r]esearch should be planned, but should also throw up some surprises, [therefore] extending thoughts in the field in critical ways" (p. 17). Narrowing the topic down so that it is manageable and attainable is one of the more difficult tasks for a beginning researcher, but essential since the completion time for many undergraduate research projects is less flexible than, for example, a Ph.D. thesis.[7] In that respect, undergraduate research, often the student's first project of that kind, may resemble research tasks in the workplace more than a dissertation. While it needs to be academic in scope, this also means that students who are not necessarily interested in graduate school and research may benefit from undergraduate research projects and the mentor will see the opportunity for hands-on teaching by helping the student to

- define a workable, realizable project, narrowing the topic down if necessary;
- apply best practices when it comes to time management;
- select and use appropriate methodology;

- find a working title and thesis;
- learn how to analyze data and original sources to support the thesis;
- practice academic writing and presentational skills;
- acquire practical research related skills such as keeping good reference records, putting together a comprehensive bibliography, learning how to read closely, take good notes, and quote academically and effectively;
- develop cultural awareness including learning about their own identity.

Elaborating on how to find appropriate sources and tools that may aid in achieving these goals, and learning how to utilize them to foster critical thinking and deeper learning toward cultural literacy, are important first steps.

Focusing on one mentee's research project

Overview of the project, "Memorials and Memories: Coming to Terms with The Past"

The premise of this research project was to identify differences and similarities between the homosexual and Jewish experiences under National Socialism (Nazis) and study how these are reflected in modern memorial structures, being careful not to minimize the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, but rather to shed light on often overlooked victims of the time such as gay men. To set up his research, the Young Scholar first learned about the Holocaust, then investigated the United Nations' Genocide Convention (1948) that defined genocide, ultimately coming to the conclusion that the persecution of homosexual victims may not be called genocide.

According to Stih and Schnock, "commemorating is to formulate a binding concept of history with monumental means and pass it on to present and future generations as a valid model and example" (2005, p. 6). In his research, Sullivan found that the Holocaust had altered the human condition approximately 80 years ago, and yet still prevails in today's society and culture not only through memorials, but sometimes even in everyday speech. The Second World War left behind death, devastation, and the memories of a few survivors, accessible today through different types of cultural products (memorials). By analyzing first-hand accounts of homosexual survivors and various memorials, the student determined that how a society decides to remember such heinous events like the Second World War and the Holocaust depends on the time and location of the cultural group and the act of remembrance. The process of remembering is defined by a nation's collective and collected memory unique to its culture. Using Young (1993, 2000) and Wagner (2016) as a starting point, he uncovered that the purpose of memorialization is to re-create history and to offer an interpretation through monuments. In his research project, the Young Scholar compared the monuments for homosexual victims of National Socialism with memorials commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, contrasting both with the more traditional national memorials of the 19th and early 20th century. Memorials for homosexual victims of National Socialism, he found, are few and far between in comparison with the vast number of memorials remembering Jewish victims; expected, since the number of Jews exterminated by the Nazis surpasses that of the homosexuals by an estimated 60 times (Setterington,

2013). Although both Jews and homosexual men were viewed as enemies to the purity of the utopian German state, persecution took different forms. While Jews were targeted for complete extermination in the name of racist and biological science, gay men were persecuted on the legal front and not necessarily for complete extermination. Therefore, memorials for Jewish victims highlight the mass murder and the destruction of culture, race, and religion by the Nazis while memorials for homosexual men seem to focus on the psychological hardships imposed upon gay men, and the violent pseudo-legal assault not only during the Nazi Regime but in the years following. Through his research, he saw that many modern (counter-) monuments encompass a "fundamentally interactive, dialogical quality" (Young, 1993, p. xii); and that the location defines the memorial and the memorial space. Ultimately, he discerned, cultural literacy is required to fully understand the meaning of a monument and how it is used to commemorate. Following Young, the student discovered that "public memory and its meaning depend not just on the forms and figures in the monument itself, but on the viewer's response to the monument, how it is used politically and religiously in the community, who sees it under what circumstances, how its figures enter other media and are recast in new surroundings" (Young, p. xii).

Though Sullivan's research project was to examine cultural products, practices, and perspectives through collective and collected memory, he was able to develop his intercultural literacy in unexpected ways. By studying this historic event and its memorialization, the Young Scholar was examining questions pertinent to German culture and national identity. In order to do this successfully, he needed a point of reference, his own identity as a gay man. The student found that examining the memorials for homosexual victims of National Socialism forced him to consider his place in the world. As a white, Christian, middle class male from the Midwest, this was the first time he was confronted with memorials for people he could relate to. Through this research project, Sullivan developed understanding of his own culture and identity in a way that now allows him to interact more effectively with other cultures. He reports that pursuing this project helped develop his intercultural literacy. Entering the research with preconceived hypotheses, he discovered that his original ideas were, at times, premature or even incorrect, making it necessary to reassess and to approach the topic from a new perspective. In this regard, independent or collaborative research projects may teach students how to deal with uncertainty and to reevaluate an unexpected situation. The research process challenged the student to navigate new spaces with an open mind, often calling for personal reflection. Through this project, he learned how to traverse unfamiliar personal and intellectual spaces, a skill that he may easily transfer to situations that involve intercultural communication. For Sullivan, being culturally literate means being able to effectively navigate a foreign culture acknowledging and accepting differences.

Mentor's reflection

When the student came to me with the idea for the Young Scholars research proposal after class, I was excited since I had hoped to one day be a faculty mentor for one of the prestigious grants available on our campus. Knowing him quite well

through multiple upper-level German culture and literature classes, one of which was a study abroad course in Germany over the 2015 January Term, I realized that he would be a superb candidate and I would enjoy working with him. The student's German language skill was solid. He had successfully completed a B1.2 class as described by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages while in Germany earlier in the year. This level has been described as the equivalent of 600 hours of instruction, and the equivalent of the ACTFL Intermediate High to Advanced Low level (ACTFL, n.d.). He was able to demonstrate a somewhat advanced level of cultural awareness and curiosity for a sophomore during the study abroad experience. In addition, I had always enjoyed his presentations in class, and his ability to think interdisciplinarily and to successfully transfer knowledge. This research project would also align nicely with my own research and interest in counter-memorials and Holocaust memorialization; exploring the experiences of homosexual men during the Holocaust was a new and exciting research topic, yet seemed attainable and could potentially even lead to additional projects such as conference presentations and articles. Being aware of one's own academic background and research interests is an important factor when considering if a research proposal brought forward by a student is a good fit or too far outside of one's expertise to help the student excel. This became especially apparent in the Young Scholars Grant project on the German guest worker program of the following year.

There was only one problem: the deadline was two weeks away and the St. Thomas' Research Board recommends working on this type of grant proposal over the course of an entire semester. However, I knew that the student was a decent writer and that he had a background in Holocaust literature and in Holocaust memorialization from previous coursework. After sending him off into the weekend with the request to think about it and to come up with an outline—almost hoping that he would decide to forgo the project due to the fact that I had multiple other deadlines that needed my attention—I turned to the Grants and Research Office's web page to find more information. Monday came around and the student had solidified his intention of wanting to submit the research proposal. In fact, he had already put together the first draft, which, after multiple edits and rewrites turned into the successfully funded proposal submitted in the nick of time.[8] Due to his academic background, this particular student did not need as much help with the content and the conceptualization of the research proposal. He had a solid thesis and knew exactly what he wanted to research. Other research projects I have mentored since then needed considerably more guidance in helping the student narrow down the topic, pose meaningful questions, crystallize a workable thesis statement, and approach the overall intricacies of writing a grant proposal. Much time, however, was spent on putting together a bibliography and coming up with the requested detailed schedule and timeline for the 10-week summer project. Surprising to me is that the majority of the students who have submitted research proposals to me seem to be unfamiliar with basic features of Microsoft Word such as the Review, Track Changes, or Word Count functions. This coupled with a general lack of attention to detail and pride in the esthetics of the final product, as well as the assumption that the grant's guidelines are optional rather than binding, can be

frustrating for the mentor, who knows that not following the rules may result in the disqualification of a proposal.

The research project started in earnest at the beginning of June and went through the end of August.[9] During this time span, we generally met once a week for about an hour to discuss the student's progress except for the times he was out of town visiting museums and archives in Chicago and on the East Coast. This being my first Young Scholars Grant project, I had no previous experience with mentoring undergraduate research projects of this scope and magnitude.[10] Having not gone through an undergraduate thesis myself, I also did not know what to expect and could not lean on my own experience with an advisor. Modeling my mentor-behavior after that of my *Doktormutter* (Ph.D. thesis advisor) was not productive in the case discussed here. Some of our weekly meetings were a little disjointed and unfocused, until I realized that more structure and guidance was needed.[11]

It became obvious that the bibliography Sullivan submitted with his research proposal for the project on homosexual victims of National Socialism was not sufficient, and that the student needed help in finding appropriate sources. Up until now many of the sources obtained were accidental finds or would not be considered academic enough. Nevertheless, it was nice to witness his excitement when he reported on a book he had found while perusing the library's book stacks (not all students know how to read call numbers), shopping on Amazon, or during his fieldtrips to Holocaust museums. But now he had to learn how to conduct a systematic search. In collaboration with a university librarian, we met multiple times in the library to familiarize ourselves with the available data collections and systems (including interlibrary loan), to conduct searches, and to practice proper source citing focusing on the MLA style.[12] Some time was spent on introducing the student to and practicing efficient recordkeeping, effective note taking, and accurate quoting techniques that would facilitate the writing process later on. And yet, many times, I had to remind him to complete a reference or sometimes even to add an entire bibliographic citation so that he would be able to find it again later or prevent plagiarism. I was not expecting the lack of attention to detail and professionalism, and therefore, for subsequent research projects, I made sure to request that students would use one of the following systems: RefWorks, an online bibliographic management program, a box with old fashioned index cards, or a Google document in which they would add every single source including where they found it and the call number if applicable. In addition, I found it is essential to discuss cited sources carefully so as to ascertain if they are appropriate for the proposed research project. In order to convince the research board or a scholarship-granting agency of the validity of the project, the literature review needs to provide adequate context. Mentors should be prepared to spend considerable time on guiding students through the source finding process and the literature review. For the sake of the research mentor, I favor annotated bibliographies which allow the reader to ascertain if a source is useful without actually reading the entire text.

Next, we visited the library at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities to look at its holdings, to talk to an archival librarian specializing in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and to get access to the library's online databases, These

included the University of Wisconsin-River Falls oral history collection[13] and the Visual History Archive developed by the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. The latter is the largest visual history archive in the world, containing almost 52,000 video testimonials among them those of Holocaust survivors, Homosexual survivors, witnesses, rescuers, and other participants. [14] During one of these visits, the reference librarian introduced the student to their microfiche archive, a resource which was quickly dismissed by the student-researcher as too antiquated and cumbersome, making the generational gap obvious.

Without me present, but financially supported through the University of St. Thomas' research travel grants, the Young Scholar visited museums such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.,[15] the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City,[16] and the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Chicago[17] to conduct research. Not being able to accompany my mentee on these trips, I lived vicariously through his reports upon his return. His excitement about the experience and the value of these research visits reminded me of my own visits to archives. Especially cherished seemed to have been the fact that he was able to share these moments with his mother, who joined him on the trip. He reported on the many fruitful and thoughtful conversations he had with her, triggered by the museum exhibits. Being able to explain to someone what his project was all about and why it was of value to him, helped him organize his thoughts. Similarly, the next Young Scholar would report on how much she valued the regular yet informal conversations about her research with her parents.

After the groundwork was laid, the Young Scholar was sometimes plugging away more happily and focused than at other times. Not being used to academic work, it took some time for him to find a rhythm and to get used to the eight hours a day/40 hours a week schedule. We worked out a system that eventually allowed him to meet that goal. The feeling of being overwhelmed and possibly never being able to work the required daily hours is true for all research mentees I have supervised thus far. I am very aware of the fact that each student researcher needs to find his or her own rhythm, learn how to focus on one topic extensively, including sitting still for an extended period of time. It is less important to me that they clock the eight hours a day five times a week, but rather that they get the requested time in eventually and that the project comes to a satisfactory completion.

To help students to overcome the dreaded writer's block, I recommended going the old-fashioned way of putting pen to paper rather than starring at the blank computer screen with an angry blinking cursor. Finding a starting point, sorting through information and deciding what is essential and what is distracting is difficult for the beginner-researcher. For most student researchers, it was necessary to break down the project into smaller more manageable parts. When stuck, I asked students to pretend they were writing informal letters to someone in which they would elaborate on their findings and their topics rather than seeing this as an unattainable huge project. And finally, my mantra is: don't get it right, get it written, since one can always edit later.

In general, it is crucial to keep the undergraduate researchers on schedule, encouraging them to submit their projects on time was a big part of the mentoring process. Often, final papers and posters were submitted late, which did not leave adequate time for review and the editing process. While we completed them just in time, and also met the requirements of the grants, I would have hoped for more time to discuss the final research papers and help students improve their writing, especially since we had submitted conference paper proposals.

What I really enjoyed and what made it all worthwhile, but is not documented in the research project, were the many fruitful critical intellectual discussions we had during our weekly meetings, the academic exchanges between the mentor and the mentee, the close student-teacher working relationships, and the prospect of focusing on a rewarding project. In addition, I enjoyed witnessing the students' excitement generated by a new discovery or a pertinent book. Seeing both Young Scholars excel above expectations during their first professional conference made me proud and hopeful when thinking of the next generation. Both students were dressed in business attire and had put together intellectually stimulating poster presentations that were well delivered and received.

In studying the Holocaust and the homosexual victims of National Socialism through memorials and memorialization, the undergraduate researcher acquired hard and soft skills valuable for both his future academic life and the workforce. He improved his German language skills, content knowledge, and developed (inter)cultural literacy. He observed and reflected on a culture's (in this case mostly Germany's) signs and symbols (e.g. memorials) in reference to the Second World War and realized that when investigating the memories and identities of others and how those are shaped by the past, he felt compelled to reflect on his own identity. In that respect, he took cultural awareness one step further toward cultural empathy.[18] He tried to place himself in the "shoes" of the authors of the firsthand accounts and the homosexual victims he studied to understand their actions and their cultural perspective. This resulted in the acknowledgement and understanding of certain behaviors and cultures and in a deeper consideration of his own identity, as he describes in his reflection below. It is through mentored research projects like the one described here that students may gain the ability to analyze, decipher, and understand cultures in a way that allow them to achieve a higher degree of intercultural literacy.

Student's reflection

Many people, when told that I was conducting research for the German program, were confused. What about German is there to research, they asked? You learn the vocabulary and the grammar, fulfill your core requirement and are done, right? Wrong. Learning a language goes far beyond how you order food or how to ask when the next bus comes. Truly learning a language means learning the history and culture that goes alongside it; in the case of German, that means learning about the Third Reich. Prior to conducting this research, I took a Holocaust Literature class and a January Term abroad course "Berlin Yesterday and Today:

The Holocaust and coming to Terms with The Past". Both classes, especially the latter, discussed how we remember the Holocaust.

I returned from Berlin with open eyes and a sparked interest, curious if there was a way that I could fuel my interest and see tangible results other than stimulating conversation. The Young Scholars Grant seemed a perfect match since it would allow me to conduct research with a professor during the summer focusing on the memorialization of homosexual victims during the Nazi Regime, and get paid for it.

I was considerably late to get the ball rolling in terms of submitting a research proposal, yet my mentor's support was overwhelming. We spent several hours drafting the application proposal. Hard work paid off when the proposal was approved and I became the first Young Scholar in the history of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages at the University of St. Thomas. Once I started my research, I was overwhelmed by the amount of support I was receiving from the university. Through funds provided by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and the Grants and Research Office, I was able to visit multiple museums and archives in and outside of Minnesota.

Conducting research during my undergraduate career was an academic experience unlike any other. It was the first time in a long time that I felt legitimately challenged. This project allowed me to conduct research on something that was not only a personal interest, but an area that seemed under-researched. There were points in the summer where the material got so intense due to the topic and the emotions it created for me personally, that I was afraid that I was going to have to stop. The most rewarding moments were those in which my preconceived ideas were proven wrong, because those were the moments that contributed most to my academic development as they forced me to rethink my approach to the question. Challenging my assumptions was unexpected but vital. I knew that a hypothesis is crucial for a research project. What I learned very quickly, is that altering your hypothesis throughout the project may be necessary. The original premise of my research was to determine how different experiences of National Socialism are represented in memorials. I was prepared to approach the question from a sociological standpoint and credit lackluster memorials for homosexual men to lingering anti-homosexual sentiments in modern Germany. Almost immediately, however, that assumption proved to be untrue. German society and government, I found, tended to be rather gay-friendly in recent decades, essentially nullifying my original thesis. I was forced to rethink my process and approach the question from a different angle.

At the start of the project, I was much better versed in international law and politics than I was in theories of memorialization. I was not expecting, however, that my research would become centered on the definition of genocide outlined in international law. Instead of approaching the question from a sociological standpoint, I found my political science background to be useful when it was necessary to edit my hypothesis. Though frustrating, this unexpected turn in my research was rewarding. I am lucky that it happened early in the process, because it forced me to consider the project as a whole before delving into specifics of

the project. When confronted with unexpected findings in my research later on, having an image of the project as a whole proved to be helpful as it allowed me to accurately adjust my approach in order to produce a cohesive final product.

While the premise of my research was to examine Holocaust memorials, it was only one of many important aspects of the project. Attempting to interpret how history is represented in modern memorial structures demanded that I took unfamiliar cultural factors into account. Spending the summer doing so, however, prepared me well for my junior year abroad in Salzburg, Austria, which began immediately after the conclusion of the grant period. It was not until after the research was completed that I realized the value of the intercultural literacy that I developed during the research project. Prolonged immersion in a culture other than my own required skills learned during the research experience when navigating complicated questions of identity, culture, and customs. While the content of the research project itself stays relevant even at the conclusion of the grant, it is the academic and personal skills gained that allowed me to effectively navigate an unfamiliar space abroad. Through this research project I am aware that being proficient in a language means knowing much more than the grammar rules. It means understanding the culture, the history, and its people. Even after three whole months of research, I feel that there is still much to learn before I can call myself a true German speaker.

Summary and conclusions

The case study described here in detail was the research project of a student at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The university research board saw promise in this research proposal, as the clear intent was to enhance intercultural literacy in a student through mentored individual research on an interdisciplinary topic. As a result of his research, and based on the accounts described above that give insight to the homosexual experience during the Third Reich, Sullivan argues that the persecution of homosexual victims, while a legal assault, may not be considered genocide. This notion impacts the structure of memorials dedicated to homosexual victims and national identities.

While St. Thomas promotes and supports undergraduate research in many ways, only 4.5% of undergraduate students did engage in formal research with a faculty member in the academic year 2013-2014 (University of St. Thomas, n.d.-a). This rather low number explains the efforts of the Office of Grants and Research to widen the scope of undergraduate research opportunities and to increase the participation of students from the humanities in general and the foreign languages in particular. Students who do take advantage of the amazing opportunities offered by our school will leave with a feeling of accomplishment and skills applicable to a future career or advanced course of studies. In this respect, we want to encourage educators to offer research opportunities to their students, even if your school does not offer generous funding, since we believe that research aids in enabling students to develop command of complex information and answer complicated questions. The long-lasting impacts that research projects have on students are numerous. Sullivan reports that thoroughly examining an unfamiliar topic

encouraged him to enthusiastically navigate unfamiliar intellectual and personal spaces. The opportunity to do in-depth research over a prolonged period of time allowed him to discover the value of leaving one's academic comfort zone, which translated well into the development of his intercultural literacy.[19]

A good starting point for research opportunities without financial backing may be semester-long projects integrated into a regular course or capstone projects. In addition, community members and local businesses may be interested in supporting programs and helping fund students' research projects. Depending on the research topic, connecting with an institutional equivalent of the Center for Local and Global Engagement at the University of St. Thomas would strengthen the ties of a program to the local community and aid in program-building.

The divide in higher education between those who teach and those who focus on research is stark. We often hear claims that research takes time away from good teaching and vice versa. Yet, even in teaching institutions, it is published articles that most often lead to tenure and promotion, not accolades collected through teaching. To make ends meet, ideally, the three pillars of an instructor's job description – teaching, research, and service – should be efficiently linked, especially since the administration even in teaching focused institutions still appreciates good teaching informed by research. Following the quest for professionalization, the ever more popular collaborative student-based research, in that matter, "is an efficacious way to educate throughout the educational system the great mass of students, as well as the elite performers, for the inquiring society into which we are rapidly moving" (Clark, 1997, p. 242). Exposing students to (collaborative) research, typically in their major or minor fields, is also a way to stimulate students to engage in critical thinking, to be active and create rather than memorize. To that end, Clark states: "In this form of education, research activity is the glue that holds together teaching and learning. Through research the professor teaches and, simultaneously, the student studies and learns. Research integrates teaching and learning" (p. 244). More than ever are we aware that collaborative research piquing the student's interest may lead to increased learning and better retention, or in other words, active learning through problem-solving.

To guarantee a positive experience that ensures teaching and learning through research and engages students in an educational setting common in institutions of higher education, the faculty mentor/teacher needs to set aside adequate time to lay the foundation, to meet with and mentor the student and his research throughout the grant application process and the grant period. It is important to monitor the young scholar's work closely throughout the project, to teach research methods, provide critical feedback on the research and the writing, and to keep the undergraduate student on the proposed timeline.

Many faculty in the foreign languages reserve the summer months to conduct their own research, or to attend professional development seminars. This means planning ahead, and potentially aligning ones' own research and schedule with that of the student mentee. In fields that are dominated by esoteric and lonely research agendas, engaging in collaborative research with an undergraduate student, who is most often left out of the higher echelons of said field due to lack of understanding of the subject matter, brings with it its own set of challenges.

It is obvious that there is a need for sound supervision and mentoring, considering that undergraduates are just beginning scholars. It is necessary to view the individual or collaborative research project as an element of learning that is enhances the undergraduate experience. Just like the student needs to learn research practices, the mentor should follow best practices in supervising the undergraduate student researcher. This starts with setting expectations, following timelines, teaching the student how to conduct research and develop persuasive writing skills, and ends with proper interpersonal interaction between the mentor and the student. A productive mentor-mentee relationship should encourage dialogue, reflection, and an exchange of ideas resulting in a final product, after many drafts and a potentially tedious editing process. In that respect, mentors need to also be cheerleaders and motivators who may have to help students through the process of finishing and writing up their findings.

Learning how to be a good supervisor for a research project is an ongoing process and takes time, but will also benefit research projects in "regular" classes, administering writing assignments, and advising students. We do not need to reinvent the wheel, but we can definitely learn from our students and past experiences. Just because we want the project to succeed does not mean the mentor should do too much or ask too much without proper backing. Needless to say, the scope of the project defines the scale of the supervision. Being a research mentor is different from being a friend, a tutor, the classroom professor, or a colleague. Trying to do it on the side or in one's spare time will be unsatisfying to all and will do the project no justice. Good supervision and mentoring requires training and should focus on aiding the new researcher in his or her academic and personal development: "Students at all levels need guidance, modelling and managing so that they can start to develop as independent researchers" (Wisker, 2005, p. 22). Developing research questions, engaging in a collegial research dialogue, working under the parameters of a conceptual framework, and using field-appropriate methods will not only develop the student's research and analytic but also people skills. In that respect, guiding our students through research projects is in line with the mission to educate them to become critical thinkers, and moves us closer to realizing a vision of the modern university which combines research and teaching at all levels.

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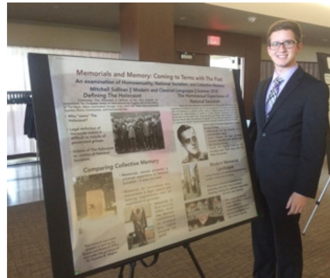
Appendix A

Student Research Presentations

2016 MCTLC Presentation



2016 Inquiry at UST: Undergraduate Research Poster Session

Endnotes

1. Following best practices and the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).
2. University of St. Thomas, the largest private university in the State of Minnesota, has an average enrollment of approximately 10,000 students including 4,000 graduate students; the coeducational distribution favors male students by a slim margin. The Department of Modern and Classical Languages offers majors and minors in Spanish, French, German, Classical Languages/Latin, and additional minors in Ancient Greek and Japanese. Furthermore, students may fulfill the foreign language requirement in the Arabic, Chinese, Irish, and Italian programs offering beginning and intermediate language classes. Today, students may choose from more than 90 majors with German being one of the

original fields of study, already listed in the first catalog.

3. For more information, see http://www.stthomas.edu/gro/students/summergrants/youngscholarsgrants/
4. Kaardal successfully completed her Young Scholars research project entitled *The German guest worker program: its failures, its lessons and its impact on the new German immigrants* in summer of 2016. This student first became interested in the topic of immigration while working at the Neander Diakonie in Ratingen-Ost, Germany where she worked with immigrants and their children. This service learning internship was part of the Congress Bundestag Youth Vocational Exchange program that she won during the 2014-2015 year. Upon returning to the United States and entering the St. Thomas's German program, she began research on this topic with a paper about the acceptance of foreign degrees and qualifications in Germany. For the paper for her GERM 300, Writing in the Discipline class, she researched the education and work qualifications of refugees coming to Germany and how Germany tried to accept and integrate those into its system. Building on this classwork, in her Young Scholars' project she focused on the guest-worker program in Germany during the 1960s and 70s and the complexity of the early Turkish immigration, the barriers to integration of Turks into Germany and the Germany society, and how this failure has influenced Germany's attitude toward new migration, relying primarily upon academic analyses, original sources, journalism and pop culture representations. An examination of these sources revealed that the German's popular perception of what constitutes being German contributed to the slow integration of the Turks into the larger German society.
5. Currently under review is a Collaborative Inquiry Research grant submitted on sustainability, waste management, and environmental stewardship. The student involved with this project is a Communications major and a German minor from the Class of 2017, who has been to Germany multiple times and has taken two upper-level German classes with sustainability content. She plans to study transatlantic attitudes toward sustainability and environmental stewardship with emphasis on the recycling mentality that is ingrained in the German culture. In order to do this effectively, she too will need to develop a certain level of intercultural awareness and cultural empathy. This project is in response to a project proposed by the cities of Elk River, MN and Iserlohn, Germany, and in partnership with the office of Sustainability Initiatives hosted in the Center for Global and Local Engagement at the University of St. Thomas. For her research project, she plans to analyze Germany's communication strategies and advertisements surrounding recycling and compare those to Elk River's current communication plans. In addition to the research aspect, this particular project has a local and global engagement designation and a service learning component. As such, it is an almost prototypical example of how to integrate the German program in other fields and create interdisciplinary ties on and off campus that aid in student retention, professionalization, and quintessentially in program building.

6. Following this recommendation is naturally more difficult in singleton departments with the single professor charged to cater to diverse interests.
7. The time frame for the Young Scholars Research grant at St. Thomas is 10 weeks over the course of the summer, the Collaborative Inquiry grant allocates 10 weeks during the course of a semester, and a capstone thesis generally needs to be completed within a semester.
8. In order to avoid a similar stressful proposal-writing experience, I have made it a point to continuously mention this and similar opportunities to all minors and majors in the German program. This has resulted in two other research proposals.
9. It was necessary to extend the project by about 2 weeks to (a) achieve the required 400 hours and to (b) complete it successfully.
10. During my five years at a comprehensive public university in the south, I mentored a total of 11 semester-long capstone projects, none of which seemed so involved, regulated, and demanding as the Young Scholars Grant projects described here. The German major at St. Thomas does not require a capstone project.
11. For the Young Scholars Grant during the following summer, I therefore asked the student researcher to keep a project diary/writing log in which she would write down pertinent information such as (1) what she had done during the week; (2) what she hoped to accomplish during the next week; (3) bibliographical information of texts and sources she used or found; (4) any questions that might have come up while working on the project that did not need immediate answers; (5) any problems she encountered or things that were frustrating; and finally (6) something she both learned and was excited about. This system was helpful in keeping us on track. To organize her project and thoughts, I also suggested to keep a folder or a cardboard box for each of her anticipated chapters, writing down thoughts and collecting material she found and could file away to facilitate the future writing process.
12. This part of the mentoring process was less necessary for the Young Scholar of the following summer, since she had taken the redesigned GERM 300, Writing in the Discipline, which I had offered in collaboration with a university librarian. In this class, she had learned how to conduct research and how to find sources.
13. http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn39164
14. http://sfi.usc.edu/vha
15. https://www.ushmm.org
16. http://www.mjhnyc.org/
17. https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/
18. To have cultural empathy means to be capable of identifying with another person from another culture, to understand his or her feelings, thoughts, and behavior within the cultural backdrop. This is a difficult concept for our students, since it is foreign, pushes boundaries, and places the learner outside of his comfort zone. In addition, overcoming one's prejudices and preferences acquired through familiarity is challenging for anyone.

19. Due to the knowledge acquired through his research project building on and extending the material from classes taken in the German program, Sullivan received special consideration in THEO 451, Christianity & Nazism. To foster the student's skills and to guarantee he is appropriately challenged, the professor teaching that course offered to work with him one-on-one on a longer research paper instead of requiring the smaller writing assignments indicated in the syllabus. In doing so, the proposed research paper for this class, *Clerical Fascism in Austria,* will combine the student's interest in National Socialism and his love for Austria.

Exploring Learner Language Development During Short-Term Study Abroad

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Abstract

The number of U.S. college students participating in study abroad programs has grown steadily in recent years, with more than 62% of participants choosing short-term programs lasting a maximum of eight weeks. It is commonly believed that study abroad is the best way to advance speaking skills, but what types of gains can we expect during such short programs? This descriptive study explores gains in learners' speaking ability during a six-week study abroad program in Spain. Participants' personal stories, narrated before and immediately after the program, were analyzed to pinpoint changes in fluency and accuracy. Learners demonstrated increases on almost all measures of fluency and showed improvement in past tense morphology. These results suggest that short-term study abroad can promote the development of oral skills in terms of longer and more accurate production. Pedagogical activities that focus on discourse analysis (of exemplar texts and students' own narratives) and self-evaluation apply the research findings to the classroom context.

Introduction

It is a common belief that study abroad programs are beneficial for second language learners (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004), which makes it a productive topic of research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). The number of studies designed to investigate the accuracy of these beliefs has been growing in recent years. Most research focuses on oral skills improvement after studying abroad, as it is said to be the area in which learners achieve the greatest gains (Freed, 1995; Freed et al., 2004; Juan-Garau & Pérez-Vidal, 2007; Llanes, 2011). Oral skills

development is measured in various ways, including measures of overall proficiency, vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. Although the measures may differ, the results of these studies are largely similar: Study abroad leads to gains in second language (L2) speaking ability.

The overwhelming majority of research studies that investigate the outcomes of study abroad focuses on programs that last one semester or longer (Freed, 1995; Freed et al., 2004; Juan-Garau & Pérez-Vidal, 2007; Lennon, 1990; Llanes, 2011), while short-term programs remain largely overlooked. At the same time, short-term programs attract more students every year due to their relatively lower cost and shorter time commitment compared to longer-term alternatives. According to the Institute of International Education, short-term study abroad programs (shorter than eight weeks) are more popular among students (Llanes, 2011). It is, therefore, evident that this area of research needs more development. It is crucial to investigate the kinds of outcomes that can be expected from short-term programs, and how these programs compare to the longer-term alternatives in terms of effectiveness. This study contributes to the growing pool of knowledge about the effects of short-term study abroad on the development of students' speaking skills. In particular, we investigate the changes in fluency and accuracy, as well as morphosyntactic development after L2 Spanish students' participation in a six-week study abroad program in Spain.

Background

In this section we review the relevant literature. First, we discuss the general notions of oral fluency, accuracy, and morphosyntactic development. Next, we provide a brief overview of the effects of study abroad on the development of these components of L2 speech.

Oral fluency

The term *fluency* is used in various ways in the context of foreign language teaching and learning, although its definition is rather vague. Merriam-Webster describes fluency as "the ability to speak easily and smoothly" or "ability to speak a foreign language easily and effectively" (fluency, n.d.), leaving it unclear what the terms *easily* or *smoothly* mean. Freed et al. (2004) reported an informal survey among first-year undergraduate students, where the definitions of fluency were quite vague as well: "speaking quickly and smoothly," "speaking without saying *um*, without hesitations," "speaking perfectly," and "talking easily" (p. 276). These loose definitions correspond to what Lennon (1990) calls a broad definition of fluency that functions as a cover term for oral proficiency. He suggests that in this definition *fluent* represents "the highest point on a scale that measures spoken command of a foreign language" (p. 389). In accord with this broad framework, Freed et al. (2004) propose that fluency is a "relatively loose cover term, with both global and restricted interpretations that vary from context to context, speaker to speaker, and listener to listener" (p. 279). In a more narrow sense, fluency is just one component of oral proficiency, different from other components, such as accuracy or appropriateness. Lennon (1990) suggests that in the narrow sense, definitions of temporal features of

speech, such as "native-like rapidity" are emphasized, with the target speech being "at the tempo of native speakers, unimpeded by silent pauses and hesitations, filled pauses …, self-corrections, repetitions, false starts, and the like" (p. 390). In a later study, Lennon (2000) reformulated his working definition of fluency as the "rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing" (p. 26).

Chambers (1997) argued that such a widely-used criterion of oral performance assessment as fluency should be defined specifically to guarantee the validity of those assessments. She proposed that a study of temporal variables would allow for greater precision of the meaning behind general terms used to describe fluency. Although there is no agreed-upon and widely used definition of fluency, most researchers seem to agree with the emphasis on the temporal and hesitation features of speech.

Various researchers set out to establish the best predictors of fluency among non-native speakers (cf. Freed, 1995; Lennon, 1990; Riggenbach, 1991; Towell, Hawkins, & Bazergui, 1996). Most studies had a similar design, where experts were asked to qualitatively rate some speech samples for fluency, and then those samples were analyzed on a variety of measures. The ones that corresponded best with the experts' ratings were identified as the best predictors of fluency. Several measures were found to appear more frequently than others: speech rate, mean length of runs, and phonation–time ratio. To calculate speech rate Riggenbach (1991) suggested first dividing the total number of syllables produced in a given speech sample by the amount of total time required to produce the speech sample, including pause time, expressed in seconds, and then multiplying that figure by 60 to get the number of syllables per minute. The mean length of runs is calculated as an average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.25 seconds or more. Finally, the phonation–time ratio is calculated as the percentage of time spent speaking as a percentage proportion of the time taken to produce the speech sample.

Accuracy

In general, accuracy refers to error-free L2 production (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). In a review of the literature on approaches to measuring accuracy in L2 discourse, Polio (1997) found that researchers tend to measure accuracy using three different approaches: (a) holistic scales; (b) error-free T-units/error-free clauses; and (c) number of errors without particular classification. The first measure involves using holistic tools to evaluate learners' production using a number scale, with a lower number signifying less accurate and a higher number meaning more accurate production. The second, more objective measure takes into account the total number of error-free independent and dependent clauses (T-units). The third approach uses other linguistic means to calculate the number of errors. Examples include average number of errors per T-unit, ratio of total number of errors in structures studied in class to total number of clauses, number of errors per 100 words, and so forth.

Morphosyntactic accuracy

Tense and aspect in Spanish. Tense and aspect are both temporal markers on the verb, with tense being a dependent category that places a situation in time with

respect to the moment of speech, and aspect reflecting the different perspectives a speaker can take and express in relation to temporal sequence of events. Aspect can be expressed lexically by the inherent lexical semantics of the verb and its interaction with direct and indirect arguments and adjuncts (Montrul & Salaberry, 2003). Aspect can also be expressed grammatically by means of inflectional morphology on the verb. This is particularly true for Spanish.

Vendler (1967) classifies verbs into four different lexical aspectual categories: states (no input of energy), activities (arbitrary beginning and endpoint), accomplishments (durative and inherent endpoint), and achievements (inherent end point but no duration). The following examples are base forms of the verbs that will take on tense and aspect readings in context and representative of the four classes:

a. Statives: *ser* 'be,' *tener* 'have,' *querer* 'want'
b. Activities: *correr* 'run,' *caminar* 'walk,' *respirar* 'breathe'
c. Accomplishments: *escribir una novela* 'write a novel,' *correr una milla* 'run a mile'
d. Achievements: *morirse* 'die,' *darse cuenta de algo* 'realize something.'

Vendler (1967) further classifies verbs among three dimensions: dynamism (i.e., non-static), telicity (i.e., express an endpoint), and punctuality (i.e., instantaneous actions). Activity, accomplishment, and achievement verbs are all dynamic, but are different from one another in duration and in telicity.

Inflection morphemes "indicate the internal temporal constituency of a situation" in Spanish (Comrie, 1976). One of the most common aspectual oppositions is the perfective–imperfective opposition that occurs in Spanish (de Miguel Aparicio, 1992). Perfective aspect deals with the beginning and end of a situation and is bounded. Imperfective aspect focuses on the internal structure of the situation, viewing it with no specific endpoint, which causes it to be unbounded. In Spanish, the perfective/imperfective distinction is grammaticalized with tense morphology on the verb. Therefore, in the past tense in Spanish, inflectional morphology marks both tense and aspect. The preterite encodes perfectivity and the imperfect encodes imperfectivity.

The L2 acquisition of aspect in Spanish: The Aspect Hypothesis. The Aspect Hypothesis (Andersen, 1986) attempts to explain the relationship between the acquisition of tense/aspect morphemes and lexical classes. Based on his observations of his two children learning Spanish in Puerto Rico, Andersen (1986) plotted the acquisition of past tense morphology across eight developmental stages as seen in Table 1. Learners overuse the present tense across all four lexical classes throughout the first two stages. Later we begin to see the preterite emerge in achievement and accomplishment verbs and the imperfect with stative and activity verbs. Adult-like usage of the preterite and imperfect with stative verbs is not observed until stage VIII, the last stage; additionally, proper use of preterite and imperfect verbs happens with activity verbs in stage VI, with accomplishments in state V, and achievement verbs in stage VII.

Table 1. *Developmental Stages (Montrul & Salaberry, 2003; based on Andersen, 1986)*

Stages	States	Activities	Accomplishments	Achievements
I	Present	Present	Present	Present
II	Present	Present	Present	Preterite
III	Imperfect	Present	Present	Preterite
IV	Imperfect	Imperfect	Preterite	Preterite
V	Imperfect	Imperfect	Pret/Imperf	Preterite
VI	Imperfect	Pret/ Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Preterite
VII	Imperfect	Pret/ Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Imperf
VIII	Pret/Imperf	Pret/ Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Imperf

A considerable body of research has been collected that tests the Aspect Hypothesis with L2 Spanish past tense morphology. Cadierno (2000), for example, discovered several stages of development of perfective and imperfective aspect as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. *Developmental Stages (Cadierno, 2000)*

Stages	States	Activities	Accomplishments	Achievements
I	Present	Present	Present	Preterite
II	Imperfect	Present	Present	Preterite
III	Imperfect	Imperfect	Present	Preterite
IV	Imperfect	Imperfect	Pret/Imperf	Preterite
V	Imperfect	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Preterite
VI	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Imperf	Pret/Impef

One can observe in Table 2 that Cadierno (2000) mapped form–function development across only six stages: stage I shows the preterite is used in achievements; in stage II the imperfect in states; in stage III the imperfect in activities, in stage IV

the imperfect in accomplishments, in stage V the preterite in activities, and in stage VI the preterite in states and the imperfect in achievements. In stages I and II, one notes the emergence of one form in one context. Later, in stages III–V, the forms are spread to additional contexts. Finally, stage VI demonstrates that the learner has acquired a full form–function mapping. Her results are a full two stages shorter than what Andersen (1986) proposed. Conflicting results and evidence suggesting that the role of lexically based aspectual categories may be more limited than once thought led Montrul and Salaberry (2003) to call for research to be done exploring the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis with L2 Spanish learners.

The L2 acquisition of aspect in Spanish: The Discourse Hypothesis. As an alternative to lexically based accounts of tense and aspect acquisition, Bardovi–Harlig (1994) proposed a more contextually based approach to researching the emergence of past tense morphology. The Discourse Hypothesis relates the emergence of past tense morphology with the narrative structure of L2 discourse in particular. Narrative structure is made up of two key parts: the foreground and the background. The purpose of the foreground is to develop the overall structure of the discourse (Hopper, 1979) and to help the story move along (Dry, 1983). Three temporal criteria are central to the foreground: (a) narrativity or temporal continuity, which are the narrative units whose order matches the order of the events in the discourse; (b) punctuality, which are the units that report punctual events; and (c) completeness, which are the units that report a completed event. The punctuality and completeness units relate more with the foreground than units reporting ongoing, repetitive or habitual events. These units are also more easily identified with the foreground than durative events (Reinhart, 1984, as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

Whereas the events in the foreground are used to develop the plot line, structure, and to move time forward, the background has many functions, all of which serve the purpose of supporting the foreground. In contrast with foreground events, background events can be non-sequential, and they provide support for or elaboration of the events that are related in the foreground (Hopper, 1979). Background clauses, for example, aid in the interpretation of an event by revealing prior events, refer to a simultaneous event, and/or assess an action that is taking place in the foreground (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

The interlanguage Discourse Hypothesis (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994) is based on Hopper's (1979) work on aspectual markers in narrative discourse. Hopper proposed that there is typically a specialized aspectual marker utilized for foregrounding and another for backgrounding. Bardovi-Harlig suggested that learners thus employ verbal morphology to differentiate the background from the foreground in the narratives they produce. In a study of the narratives produced by L2 English students, Bardovi-Harlig (1995) found that simple past forms emerged in the foreground, while past morphology emerged in the background later, yet never surpassing the use of past morphology in the foreground.

Applying the Discourse Hypothesis (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994, 1995) to a L2 Spanish context, Lafford (1996) analyzed the discourse produced by 15 L2 Spanish learners when retelling the story depicted in a clip from the silent Disney movie *Fantasia*. She found that the likelihood of a more even distribution of verbs in the background

versus verbs in the foreground increased with proficiency. Consistent with the Discourse Hypothesis, she also discovered that learners tended to use the preterite to mark the foreground events and the imperfect to mark background events. The 15 learners were grouped according to their oral proficiency based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (7 Intermediate High, 6 Intermediate Mid, 2 Intermediate Low). Upon examining the data, she discovered that the preterite was more common than the imperfect in the foreground in all three groups. However, there was variation among the groups' utilization of the imperfect. The Intermediate High group utilized the imperfect with almost every verb in the background and used preterite forms more often in the foreground. The Intermediate Mid group produced preterite verbs exclusively and used an equal number in both the foreground and background. The Intermediate Low group also did not produce any imperfect forms either, and of the preterite verbs produced, each was present only in the foreground. All other verbs were in the present.

Comparing theoretical frameworks. When comparing the Aspect Hypothesis with the Discourse Hypothesis, the question researchers need to take into consideration is whether the analysis and interpretation of a single data set can be grounded in both theoretical frameworks. Although the hypotheses appear to be distinct, with one relying on lexical aspect and the other on discourse structure, Bardovi-Harlig (1999) suggests that both hypotheses share some of the features of temporal semantics. Verbs in the foreground are bounded events, so they will be accomplishments or achievements, which are acquired first according to the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis. Verbs in the background, on the other hand, are atelic events, so they will be activities or states, which emerge later in L2 speech in accordance with the lexical aspect hypothesis. However, where the Aspect Hypothesis predicts that atelic foregrounded verbs have a low likelihood of appearing in the preterite in the foreground, the discourse hypothesis predicts the opposite case, thus signaling a potential difference between the two theoretical frameworks.

Effects of study abroad on fluency and accuracy development

One of the most important factors in foreign language acquisition is the context of learning (Llanes, 2011), and most research in SLA has been done in naturalistic and classroom contexts. A growing body of research is now appearing on immersion and study abroad programs, although it is still quite scant. It is believed that learners' oral proficiency benefits the most from study abroad experience (Llanes, 2011), which could be the reason that a large part of research on the learning outcomes of study abroad programs focuses on participants' oral proficiency.

Fluency is one of the most commonly studied components of speaking skills development. To the best of our knowledge, all research studies on gains during study abroad have registered positive changes in learners' fluency. For example, Lennon (1990) used several temporal and hesitation variables to analyze change in the oral fluency during a six-month study abroad program of students of English as a foreign language. He found that performance on some of those variables had improved, and in addition that participants' speech was perceived as more fluent by a panel of trained judges.

Freed (1995) investigated how students of L2 French improved their fluency in study abroad and at home contexts, and found that those who had experience living abroad spoke more and at a faster rate. Freed et al. (2004) also looked at students of French, but they compared three contexts: at home, study abroad, and U.S.-based immersion. While they did see an improvement in fluency among the study abroad participants, they also found that immersion students demonstrated even greater gains.

Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal (2007) studied Spanish/Catalan bilinguals studying English as a third language. In contrast to previously discussed studies, they tested their participants' oral proficiency on five occasions over a period of time: upon students' entrance to the university, six months later, immediately prior to their study abroad experience, immediately after their return from the study abroad, and one year later. The researchers found that study abroad helped students improve their fluency, but it did not play a role in the accuracy or complexity of their speech.

Research on accuracy development in study abroad is limited, but studies to date have also demonstrated promising results. In studies using bilingual Spanish/Catalan learners of English, Llanes and Muñoz (2009) found significant gains in accuracy in learners' speech during a short-term sojourn (three to four weeks) abroad, and Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) found moderate gains in accuracy in speech samples elicited over a two-year period. In a particularly innovative study, Leonard and Shea (in press) measured accuracy gains in the oral discourse produced by American English-speaking students studying Spanish for a semester in Argentina. They too found statistically significant improvements. However, the researchers noted that the learners who experienced the greatest gains had higher levels of L2 linguistic knowledge and faster L2 processing prior to their stay abroad.

Whether studying in a formal classroom at home or abroad, the context of learning may also play a key role in developing grammatical accuracy. However, there is little empirical research on this topic, especially in short-term study abroad settings. The meager research that does exist shows conflicting results (Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 2007, 2010; Isabelli, 2003; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012).

There is evidence to suggest that students make little to no progress in grammatical accuracy, particularly in past-tense morphosyntactic development, during a study abroad program. Studying 16 students of Spanish during a six-week study abroad program in Argentina, DeKeyser (2010) evaluated students' accuracy, fluency, and overall proficiency pre- and post-study abroad. He found that despite at least two years of college instruction and a high level of motivation, students lacked the proceduralized knowledge necessary to make substantial linguistic gains. Speaking in an accurate manner without paying attention to fluency was virtually impossible for the learners, even for basic structures, and even after completing their six-week sojourn.

In a study comparing the effects of learning context on morphosyntactic development, Collentine (2004) compared the abilities of two groups before and after studying Spanish for one semester. Group A was a group participating in a study abroad program in Alicante, Spain. Group B was made up of students

who studied Spanish at their home institutions in the United States. He discovered that the at-home context facilitated more development on discrete grammar and lexical features. However, the study abroad group achieved better narrative skills, increased fluency, and produced language that was more semantically rich.

Mora and Valls-Ferrer (2012) also compared different learning contexts and investigated the effects of study abroad programs and formal instruction at home on learners' oral production skills. The authors obtained speech samples at three points over a two-year period: upon students' enrollment in the university, after two three-month terms of formal instruction, and immediately after a three-month study abroad program. These speech samples were quantitatively analyzed for fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Researchers found no gains during formal instruction at home, while study abroad resulted in significant improvement in fluency. Accuracy and complexity, however, appeared to remain largely the same in both contexts. These findings provide strong evidence for the positive impact study abroad can have on students' oral production, and especially their fluency.

Previous research clearly demonstrates that participation in study abroad programs helps learners improve their speaking skills. However, most research is done on long-term study abroad programs. With the growing popularity of short-term programs, it is necessary to investigate whether such programs yield the same results as the long-term ones. This study intends to address this need and poses the following research questions:

1. How does a short-term study abroad program affect the oral fluency of L2 Spanish learners?
2. How does a short-term study abroad program affect the oral accuracy of L2 Spanish learners?
3. What differences are there in the verbal morphology of the L2 Spanish learners' oral narratives before and after a 6-week study abroad program?
   a. What are the differences in occurrence of past-tense morphology in obligatory past contexts pre- and post-study abroad?
   b. Does the distribution of past tense morphology in obligatory past contexts follow the predictions of the Aspect Hypothesis, the Discourse Hypothesis, or both?

Methodology

This section describes the research design of the present study. We first provide a brief description of the participants and context of the study, followed by an explanation of the data collection procedures. We then describe the measures we used to document changes in learner speech before and after study abroad.

Context and participants

The participants in this descriptive study were four female college students of Spanish who participated in a short-term study abroad program in Valladolid, Spain. They ranged in age from 19–23 years old. They all had completed four years of high school Spanish and at least one year of college-level Spanish at a large Midwestern university prior to studying abroad. The participants were selected

from a bigger pool of students in the summer study abroad program to allow for a more in-depth, case study-like analysis of each participant's speaking skills development. The basis for the selection was the increase in the length of their oral speech samples, as measured by word count, collected from the study abroad participants before and at the end of their study abroad experience. Although all participants experienced a word count gain, the four subjects with the highest word count gain ($M = 69.8$) were selected for this study. We chose the four subjects with highest word count gain because longer speech samples provided a greater number of tokens for analysis.

The site for our data collection was an intensive six-week study abroad program in Valladolid, Spain. The goals of the program were twofold: to improve learners' written and spoken Spanish and to broaden their knowledge about Spanish cultures and life in Spain. Participants were enrolled in three courses, which were taught in Spanish. Two of the courses were three credits each and were from a range of topics, including Spanish language, Spanish culture, and Spanish literature. In addition, all participants enrolled in the one-credit course "Life in Spain," designed to help prepare them for the week of independent travel, and write a final paper about Spanish culture and their study abroad experience. This course was also conducted in Spanish. Additionally, for two hours a week they met with conversation partners who were native speakers of Spanish enrolled at a local university.

The participants lived with host families and shared a bedroom with another American student from the program. Although students shared an accommodation with a speaker of the same L1, they were encouraged to interact with each other and their host families in Spanish as much as possible.

Data collection

This study was designed to measure the immediate gains in fluency and accuracy, as well as morphosyntactic development as a result of participating in a short-term study abroad program, which is why we chose to use a pre-/post-test design. The pre-study abroad data were collected in the United States prior to students' departure for Spain. The post-study abroad data were collected in Spain at the end of the program.

In the pre-study abroad data collection session, participants were presented with a stack of index cards. Each card had a Spanish word (accompanied by an English translation) designating an emotion. Participants were asked to look through the cards until one of the words triggered a memory of an episode from their life related to that emotion. Then they had to narrate that episode to the researcher. In the post-test the researcher reminded the participants of the story they had told and asked them to tell it again. We chose a re-telling task rather than the telling of another event because it allowed us to make a more precise comparison of the participants' stories. Although repeating the same task is certainly a limitation, the participants were unaware that they would be required to retell the story. In addition, six weeks had passed between pre- and post-study abroad data collection, which minimizes the possibility of task repetition effects. All of the narrations were audio-recorded and were later transcribed by the researchers.

Data analysis

Analysis of fluency. Fluency gains were evaluated on a number of measures. To be consistent with the previous research, we chose the measures found to be the best predictors of fluency: speech rate, phonation–time ratio, and mean length of runs. Speech rate was calculated as words per minute, with all Spanish words and non-Spanish proper nouns counted as words. False starts and full and partial repetitions were not included in the count. To measure phonation–time ratio, the percentage of time spent speaking was taken as a proportion of the time taken to produce the speech sample. In other words, we calculated how much of the time spent on producing the story was devoted to speaking by dividing the actual speaking time by the total speaking time and expressing the result as a percentage. The mean length of runs was represented as the average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.5 second or more.

In addition to the measures described above, we used Freed et al.'s (2004) measures of general oral performance: total words spoken and duration of speaking time. As previously mentioned, the word count included all Spanish words and non-Spanish proper nouns and excluded false starts and repetitions. For the duration of speaking time two elements were taken into account. First, the total duration of speaking time from the first to the last word in the story was measured. The second measure reflected the duration of the student's actual speaking time without pauses and interjections in either Spanish or English (e.g. *um*, *eh*, *like*).

Analysis of accuracy. To analyze the development of general accuracy we used the simple ratio of errors measure. First, we marked all the errors made by participants in their speech samples. All errors were counted equally (i.e., an agreement error was counted the same as a tense error and as a missing article error). We included both grammatical and lexical errors, but pronunciation errors were not taken into account. Second, we divided that number by the total number of words produced by participants in each sample and multiplied the result by 100 to get the percentage representation. This measure shows how many errors a participant made per 100 words, which is why the lower ratio means higher accuracy.

Analysis of morphosyntactic development. To analyze the emergence of past-tense morphology, all verbs and their predicates were identified. Next, verbs were coded for the differences in occurrence of past-tense morphology versus another form such as present, infinitive, subjunctive, and so forth. The verbs exhibiting past-tense morphology were then classified according to the four-part Vendler (1967) system (i.e., state, activity, accomplishment, achievement) and according to Hopper's (1979) two-part discourse hypothesis system (i.e., background vs. foreground).

Due to the descriptive nature of this study and a low number of participants, we did not perform statistical analyses of the results. Instead, each participant's changes were analyzed separately to demonstrate individual speaking skills across a variety of measures.

Results and discussion

In this section we present the results of the study. We first use various measures of fluency and accuracy to discuss the changes in learners' narratives as a result

of their study abroad. Then we examine the development of learners' past tense verbal morphology production. Finally, we discuss the overall development of each participant's speaking skills.

Fluency

Measure 1: Total words spoken. All of the participants demonstrated gains in the number of words, which is not surprising given that for this analysis we chose participants with the biggest gains on this measure. Table 3 summarizes the numbers of words for pre- and post-study abroad speech samples and the gains demonstrated by the learners. Participant 1 demonstrated the biggest relative gain, increasing the number of words by almost twice and going from 87 words in the pre-test to 169 words in the post-test. Participant 4 showed the largest overall gain, increasing her speech sample by a total of 104 words, or by approximately 1.64 times. The mean word gain for the whole sample constituted 69.8 words.

Table 3. *Total Word Gain*

Participant	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference	Relative difference
1	87	169	+82	94%
2	72	117	+45	62.5%
3	74	122	+48	64.8%
4	163	267	+104	63.8%

Measure 2: Duration of speaking time. The duration of speaking time was measured in two different ways. First, we measured the total duration of the sample from the first to the last word. Then, we measured each sample for the duration of actual speech; that is, without counting pauses, hesitations, or interjections in any language (e.g. *like, eh, um*). Table 4 summarizes the results.

All the participants demonstrated gains in both total and actual speech duration. Participant 1 demonstrated the highest result. She greatly increased her total speech time duration, adding 1 minute 30 seconds to her original speech sample time of 1 minute 40 seconds. However, her actual speaking time did not increase very much in comparison to her total speaking time. She demonstrated a gain of 26 seconds, but the fact that her total time went up 1 minute 30 seconds

Table 4. *Duration of Speech in Minutes and Seconds*

Participant	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	
	Total (pre)	Actual (pre)	Total (post)	Actual (post)	Total	Actual
1	1:40	1:05	3:10	1:31	+1:30	+0:26
2	1:13	0:41	1:34	1:02	+0:21	+0:21
3	1:27	0:52	1:46	1:09	+0:19	+0:17
4	3:20	1:54	3:31	1:56	+0:11	+0:02

suggests that she added a lot of interjections and pauses to her post-test speech sample. Participant 4 showed the same trend, although on a much smaller scale. She added 11 seconds to her total time, while only adding a negligible 2 seconds to her actual speech. In Participants 2 and 3 we see roughly the same gain in total and actual times, which reflects that they really improved their actual speaking time, in contrast to Participants 1 and 4. This difference will be more salient in the phonation–time ratio measure, which calculates the proportion of actual speech time to the time spent telling the story in the sample.

Measure 3: Phonation–time ratio. The phonation–time ratio uses the results of the total and actual duration of s 5 speech time by 17% and 2.2%, respectively. While 2.2% does not seem significant, a 17% decrease raises questions as to why that learner experienced such a decline between her first and second times to tell her story.

Table 5. *Phonation-Time Ratio*

Participant	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
1	65%	48%	−17%
2	56%	65.7%	+9.7%
3	59.8%	65%	+5.2%
4	57%	54.8%	−2.2%

Measure 4: Speech rate. Speech rate measure was used to calculate the average number of words spoken per minute. As shown in Table 6, all four participants demonstrated a gain on this measure. However, the gain demonstrated by Participant 1 is rather small. It is interesting that Participant 4 showed the biggest increase in the number of words spoken per minute, while her phonation–time ratio declined. In other words, this participant spoke faster on average, but the proportion of pauses slightly increased at the same time. This might indicate that although she can speak faster, she still requires the same amount of time to think before speaking. Another reason for this slight discrepancy could be that the pauses in her post-study abroad sample reflected thinking about the content rather than about language. Since the participants were asked to tell the same story they had previously told in the pre-study abroad data collection, trying to remember all the details they had told before could result in the longer duration of pauses. A qualitative component is needed to confirm or disprove this speculation.

Table 6. *Speech Rate (Words per Minute)*

Participant	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
1	52.7	53.4	+0.7
2	59.2	74.5	+15.3
3	51	68.9	+17.9
4	48.9	75.9	+27.0

Measure 5: Mean length of runs. The mean length of runs is a measure that represents the average number of syllables uttered by the participant per run, or a period of speech between pauses of 0.5 second or longer. As shown in Table 7, Participant 1 decreased her mean length of runs by 4.79 syllables, which is not surprising considering her lack of gain on most of other measures. The other three participants improved their mean length of runs, with Participant 2 showing the largest gain of 3.07 syllables. These gains demonstrate that learners produced longer speech segments without pausing, which is a sign of an easier speech flow.

Table 7. *Mean Length of Runs (Syllables per Run)*

Participant	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
1	9.44	4.65	−4.79
2	5.76	8.83	+3.07
3	5.42	6.38	+0.96
4	4.12	5.99	+1.87

Accuracy

To analyze changes in students' accuracy in oral production, we compared the ratios of errors and error-free T-units in their pre- and post-study abroad speech samples. Table 8 demonstrates the changes in participants' ratio of errors, which was calculated by dividing the total number of errors by the total number of words in the speech sample.

Table 8. *Ratio of Errors*

Participant	Word count (pre-test)	Error count (pre-test)	Ratio of errors (pre-test)	Word count (post-test)	Error count (post-test)	Ratio of errors (post-test)	Difference
1	87	19	21.8%	169	9	5.0%	−16.8%
2	72	8	11.0%	117	5	4.3%	−6.7%
3	74	16	21.6%	122	10	8.0%	−13.6%
4	163	9	5.5%	267	16	5.9%	+0.4%

The results summarized in Table 8 demonstrate that three participants greatly lowered their ratio of errors, while one participant did not exhibit any major change on this measure. Participants 1 and 3 had a higher ratio of errors pre-study abroad than the other two participants, and they also made more relative progress than their peers. At the same time, Participant 4 had a much lower ratio of errors in the pre-study abroad speech sample than the other participants and did not demonstrate any gain in accuracy on this measure. This suggests that students who have lower accuracy prior to study abroad may experience bigger accuracy gains than those whose accuracy is higher in the first place.

Morphosyntactic development

In regard to morphosyntactic development, the first sub-question this study sets out to answer is what differences were observed in the occurrence of past-tense morphology in obligatory past contexts pre- and post- study abroad. Figure 1 shows the number of times that the verbs produced by students exhibited past tense morphology in obligatory past tense contexts.

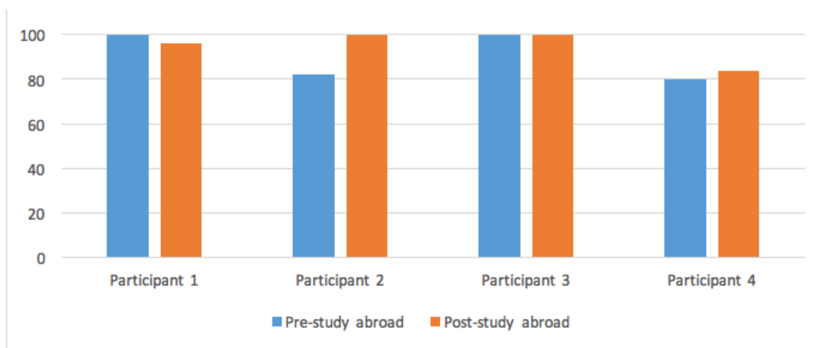

Figure 1. Differences in the occurrence of past tense morphology (percentage).

Interestingly, Participant 2 and Participant 4 are the only participants that show gains in past tense morphology production. While only producing nine of the eleven verbs in the preterite or imperfect (vs. the present, indicative, subjunctive, etc.) before going abroad, Participant 2 achieved 100% accuracy post-study abroad. While still not achieving 100% accuracy, Participant 4 gained 4% post-study abroad. Participant 3 showed no gains or losses, utilizing past tense morphology correctly with 100% accuracy. Participant 1 exhibited slight decreases in accuracy, but this could be due in part to the overall increase in verbs produced in the two contexts. She produced nearly twice as many verbs in the past in the post-study abroad setting than in her original attempt before departure. This is evidence that these students had already mastered this feature of the L2 pre-study abroad.

The second sub-question investigates whether the distribution of past-tense morphology follows the predictions of the lexical aspect hypothesis and if there is evidence of development as a consequence of study abroad. Table 9 illustrates the verbs produced in the preterite and the imperfect in pre- and post-study abroad narratives.

Table 9. *Counts of Morphological Markings in Lexical Class Pre- and Post-Study Abroad*

	Pre-Study Abroad				Post-Study Abroad			
	Telic	Activity	Stative	Total	Telic	Activity	Stative	Total
Preterite	14	2	9	25	28	2	13	43
Imperfect	0	0	18	18	1	0	29	30

According to the Aspect Hypothesis, stative verbs are acquired first in the imperfective aspect and telic verbs in the perfective aspect. However, in both pre- and post- narratives, students exhibited a slight preference for preterite morphology over imperfect morphology in all of the aspectual categories, regardless of whether the context required the preterite or imperfect. These results are consistent with Salaberry (1999), who also found a general overuse of the preterite among his subjects. The author hypothesizes that one explanation for this phenomenon is a primacy effect, because the concept of the preterite is often presented before the concept of the imperfect in instructed settings.

The last sub-question presented in this study aims to explore whether the distribution of past-tense morphology follows the predictions of the Discourse Hypothesis and to examine if there is evidence of development as a consequence of study abroad. Table 10 displays the distribution of verb morphology across grounding in the number of verbs used.

Table 10. *Distribution of Past Tense Morphology across Grounding Pre- and Post-Study Abroad*

	Pre-study Abroad			Post-study Abroad		
	Background	Foreground	Total	Background	Foreground	Total
Preterite	11	14	25	20	23	43
Imperfect	18	0	18	30	0	30

The results indicate that the Discourse Hypothesis is accurate in predicting that the preterite will appear more often in the foreground. However, although the imperfect is predicted to appear more in the background, one can note the large number of preterite verbs present in this context in the post-study abroad discourse. This discovery provides additional evidence that the preterite tends to be overused by L2 classroom learners.

Effects of short-term study abroad on learners' speaking skills

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that all of the participants benefited from participating in the short-term study abroad program and improved their speaking skills, although some gains were minimal. However, the extent to which learners improved their speaking abilities was different. In particular, Participants 2 and 3 demonstrated an improvement on all the fluency and accuracy measures used in the analysis, while Participants 1 and 4 had more mixed results. In what follows, we analyze each student's case separately.

Participant 2 demonstrated gains on all of the fluency measures. She increased the number of words she used in her story and her total and actual speaking times. Her phonation–time ratio, or the time she spent speaking relative to the whole speech sample increased by almost 10%. Finally, her speech rate went up by 15.3 words per minute, and the length of run improved as well. This means that not only did this participant speak more and for a longer period of time, she also spoke faster and with fewer pauses. Interestingly, her accuracy did not suffer from this fluency improvement. The ratio of errors went down from 11% to 4.3%, meaning she only made 4.3 errors

per 100 words. In addition, Participant 2 improved her use of past tense: Whereas before study abroad she used a past tense verb in 82% of situations when it was needed, she used it 100% of the time in her post-study abroad speech.

Similar to Participant 2, Participant 3 demonstrated gains on all of the measures of fluency that we used. She experienced a word gain of 48 words, the duration of her actual speech increased by 17 seconds, and her phonation–time ratio, or in other words, the time she spent speaking increased by 5.2%. Her speech rate also increased by 17.9 words per minute, and her mean length of runs increased by 0.96 syllable per run. In addition to fluency development, Participant 3 also made notable improvements on accuracy. The ratio of errors she exhibited decreased from 21.6% pre-study abroad to 8% post-study abroad—a change of 13.6%. In terms of past tense morphology production, she produced verbs in the preterite and imperfect with 100% accuracy both pre- and post-study abroad. An analysis of her errors showed that she was able to improve specifically in grammatical elements like prepositions and adjective–noun gender agreement since the accuracy of her past tense verbs stayed the same at a ceiling effect.

Various fluency measures showed contrasting results for Participant 1's speaking skill development. On the one hand, she spoke for a longer period of time and increased the number of words in her speech sample. On the other hand, her speech rate increased by 0.7 words per minute, which suggests no real change in how quickly she talked. As for the mean length of runs and the actual speaking time, these measures showed a substantial decline. Taken together, these results show that although Participant 1 did speak more in her post-study abroad narrative, she also paused more often and for longer periods of time. Interestingly, the analysis of Participant 1's speech accuracy showed a big improvement in the ratio of errors, which declined by 16.8%. While before study abroad she made 21.8 errors per 100 words, after study abroad that number went down to just 5 errors per 100 words. This increase in accuracy may have come at the expense of fluency; she had longer and more frequent pauses to self-monitor her language use more than prior to study abroad. As for the past-tense morphology, Participant 1 exhibited a slight decrease in accuracy, dropping from 100% to 96%. However, she also used more verbs in her post-study abroad narration, which could explain this slight decline.

Participant 4 also had some conflicting results. She exhibited improvements in three of the fluency measures used in the study. She experienced a word gain of 104 words, her speech rate notably increased by 27 words per minute, and the mean length of her runs increased by 1.87 syllables. However, the duration of her actual speech only increased by 2 seconds and the phonation–time ratio decreased slightly by 2.2%. In terms of accuracy, Participant 4 had a slight (0.4%) increase in the ratio of errors, but she was also the student with the lowest ratio of errors in the pre-study abroad samples. At the same time, her past tense morphology showed an improvement: She produced 80% (12 of 15) of the verbs in obligatory past contexts with past tense morphology in her pre-study abroad narrative and 84% (26 of 31) in her post-study abroad sample. Although she only increased 4% in this measure, her post-study abroad narrative revealed almost twice as many verbs in the past tense as in the pre-study abroad narrative, where many of the verbs that were supposed to be in the past tense appeared in the present.

The analysis of learners' oral narration before and after study abroad demonstrated that they all benefited from the experience. Despite some inconsistencies in two participants' results, they all showed a remarkable improvement in their speaking skills, which suggests that even short-term study abroad programs can be beneficial and lead to more accurate and fluent speech production. This analysis has also demonstrated that it is important to use various measures of evaluating fluency and accuracy as it allows for a better understanding of the development of these features of speaking skill.

Pedagogical implications

In our study, we used measurements of accuracy, fluency, and morphosyntactic development to attempt to answer the question of how learner language changes after participating in a short-term study abroad program. In the following section we first suggest a useful framework for teachers and researchers who are interested in identifying and exploring similar questions related to the changes in language produced by their own students. Second, we highlight the ways in which, through students' self-analysis of their own discourse, narratives can be used as a pedagogical tool to foster L2 learning.

Exploratory Practice framework

When carrying out research related to learner language we suggest using the framework of Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2001, 2005; Tarone & Swierzbin, 2009) because it guides teachers step-by-step through the process. Allwright's (2001) framework consists of three parts: (a) contemplation/reflective practice; (b) action for understanding/exploratory practice; and (c) action for change/action research. According to Tarone and Swierzbin (2009), the main goal of Exploratory Practice is to "improve the quality of life in the language classroom for both teachers and learners by expanding their understanding of their learning and teaching processes, and where needed, by acting to improve those processes" (p. 91).

During phase 1, the Contemplation Phase, the teacher identifies a language question or puzzle and thinks about it in relation to what he or she already knows. The teacher's background knowledge used for comparison could be from his or her previous experience as a teacher/language learner or what he or she learned during a course about language acquisition. Because a teacher's previous knowledge and experiences may not be enough to answer the question at hand, more action—in the form of data collection— is needed. For example, we noticed that the students who participated in our short-term study abroad program tended to make notable improvements in terms of speaking ability by the end of their time abroad. However, we wondered how exactly students' speech changed in terms of accuracy or fluency, so we decided we needed more information.

If more information is needed, the teacher or researcher should move into phase 2, the Action for Understanding Phase. During the phase the teacher or researcher collects more information and data about the language phenomenon in a particular context. Tarone and Swierzbin (2009) suggest that data collection for this phase take one of two forms: it can be from either naturally occurring speech samples in the classroom or from speech generated through an activity

that focuses on a particular language form or function. Once data are collected, they can be analyzed using the measures used in the present study or a variety of others, depending on the teacher's/researcher's particular language question. Before carrying out our own study we researched different measures of fluency and accuracy and decided which would be most helpful to us in answering our research questions. We then used narrative activities in a pre-/post-test design, so that we could (a) assess changes in these measures and (b) measure changes in the preterite and imperfect verb forms elicited in Spanish in particular.

In the third stage, Action Research, teachers use the new information to take action and change (or not) their teaching approaches based on what they have discovered from the data. In our case, the students' improvements in fluency, accuracy, and morphosyntactic development confirmed that our program successfully fostered language development for the students from whom we collected data. However, based on the results we obtained and based on students' interest in self-analyzing their own discourse, we believe that discourse-elicitation activities can be used for both research purposes and as teaching tools, a point on which we elaborate in the next section.

Student self-analysis of L2 discourse

Several researchers have argued that teachers and learners should work together to answer questions about the language learning process and improve classroom instruction (e.g., Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Tarone and Swierzbin (2009), for example, advocate for explicitly training learners how to analyze their own discourse, so that when they have a language question or puzzle, they can generate their own data, observe their own language use, and reflect on the particular issue(s) in question. In this way, through analysis and reflection, narratives can be used not only as a way to observe one's language use, but to also learn from it.

In training learners to engage in self-reflection, Wiggins (2012) suggests that learners consider six characteristics:

1. Goal-referenced: Learners need to consider the goal of the activity and to what extent they achieved it.
2. Tangible and transparent: Learners need to find specific examples that support their decision about whether or not they were able to achieve their goal(s).
3. Timely: Learners should engage in self-evaluation as soon as possible after producing written or oral discourse.
4. Ongoing: Learners need time and opportunities to make adjustments to their discourse in light of what they learn from their analysis.
5. Consistency: The more learners are able to engage in self-analysis, the more likely it is to inspire action and change.
6. Progress toward a goal: Learners need to set long-term goals and to reflect on whether or not their current work is helping them reach those goals.

While in our study learners were not involved in the analysis of their L2 speaking ability development, we believe that students can be trained to perform

such analyses on their own and, thus, evaluate their own progress. It is especially useful in larger classes where the teacher cannot possibly perform such analysis for all the students on a regular basis. Instead, learners can record samples of their speech at multiple points in the semester and evaluate it using the various measures used in this study, or others. This will allow them to compare their development with their learning goals and identify the areas in which they could improve. According to Brown and Lee (2015), one of the key elements of successful L2 instruction is teaching students how to facilitate their own learning. Through making students more responsible for their learning outcomes, instructors not only allow them to become autonomous learners, but they also enable them to understand their strengths and weaknesses and become more actively involved in the learning process.

The framework of exploratory practice model discussed above provides a strong roadmap for teachers to consult when carrying out research about language learning questions and puzzles present in their own classrooms. Additionally, training students to analyze their own discourse not only helps students to take responsibility for their own learning, but it also helps them track their progress over a particular time period or toward a language proficiency goal. Finally, through analyzing changes in learner language using the methods discussed above, teachers can measure students' language gains over a semester, a year, or over the course of an entire language program and report them to their administrator.

Conclusion

This study examined Spanish language learners' fluency, accuracy, and morphosyntactic development during a short-term study abroad. The pre- and post-test design allowed us to directly compare two samples of speech on the same topic, one right before study abroad, and one immediately after it. Based on the data of eight speech samples, we found that there was a slight increase on almost all measures of fluency. The analysis also showed improved accuracy and past-tense verb morphology. As a result of study abroad, not only were learners able to more accurately produce past tense morphology in obligatory past-tense contexts, but they were also able to increase their accuracy in terms of the grounding features of the Discourse Hypothesis. These results show that short-term study abroad is beneficial for learners and that it helps promote the development of L2 speakers' oral production. Future research on this topic will benefit from having larger numbers of participants to be able to make general conclusions. In addition, a qualitative component could help explain some inconsistencies we encountered in the data.

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Notes

1. Both authors contributed equally to this work.

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Language Teachers as Models of Bilingual Speech

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Abstract

The present study contributes to the limited body of work that examines teacher code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon and adds to the discussion on the language of instruction in the L2 classroom by exploring the notion of the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech. An analysis of the discourse of three French as a foreign language secondary school teachers revealed that their speech included code-switching, an alternation between the L2 and the L1. Seventy-one percent of their code-switches occurred during form-oriented discourse (overt information about the lexical and grammatical aspects of the language) in which an L2 lexeme was embedded within an otherwise L1 sentence, or an L1 lexeme was embedded within an otherwise L2 sentence. This practice has been found by prior research (Gearon, 1997) neither to provide true L2 input nor facilitate the development of students' communicative competence. The remaining 29% of the teachers' code-switches occurred during meaning-bearing discourse (L2 input that conveys a message and recognized as essential to language acquisition). The code-switches found within the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse parallel the patterns identified in the professional literature on bilingual discourse and provide some support to the notion of the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech. The study calls for future research that examines code-switching during meaning-bearing discourse as a means of enhancing input.

Introduction

In the field of second language (L2) acquisition it is agreed that language learners need L2 input in order to develop proficiency. In the classroom setting

it is generally accepted that the teacher is the most likely source of input. There is, however, a lack of consensus as to whether or not teachers should use the L2 exclusively, with no allowance for the students' first language (L1). Those who hold a virtual position maintain that when teachers revert to the L1 they are depriving their students of essential input and are, in fact, undermining the benefits of teaching in the L2 (Macaro, 2009). Advocates of the maximal position believe that exclusive use of the L2 can be sustained only in perfect teaching/learning conditions, which do not exist in reality (Macaro, 2009). Proponents of the optimal position see the L1 as a tool for enhancing L2 learning and encourage the development of pedagogical principles and guidelines for a justifiable role for the L1 (Macaro, 2009).

Another position being advanced is that of the L2 classroom as a bilingual or multilingual speech community and the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech (Blyth, 1995; Chavez, 2003; Cummins, 2007). Within this paradigm, students are seen as legitimate L2 users (Cook, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003), or developing bilinguals (Levine, 2011), and switching between the L1 and L2 is understood to be a worthy and appropriate behavior (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005). Advocates of this paradigm recognize the need for L2 input, but they see no incongruity between providing input and their vision of the L2 classroom as a bilingual space.

The study described here was undertaken to explore the notion of the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech. The purpose was not to question the need for input or to promote an indiscriminate use of the L1. The researcher analyzed the classroom discourse of three secondary school French as a foreign language teachers in order to discover the ways in which they code-switched between the L2 (French) and the L1 (English). The patterns of their code-switching were examined in light of the functional distribution of their discourse in order to determine the extent to which the patterns parallel those found in non-classroom bilingual discourse and adhere to laws of constraint.

Definition of terms

The simultaneous or early bilingual, as defined by Bullock and Toribio (2009) is an individual whose exposure to two languages began at birth or early childhood and who has ongoing contact with monolingual speakers of both languages. The teachers in the present study cannot be classified as bilinguals in this sense. However, they are bilingual in the sense defined by Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) as "people who possess sufficient skills in a second language to be able to carry out at least part of their social and intellectual activities in that language" (p. 217).

Code-switching has been defined as "the mixing of phonologically distinctive elements into a single utterance" (MacSwan, 2009, p. 309), or more broadly speaking, "the ability on the part of bilinguals to alternate effortlessly between their two languages" (Bullock & Toribio, 2009, p. 1). The practice of code-switching is considered to be a positive communication strategy, not an indication of the bilingual's lack of proficiency in either or any of the languages spoken. Zentella (1997) refers to code-switching as "a conversational activity via which speakers negotiate meaning with each other" (p. 113). Given the importance of negotiation

of meaning in the development of language proficiency, Zentella's definition is especially applicable to the practice of code-switching in L2 classrooms.

Definitions of several linguistic terms will facilitate the reading of the present study. A morpheme is "any of the minimal grammatical units of a language, each constituting a word or meaningful part of a word that cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts, such as *the, write,* or the *-ed* of *waited*" (morpheme, 2010). A bound morpheme is one that "occurs only as part of a larger construction" (bound morpheme, 2008), such as the *–ed* of *waited*. Adding a bound morpheme from one language to a morpheme from the other language is a contravention of Poplack's (1980) free morpheme constraint, which states, "codes may be switched after any constituent in discourse provided that the constituent is not a bound morpheme" (p. 585). Examples of violations of the free morpheme constraint would be adding the English suffix *–ed* to the French word *vend* (sell) resulting in the ill-formed word *vended* (sold) or adding the Spanish bound morpheme *-iendo* (-ing) to the English morpheme *eat* to form the unacceptable word *eatiendo* (eating) (Poplack, 1980). The equivalence of structure constraint is also pertinent to the present study:

> Code-switches will tend to occur at points in discourse where juxtaposition of L1 and L2 elements does not violate a syntactic rule of either language, i.e. at points around which the surface structures of the two languages map onto each other. According to this simple constraint, a switch is inhibited from occurring within a constituent generated by a rule from one language which is not shared by the other" (Poplack, 1980, p. 586).

Poplack (1980) illustrates the equivalence of structure constraint with the sentence "El MAN que CAME ayer WANTS JOHN comprar A CAR nuevo (the man who came yesterday wants John to buy a new car)" (p. 587). The violations occur where the infinitive form of the verb *comprar* is correct in English grammar, but not in Spanish, where the subjunctive *compre* would be appropriate, and the position of the adjective *nuevo* where its position in the sentence is not common to both languages.

Review of the literature

The purposes of prior research conducted on the L2 teacher's language of instruction were to: (1) determine an L2/L1 ratio (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Duff & Polio, 1990; Leeman Guthrie, 1987; Macaro, 2001; Turnbull, 1999; Wing, 1987), (2) examine teachers' beliefs about L1 use in L2 instruction (Allen, 2012; Bateman, 2008; Kim & Elder, 2008; Levine, 2003; Zéphir & Chirol, 1993); and (3) identify the purposes or functions for which L2 teachers use the L1, such as explaining grammar, building rapport with students, managing discipline, giving complex directions, and saving time (Crawford, 2004; Macaro, 2001; Polio & Duff, 1994; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie, 2002).

A few studies examined the code-switching purposes of L2 students and found them to parallel those that occur in bilingual social settings, such as filling a lexical gap, setting off an aside, providing contextual cues, summarizing a narrative, shifting topics, attracting attention, demarcating quotations, and organizing turn-

taking (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005). However, only two studies examined L2 teachers' code-switching and categorized the code-switches based on frameworks from the field of linguistics.

In the first of the studies, Gearon (1997) analyzed the discourse of six teachers of French as a foreign language in secondary schools in Australia in order to determine the position of the code-switches (inter-sentential, occurring between sentences, or intra-sentential, occurring within a sentence), the purposes of the code-switches, the potential contribution of code-switching on the development of students' communicative competence, and the adherence of the code-switches to laws of constraint, specifically the free morpheme and the equivalence of structure constraints (Poplack, 1980). The results revealed intra-sentential code-switches in which French lexemes, (minimal lexical units, such as words or idiomatic expressions) (lexeme, 2010) pronounced phonetically in French, were embedded within English phrases for the purposes of stressing numbers, presenting vocabulary, checking students' comprehension of lexical items, and pointing out grammar rule, as illustrated in Example 1.

Example 1

So now if you open à la page *cinquante-sept* and listen to the song…
So now if you open to page fifty seven and listen to the song… (Gearon 1997, p. 469)

Gearon (1997) concluded that this pattern of code-switching is a teaching strategy, not a communication strategy, and does not contribute to the development of communicative competence because such instances do not supply true L2 input. Nor do they allow students to make hypotheses about the language, create a need to communicate, or make a close connection between the spoken word and the content taught in the L2, requisites for optimal conditions for classroom acquisition (Clyne, Jenkins, Chen, Tsokalidou, & Wallner, 1995).

Gearon (1997) found instances of code-switching that violated the free morpheme constraint (Poplack, 1980). Code-switching an L1 bound morpheme –*'s* to the L2 morpheme *l'éclair* is not supported.

Example 2

… in fact for this one I'll put *un* because *l'éclair* —'s not going to make much good to me either (Gearon, 1997, p. 470). Gearon does not provide the context for this sentence. *L'éclair* could be lightning or a pastry.

Gearon (1997) also found violations of the equivalence of structure constraint. In Example 3 below, the expectation is that the infinitive *ouvrir* (to open) would be used instead of the imperative *ouvrez* (open) because infinitives are used after modal verbs (*pouvoir*/can).

Example 3

… you can all *ouvrez* vos livres à la page à la page soixante-et-un et *ouvrez* vos feuilles à la page quarante-deux… (Gearon, 1997, p. 471). You can all open your books to page to page 61 and open your papers to page 42.

Jingxia (2010) conducted the second study that examined code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon in an L2 classroom setting. The interest of the study was in both the code-switching beliefs and the practices of Chinese university instructors of English as a foreign language (EFL). Data were collected by means of a questionnaire and eight audio-recorded 50-minute classes, each taught by a different instructor. Results of the questionnaire found that 80% of the teachers believe code-switching is beneficial, and 85% are sometimes or occasionally aware of when they switch from the L2 (English) to the L1 (Chinese).

An analysis of the transcriptions of the recorded classes determined that the eight instructors code-switched between 21 and 55 times within one 50-minute class period. The functional uses of their code-switches support prior research on the purposes or functions for which teachers use the L1, to: translate unknown vocabulary, explain grammar, manage the class, emphasize certain points, express empathy or solidarity, and facilitate understanding.

Jingxia (2010) categorized the Chinese instructors' code-switches using Poplack's (1980) tripartite typological framework and found all three of the patterns identified by Poplack, inter-sentential, intra-sentential and tag, or "the insertion of a formulaic expression from language B (e.g., so, well, *d'accord*?) into an utterance in language A, primarily for pragmatic effect" (Bullock & Toribio, 2009, p. 4). Unlike Gearon (1997), Jingxia found that the major pattern was inter-sentential switches (with an average of 18.1 times in all eight classes combined), followed by intra-sentential (12.4 average) and then tag code-switches (5.9 average). Jingxia concluded that other patterns of code-switching, in addition to the three explored in the study, may be found in foreign language classrooms.

Methodology of the present study

The study followed a non-participant observation methodological approach that "entails the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for the study" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79). The interest was in identifying the extent to which the code-switches in the teacher participants' discourse paralleled the patterns identified in the professional literature on bilingual speech and to determine if their code-switches adhered to laws of constraint, as defined by Poplack (1980). The study went beyond prior research on L2 teacher code-switching in two important ways. First, whereas Gearon (1997) analyzed the code-switches in the teachers' form-oriented discourse only, the present study analyzed both form-oriented and meaning-bearing discourse. Secondly, the present study hypothesized that the patterns and purposes of the code-switches are contingent upon the functional distribution of the teachers' discourse.

Participants

Three secondary school teachers of French as a foreign language in the United States participated in the study. They did not know that the focus of the study was on code-switching. They were told that the researcher was interested in best practices. The teachers, Valerie, Terri and Anne (pseudonyms) were white female citizens

of the United States and native speakers of English. Their teaching experiences ranged from 27 to 16 to 3 years, respectively. All had had limited experiences in a French-speaking country. Their students were white, native speakers of English, with the exception of one student in Terri's class, who was a recent immigrant from Bosnia.

Procedures

The data were collected through non-participant observations (Marshall & Rossman, 1989) of 27 classes for a combined total of approximately 25 hours. A summary of the number of observations, the level of the students, and the time involved is provided in Table 1. The observations took place with the same three groups of students throughout the collection period: Terri's and Anne's second year French classes, and Valerie's fourth year class. The teachers wore a wireless microphone during the observations so that their discourse could be audio-recorded. In addition to the observations, periodic interviews were conducted throughout the data collection time frame. Data from the interviews not included.

Table 1. *Description of Observations*

	Valerie	Terri	Anne	Totals
Class level observed	4th year	2nd year	2nd year	
Number of classes observed	7	9	11	27
Total minutes observed	361	585	570	1516

Data Analysis

The data analyses occurred in several stages. First, I transcribed the audio-tapes from the 1516 minutes of classroom observations, which yielded 213 pages of data. Next, using functions in Microsoft Word, I counted the number of words in each language and then determined a ratio of L2 to L1 for each teacher in order to gain an overall perspective of their language use. The ensuing stages were guided by a structural approach to the study of code-switching (Bullock & Toribio, 2009) and by procedures for content analysis (Berg, 2009).

A structural approach to the study of code-switching is concerned with morphological and syntactic patterns and grammatical aspects of code-switches *within* sentences (MacSwan, 2012). Therefore, I decided to examine only intra-sentential code-switches. Two other factors influenced this decision. First, Gearon (1997) analyzed only the intra-sentential code-switches found in the teachers' discourse. Following her lead would facilitate comparisons between the results in Gearon and the present study. Secondly, Bullock and Toribio (2009) assert that "inter-sentential switching requires an advanced level of bilingual proficiency" (p. 3); the teachers in the study were not advanced bilinguals.

The procedures taken in the content analysis (Berg, 2009) included identifying the intra-sentential code-switches through repeated readings of the full transcripts and classifying each instance as occurring in form-oriented (overt information about the language itself, including both grammar and vocabulary) or meaning-

bearing (conveying a message) discourse. I tallied the number of code-switches in both types of discourses and determined a percentage for each function. The code-switches found in the teachers' form-oriented discourse were not subjected to further analysis. Through iterative sorting, I categorized the code-switches found in the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse based on patterns and examples from the professional literature on bilingual discourse (Backus & Dorleijn, 2009; Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Cantone, 2007).

Results

Ratio of French (L2) in the teachers' discourse

The purpose of presenting the findings in Table 2 is to provide a snapshot of the teachers' overall language use. The table illustrates that all three teachers' L2 use was, on average, below the 90% recommended by ACTFL (2010), although Valerie did exceed the goal on at least one day. The percentages demonstrate that both languages – French (L2) and English (L1) – were present in each teacher's instructional discourse.

Table 2. *Range and Average of Total Number of Words (L1 and L2) and Ratio of L2 Words Per Class Observed*

	Valerie		Terri		Anne	
	Total words	L2%	Total words	L2%	Total words	L2%
Range	3,767 - 1,161	96% - 37%	5,088 – 3,885	86% - 34%	3,782 - 656	32% - 9%
Average	2,530	82%	4,471	61%	2,282	26%

Code-switches in form-oriented discourse

The content analysis resulted in 564 sentences that contained a code-switch between French (L2) and English (L1). The total code-switches occurring in form-oriented instruction was 403 (214 in grammar instruction, 189 in vocabulary). This represents 71% of the total number of code-switches. Example 4 illustrates code-switching during a grammar lesson. Terri is distinguishing between the two possible auxiliary verbs in the past tense.

Example 4

You've got to be real careful with your pronunciation. Because *on a arrivé* is *avoir*. On *est arrivé* is être. You have to be very precise when you say those. Because it's going to be wrong if you say *on a arriv*é (Terri, observation 2).

In code-switches during vocabulary instruction, it was typical for the teacher to ask either for a translation, as in Example 5 below, or provide the translation herself, as in Example 6. The former requests typically began with "how do you say, what is, or do you know"; the latter usually consisted of the targeted word followed by "is, means, or *en anglais*" (in English).

Example 5

What is a *coeur*? (Terri, observation 1)

Example 6

A hunchback *en anglais c'est un bossu*. (Valerie, observation 3)

Code-switches in meaning-bearing discourse

Of the 564 sentences identified in the data analysis as containing a code-switch, 161 instances (29%) occurred in meaning-bearing discourse. As illustrated in Example 7, the focus of meaning-bearing discourse is on conveying a message, not on explaining language form.

Example 7

On va commencer avec le livre, où vous avez lu les pages de reading comprehension *et après avoir fait ça, on va commencer avec l'imparfait.* (Valerie, observation 1). We'll begin with the book, where you read the reading comprehension pages and after that, we'll begin with the imperfect.

In this study the teachers were observed engaging in meaning-bearing discourse when: speaking to students during a warm-up period, establishing a background before beginning an interpretive text, discussing an interpretive text after having read it, giving directions for activities, and assigning homework.

Categorization of code-switches in meaning-bearing discourse

The 161 code-switches observed in the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse (L2 input that conveys a message) were grouped as either "insertions" or "alternations", the two classes of code-switches most commonly found in the professional literature on bilingual discourse (Muysken, 2000). The analysis yielded 86 instances of insertions and 75 of alternations. Insertion "involves the embedding of a constituent – usually a word or a phrase – in a nested A – B – A structure" (Bullock & Toribio, 2009, p. 3), where A and B refer to languages. Example 8 below is an illustration of insertion from the literature.

Example 8

This morning *mi hermano y yo fuimos a comprar* some milk.
This morning my brother and I went to buy some milk. (MacSwan, 2012, p. 323)

The 86 sentences identified as containing an insertion were further grouped based on shared characteristics or on subcategories of insertion from the literature. These categories, along with examples and frequency counts, are illustrated in Table 3. Code-switches that exemplify classical insertions, as defined by Bullock and Toribio (2009) were grouped in category 8a. Sentences in categories 8b through 8e are insertions, but the code-switches in each category have distinguishing characteristics or purposes, such providing a translation (8b) or eliciting a response (8c). Two asides (8d) and one lexical change (8e), both subcategories of insertions,

Table 3. *Insertions in Meaning-Bearing Discourse*

Category	Shared characteristics and examples of categories	Number of insertions per category			
		Valerie	Terri	Anne	Totals
8a	Classical insertion of L1 word(s) within an otherwise L2 sentence (or vice-versa). C'est une bonne idée de faire *les flash cards* avec une photo d'un côté et le mot de l'autre côté. [A2]	32	15	14	61
8b	L1 translation immediately inserted after the L2 word(s) (or vice-versa). Et tout d'un coup, *all of a sudden*, je me suis rendu compte. [T3]	7	10	3	20
8c	L1 word inserted as a means of eliciting a response from a student. Et… um… Lise, c'était *blank* de François Premier. [T1]	0	2	0	2
8d	L1 inserted as an aside. Trouvez quelqu'un qui s'est, *the next one is written rather poorly*, qui s'est levé tôt. (T5)	1	1	0	2
8e	L1 word inserted is a lexical change. Pas comme *un businessman* aujourd'hui. [T9]	0	1	0	1
Totals		40	29	17	86

were found during the grouping process. Asides occur when speakers "mark off 'parenthetic' parts of their utterances by a change of voice—in English often to a lower pitch" (Gardner-Chloros, Charles, & Cheshire, 2000, p. 1317). A lexical change occurs when "the use of words or morphemes, or morpheme combinations, from the lending language, becomes entrenched as conventional usage and/or combinations in the receiving language lexicon" (Backus & Dorleijn, 2009, p. 77). That is to say, "businessman" in 8e, is accepted in the L2 vernacular.

The second most common type of code-switching is alternation "in which the two languages present in the clause remain relatively separate. It can be represented as in A – B" (Muysken, 2000, p. 96), where A and B are languages. As illustrated

in Example 9 below, alternation typically appears at the periphery of an utterance.

Example 9

Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish *y termino en español* [sic] Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish and finish in Spanish. (Poplack, 1980)

The data analysis in the present study yielded 75 instances of alternations in the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse. They were grouped into four categories based on shared distinctive characteristics. Examples and frequency counts are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. *Alternations in Meaning-Bearing Discourse*

Category	Shared characteristics and examples of categories	Number of alternations per category			
		Valerie	Terri	Anne	Totals
9a	Classical alternation in which the sentence begins in one of the languages and ends in the other language. Oui, je crois que ce sont pour les serviettes, *like napkin rings, or holders, maybe.* (A1)	15	27	10	52
9b	The alternation is a translation of the first part of the sentence. So my friend became a star, *devenu un star.* (T3)	7	6	4	17
9c	The alternation is a discourse marker. *Okay now* il faut lire un peu en avance, n'est-ce pas? (V5)	3	1	1	5
9d	The alternation is a nonce loan. So he was *imparfaiting*. (V5)	1	0	0	1
Totals		26	34	15	75

The code-switch in sentence 9b is similar to that in 8b in that both code-switches are translations of L2 words appearing in the sentence. The difference is the position that the code-switches occupy in the sentence. The alternation in 9c represents a discourse marker, defined as a "non-propositional linguistic items whose primary function is connective and whose scope is variable" (Hansen, 1998, p. 73). Valerie's tongue-in-cheek novel invention of the word "imparfaiting", in 9d, is an example of a nonce loan. The definition of nonce loan is "elements borrowed on the spur of the moment" (Muysken, 1995, p. 190) that are "restricted to a single speaker in a specific context, and not recognizable by monolingual speakers" (van Dulm, 2007, p. 10).

Violations to the laws of constraints on code-switching

In the descriptive literature on code-switching the notion of *constraint* refers to the phenomenon that "some code-switched constructions are well-formed and others are ill-formed" (MacSwan, 2012, p. 325). In a study that explores the notion of the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech, it is essential to include an analysis of contraventions of these constraints that may have occurred in the teachers' discourse. L2 learners build implicit linguistic systems based on the L2 input to which they are exposed (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). Input that includes ill-formed code-switches is likely to influence the learners' emerging system negatively, in the same manner as input that contains grammatical errors. If teachers are to model bilingual speech they must model well-formed code-switches just as they must model structurally correct language.

In the present study, violations to both the free morpheme and the equivalence of structure constraints were found in the data. Example 9d in Table 4, Valerie's invention of the word *imparfaiting*, was classified as a nonce loan. It could also be considered a violation of the free morpheme constraint, in that the word is a combination of the French *imparfait* and the English bound morpheme *-'ing*. However, according to Poplack (1987), it is possible to circumvent the free-morpheme constraint through the mechanism of a nonce loan.

Another example of a contradiction of the free morpheme constraint is found in Example 10, where the English bound morpheme *-'s* was attached to the French morpheme *vouloir*.

Example 10

> Yeah, *vouloir's* one of those strange verbs that if you use it in *passé composé* [simple past tense], it means that you tried to do that, rather than you just wanted to at a particular moment. (Valerie, observation 5)

Even though the grammatical structure of *vouloir's* models the English contraction of *is* and not an instance of possessive *-'s*, I contend that it is unlikely L2 learners will make the distinction. A code-switch involving the English *-'s* in L2 input, regardless as to whether it is a contraction or a possessive, may be encoded in the learners' developing system as possessive. This contention is conjecture based on several decades of teaching experience. At this point, there simply is no empirical evidence on the impact of code-switching and contradictions of constraints of code-switching on learners' emerging implicit linguistic system.

Example 11 is a violation of the equivalence of structure constraint. Including a definite article before a noun is a syntactic rule in French, but not in English. Whereas in French the definite article *le* is required here, in English including the word *the* is not appropriate in this context.

Example 11

> *Mais il faut savoir que j'avais quatre ans, n'est-ce pas, en entrant dans* le kindergarten *pour comprendre ça.* But you must know that I was four years old, right, going into kindergarten. (Valerie, observation 2)

Other occurrences of violations to the equivalence of structure constraint in the teachers' discourse, although not numerous, were similar to that in Example 11, where a definite or indefinite article in French preceded an English word that did not require an article. Including the French morpheme *le* (or other structurally similar words) may exacerbate or facilitate L2 learners' acquisition of grammatical gender and noun/article agreement in French. It is beyond the scope of the present study to draw a conclusion regarding the impact of adherence or contradiction of constraints on code-switching.

Discussion

Form-oriented discourse

The code-switches in the teachers' form-oriented discourse, as illustrated in Examples 4, 5, and 6 above, were easily expressed because of congruent lexicalization (Muysken, 2000, p. 3). This pattern refers to "a situation where the two languages share a grammatical structure which can be filled lexically with elements from either language [and] are inserted more or less randomly" (Muysken, 2000, p. 6-8). Because the basic sentence structure in both French and English follows a subject-verb-object pattern, nouns can be exchanged between the languages in a straightforward fashion. Thus, the French/English language code-switching observed in the teachers' form-oriented discourse may have served as a teaching technique used to simplify the delivery of overt information about the L2.

However, in the literature on communicative language teaching, form-oriented instruction that consists of explanations about the structure and lexicon of the language is not recognized as a source of meaningful L2 input (Lee & VanPatten, 2013; Wong, 2005). The code-switches illustrated in the form-oriented discourse in the present study, in addition to the less than 90% plus recommended L2 use (ACTFL, 2010), as noted in Table 2, may facilitate students' understanding of how the language works. But code-switches cannot enhance the amount and quality of L2 input in the absence of discourse that provides meaningful L2 input. Form-oriented discourse, such as that observed in the present study, with or without the inclusion of code-switches, does not facilitate the learners' development of communicative competence because it is not a source of L2 input and does not provide the requisites for classroom L2 acquisition, as detailed in Clyne et al. (1995).

Meaning-bearing discourse

Whereas prior research (Gearon, 1997) noted the absence of long segments of L2 input in the classrooms observed, in the present study there were periods of time during which all three teachers engaged in extended L2 meaning-bearing discourse. As mentioned in the results section above, this discourse occurred when the teachers talked informally with the students during the first few minutes of class time, established background knowledge prior to reading or listening activities, discussed reading passages, gave directions for interpersonal communication activities, and assigned homework. During these periods, the teachers' discourse included code-switches that parallel the patterns of those identified in the literature

on non-classroom bilingual speech (Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005; MacSwan, 2009). The teachers used code-switches that have been characterized as worthy and appropriate bilingual behavior (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005): classical insertions, asides, lexical changes, classical alternations, discourse markers, and nonce loans. The teachers' meaning-bearing discourse also included common contraventions to code-switching principles – the free morpheme constraint and the equivalence of structure constraint.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of the present study was to explore the notion of the L2 teacher as a model of bilingual speech. Towards that end, the code-switches found in the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse were compared to examples of code-switches identified in the professional literature on bilingual discourse (Backus & Dorleijn, 2009; Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Cantone, 2007). From a structural approach, one that examines the morphological and syntactic patterns and grammatical aspects of code-switches within sentences (MacSwan, 2012), the teachers did model bilingual speech. Whereas an examination of the cognitive mechanisms that underlie the teachers' code-switching practices (a psycholinguistic approach) and an investigation of the social factors (power, prestige, etc.) that impact their code-switching (a sociolinguistic approach) would provide a fuller account of the teachers' code-switching practices, they are beyond the scope of the present study. The methodologies of the three approaches are incompatible and psycholinguistic studies are typically conducted in laboratory settings (Bullock & Toribio, 2009).

A second purpose of the study was to examine the hypothesis that the patterns and purposes of the code-switches are contingent upon the functional distribution of the teachers' discourse. The preceding discussion on the code-switches found in form-oriented discourse vis-à-vis those found in meaning-bearing discourse provide support for the hypothesis. The patterns in form-oriented discourse were dependent upon congruent lexicalization and the code-switches served as a teaching technique rather than a communication strategy. Those in the teachers' meaning-bearing discourse modeled bilingual behavior that occurs in authentic contexts between or among individuals who share two languages.

Although the presence or absence of the conditions needed for the development of learners' linguistic system and language proficiency is observable, the impact of code-switching on L2 learners' development remains to be seen. Only empirical, quantitative studies in which the many variables in classroom L2 teaching and learning are controlled can determine the actual benefits or detriments of teacher code-switching.

Beyond adding to the limited body of work that examines teacher code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon, the present study contributes to the larger discussion on the language of instruction. Had the teachers taken an approach in which their instruction on form was embedded within contextualized, meaningful input, they would have used a greater percentage of L2, and the results of the study may have been different. A larger number of code-switches that parallel those found in bilingual discourse may have been found. The conclusion, however,

would have been the same. Teachers can be models of bilingual speech only when their discourse is embedded in meaningful L2 input.

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Promoting Performance Through Arts Integration in the Elementary Chinese Classroom

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Abstract

Elementary school students learn well by using their imagination and respond best to concrete experiences. Arts-related activities such as drama, music, movement, and storytelling can effectively engage students in their own learning process and help them understand the content (Gullatt, 2008; Reif & Grant, 2010; Žemberová, 2014). This article provides an overview of learning characteristics of children, common forms of art used in the classroom, and how art can be used to contribute to children's learning, especially to foreign language performance. The authors frame students' learning outcomes to the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* (ACTFL, 2015), and describe several arts-integrated activities that can be replicated by readers.

Introduction

Pablo Picasso once said, "every child is an artist." In the context of foreign language learning in primary schools, the arts can serve as invaluable tools for young learners to express themselves. According to Hartle, Pinciotti, and Gorton (2015), "Using the arts as multiple modes of meaning-making expands children's potential for creative engagement and diverse ways of thinking, feeling, knowing, interacting, and communicating about themselves, others and their world" (p. 294). As language teachers, we should create arts-related activities to ignite children's imaginations to explore, connect, and ultimately to improve their language ability to better communicate.

Integrating the arts and art-making into foreign language classroom is an effective approach to teaching and learning for several reasons. It helps students construct the meaning of their own learning instead of being passive receivers of knowledge (Crawford, 2004; Hartle et al., 2015). It motivates students to use higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, problem solving, and critical thinking, and to perform tasks in real-world situations (Newmann, 2000; Silverstein & Layne, 2010). It respects students' background knowledge and different learning styles by allowing them multiple avenues to demonstrate what they have learned (Žemberová, 2014).

In addition, arts integration has been proven effective in engaging students in language learning in the lead author's own classroom. The lead author (henceforth, I) came to teach in the United States through the Teaching Chinese in Arkansas program in 2012 and was assigned to an urban elementary school in Little Rock. With a test-oriented education background myself in China and some teaching experience with adult learners in intensive language programs, I was accustomed to mechanical language drill and rote learning as a way to teach the target language. However, this approach did not work for my American elementary students. After devoting most of my planning time to making PowerPoint presentations to help students grasp grammar points but still observing few positive results from students, I started looking for new ways to teach by seeking help from my mentor. She then introduced me to some arts-related projects that I could do in my classroom, which are demonstrated in more detail later in this paper. After I tried these artistic activities, students showed more interest in learning Chinese language and culture and were more engaged in using the target language.

In this article, the authors propose that the arts can afford exciting and effective ways for students to demonstrate their learning through various arts-related performances in a Chinese elementary classroom. The lead author introduced several meaningful tasks in her classroom in three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational). The *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* (ACTFL, 2015) were used to assess students' performance across the three modes of communication.

Literature review

Arts integration

There are many definitions of arts integration among different researchers. Rabkin and Redmond (2006) describe arts integration as "an instructional strategy that brings the arts into the core of the school day and connects the arts across the curriculum" (p. 26). Silverstein and Layne (2010), arts integration specialists from the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, delineate arts integration as "an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both. LaJevic (2013) explores arts integration as "a dynamic process of merging art with (an)other discipline(s) in an attempt to open up a space of inclusiveness in teaching, learning, and experiencing" (p. 2). Hardiman et al. (2014) contend arts integration is "the pedagogical practice

of “teaching through the arts” (p. 144). Chapman (2015) combines arts integration with language immersion, and refers to it as “the process of using the arts as the purposeful medium through which enhanced learning occurs across disciplines to inform mutual understandings” (p. 93). Based upon previous research and the lead author’s own classroom applications, in this article, arts integration is defined as using art as a vehicle to support foreign language teaching and learning.

Learning benefits of arts integration

Many arts-integrated programs have shown academic gains of students across the curriculum as measured on standardized tests. A study of the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) discovers that student achievement, especially at the elementary school level, was significantly higher on standardized tests in a comparison between CAPE and non-CAPE schools (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999). During their study on the effects of arts integration on long-term retention of academic content, Hardiman et al. (2014) deduce that “students retained what they learned significantly better when taught through arts integration instruction. Arts integration naturally leads students to interact with academic content in ways that promote long-term retention” (p. 147). An abundance of other research has also identified the benefits of integrating art into the curriculum more specifically, such as providing inclusive and equitable learning opportunities to foster deeper ways of knowing (Chapman, 2015), promoting cognitive and intellectual development in children (Baker, 2013), offering students alternatives to traditional lecture, note-taking, worksheets, and assessment (Reif & Grant, 2010), helping them gain a positive attitude to learning, understanding others, and expressing their own thoughts (Arts Education Partnership, 2013). Arts integration has also been shown to benefit academically struggling students and culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Catterall et al., 2012; Hardiman et al., 2014; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Reif & Grant, 2010).

In addition to the general benefits of arts integration into instruction, arts integration into foreign language classroom has its own advantages. Arts integration can greatly serve the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The “5 Cs” goals of foreign language education (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) stress the importance of applying language in real world situations and 21st century skills, such as investigating, explaining, reflecting, critical thinking, problem solving, interacting and collaborating. Arts, by their nature, can engage students in learning through these processes. Silverstein and Layne (2010) state the arts “offer learners various ways to acquire information and multiple modes of representation, expression, and engagement” (p. 4). Hartle et al. (2014) suggest that “arts afford ways to organize, communicate and understand information, and most critically provide humans with what is needed in order to learn and thrive in a changing, global world” (p. 290). The New York State Education Department (2010) describes that “through the arts, young people have opportunities to develop their voices; enhance multicultural awareness; take pride in heritage; and recognize their role in, respond

to, and participate in the world at large" (p. 5). According to the research mentioned above, arts can provide a variety of contexts to engage students in using language in real life and practicing critical skills needed for the global world.

Shrum and Gilsan (2015) point out that the degree of success in learning another language is influenced by affective factors, such as motivation and anxiety. Krashen's (1982) hypotheses on second language acquisition also emphasize the importance of comprehensible input and a low-anxiety environment in order for second language acquisition to occur. Arts-related activities, such as drawing, painting, music, movement, and storytelling, are great ways to provide interesting and relevant input to engage language learners, and allow them to communicate verbally and nonverbally to lower their anxiety of speaking another language. Žemberová (2014) describes this advantage of using art in the foreign language classroom: "It can be conveyed and dealt with in a non-verbal way, which is especially suitable in situations when the learners can understand more than they can produce themselves or when the progress in the language development is hindered by a fear of making mistakes" (p. 243).

Characteristics of elementary school learners

Students' natural desire for knowledge changes at different stages of their development. Children make sense of the world differently from other age groups; teachers must be aware of this difference and organize knowledge in ways that can be best accessed by the age group they teach. Appropriate support should be provided to them as they progress toward intellectual and emotional maturity.

The learning characteristics of elementary students include making sense of the world by responding in terms of emotional categories (Egan, 1979), using their imagination, and enjoying discovery and exploration (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1995). Possessing short attention spans (Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010), elementary children also need critical cognitive development (Baker, 2013) to reach their full potential.

Characteristics that elementary students possess lend a clear rationale for arts integration into their learning. For example, stories of fantasy and dramatic play (drama and storytelling) can stimulate their imagination and emotions. Large-muscle activity (movements), such as jumping and throwing or catching a ball, can be beneficial for their short attention span. Concrete hands-on experience, such as drawing and tangram puzzles (visuals), can also help them stay engaged. Music and rhythmic activities increase their verbal memory to develop their cognitive capacity; thus, teachers need to offer them a variety of learning experiences that incorporate music and self-expression.

Common forms of art used in the classroom

The arts provide an outlet for expression, a visible display of internal creativity and thinking process. Barton (2015) suggests that arts assist "the communication of ideas and feelings through multiple symbolic forms" (p. 3). The arts encompass many different forms, such as visual arts, music, drama, movement, dance, and media arts (Chapman, 2015; Gullatt, 2008; Hartle et al., 2014; Reif & Grant, 2010; Silverstein & Layne, 2010). However, in this article, the focus is the commonly used

forms of art in classrooms, especially the ones that have been practiced in the lead author's classroom, which include visual arts, drama, music, and movement.

Classroom applications

The following classroom applications took place in an urban elementary school in Little Rock. In this school, K-5 students had opportunities to take Chinese as an enrichment class. Within 3rd-5th grade, some of the classes are talented and gifted classes, while others are traditional classes. However, they are all new learners of Chinese at the beginning stage of their language development. Therefore, it is very important to provide these students with comprehensible input through visuals, gestures, models, and so on. In addition, repetitions and scaffolding are much needed in order to help these beginning students become familiar with the new sounds, symbols, and to be able to produce language later on their own.

Visual arts

According to Medina's *Brain Rules* (2008), vision trumps all other senses. Visual images can be used by teachers as aids to make content more comprehensible, and they can also be used by students to demonstrate their knowledge in a nonlinguistic way. For beginning language learners, visual arts such as drawing and painting are ideal vehicles to encourage students to express themselves in ways that do not rely heavily on language (Reif & Grant, 2010). Gullatt (2008) points out that the language of visual arts includes elements such as line, texture, shape, space, and color. Visual stimulation is one more way to enhance the thinking and creative learning process of students (Gee, 2000).

Interpretive visual arts task. The interpretive mode of communication is one-way communication, which includes listening, reading, and viewing skills. Activities such as listening to directions, reading stories and viewing movies are all examples of interpretive communication. Arts integration in the interpretive mode indicates that students interpret linguistic input to create visual arts. The following example illustrates how the classroom teacher integrated listening skills with a drawing task.

When learning body parts, students were given instructions in Chinese to create a monster that has "two heads, three eyes, two noses, one mouth, and five ears." In order to complete this task, students had to recognize numbers and body parts that had already been taught to create a visual representation of the teacher's verbal directions. In addition, students were allowed to use their imagination to draw and color their monsters differently later.

Presentational visual arts tasks. Presentational communication is also one-way communication intended for an audience of readers, listeners, or viewers. The following examples illustrate how presentational communication is practiced with visual arts. The first task demonstrates how the classroom teacher integrated listening and speaking skills with color mixing in visual arts.

When learning colors in Chinese, the teacher demonstrated to students how to mix primary colors to get secondary colors. The teachers prepared three clear drinking glasses with water in them before the class. Then she dropped red, blue,

and yellow food coloring to them respectively. After each glass of color and water was mixed, the teacher introduced the Chinese word for that color to students. Students were guided to pronounce red, blue, and yellow in Chinese when looking at these three different colors in the glasses. Then the teacher asked students how to get secondary colors, such as orange, purple and green, by mixing these primary colors to activate their previous knowledge. Next the teacher poured a little red liquid into the yellow glass, orange appeared and so on. After all the colors and the vocabulary were introduced, students were given opportunities to make a piece of visual artwork by using food coloring and shaving cream. First, each student was given a paper plate with some shaving cream on it. Students then dropped different food coloring on their shaving cream. Toothpicks were used to mix the colors they had on their shaving cream. After that, students pressed down a piece of white drawing paper on their colored shaving cream. Lastly, students lifted up the paper and had a piece of artwork they created themselves (see Figure 1). Finally, students shared the colors they created in their artwork in Chinese with each other or the whole group using the sentence frames that were provided by the teacher on the board, for example, "wǒ xǐ huan (I like…), wǒ yǒu… (I have…) and wǒ kàn dào le… (I see…)".

It is also worth mentioning that it is very important for the teacher to model the process of mixing colors to students in this activity. If overmixed, all the different colors will turn into one color. In order to have a piece of art that still has distinctive colors, students should use the toothpick to mix colors from different directions and stop mixing when they are satisfied. It is helpful to have an overmixed work and a non-overmixed work ready to show students the difference before they mix colors. Also, all students' work should be displayed (see Figure 2), not just exemplary works. When students see their work on the wall, it encourages them to take pride in their effort and boosts their confidence in creating more artwork in the future.

Figure 1. Sample work of mixing colors by a 4th grader.

Figure 2. Display of all students' work of mixing colors.

Another example of visual arts in the presentational mode is creating a haunted house. Students learned typical symbols that are often used for decorations during Halloween, such as spiders, bats, ghosts, pumpkins, vampires, and so forth. After students familiarized themselves with these words in Chinese, they were given opportunities to create a haunted house by using a template and decorating it using at least five Halloween symbols and five different colors that were previously learned. In addition, they had to attach a list of the Halloween symbols and colors they used in their haunted house in both Chinese pinyin (phonetic spelling) and characters. A completed project is displayed in Figure 3. Detailed steps for making this project are included in Appendix A.

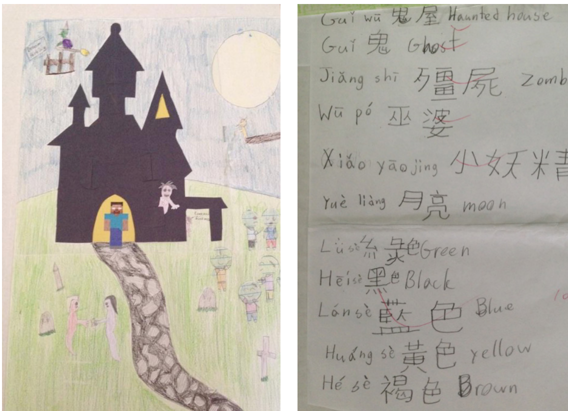

Figure 3. Haunted house created by a 5th grader.

After completing all the steps, students' work was graded using a rubric created by the teacher (Appendix B). In order to acknowledge students' effort into this project, the teacher added "personal pride" as one of the criteria, in consideration of the fact that when creating artwork, sometimes things do not come out the way students may want, even after they spend a large amount of time and effort.

At the end of this project, students shared with the class what they had included on their haunted house as an oral presentation in Chinese. For more advanced level language learners, students can create a poem or a story in the target language to accompany their haunted house as an extended activity.

Drama and movement

Drama is arts in action. It is a creative and fun way to make written materials come alive. Typically, stories and literature are used in dramas. However, teachers can integrate drama into almost all subject areas in school to enhance students' learning (Flynn, 2007). As students actively engage in dramatizing content knowledge, they adapt the information into a script by developing dialogue and characters. In addition, they are given the opportunities to use their own voices, facial expressions, and gestures to act out the script. In order for this form of art to truly benefit students' learning, as Gullatt (2008) suggests, teachers must be familiar with the dramatization process, such as transferring content into drama and debriefing the performance to ensure all students have learned from the dramatization.

Readers Theater is an example of how drama can be used in the classroom. Readers Theater is a technique that facilitates reading instruction through dramatic performance of a text (Gullat, 2008). Flynn (2007) introduces Curriculum-Based Readers Theater (CBRT), which is an arts-integrated instructional strategy that combines traditional Readers Theater with reading, writing, rehearsing, and performing. Through repeated reading and rehearsing of the script, students' reading fluency, comprehension, and retention of information can be strengthened.

Presentational drama task. The following example demonstrates how the lead author integrated reading and performing using Readers Theater in the target language. Building upon their previous learning of colors and animals, students were given opportunities to complete a Chinese version of the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* This book contains great illustrations of colors and animals, thus, it can well serve the purpose of reviewing this vocabulary. Following the English version, students first designed the cover of their book (Figure 4) and then designed each page inside the book by adding elaborations and coloring (Figure 5). Also, they had to fill in blanks that were left for colors vocabulary in both pinyin and characters. After students finished their books, they worked on developing reading fluency through a Readers Theater activity described in Appendix C. Each student was assigned a solo speaking role of a character in the book, such as elephant, bird, duck, and so forth. All students had the opportunity to speak lines in unison. In addition, they had to think of gestures that could go along with their solo line individually and gestures for the choral lines as a whole group. Gestures can emphasize the words and add kinesthetic elements to the reading. For example, a student was assigned to read "I see a red bird looking at me" in Chinese, so while she was reading "red bird, red bird," she opened her arms like wings and moved them up and down. The whole class came up with the gesture of putting their hands around their eyes as a shape of a binocular while they read "What do you see?"

Figure 4. Cover of a student-created *Bear* book.

Figure 5. Two pages of a student-designed *Brown Bear Brown Bear* book.

Reif and Grant (2010) contend "designing instruction to incorporate movement is engaging and energizing" (p. 106). As stated earlier, elementary students have a short attention span. It is hard to keep them engaged when they have to sit at tables for a long time. Purposeful movements can enhance their well-being by allowing them to connect concepts to action and to develop their motor skills. In foreign language education, TPR (Total Physical Response) is widely used by many teachers. Students respond to the teacher's commands in the target language with their whole-body actions. The following examples show how movement was used to help students practice the target language in the lead author's classroom.

Interpretive movement task. When teaching animal vocabulary to kindergartners, the teacher used an activity called Paint Bubble. It required students to use their imaginations and move around as if they had bubbles around them. Before the activity started, the teacher asked students to think of things that could pop their bubbles, such as running into people or things or using loud voices. If their bubbles broke, they had to go to the bubble healing area. So, during this activity, students were able to move around the classroom without creating chaos. As they began to move around, the teacher put pictures of different animals on the interactive whiteboard with the words in pinyin and Chinese characters for them to read. Then the teacher would ask students to fly like a bird, walk like an elephant, run like a horse, or use any other gestures they liked for that animal themselves (see Figure 6 on page 158). The teacher made sure she used the target language when speaking the name of that animal. With the help of visuals and movements, students were able to interpret the Chinese words for animals correctly.

Presentational movement task. When learning numbers, 3rd to 5th grade students used a hopscotch movement activity to develop their counting skills. First, they were divided into three groups, and each group was given a hopscotch sheet as shown in Figure 7. In each group, students took turns jumping from number one

Figure 6. Kindergartners using movement to demonstrate their understanding of animal vocabulary.

to ten based on the pattern. The teacher emphasized that when they landed on the number(s), they had to sound out the number(s) in Chinese or they would lose their turn to play. Through this movement activity, students were able to count from one to ten in Chinese more fluently in front of others. Also, students had multiple opportunities to listen to each other counting to enhance their own memory of numbers in Chinese.

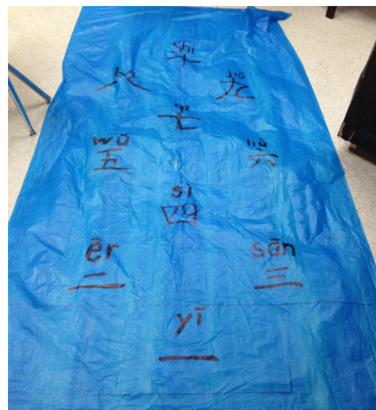

Figure 7. Chinese number hopscotch.

Music and rhythm

Memorizing new words is a great burden to memory for many language learners. However, some research has shed light on how this burden may be eased

through music and rhythmic activities. Reif and Grant (2010) argue that "word play is at the heart of chants and the lyrics of music" (p.108). Žemberová (2014) suggests that singing songs is in general considered a motivating and effective way of learning new vocabulary. Page (1995) describes how music is necessary to strengthen memory and to increase attention spans. Songs and chants "provide an easily accessed mnemonic structure for remembering procedural steps, processes or cycles, elements of a structure, or even spelling" (Reif & Grant, 2010, p. 108). The following examples demonstrate how the teacher integrated music to promote students' performance.

Presentational music and rhythm tasks. When learning family members, the teacher used both a chant and a song to help students remember the main family members and relationships between them in Chinese, for example, "bà ba de bà ba shì yé ye…" (Father's father is grandpa). Then, the teacher taught a song using the melody of "Ode to Joy" to help students remember all the new words, "bà ba, mā ma, gē ge, dì di, jiě jie, mèi mei, yī jiā rén" (father, mother, older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister, one family). The song and chant provided models for the following presentational tasks.

After practicing nine words for fruits in Chinese, students were asked to create a song using the fruit vocabulary. During this task, students worked in pairs to decide what melody to use for their songs and how to add words to it. Last, each pair performed their songs for the whole group. One pair performed their song in the melody of Ten Little Indians, and they added English translation for each word, for example, píng guǒ, apple; xiāng jiāo, banana; cǎo méi, strawberry, and so forth.

Another presentational music task was rapping the functions of body parts. When learning body parts, the teacher used a chant to help students remember the functions of eyes, ears, mouth, and nose: "wǒ de yǎn jing, kàn kàn kàn; wǒ de ěr duo, tīng tīng tīng; wǒ de zuǐ ba, shuō shuō shuō; wǒ de bí zi, wén wén wén." (My eyes, look, look look; my ears, listen, listen, listen; my mouth, talk, talk, talk; my nose, smell, smell, smell). First, students were separated into groups. After practicing the vocabulary for pronunciation and fluency, they had to perform this chant in a rapping rhythm. Eventually, students recited this chant fast with beats on their tables.

Learning outcomes

At the beginning of each activity, the lead author explained expectations to the students. "Following directions" was always included in the scoring criteria. During the process of making artwork, students were required to follow directions very well, otherwise, they would lose their opportunities to participate and lose points. Thus, artwork served as an incentive and reward for good behavior. Moreover, students took a lot of pride in their own work, especially when the teacher displayed it. They were often excited to show and explain their work to the teacher.

In addition, these beginning students were able to demonstrate language performance on the arts-integrated activities at the Novice Mid level, as assessed

by *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements* (ACTFL, 2015). In the interpretive tasks (drawing a monster, Paint Bubble), they were able to recognize some learned, memorized, and familiar words and phrases when they heard them spoken or read them. By interpreting numbers and body parts correctly, most of the students were able to draw a picture of a monster as instructed. When looking at the words for different animals on the whiteboard, students were able to use movements to show their understanding of the words. In the presentational tasks (mixing colors, haunted house, Readers Theater, number hopscotch, fruit song, body parts chant), they were able to present information about themselves and some other very familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, and memorized expressions. For instance, they used a range of sentence frames, such as, "I like…, I have..., and I see…" to present colors in their mixing color work, and they were able to write lists and memorized phrases on familiar topics. During the Halloween celebration, students were able to write a list of colors and objects that they used for their haunted house project.

Although there were not arts-integrated activities in the interpersonal communication mode, all other arts-related tasks eventually helped students communicate with each other in the target language. They were able to demonstrate performance at the Novice Mid level by exchanging information on very familiar topics using a variety of words and phrases that they had practiced and memorized. For example, after the mixing color activity, students were able to walk around and ask each other what color they liked in Chinese by using the vocabulary and sentence frame practiced during that activity. Students were asking for unknown information with a partner in a meaningful context.

Conclusion

This article primarily focuses on inspiring more foreign language teachers to consider using arts in their future teaching. LaJevic (2013) pointed out that "general classroom teachers lack a general knowledge about the arts and an understanding of the relationship between art and learning, in particular, arts integration" (p. 1). Teachers may have some misconceptions towards arts integration; for example, they may think a lack of expertise in arts will make them incapable of using arts in their teaching or that arts are inferior to core subjects, such as math, and science. They simply use coloring, cutting, or gluing to decorate their classrooms or fill in extra class time instead of purposefully integrating the arts in activities. Therefore, it is important that teacher education includes exploration of the arts to help teachers increase their understanding and comfort level with arts integration. Teachers need to examine their preconceived opinions about arts first, and then they should be given opportunities to practice some art activities themselves. Hartle et al. (2014) suggest that roles of teachers in arts integration can be artist, researcher, designer, co-constructor, and advocate. There are great opportunities for teachers and learners to realize the possibilities in themselves and the world around them through arts integration.

However, arts integration also faces many challenges. Chapman (2015) describes how "integrated arts approaches to learning may be compromised by

high-stakes testing programs, which appear to prioritize particular pedagogical styles, disciplines, and types of learners" (p. 96). Other factors that might cause arts integration to be downplayed include limited budgeting, lack of support, and an overcrowded curriculum, for example.

As foreign language teachers, we often struggle with students' low motivation for learning about another language and culture. However, arts integration has been proven helpful for making learning more fun and engaging in the lead author's classroom. In addition, during arts-integrated activities, students are more willing to use the target language to express themselves. These and the other benefits previously described provide evidence supporting arts integration in the elementary foreign language classroom.

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Appendix A

Haunted House Activity

Detailed steps for making this project are as follows:

1. Paperclip the house template to the black construction paper. Have it checked by the teacher.
2. Lay this on top of five sheets of paper.
3. Carefully trace the lines of the haunted house. Be sure to press hard.
4. Have your tracing checked.
5. Unclip the paper. Put the template in the middle of the table.
6. Cut the haunted house out of the black paper.
7. Make a fold where there is a window. Cut a straight line at the bottom and a curved line at the top.
8. Cut on the fold.
9. Do this for all the windows with curves.
10. For the straight windows, cut two straight lines, one top and one bottom. Cut on the fold.
11. For the windows without shutters, cut a straight line at the bottom. Then cut a curved line to the bottom line.
12. Glue your haunted house onto a piece of large white paper.
13. Decorate the background by drawing your own objects or using print out pictures from the internet.

Appendix B

Haunted House Rubric

Student Name: ____________________ Score: ____________________

Category	**10**	**8**	**6**	**4**
Following Directions	Followed directions all the time and completed the project step by step.	Followed directions sometimes, and completed most steps of the project.	Followed directions sometimes, and missed some steps of the project.	Did not follow directions very well.
Objects	List at least 5 objects in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin* (Chinese sound system), and *Hanzi* (Chinese characters).	List 4 objects in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin* (Chinese sound system), and *Hanzi* (Chinese characters).	List 3 objects in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin* (Chinese sound system), and *Hanzi* (Chinese characters).	List 2 objects in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin* (Chinese sound system), and *Hanzi* (Chinese characters).

Colors	List at least 5 colors used in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin*, and *Hanzi.*	List 4 colors used in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin*, and *Hanzi.*	List 3 colors used in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin*, and *Hanzi.*	List 2 colors used in your piece of art in English, *Pinyin*, and *Hanzi.*
Creativity	Generate many ideas. The final project shows many differences and new details.	Generate some ideas. The final project shows some differences and new details.	Generate few ideas. The final project shows few differences and new ideas.	Generate no ideas. The final project show no difference and new ideas.
Personal Pride	I am extremely proud because I did my best.	I feel very good, because I worked hard but I could have done a little bit better.	I feel good, because sometimes I worked hard, but I know I could have done better.	I feel ok, but I would make a lot of changes if I redid it.

Appendix C

Zōng Sè de Xióng, Zōng Sè de Xióng
(Brown Bear, Brown Bear)

All Zōng sè de xióng, zōng sè de xióng, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?)
1. Wǒ kàn dào hóng sè de niǎo kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Hóng sè de niǎo, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Red bird…)
2 Wǒ kàn dào huáng sè de yā zi zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Huáng sè de yā zi, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Yellow duck…)
3 Wǒ kàn dào lán sè de mǎ zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Lán sè de mǎ, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Blue horse…)
4 Wǒ kàn dào huī sè de lǎo shǔ zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Huī sè de lǎo shǔ, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Grey mouse…)
5 Wǒ kàn dào lǜ sè de qīng wā zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Lǜ sè de qīng wā, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Green frog…)
6 Wǒ kàn dào fěn hóng sè de dà xiàng zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)

All Fěn hóng sè de dà xiàng, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Pink elephant…)
7 Wǒ kàn dào bái sè de gǒu zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Bái sè de gǒu, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(White dog…)
8 Wǒ kàn dào hēi sè de mián yáng zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Hēi sè de mián yang, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Black sheep…)
9 Wǒ kàn dào jīn se de yú zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Jīn sè de yú, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Golden fish…)
10 Wǒ kàn dào lǎo shī zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Lǎo shī, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Teacher…)
11 Wǒ kàn dào hái zi men zhèng zài kàn zhe wǒ. [Gesture]
(I see…)
All Hái zi men, nǐ kàn dào le shén me? [Gesture]
(Children…)
12 Wǒ men kàn dào:
(We see :)
1–4 Zōng sè de xióng [Gesture]
(Brown bear)
5–8 Fěn hóng sè de dà xiàng [Gesture]
(Pink elephant)
9–12 Bái sè de gǒu [Gesture]
(White horse)
1–4 Hēi sè de mián yang [Gesture]
(Black sheep)
5–8 Jīn sè de yú [Gesture]
(Golden fish)
9–12 Hóng sè de niǎo [Gesture]
(Red bird)
1–4 Huáng sè de yā zi [Gesture]
(Yellow duck)
5–8 Lán sè de mǎ [Gesture]
(Blue horse)
9–12 Huī sè de lǎo shǔ [Gesture]
(Grey mouse)
1–4 Lǜ sè de qīng wā
(Green frog)
All Lǎo shī kàn zhe wǒ men, zhè jiù shì wǒ men kàn dào de.
(Teacher looking at us…)